



**PIETERMARITZBURG CAMPUS**

**Healing in Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches: a Challenge to the  
Roman Catholic Church's Mission in Urban Centres of Cameroon**

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**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the academic requirements for the degree of  
Master of Theology (Catholic Theology)**

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**MARCH 2012**

## DECLARATION

I, **Ambroise BAYIHA BAYIHA**, declare that:

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to various people and organisations without which this essay would not have been completed. I would thank my supervisor, Prof Vicente Reig-Bellver for his dedication in guiding me through the writing of this dissertation and for his tireless and inspiring words that always helped me find the right sentence

In particular I would like to thank my religious congregation, the Society of the Catholic Apostolate (The Pallottines) with its Cameroonian Regional Rector, Rev Fr. Burno Ateba Edo SAC and his Council for having offered me the opportunity to study towards this degree. Thanks to my Local Community at St Vincent Pallotti House of Formation in Merrivale, to its staff and students for their constant support and encouragement during this time of study. In addition, I would like to thank St Vincent Catholic Parish – Pelham, Pietermaritzburg’s faithful who have been part of my life for the last nine months, many of whom did not stop encouraging me to complete this degree; to you all, a special word of thanks. It really shows that ‘together with Christ, we can transform the world’.

A word of gratitude to the Archbishop of Yaoundé, the Very Rev. Archbishop Victor Tonyè Bakot for permission to conduct the research in his ecclesial territory. In addition, Special thanks to the Rev Dr (Apostle) T V NDIH Vice President of The Apostolic Church Cameroon (TACC), who authorised me to research within their Church and was also interviewed along with nine other members. To the entire TACC I say thank you very much. A word of gratitude to Rev. Fr Robert Ndebi Biya, General Chaplain of the Ephphata Fraternity, for his availability; as well as all the members whose contributions to this study are valued. In the same vein, many thanks to Mr Leonard Nlam, Moderator of the Colonne de Feu Fraternity in Cameroon who authorised and facilitated the interviews with their members; to all of them I say thank you.

Most importantly, thanks to God the Source of life, faith and intelligence. To my family back home in Cameroon, thank you for planting and sustaining in me the seed that now is blossoming and for being there for me. To all those who are dear to me and who are too numerous to mention here, I say thank you for your love and support. Thank to Alexa Barnby for editing this dissertation.

## ABSTRACT

This study has been motivated by the observation made in urban centres of Cameroon, that many Catholics are getting involved in divine, faith or spiritual healing ministry; something that has not been the case few years ago. A closer look at this phenomenon revealed that, not only the people were committing to the ministry, but the influence was external to the Catholic Church. With the gradual expansion of Pentecostalism in the cities and towns of the country, with its emphasis on healing, healing ministry became more of a necessity for other churches. The Roman Catholic Church having neglected this ministry over centuries is at the crossroad. And the question is to know how Catholic healing ministers can improve their healing ministry with elements borrowed from Pentecostal churches.

In a fieldwork in Cameroonian city of Yaoundé, 20 interviews were conducted: 10 from the catholic side and 10 from the Pentecostal side represented by The Apostolic Church Cameroon. These data were analysed by the Thematic Analysis method. The analysis and the reflection that followed brought to light that there are different types of healing ministers operating in our cities but not all of them are actually doing what needs to be done. At this, Jesus Christ is presented as the model of healing for ministers to imitate; because Jesus did not heal for his own glory and interest rather for the infinite glory of God and for the salvation of the vulnerable people. The study states that ecumenism between Catholics and Pentecostal can well be initiated from healing ministry through a set of identified recommendations.

KEY WORDS: Roman Catholic Church, Faith Healing, Healing ministry, Pentecostalism and Charismatic Churches.

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## ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

- CCCF: Communauté Charismatique Colonne de Feu
- CCR: Catholic Charismatic Renewal
- CDF: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
- CR: Charismatic Renewal
- PCC: Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches
- RCC: Roman Catholic Church
- RCE: Renouveau Charismatique Ephphata
- RCIA: Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults
- TACC: The Apostolic Church of Cameroon

## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background and identification of research question

In towns and cities across Cameroon, the spread of Pentecostalism appears to be creating new ways of doing and behaving among Roman Catholic Church (RCC) members, as well as introducing new methods of healing among the clerics.

As an RCC priest and having studied some of the Church's doctrines and traditions, the researcher has, of late, observed that a great number of priests and lay people have embraced these new ways, mostly in connection with divine healing or faith healing (Akoko 2007:49-51; Bate 1995:15). Indeed, many members of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches (PCCs) are involved in the healing ministry and openly offer their services to those in need, in addition to ministering to those who come of their own accord. In the realisation of how many people are in need of a holistic healing approach, the call for an integral and liberating healing ministry to be introduced in the RCC arises as the faithful are struggling to cope with life. Much of the healing that takes place in PCCs is performed in the urban centres where people are confronted with poor living conditions and challenges such as unemployment, poor housing and promiscuity. Consequently, urban dwellers are more inclined to search for liberating healing than village dwellers. This change of focus in the RCC's healing mission in the pastoral field, from rural to the urban areas of Cameroon, is thus worth investigating.

The flood of RCC priests lately involved in healing ministry reminds us of Jesus' words to his disciples: "Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons" (Mat. 10:7-8). Is this increase caused by the fact that there are so many sick people to attend to in urban Cameroon or is there another reason? This research was conducted as field study, as there are no books that deal directly with the topic to be investigated (Akoko 2007:40). There is, however, some relevant literature available, which will be discussed later in literature review. Our appropriation of text and context will be the theological reflection that will come from the two poles of this research - the literature review and the fieldwork, - and the presentation of the findings.

This research will firstly examine healing and the healing ministry in the PCC, as an understanding of faith healing could foster the notion of liberation within the RCC and ultimately, possible collaboration between the two churches in this regard. This leads us to ask the research question: "How can a true and liberating pastoral healing ministry be established in the RCC?"

