

**HIV and AIDS and its implications for the ministry of healing in
some Pentecostal churches in Namibia.**

By

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Abstract

Healing has long been considered part of the Church's pastoral and diaconal calling. For Christians the ministry of healing is grounded in the Word, sacraments and prayer. Based on this understanding some of the Pentecostal churches in Namibia proclaim that HIV and AIDS can be cured through divine healing. It was revealed through interviews with both the practitioners of healing and recipients of healing that the claims of healing HIV and AIDS are not conclusive. It has been established through this study that the implications of a failed healing for the recipients include; lost of faith, hatred towards the practitioners, church, substance abuse and attempts at suicide. A close study of the available literature substantiates the fact that healing of HIV and AIDS in Namibia remains only a claim.

The logical conclusion derived was that people confuse healing of HIV and AIDS with spiritual and psychological strength and tranquillity that they receive from Pentecostal churches through their healing services. This study recognises the importance of "healing" and "coping" and the need for appropriate theological and psycho-social support for the recipients of divine healing. This study also reveals that HIV and AIDS has forced some Pentecostal churches to revisit their approach of healing. Thus, some of the Pentecostal churches have embarked upon Home Based Care, feeding schemes and material support for PLWHA.

The interviews could barely establish a definite case of a successful outcome of healing of someone who was HIV and AIDS positive and was healed through divine intervention. Thus, with the help of interviews, observant participation, and literature review, it was established that the implications for the ministry of healing in some Pentecostal churches in Namibia is real.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my late mother Sanna Lulu April and my little daughter Salomé Amakhoe-April. These two women together with my wife Judika April have a very special place and meaning in my life.

Declaration

I, Salomon Menthos April, hereby declare that this whole dissertation, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, represents my original work. I also declare that I have not otherwise submitted this dissertation in any form for any degree purpose or examination to any university.

Signature.....

Date.....13/03/08

As Supervisor, I agree to submission of this dissertation
Professor Anthony Balcomb

Signature.....

Date.....13/03/08

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABC	Abstain, Be faithful, Condomize
AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
AICs	African Independent Churches
AME	African Methodist Church
ARVs	Antiretroviral medication
CCAC	Christian Catholic Apostolic Church
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
FBOs	Faith Based Organizations
FGC	Full Gospel Church
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network
MoHss	Ministry of Health and Social Services
MTP III	Medium Term Plan
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PLWHA	People Living with HIV and AIDS
PPC	Protestant Pentecostal Church
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
WHO	World Health Organization

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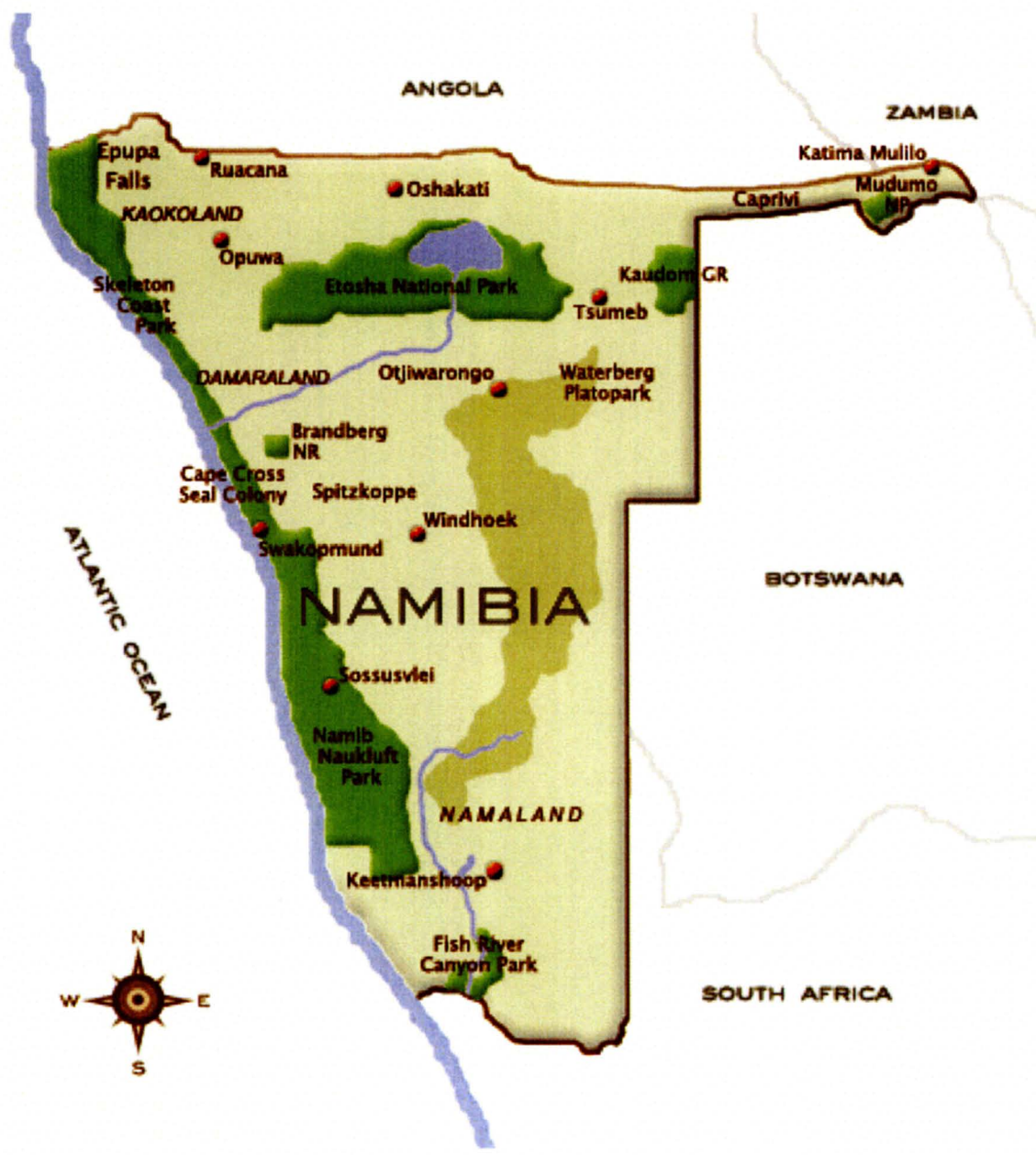
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Chapter One Introduction

1. Motivation and Background of the study

Pentecostalism is the subject of this study because it is a movement that is well known for its emphasis on the healing ministry. It is not an easy task to define Pentecostalism because of the diversity within it. One definition is as follows: "Pentecostalism is a movement which, since the first three decades of the twentieth century, is known for its tongue-speaking, prophecy, healings, and miracles, which spread out from the revival on Azusa Street in Los Angeles. Pentecostalism stresses the importance of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit as a second or third work of Grace."¹ According to Balcomb one of the defining characteristics of Pentecostals is their attempt to disavow denominationalism and formal structure and to emphasize the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, which is "translated into the power to overcome sickness and low esteem, the power to obtain jobs, and the power to have some control over your future."²

1.2. Research Problem

Taking into consideration the above background of the Pentecostal movement, this paper is an attempt to probe into the response given by the Pentecostal churches in the face of HIV and AIDS through their healing ministry. It is common knowledge that some of the Pentecostal churches claim that HIV and AIDS is curable through prayer and laying on of hands. It is also common knowledge that the resurgence of HIV and AIDS has posed serious problems not only for the Pentecostals but also for medical science. At the time of writing this paper medical science has not yet found any cure for HIV and AIDS. However, in some circles of the Pentecostal churches absolute healing for the epidemic is claimed. Pastors and priest from different Pentecostal churches state in no uncertain terms about how they have healed persons from AIDS or have been healed from HIV and AIDS. Amidst such claims the fact of the matter is that HIV and AIDS is a threat to the developing countries, as many industrious persons a dying at an early age and as so many people are still infected with the HI-virus of which Namibia is no exception.

¹ Synan, V. 1975. *Aspects of Pentecostal - Charismatic Origins*. Logos International, New Jersey. p. 17.

² Balcomb, A. pp. 2-3.

It is not the purpose of this paper to deny the fact that faith healing can take place. The purpose is to establish if at all such healings have taken place. Who was healed, where and when they were healed, and whether any verification of the results from a medical practitioner were sought? Because, crudely put, the pandemic has raised the question as to whether God can heal people infected with the disease, and if so, why this has not made the headlines, and why the infected are not clamouring to get into the churches to get healed. Additionally, if HIV and AIDS could be healed through divine healing, why do we still have so many deaths and funerals as a result of HIV and AIDS carried out by the Pentecostal churches? How are both practitioners and recipients of healing explaining the lack of healing, and how does this impact on the way they go about the healing ministry?

1.3. Research methodology

In order to get answers to the above questions personal interviews were done both with practitioners and the recipients of healing. For effective and reliable results two groups of people were being investigated in this study – the recipients of healing (otherwise known as the sufferers) and the practitioners of healing. A typical profile of the recipients of healing is provided below. More important were the circumstances surrounding a recipient's presentation of him or herself as a candidate for divine healing, and the ensuing consequences of the healing act, by which is meant the event during which healing is administered.

Ten congregations were selected from two towns namely, Windhoek and Khorichas. The former is a city with different dynamics from the latter, which is more rural. These two environments proved to have different needs and pressures, which might impact on the healing ministry. Congregations were selected through the ministers fraternal of which I am a member. Those congregations were targeted where convictions concerning healing are particularly robust. Permission was sought from the leaders of these congregations to do the research. Two methodologies were employed – participant observation and personal interviews. I approached the pastors of the churches concerned so that I might be invited to participate in these services. In this way I was able to observe, first hand, what happens in a healing service? For example what methods were employed, how the liturgy and/or worship was used in

the healing service, what the approach was of the pastor, as well as the approach of those receiving healing.

Personal interviews were important because these provided insights that could not be obtained in the healing service as such. Interviews were sought with practitioners of the healing ministry – which in most cases were the pastors of the ten congregations concerned – and with at least five individuals from each of the churches, who have been recipients of this ministry. Sensitivity was exercised especially with regard to the interviews with the recipient group. Consent was obtained to conduct these interviews. The issue of confidentiality was of prime importance in such interviews and candidates were assured of this, as well as anonymity if they so desired, at all times. Only those who had declared their HIV status and who had come forward for healing were interviewed. This obviated some of the problems around confidentiality. A tape recorder was used during the interviews when permission was granted for this. The interviews were conducted in Damara Nama and Afrikaans and transcribed into English.

Participatory observation was one other method that was used to establish the effect and impact of healing. This was important as through interviews not everything could be captured. By attending to these services I was able to understand all the dynamics that are at play during a healing service.

1.4. Limitations and Delimitations

There were obviously many constraints that accompanied this research. The Pentecostal churches are not known for their openness about issues around sexuality, except to have particular convictions concerning its practice within the context of marriage, and abstention in any other context. This implies that they approached the subject of Aids in a fairly moralistic way. The fact that I am not a follower of a Pentecostal church was a limitation in my research. As I went on with my research I realised that I was not able to penetrate issues around healing, as I was only given those issues that the participants were comfortable with in talking to an outsider.

1.5. Aim and objectives

The research probed some of the ways in which the HIV and AIDS pandemic in Namibia is impacting the healing ministry of the Pentecostal churches. The purpose of the research was to find out how the Pentecostals are responding to the pandemic, and whether the healing ministry of the church is in crisis as a result of the pandemic. It examined as well some of the effects that failed attempts at divine healing has on people involved in the healing ministry – for example people with HIV and AIDS who have not been healed. It was found that (some) people did not experienced healing after prayer, consequently, damage ensued, not only to the faith of the sufferer but also to his or her psychological, social, and emotional well-being. This study has established that no conclusive healing of HIV and AIDS had taken place in the subjects that were studied. However it has become evident through the research that, there is a sense in which faith, in itself, provides the psychological and emotional well-being that makes healing more possible.

The kinds of questions guiding the process were the following:

- How common is the practice of divine healing amongst Pentecostal practitioners towards people living with HIV and AIDS?
- What are the results of this practice?
- What are the consequences of failed attempts at healing?
- To what extent has the Pentecostal church reviewed its belief in divine healing as a result of the pandemic?
- Has the Pentecostal church changed its practice of divine healing as a result of the pandemic?

1.6. Conclusion

Chapter One

Having dealt with the background to this study, the research problem, the aim and objectives, the next chapter deals with Pentecostalism in Namibia. How it came to Namibia, its theology and practices.

Chapter outline

Chapter Two

Pentecostalism in Namibia: How popular is Pentecostalism and how do people view the Pentecostals.

Chapter Three

HIV and Aids in Namibia: The impact of HIV and AIDS and the responses.

Chapter Four

Presentation of the gathered information and analysis of the findings.

Chapter Five

Summary and conclusion

Chapter Two Pentecostalism in Namibia

2. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to establish the origin and spread of Pentecostalism in Namibia. It is not possible for Pentecostalism in Namibia to be dealt with in isolation, as it is entrenched in, and linked with, the rise and existence of Pentecostal churches elsewhere in the world. For a better understanding of the Pentecostal movement, this chapter provides its general historical background, and how it came to Namibia. A very brief overview about the understanding of the pivotal role that the Holy Spirit plays in Pentecostalism will be provided. The second part of this chapter deals with the theology and practice of divine healing amongst Pentecostal churches in Namibia.

2.1. General background to Pentecostalism

Before the focus turns to Pentecostalism in Namibia, a very brief overview of Pentecostalism in general is necessary. This is important because Pentecostalism in Namibia grew from what was happening in other parts of the world.

Anderson refers to Pentecostalism as a movement of churches “that emphasise the working of the Spirit in the church, particularly with ecstatic phenomena like prophecy and speaking in tongues, healing and exorcism.”³ According to Adogame, “The bedrock of the Pentecostal belief system is the pre-eminence of benevolent powers - God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.”⁴ The theological message of the Pentecostals, according to Balcomb, has traditionally been influenced by Pietism, which emphasises Christ within the individual, it has little concern for outward worldly affairs and is focussed on the ‘home in heaven’.⁵ However, current manifestations have quite a strong emphasis on the present world, which emphasizes the need for success and health in everyday life. The adherents of Pentecostal movements unite around an emphasis upon the experience of the Holy Spirit in the life of an individual believer and in the fellowship of the church. Theologically speaking, the Pentecostal adherents wish, in brief, to be understood as experiential

³ Anderson, A. 2004. *An introduction to Pentecostalism*. Cambridge, University Press. p.103.

⁴ Adogame, A F E. “HIV/AIDS Support and African Pentecostalism” *Journal of health psychology*, volume 12 issue 3 pp 475-484. p. 478.

⁵ Balcomb, A 2005. *Interviews with South African Pentecostal Pastors and leaders – Analysis and Impressions*. p. 2.

Christianity, with the experience culminating in the baptism of the believer in the Holy Spirit. The reason for this emphasis is the continuation of the experience of the Holy Spirit in the early church.⁶ The understanding is that the experience of the Holy Spirit empowers an individual, and gives that individual a spiritual sensitivity, which no ecclesiastical rite, ceremony, ordination, or commission can give. The individual regards him/herself to be the direct object of the Spirit's concern, ordained by Him and by no human being, for service and mission in the world. It is fundamental to Pentecostalism that the New Testament is not a record of what happened in one generation, but is a blueprint of what should happen in every generation until Jesus comes again. Special emphasis rests, among other things, on the spiritual manifestations recorded in the New Testament, such as speaking in tongues, prophecy, miracles, healing and visions which, according to them, should continue to be experienced by Christians today.⁷

Anderson describes Pentecostalism as a big business in Africa too. Already in the year 2000 a rough estimate of 11 percent of Africa's population was found to be charismatic. Classical Pentecostalism in Africa has been in operation since 1907. Anderson refers to the Pentecostal phenomenon in Africa as something that qualifies it being called an "African Reformation" of the twentieth century, that has significantly impacted the character of African Christianity.⁸ Anderson maintains that the origin and history of Pentecostalism in South Africa is inseparable from the Zionists and Apostolic churches. Personalities such as Pieter Leroux, a Dutch reformed missionary, together with about 400 Africans, joined the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church (CCAC) of John Alexander Dowie in Zion City, near Chicago, a movement that emphasised divine healing and triune baptism of adult believers by immersion. Already in 1905 by the time Dowie sent his missionary to South Africa, the numbers had grown to 5,000 believers. The first Pentecostal services in Johannesburg were racially integrated, but as the African leaders continued to work together with the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), a culmination of the ministries of the CCAC, the white leaders passed racist laws and kept all significant positions for themselves. This contributed to the many schisms that took place thereafter, and most

⁶ Bruner, F D. 1970. *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*. Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. pp. 19-21.

⁷ Bruner, F D. 1970. pp. 22-23.

⁸ Anderson, A. 2004. *An introduction to Pentecostalism* p. 104.

of the African Zionist leaders decided to leave the AFM.⁹ Hollenweger argues that Dowie's black followers were taken over by the AFM and ordained as Evangelists, before they could read or write, or even without a theological training. To receive the power from on high seems to have been the only criteria for the Pentecostal missionaries to be instituted as preachers and missionaries.¹⁰

Pentecostalism is marked by a phenomenal growth, and today it consists of a community, probably in the hundreds of millions, which can be found in almost every country under the sun. Pentecostals can already claim, for example, that they are the largest non-Roman Catholic communion in France, Italy, and Portugal in Latin Europe, and in Brazil, Chile, and El Salvador, and perhaps in Mexico in Latin America.¹¹

While it is debatable whether the Zionist churches in South Africa could be considered Pentecostal, they can trace their origins to Pentecostalism, namely, through the Apostolic Faith Mission. Le Roux left the care of his former African congregation on the Witwatersrand in the hands of his African helpers and concentrated on Pentecostal work among the Europeans. It was during this time (1917-1919) that a continuous process of secession took place, which has resulted in a whole series of Zionist churches. To narrow down the scope of this study to southern Africa, and eventually to Namibia, it is necessary to mention that through the influence of the Zionist churches in Africa some of the Zionist churches that originated from the AFM spread to Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana, from where they later arrived in Namibia. The arrival of the Pentecostal movement had given a major stimulus for the subsequent growth of a movement of African Independent churches in Southern Africa.¹²

Nel summarises the origin of the Pentecostal movement as follows:

Pentecostalism can be viewed as an American phenomenon per se with roots in Methodism, Revivalism, the Holiness

⁹ Anderson, A. 2004. *An introduction to Pentecostalism* pp. 106-107.

¹⁰ Hollenweger, J H. 1972. *The Pentecostals*. Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers. p. 65.

¹¹ Bruner, F D. 1970. *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*. Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishers. p. 23.

¹² Sundkler, B G M. 1961. *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*. Great Britain, Oxford University Press. pp. 38-54.

movement, and the conservative Protestantism. In addition a doctrinal history of Pentecostalism can be traced from Roman Catholicism with its doctrine of confirmation, through Methodism and the Holiness movement with its doctrine of sanctification, to Pentecostalism's Spirit baptism.¹³

According to Williams :

Pentecostalism represented a crucial breakthrough in the realm of the Holy Spirit. The focus,... was not the Spirit's work in salvation, or even in sanctification, but in the much-needed empowerment of Christian life.¹⁴

2.2. Pentecostalism in Namibia

Pentecostalism was not part of the Namibian religious phenomena until after World War - I. It was in the year 1919 that Pentecostalism reached Namibia through a South African policeman called JA Venter, who was transferred for duty to Namibia. Venter was a member of the Apostolic Faith Mission. He shared his faith with the Namibian people and by the time the first missionaries, PJ van der Walt and Pastor de Kock, came to Namibia in 1942, the official membership of the AFM was between 600 and 700. The AFM must therefore be regarded as the first Pentecostal church to be established in Namibia.¹⁵ With its arrival in Namibia the focus seems to have been mainly on the white people, because only in 1943 did van der Walt start a full-time mission to the black people of Namibia. It is important to mention here that the type of biblical message, and the style in which it was presented, was strange and in contrast to the message and worship style of the mainline churches. The significant difference was the emphasis on "divine healing", "believer's baptism" by immersion, and "baptism in the Holy Spirit".¹⁶

¹³ Nel, M. "The role of healing in the establishment of the Pentecostal movement." *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*. June 2001, volume xvii No. 1. p.

¹⁴ Williams, J R. 1972. *The Pentecostal Reality*. New Jersey, Logos International, Plainfield. p. 50.

¹⁵ Buys, G L and Nambala, SVV. 2003. *A History of the church in Namibia*. Windhoek, Gamsberg Macmillan Publishers. p. 143.

¹⁶ Buys, G L and Nambala, SVV. 2003. p. 143.

According to Buys and Namabala, in order to understand the context of the Pentecostal ministry and its Pentecostal doctrines in Namibia, its origin must be traced back to South Africa. The AFM was established in Johannesburg in 1908, as a culmination of the ministries, which came from the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion (CCAC), which sent a missionary, Daniel Bryant to South Africa. The Zion Apostolic Church was established through culminated efforts by three men, Johannes Buchler, Pieter le Roux and Daniel Bryant.¹⁷

The first permanent branch of the AFM in Namibia was planted in 1942 by Pastor Andries de Kock, in Windhoek. History has it that the first “believer’s baptism” to be held was conducted by Pastor de Kock for the De Jager couple in Namibia. It was from Windhoek that Pastor de Kock visited Hammerstein in the district of Maltahohe in the south-western part of Namibia. By the time Pastor de Kock visited this area the owner of this farm, called Tinus Coetzee, was already a member of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), as was the whole white community of the area.¹⁸ Pastor de Kock baptised both of Coetzee’s sons with adult baptism, together with the family of Barend Smit. According to Buys and Nambala the birth and spread of the AFM was not smooth and without problems.

Nevertheless, although the Pentecostal message was different and in conflict with the message of DRC, there was an exodus of the former DRC members to the newly establishing AFM. Pastor van der Walt was the first AFM leader to concentrate on the black people of Namibia. His ministry was about evangelism and healing. A permanent branch of the black AFM was established among the Ovambo by Namibian contract workers, who returned home from Cape Town. These workers had gone to South Africa to work in the Cape Town harbour. They were exposed to the Afrikaans language, and also to the Pentecostal message, in the Salt River AFM church. It is important to note here that, as far as it concerns Namibia, the AFM could be regarded as the mother church of several other Pentecostal churches. Pastor van der Walt was instrumental in the spread of the different Pentecostal churches in Namibia. It was in 1952 that he left the AFM and started the first mission of the Full Gospel Church (FGC) in Omaruru, the origin of which can be traced back to 1910 in South

¹⁷ Buys, G L and Nambala SVV. 2003. pp. 143-144.

¹⁸ Buys, G L and Nambala, SVV. 2003. p. 147.