## **1.2. Preliminary literature study and location of research**

Pentecostalism and charismatic revival go back over 100 years to their origin in the United States of America (USA); however, the movement has subsequently expanded to all parts of the globe and is “one of the fastest growing components of Christianity” (Warrington 2008:1; Bate 1995:15). In Africa Pentecostalism arrived in two waves: the first took the form of the early Charismatic Movements of 1900s to 1960s and the second was the modern Pentecostal movement that took place from the 1970s to 1990s (Kalu 2008). It was during this second wave that Pentecostalism was introduced to Cameroon, as indicated by Akoko (2007:55). Akoko discusses the origin of Pentecostalism in Cameroon, the way in which it developed and how it is still active today. Akoko maintains that the main reasons for the growth of this Movement are social and political instability and the economic crisis; the economic recession and accompanying poverty encouraged people to join the PCC (Akoko 2007:12-13). There is lot of truth in this. However, while acknowledging Akoko’s view, this research will place a great deal of emphasis on the aspect of healing within these two churches; an aspect that has not yet been researched. Consequently, his study might assist in further investigation.

Many churches in the Pentecostal Movement offer, among other things, a healing ministry. Pentecostals strongly believe that divine healing or faith healing is an integral part of the liberating mission of the Church and that it is the Holy Spirit who has the power to heal both body and soul; that is, the integral liberation. The Holy Spirit can indeed liberate the whole person (Maxwell 2006:106; Shorter 1985:3). Therefore Warrington (2008:267) states that “this emphasis on divine healing is noticeable in Pentecostalism throughout the world, support resting on OT and NT texts, reinforced by occurrence of healings throughout history”.

However, healing appears in other churches as well, such as the RCC (Twelftree 1993). Twelftree provides an overview of the healing ministry of Jesus and a large scope of his deliverance activities through various cases of exorcism as described in the Gospels. This will help to evaluate and give an account of how the healing ministry operates today. In addition, together with Scriptures and the fieldwork findings, it will also be useful to the chapter on theological reflection.

Healing forms part of the mission of the RCC. Accordingly, Walls and Ross (2008) give a résumé and a pertinent account of the theology of mission today. The five marks of mission are important for this study, particularly marks three, four and five which deal with responding to human needs with loving service. The need here is to get rid of health and life problems and assist

in transforming unjust social structures as well as bringing about the renewal and liberation of the people and of the planet at large. The emphasis of transformation in this study is based on the assumption that healing takes people from the subjugation of suffering to the joy of being healed and well again. As Francis MacNutt writes, Jesus “came to share God’s own power to transform the evil in our lives that we cannot control simply by our own will-power” (1999:11-12; Lado 2009:120; Domingues 1999:442, 444).

Since every human being is made to be fully realised and to enjoy a good life, healing has often been understood as the following: “[the] utmost goal for [the] human being is happiness” (CDF 2000). The Church recognises that the source of all healing is God through Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Although the RCC acknowledges ‘direct’ healing from God, it also holds that sacraments are great sources of healing as liberation because: “sacraments are visible signs of an invisible healing: ‘medicine for immortality” (Marsch 1989:1). Michael Marsch explains how the healing of the whole person, that is, spirit, mind, and body, is accessible to all through the Church and the sacraments. The unity of the person with Christ and with other people opens the gift of health to individuals and to communities.

Fernando Domingues (2000) offers a wide perspective on what a genuine or true healing ministry is or how it should be understood, and the way in which it operates in context by investigating various components. Domingues’s book titled *Christ our healer: A theological reflection with reference to Aylward Shorter* shapes this research because he sees healing from the perspective of a transformation from a worse state to one of grace, which the author calls salvation. This is a liberation view of healing; thus providing material for the theoretical framework for this study. The RCC oversees this ministry under the watchful eye of the church authorities. In addition, disciplinary norms have to be applied which indicate who can become involved and how it has to be carried out (CDF 2000). The challenge in this regard is how to provide a frame in terms of which the RCC can understand and perform this integral, holistic and liberating ministry.

The challenge to the healing ministry also comes from inside the RCC, with the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR). Lado refers to this as the “domestication of Charismatic renewal within mainline Churches” (2009:20). He argues that the challenge is a response to a deeper spiritual quest that Africans bring to the Church. Lado’s book, titled *Catholic Pentecostalism and the paradoxes of africanization: processes of localization in a catholic charismatic movement in Cameroon*, presents a social anthropological account of the dialectic of Africanisation of Christianity within a given charismatic movement in Cameroon; namely the *Renouveau Charismatique Ephphata* (RCE). The book firstly traces the origins of Pentecostalism up to its

arrival in Cameroon (2009:9-18); and secondly, analyses the healing process in the CCR in Cameroon (Lado 2009:113-141). Can this challenge from Pentecostalism and CCR be the inspiration or orientation needed to conduct a more liberating and holistic healing ministry within the RCC? This aspect has not to our knowledge been investigated by any of the material we have come across so far. We therefore propose a research that will probably attempt to shade more light to healing ministry in the RCC.

Holistic healing could foster and strengthen the ecumenical dialogue between the RCC and the PCCs. This aspect is highlighted by Hollenweger (1999:147): “Generally speaking, neither the secular nor the religious press seems to have spotted the significance of one of the most important events in the religious scene of our century: the official Roman Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue, which began in 1972 and is still in progress...”.

In her article, “Manifestations of ecumenism in Africa today: A study of mainline and Pentecostal churches in Cameroon”, Priscilla Djomhoué (2008) writes on ecumenism between the Pentecostal Churches in Cameroon and the Mainline Churches. This article makes a significant contribution in that she offers a brief but relevant account on how different churches came to settle in Cameroon, as well as the degree of collaboration that exists between them today, if any. Part of the article offers the elements of ecumenism, which this research intends to highlight as one of the objectives. Djomhoué tends to concentrate on Protestants and Pentecostal ecumenism, with minimal reference to the RCC and the PCC in Cameroon and with no mention whatsoever of a healing ministry in either church, which is the focal point in of this research. This gap also will be filled with the current study.

Most, if not all, of the written material related to the topic and that the researcher has come across during the research deals with the history, spirituality and theology of the PCC and the RCC. None of the books or articles consulted deal specifically with the notion of healing in relation to the two churches in Cameroon or elsewhere. Our study proposes to concentrate on the healing ministry even though references will be made to the history and theology of the churches. Faith healing or the healing ministry will be proposed as grounds for ecumenism. Aspects n that need to be revisited are in the RCC globally and to investigate whether this dialogue between the PCC and the RCC exists in Cameroon, in which case it should be strengthened. If it is found that it does not exist, possible ways of establishing such a dialogue should be investigated. The researcher is therefore, convinced that there are large gaps within the existing literature and that there is, accordingly, sufficient room for a thesis the topic.

### **1.3. Research problem and objectives**

The research question formulated for this research is the following: “How can a true and liberating pastoral healing ministry be established in the RCC?” By a true, genuine and liberating healing ministry we are referring to healing that alleviates the human suffering caused by sickness or other factors, and which leads to liberation from physical, social, psychological and spiritual bondage. The focal point in the process is the suffering human being. The healing ministry is a people-centred ministry that eventually leads individuals to their final salvation. The healing ministry of Jesus is an illustration of what a true, genuine or liberating healing ministry is.

Domingues states explicitly that a genuine, true and liberating healing ministry is not intended to increase one’s own popularity, or personal gain, or to bring about miraculous healings, but simply to deliver or transform those people who are suffering, following the example of the master of healers (2000:80). A healing ministry should not concentrate or focus on the person of the minister, but rather be centred on the person who is suffering and on bringing them to a comfort and helping them to deepen their personal relationship with God.

In order to assist in answering the research question, number of sub-questions have been formulated:

#### **Sub-questions**

- How is the healing ministry understood and practised in the PCCs?
- How is the healing ministry understood and practised in RCC?
- What can the RCC and her ministers learn from the PCC’s healing ministry (as an integral part liberation)?
- How can the PCCs and the RCC build a healthy working relationship?

#### **Research objectives:**

- To analyse the healing ministry in PPCs
- To assess the understanding and practice of the healing ministry as integral liberation within the RCC
- To make RCC ministers involved in healing more aware of the way they to practice healing as a liberating value for vulnerable people.

- To identify possible means for dialogue or mutual collaboration on an integral-holistic healing ministry for both churches.

#### 1.4. Theoretical framework

Healing is a broad notion that crosses easily from one discipline to the other and so doing acquires different meanings. The healing that will be dealt with in this study is *faith healing* also termed *divine healing*. Quoting Becken, Bate writes: “we understand the term Faith Healing as using the dynamics of prayer and community support to directly calling [sic] upon the power of Christ as an agent of healing”(1995:175). It is not healing as it is generally understood by modern or traditional scientific medicine; rather this research concentrates on the perceptions of and challenges involved in a pastoral healing ministry and on the reasons that initiated and that still keep some Christians involved in this ministry. The context for this research is Yaoundé, the capital city of Cameroon, which is situated in the central African region. This study was deliberately limited to the urban centres, not because rural areas are unimportant, but simply because most PPCs established or are exercising in urban areas. In this case the findings can easily be generalised to other localities of the country or beyond its borders.

The study will use a liberation theoretical framework. It is believed that being relieved from sickness or other physical, social, psychological, or spiritual ailments is a case of liberation that pulls a person out of oppression, suffering, domination, stigmatisation and neglect. Those who help reduce this condition are supposed to be liberating the vulnerable; at least that is our assumption. They are meant to participate in leading God’s people from a state of suffering to one of freedom, happiness and wellbeing. Accordingly, Fernando Domingues (2000:80) writes:

Jesus’ wondrous healing and exorcisms were not intended to increase his own popularity, nor respond to popular craving for the miraculous, nor even simply to deliver those people from suffering. The latter may have been the immediate motivation for some cures and acts of deliverance, but the whole healing activity of Jesus finds its full meaning only as a proleptic realisation of God’s offer of universal eschatological salvation, which would be definitely accomplished in the mystery of Jesus’ own death and resurrection.

This quote offers a framework for a genuine healing ministry. Genuine, true or liberating healing is that healing which is not about personal gratification and glory, be they material or spiritual; nor is it about looking for miraculous cures at any cost. Rather this healing is for leading God’s suffering people to their final salvation; however, actual physical, emotional, psychological, social

and spiritual relief as the present manifestation is not neglected. In this case, a genuine healing ministry has its origins in Jesus' healing ministry which was the proleptic or anticipation "of God's offer of universal eschatological salvation" (Domingues 2000:80). And all other healing ministers are therefore bound to follow the example to their Master, Jesus Christ, if they want to be truthful, genuine liberators.

Accordingly, the Roman Catholic healing ministry was investigated and accessed in line with this understanding of the way her ministers are dealing with the issue and to find out whether there has been any influence whatsoever from other churches, especially the PPCs. This framework has helped detect any wrong attitudes whatsoever and has provided tools for analysing various data that were collected during fieldwork in order to present findings that are accurate and useful.

### **1.5. Research design and methodology**

During the research, not a single document was found that deals with the topic of this research, although literature was found with a partial connection. This study has used a non-empirical method in the form of a literature search and an empirical study or qualitative research with field work in form of individual, in-person or one-on-one interviews. Ten interviews were conducted with respondents from the RCC, that is, five priests and five lay people who were involved in the healing ministry or exorcism in the city of Yaoundé, – the capital city of Cameroon. In addition, interviews were held with five ministers and five lay people committed to the healing ministry in the PPCs in the same city. The latter group are members of The Apostolic Church of Cameroon (TAAC), one of the Pentecostal Churches in Cameroon from which permission to conduct research was acquired.