Africa. The founder of the FGC was Pastor George Bowie, a missionary from the USA, who was a member of the Bethel Pentecostal Assembly in New Jersey. In 1966 he left the FGC and started the Protestant Pentecostal Church (PPC) mission in Windhoek. The origin of the PPC lies in the event when 11 pastors and 1 755 members left the AFM, an exodus based on an internal struggle, which revolved around issues of a political role played by the vice-president of the AFM, and on the acceptance of a general “confession of faith” by the AFM, which would “limit the freedom and gifts of the Holy Spirit.” There were five points of controversy altogether.¹⁹ The spread of Pentecostal churches has continued up to today. However, not much has been documented about these churches, especially among the black communities. The demographic of the Pentecostal churches of Namibia depicts the same scenario described by Balcomb concerning the Pentecostal churches in South Africa – namely, that “the demographic of the churches indicates that most of them are not racially integrated at all, or are integrated to a limited degree.”²⁰ Only those churches led by white Pastors are, to a limited degree, racially integrated, and most of them are situated in the city areas. With this short overview about the arrival and spread of Pentecostal churches in Namibia, I now turn to the theology and practice of healing in general, and among the Pentecostals in Namibia in particular.

2.3. The ministry of healing

The healing ministry has its roots in the Bible, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. Thus the whole question of healing can be seen as part of the central thrust of God’s redemptive intent, depicted in the sacred account of God’s dealings with His people, with Israel of old and with the church in our era. This does not, in any way, suggest that the biblical authors regarded sickness as mere illusion. In fact, they often described the malady in sufficient detail.²¹ There are a plethora of texts in the OT about healing. The healing of Naaman in 2 Kings 5: 1-27, is very particular, in that he suffered from a socially unacceptable and humiliating illness. One could associate the rejection and humiliation that Naaman went through with the present experience of those living with HIV and AIDS. The Prophet Elisha while healing

¹⁹ Buys, G L and Namabala, SVV. 2003. pp. 50-152.

²⁰ Balcomb, A. 2005. p. 18.

²¹ Scharlemann, M H. 1965. *Healing and Redemption*. St. Louis, Missouri, Concordia Publishing House. pp. 69-70.

Naaman stressed the power of God over illness and healing. Another striking account is that of the healing of Hezekiel in 2 Kings 20, Isaiah 38 and 2 Chronicles 32: 24. In all of these accounts it is evident that God has much more to offer than mere physical health. These two accounts are cited here to show that healing was already practiced during the Old Testament times.

The New Testament on the other hand is full of accounts of healing. Healing was an essential part of Jesus' ministry. Beate Jakob draws our attention to the fact that healings done by Jesus must be seen within the framework of his message of the kingdom of God. He argued that Jesus' healing miracles do not primarily present Jesus as a miraculous healer to be consulted in the case of disease. Rather, the point is that through Jesus, God devotes his attention to this world completely and forever. Jesus himself interprets his healing miracles by saying, "But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Luke 11: 20).²² The stories of miracles and healing in the New Testament did not stop with God and Jesus, but continued with other miracles done by his disciples, though there are no detailed versions given about these. Paul also mentions his own miracles in some of his Epistles, for instance, in Romans 15: 18-19 and 2 Corinthians 12: 12. In the Acts of the Apostles the miracles done by Peter and Paul are described.²³

Today we confess, in the Nicene Creed, that the Holy Spirit is Lord and Giver of life, who is also the gift for the end time to create life in the midst of death, as the miracle of Pentecost amply testifies.²⁴ To conclude this explanation of the ministry of healing, de Villiers' article on Healing in the Pentecostal tradition gives an overarching view of the divine healing of the Pentecostal churches. This faith statement, as he calls it, comes from the Full Gospel Church of God in Southern Africa:

Section 20 – Divine healing. We believe that divine provision has been made for the physical health and healing of the believer through the redemptive word of Christ upon the cross and that

²² Jakob, B. "We can expect great things from God: The relation between faith and healing." <http://search.atlaonline.com>. Accessed 2007/02/07. p. 460.

²³ de Villiers, P G R. 1986. *Healing in the Name of God*. Pretoria, Published by University of South Africa. p. 33.

²⁴ Jakob, B. <http://search.atlaonline.com>. Accessed 2007/02/07. p. 462.

by his stripes we are healed (Ex 15: 26; Num 21: 8, 9; Jhn 3: 14; Is 53: 4; Mt 8: 17; 1 Pt 2: 24). Divine healing is to minister to the sick through prayer and the laying on of hands in the ministry of the Gospel, (Mark 16: 18); through anointing the believer with oil and through the prayer of faith, (James 5: 14, 15); and also through the ministering of the gift of healing, (Acts 28: 8, 9, 1 Cor 12: 9).²⁵

2.3.1. Theology of the Holy Spirit

Since every gift in the Pentecostal churches seems to revolve around Spirit baptism, a slightly elaborated version of the theology of the Holy Spirit is necessary here. The emphasis on the Holy Spirit is linked with the Pentecost event in Acts chapter two. The important part of this event, on which Pentecostalism lays claim, is the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the first disciples enabling them to speak in tongues. Thus the important part in the theology of the Holy Spirit is about the experience. According to Bruner the theology of the Spirit is centred in the experience of the full reception of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, he says that the Pentecostal pneumatology emphasises, not so much the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, but is in fact preoccupied with the critical experience, and the filling of Spirit as described by Luke in Acts. A very explicit emphasis is lent to the notion of baptism in the Holy Spirit:

The promise of the Father: All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek promise of the Father, the Baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian Church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry. Luke 24: 49; Acts 1: 4, 8; 1Cor. 12: 1-31. This wonderful experience is

²⁵ de Villiers, P G R. 1986. p. 209.

distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth.

Acts 10: 44-46; 11: 14-16; 15: 7-9.²⁶

According to Clark, the Spirit baptism translates into the understanding of what it is to be born again. It is about moving from darkness to light. It urges every believer to take a personal decision to become a committed disciple of Christ. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is an endowment with the power of service. Through this baptism salvation is complete in a moment, in the forgiveness of sin and the new birth into a new life.²⁷

The baptism in the Spirit is not merely a matter of correct conceptual thinking, but this experience also has tremendous implications for one's lifestyle. It is not simply a matter of holding to certain standards because they are traditional, but it is a matter of obeying them because it is the truth that makes the difference in life.²⁸

In concluding the pivotal role that Holy Spirit plays in the Pentecostal churches, Balcomb in his unpublished article, *Interviews with South African Pentecostal Pastors and Leaders - analysis and impressions*, also asserts that the Pentecostal message is primarily about a theology of encounter, a different word for the notion of experience. He interprets this notion of encounter as being arrested by the Holy Spirit, and presented with the demands of the risen Christ, to surrender your life to him in obedience. He argues that the encounter with Christ is accompanied by the realization of the love of God, and therefore the realization of one's own inestimable value in the sight of God.²⁹ With this overview of the theology of the Holy Spirit, we can now return to the subject of this chapter, namely, the ministry of healing.

2.3.2. The Holiness Movement

²⁶ Bruner, F D. 1970. p. 61.

²⁷ Clark, M S and Lederle, H I. 1989. *What is distinctive about Pentecostal Theology?* Pretoria, University of South Africa. pp. 55-57.

²⁸ Clark, M S and Lederle, H I. 1989. p. 57.

²⁹ Balcomb, A. 2005. p. 4.

The Holiness Movement has played a very important role in the birth of Pentecostalism. It was the importance that the Holiness Movement gave to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which was to have significance in the Pentecostal movement. All those who came under the Holiness ministry became familiar with “Spiritual baptism.”³⁰ The Holiness Movement seems to have arisen from a variety of causes, especially the demoralizing after-effects of the American Civil war, the dissatisfaction of many within Methodist churches with their concept of holiness, or the adherence to Wesleyan perfectionist doctrine, and a corresponding concern for the advance of modern liberal views in theology, and the issues of wealth and worldliness in the church as a whole. The central part of the Holiness Movement was about a second experience, specifically a conversion into Scriptural holiness, sanctification, or as it was also called, perfect love.³¹ This subsequent experience was translated as the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

According to Nel, one of the important presuppositions functioning as the theology of the Holiness Movement is that a believer receives power from above during the experience of sanctification, enabling him or her to exercise power over sin and Satan, as well as sickness.³² The post-apostolic ministry of healing dates back to the time of John Wesley who started his United Societies in 1739. The impetus behind the formation of these societies was the hunger and desire that men and women had for Wesley’s prayers and advice on how to flee the wrath of God. The overall desire of these people was the need that they felt for renewal and revival. These people were troubled by their consciences and persistently prayed for redemption. In short these people searched for Godliness, and the method that they employed was to help each other and to show love for one another.³³ The Holiness Movement was informed by Wesley’s distinction between the sanctified, or those who had been baptised in the Spirit, and ordinary Christians.

By using Chappell’s argument, Nel stated that the Holiness Movement provided the foundational theology, the leaders and the methodology for the divine healing

³⁰ Bruner, F D. 1970. pp.42-43.

³¹ Bruner, F D. 1970. p. 42.

³² Nel, M. “The role of healing in the establishment of the Pentecostal movement.” p. 168.

³³ Wesley, J. 1743. *The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Methodist Societies*. Bristol, Felix Farley Printers. pp. 3-4

movement. According to him the Holiness Movement had its origins in the first evangelical awakening of the eighteenth century and the second evangelical awakening of the nineteenth century. The emphasis in the first evangelical awakening was personal confession, inner change of heart and the striving for a second, distinct experience of sanctification. The second evangelical awakening stressed the doctrine of sanctification. Sanctification was regarded as a crisis experience distinguishable from repentance, and was regarded as the baptism with the Spirit.³⁴ Vining, in his unpublished Doctoral thesis about sanctification and how it was understood, affirms the above statements. According to him Wesley's view of health and healing grew out of his understanding that sanctification provides one with "the capacity to love", and love is the only way to the absolute healing and health of the soul, mind, and body of an individual.³⁵ The ministry of healing should be seen as one of the gifts that spread from the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Nel, quoting Chappell says:

By propagating the doctrine of Christian perfection or the baptism of the Holy Spirit as purification from sin, the nineteenth century Holiness Movement provided the basic theological milieu in which the supernatural gifts of God, and in particular, divine healing would flourish.³⁶

2.3.3. The message of healing in Namibia

Health and healing are on the mind of every human being. Some individuals and churches claim that by the power of the Holy Spirit any disease/sickness can be healed. What is necessary to execute healing is only faith in God, who promised healing to those who believed in Him. A short definition of healing follows: "Healing can be defined as a restoration of health to a part of the body that was previously diseased."³⁷ Nel gives the following explanation of healing in the Christian spiritual context:

³⁴ Nel, M. "The role of healing in the establishment of the Pentecostal movement." pp. 166-167.

³⁵ Vining, J K. 1990. "Health and healing in the Pentecostal tradition as reflected by the church of God and the implications for the Pastoral counselling." (Unpublished Doctoral thesis) p. 22.

³⁶ Nel, M. "The role of healing in the establishment of the Pentecostal movement." p.168.

³⁷ Israel, M. 1984. *Healing as Sacrament*. Cambridge, Cowley Publications. p.2.

Divine healing is the removal of illness by the power of God. It is the process or act of God where the temple of God is restored after an intruder has devastated it. Divine health is to live daily and hourly in contact with God, so that His life flows through man's body, spirit and soul.³⁸

Churches, especially those known as the mainline churches in Namibia, are emptying on a daily basis, because people are searching for health and healing from those churches and individuals who claim to have the gifts of healing. Bate comments:

Between 1980 and 1990 in South Africa, the number of Christians belonging to mainline churches such as Anglican, Methodist, Catholic and Dutch Reformed Churches declined by 25% from 12.1 million to 9.1 million. During the same period the number of Christians belonging to those churches offering religious and faith healing increased by 23% from 5.6 million to 6.9 million.³⁹

There is no doubt that the healing ministry and the healing power of faith have been highlighted by the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. The doctrine and practice of divine healing also forms a prominent part of the life and theology of Pentecostal churches in Namibia. On the other hand the mainline churches would not deny that physical healings can occur, but they would rather place more emphasis on the spiritual and social aspects of healing.⁴⁰ It is thus not surprising that sick people resort to Pentecostal churches, where healing is professed to be a reality for those who have faith; hence the massive exodus of members from the mainline churches.

In the context of Namibia, the AFM was the first church to be known for the Pentecostal message of divine healing, of believer's baptism by immersion and of baptism in the Holy Spirit.⁴¹ It is not surprising that "many of the early members of the AFM witnessed that they were drawn to the movement by the healing received

³⁸ Nel, M. "The role of healing in the establishment of the Pentecostal movement." p. 176.

³⁹ Bate, S C. 1995. *Inculturation & Healing*. Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publications. p. 15.

⁴⁰ Jakob, B. <http://search.atlaonline.com> accessed 2007/02/07.

⁴¹ Buys, G L and Namabala, SVV. 2003. p. 143.

after prayer.”⁴² The seriousness and the drive to find healing are illustrated by the plethora of written material emanating from the Pentecostals. “In a flood of literature the healing evangelists proclaim that it is the will of God - with or without the help of doctors – to heal the sick.”⁴³ Namibia is no different from the rest of the world, where people are tirelessly searching for healing. It is this inexhaustible need for healing that has turned many private houses in Namibia into healing centres. Thousands of self-proclaimed prophets of healing are to be seen everywhere in Namibia. Poor people are paying large amounts of money, either to traditional healers, or are giving prescribed offerings to the prophets of healing, with the hope of being healed. Very little is written about the healing practice in Namibia but the activities carried out in these healing centres and churches are similar to what is taking place elsewhere in the world. Demons are cast out and the sick are prayed for and promised that they have been healed. Although from a South African perspective, perhaps Nel’s statement reflects the situation in Namibia too:

Demons are cast out, the sick healed, many blessedly saved, restored, and baptized with the Holy Ghost and power. Heroes are being developed, the weak made strong in the Lord. Men’s hearts are being searched as with a lighted candle. It is a tremendous sifting time, not only of actions, but also of inner, secret motives.⁴⁴

The message of healing practised by the Namibian Pentecostal churches is, to my mind, not critical enough in its use of scripture. By this I mean that the texts around the issue of healing are taken too literally without due recognition of the context in which the texts were written and how this context might influence the use of the texts.. Similar sentiments are expressed in the argument of Wanyama et al: “All these patients were members of evangelical churches that believe in the sole authority of the literal bible, a salvation only through regeneration, rebirth, and a spiritually transformed personal life.”⁴⁵ The perceived notion about healing is that it concerns the

⁴² Nel, M. “The role of healing in the establishment of the Pentecostal movement.” p. 175.

⁴³ Hollenweger, J H. 1972. p. 356.

⁴⁴ Nel, M. “The role of healing in the establishment of the Pentecostal movement.” p. 173.

⁴⁵ Wanyama, J. .. et al. “Belief in divine healing can be a barrier to antiretroviral therapy adherence in Uganda.” *Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, Inc*, 11 July 2007 Volume 21, pp 1486 – 1487. p. 1487.

physical ills of the human body, and is wrought by the power of God, through the prayer of faith, and by the laying on of hands (Mark 16: 18), as well as that it is provided for in the atonement of Christ, and is available to all who truly believe. The practice of divine healing is thus underpinned by the theology of atonement. Nel, looking at the background of the message of atonement, finds that sickness was seen as incipient to death and that death is the result of sin; while there is no sickness in God because there is no sin in Him. Sin is the origin of illness. Therefore atonement means to be united in body, soul and spirit with Christ and cleansed from sin and sickness. Salvation in Christ is the sum total of what God wants for a person's body, soul and spirit. Nel concludes by saying that when God heals a person it is a sign that his/her sins have been forgiven, because healing is part of the salvation that God wants to give to his people.⁴⁶

The doctrine of atonement, its purpose and function with regard to an overall understanding of healing, are now examined. Kelsey argues that atonement, in terms of the Christian worldview, is about the spiritual result of a victory worked out by Christ, as Spirit, in the physical world through Jesus, as human being. He argues that the early church did not conceive of atonement on the intellectual level only, but regarded it as the experience of freedom and power. People in Christian fellowship felt freedom and experienced that they were no longer subjected to mental, and physical illness, that they were free from demon possession, and that they were empowered in the face of persecution.⁴⁷ These claims are what give the Pentecostal movement its widespread appeal today.

In the context of Namibia the understanding of atonement is very similar to the views presented by Kelsey above. However, some Pentecostal churches in Namibia do not depart from the mainstream notion of atonement in the understanding and practice of their healing ministry. I argue that since many of the pastors in the Pentecostal churches in Namibia (especially among the black community) are not educated theologically, these differences are not relevant to them. Most of the Pentecostal churches in Namibia very seldom see atonement as sacramental, as is the case in the

⁴⁶ Nel, M. "The role of healing in the establishment of the Pentecostal movement." pp. 176-177.

⁴⁷ Kelsey, M. 1995. *Healing & Christianity*. Minneapolis, Augsburg Press. p. 290.

mainline churches, but rather as a personal experience of God's work through the Holy Spirit.

Very common biblical texts that the Pentecostal churches in Namibia use for healing include Isaiah 53:4, 5; Matthew 8:17; James 5:14-16; and 1 Peter 2:24. The texts are used to justify the purpose, meaning and the exercise of the healing ministry. Without turning a blind eye to the thinking of the critics of modern teaching on faith and healing, it is undeniable that a multitude of evangelical scholars, ministers and classical faith leaders attest to this teaching. The above-cited biblical texts are used to proclaim and confirm the "biblical truth" of healing. Paul King affirms that in the circles where Charles Spurgeon moved, the perception was that Christ has obtained for us the healing of our diseases, because he has borne our sicknesses. Also using these texts as a basis, Spurgeon's teachings resonated widely in the West. Namibian Pentecostals use the same texts for healing practice. It is claimed that Christ has promised us healing, because it is a part of the salvation we have in Him.⁴⁸

Pentecostal churches practice healing in Namibia, but there are various understandings of the process. As King has observed in his article, there seems to be a difference in the perception of healing, especially regarding exactly when healing is taking place. Some argue that healing is a process and others believe that it takes place instantly and spontaneously. King states that the belief is common that healing is a provision of the atonement, however some contemporary faith teachers do not consider it as given in all circumstances.⁴⁹

Thus, healing as practiced by the Pentecostal churches in Namibia could be summed up as a gift that one receives at Spirit baptism. The Holy Spirit is at the centre of the practice of divine healing, and in the view of almost all the Pentecostal churches in Namibia all sicknesses can be healed. The reason for illness is found in the fall of humankind, and Christ had to die for the restoration of the original relationship between human beings and God, that was destroyed. It is against this background that

⁴⁸ King, P. "Classic faith answers to contemporary issues and questions of faith and healing." *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, December 2006 Vol xxxii No 3, 77-101. p. 80.

⁴⁹ King, P. "Classic faith answers to contemporary issues and questions of faith and healing." pp. 80-82.

the theology of atonement is important in the practice and understanding of the healing ministry, but not necessarily in all Pentecostal churches.

2.3.4. Conclusion

This chapter looked at the emergence and growth of Pentecostal movement in Namibia. It has become clear that Pentecostalism in Namibia was imported from neighbouring countries, and more specifically from South Africa. Since Pentecostalism did not originate in Namibia neither in Africa a historical background about the origin of Pentecostalism was provided with an emphasis on how it came to Namibia. It has been established that the theological teachings and worship practices of the Namibian Pentecostal churches are virtually identical with that of the other Pentecostal churches around the world. Cultural African practices have, in many cases, been asserted but the fundamental elements are very similar worldwide. It has been found that the ministry of healing continues to be based on the understanding that through the baptism of the Holy Spirit one is blessed with extraordinary gifts, including the gift of healing. The conclusion drawn from this chapter is that according to the Pentecostal theology of healing, all diseases can be cured. Whether such perceptions and believes are true would be dealt with later in this paper.

The following chapter (Two) will look at the statistics and impact of HIV and AIDS in Namibia. It will focus mainly on the national response by the government and the relevant stakeholders in their search to mitigate and curb the impact and the spread of HIV and AIDS. Areas where improvement is anticipated will be highlighted.

Chapter Three **HIV and AIDS in Namibia**

3. Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to give an overall picture of the HIV and AIDS pandemic in Namibia. In light of the topic of this paper, viz “HIV and AIDS and its implications for the ministry of healing in some Pentecostal churches in Namibia”, it is essential that this chapter will look at the impact of HIV and AIDS in Namibia, and the efforts that have been made, both by the Namibian Government and other stakeholders, to combat the pandemic and its effects. Thus, the second part of this chapter will be devoted to the challenges HIV and AIDS present to the claim of divine healing.

3.1. HIV and AIDS in Namibia

Namibia is one of the least densely populated countries, with a population of slightly more than 1,9 million people, according to the latest census held in 2000-2001. Namibia is situated in south western Africa, between latitudes 17°30 S and 29°S, and longitudes 12°E and 25°E. It's geographical area is some 842 000 km².⁵⁰ The economic situation in Namibia is not particularly healthy. Despite a well developed infrastructure, with harbours, schools, clinics, storage dams, boreholes, water pipelines and roads, Namibia was left with huge social and environmental problems by the South African apartheid government, which ruled until independence in 1990.⁵¹

Already at its independence in, 1990 HIV and AIDS was prioritised under the leadership of Dr Sam Nujoma, the now retired president. Namibia is believed to have experienced a steadily worsening HIV and AIDS epidemic since the early nineties. Its explosive increase is similar to other countries in southern Africa. Due to the seriousness of the epidemic the Namibian government put a significant amount of effort into fighting the disease. The first AIDS case in Namibia was diagnosed in 1986, still under the South African regime. But since 1990 there has been a resurgence of energy and commitment in the response to the epidemic in the country. Together with development partners, the government of Namibia is making a

⁵⁰ Namibia Vision 2030. 2004. *Policy Framework for Long-term National development Main document*. Windhoek, Printed by NAMPRINT. p. 25.

⁵¹ Namibia Vision 2030. 2004. p. 29.

difference, curbing the spread of the HIV and restoring quality of life to people infected and affected. In Namibia the mode of HIV transmission is mainly through heterosexual relationships and mother to child HIV transmission.⁵²

The hands-on approach of the Namibian government has indeed contributed, through its efforts, to the decline of the HIV prevalence rate to 19.7% in 2004 from 22% in 2002.⁵³ In Namibia the Ministry of Health and Social Services conducts a sentinel survey every two years, to determine HIV prevalence among pregnant women. According to the 2006 report approximately 85% of pregnant women attended antenatal care. The objectives of the survey, amongst others, are:

- To estimate the current burden of HIV in Namibia by HIV - 1 and HIV – 2.
- To monitor trends over time in HIV prevalence amongst pregnant women nationally.
- To measure progress in achieving the overall target of reducing HIV prevalence to below the epidemic threshold.⁵⁴

The results of the survey at the Windhoek Central Hospital (2006) were as follows: 320 women were tested, 291 were found to be HIV negative and 29 were HIV positive. The overall percentage of the HIV positive women in Windhoek was thus 9.1%. In the case of Khorichas the test results indicated are also inclusive of Outjo, which is 131 km away from Khorichas itself. According to the findings at Outjo-Khorichas 190 women were tested of whom 167 were found to be HIV negative and 23 were HIV positive, giving an overall percentage was 12.1% in Khorichas health district. The following conclusions were drawn from the sentinel survey:

- There has been a slight increase in the prevalence ratio among pregnant women who attended the antenatal clinic from 19.7% in 2004 to 19.9% in 2006.
- The age groups 15-19 years recorded a slight increase in the prevalence ratio from 10% in 2004 to 10.2% in 2006.

⁵² Namibia Vision 2030. 2004. *Policy Framework for Long-term National development Main document*. Windhoek, Printed by NAMPRINT. p. 24-27.

⁵³ Namibia Ministry of Health and Social Services. 2006/7 – 2008/9. p.1.

⁵⁴ Ministry of Health and Social Services. 2006. *Press Release*, Results of the 2006 National Sentinel Survey among Pregnant Women. 17th April 2007, p. 1

- The age groups 25-29 and 30-34 recorded a moderate increase in the prevalence ratios in 2006 compared to 2004.

In my analysis the results of the sentinel survey are worrying. The fact that the percentages show an increase, albeit slight, indicates that much remains to be done. I therefore fully support the last observation made by the Permanent Secretary Hon. Dr. Shangula who said “the findings calls for increased efforts to intensify HIV/AIDS control measures.”⁵⁵

The chart below gives a more vivid picture of HIV/AIDS in Namibia in relation to the bigger picture of the Sub-Saharan continent (WHO Report 2004).

⁵⁵ Ministry of Health and Social Services. 2006. *Press Release*, Results of the 2006 National Sentinel Survey among Pregnant Women. 17th April 2007, p. 4.

Figure 3.1.1

Indicator	Namibia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Global
Estimated number of people living with HIV/AIDS, 2003	210,000	25 million	37.8 million
Percent of adult population estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS, 2003	21.3%	7.5%	1.1%
Estimated number of deaths due to HIV/AIDS, 2003	16,000	2.2 million	2.9 million
Women as percent of adults estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS, 2003	55%	57%	48%
Percent of young women, ages 15-24, estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS, 2001	19.4 – 29.1%	8.9%	1.4%
Percent of young men, ages 15-24, estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS, 2001	8.9 – 13.3%	4.4%	0.8%
Estimated number of AIDS orphans, 2003	57,000	12.1 million	15 million
Number of people estimated to be receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART), June 2005	17,000	500,000	970,000
Number of people estimated to be in need of	32,00015	4.0 million	5.8 million

ART, December 2004			
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3.1.2. Factors and Causes contributing to the spread of HIV

The Namibian government has defined poverty, amongst other issues, as contributing to the spread of HIV in Namibia. In the document by the Ministry of Health and Social Services, *The National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS (Third Medium Term Plan 2004-2009)*, the following have been identified as the causes of poverty and also as fuelling the spread of HIV:

the high mobility of individuals between different places in the country, cross border travel, and high prevalence of STD's, widespread alcohol and substance abuse, gender inequalities, poverty and certain cultural practices, the disintegration of traditional family structures, intergenerational sex between older men and young women, and ignorance.⁵⁶

Desmond Cohen in his article *Poverty and HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa* also states that the following issues are intrinsic to understanding poverty in Africa and its link to HIV and AIDS.

- The gender dimension of poverty – In particular the poorest households are often female headed;
- The intergenerational aspects of poverty – the importance of seeing poverty as part of dynamic social, economic and political processes,
- The qualitative as well as quantitative measure of poverty – giving appropriate weight to those aspects of poverty which delineate and define capacities and contributions by individuals and households to socio-economic and political processes, and how these are changed by the epidemic; and
- The ways in which the HIV epidemic alters the complex relationships between the poor and the wealthy – through changes in income and asset distribution brought about by

⁵⁶ Ministry of Health and Social Services. 2004. *The National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS*. Windhoek, Capital Press. p. 3.

the epidemic and through an intensification of processes of social exclusion.⁵⁷

In analysing the above statements it is important to mention that HIV and AIDS is a gendered disease. In the African cultures women do not have power over their bodies and are not able to negotiate for safer sex practices. Again on the other hand, biologically, women are more susceptible to the contraction of HIV. Women are still not well represented in the decision-making bodies in the socio-economic, political and religious systems. Hence, women are the most marginalized socio-economically and politically. This view was also confirmed by the International conference held in Namibia (13-17 November 200) under the theme: “*The HIV/AIDS Pandemic and its gender Implications*”.

Poverty is not only a cause but also a consequence of HIV/AIDS. Poverty and unequal access to resources is a particular problem for many women. The extended family unit, the backbone of society in developing countries is being decimated by HIV/AIDS. Women’s economic dependence makes it impossible for women to negotiate safe sex or forces them to exchange sex for survival, resorting to sex work.⁵⁸

Certainly, HIV and AIDS does not discriminate on the basis of social status, race or gender. As a result the rich are also infected and affected, but the risk of being infected among the rich is minimum, since they can choose what they want and whom they want to be with.

Thus, many of the above factors are bred by the huge unemployment rate and low level of education of most of the Namibian people. Many young girls are risking their lives by selling their bodies to elderly men, often because they do not have a choice. They are responsible for their aged parents and young siblings, and since they cannot be employed they resort to practicing commercial sex. Cohen’s view supports this:

⁵⁷ Cohen, D. “Poverty and HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa.”

<http://www.undp.org/hiv/publications/issues/english/issue27e.html> accessed 7/18/2007.

⁵⁸ The Hiv/AIDS Pandemic and its Gender Implications - international conference, Namibia. <http://findarticles.com> accessed 16/09/2007.

Poverty is associated with weak endowments of human and financial resources, such as low levels of education with associated low levels of literacy and few marketable skills, generally poor health status and low labour productivity as a results.⁵⁹

In the Third Medium Term Plan (MTP III) the same scenario of contributing factors is described as follows:

... In Southern Africa, poverty, mobility, high levels of inequality in income, alcohol abuse, inequality in status and access to resources between urban and rural populations and between men and women, high percentage of female headed households, and high percentage of households with members living long distances from each other all contribute to very high vulnerability of our citizens to HIV/AIDS infection.⁶⁰

Unless radical and drastic measures are applied to address the reality of the socio-economic gap between the haves and the have-nots, very little will be achieved by the efforts made to curb the spread of HIV. Disparity of survival causes many young men and women to enter into unsafe sex practices. Namibia is one of the countries with a very large income gap. The following quotations from the *National Policy for Reproduction Health* supports this statement:

Namibia's Gross National Product (GNP) in 1992 stood at US\$2,106 million giving a per capita income of US\$1,670. However, it should be noted that the country's income distribution is rather skewed.

⁵⁹ Cohen D. "Poverty and HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa." <http://www.undp.org/hiv/publications/issues/english/issue27e.html> accessed 7/18/2007. p.7.

⁶⁰ Ministry of Health and Social Services. 2004. *The National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS*. Windhoek, Capital Press. p. 2.

The majority of people are engaged in low productivity subsistence agriculture and informal employment. In 1994, the government accounted for 35% of total formal employment.⁶¹

Cohen thus states that, “The HIV epidemic has its origins in African poverty, and unless and until poverty is reduced there will be little progress, either with reducing transmission of the virus or an enhanced capacity to cope with its socio-economic consequences.”⁶²

The question to be answered is: what are the specific efforts that the Namibian Government has undertaken to effectively and efficiently address the HIV epidemic?

3.1.3. National Response to HIV and AIDS

The Namibian government has done a significant amount in response to the HIV epidemic, together with the support of its development partners, including the national and international community. To emphasise the above statement, note a quotation from Namibia’s blueprint of development called Vision 2030:

Namibia operates a health care system aimed at ensuring equity of access to quality health care services to all; promoting community involvement and greater citizen participation in the provision of health services; providing affordable health services; facilitating co-operation and inter-sectoral action with all major players in the provision of health care....⁶³

The economic capacity of Namibia, as indicated above, is very limited, but with the help of the other stakeholders, much has been done to curb the spread of the epidemic. HIV and AIDS is addressed as a crosscutting issue in all sectors, and more specifically under the theme of Population, Health, and Development. A multi-sectoral approach, the promotion of policies to combat stigma and discrimination, and

⁶¹ Ministry of Health and Social services. 2001. *National Policy for Reproductive Health*. Windhoek, Solitaire Press. p. 2.

⁶² Cohen, D. Poverty and HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa.”

<http://www.undp.org/hiv/publications/issues/english/issue27e.html> accessed 7/18/2007. p. 8.

⁶³ Namibia Vision 2030. 2004. *Policy Framework for Long-term National development Main document*. Windhoek, Printed by NAMPRINT. p. 53.

enhanced monitoring mechanisms have been implemented. The following are the specific efforts undertaken in the response to HIV and AIDS.

3.1.3.1. MTP III

The Medium Term Plan III is geared at ascertaining effective management and control of the HIV and AIDS epidemic. It is an outflow from the greater development plan called Vision 2030. It was developed to fill the gaps that were experienced with the MTP II, which was reviewed in February 2003. It has been defined as a guide for sector response to the epidemic, as well as a management and coordination tool for all those involved in the fight against it. The following are the five key components of MTP III.⁶⁴

- Enabling environment
- Prevention
- Treatment, care and support
- Impact mitigation and
- Programme management.

It is important to note here that the MTP III was not a government imposed action plan. The plan has been developed through a participatory method. It went through an intensive consultative process with the public and private sectors, regional committees, development partners and people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).⁶⁵ Thus, this document could be regarded as a peoples' action plan.

The MTP III emphasises, in its national response, the recognition and adoption of programmes that address the epidemic at all stages, from prevention to care, support and treatment. The success of treatment, care and support is linked to effective prevention through increased acceptance of voluntary and confidential counselling and testing. The success of these efforts is monitored by keeping PLWHA and

⁶⁴ Namibia Ministry of Health and Social Services. 2006/7 – 2008/9. *Plan for National Multisectoral Monitoring and Evaluation of HIV/AIDS*. Windhoek, Solitaire Press (Pty) Ltd. p. 1.

⁶⁵ Ministry of Health and Social Services. 2004. Windhoek, Capital Press. p. ii.

vulnerable groups in close contact with health-care systems, and by giving them continuous information, counselling and care.⁶⁶

3.1.3.2. Civil society involvement and Political commitment

The involvement and participation of civil society has been highlighted as a central principle in the response to HIV and AIDS. The Namibian government regards the involvement of the civil society as meaningful, and particular emphasis is placed on the involvement of those people living with HIV and AIDS. This is to ensure that PLWHA would not be regarded as recipients only of programs and policies made for them, but that they themselves are part of those organisations and agencies that design and implement the programs. The other equally important emphasis of the MTP III is to involve the political leadership in the fight against HIV and AIDS. According to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS) Declaration, “Leadership by governments in combating HIV/AIDS is essential and their efforts should be complemented by the full and active participation of civil society, the business community, and the private sector.”⁶⁷ In short, political involvement translates into personal commitment, concrete actions, and active participation in all programs geared towards combating HIV and AIDS.

The MTP III is a comprehensive action plan that was produced through numerous reviews of the previous HIV and AIDS action plans. Amidst its meagre financial resources, the Namibian government has thus taken up cudgels in earnest for the fight against HIV and AIDS. Due to the limited space in this paper many other actions described in great detail in the MTP III will not be dealt with here. Suffice to say that the Namibian government and its people are tackling HIV and AIDS head-on. It is also encouraging to see that HIV and AIDS is not fought in isolation, but that all the other contributing factors such as the socio-economic, and political issues are also being dealt with as breeding grounds for the spread of HIV. Obviously, for a developing country such as Namibia, there are implications and constraints that were not reflected in any of the information given above. It is therefore important to pause

⁶⁶ Ministry of Health and Social Services. 2004. *DS*. Windhoek, Capital Press. p. 10.

⁶⁷ Ministry of Health and Social Services. 2004. *The National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS*. Windhoek, Capital Press. pp. 9-10.

and look at some of the problematic issues posed by HIV and AIDS for the government and the rest of its stakeholders.

3.1.3.3. Constraints of HIV and AIDS in Namibia

To give a picture that HIV and AIDS is effectively controlled and managed by the Namibian government and its partners would misrepresent the reality as experienced by the people on the ground. The Namibian government, NGOs, CBOs and the FBOs are battling to curb the spread of HIV. However, one of the significant constraints in the national response to HIV and AIDS is the limited financial resources available for all the stakeholders to fight the epidemic effectively. Even though much effort is being made, the accessibility of the medication is crippled by the cost of drugs to treat the opportunistic infections, and transport cost to health centres.⁶⁸ Other aspects of the programmes are also not able to function, due to human and other resource shortages. De Cock et al's summary of the situation, as experienced in Southern Africa, is identical to the Namibian situation. "... HIV/AIDS prevention in Africa has been under-funded; greatly increased resources and strengthened infrastructure are required to tackle the issue."⁶⁹

Other sources such as IRIN (Integrated Regional Information Network) argue that Namibia lacks sufficient data and resources to provide adequate support for 130,000 orphans. It continues by arguing that the country requires a centralized comprehensive food security and vulnerability information system. Issues such as detailed descriptions of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) households, their location, livelihoods, coping mechanisms and specific needs are also incomplete.⁷⁰ Technical constraints, such as inadequate capacity and lack of direct control over transport, warehouse and human resources to implement programmes, is another area of grave concern.⁷¹ This problem could also affect the accessibility/availability of ARVs, condoms and HIV counselling and testing centres. The gap between the rich and the

⁶⁸ Cohen, D. "Poverty and HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa."

<http://www.undp.org/hiv/publications/issues/english/issue27e.html>. Accessed. 7/18/2007. p.5.

⁶⁹ De Cock, K M, Mbori-Ngacha, D and Marum, M. "Shadow on the continent: public health and HIV/AIDS in Africa in the 21st century" in *Lancet*, 360 (July) 2002. p. 68.

⁷⁰ "Namibia: lack of data and resources affects OVC interventions."

<File://h:\irin> Africa southern Africa Namibia: accessed 15/09/2007.

⁷¹ <File://h:\irin> accessed 15/09/2007.

poor and the sky-rocketing unemployment rate in Namibia also contribute to the spread of the epidemic. Obviously these are but some of the areas that the Namibian government needs to prioritise for effective HIV and AIDS response.

In light of the enormous impact caused by HIV and AIDS, this paper looks at the challenges that it may entail for the divine healing ministry as practiced by the Pentecostals.

3.2. HIV and AIDS – A challenge to the claim of healing

Apart from the socio-economic, political, medical and cultural challenges, HIV also challenges the claim of healing on many other different levels. For the purpose of this paper I want to concentrate only on one of those that, in my opinion, are at the heart of the challenges posed by HIV and AIDS for divine healing ministry. These are the increasing rate of HIV related diseases and deaths, and the importance of education for both the practitioner of faith healing and the recipient.

3.2.1. Increasing HIV related deaths and diseases

The high death rate caused by HIV poses a serious challenge for the claim of healing made by the Pentecostal churches in Namibia. According to the information encapsulated in Namibia's Vision 2030, massive numbers of people die on a daily basis from HIV related diseases.

AIDS makes a significant contribution to poor health and to low life-expectancy. Hospitalisation and deaths due to HIV/AIDS-related complications have been steadily increasing, thus putting an additional burden on the health system. Since 1996, AIDS has been the leading cause of deaths in Namibia.⁷²

The MTP III provides a more detailed picture of deaths caused by HIV related diseases in Namibia.

⁷² Namibia Vision 2030. 2004. *Policy Framework for Long-term National development Main document*. Windhoek, Printed by NAMPRINT. p. 53.

HIV/AIDS has been the leading cause of death since 1996. In 1999, AIDS was responsible for 26% of all reported deaths, and for 46% of deaths in the 15-49 years age group. According to the 2001 Population and Housing Census, the number of deaths has increased by 80% in the three preceding years.⁷³

The high percentages of HIV related deaths in Namibia surely challenge the claim of healing HIV and AIDS. Perhaps, a clearer definition of healing HIV and AIDS in Pentecostal theology is necessary.

3.3. Conclusion

In this chapter the impact of HIV and AIDS and the responses provided by the government and other stakeholders were explored. Through the literature review it has been established that HIV and AIDS is a reality with catastrophic proportions in Namibia. Furthermore, this chapter provided by reference to statistics that the epidemic has a huge impact on the economy of the country and logistically - hospitals and mortuaries are not able to cater for the sick, the dying and the dead. Economic and psychological need for care and support for the sick and the dying and the devastating effect that it has on the families have been portrayed. This chapter has also examined some of the challenges posed by HIV and AIDS for faith healing. One area of challenge in this chapter is the increasing numbers of HIV related diseases and deaths, and the importance of education to become implicit to the healing ministry of the Pentecostals. The conclusion drawn is that if HIV and AIDS is curable by prayer and laying on of hands only, then why do we have such a high number of deaths and HIV related diseases.

The following chapter (Four) will be about the presentation of the results gleaned from the fieldwork in Namibia. The data collected will be presented followed by a critical analysis.

⁷³ Ministry of Health and Social Services. 2004. *The National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS*. Windhoek, Capital Press. p. 4.

Chapter Four Presentation and Analysis of Data

4. Introduction

Between June 11th and July 28th 2007 I undertook interviews with ten Pentecostal pastors who are practitioners of divine healing, and five clients who were the recipients of healing prayer and the laying on of hands. Seven of the pastors were from Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia, and three were from Khorichas, a semi-rural town in the north-western part of Namibia. One of the five persons that I interviewed, as recipients of divine healing, was from Khorichas, and the remaining four were from Windhoek. I also attended a healing service with the aim of observing how healing was conducted in some of the Pentecostal churches. Since these interviews were conducted during winter-time, most of the Pentecostal churches did not have healing services. However, I was fortunate to attend one held by the Universal Church on the 26th June 2007. These interviews and participant observations sought to establish the implications that HIV and AIDS has for the ministry of healing as practiced by some Pentecostal churches in Namibia. The research was conducted with the assumption that while much is being preached and proclaimed about divine healing among the Pentecostal churches, it is necessary to reach an understanding of their conception of divine healing, and also to establish the impact that healing itself has on the recipients, whether the result was successful or unsuccessful.

The participants were invited, and it was explained that participation would be on a voluntary basis and that no one would be forced to answer any of the questions. Appointments were made telephonically. The participants signed the informed consent form (Appendix 2), after the purpose and the aim of the interview had been explained to them. The appointments went fairly smoothly because of the relationship that I (a pastor myself) have with the Pentecostal pastors through the fraternal bond of the Church ministers. Since the interview was limited to two towns (Windhoek and Khorichas) the researcher travelled to the appointees' places of residence.

The profiles below display the number of respondents.

4.1. Profile of the first set of interviews (Practitioners)

Interview	Place	Age	Qualifications	Gender	Marital status	Church
One	Windhoek	55	Diploma in Theology: South Africa	Male	Married	Ebenhaezer Congregation
Two	Khorichas	72	Not revealed	Female	Widow	Moria Congregation of Africa
Three	Khorichas	30	Grade 8	Male	Married	Patmos International
Four	Windhoek	50	Not revealed	Male	Married	Reformed Pentecostal Church
Five	Khorichas	45	Education Diploma	Male	Married	Bethesda Faith Mission
Six	Windhoek	25	Pastoral Training	Male	Single	Universal Church
Seven	Windhoek	42	Masters in Political science	Male	Married	No Walls Apostolic House of God
Eight	Windhoek	62	Not revealed	Male	Married	Protestant Pentecostal Church
Nine	Windhoek	Not revealed	certificate in Theology	Male	Married	St John's Apostolic Faith Mission
Ten	Windhoek	36	Certificate in Theology	Male	Married	Jesus Heal all Nations

*All names are replaced with numbers to protect the informant's identity and to preserve anonymity.

4.2. Profile of the second set of interviews (Recipients)

Interview	Place	Age	Qualification	Gender	Marital status	Church
A	Windhoek	25	Trained HIV/AIDS Counsellor	Female	Single	The Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints
B	Windhoek	35	Grade 12	Female	Single	Apostolic faith Mission
C	Khorichas	39	Grad 9	Female	Single	Patmos International
D	Windhoek	39	Not revealed	Female	Single	Reformed Pentecostal Church of Namibia
E	Windhoek	Not revealed	Grade 7	Female	Single	Ebenhaezer Congregation Church

* All names are replaced with letters to protect the informant's identity and to preserve anonymity.

4.3. Presentation of Data

4.3.1. Practitioners of healing

Through intensive interviews and observatory participation I was able to come up with following impressions and conclusions. About fourteen guiding questions helped me to gather relevant and reliable information (See Appendix 1). The ten pastors from different Pentecostal churches in Namibia were all unanimous about the fact that divine healing is a reality and that it still is taking place today. They all are using specific scriptures from the Bible to qualify their practice of healing. All of them claimed that many HIV and AIDS infected people have been healed. But not one of them could give evidences or verifications that are accompanied scientifically.

Their theory and practice of healing is based on the conviction that healing is part of God's plan. The two main aspects of healing, according to all of the practitioners of healing, was the faith of a recipient of healing prayer and the promises of healing contained in the Bible. All of them regarded the healing ministry as a special gift from God and some of them claimed that they had received special revelation (Interview Three). The Holy Spirit was claimed to be the source of inspiration for all of the practitioners.

It has been established that different methods are applied to execute healing. Some churches believe that healing services held mostly during normal worship services are effective. Special healing crusades are held that took place in a tent or most of the time in the open. Common practice of healing seemed to be the laying on of hands. Fasting is essential for effective outcomes. Application of oil seemed to be used during special occasions (Interviews Two and Four). Some other methods of healing include prayers on a one-to-one basis and in hospitals, and homes. Some Pentecostal churches pray over a glass of water and give it to the sick to drink for medicinal purposes (Interview Three). It has also been established that water is used to bath the sick and that a scarf with the effigy of Christ is used to heal the sick (Acts 19: 11-12). A very small percentage of the respondents lay claim to the importance of counselling before an act of healing.

The ultimate reason for the practice of healing according to these churches is derived from the teachings of the Bible. In other words, the Bible served as a blueprint for their methods of healing. All of them agreed that faith was the significant part of a healing ministry. It has been found that sickness is a result of sin, and therefore confession is important before healing could take place. For an effective outcome of healing, trust and faith, are very essential. Trust according to the findings would mean to confide in the healer without withholding any of the relevant information as this can hinder the process of healing. Some of the respondents were convinced that special anointing received from the Holy Spirit is necessary to practice divine healing.

It was apparent that all of the respondents do not refute or disregard the importance of the use of scientific medicines. They regarded medical science as complementary to the prayer. The shared conviction by the respondents is that God could heal through miracles and that healing could take place instantly or through a process. The respondents were all convinced of the fact that God could heal any disease. As they regarded themselves as servants, only God, who is the sole healer, could heal any sickness, including HIV and AIDS. Those people for whom they prayed sought healing from HIV and AIDS. Some of those infected with HIV had been brought by relatives and friends, and others got there by themselves.