Prior to the interviews, the interviewees were briefed on the nature of the research and on the topic of the interview, and the time frame for the interview was discussed; this was to help the interviewees feel comfortable and relaxed during the interviews and to obtain their consent for participation. The interviews were conducted in the language that the interviewee understood best. Cameroon is a bilingual country, with French and English as official languages, most, if not all, church ministers are fluent in one or both languages. Consequently, the interview questions and the informed consent form were all translated into French so as to accommodate those for whom English was not the preferred language. The researcher is fluent in both French and English. A



semi-structured or open-ended questions format was used for interviews. A list of indicative questions is to found in the appendix at the end of the dissertation. The participants were also informed that their names would be codified, denoting them as: Speaker One, Speaker Two and so on, in order to make the process confidential and reliable. The participants were also informed that the research was simply an academic exercise; hence, there would be no financial benefit for them; rather their participation was voluntary involvement and they were welcome to stop at any time they feel it necessary.

The interviewees were selected according to a snowball or a “friend-of-a-friend-approach” (Terre Blanche 2007:291). The reason for this is that the researcher lives in South Africa, a great distance from Cameroon, and managed to contact a few healing ministers from both churches and through whom, with their assurance and collaboration, we reached out to the other healing ministers, both clerics and lay people within The Apostolic Church of Cameroon (TAAC) and the Roman Catholic Church in Yaoundé for interviews.

The advantages of a snowball sampling method include, firstly, that it helped us reach ministers who might have been very difficult to find and, secondly, it offered the possibility of reaching out to experts in the field. We are aware that snowball sampling does not make it easy for findings to be generalised; however, the sample chosen covered a good portion of the targeted population of healing ministers and therefore can provide us with useful findings which can be of interest beyond this research. A focus group was also planned with some of the participants from both churches, that is, the healing ministers, four in total: two ministers from the RCC and two from the PCCs, in order to lay down the foundations for a possible ecumenical collaboration. However, this did not materialise owing to healing ministers tight schedules during Christmas period.

During the interviews, anticipated difficulties such as why should or would a Pentecostal or a Catholic minister agree to give an interview, were taken care of during the fieldwork and the preparation for the interviews, by holding preliminary meetings, making phone calls or sending emails as suggested by *Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa (Introduction to oral history 2006:12-13)*. During this period the purpose of the interviews was explained to the interviewees.

## **1.6. Structure of the dissertation**

### Chapter 1: General introduction

This chapter gives a brief introduction to Cameroon, as well as discussing the background of the research and identifying the research question. A motivation for the study in order to show why this research is really needed is included. The research design and methodology, the research problem and the theoretical framework are also outlined in this first chapter, as are the limitations of the study.

### Chapter 2: The meaning of healing in the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches

In this section briefly describe the background of Pentecostalism in general and within Cameroon in particular. The notions of faith or divine healing, ministry of deliverance within the PCC is also examined. The traditional African conception of healing, which is more a holistic approach than the Western idea of healing, is briefly explored.

### Chapter 3: Healing ministry in the RCC

The notion of a healing ministry is investigated as it is understood and practised in the RCC, starting with provision of some historical background and then looking at the actual understanding of a healing ministry within that church. The internal challenge posed by the CCR movement is investigated in order to discover new insights in the healing ministry. Considering that Catholics believe in the healing power of the sacraments, it ascertained whether this belief and practice is helpful as a tool for the healing ministry in terms of the liberation and salvation of the vulnerable.

### Chapter 4: Fieldwork – An analysis and findings (challenges to the RCC's mission)

The various data collected and analysed will help affirm or refute the assumption that healing in the PCCs have an influence on the growing number of RCC ministers involved in the healing ministry and whether this is a real challenge to the Catholic way of healing. It is hoped other challenges not yet foreseen at this stage and which can contribute to enhancing the healing ministry will be identified within the RCC's mission to be a genuine tool for the liberation and wellbeing of the faithful.

### Chapter 5: Theological reflection

The theological reflection offers a platform for the appropriation of the text and context in which the research has been conducted. It offers possible means for collaboration by checking the

similarities and/or differences between the two churches as far as the healing ministry is concerned and also to develop guidelines for possible dialogue. The healing ministry of Jesus Christ is the basis for this reflection.

#### Chapter 6: General conclusion

In this chapter the focus is on summarising the findings, providing a summary of the research and discussing the contributions this research has added to the field. In addition, few suggestions are made for further research and recommendations for implementation of findings. Finally, there is a concluding section.

## CHAPTER TWO

### HEALING IN THE PENTECOSTAL AND CHARISMATIC CHURCHES

#### 2.1. Introduction

Pentecostalism is an organisation that has become a planet-wide movement; both as a new creation and as innovation within the missionary or, as they are often called, mainline or mainstream churches. The growth of Pentecostalism is acknowledged by all the observers of religious movements. Various elements or factors account for this. This chapter gives a brief description of Pentecostalism in general, in particular within Cameroon. This section also gives a brief analysis of how healing is understood and practised within the PCCs. In addition, the notions of faith or divine healing, ministry of deliverance or exorcism within the PCCs is examined. Moreover, the African traditional conception of healing, which is a more a holistic approach than western conceptions, is briefly explored. Since the PCCs are a dynamic reality, the PCCs and the Charismatic Churches will be combined for the purpose of this research.