Some factors such as little faith have been regarded as the biggest obstacles to healing. HIV and AIDS have been classified by some of the respondents as a stubborn disease, and all of them said that HIV and AIDS had a segment of shame and stigma attached to it. According to some of the respondents, people infected with HIV lived a lie and did not acknowledge that they were sick. Dishonesty, anger, distrust, and hopelessness were problems intrinsic to HIV and AIDS. Some others regard HIV and AIDS as a moral problem. It is the conviction of some of the respondents that a solution must be sought in peoples' behaviours and lifestyles. Another equally hindering factor is that many people do not want to reveal their HIV status for the fear of stigma and discrimination. However, some of the respondents had a slightly different view as to why people were not disclosing their HIV status. In their analysis of the situation, the chief reason was cultural. According to the African cultures sex was a taboo subject, and as HIV was mostly linked with sexual behaviour, people did not want to talk about their HIV status. A small number of the respondents had cases

whereby they might have prayed for someone they suspected might have HIV. This was so because they could have built a relationship of trust, or run a pre-counselling type of a talk before prayers were said.

The overall claim by the respondents is that those people whom they prayed for got healed. It is claimed that in cases where healing did not take place the health condition of those who did not get healed had improved. The contradiction found here is that a small percentage of the respondents said that they did not believe that HIV and AIDS could be cured because it was not yet God's time. None of them encouraged people to discontinue the use of ARVs.

Problems experienced by the practitioners of healing include the blame game and hatred developed by the recipients towards them. It has also been found through this study that some got disillusioned and their hope of getting healed was destroyed. From the respondents said that people boycotted the church and also did not want to have anything to do with God. They blamed the church and God for failed healing attempts, and bore grudges against the practitioners of faith healing. However, some of the respondents were not aware of any disillusionment. Another fatal reaction to failed healing is the indulgence in alcohol and substance abuse. Perhaps, worst of all, were the cases where people became mentally unstable (Interview Ten).

What became apparent through this study is the fact that HIV and AIDS has influenced the approach to healing. Also the perception of immorality has been greatly challenged, as many innocent babies and faithful women were dying of HIV and AIDS. Sex education inclusive of HIV counselling, had become more essential than before. A very small percentage of the respondents said that their approach to healing was not challenged or influenced in a particular way, as HIV and AIDS, to them, was no different from any other sickness.

Furthermore, it has been established that all of the respondents were supportive of the AB of the ABC formula (Abstinence, Be faithful, Condomize). Mutual fidelity between partners, and abstinence for the youth, were emphasised. None of them condoned the use of condoms as this, in their view, promoted immoral and irresponsible sexual habits.

This study has also found that other efforts are made by the Pentecostal Churches to mitigate the situation in Namibia include feeding schemes aimed at assisting PLWHA, financial and material grants, and institutions giving intensive support for aids orphans. Home-based care programmes were up and running and the youth were empowered educationally for the effective execution of this task.

4.3.2. Recipients of healing

Through intensive research with the recipients of healing following are the impressions and conclusions reached. It has been established that faith is very important before any act of healing can be successful. Some of the informants witnessed that their faith was not strong enough to help them through the first stages after they were told that they were infected with the HI-virus (Interview A). However, some of them witnessed to the fact that their faith had been the succour, which had helped them to accept the HIV positive status. The overall conclusion is that not all of the informants had a strong enough faith to lean on when they were told of their HIV status. Some of them wanted to commit suicide and at least one of them wanted to go to a witchdoctor.

This study established that all of the informants believed in divine healing but in varying degrees. Some of them believed that God can heal sicknesses, but did not believe in the claims of HIV and AIDS healing. Others believed in divine healing but were hesitant at the same time. The conclusion is that, principally, the informants believed in divine healing but as far as it concerned HIV and AIDS, they seemed to have some doubt. Furthermore, it was found through this study that the informants visited Pentecostal churches on their own after they learned about their HIV positive status. Some were advised to do so by their family members, who were Pentecostal themselves. The general conclusion that one can make is that the informants might have heard and known about healing services that were taking place in the Pentecostal churches and this is why they had visited the Pentecostal churches in the first place. .

Some of the informants said that having been forced by the new circumstances and seemed not to be sure as to what to believe with regard to divine healing. However, others were positive that healing by divine intervention could still happen. They were

certain that God would heal them from HIV in his own time. It was also established that Scripture was the basis on which belief in divine healing was based. Christ was the role model as far as divine healing was concerned. They all believed that both the Old Testament and the New Testament had accounts of healing that informed and confirmed their personal belief in divine healing. Faith, in their view, was vital for divine healing to take place; hence the belief that if they persisted in their faith God would heal them from HIV.

Some of the barriers to healing, according to the informants, were the fact that they did not go to the Pentecostal churches through self-conviction. As for those who went there out of their own, speaking in tongues seemed to have put them off, as they did not understand a word. The point is all of them were promised that God had healed them. On their part, some of them believed that they were healed. At least one of them went back for verification of the test results and learned that she still had not sero-converted to HIV negative status. Although the popular belief was that they had been healed, none of them could produce any official certification.

All of the informants said that they were on ARVs. One of them had sworn that she was never going to stop using them (Interview A). Another claimed that after she had received a healing prayer she was found to be HIV-non reactive and apparently was told to stop using the ARVs by her doctor. The other one used ARVs irregularly and had told her friends to do the same. The conclusion one can come to with regard to treatment is that, having received a healing prayer, some of the informants continued in a state of denial. It was also established that all of the informants said that their lives were changed either for the better or for the worse. Some of the informants said that they were disappointed in God, and in the church. After they found that they were not healed, their lives became miserable. Some of them said that they were healed from an immoral life-style and from the abuse of alcohol. Some of them started a different circle of friends and found the Word of God meaningful, which was not the case before.

From the informants some seemed to have experienced some sort of resentment towards the church and God. A small percentage of informants said that they did not experience any particular problem, because they believed that they had been healed or

that a process of healing was started with the prayer. However, one of the informants said that she never really believed in divine healing and as a result nothing had changed (Interview A). Other informants said that their personal experience of healing had cemented and confirmed their belief in divine healing more than ever before. They were convinced that divine healing could still take place today, and that it was God's will to heal and not that of any human being.

According to the findings made the informants felt that the existing forms of healing must be re-examined. HIV and AIDS education and counselling must be prioritised, and more open-air healing services needed to be run. Some of the informants expressed the desire that churches should not only pray and pronounce healing but should journey with a person. Whether they know others who had HIV and AIDS and were prayed for, the informants knew someone but none of them wanted to disclose the whereabouts of their friends. The reason for this could be because they did not want to betray the trust and confidence that their friends had in them.

4.3.3. Summary of the participant observation

My participant observation consisted of only one event. I attended a healing service in Namibia held by the Universal church. The pastor used prayer as the main mode of healing that night. At no point did he lay hands on any of those that were present. The woman who seemed to have a problem, was attended to by the disciples. The pastor made the people say: "I am healed" a phrase which was repeated three times. The sermon that was preached foregrounded the element of tithe-giving quite strongly. Once again the theology of prosperity and wealth came quite strongly to the fore. Healing has been explained as implicit to wealth and that it is therefore necessary that people who have been healed must bless the Lord with their material gifts.

4.4. Analysis of results

I wish to structure my analysis of the interviews in the following order:

- Interviews with the practitioners of healing
- Interviews with the recipients of healing
- Participant observation

4.4.1. Analysis of results under the following headings (Practitioners).

- Healing ministry/activity
- Actual process
- Implications

4.4.1.1. Healing Ministry

In my analysis the Pentecostal churches still hold very strongly to the biblical model of healing. They remain convinced and adamant that healing can take place today as it did during biblical times. Every one of those interviewed regard the healing done by Christ as recorded in the NT as the blueprint of their divine ministry. Also, the Pentecostal event found in Acts 2 is to many of them the occurrence that denotes the empowerment notion. Through the pouring out of the Holy Spirit human beings have been empowered to perform wonders and miracles. The only gateway to this empowerment is absolute faith in Christ. “The Holy Spirit is emphasised and faith healing is a key aspect of their ministry. People do not need to disclose their illness; they are healed through the Holy Spirit, uMoya, acting through the agency of the healers, and often of the church congregation as a whole.”⁷⁴ The informants shared a similar understanding:

We do not have specific reasons for practicing healing in our church. As I have already said everything depends on the Holy Spirit. It is through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that healing can take place. I am not the one who heals, God does, and it is by the power of the Spirit that healing can actually take place (Interview Ten).

The pivotal role that the Holy Spirit plays in faith healing is also confirmed in the following excerpt:

⁷⁴Haddad, B. “We pray but we cannot heal”: Theological challenges posed by the HIV/AIDS crisis.” p. 86.

I do not do anything without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works in different ways, sometimes while I am praying my hand automatically moves to the place where the problem of the sick person is. Other times I only exercise a 'holy blowing' and sometimes I am told by the Holy Spirit to pray over a glass of water and to give it to the sick person to drink (Interview Three).

Almost all of the pastors interviewed emphasized the issue of faith. Without enough faith from both the practitioner and the recipient it is not possible that a healing can take place. "These blessings are received through faith, and are the blessings of salvation, physical health and material prosperity."⁷⁵ Some other essential requirements for healing to take place are obedience, repentance, confession of sins and living a morally sound and healthy life. The overall claim is that all kinds of sicknesses and diseases are curable through prayer and the laying on of hands, including HIV and AIDS. None of the pastors whom I interviewed was hesitant about his/her healing ministry: all claimed that they have healed sick people from all kinds of sicknesses, including from HIV and AIDS. Very few of them conceded that their claims of healing had resulted in failure. None of them seem to have experienced the devastating consequences of failed attempts of healing. The reason for this, in my opinion, is that their church's reputation is at stake and they do not want to lose face, or members. Another aspect is that the unhealed recipients, having lost trust, do not always return to the healer. Some also feel they have been treated as inferior and therefore do not return.

I took myself to the Pentecostal church even though I did not really go for healing I had this innate desire to be healed. Unfortunately, to my surprise I found that the people of this church are very much self-centred. The biggest problem for me is that they treat you for what you have and not for who you are (Interview A).

⁷⁵ Cartledge, M J. 2003. *Practical Theology*. Cumbria, Paternoster Press. p.201

The conclusion reached by analysing the healing ministry of the Pentecostal churches in Namibia is that their claim of healing remains only a claim. One can safely say that no conclusive healing has ever taken place. It is said that people have been healed from HIV and AIDS and that medical proofs are available, but no one was able to produce such a document for the researcher. Every time the researcher asked for proof of these results there was always one or other excuse: somebody who is out of town or she/he does not worship with us anymore etc. Adogame also concurs with this conclusion:

Official sources have often alluded to the fact that some HIV/AIDS patients have been healed of their ailment through involvement with the church. None of these claims was confirmed by concrete evidence through this research.⁷⁶

Perhaps, the phrase "*We pray but we cannot heal*"⁷⁷ used by Haddad sums up the situation most honestly. "AIDS is incurable and they did not have the power to stop its devastation."⁷⁸ This is echoed by one of the informants:

⁷⁶ Adogame, A F E. "HIV/AIDS and African Pentecostalism." p. 481.

⁷⁷ Haddad, B. "We pray but we cannot heal": Theological challenges posed by the HIV/AIDS crisis." p. 86.

⁷⁸ Haddad, B. "We pray but we cannot heal": Theological challenges posed by the HIV/AIDS crisis." p. 86.

HIV and AIDS according to the Bible is a punishment from God. We pray but cannot promise healing because it is a curse from God. Only God can remove the curse and heal those infected with HIV (see Deut. 28: 58-61) (Interview Ten).

Bate also confirms the fact that healing does not take place:

Several people have left the Neo-pentecostal churches disillusioned because they did not receive healing. Often they are blamed for this fact, being told that their faith was too weak.⁷⁹

Physical healing of HIV and AIDS might not take place, but from the research it was evident that certainly some sort of a psycho-social healing is taking place. This finding is also confirmed by Adogame:

While the church's claim to curing and healing people infected with HIV/AIDS is controversial, what remains uncontested is the fact that the church provides religious, spiritual, psychological and social support to its numerous members. The spiritual commitment, religious involvement and socialization that take place within the context of the church often protect HIV/AIDS sufferers from the social stigma of the disease.⁸⁰

All of the Pentecostal churches that were visited during the course of conducting research for this paper use the same biblical texts to justify, practice or interpret divine healing.

4.4.1.2. Actual Process

All the Pentecostal churches use more or less the same methods in the execution of the healing ministry. Olive oil is used, though most seem to claim that this is only on

⁷⁹ Bate, S C. 1995. *Inculturation & Healing*. Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publications. pp. 59.

⁸⁰ Adogame, A F E. "HIV/AIDS and African Pentecostalism." p. 477.

rare occasions. Popular methods applied in healing are prayer and the laying on of hands, with a small portion of the Pentecostal churches using water either to drink or to bath in.

Another method that we are using is the water in the bath over which we pray. Those people who bath with that water are taken to be cleansed from all sin and also to be healed from all diseases (Num. 19: 14-19). On these occasions of bathing, women are accompanied by a female disciple and men are accompanied by a male disciple. The Pastor puts the water all over the body of a sick person. We also give water in bottles for people to drink. This water has been prayed over and is used for medicinal purposes. This usage is based on 2 Kings 2: 19-22 and that meaning, in our understanding of the Word of God, is still applicable today (Interview Nine).

I have only come across some instances when a 'holy blowing' is exercised. This is a Spirit loaded 'blowing' at which a client falls to the ground, unconscious. Implying that after he/she has been awakened his/her sickness and problems are something of the past.

Other times I only exercise a 'holy blowing' and sometimes I am told by the Holy Spirit to pray over a glass of water and to give it to the sick person to drink. When touched by the Holy Spirit some people cry and others fall down (Interview Three).

In my analysis those people who seek healing are desperate, and they will do anything that they are told to do in the hope of getting healed. The practitioners of healing, on the other hand, try by different means to give their healing practice biblical value and meaning, by closely emulating the modes of healing recorded in the Bible. However I find aspects of their approach and treatment of HIV and AIDS positive. They do not treat HIV and AIDS as different from other diseases. This could help to crush the stigma and discrimination that has been fuelled by the different approaches and treatments that HIV is being given biomedically. "Paradoxically, treating HIV/AIDS

as being different from other infectious diseases probably enhances stigma rather than reduces it.”⁸¹

Other matters worth commenting on are the non-critical reading of the biblical texts, traditional healing, and the fact that people are told to discard their medicines. Of course in this day and age, the “copy and paste” style of reading the biblical texts (i.e. the literal interpretation) is surely not relevant. There is a great need for the Pentecostal churches to read the biblical texts into the context of the communities that they are serving. This will go hand in hand with the intellectual and rational reading and interpretation of the texts.

None of the pastors conceded to the fact that they are asking people to throw away medicine if they believe that they have been healed, although many recipients of healing appear to do just this.

A prayer was done for me after which I was pushed on my forehead with the expectation that I should have fallen because that hand is filled with the Holy Spirit and the assumption is that no one can stand upright if touched with the Spirit filled hand. After I was helped to come to my feet I was told to throw my ARVs to the floor as an indication that I believe that I was healed but I did not have the ARVs with me at that time (Interview B).

The health risk that such an action carries is clear. Medically it is expected that those people who have started the ARV treatment should never stop such treatment, as this might have very dangerous consequences for themselves and for the mutation of the virus. As far as traditional healing is concerned, there is no cure for HIV and AIDS according to the medical science yet. Therefore it would be advisable for people to refrain from going to traditional healers in search of a cure.

⁸¹ De Cock K M ...et al. “Shadow on the continent: public health and HIV/AIDS in Africa in the 21st century” in *Lancet*, 360 (July) 2002: p. 69.

The last, but also very important factor that is regarded as a roadblock to the process of healing, is sin. The theology of 'you reap what you sow' is still upheld by many of the Pentecostal churches in Namibia. "Some in the modern faith movement claim it is always God's will to heal, and if healing does not take place, it is not God's fault – it is due to sin or lack of faith."⁸² This judgemental attitude is not helpful to stem the stigmatisation and secrecy, which surround the epidemic.

In conclusion, I think that one laudable factor that surfaced throughout all the interviews with the pastors, is that they regard the efforts being made by medical science as complementary to what they themselves are doing. A similar attitude is echoed by King: "I don't have anything against medicine, because medicine is not against divine healing."⁸³ A pastor whom I interviewed also concurs:

My healing ministry does not contradict the medical science. We have a very close cooperation with the doctors. We even refer a lot of people to them for medical observation (Interview Eight).

4.4.1.3. Implications

HIV and AIDS has certainly dealt a blow to the claim of faith healing. "For some Pentecostal churches, HIV/AIDS may be somewhat of an embarrassment, precisely because there is no known cure for the disease. This poses an obstacle for a ministry of faith healing."⁸⁴ Authors such as Stumpf (1985, 1986), Rose (1968) and Levin (1985), in Bate, "are even more critical, contending that miracle healings are totally unsubstantiated and that most of what goes on in coping–healing churches is fraudulent."⁸⁵ Before the advent of HIV and AIDS claims of healing one or other sickness made headlines without being socially dangerous, as most of these sicknesses were not deadly or contagious like HIV and AIDS. With HIV and AIDS, however, results are needed to confirm that healing has taken place. How can the claim of healing HIV and AIDS be rationalised if the HIV-related sickness and deaths are

⁸² King, P. "Classic faith answers to contemporary issues and questions of faith and healing." p. 82.

⁸³ King, P. "Classic faith answers to contemporary issues and questions of faith and healing." p. 87.

⁸⁴ Conradie, E M. "HIV/AIDS and human suffering: Where on earth is God?" *Scriptura* 89 (2005), pp. 406-432. p. 425.

⁸⁵ Bate, S C. 1995. p. 59.

increasing in large proportions amidst the efforts made by the Namibian government and its partners? “HIV and AIDS has been the leading cause of death since 1996. AIDS was responsible for 26% of all reported deaths... .”⁸⁶ Therefore, in my analysis, the implication is that the Pentecostal churches should revisit their perception of healing and also try to come up with a new definition and application of their praxis.

HIV and AIDS has surely influenced the approach to healing. We have been forced to concentrate more on counselling and also on sexual education. A person with HIV cannot just be prayed for. You need to talk to the person and assure that person that you are walking with him/her whatever the result may be after the prayer (Interview Ten).

It is not to be denied that the conditions of many people have improved after they have received prayers, but that does not mean that people have been healed, as claimed by the following informant:

The pastor only became aware of my status when I came back the next day and witnessed that God has healed me from HIV. Apart from HIV I had other problems such as kidneys, allergies and a lot of sores on my body of which all have disappeared upon my repentance (Interview C).

Bate’s model of “coping-healing” could present a suitable understanding if owned and applied by the Namibian Pentecostal churches. “The addition of the word ‘coping’ renders the topic more neutral, since finding ways and means of coping with the reality may be experienced subjectively as healing,”⁸⁷ even though the person is not necessarily cured. This implies that people might get well but not be totally healed. Again, this understanding could shape how Pentecostals redefine healing.

⁸⁶ Ministry of Health and Social Services. 2004. *The National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS*. Windhoek, Capital Press. p. 4.

⁸⁷ Bate, S C. 1995. *Inculturation & Healing*. Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publications. pp.15-16.

Furthermore, in my analysis, the fact that Pentecostal churches have projects and programmes to mitigate the impact of the HIV and AIDS epidemic, suggests that their claims of healing HIV and AIDS and the actual outcomes of their healing activity do not correlate. Almost all the Pentecostal churches in Namibia have additional programs that serve as resources and recourse to mitigate the socio-economic impact of HIV and AIDS. They run feeding schemes and even assist financially where need be. Of course these are good initiatives put in place to mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS. But does that in itself not imply that there is a vestige of doubt included in the claim of healing HIV and AIDS? Perhaps, the old horse of shifting the blame will be saddled again: the faith of the sick was not strong enough or they might have sinned and did not confess their sins duly. These realities surrounding the claim of healing HIV and AIDS should not only be viewed as associated implications but, rightly, as challenges too.

The positive aspect of having such programmes is that they indicate that the Pentecostal churches in Namibia do take the suffering associated with HIV and AIDS seriously. The fact that some of the pastors called for a redefinition/realignment of their healing ministry, in my analysis, is evidence of their awakening to the realities of the present circumstances.

HIV and AIDS place a huge challenge on the healing ministry. I think it is very important that the healing ministry of my church be re-defined. There is a need to educate people around the importance of healing ministry with a specific focus on a holistic (body, mind and psyche) approach to healing. Apart from a need to have thorough theological education there is also the need of establishing ecumenical prayer groups based on the need for healing and not on doctrines of various churches (Interview Ten).

I wish to conclude this section of the paper by highlighting the fact that none of the Pentecostal pastors supported the use of condoms. In their view, condoms promote sin and immorality. Balcomb also came across similar sentiments in his research among Pentecostal churches in South Africa: “Another area which is impacted by these

values is that of HIV/AIDS prevention. None of the respondents accepted the validity of condoms because they implied the relaxation of the abstinence rule.⁸⁸

4.4.2. Analysis of results under the following headings (Recipients)

- Expectations of healing
- Experience and impact
- Implications

4.4.2.1. Expectations of Healing

These interviews were conducted during the June and July (2007) holidays in Namibia. I succeeded in interviewing five women. The reason that all of them are women is in itself meaningful. It has been proven, through the findings of these interviews, as well as in numerous other studies, that HIV is a gendered epidemic. From the impressions I got during the interviews all of the informants, except for one, believed in healing even before they were diagnosed with the HI-virus. The most conspicuous factor was the desperation and the willingness to believe in anything that could help them. Such sentiments are detectable from the following quote:

At first when the HIV news was shared with me I had two thoughts. One was to go to a witchdoctor and the other was to repent. As I did not have money to pay for a witchdoctor I finally decided to repent (Interview C).

There is a common belief that Pentecostal churches are able to deliver healing from any kind of sickness, including HIV and AIDS. Another appealing factor could be the sense of acceptance they experienced in these churches. Three of the five women claimed that they had been healed. Two of them claimed that they had gone back for the confirmation results and were found to be HIV negative. Again on enquiring about the documents none of them could produce any, and yet remained adamant that they had been healed.

⁸⁸ Balcomb, A. 2005. Interviews with South African Pentecostal pastors and leaders – analysis and impressions. p. 13

About myself I should say that the doctors are dumb-founded and they cannot believe what they find from my second test after I was prayed for. At my second testing HIV was non-reactive (Interview D).

Even the above informant could not produce any certification to verify what she was saying.

The next informant echoed a similar sentiment:

The Pastor only became aware of my status when I came back the next day and witness that God has healed me from HIV. Apart from HIV I had other problems such as kidneys, allergies and a lot of sores on my body of which all have disappeared upon my repentance. As we speak I did not go for a HIV test to confirm my negative status. I plan to do the test as soon as possible. There is nothing that I doubt or fear as far as it concerns my present status because I know that my Lord does not put his children to shame if they truly believe in Him (Interview C).

Clearly people, on having being diagnosed with HIV, go to Pentecostal churches with perceived needs, and sometimes with pre-concluded expectations of a positive healing outcome. In other words, they had already decided that if they went for healing prayer they would be healed. This view is also confirmed by Bate:

These witnesses certainly indicate that amongst the people who seek healing through prayer, there is a perception that such healing is available and that indeed, some of them perceive themselves to be healed.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Bate, S C. 1995. *Inculturation & Healing*. p. 59.

The attitude is that no one owes anyone proof: 'It is my faith and why do I have to prove my faith to some else?' In the final analysis no conclusive healing had taken place. The claim of healing from HIV and AIDS is more a psychological "lullaby", for the reality is stored in the sub-conscience of the recipient of the faith healing. The fact is "the need for a "miracle" cure of an incurable disease. The need to hope for the seemingly impossible."⁹⁰

Lastly, none of these women had a problem with medical healing. What is apparent however is the fact that some stopped taking ARVs and others used them only occasionally, but there is certainly a feeling that the continued use of ARVs after having received a healing prayer is a sign of lack of faith.

Based on my faith and understanding of life and death I do not take my ARVs quite regularly. I also advised my friends to do the same. My faith was my buttress right from the minute I was told about my HIV status until now (Interview E).

4.4.2.2. Experiences and Impact

According to these women only one seems to have been disappointed in her expectation of healing. All of them claimed to have experienced healing. Olive oil was not applied to anyone, but all of them received prayer and the laying on of hands. They all reacted to this differently: some got 'goose bumps' and others lost consciousness in the heat of the moment.

I fell down but I did not know until I was awakened again. I regarded that experience as the healing power of God that was released in me. I have concluded that I was healed (Interview E).

Interestingly, the healing prayers that they received have impacted these women's lives. All of them have changed their lifestyles and all seem to operate from a mindset

⁹⁰ Bate, S C. 1995. *Inculturation & Healing*. p. 256.

that somehow their previous lifestyles were not morally sound. This is discernable from the testimonies of their lives before their 'healing experience'.

I was healed from alcohol, sleeping with men, and also from the severe breathing problem that I had. Prior to my repentance I could not differentiate good from bad and right from wrong. I did not have time for God but now my life is centred around God. I find peace and comfort in the Word of God now, which was not the case before. I also find more meaning and have come to the realisation that one does not need the other to preach to you (Interview C).

The following informant concurs:

My life was changed tremendously. After I was prayed for I started a completely different life style. I have chosen different friends and have decided to move in different circles than those that I frequently visited. Before my own repentance I was an alcoholic. I had a boyfriend whom I have jilted. Surely, I was not a loose person who lived life carelessly (Interview D).

All these women experienced changes in their lives that they label as healing. The notions of care and compassion have, after long being absent, returned to their lives again.

This church is different from the rest in that the presence of the Holy Spirit can be felt and the people are full of compassion and care. The president of this church is aware of my HIV status and he goes out of his way to make me feel at home. I should add that this church in my view is the right place to be because of its enriching teachings and programs (Interview A).

It has also become evident through the research that the Bible became a source of strength and personal succour for all of these women. The following informant concurs with this:

I find peace and comfort in the Word of God now, which was not the case before. I also find more meaning and have come to the realisation that one does not need the other to preach to you. One's faith and the time that one spends with the Word of God is the path to healing of which repentance and continuous engagement in prayer is the climax (Interview C).

Adogame also concurs:

Biblical passages regarding healing provide succour and comfort, coupled with recounted spiritual experiences enacted through prayer visualization. Thus, while the belief and desire for healing from HIV/AIDS may not materialize, the sacred space, programmes and rituals provide important religious, psychological and social relief.⁹¹

One can, therefore, safely infer that even if the HIV virus is not killed, there is a level of healing taking place. Bate concurs with this view:

From these impressions, it seems to me that the healing being received by people was always real for them and generally expressed in terms of an increase in "life" or "well – being".⁹²

However, perhaps the most important factor being experienced by most of these women is the denial that they now experience through the impact of this anticipated miraculous healing.

⁹¹ Adogame, A F E. "HIV/AIDS and African Pentecostalism." p. 482.

⁹² Bate, S C. 1995. *Inculturation & Healing*. p. 55.

4.4.2.3. Implications for recipients

The fact of bringing so many people who are sick together and raising their hopes only to dash them when there are no cures is to leave people disillusioned and worse off than when they started. Thus on a pro-rata basis, whilst some may be cured, the majority are actually harmed.⁹³

Disillusionment, hopelessness, sadness, anger and resentment were some of the destructive emotional roller coasters that these women experienced. I was told, while waiting for my interview with a pastor, that an individual whose hope for healing was dashed, had left the church and did not want to hear about God or the church anymore. Similar sentiments surfaced in my interviews:

Since I did not get healed I became miserable. I lost trust in everything that the church had to tell. I stayed away from the church for quite a time (Interview A).

In June 1983 similar sentiments were echoed by people in a program that was presented by SABC TV, Bate captured the highlight of that presentation as follows:

Several people who had not been healed complained that they were often made to feel worse when they didn't receive healing and that the experience of having their hopes dashed was a traumatic one.⁹⁴

Conradie also shares this view: "When a person's faith is put to test through such a ministry, and healing does not take place, this may, of course, lead to disillusionment."⁹⁵ Immeasurable harm is done to people whose HIV and AIDS status remain positive after a failed healing attempt. Many of these informants did not want to hear about God. They hated God because they partly blamed Him for not having

⁹³ Bate, S C. 1995. *Inculturation & Healing*. p. 74.

⁹⁴ Bate, S C. 1995. *Inculturation & Healing*. p. 59.

⁹⁵ Conradie, E M. "HIV/AIDS and human suffering: Where on earth is God?" p. 425.

prevented them from becoming HIV positive, and for not healing them from the disease.

I did not get healed. I hated God, the church and the people.
However, I do believe that a person can be HIV positive and still live a healthy life (Interview A).

The *Southern Times* of January 21, 2007 carries a story that underlines the type of problems people experience when healing fails. Shipanga (a pseudo name) attended a Pentecostal church in Namibia and was told that he had been healed. The content of the prayer had been:

God is omnipotent. God is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. He knows your problems. He is the only one that can solve your problems. God says if you are tired, come and I will give you rest. If you are jobless, God will give you food. If you are single, God will give you a partner. If you are HIV positive, God will make you HIV negative.⁹⁶

When he went for a reconfirmation test the following day and found that he did not sero-convert to an HIV negative status, he screamed, wailed and sobbed.

In conclusion the biggest implication that HIV and AIDS has for the divine healing ministry is realisation of the need to revisit the theological matrixes and approaches of the healing ministry. Education and counselling are now necessary tools for the divine healing ministry. Both the recipient and the practitioner of healing need to be educated to understand HIV and AIDS bio-medically as well as in the context of the socio-economic and political implications and challenges that it poses. Education with regard to HIV and AIDS will include aspects such as peer education, interpersonal communication and counselling, spiritual counselling, and HIV and AIDS education modules. Methods of education will include drama, sermons, musical concerts and sensitization seminars just to mention but a few. All of the above are extremely

⁹⁶ The Southern Times. 21st January 2007. "Churches incubating HIV". p. C2.

important: “to educate on and reduce the spread of the AIDS epidemic in many African countries.”⁹⁷

A narrow approach to HIV and AIDS healing sidelines many technical aspects that are weaved into the handling of HIV and AIDS. Lastly a majority of the informants suffered from chronic denial, which has been instilled by the practitioners of the divine healing ministry. However, “HIV/AIDS is a serious problem in Sub-Saharan Africa which cannot be resolved by denial of its medical reality or by pious prayers and exorcism.”⁹⁸

4.4.2. Analysis of the participant observation

I attended the Universal Church service in Namibia on June 26th. The impression I got was that people came to this service with the hope of being healed. The whole service was focussed on healing. After very solemn music was played the pastor started to pray. In my analysis of this service the pivotal part of the healing service was the prayer. The pastor went on and on as if he was trying to manipulate God into doing the impossible. He spread his hands over all of us but did not touch the young woman who seemed to be suffering from a sickness that made her stamp her feet and shake her body tremendously. It could be argued that the prayer was used to hypnotise the people into believing that miracles can take place anytime.

The sermon was clearly focussed on enticing people to share everything that they possessed with the Lord. Once again, deriving from the thrust of the prayer and the content of the sermon, it was clear that the theology of prosperity was being drummed into the people. In analysing the service, its message seemed to be that if you needed something from God you needed to give something to Him as well. Health and healing emerged strongly as central to the popular wealth and prosperity theology/message. Bate also established the same argument: “In the ‘Reborn’ Christian movements, the importance of healing, a central theme, as well as the emphasis on the “Prosperity Gospel”, emerged because these provide a lived “this

⁹⁷ Adogame, A F E. “HIV/AIDS and African Pentecostalism.” p. 480.

⁹⁸ Twesigye, E K. “The ethics of HIV/AIDS and the rise of an Apocalyptic Mariologist Movement for the restoration of the ten commandments” *Scriptura* 89 (2005), pp. 456-468. p. 462.

world” experiences of the veracity of their choice: signs of the future redemption here and now.”⁹⁹ However, a theology that rides on material wealth and prosperity, as part of healing, is disturbing and might have fatal consequences. Williams also concurs with this view: “I am disturbed by a theology, very prevalent today, which sees healing and material prosperity as something which a Christian has a right to claim from God.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Bate, S C. 1995. *Inculturation & Healing*. p. 125.

¹⁰⁰ Williams, D T. “Salvation and healing: towards a unified theology.” *Theologia Evangelica*, June, 1990. Volume xxiii No 2, pp 15 – 26. p. 25.

Chapter Five Summary and Conclusion

5. Introduction

In the article “*We pray but we cannot heal*”¹⁰¹ Haddad sought to find new ways for Pentecostal churches to deal with the hard reality of not receiving healing after prayer. The focus of my study was to establish the implications that HIV and AIDS has for the healing ministry of the Pentecostal churches in Namibia. To achieve this, the study analysed the general practice of divine healing in Namibia. It has been established through interviews, participant observation and on the basis of the available literature (though very scant), that there are serious implications of the HIV and AIDS pandemic in the healing practice of the Namibian Pentecostal churches.

5.1. Summary

It is obvious that claims of healing HIV and AIDS are powerful and widespread in the Pentecostal fraternity of Namibia. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) wrote a circular to the Council of Churches in Namibia on February 28th 2007, in which he aired the national concern about this matter, and requested that those churches which claim that they can heal HIV and AIDS be stopped and that correct HIV/AIDS related information be disseminated. “As a matter of concern the MoHSS has it from reliable sources that there are some denominations that are dissuading patients who are on Antiretroviral Treatment (ART) from taking or adhering to their drugs.”¹⁰² In direct contrast to such a national request, it is still being claimed that healing can only take place on the basis of a strong faith, on the part of both healer and recipient. “When someone is not healed, often the person being prayed for is blamed for their lack of faith.”¹⁰³ Furthermore, healing can fail, it is claimed, because of failing to lead a morally sound life, and to confess sins.

There seems to be no compromise from any of the Pentecostal churches as far as the use of condoms is concerned, and they support only the Abstinence and Be faithful

¹⁰¹ Haddad, B. “We pray but we cannot heal”: Theological challenges posed by the HIV/AIDS crisis.” pp. 80-90.

¹⁰² Ministry of Health and Social services. February 28, 2007. “HIV/AIDS information dissemination.”

¹⁰³ Aaltonen, R ... et al. 2005. *Challenging the current understanding around HIV and AIDS*. Kenya, Starbright Services Ltd. p. 148.

aspects of the ABC formula. “The teaching that anyone who wants to can be healed supernaturally here and now from HIV and AIDS, is based on a number of false assumptions.”¹⁰⁴ These false assumptions have been revealed in this paper through the research process.

A central source of these false assumptions is to do with the interpretation of the biblical texts, which blame sin and lack of faith for illness, and which claim that through the Holy Spirit, God can heal any of these sicknesses. This study has also pointed out the effect that the false claims of healing HIV and AIDS has on the faith, and even on the lives, of a people in general. Obviously, the claim of healing HIV and AIDS has proven to be a definite barrier for the use of antiretroviral therapy/treatment as established through this study.

Therefore, the right approach to healing would be to start seeing HIV and AIDS as part of all the other socio-economic factors, and to treat it together with those social ills. I am convinced that as long as HIV and AIDS are dealt with in isolation the ramifications of HIV related diseases and deaths will continue to grow. Thus, the Pentecostal churches are challenged by HIV related diseases and deaths, to apply a holistic healing approach, instead of the narrow focus of physical healing that they have for HIV and AIDS. However, it is important to bear in mind that some of the Pentecostal churches, though very small in number, do indeed apply a holistic healing approach.

5.2. Conclusion

This study concludes with the recommendation that the Pentecostal churches continue to practice divine healing, but that they should avoid promising healing to everyone who comes for a prayer. No one can prescribe to God when and who to heal, but this study does not refute that God can heal any sickness. It does, however, confirm that God can process healing in different forms. As Aaltonen suggests, to avert damaging peoples’ faith and trust in God and in the overall mission of the church, it is advisable that all the necessary caution, and rationale be applied when practising divine

¹⁰⁴ Aaltonen, R ... et al. 2005. p.149.

healing.¹⁰⁵ In the context of this study rationale means following the proper channels to verify, if at all, that healing has really taken place. People must be encouraged to go for HIV testing and counselling after they have received a prayer of healing. “It should not promise a person ‘you are healed’ when that has not taken place. If healing is taking place, the person in question should have it verified.”¹⁰⁶ This is important to avert, as much as possible, the spread of the HI-virus by people who falsely believe that they have been healed.

A failed healing attempt can also severely damage a person psychologically. People are disappointed, some get mentally unstable (See interview Ten) others develop anger towards God and the church. Others continue to take revenge by spreading the HI-virus out of resentment. To avoid all of the above, this study has suggested ways in which the Pentecostal churches can address the HIV and AIDS issue. Thus the need for education is emphasised, as is the need to see and deal with HIV and AIDS in the context of the socio-economic realities that cause its spread.

Finally this study indicates possible areas where further research could be undertaken.

- Why do people persist in attending the Pentecostal churches if research has shown that there is no healing taking place?
- Why do the Pentecostal churches continue to claim HIV and AIDS healing if they also know that there is no cure for the epidemic?
- What exactly do the Pentecostal churches mean when they talk of healing, and how can a more realistic and holistic understanding be developed?
- In what ways can the power of the Pentecostal churches be harnessed to fight stigma related to HIV and AIDS?
- In what ways can the Pentecostal churches educate their members about the realities of HIV and AIDS?
- How can the Pentecostal churches broaden their response against the causes and results of HIV and AIDS at a socio-economic level?
- Lastly, what sicknesses, if any, are people healed from by the Pentecostal churches?

¹⁰⁵ Aaltonen, R. ... et al. 2005. p. 152.

¹⁰⁶ Aaltonen, R. ... et al. 2005. *Challenging the current understanding around HIV and AIDS*. Kenya, Starbright Services Ltd. p. 152.

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APPENDIX 1

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT FOR A STUDY PROJECT ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF HIV AND AIDS FOR THE HEALING MINISTRY OF THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES DONE IN SOME PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN NAMIBIA.

Study title:

HIV and AIDS and its implications for the ministry of healing in some Pentecostal churches in Namibia.

Possible interview Questions for practitioners of the healing ministry.

Background information

- Place: Town
- Name of the church
- Age
- Educational level
- Occupation
- Children/Dependents: number and ages
- Do you practice the ministry of healing in your church?
- What are some of the reasons why you practice this ministry?
- What are some of the ways that you practice this ministry? E.g. large meetings, private one to one situations? Etc
- Are there any reasons why you pray for the sick in these particular ways?
- What are the different ways you believe God heals people?
- What kind of sicknesses/diseases do you pray for when it comes to healing?
- Have you ever prayed for people to be healed of HIV and AIDS?
- Are there any particular problems surrounding prayer for people suffering from HIV and AIDS? If so what are they?
- Did you ever pray for people with HIV and AIDS who you suspect have it but who do not declare their status? If so how often does this happen?

- What have been the results of your prayers for people with HIV and AIDS?
- Have there been any problems that have emerged in your healing ministry as a result of people not being healed of HIV and AIDS? If so what are they?
- Has the HIV and AIDS pandemic influenced your approach to the healing ministry in any way? If so how?
- Do you have an approach to the HIV and AIDS pandemic that is over and above prayer for People living with HIV and AIDS? E.g. do you adhere to the so-called ABC policy?
- Are there any other ways in which your church addresses the HIV and AIDS pandemic?

Possible interview questions for recipients of the healing ministry.

- Place: Town
- Name of the Church
- Age
- Educational level
- Occupation
- When you were told that you are HIV positive how did your personal faith in God help you to deal with the new reality?
- Do you believe in divine healing?
- Was it on your own account that you resorted to seek for divine healing or were you advised by somebody to do so?
- Prior to your HIV positive status were you a strong believer of the physical healing by divine intercourse?
- What is the basis of your belief in divine healing?
- Have you received prayer for healing?
- What was the result of this?
- Are you receiving any other forms of treatment?
- How has your life changed since you received prayer for healing? If so how?
- Are there any particular problems that have occurred since your received prayer for healing? If so what are they?

- Has your experience of divine healing changed your beliefs about it? If so how?
- What do you think about the practice of your church toward divine healing?
- Do you know anyone else who has a similar experience to your own?

APPENDIX 2
Interview Report and Participant observation

These interviews are recorded precisely as they took place, without any modification of the ideas and thoughts of the participants.

Category A: Practitioners of divine healing

Interview One

This informant is the senior pastor of the Ebenhaezer Congregation Church in Namibia. His church is based in the heart of Katutura, a residential area of the black people in Windhoek. He is the founder of this church and also the principle person responsible for divine healing.

Do you practice the ministry of healing?

Yes I do. I believe in the Word of God and on the basis of His promise I practice healing in my Church. I have special time arrangements for healing services, though at times I pray anywhere and anytime if someone wants to be healed. My healing services are not confined to the church building necessarily, though that is the most suitable place to execute healing services. At times I visit hospitals and homes to pray for the sick.

What are some of the reasons why you practice this ministry?

The chief reason why I practice healing is because people are sick and God has promised healing to those who have faith in Him.

What are some of the ways that you practice this ministry?

I have two methods that I apply when praying for the sick. First of all, I lay my hands on the sick and sometimes I make use of olive oil (James 5: 14ff). I proclaim healing for those who believe and have faith with the following phrase: "Stand up and go, for you have been healed in the name of Christ". The church is the ideal place where I practice healing but I pray for the sick in hospitals, homes, on a one-one basis and during healing crusades.

Are there any reasons why you pray for the sick in these particular ways?

Faith is the basis of healing and it is a two-way thing. Both a practitioner of healing and a recipient of healing must have absolute faith and trust in the healing power of God.

What are different ways you believe God heals people?

Apart from prayer for healing God can and does heal through medical science. I do not tell people to throw away their medications because in my opinion healing can be on the spot or it could be a process. God can heal someone from a disease instantly or he can heal sick person by restoring the physical strengths without actually killing the cause of a disease. Look at the example of Apostle Paul he was not healed from his sickness but he was healthy to do the works of the Lord.

What kind of sicknesses/diseases do you pray for when it comes to healing?

I pray for any kind of sickness. I do not discriminate between sicknesses. Anything that brings discomfort to a person's body and life in my view is a sickness in one or the other way. Therefore I pray for all kinds of sicknesses.

Have you ever prayed for people to be healed of HIV and AIDS?

I have done a lot of healing prayers for PLWHA. Some of them came on account of healing that has taken place of which they might have heard. Their friends and families bring some others.

Are there any particular problems surrounding prayer for people suffering from HIV and AIDS?

HIV and AIDS is a stubborn pandemic. It has a segment of shame which eventually leads to people being afraid of stigmatisation. People do not come for healing prayer while still in good health. They are brought most of the time only when HIV has already become worse.

Did you ever pray for people with HIV and AIDS who you suspect have it but who do not declare their status?

Almost all the cases that I prayed for I only suspect. The reason why people do not reveal the HIV status before prayer could be explained in many ways, one of which is definitely stigma and discrimination. People fear to be ostracised on the basis of their HIV positive status. Worse of all, people do not want others to know that they have full-blown AIDS, consequently they are brought with the hope to get healed without telling anybody. This is more conspicuous during worship services; otherwise if they want a private prayer I am informed about the HIV status or the cause of the illness.

What have been the results of your prayers for people with HIV and AIDS?

Some of the people whom I prayed for get healed, some did not. It is difficult for me to tell why some are not healed. Those who got healed give testimonies in the church and others died while I was praying. I believe in the healing power of prayer but I cannot tell why some people I am praying for cannot be healed. The reason why some do not get healed could be faithlessness, yet I know from the Bible that some people without having faith were healed. One thing I know for certain and that is that healing is entirely by God's will.

Have there been any problems that emerged in your healing ministry as a result of people not being healed of HIV and AIDS?

I did not encounter a very specific problem that emerged in my healing ministry because of a failed healing. But I know of cases whereby families of the sick person can become disillusioned and angry with the pastor. Their hope has been destroyed and above all the sick person's condition is getting worse.

Has the HIV and AIDS epidemic influenced your approach to the healing ministry in any way?

The perception that everyone who is HIV positive had been immoral has been greatly challenged. But again as I am not the one who heals I do not need to design approaches because what I am doing is a prayer only. It is God's decision to heal. Another thing which I think that HIV has influenced is the way in which we pray. You do not just pray for HIV and AIDS like you would pray for any other illness. The expectations of healing from the sick persons are very high and it definitely places a psychological pressure on one's performance.

Do you have an approach to the HIV and AIDS pandemic that is over and above prayer for PLWHA?

Our message to everyone is to be faithful to his or her partners. Most of all we encourage the youth to refrain from sex until they get married. We do not promote the use of condoms, though we would not refuse anyone who cannot abstain from using them.

Are there any other ways in which your church addresses the HIV and AIDS pandemic?

We do home visits and pray for the sick. Those who need material assistance are assisted to the extent that the church's financial resources can allow.

Interview Two

This informant was formerly from the Evangelical Lutheran Church. She was married to a teacher who till his death was a Lutheran. She is now the senior pastor of the Moria Congregation of Africa in Namibia (Pentecostal church). One of the tenets of this congregation is its practice of the healing ministry. This Pentecostal church is based in Khorichas on the top of a hill from where a person has a good view of the town.

Do you practice the ministry of healing in your church?

We believe and also practice divine healing in our church. Our church originated in the healing ministry. Our convictions and faith in divine healing are based on the Scriptures. We strongly believe and proclaim healing through prayer and laying on of hands. Olive oil is only used when the holy Spirit so dictates, otherwise prayer alone is sufficient to heal any kind of sickness including HIV and AIDS.

What are some of the reasons why you practice this ministry?

Jesus Christ is our role model when it comes to healing. It is on his word and promise that we practice divine healing. The Bible is the manual that we use to explain and practice healing. It is essential that the person for whom the prayer is said must believe and have faith because the prayer for healing is entirely the work of faith. Most importantly the desire for the prayer must come from the person him/herself and the prayer is executed on the basis of that desire.

What are some of the ways that you practice this ministry?

The method that we use is prayer and the laying on of hands and the settings within which these services can be done are different. Sometimes we render a healing service in a large meeting on a Sunday, some other times we do healing prayers in houses of families and other times we pray for individuals. For effective results we fast before we can do a prayer of healing though at times we could also pray without fasting.