#### 2.2. Background of Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement in general

The real origin of Pentecostalism is still a disputed issue that would require an entire thesis to deal with it. Therefore, this section is limited to its arrival in the West, as Warrington (2008:1) stresses the following with regard to Pentecostalism: “Its inception in the West is generally identified as being in Azusa Street, Los Angeles, in 1906”. Kay and Dyer (2004:xxv) confirm that origin, although they differ on the actual year, by saying that: “Historical consensus ... takes the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles of 1907 as a crucial starting point for Pentecostal expansion since it was from here that many of the protagonists of Pentecostal life and experience first caught fire”. Asamoah-Gyadu (2005:10) agrees and adds that “[w]hile scholars like Synan hold the view that practically all the Pentecostal groups in existence can trace their lineage to the Azusa Mission, there is evidence to suggest that not all Pentecostal outbursts around the world may be causally linked to North American initiatives.” His assertion shows that there were signs of Pentecostals already in India and even Haiti before the events of Azusa Street, with no or little involvement of missionaries. In the same vein, Lado (2009:14-15), quoting Hollenweger, stresses the primacy of Azusa as the root of most Pentecostal groupings today. He states:

The most important root of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements is a revival in a Black church on Azusa Street in Los Angeles under the leadership of the Black ecumenist W.J. Seymour ... Behavior there was sometimes very enthusiastic, sometimes also physical phenomena like

weeping, speaking in tongues, falling about, vision and so on. The journalists of the time described these ‘crazy niggers’ in sensational reports, since they did not know what had really happened. ... For the first time in the history of the USA, White leaders (sometimes from the racist South) were ready to have hands laid on them in a community led by Blacks in order to achieve spiritual breakthrough (Lado 2009:14-15).

Since Azusa, Pentecostalism has spread throughout the continents with astonishing speed, attracting an impressive number of new members and defying all missionary activities to date. This evolution did not, however, go as smoothly as one might imagine. The movement, as much as it increased, was also defragmenting. Many other branches kept on blossoming to the extent that it is, to date, almost impossible to say with confidence how many Pentecostal churches there are in the world. One possible explanation is based on the fact that the original influences leading to the creation of Pentecostalism are many and varied. Warrington (2008:2.4) states : “Its antecedents and influences have been identified as Anabaptism, Dispensationalism, Evangelicalism, Pietism, Wesleyanism and the ... Holiness movement, the teachings associated with Keswick (in which the emphasis was placed on ... abiding with Christ ... and the baptism in the Spirit)”. It is with this same speed that Pentecostalism landed in Africa and in Cameroon.

The rapid growth of this component of Christianity has left many puzzled. Apart from the speed of its growth, its development also has given way to new trends. Burgers and McGee (1988:1) argue as follows:

Since the beginning of this century, Christianity has witnessed the emergence of two great renewal movements of the Spirit: the Pentecostal movement, beginning in 1901, and the charismatic movement that developed several decades later [...] these movements and their participants (both men and women, clergy and laity) have proclaimed that the spiritual power of the first century can be the norm for Christians today.

Drawing a dividing line between these two movements is not easy and therefore the terms *Pentecostal* and *Charismatic* can be used interchangeably, simply because they have many features in common; therefore they will be used interchangeably in this essay. Nevertheless, they have the theology to differentiate the two. Burgers and McGee (1988:1) agree that:

“Pentecostals” subscribe to a work of grace subsequent to conversion which Spirit baptism is evidenced by Glossolalia [...] For some, this baptism must also follow another act of grace, sanctification. “Charismatics”, however, don’t always advocate either the necessity of a second work of grace or the evidence of glossolalia as an affirmation of Spirit baptism.

Pentecostalism is a huge movement and diverse, as we have seen earlier on its many origins. Not concentrating on what divides them, these two entities focus on the unifying factor as described by Akoko (2009:12): “Pentecostalism, as a religion, has many strands. Some of the factors that differ from one group to the other are organizational structure, doctrines, practices and origin. What unites them most is that members believe they are ‘born-again’ Christians. This is based on the biblical conversion experience of being ‘born again’ through an individual act of repentance and submission.” It is clear that for the Pentecostals, the life in spirit is of total self-giving to God and the acceptance of Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour. It is a total conversion from the world and all its temptations and clinging only to the new state of life. Hollenweger (1976:315) points out that: “The fundamental experience, necessary to salvation, for the Pentecostal believer is conversion or regeneration. In numerous hymns and choruses he sings of ‘miraculous transformation which takes place in the soul and life of the sinner in the moment in which he repents and declares his sincere faith in Christ Jesus’.” This “leaving” the world and concentrating on Jesus and the church offers members a sense of belonging and personal involvement or commitment. They appear to own their salvation and work hard to remain with it, at least, according to the teaching. This gives way to vibrant and lively churches where everybody feels individually responsible of the work the church is to perform. That is why: “Pentecostals ask: In what way have we departed from the commandments of God, so that the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the healing of the sick, the prophecy, and speaking in tongues have disappeared, and the church has become lifeless and powerless? [...] What can we do for the wind of revival to begin to blow again, and the ‘showers of blessings’ to descend once more?” Hollenweger (1976:321).

This situation leads to the question of what mainstream churches do not understand about the life that is sparked by the power of the Holy Spirit as it is observed in Pentecostal Churches. That is why they hold criticism that “the traditional churches are still stuck between Easter and Pentecost. Although they know that Jesus died and rose again, they lack the Pentecost power which fell on the disciples when they were behind closed doors, drove them out, and made them into courageous witnesses to the gospel” (Hollenweger, 1976:330). We can only wonder if the situation in the Cameroon churches is different.

## 2.2.1 Background of Pentecostalism in Cameroon

### 2.2.1.1. Brief presentation of Cameroon



**Figure 2.1: Map of Cameroon with neighbouring countries**

Cameroon is situated in the Central African region and lies on the Gulf of Guinea, contrary to so many websites and books, even history books, which place it in the western region of the continent. Cameroon covers an area of about 183,567 sq miles or 475,442 km<sup>2</sup> and has a

population (2011) of 20 million. This dissertation deals mainly with the urban population, and, according to the 2009 UNICEF statistics, 58% of the Cameroon population is urbanised.

It is a country of great diversity, as Mukum Mbaku (2005:xi) attests when he writes that: “Cameroon is one of the most ethnically and geographically diverse countries in Africa. It is rich in customs and traditions, both indigenous and modern”. Cameroon is rightly often called “Africa in miniature”. Indeed, so the country comprises almost all that can be found anywhere else in the African continent: in terms of its population, geography, climate, diverse economic resources and cultures.

The country consists of an arid desert-like northern part combined with middle section comprising savannah; the southern part of the country form part of the equatorial forest that runs through the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Congo Republic, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and even the Central African Republic. The geography combines plains in the north and centre with a mountainous region in the west and south-west. The highest point in the country, at 4100 meters, is Mount Cameroon, in the south-west region. There are beaches on the Atlantic Ocean, desert in the north, savannahs in the centre and rainforests in the south. The people are equally diverse as Cameroon is home to more than 260 ethnic groups, with the same number of languages. The inhabitants comprise the Foulbe, Peul, Fulani, Hausa, Basa’a, Beti, Bamiléké and Douala to name but a few. These people have given the world music rhythms such as the Makosa, Bikutsi, Asiko Mangambeu and many more. However, Cameroon is best known to the world for her national football team, the Indomitable Lions.

Very little is known about the country before 1472, when “Portuguese seafarers arrive at the Bight of Biafra, visit the land of Fernando Po, and sail into the estuary of what is now called the Wouri River in Cameroon. Struck by the presence of large schools of prawns, they name the river *Rio dos Camaroes* (River of Prawns).” Mukum Mbaku (2005:xix). In 1844, the Germans colonised Cameroon. After the First World War, which Germany lost, the country was divided between France and England who ruled the country separately. On 1 January 1960, French Cameroon became independent and immediately proposed union with the other part administered by England from Nigeria. This union became effective in October 1961 and the Federal Republic of Cameroon was formed which lasted until 20 May 1972 when the country was named the United Republic of Cameroon; later in 1984, it became the Republic of Cameroon.

The first missionaries who settled in Douala in 1845 were of the Jamaican branch of the English Baptist Missionary Society. Since then there has been a succession of Protestant



missionaries from many churches. The Catholic Church arrived in Cameroon on 25 October 1890 with the German missionaries of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate (Congregation of the Pallottines). Cameroon having become a German colony in 1884, its administration could only accept Germans missionaries. Most of the other Christian denominations entered the picture at a later stage.

### 2.2.1.2. Pentecostalism in Cameroon



**Figure 2.2: Map of Yaoundé city, capital of Cameroon**

As already mentioned, the study took place in the capital city of Cameroon, Yaoundé. The city is divided into seven municipal districts as in figure 2.2. In each these districts there is a multitude of churches and religious groups of all types. As stated in the previous section, the mainstream churches, including the RCC, became established between 1840 and 1890. Other

religious movements, including Pentecostals followed later around the 1940s. Among these are the Baptist Church, The Apostolic Church Cameroon (TACC), the Seventh Day Adventist, the Assemblies of God, Christian Assemblies, Full Gospel, and many more. Pentecostalism is as complex as Christianity itself; that is, Pentecostalism came to Cameroon with its diversity of doctrine and its practises. The exact date of its arrival is not known, leaving it up to speculation and counter-dated origins.

Djomhoué (2008:357) in underlining this diversity in the Pentecostals, states: “The Pentecostal Churches present in Cameroon today include Assemblies of God, Christian Assemblies, Full Gospel, and the Apostolic Church. The Seven Day Adventist Church has been present since 1971. There are also the Jehovah’s Witnesses, who came initially from outside and had great difficulty settling in Cameroon”. Ministers from TACC interviewed for this project on the healing activity in that church.

There are a number of reasons why the Pentecostal movement could not take root earlier in the country. The main reason was that from 1960 to 1982 Cameroon was ruled by a Muslim regime, and which would not authorise any religious group other than Islam and the mainstream Christian churches. When the new government took over, which referred to itself as “Christian”, there came some openness with the multiplication of political parties in the 1990s. Religious freedom saw a boom in the number of new religious movements entering Cameroon, many of which were Pentecostals in doctrine and practice. Djomhoué (2008:357) confirms this state of affairs when she writes that:

The Pentecostal movement really settled in Cameroon only after the introduction of the multi-party system: indeed, its emergence was hampered by the Muslim authorities and by the Christian churches already in place [...] From 1990, the religious field opened up, as a result of liberalization and enactment of laws on freedom.

At the same time as plurality entered politics and freedom was experienced in many spheres including religion, the country was faced with a severe economic crisis.

Some thinkers and writers have linked rapid growth within the Pentecostal movements with the fact that so many people were unemployed and needed something to do; hence, they joined Pentecostal groups. They assume that because of the abject poverty in the country people have flocked to these new religious movements for a quick way to cope with the situation at hand. This assertion is well articulated by Akoko (2007:22) when he states: “The crisis has given rise to compounding poverty, misery and unemployment and ferments fear, doubt, and uncertainty right

down to increase in social insecurity. Armed banditry is now commonplace, with bandits operating in broad daylight and often with impunity.”

With the impending economic meltdown, people found themselves very vulnerable to various factors facing them. With no or not sufficient income, it became obvious that parents could no longer hold the position they were to had in the family, leaving room for chaos. When faced with illness, hospitals were not an option simply because there was no money. Again, Akoko (2007:53), referring to the Cameroonian context in which Pentecostalism is flourishing, states:

Another factor that accounts for the growth of the faith is the whole range of economic opportunities that have been opened up by these groups during this period of economic crisis affecting Cameroon. These Churches need a team of Pastors and other workers to work in their establishments. Many unemployed people have enrolled in Pentecostal Bible Colleges not because of the pastoral call to serve but to earn a living. Some of the Churches have enormous projects and establishments such as schools, hospitals and banks. Employment opportunities are offered only to members of the Church, and as such, many people have joined in order to be employed.

Besides all the above elements of the Pentecostal doctrine this movement employs a very powerful tool both for its growth and for the strength of its structure; that is, the healing ministry which is a core value of Pentecostalism.