Are there any reasons why you pray for the sick in these particular ways?

We believe that sin is the cause of sickness that leads to death. Therefore it is required that a person should confess his/her sins to receive healing. Even a person who is not a repentee is prayed for by my church, though, in such cases it is likely that the person will again fall sick. The particular reason is the person is sick and can only be healed through faith in Christ. Unfortunately healing can only take place if a person for whom the prayer is done has fully accepted the Lord as his or her personal saviour.

What are the different ways you believe God heals people?

The outcome of a healing prayer could be immediate or at times it could be the beginning of a process of healing.

What kind of sicknesses/diseases do you pray for when it comes to healing?

We pray for all kinds of diseases or sicknesses. Diabetes, high blood pressure, TB, cancer anything, just name it. Because the healer who is Christ does not have any sickness that he cannot heal.

Have you ever prayed for people to be healed of HIV and AIDS?

Yes I have prayed for many people who were HIV positive and even those who had AIDS.

Are there any particular problems surrounding prayer for people suffering from HIV and AIDS?

One of the biggest problems I have experienced with HIV infected people is that they are living a lie probably because of the fear of being stigmatised. Some who believed that they have been healed refused to continue the medication and some others

continue the use of the medication and the difference is to be seen in their physical appearance.

Did you ever pray for people with HIV and AIDS who you suspect have it but who do not declare their status?

HIV and AIDS is curable through prayer but the problem is that the PLWHA most of the time do not want to declare their status. Sometimes I take the initiative from my side and approach those persons whom I suspect might be infected by the HI-Virus but I receive only quarrelling and ill feelings towards me. I have prayed for many people with HIV and AIDS who did not declare their status and this happens very frequently.

What have been the results of your prayers for people with HIV and AIDS?

People give testimonies that they have been healed after having received a prayer. Others do not come back in which case we suspect that they were not healed. The outcome of a healing prayer could be immediate or at times it could be the beginning of a process of healing. Many people do not understand this part and if they do not get healed instantly they get disappointed and so many afterwards want nothing to do with any church or even with the Word of God.

Have there been any problems that have emerged in your healing ministry as a result of people not being healed of HIV and AIDS?

Many people decide to stay away from church. Many others indulged in severe misuse of alcohol and others hold it against those people who were practicing the healing ceremony on them.

Has the HIV and AIDS pandemic influenced your approach to the healing ministry in any way?

Yes, we do not just start to pray. We encourage people to go for an HIV test because to know your status is helpful not only to the person him/herself but for the community in which he/she lives. We also encourage those people who want to marry to first go for an HIV test. The biggest influence is that we see ARVs as part of the doses that God provides for the healing of HIV and AIDS.

Do you have an approach to the HIV and AIDS pandemic that is over and above prayer for people living with HIV and AIDS?

To show that we do not only spiritualise the HIV and AIDS problem but regard it as a life threatening reality we have also sent some of our youth for HIV and AIDS counselling training.

Are there any other ways in which your church addresses the HIV and AIDS pandemic?

Apart from prayer alone we support the ABC (Abstain, Be Faithful, Condomize) policy. We do this because the efforts made by medical science in our view are not opposed to prayer and the laying on of hands or the application of the olive oil. To us what is done by medical science is complementary to that which we do in the name of Christ the great healer of all ages. It is our belief that the successes of medical science are possible by the grace of God alone.

Interview Three

This pastor sees himself as both an apostle and a pastor. His highest academic qualification is Grade 8. He was a member of the Roman Catholic Church. He is both a divine healer and an exorcist. He has been doing this work for about 5 years. His assistant and pastor, who does the same works as he does, is his wife. He felt bored with the RCC and started to look elsewhere for the presence of the Lord. He had a continuous feeling that something was missing. Whilst still in the RCC he saw visions of healings which were conducted by himself. It was at that juncture that he realised that God wanted him to repent and to become a healer. He is convinced that a person must repent in order to be able to practice divine healing. His born again experience is based on Acts 10 (the account of Cornelius and repentance).

Do you practice the ministry of healing in your church?

It was revealed to me that I am a full missionary of God. I did not need any ordination from below as I was ordained from the Most High through the revelation which I have received. I began by visiting hospitals and saw the need for prayer. I have seen and experienced the results of my prayer for the sick because some people got healed. The impetus behind my ministry of healing is the compassion that I have for the sick. The following are some of the biblical verses that inform my healing ministry. Ex. 15: 26,

Deut. 7: 15, Is. 53: 4-5, Ps. 107: 20, Mt. 8: 16-17, Mt. 4: 23-24, I Pet. 2: 24, 3Jhn. 1: 2, Rom. 8: 1, 2 Cor. 5: 17. Acts 19: 11-12.

What are some of the reasons why you practice this ministry?

The requirement or expectation is that a sick person must have faith and should also believe in the biblical accounts about healing. The Word of God is alive and if used correctly it can still produce results today. I practice healing because in Christ we have been promised that whatever we ask in His name we will be given. Christ promised healing to those who are sick. His apostles were also empowered to pray and through their prayers many get healed. Thus, I am doing what is biblically right.

What are some of the ways that you practice this ministry?

The settings within which I run my healing services varied from a normal worship service to private meetings and at times I have healing crusades that take place in a tent. I pray to God and heal the sick in the name of Christ. I base my faith on biblical understanding because Christ himself taught that: "Whatever you ask in my Name, you shall be given" (John 14: 14). I do not do anything without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works in different ways, sometimes while I am praying my hand automatically moves to the place where the problem of the sick person is. At other times I only exercise a 'holy blowing' and sometimes I am told by the Holy Spirit to pray over a glass of water and to give it to the sick person to drink. When touched by the Holy Spirit some people cry and others fall down.

Are there any reasons why you pray for the sick in these particular ways?

No particular reason is attached to the way in which I pray for the sick. Most of the times I do what the Spirit dictates to me at that moment. To me the most important thing is to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. If there is something particular and different in my prayer, that is because the Holy Spirit led me in that direction.

What are the different ways you believe God heals people?

I am not opposed to medical science because I believe that it is God's invention. One thing however is certain and that is that medical science alone is not sufficient; it must partner with divine healing in order to address the need for healing effectively. Sometimes one can use both scientific medicine and prayer/divine healing for

complete recovery. There are times that I pray over the ARVs with the understanding that together with the power of the Holy Spirit healing will ensue.

What kind of sicknesses/diseases do you pray for when it comes to healing?

I am pray for all kinds of diseases, HIV and AIDS, diabetes, cancer, and even for the mentally disturbed. I remember the time when I removed a throat cancer by laying on of hands. My hand felt like it was burning with fire as it was charged with the Holy Spirit.

Have you ever prayed for people to be healed of HIV and AIDS?

Yes I did. People are brought to me almost on a daily basis for prayer. In some instances they come by themselves.

Are there any particular problems surrounding prayer for people suffering from HIV and AIDS?

The difficulty with HIV and AIDS infected people is that often they are not honest. Most of the time I suspect that a person has HIV but am not told. Other difficulties range between anger, a very slow growth of trust, despair and hopelessness. It takes a little while for people with HIV to trust you. Some people get healed from HIV and AIDS but upon recovery fall back to their sinful way of life. Consequently such people get re-infected again. Righteousness and healing collaborate in Christ for a complete healing from any kind of disease. A person who seeks healing must surrender him/herself completely to the Lord.

Did you ever pray for people with HIV and AIDS who you suspect have it but who do not declare their status?

That is happening almost every time. People are ashamed and for the fear of being ostracised they choose not to tell me. Stigma and discrimination in Khorichas is still very high. I suspect the main reason why they do not tell me is the fear of stigmatisation.

What have been the results of your prayers for people with HIV and AIDS?

I prayed for a lot of people who got healed from HIV and AIDS. Some decided to stop the use of the medicine. I personally do not tell people to discard their medicines because I believe that it is a matter of personal faith.

Have there been any problems that have emerged in your healing ministry as a result of people not being healed of HIV and AIDS?

Not that I am aware of.

Has the HIV and AIDS pandemic influenced your approach to the healing ministry in any way?

I treat HIV and AIDS like any other sickness. I am always filled with the Spirit of the Lord in order to remove HIV and AIDS from a person.

Do you have an approach to the HIV and AIDS pandemic that is over and above prayer for people living with HIV and AIDS?

Prayer is ultimate. I personally do not condone the use of condoms. Our church encourages people to marry because condoms are unbiblical. We support the Abstain and the Be faithful part of the ABC policy. The Word of God does not allow people to have sex before marriage and those who are married are taught by the Word of God to be faithful to one another. I believe that people must be taught in order to know the truth and the truth shall set them free (John 8: 32). The Holy Spirit serves as an agent of truth convincing people to lead a holy life.

Are there any other ways in which your church addresses the HIV and AIDS pandemic?

My personal motto is: "Healthy diet, taking of the ARV tablets (for those who do not have complete faith), and to seek the Lord with all your heart". We have no soup kitchens running nor are we able to contribute at this stage financially, though, at a very limited scale we help here and there.

Interview Four

This pastor is 50 years old, is married and has 6 children. His church is situated in the black residential area called 'Grysblok' in Windhoek. The membership of his church is still relatively small. He regards himself as having the gift of healing.

Do you practice the ministry of healing in your church?

The basis of my healing ministry is the Word of God: 'One who believes will have anything he/she asks for in my name.' I tested God on his promise. Through his help I have seen positive results of my healing prayer. Obviously, some people get healed but others did not. I ran healing crusades and a few years ago I lifted someone who was in a wheel chair for 14 years. It is here that I have realised that I have healing as a gift. The following are the texts that inform my theology and practice of healing. Luke. 10: 8-9, 1Cor. 12: 9 ff, Psalm 103: 2-3, Mk. 6: 13 and Mk. 5: 25ff.

What are some of the reasons why you practice this ministry?

In my understanding of the Word of God any disease is curable by God including HIV and AIDS. I practice healing on the basis of his promise contained in his Word.

What are some of the ways that you practice this ministry?

Prayer and laying on of hands are the most central modes of healing. Sometimes I do a group prayer were everyone present would join in the prayer for healing. I make use of olive oil but on very rare occasions. I believe that a powerful prayer of a believer can bring about desired results.

Are there any reasons why you pray for the sick in these particular ways?

Remember, the Word of God says if you believe God can heal you from any kind of disease. However the results of a healing depends on a person's faith. Prayer, and olive oil or any other way of healing portrayed in the Bible can only work together with a strong faith on the part of the sick and also on the part of the healer.

What are the different ways you believe God heals people?

God can heal through the prayer of a believer and he can also help through the use of medical science. No-one can prescribe to God when and how to do His works. It is why it is important to know that medical science is not an enemy to divine healing. In both instances God is at work and human beings are only the agents through whom God works.

What kind of sicknesses/diseases do you pray for when it comes to healing?

I pray for all kinds of sicknesses. There is no exception. If I was the one who heals I might have had exceptions simply because my powers of healing would be limited. Since God is the healer there is no disease that He cannot heal.

Have you ever prayed for people to be healed of HIV and AIDS?

I have healed HIV positive people with prayer only. Some of these people whom I prayed for were being given back to their families by the doctors because there was nothing more that they could do.

Are there any particular problems surrounding prayer for people suffering from HIV and AIDS?

HIV and AIDS is similar to those diseases that we read about in the Bible for which no cure could be found. The failed healing attempts of HIV are sometimes resultant from the little faith people have. Sometimes they do not believe at all and they only come to test our healing powers. Among those who get healed some return to their previous immoral life style and get re-infected again. The root cause of HIV is disobedience. It was never God's plan to allow his people to suffer. We are the cause of our own suffering. It is my personal conviction that most of the people infected with HIV lived carelessly. People do not give heed to education programs on HIV and AIDS and consequently get infected with HIV.

Did you ever pray for people with HIV and AIDS who you suspect have it but who do not declare their status?

Very often. People do not speak easily about HIV and AIDS amidst so many efforts made from both the church's side and from the government's to speak openly about matters of sex. I think culture is still very strong because according to our cultures we do not speak about sex openly. Since HIV infection is mostly linked with sex, people are ashamed because they will be labelled as having being immoral.

What have been the results of your prayers for people with HIV and AIDS?

The results of a healing depends on a person's faith. Upon testifying that they have been healed from HIV, I do not encourage people to go back to confirm their new HIV status. Because faith is a matter of trust in the Lord. There was one time that a little boy who I prayed for was taken for re-testing and found to be HIV negative. I

saw the 'passport' of the hospital myself and have seen that this little baby-boy was found negative. So many people whom I prayed for did not come back and I cannot tell if they got healed. Even if some people who I pray for will not be healed I will not be discouraged. I will in turn encourage the person to hold onto his/her faith. Sometimes I do not pray for a person to be healed especially if I see that the HIV and AIDS status of a person has developed very far. In such instances I prepare the person for a happy home going. Before I do a prayer I always do a little pastoral counselling. This is important to serve as a cushion for the psychological impact of the unexpected results.

Have there been any problems that have emerged in your healing ministry as a result of people not being healed of HIV and AIDS?

The failed healing attempts of HIV are sometimes resultant from the little faith people have. Since many who I suspect were not healed choose not to come back I will not know what exactly they are doing thereafter.

Has the HIV and AIDS pandemic influenced your approach to the healing ministry in any way?

There is no particular influence that HIV and AIDS has thrown up for the healing ministry in my view. As I have said earlier on HIV is a sickness like any other. I treat HIV and AIDS similar to other diseases.

Do you have an approach to the HIV and AIDS pandemic that is over and above prayer for people living with HIV and AIDS?

Abstinence, Be faithful, and Condomise are the solutions to prevent the spread of HIV according to the Namibian government. I preach faithfulness both to God and to fellow human beings. Faithfulness is a biblical virtue and should therefore be practiced at all times. Abstinence on the other hand is a healthy lifestyle for those who are not married and above all premarital sex is not sanctioned by God in the Bible. I will never promote the use of condoms from a pulpit for that would be against the Word of God. I am not called to condone sin through the use of condoms. Because both a person who is not faithful to his/her partner and a person who practice premarital sex have sinned in the eyes of God.

Are there any other ways in which your church addresses the HIV and AIDS pandemic?

We are still in the process of establishing feeding schemes and home based care programs. Logistics do not allow us to practice those aspects as we would have loved to.

Interview Five

This pastor is a teacher by profession. He left the Lutheran church for the Moria Pentecostal Church. He then left Moria and is serving as a full pastor in the Bethesda Faith Mission Church. This church is based in Khorichas and its membership is not very large.

Do you practice the ministry of healing in your church?

We practice healing ministry in our church. Most of the time this is being done on request. The name of the church, Bethesda is in itself known for the incident of healing (John 5: 1-9). Healing is to evangelise and the Gospels are full of accounts of healing. It is our responsibility to continue the work done by Christ. Elements of healing in our church include singing and persistence in prayer. We do not promote praying in tongues because we want the recipients of the healing prayer to be able to understand the content of the prayer. The use of olive oil depends on the revelation of the Holy Spirit. The application of oil is only done if a prophecy was received to use it when praying for the sick. Other instances where oil is applied is in situations where a person is deadly ill.

What are some of the reasons why you practice this ministry?

God has promised healing for those who pray to him in faith. The ministry of Jesus is full of accounts of healing. In the wounds of Christ our healing has been assured.

What are some of the ways that you practice this ministry?

Healing services can be held at any time and in any place. However, for reasons of convenience we prefer that it be done in a place of worship. The worshiping atmosphere is vital for the efficiency of a healing service. Sometimes we have worship services that are specifically designed for the healing of the sick. It is our belief that God can heal any disease including HIV and AIDS.

Are there any reasons why you pray for the sick in these particular ways?

What is important is that the sick person who seeks prayer for healing must have faith. A person with a strong faith will definitely receive healing. I would say we do this according to the Bible.

What are the different ways you believe God heals people?

If we look into the events where healing had taken place in the Bible we will see that God through Christ healed many people. Some were healed by the touch of a hand, others were healed through a spoken word, and in some rare cases material was used like in the case of the son that was born blind (John. 9: 6ff).

What kind of sicknesses/diseases do you pray for when it comes to healing?

I pray for all kinds of diseases. From a migraine headache to HIV and AIDS. I believe nothing is impossible for God. The one in whose name I practice healing can heal any sickness.

Have you ever prayed for people to be healed of HIV and AIDS?

I have prayed for many people with HIV and AIDS. But my colleague also the senior Pastor who lives in Swakopmund (a coastal town in Namibia), is gifted with healing and almost all the HIV and AIDS cases are referred to him.

Are there any particular problems surrounding prayer for people suffering from HIV and AIDS?

The biggest problem surrounding HIV and AIDS is the fear of stigmatization. People do not want to declare their status openly and some do not have sufficient faith that God can also heal HIV and AIDS.

Did you ever pray for people with HIV and AIDS who you suspect have it but who do not declare their status?

I have prayed for people whom I suspect might have HIV and have seen that health-wise a lot of improvement has taken place. Some of them have also returned to work.

What have been the results of your prayers for people with HIV and AIDS?

Many peoples' lives have improved so that they could return to their places of work. I know of some who get healed and have proven with medical reports that they have become HIV negative. Other people whom I prayed for did not come back so it is difficult to tell about their HIV and AIDS status.

Have there been any problems that have emerged in your healing ministry as a result of people not being healed of HIV and AIDS?

I would not know anything negative because as I have said the conditions of those who come for prayer have improved though they might still have the virus. Others who did not return might have been disappointed in the outcome of the prayer.

Has the HIV and AIDS pandemic influenced your approach to the healing ministry in any way?

HIV and AIDS places a huge challenge on the healing ministry. I think it is very important that the healing ministry of my church be re-defined. There is a need to educate people around the importance of healing ministry with a specific focus on a holistic (body, mind and psychic) approach to healing. Apart from a need to have thorough theological education there is also the need of establishing ecumenical prayer groups based on the need for healing and not on doctrines of various churches.

A person for whom healing prayer is done does not need to be holy. Anyone who believes can be healed. Likewise, a person who prays for a sick person might not necessarily be holy but he/she must be a believer. Confession of sins is not a prerequisite to be healed because Christ healed those who came to him on the basis of their faith alone.

Do you have an approach to the HIV and AIDS pandemic that is over and above prayer for People living with HIV and AIDS?

Our church does not oppose the ABC policy totally. We support the A and the B part of that policy. To abstain is a biblical principle for all the unmarried people, to be faithful is also a biblical principle for those who are married. The use of condoms are prohibited because if people could stick to the first two principles, that of abstinence and faithfulness there would not be any need to use a condom. People must lead a God revering life and they will have life in abundance.

Are there any other ways in which your church addresses the HIV and AIDS pandemic?

Pastoral counselling is essential to help a sick person to grow spiritually. For a conducive environment where healing can be done, my church is planning to establish prayer houses. These houses will house the sick and the vulnerable including not only the children but also the elderly. Our aim with these prayer houses is to make the great commandment of love and care tangible.

Interview Six

This pastor started to work as a minister when he was only 19 years old. He says that the Universal Church to which he belongs does not claim to conduct healing, saying that healing is not in their hands and it is entirely God's will to heal the sick. This church is situated in the heart of the city of Windhoek. It is huge building that can easily house 3 000 people. This pastor is single and does not have any children. He is 25 years old .

Do you practice the ministry of healing in your church?

I was only 19 years old when I started as a pastor. The Universal Church in particular does not claim healing. We have no power to heal. Since the beginning God has shown his healing powers. He is the healer (Ex. 16: 26ff). Healing messages in the Bible are so many. Healing of a person happens through faith in the words of the Bible (Is. 56). The church does not heal but God does. No matter what the sickness is we believe that if you have faith you will be healed. We should also bear in mind that the blessings of God do not come without self sacrifice. Problems came from the Devil therefore sickness is the result of disobedience. According to Mathew 10: 10 the Devil came to steal and destroy. On the contrary Jesus came to rescue, heal and give life in abundance. The ministry of Jesus was full of healing activities. There is no sickness that God cannot heal including HIV and AIDS. According to Mark 9: 23 they brought a sick man to the disciples whom they could not heal. The reason was that the man himself was doubting and doubt can destroy you.

What are some of the reasons why you practice this ministry?

According the Epistle of James we are promised that we will receive anything that we ask in faith (1: 6, 5: 13-14). This is the reason for us to practice healing.

What are some of the ways that you practice this ministry?

We need to read the Word of God if we want to understand the ways in which God works. God never said that HIV cannot be healed. If we pray for the sick we lay hands on them but that is not a promise of healing. The healing only happens where there is absolute faith and trust in God. Healing can only take place where the sick and the practitioner of healing work together in faith. If the powerful streams of faith can flow from both sides, surely, God through faith will heal any disease. The type of healing prayer that we do for HIV and AIDS is called a chain of prayer. It is important to know that healing happens differently.

Are there any reasons why you pray for the sick in these particular ways?

There is no specific reason for the manner in which we pray for the sick. We do not differentiate between sicknesses therefore we treat them all in a similar manner. In fact our approach to all sicknesses remain the same.

What are the different ways you believe God heals people?

In some cases there is an instant healing and in other cases it happens through a process.

What kind of sicknesses/diseases do you pray for when it comes to healing?

We deal with every sickness in the same way. Anything that destabilises the normal condition of a person is being dealt with as a sickness. Therefore we do not only pray for physical ailments we also pray for those situations that breed diseases and sicknesses.

Have you ever prayed for people to be healed of HIV and AIDS?

We do not claim that we can heal HIV and AIDS but we believe that God can heal HIV and AIDS. If we pray for someone with HIV in particular we do not tell them that they are healed and should therefore throw away their tablets. It is incumbent on the recipient of the healing prayer to go back to be tested again to verify that he/she has been healed or even to stay without going for a verification test. It depends entirely on them whether to throw the medication away or to continue to use it. We have testimonies of people who got healed from HIV. Many people returned to doctors for testing and were found to be HIV non-reactive.

Are there any particular problems surrounding prayer for people suffering from HIV and AIDS?

HIV and AIDS to me is not a unique illness that can bring about unique problems. Like I said faith in God is the solution to any problem that even HIV can bring about. We need to know that faith is like a muscle and with every exercise it gets stronger and stronger. We never pronounce healing to people instead we say that they should say 'I am healed.' We do not see HIV as a different kind of problem.

Did you ever pray for people with HIV and AIDS who you suspect have it but who do not declare their status?

Sometimes one suspects but people are silent. There are many reasons why they choose to be silent. They are afraid to be discriminated on the basis of their HIV status.

What have been the results of your prayers for people with HIV and AIDS?

Many people returned to doctors for testing and were found to be HIV non-reactive. Some do not come back and it is hard to tell what exactly the position of those people is. We have testimonies of people who are healed from HIV and AIDS.

Have there been any problems that have emerged in your healing ministry as a result of people not being healed of HIV and AIDS?

We have not experienced anything like that before. I am not aware of anything particular. Sometimes we are aware of the fact people come to healing services to test us out. Those people are responsible for the often false stories that they spread.

Has the HIV and AIDS pandemic influenced your approach to the healing ministry in any way?

We deal with every sickness in the same way. The cause of HIV is the Devil and we are fighting him with all the spiritual tools that we have. The solution (or call it a cure) for HIV is not in the medical laboratories, it is right here, it is in our behaviour. We need to know that no one can fight spiritual problems with physical means. Behind every problem there is evil. It is good to know that behind every problem is not God; people are far from God therefore HIV is one of those problems with spiritual roots/origins.

Do you have an approach to the HIV and AIDS pandemic that is over and above prayer for people living with HIV and AIDS?

The only thing we proclaim is that people should live life responsibly and keep up their Christian morals. All of this comes with education. The biggest problem around HIV and AIDS is that people still live in darkness. We fight every problem, of which HIV and AIDS is one, through faith. We do not accommodate problems of any kind.

Are there any other ways in which your church addresses the HIV and AIDS pandemic?

Prayer is the main resource that we have to deal with HIV and AIDS. For we are convinced that HIV is embedded in the way in which people live their lives. In order to solve HIV we need to solve the problem of the Devil first. Behavioural problems cannot be solved in laboratories.

Interview Seven

This Pastor is a South African national. He has a Masters in political science, is married and has two children. His house is in the former coloured residential area called Khomas Dal. On the day of our appointment I observed that this house serves as a consultation room of a medical practitioner. People come with all kinds of problems ranging from barrenness to marital problems.

Do you practice the ministry of healing in your church?

Yes I practice the ministry of healing. I am practicing this ministry because the Bible teaches me.

What are some of the reasons why you practice this ministry?

I do not have a particular reason to practice healing. It is the instruction of God.

What are some of the ways that you practice this ministry?

I do prayer for healing on a one to one basis and also in large meetings. I do not have specific reasons for the two methods that I apply. It depends mostly on where and when a person seeks a healing prayer. Sometimes a person wants to be healed in the

worship service and sometimes a person comes to my office on which occasion I first counsel and then pray for the person.

Are there any reasons why you pray for the sick in these particular ways?

I do not have any particular reason. I practice my healing ministry according to what I see in the Bible.

What are the different ways you believe God heals people?

Through prayer and medical science. Sometimes God uses both of these together for healing to take place.

What kind of sicknesses/diseases do you pray for when it comes to healing?

I pray for all kinds of diseases and sicknesses. It is not for me to decide which one to be healed and which one not. I therefore pray for all sicknesses because God can heal all sicknesses.

Have you ever prayed for people to be healed of HIV and AIDS?

I have prayed for a lot of people who were HIV positive and even for those that already had full blown AIDS. I have seen many people healed from HIV and AIDS. I myself was HIV and AIDS positive and I was healed through prayer and faith.

Are there any particular problems surrounding prayer for people suffering from HIV and AIDS?

A particular problem that I see with regards to HIV and AIDS is that it poses a challenge to the spiritual life of a person. The whole battle is in the mind of a person. It is about the spirit of death and life in fullness. A person has to take a decision and to stick to it. Divine healing is only possible where a person bravely says no to the previous sinful lifestyle.

Did you ever pray for people with HIV and AIDS who you suspect have it but who do not declare their status?

Since I prefer to have a talk with most of the people that come to me for prayer, I seem not to have many instances where I might have prayed for someone whom I suspected was HIV positive and did not tell me. There might have been occasions

especially in the open church healing services where people might have been served with a healing prayer without me knowing in advance.

What have been the results of your prayers for people with HIV and AIDS?

I have seen people healed from HIV and AIDS and some of them went for confirmation testing and were found to be HIV negative. I do not know what exactly happened. What I know for sure is that God can heal HIV if you believe.

Have there been any problems that have emerged in your healing ministry as a result of people not being healed of HIV and AIDS?

I do not experience any particular problem because HIV to me is a sickness like any other. Those people who are not being healed are prayed for on a continuous basis. We do not go about prayer like we are doing business. We prefer to stay with the sick until we see change in their lives. Hence I do not know of a case that I can refer to as a failed healing attempt.

Has the HIV and AIDS pandemic influenced your approach to the healing ministry in any way?

HIV and AIDS does not influence my approach to healing. The problem we are facing is that of magic. Witchcraft influences my approach to healing in Africa. Peoples' faith is destroyed because they are told to eat, drink and see things that are not really related to the problem they have. Another problem is that of sin. The issue is that Jesus has said go and sin no more. On the contrary many people come for healing and afterwards return to their sinful lifestyle.

Do you have an approach to the HIV and AIDS pandemic that is over and above prayer for People living with HIV and AIDS?

I do not believe in sex before marriage and I do not condone such a life style. I believe in abstinence. HIV would not be a big problem only if the government could stop making it a secret.

Are there any other ways in which your church addresses the HIV and AIDS pandemic?

Apart from praying we have a huge feeding scheme for HIV and AIDS infected people. We are also running an orphanage. Our ministry for those that are sick does not begin and end with the PLWHA. We are also concentrating on the prostitutes. The reason why we are doing this is because we are realistic. You cannot heal a sickness if you do not treat symptoms. I do not imply that prostitution is the sole cause of HIV.

Interview Eight

This pastor among all those whom I have interviewed, is the only white person. He is 62 years old, married and has 4 children and 8 grand children. He is ministering in the Protestant Pentecostal Church that is situated in the city of Windhoek in a residential area called Hochland Park. His church is famous for healing services and people stream there in large numbers to be healed from within Namibia and also from abroad. This church is thus far the only one that has a racially integrated membership.

Do you practice the ministry of healing in your church?

I believe that divine healing is one of God's gifts to humans. He gives the power to heal to whom he wants. I do not link the power for healing to a person or to a church. I should say that the healing ministry was timely for Namibia. Our motto is health and healing in our land. We concentrate on emotional healing and healing between different ethnic groups. We are regarded as a church that gathers everyone regardless of race, creed, or political orientation.

What are some of the reasons why you practice this ministry?

God started the physical healing in our church. I am not the one who heals people but it is God who heals his people. I am only helping people to come to a stronger faith and to cast all their anxieties on God. A strong and firm faith is necessary for healing to take place. We have been practicing a healing ministry for about nine years now. My relationship with God is very important to understand God's will with people. It is based on the Scriptures and the plan of reconciliation that was manifested through Christ suffering and death.

What are some of the ways that you practice this ministry?

I am practicing the healing ministry in the church and all over Namibia. I am also doing healing ministry in the Republic of South Africa. We practice healing also on

invitation. I practice healing because it is a demonstration of God's love towards the sick. We have overcome stigma and people can come any time to ask for a prayer. We pray for people from all walks of life. Our healing ministry is not discriminatory.

We have a large number of people coming for prayer. If I may give you statistics only in the year 2006 about 22 000 people came from all over the world, even as far as from Australia, to receive healing. I do private prayer sessions but I prefer to do it in a worship meeting because the spirit and faith demonstrated by those participating has a huge impact on the outcome of the prayer. I do hospital visits and pray for the sick.

Are there any reasons why you pray for the sick in these particular ways?

Some prayer meetings are private and confidential. This is important because I want people to be free.

What are the different ways you believe God heals people?

God heals people through miracles. I fully believe that people can be healed through medical science. I am quite balanced on this view. Those people in the medical service are servants of God. The important key to healing is faith. My faith and the faith of the other meet and bring about the results we both hope and pray for. Healing is not a method; it is the faith that contributes to healing.

What kind of sicknesses/diseases do you pray for when it comes to healing?

There is no sickness for which we have not prayed. Aided by our home based care programme we have found that about 250 people came for prayer that were HIV and AIDS positive. So many other diseases like diabetes, TB and the physically challenged people come for prayer. We pray for the sick and also have follow up programmes in place just to ensure that everyone is given the kind of support that he/she might need. We also distribute a lot of food for vitamin supplements and for bodily health.

Have you ever prayed for people to be healed of HIV and AIDS?

Yes I did and this is done in co-operation with medical doctors that we have in our church. We have proofs that people have been healed from HIV and AIDS. These include medical reports as well and we could also see with our own eyes the changes

that have taken place in the physical appearance of a person. Our healing ministry does not end with a prayer. We choose to walk with the sick and to experience the ups and the downs together with them. We encourage people to talk to God through the Word of God. We also encourage them to do away with unhealthy habits that may hinder healing from taking place. Unforgiveness is one such a hindrance that we encourage people not to practice. The more we realise the impact of HIV, the deeper we get involved to help the HIV positive people. We give clothing, food and even financial support if necessary.

Are there any particular problems surrounding prayer for people suffering from HIV and AIDS?

One of the problems is that the faith of a person must be awakened, not to put trust in humans but in God because only God can heal. People are inclined to believe in those things that they are able to see, which is contrary to what the Bible is teaching.

Did you ever pray for people with HIV and AIDS who you suspect have it but who do not declare their status?

We had cases where we suspected that some people whom we prayed for might be HIV positive. We have very few cases where people do not reveal their status. This is so because we have built a relationship of trust. We do everything we can to win their trust.

What have been the results of your prayers for people with HIV and AIDS?

People have been healed. The physical conditions of so many others have improved.

Have there been any problems that have emerged in your healing ministry as a result of people not being healed of HIV and AIDS?

We did not encounter a problem that I can refer to as such. The only problem I think is the faithlessness of the people. Another is that they seem to have faith in things that they can see and in immediate results. They do not think that a prayer for healing is the beginning of a long process of actual healing, not that I question that God can and does heal people miraculously.

Has the HIV and AIDS pandemic influenced your approach to the healing ministry in any way?

In no particular way. But as a matter of fact we have counselling sessions whereby we teach people how to live life healthily. Our sermons and spiritual talks are always loaded with teachings about HIV and AIDS.

Do you have an approach to the HIV and AIDS pandemic that is over and above prayer for People living with HIV and AIDS?

We preach abstinence. We do not believe in condoms. I do not trust the absolute safety of condoms. I believe in a one man one wife relationship that is what God wanted us to be like. Cohabitation is not biblical. We teach young people to say “no” to sex and to wait until they are old enough. My healing ministry does not contradict medical science. We have a very close cooperation with the doctors. We even refer a lot of people to them for medical observation. Curses, embitterment, unforgiveness and sin are also contributing factors of a failed healing prayer. Our healing ministry is based on the Scriptures and a positive result of a prayer depends entirely on the faith of both the practitioner and the recipient of a healing prayer.

Are there any other ways in which your church addresses the HIV and AIDS pandemic?

Right now we are busy building an orphanage that will care for the vulnerable children and the victims of HIV and AIDS. Apart from this we have home based care programmes where we on a continuous basis monitor the improvement of a patient. Food and financial assistance is given where necessary.

Interview Nine

This pastor is between the ages of 65 and 70. He is the Bishop of the Saint John’s Apostolic Faith Mission. He has various certificates in theology from the All Africa School of theology, qualifications which he obtained in the early seventies. This church is largely an ethnic based church, the majority of its members are all from the Otjiherero clan.

Do you practice the ministry of healing in your church?

Our healing ministry is based on the Scriptures. God gives us the power of healing through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 28: 16-20, Jesus sent his disciples out

into the world and promised that he would be with them until the end of the world. It is against the background of this promise that we work and serve the people of God.

What are some of the reasons why you practice this ministry?

Jesus sent his disciples out on the mission of healing by prayer according to Matthew 10: 5ff. We have testimonies of lots of people who got healed through our healing ministry. Among these people are those on whom the doctors had given up. We have been given all the power to heal any kind of diseases through prayer (Mat. 10 1ff, Mk. 3: 13-19, Lk. 6: 12-16).

What are some of the ways that you practice this ministry?

There are different methods that we apply for healing such as a scarf with the effigy of Jesus (Acts 19: 11-12). We put the scarf on the head of the sick and pray. We have a bigger banner which four people hold at each end in a horizontal position. Everyone who desires to be healed has to walk under this banner, on which occasion the apostles who are standing under the banner lay hands on the heads of the sick and pray that they be healed. This exercise is good because it is time saving.

We are using olive oil according to Leviticus 14: 14ff. We do not apply blood because the blood of Christ was shed for everyone. We believe that the blood of Christ that we drink at the Holy Communion has a healing effect and that it empowers people and also removes all their pain. Holy Communion is not served every day, except for those that are sick. We do this most of the time on a face to face basis. Another method that we are using is the water in the bath over which we pray. Those people who bath with that water are taken to be cleansed from all sin and also to be healed from all diseases (Num. 19: 14-19). On these occasions of bathing, women are accompanied by a female disciple and men are accompanied by a male disciple. The pastor pours the water all over the body of a sick person. We also give water in bottles for people to drink. This water has been prayed over and is used for medicinal purposes. This usage is based on 2Kings 2: 19-22 and that meaning, in our understanding of the Word of God, is still applicable today.

Are there any reasons why you pray for the sick in these particular ways?

According to Acts 4: 12-15, the name of Christ alone can heal the sick and we have witnessed this with our own eyes. According to Acts 3: 11ff, Peter healed people, sometimes if only his shadow passed over the sick person it was enough for healing. We are using the Bible as the blueprint for the reasons behind our healing ministry.

What are the different ways you believe God heals people?

God can heal people miraculously and he can heal them through other mediums of healing such as medical science.

What kind of sicknesses/diseases do you pray for when it comes to healing?

I pray for all kinds of diseases. It is my belief that all sicknesses can be healed through prayer.

Have you ever prayed for people to be healed of HIV and AIDS?

HIV and AIDS, according to the Bible is a punishment from God. We pray but cannot promise healing because it is a curse from God. Only God can remove the curse and heal those infected with HIV (see Deut. 28: 58-61). One thing that we do certainly is to reprimand people and encourage them to live a God fearing life. After the present life God will remove all the diseases when He will 'recreate' the whole earth. Diseases are as a result of the disobedience of people. This is also the sign of 666. God sent these curses into the world. If we start to obey God, HIV, Tsunamis, and earthquakes will become history, because these are the signs of displeasure that God has with his people.

Are there any particular problems surrounding prayer for people suffering from HIV and AIDS?

The very reason why there is no cure for HIV as yet, is because it is not yet God's time. HIV originated from the immoral lifestyle of the gays and lesbian people (Lev. 20: 13ff). HIV is not curable, rather we do not have the power to heal it. In God's time HIV and AIDS will be cured and that is the time when medical science will find a medication. It is also only in God's time that HIV and AIDS can be healed through prayer. I am not saying that we cannot heal HIV and AIDS through prayer. What I am saying is that it is God's will whom to heal.

Did you ever pray for people with HIV and AIDS who you suspect have it but who do not declare their status?

We very often pray for people whom we suspect might be HIV positive, especially during worship services. The reason why they chose to come to the worship services is because we pray for everyone and everyone who desires healing walks under the banner. This is the reason for which we would not be able to know about all the cases.

What have been the results of your prayers for people with HIV and AIDS?

Although it is my conviction that HIV is not curable, those for whom we pray have improved health wise. We also encourage them to use the ARVs consistently.

Have there been any problems that have emerged in your healing ministry as a result of people not being healed of HIV and AIDS?

Many families are disappointed to see that their family member is not healed after a healing prayer. In other cases some of those for whom we have prayed die. We hear that people are blaming us when they are not healed.

Has the HIV and AIDS pandemic influenced your approach to the healing ministry in any way?

Given the fact that HIV and AIDS is a sickness like any other I am not aware of any particular influence that it has on our approach to divine healing.

Do you have an approach to the HIV and AIDS pandemic that is over and above prayer for people living with HIV and AIDS?

We are enemies of condoms. Those people who learn how to use condoms do not stop sinning. By promoting the use of condoms sin is altogether warranted.

People must be faithful to their partners, those who are married and the single ones must refrain from practicing sex.

Are there any other ways in which your church addresses the HIV and AIDS pandemic?

We do not run feeding programmes or any other HIV related programmes as yet. We are however planning to start with some of them very soon.

Interview Ten

This pastor is 36 years old and is married with two children. He studies music at the College of Arts in Windhoek. He also has a diploma in theology. He believes in divine healing and also practices it. However, in his view divine healing is like the medical profession with surgeons and dentists. He believes that a person can heal sicknesses but that the Spirit endows one with particular gifts to heal particular sicknesses.

Do you practice the ministry of healing in your church?

We practice healing. It is an integral part of our ministry. It is part of our identity. People know our church for its healing services. Our healing ministry is informed by such texts as Mark 16 where emphasis is laid on empowerment. Everyone who has received Christ is a child of God and is empowered to heal the sick and to exercise exorcism. Our healing ministry is wholly Scriptural and we do it by the conviction of the Holy Spirit. One needs to undergo a baptism of the Spirit to be able to practice divine healing.

What are some of the reasons why you practice this ministry?

We do not have specific reasons for practicing healing in our church. As I have already said everything depends on the Holy Spirit. It is through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that healing can take place. I am not the one who heals, God does, and it is by the power of the Spirit that healing can actually take place.

What are some of the ways that you practice this ministry?

We have different ways in which we do healing. Sometimes crusades are organised specifically for healing which to a great extent is mostly an open-air service. At other times we have healing in the normal church services and we also have private healing sessions which are mostly preceded by intensive counselling. A prayer for healing is not just about mumbling words. It is more than that, it is a specific prayer loaded with specific words of choice. It is not only about the words that you use it is about having to be filled with the Holy Spirit. In doing a healing prayer you need to talk with authority. You need to be able to chase the Devil out of a person and to be able to do that you must have authority and conviction.

Are there any reasons why you pray for the sick in these particular ways?

The type of anointing that you receive from the Holy Spirit determines what you can do. We are all baptised with the Spirit but each one of us has a different function to fulfil.

What are the different ways you believe God heals people?

There is no specific way for God to heal the sick. Some people get healed on the spot and for others it is a beginning of the process of healing. I would say that divine healing also works more like the medical profession whereby you have a group of doctors that work with hearts and another group that works with the brain. Being a divine healer does not automatically make you to be a healer of all kinds of diseases.

What kind of sicknesses/diseases do you pray for when it comes to healing?

In my case I pray for witchcraft, sexual problems, HIV and AIDS, kidneys, cancer, heart disease, diabetes and blood pressure. I am not implying that I cannot heal other diseases than those that I have listed; in fact it is not me who heals, so for God any disease can be healed.

Have you ever prayed for people to be healed of HIV and AIDS?

I am praying for those that are infected with HIV and for those who have full-blown AIDS.

Are there any particular problems surrounding prayer for people suffering from HIV and AIDS?

The biggest problem I have seen with HIV and AIDS is that a big number of PLWHA have either lost hope or faith. A person without hope and faith cannot be healed. The other problem is that people have hardened their hearts and they simply do not want to hear and accept the Word of God. Another regrettable problem is that these factors contribute to the fact that some of these people become mentally unsound.

Did you ever pray for people with HIV and AIDS who you suspect have it but who do not declare their status?

I have also prayed for many people not knowing that they were HIV positive but it is not about me knowing. The fact is that God knew that they were HIV positive. The Holy Spirit identifies the types of problems or sicknesses and it can never be wrong.

What have been the results of your prayers for people with HIV and AIDS?

I have experienced results from those for whom I have prayed. Some got healed and some not. The result of a healing prayer depends on the faith of a person. Those people who are not healed seem not to have enough faith. Some people ask questions such as: Where was God when I got infected? And Why did he not prevent me from getting HIV? Meaning, of what use is it to pray to God for healing or to seek healing from God if in the first place he could not prevent it. Those people whose lives are changed by prayer normally do not leave us and in that way we know that he/she has been impacted by the prayer. We have medical proofs to show that people have been healed from HIV. We encourage people to go for a confirmation test before they can testify that they have been healed. We regard medical science as part of God's plan for healing.

Have there been any problems that have emerged in your healing ministry as a result of people not being healed of HIV and AIDS?

Some people's minds are affected badly. Some others simply do not have anything to do with God anymore. Some develop apathy for the church. Some become very angry with anyone that they associate with the healing ministry.

Has the HIV and AIDS pandemic influenced your approach to the healing ministry in any way?

HIV and AIDS has surely influenced the approach to healing. We have been forced to concentrate more on counselling and also on sexual education. A person with HIV cannot just be prayed for. You need to talk to the person and assure that person that you are walking with him/her whatever the result may be after the prayer.

Do you have an approach to the HIV and AIDS pandemic that is over and above prayer for people living with HIV and AIDS?

I proclaim abstinence which is a biblical value. I do not deviate from the biblical teaching of abstaining from premarital sex and of being faithful to one's partner.

Are there any other ways in which your church addresses the HIV and AIDS pandemic?

Other forms in which we show our empathy to those that are infected and affected is through feeding schemes and through what little financial or material assistance we give for them to acquire their basics needs on a daily basis. This is an expensive undertaking but we do not count our contributions in monetary terms but more in terms of a contribution that we have to make towards a healthy society.

Category B: Recipients of the healing ministry

Interview A

This informant is a trained HIV and AIDS counsellor. She is 25 years old. She belonged to the Lutheran church before she became a member of the Pentecostal churches. She has been to at least two Pentecostal churches thus far. After completing grade 12 she was forced by circumstances to look for a job. She blamed the Lutheran church for not having given her the support she needed when her mother died. Since she did not have a support system she had no choice than to work in a restaurant. It was at this restaurant that she found her first boyfriend somebody who appeared to be caring and loving. However, he infected her with HIV. She believes that if the church had given her the support she needed that she would not have HIV today.

When you were told that you are HIV positive how did your personal faith in God help you to deal with the new reality?

When I was told that I am HIV positive the first thought that came to my mind was that the heavenly Father did not love me and that He had abandoned me. Why did He not send a guardian angel for my protection? My small world fell into pieces and I did not see any reason as to why I should continue to live. I felt that God did not exist. I moved from one church another for various reasons, not necessarily for healing purposes.

Do you believe in divine healing?

Right now I do not believe in a miraculous healing. I think those churches that preach divine healing in most instances are misleading people. There is a need that they should define their ministry of healing in clear terms. I have seen that olive oil was applied in some instances when ministering to the sick. In my case no such thing was

done, probably because I have never being a strong believer in divine healing. I do not question that God can heal but I have a problem with the fake healing promises that are made in His name. In my view the claim of healing HIV and AIDS is misleading and lands the faith of those people who cannot be healed in a huge problem.

Was it on your own account that you resorted to seek for divine healing or were you advised by somebody to do so?

I took myself to the Pentecostal church even though I did not really go for healing I had this innate desire to be healed. Unfortunately, to my surprise I found that the people of this church are very self-centred. The biggest problem for me is that they treat you for what you have and not for who you are.

Prior to your HIV positive status were you a strong believer of the physical healing by divine intervention?

I did not really think about it strongly. I guess I know that people were talking about divine healing but if this was truly happening was not one of my worries at that time.

What is the basis of your belief in divine healing?

I believe in divine healing on the basis of the biblical teachings. Christ is my role model when it comes to healing.

Have you received prayer for healing?

Yes I received a healing prayer but I must admit that I was not very enthusiastic. In my view the claim of healing HIV and AIDS is misleading and destroys the faith of those people who cannot be healed.

What was the result of this?