### **2.3. The healing ministry within Pentecostalism**

Among the leading theological and fundamental aspects of the PCCs and one that draws a considerable number of followers is the notion of healing; meaning divine or faith healing. The assumption that healing within PCCs is more about a transformation of state, from bad to good, forms part of this research project. Healing is therefore, a relief ministry. This is confirmed in the Bible (Acts 8:1-8), as quoted by Asamoah-Gyadu (2005:164): “When the crowd heard Phillip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics were healed. So there was great joy in that city”. The expression of joy referred to in this text is a sign of relief and a mark of transformation in one’s life. In Warrington (2008:265) we read that: “Pentecostals believe in the possibility of divine healing as a legitimate expression of the ministry of the Church, entrusted to it by Jesus and mediated through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

To emphasise the importance of healing within PPCs, Akoko (2007:51) confirms that:

Pentecostals believe physical illness should be treated through spiritual means. A good number of them prefer praying to physically ill persons rather than taking them to the hospital. They believe everyone can have this spiritual ability to treat illnesses. This is accomplished by laying of hands on the head of the patient and praying. Testimonies from people healed are usually made during crusades and regular church services.

In the same vein, many Pentecostals argue that healing was neglected by the missionary and mainstream churches, which is why Pentecostalism is bringing it back into the picture and is why it is attracting so many people. Warrington (2008:265) quotes but a number of views in this regards: “Dayton contends in his survey of the rise of the Healing Movement that, ‘Pentecostalism ... understood itself to be restoring a lost concern of the Early Church’ while Paloma describes it as one of the major reasons for the growth of Pentecostalism.”

This concern that the older churches have neglected healing for so long time is echoed by Francis MacNutt, an ex-Roman Catholic priest, who, in his book *The Nearly Perfect Crime: How the Church Almost killed the Ministry of Healing*; stresses that there is a need to rediscover and develop what empowered the early church, namely the healing ministry.

The healing advocated by the PCCs all over the world is not just a new creation of these churches but, as argued by Warrington (2008:267), “this emphasis on divine healing is noticeable in Pentecostalism throughout the world, support resting on OT and NT texts, reinforced by occurrences of healings throughout its history”. She adds subsequently that not only does the Bible present some healing facts here and there, but that the whole issue is based on Jesus’ own healing experiences: “Discussions within Pentecostalism concerning healing have been based on the healing ministry of Jesus, the charismatic gifts of healings referred to by Paul and the guidelines in Jas 5:13-18” (Warrington 2008:268).

One important element of the healing ministry of Jesus that the Pentecostals lay value upon is the holistic approach; Jesus wanted to heal not only the body, that is, the physical, but the whole person, that is, the body, spirit and soul, the person in totality. Again it is Warrington (2008:268) who confirms this by stating that: “... the guidelines in James 5 which provide a path to wholeness and healing in their fullest sense; a potential harmony of the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of a person”. This view appears to be directed at getting everybody on board, not only the physically sick or the clinically unwell, but everyone who is open to benefit from a healing ministry that is holistic; simply because it restores joy and hope in people. There is this understanding that: “James is recognized as offering hope to those in his community who are physically ill but also support for those who are lacking wholeness as a result of other forms of

weakness” (Warrington 2008:268). All the above confirms how important healing is to the Pentecostal churches.

No form of healing is or should be an end in itself. Every healing must lead the sick or healed person to the healer Jesus Christ and eventually God. Because this has not always been the case in some PCCs, healing becomes in itself a source of conflict. As healing takes on an increasingly important role in PCCs, the more it attracts unorthodox ‘practitioners’ who do not have the wellbeing of the suffering people at heart, rather they are in search of riches and fame. This situation is aptly described by Hollenweger (1976:357) when he states:

On the whole one can say that the more recent and more enthusiastic groups look with favour on the healing evangelists. On the other hand, the older Pentecostal groups have gone to some trouble to keep the healing evangelists at distance, for until recently they held and taught the view of the healing evangelists which they now condemn as false: ‘Anyone who believes is healed; anyone who is not healed has not believed alright!’

Healing becoming therefore the medium of measurement of people’s faith, which is a bit reductionist.

Not only is the above one sided, but it also overemphasises the relationship between prosperity and faith in God that eventually leads to healing. That is why “Brumback accused the healing preachers of attacks upon local Pentecostal pastors, moral lapses, egotism, arrogant behaviour and over-estimation of the value of body healing, and the false teaching that prosperity is an irrefutable sign of piety.” (Hollenweger 1976:357). This view on healing can be complemented by another view that emanates from the African understanding.

### **2.3.1. African view of healing**

To understand the healing beliefs in Africa it is important to get to know how Africans view life itself. In most African cultures life is viewed as a line that must be protected and handed over from generation to generation; this ought to be done without any complications which are seen as failures. Life has such value for Africans to the extent that Stinton (2004:72) agrees with Bujo confirming that: “Among those values we have to underline life, which was the cardinal point for all the rest. Life is, of course, that to which all humanity aspires, but the way in which the African systematically centres community and ethos around life deserves particular attention. The Christian message cannot ignore this fact without exposing itself to failure.” This life therefore takes into consideration the entire person’s components: that is body, soul and spirit. It is

what is often known as the holistic view of life in Africa. Susan Rakoczy (1993:25) confirms this concept by stating that “here in Africa, including South Africa, there is a great desire for healing and wholeness”. This African longing for wholeness goes far beyond the human aspect of life because it embraces both the human, natural and of course the social aspect of life. This last aspect amount a lot of importance to Africans where the *Ubuntu* lies: ‘I am because we are’. That is why Célé Kolié in Schreiter (1992:132) reinforces that: “Fundamentally, for the African person, being ill is an alteration in the equilibrium of the human organism, but it is also, and especially, a rent in the social fabric”!; Africans are not separated from the rest of the family and clan, even in time of pain.