I did not get healed. I hated God, the church and the people. However, I do believe that a person can be HIV positive and still live a healthy life.

Are you receiving any other forms of treatment?

I am among a very caring group of people with who I am working. That is the most important part for me when it comes to treatment. I am on ARVs that I will never let go of.

How has your life changed since you received prayer for healing?

Since I did not get healed I became miserable. I lost trust in everything that the church had to tell. I stayed away from the church for quite a time. I only started to go to church again because that church that I now belong to is very caring. The church to which I now belong is the Latter-day Saints. This church is different from the rest in that the presence of the Holy Spirit can be felt and the people are full of compassion and care. The president of this church is aware of my HIV status and he goes out of his way to make me feel at home. I should add that this church in my view is the right place to be because of its enriching teachings and programmes.

Are there any particular problems that have occurred since your received prayer for healing?

No, except that I was failed in my expectations. I did not lead an irresponsible life even after the healing prayer had failed. I reckon I did not have anybody to blame, as I brought myself for prayer and I had to bear the consequences.

Has your experience of divine healing changed your beliefs about it?

In the first place I did not really believe in divine healing. I am now more than ever convinced about the fact that most of divine healing claims are only fakes.

What do you think about the practice of your church toward divine healing?

Particularly in relation to HIV and AIDS, the churches that practice healing must introduce a component of education and counselling in their ministry. This will help them to prepare people for the outcome of a prayer, be it positive or negative.

Do you know anyone else who has a similar experience to your own?

There was a friend of mine but I have lost touch with her. I really do not know where she is.

Interview B

This informant is 35 years old. She tested HIV positive in 2002. She has a 7 year old son on whose behalf she hopes that God will spare her for some years to come. She lives in Windhoek in Katutura, a residential area for blacks. She is unemployed and her only means of income is her family.

When you were told that you are HIV positive how did your personal faith in God help you to deal with the new reality?

My faith served as the buttress at that time at which I received my results. My faith in God helped me to accept the results and to live a normal life. I prayed to God for the availability of a medication.

Do you believe in divine healing?

I do believe in divine healing, though at times I am hesitant. I believe that God through Christ healed the sick and the Gospels testify to that. I trust that my faith will help me to heal. If someone prays for me to be healed and if I believe I do not doubt that God will heal me. I personally do not believe that HIV and AIDS is only curable through scientific means. I am certain that prayer and faith have a vital role to play even through the use of the scientific medicine. I personally do not rely on the prayers of others only, I pray for myself.

Was it on your own account that you resorted to seek for divine healing or were you advised by somebody to do so?

I was advised to attend a Pentecostal church called Christ Embassy to which I have only been once. I went to this church on account of my brother. While I was attending this church I believed that no one among them could heal me through prayer and laying on of hands. They prayed for me and laid hands on me. I was then told that I was healed.

Prior to your HIV positive status were you a strong believer of the physical healing by divine intervention?

Prior to my HIV status I believed that God can heal any disease. It was my belief that through prayer and personal faith one could be healed but I am not so sure anymore. I received a prayer for healing which I personally did not believe in.

What is the basis of your belief in divine healing?

God's Word. He promised us that He would give us anything that we ask in His name.

Have you received prayer for healing?

Yes. On account of my brother I went and received a healing prayer. In this church the practice is that you write your name, telephone number and your problem down on a piece of paper which they provide you with. Carrying this piece of paper in your hands you move to the front and when your turn comes the pastor takes the paper from you and prays for the problem which is on that piece of paper. In my case I had written that I am HIV positive and that I want to be healed. A prayer was done for me after which I was pushed on my forehead with the expectation that I should have fallen because that hand is filled with the Holy Spirit and the assumption is that no one can stand upright if touched with the Spirit filled hand. After I was helped to come to my feet I was told to throw my ARVs to the floor as an indication that I believe that I was healed but I did not have the ARVs with me at that time.

What was the result of this?

I was not healed. My hope is that I will be healed but I do not want to put my faith in it, as I am afraid of a possible disappointment.

Are you receiving any other forms of treatment?

I am on ARV treatment which I will never stop using.

How has your life changed since you received prayer for healing?

After I received that prayer my life was not changed, probably because I did not believe in that prayer which was also done in tongues. I would have preferred that the prayer be done in a language that I understand because I think if I could understand the content of the prayer, my response could be different and the results could possibly be different as well.

Are there any particular problems that have occurred since your received prayer for healing?

I experienced no particular problem as I did not really believe in healing of HIV and AIDS through prayer. My faith was not changed in any particular way.

Has your experience of divine healing changed your beliefs about it?

I do not question that divine healing could still take place today. What we need to bear in mind is that divine healing is purely by God's will.

What do you think about the practice of your church toward divine healing?

They need to take HIV and AIDS seriously. HIV and AIDS need more than just a prayer. The church needs to be involved more on a personal level with those who are HIV positive and even with those that are affected.

Do you know anyone else who has a similar experience to your own?

No.

Interview C

This informant is 39 years old. Her academic studies ended at Grade 9. She is single with two children. She is not employed and her means of income is her family. She lives in Khorichas where unemployment is over 80%. It is under such circumstances that the inhabitants of this town are trying to make a living. It was in 2006 that she was diagnosed with HIV.

When you were told that you are HIV positive how did your personal faith in God help you to deal with the new reality?

I was a regular church goer but I should admit that my faith was not that deep. The breaking news about my HIV positive status has shaken the walls and foundations of my faith. At first when the HIV news was shared with me I had two thoughts. One was to go to a witchdoctor and the other was to repent. As I did not have money to pay for a witchdoctor I finally decided to repent. I accepted the results of repentance as I believe that I do not have a virus in my body.

Do you believe in divine healing?

Long before I was HIV positive I believed in divine healing. My faith in divine healing is based on the Scriptures. Jeremiah 17: 14 and Psalm 91 are but a few of those texts that inform my faith in divine healing. I was healed from alcohol, sleeping with men, and also from the severe breathing problem that I had.

Was it on your own account that you resorted to seek for divine healing or were you advised by somebody to do so?

The very same day on which I received my results I visited a Pentecostal church (Patmos International). By this time I already knew and had heard about their healing services.

Prior to your HIV positive status were you a strong believer of the physical healing by divine intercourse?

I believed that God can heal miraculously. I have seen people who were healed from all kinds of sicknesses through prayer.

What is the basis of your belief in divine healing?

My faith in the Word of God is the basis of my belief in divine healing

Have you received prayer for healing?

I joined those for whom prayer was done but the pastor did not know that I was HIV positive. Upon the confirmation of my status which I know is now HIV negative, I plan to go public because I cannot keep such a miracle to myself. People must hear that God still heals if they repent and believe.

What was the result of this?

The pastor only became aware of my status when I came back the next day and witnessed that God has healed me from HIV. Apart from HIV, I had other problems such as kidneys, allergies and a lot of sores on my body, all of which have disappeared upon my repentance. I did not go for a HIV test to confirm my negative status. I plan to do the test as soon as possible. There is nothing that I doubt or fear as far as it concerns my present status because I know that my Lord does not put his children to shame if they truly believe in Him.

Are you receiving any other forms of treatment?

I am a repentee who believes and has faith in divine healing. It was on 6 August 2006 that I got my results of HIV and I resorted to taking ARVs for only the duration of August to October after which I decided to drop the using them as I believe that God has healed me, because if you repent and believe in God and his Word with your whole heart then you will be healed.

How has your life changed since you received prayer for healing?

I was healed from alcohol, sleeping with men, and also from the severe breathing problem that I had. Prior to my repentance I could not differentiate good from bad and right from wrong. I did not have time for God but now my life is centred around God. I find peace and comfort in the Word of God now, which was not the case before. I also find more meaning and have come to the realisation that one does not need the other to preach to you. One's faith and the time that one spends with the Word of God is the path to healing of which repentance and continuous engagement in prayer is the climax. I do not think that I will ever return to that world again. My HIV status has changed my perception on many things. My trust is in the Lord who promised that he will be with me all the days until the end of the world (Mat. 28: 20).

Are there any particular problems that have occurred since your received prayer for healing?

I did not experience any problem than and still do not have any problem now. I am healed and I am healthy.

Has your experience of divine healing changed your beliefs about it?

It has only been consolidated. I know now that God still heals those who pray to Him for health.

What do you think about the practice of your church toward divine healing?

I do not see anything major that needs to be changed. I would however love to see more open-air healing services be held.

Do you know anyone else who has a similar experience to your own?

I know about lots of people but I cannot think of any at this moment.

Interview D

This informant is 39 years old. At the time of receiving her HIV positive results she was not a Pentecostal. She has two children of whom one is a boy. She does not work and her family is also not supportive towards her. Thanks to the Pentecostal church she now belongs to she is able to send her daughter to school and also to put bread on

the table. This is not very easy for her as the church is also not in position to give her financial assistance every day. She was diagnosed with HIV in 2006.

When you were told that you are HIV positive how did your personal faith in God help you to deal with the new reality?

I refused to accept the results. I was devastated and deeply worried. At that time I was pregnant with my last born and I kept on worrying about his health and future. The first thing I thought of doing was to kill myself. However, my daughter of 13 years told me to go and see a pastor. My faith did not help me much as I contemplated a lot of things. I was angry with God and I wanted to end my life.

Do you believe in divine healing?

I believed in divine healing and still do.

Was it on your own account that you resorted to seek for divine healing or were you advised by somebody to do so?

I went to the pastor of the Pentecostal church whose healing services I have heard of but I did not find him on my first visit. I had to take my son who was born by that time for an HIV test and he was also found to be infected with HIV. He got this infection through breastfeeding. On my second visit I found the pastor and after he prayed for my son, I took him for another test and he was found to be HIV negative.

Prior to your HIV positive status were you a strong believer of the physical healing by divine intercourse?

I believed that God can heal sicknesses but I did not give it a deep thought. All along, even before I was found HIV positive, I strongly believed in God's ability to heal. My little boy's miraculous healing and the HIV non-reactive status of myself clearly embodies the message of divine healing. God is still in charge of the world and he still can heal any disease. Only human beings speak of diseases for which there is no cure. I believed that through prayer I could be healed.

What is the basis of your belief in divine healing?

The Word of God and the healings done by so many contemporary people of faith. We can see the miracles of healing even on the televisions. My faith in divine healing

is based on the Words and promises of God in the Bible. I know that God will never lie.

Have you received prayer for healing?

Yes I was prayed for. I was very anxious but deep within I know that God can heal me.

What was the result of this?

I should say that the doctors are dumb-founded and they cannot believe what they find from my second test after I was prayed for. At my second testing for HIV I was non-reactive.

Are you receiving any other forms of treatment?

I have been put off the pills as my cd4 count is also much too high. It is for three months now that I have not used the ARVs at the instruction of the doctor. The doctors said they do not know what is happening; they do not have an explanation.

How has your life changed since you received prayer for healing?

My life was changed tremendously. After I was prayed for I started a completely different life style. I have chosen different friends and have decided to move in different circles than those that I frequently visited. Before my own repentance I was an alcoholic. I had a boyfriend who I have jilted. Surely, I was not a loose person who lived life carelessly. The reality is that I am a very poor woman. Most of the time I do not have anything to eat but one thing is certain, in God I have abundance of life. I found wonderful friends in our church which is different from the Lutheran church to which I belonged. The element of care and of love is very evident and tangible in the Pentecostal church of Namibia. The assurance that God has given to us that he will be with us to the end of the world is my personal solace (Mat. 28: 20).

Are there any particular problems that have occurred since your received prayer for healing?

I cannot think of anything. The very reason that the doctors are dumb-founded by my results tells it all. How can I have a problem if God has taken away my biggest problem?

Has your experience of divine healing changed your beliefs about it?

No, instead it has only been cemented.

What do you think about the practice of your church toward divine healing?

My faith in divine healing has been consolidated by my own experience. I therefore desire that my church should run open air healing services more often, on which occasions people like us who have been healed should proclaim the wonders of God. This will make people see that God is still alive and active in the lives of those who have faith. Through faith nothing is impossible. In the beginning I was very angry at God. Why me? I kept on asking since I did not have anybody to care for me together with my children. What has given me comfort and strength to face the world head on were his Words: "Come to me all who are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Mat. 11: 28).

Do you know anyone else who has a similar experience to your own?

I knew a friend but I have relocated from that area where I used to live, thus I would not know if she still lives there.

Interview E

This informant is about 39-40 years of age. She did not want to reveal her age because in her culture there is a saying that a woman's age is a secret. She belongs to the African Methodist Episcopal Church, but she attends a Pentecostal church. She is not employed and does not have any income. A social centre in Windhoek has taken in her children from where they attend school every day. She was diagnosed with the HI-virus in 2005.

When you were told that you are HIV positive how did your personal faith in God help you to deal with the new reality?

Right from the start I believed that one must accept God together with the virus. By making God your personal companion you get huge internal strength and tranquillity. I did not panic when I was informed about my status. Of course I was worried but what gave me strength was the knowledge that even without the HI-virus one will eventually die. At the time of my results I belonged to the African Methodist

Episcopal Church. I was in no position to call upon the name of God. The reason that I did not call His name has nothing to do with my faith in Him. To be honest I was a bit angry with myself and was also disappointed in God.

Do you believe in divine healing?

I believed in divine healing even before I was infected with the HI-virus. Right now I believe that God can heal HIV and AIDS. I have faith in Him and I know that nothing is impossible for Him.

Was it on your own account that you resorted to seek for divine healing or were you advised by somebody to do so?

I visited a Pentecostal church on my own account after I was told that I am HIV positive.

Prior to your HIV positive status were you a strong believer of the physical healing by divine intercourse?

I always believed that God can heal all kinds of diseases.

What is the basis of your belief in divine healing?

Everything about divine healing is quite clearly stipulated in the Bible. How in the Old Testament prophets went about healing people who were sick and how Christ and the apostles had healed people is also to be read in the New Testament.

Have you received prayer for healing?

Since I received the healing prayer I can feel the many blessings in my life. I am getting attention and gifts from circles that I never thought would even have taken cognition of my existence. Such blessings in my view are part of the healing process.

What was the result of this?

I received a healing prayer from the pastor of the Christ Ambassador Church. As he was praying I got goose pimples all over my body. I fell down but I did not know until I was awakened again. I regarded that experience as the healing power of God that was released in me. I have concluded that I was healed. I define healing as having the ability to live a healthy life although you may have the HI-virus in your veins.

Are you receiving any other forms of treatment?

Based on my faith and understanding of life and death I do not take my ARVs regularly. I also advised my friends to do the same. My faith was my buttress right from the minute I was told about my HIV status until now.

How has your life changed since you received prayer for healing?

I have decided not to have sex. I am trying to live a morally sound life which I advise my friends also to do. I am only worried about the future of my children. It is my prayer that God will help them to become self-reliant one day.

Are there any particular problems that have occurred since your received prayer for healing?

Since I understood healing as being in many various forms I was not really disappointed when I realised that virus is still in my veins. I regard healing entirely as God's business and I know that God can heal instantly or that it can take the form of a process. I therefore do not have any ill feelings about my present health condition. I can be healthy and live a normal life with HIV.

Has your experience of divine healing changed your beliefs about it?

No, my belief in divine healing is not changed. (See my view of health and healing above).

What do you think about the practice of your church toward divine healing?

My previous church (African Methodist Episcopal Church) definitely falls short in many things when it comes to healing. One of the obvious things is the absence of the Holy Spirit. I am saying this because every time I go to the AME I do not feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary in the Christ Ambassador Church I feel young and healthy. I believe and have faith that Christ is the only solution to HIV and AIDS.

Do you know anyone else who has a similar experience to your own?

I know a friend who lives next door.

Category C: Participant observation

Universal Church of Namibia

Date: 26 June 2007

Time 18hoo

The Universal Church of Namibia has a huge building that could accommodate approximately 2 000 plus people. The atmosphere inside the church was solemn and quite fitting for a healing service. I say this on the basis of the silence and the feeling that I got which seemed to subscribe to the presence of the Spirit of the Lord. On the day of my visit the attendance was not so impressive, with an audience of roughly 80 people arriving.

I went to the front and took a seat in the second front row. As soon as the pastor got to the altar a prelude of music started which was pre-programmed in an electronic piano. After a while the volume of the music was lowered and the people had risen to their feet spontaneously. I got the impression that this was part of the routine. The pastor started praying. He continued to pray for about half an hour. Whilst the pastor was praying men and women dressed in black and white called 'disciples' were moving through the pews. Almost in the middle of the prayer I heard a loud scream and a bumping of feet on the floor. I opened my eyes and saw that it was a young woman aged 30-35. The next minute the 'disciples' swamped her and she continued to drum her feet and scream but after a while the screaming lowered and at that juncture she was carried to the fore. At this moment the pastor spread his arm (he had a microphone in the other hand) over all of us and said that we should say: "I am healed". We repeated the same phrase about three times. At this point the woman was fully calm and quiet. She was helped to her chair by the 'disciples'. The pastor continued his prayer, this time having changed his choice of words to connote a thanksgiving mode and closed with an Amen.

He went back to the pulpit and announced that we should open our Bibles at Gen 2: 15-17. This passage is about the Garden of Eden and the tree that Adam and Eve were not allowed to eat from. The pastor started his sermon and by this time he was standing in front of us with the Bible in hand. His point of emphasis was that God has

blessed us abundantly and therefore we should serve him with all that we have. He stressed the importance of giving tithes. Very lively music was played and led by a solo vocalist, monetary offerings were brought. Again here people were encouraged to offer generously. After the offerings were blessed, some announcements followed.

The pastor led us into singing and dancing and after a very cheerful clapping of hands, the service was closed with the blessing. The service lasted about an hour.

After the service I spoke to the pastor and re-confirmed our appointment. I noticed that since most of the people that were present had their own cars they do not really stay to chat. From those who were waiting for taxis' I got the impression that Tuesday nights are very important for healing services. I asked them what the woman suffered from and I was told that she was demon-possessed. Everybody was convinced that by the power of the Holy Spirit this woman had been healed. I asked them about the possibility of HIV and AIDS healing and they told me that they have witnessed that HIV was healed and that some people have shown them the confirmation results from the clinic. I wanted to have names and I was told that all of them were not there that night and some were not in Windhoek or that they have forgotten who the healed were. I went into my car and returned home wondering if ever we will be able to truly put faces to those who it was claimed had been healed from HIV and AIDS.

APPENDIX 3

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH PROJECT

Study title:

HIV and AIDS and its implications for the ministry of healing in some Pentecostal churches in Namibia.

Project Aims:

My sincere gratitude goes to you for cooperation and participation in this research project. The purpose of this study is to probe the implications and affect of the claim of healing HIV and AIDS. What consequences could such a claim possibly have on the faith of an individual? The study wants to reaffirm the power of healing but definitely wants to explore the effect that a failed healing attempt may have on the faith of a believer.

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Subject identification

In my years of service as an ordained minister I have come across People living with HIV and AIDS. I have seen their disappointment in the healing ministry of the Pentecostal churches as many of them were coming to me for counselling after a failed attempt of healing. I have observed that people were going from one church to

the other searching for answers for problems that troubles them. Often these problems were wearing them out physically, emotionally, and psychologically. So many people have tried different avenues of healing. Some went to see traditional doctors; others went for scientific medical observations and treatment. A large number of them would go to Pentecostal churches for healing. The preached message by the Pentecostal churches that by the power of the Holy Spirit any disease could be healed lured them. Consequently, people living with HIV and AIDS swamped the Pentecostal churches with the hope of receiving Healing.

I saw so many people who afterwards did not belong to any church, because they have lost trust in the healing ministry of the Pentecostal churches. Ironically, the Pentecostal churches are still the obvious choice when it comes to healing activities. Without refuting the possibility of divine healing this research project seeks to encourage people who are infected and affected to lead a positive life. It is an attempt at trying to proclaim the necessity of keeping hope. It is to encourage the sick to accept their HIV and AIDS status and to continue to cast hope and trust in the resurrected Lord. In short, this study wants to investigate the misleading claims of healing for HIV and AIDS and the implications that it has on the faith of an individual.

Description of Procedures

All the participants will be expected to be part of this project by free will. The participants will be asked to respond to questions without any intimidation from the side of the researcher. They are free to answer only some of the questions and to leave others that make them uncomfortable. From the participants would be expected to share their experiences and observations about the healing ministry in the Pentecostal churches. It is possible that they themselves had gone through the experience of healing, either as a healer or a recipient; thus, it would be appreciated if such experiences could be shared. The questions will cover a broad spectrum of healing as understood and practiced in the Pentecostal churches. The emphasis would be on the healing of HIV and AIDS. The Pentecostal theology of healing will lent a vantage point from which the healing ministry and activities will be analysed. The research will need a lot of time, thus, the researcher takes it on him to exercise excellent time

management. Interview appointments must start on time as each interview could easily take one to two hours.

If at all anybody would feel uneasy for an apparent reason and would not want to continue to participate such a person will be excused from the project. Otherwise, any identifiable problem will be referred to the professionals.

Potential Benefits

The information gathered is meant to be to the benefit of the Namibian nation and other parts of the world where similar problems that this research is occupied with are experienced. It is why it would be expected from the participants to partake in this project voluntarily. Compensations in the form of money or in kind would not be given. This is important to do away with the possible impression of a bribe for information. The researcher will however provide some snacks for the duration of the interview. After the project has been completed the researcher will go back to the participants and share the final results obtained from the project. At the end of the research, we can work through the recommendations and come up with possible suggestions as to how the findings could be put into practice.

Reimbursements

Due to the fact that the researcher has no funding for the project he undertakes to go to the participants, instead of expecting the participants to spend money on this project.

Written and Audio recordings

All the information gathered during interviews will be written down. Where permission is granted interviews will be tape-recorded and transcribe after the interview session. Everything will be kept in a safe and lockable place.

Method and date of disposal of gathered data

After the completion of the project, the researcher will burn all paper work with the questions and answers. Information recorded on audio cassettes will be erased. At the end of

the academic year the information will be disposed of towards the end November 2007 after final copy has been submitted.

Confidentiality and anonymity

All the participants in this research project are assured of the strict clause of confidentiality. A declaration of confidentiality will be signed to assure the participants that all the information given will be treated accordingly. Every effort will be made to keep responses confidential; therefore, no names will appear on any research forms, instead, codes will be used.

For the duration of the research project all the research records will be placed in a locked cabinet. The researcher will not leak any personal information pertaining to you. Please note that the researcher does not record your name or your home address in the interview nor in the notes that the researcher is taking. Therefore no one will be able to trace the data back to you for any reason. Whatever will be discussed cannot be traced back to you. When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity unless your specific consent for this activity is obtained. The forms will be destroyed after the research has been completed.

To participate is voluntary and withdrawal or decline is optional

Your participation in this project is entirely on a voluntary basis. Thus, you have the absolute right to withdraw from this project at any time. No grudges will be held against your person for declining or withdrawal. This will not harm your relationship with the researcher or the church.

Duration of the study

The duration of this study is eight weeks (June – July 2007). Knowing that such a study could be tiresome the researcher relies on your cooperation for the successful completion of the study.

Consent to Participate:

I.....(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....
.....