The African world-view is one of the unity of body and spirit. While Western medicine divides people into ‘parts’, for example a sprained ankle, high blood pressure, depression, for an African there are no barriers between life in tradition, culture or in religion. These are all intertwined together to the extent that the African lives them in the one life. No separation is permitted in the way life must be lived. Quoting John Mbiti, Adeso (2001:39) writes: “African Religion is an essential part of the way of life of each people. It influence covers all of life, from before the birth of a person to long after he has died. People find it useful and meaningful in their lives, and therefore they let it spread freely”. With the understanding of this African view of life, it becomes easier to grasp the need for fullness or wholeness that Africans are longing for and which is characterised by healing; restoring the radiance to life after a failure.

Just as for Africans life is uninterrupted despite all the difficulties and problems that threaten it, healing is one reality Africans hold in high esteem as restoring life to it fullness. Sickness is not only felt in the body alone, nor is it a personal affair, but one that concerns the entire social apparatus. Sickness like healing is the domain of the whole family, village or even the entire clan. Because of this global view, “the African understanding is that when one part of our body or spirit is injured, every part of our being is affected. Further, the illness is not just an individual affair, but affects the whole family. Traditional healers in Africa diagnose the person’s illness and treat the whole family, not just the ‘sick person’” (Rakoczy 1993:25).

## **2.4. Conclusion**

It can be said that healing is a very important component of the PPCs to the point that it attracts a considerable number of new converts. The understanding of healing as not only a

spiritual part of a Christian life but also as healing the physical part of the person and even going beyond to the family and clan at large is an achievement for the PPCs. While on this point, it is necessary to refer to Akoko (207:51) who stresses:

Unlike the other denominations, Pentecostalism with its faith healing doctrine provides a strong solution to the problem of ill health thereby, attracting many people. Many people have been persuaded to join the Pentecostal faith because of their own ill health or that of a relative. In the case of women in particular some have been converted not because of physical ill health but because of family crises resulting from alcoholism, unemployment, or domestic strife.

The question we can therefore ask is: How is the healing ministry understood in the RCC?

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **HEALING MINISTRY IN THE RCC**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

Healing has always been a general concern and an integral part of the mission and activities of the RCC since its inception, especially in Africa. Taking from Jesus' own activities of bringing back the health to those who suffered any ailment as well as confirming them in faith; passing through the Church Fathers till present days, the RCC had not completely abandoned this aspect of the ministry of Jesus. Instead of tackling healing in general, only the notion of faith or divine healing in the healing ministry will be investigated in this study, as it is understood and practised in the RCC; starting with some historical background and then looking at the actual understanding of the healing ministry within that church.

The internal challenge posed by the CCR movements will be investigated in order to discover new insights into the healing ministry. Bearing in mind that Catholics believe in the healing power of the sacraments, this belief and practice will be examined to determine whether it is a helpful tool in the healing ministry for the liberation and salvation of the vulnerable.

#### **3.2. Historical view of healing ministry in RCC**

As with most of the mainstream churches, the RCC has an apparent dual view of the healing ministry: the physical healing and the spiritual, faith or divine healing. We assume that this has its origins in the language used throughout the history of the church. It was believed that only souls needed to be saved, so souls needed to be taken care of and needed healing before one departed to the eternal home. However, with the development of science, this view appeared to lose ground and the way was paved to a more holistic approach to the person and the way healing ministry is performed. No matter from which angle this is approached, the conviction is that at the task of the RCC mission is healing observed in its different ministries. Messi Metogo (2006:11) summarising Eric de Rosny, states that: "The catholic Church has always concerned itself with the ministry of healing through medical establishments and through spiritual help to the sick. What is new is the broadening of the idea of health, which now involves body and soul and thus rejoins



the old African idea of health". The dualistic view of healing in general was quite wide spread even in the RCC.

Not long ago, many people believed that Catholics were against modern or scientific healing methods; because of the healing power of prayer. Walsh (1928) reminds that "There have always been all sorts of healing religions; and the Catholic Church itself proclaimed the curative value of prayers at shrines and the touch of relics and of various blessed objects, and yet the popes selected their personal physicians with due attention to their scientific attainments."

### **3.2.1. The early Church's healing ministry**

The mission of the Apostles and Church Fathers was firstly the continuation of the ministry of Jesus by placing him at the centre of everything they did. They were in this case being looked on as leaders who would maintain unity in the new church. Secondly, the Apostles received a mission from Jesus to heal the sick and cast out devils. These heroic acts were a reminder for Christians that "Jesus was working through the Apostles by the immediacy of His spirit. Their activities provided for the people of their time a demonstration that the Apostles' work was given to them by God" (Scott 2006:150). The Apostles were in this case co-workers of Jesus in his divine ministry and this provided a mandate for them to do what he had done. They were not to create their own ways of doing, but were to look at the Master, learn from him and simply imitate his ways. McManus (1984:38) reminds us that: "In the early church the disciples did exactly the same works as Jesus himself did. They preached the gospel, healed the sick, and cast out demons. And these works were the signs that their preaching was true". They only had to follow the leader and the master, Jesus. Because Jesus did not use so many other things to perform his healing, it was obvious that "the healing ministry of the Apostles was not one that required herbs, drugs, magic, but faith in God." (Scott 2006:150).

The church believes in healing in the name of Jesus. There is no Christian healing minister who can claim to be helping people with something other than the name of Jesus. Faith in Jesus Christ is what brings about cures and healing in those who suffer and are ready to accept Jesus. When St Peter went to the Temple, he offered nothing other than healing in the name of Jesus. He said: "I have neither silver nor gold, but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, (rise and) and walk" (Acts 3:6). Jim McManus agrees with this biblical view and goes on to develop the ideas of what Christian ministry should be. He states: "Asking in the name of

Jesus, speaking in the name of Jesus, acting in the name of Jesus-that is what we mean by Christian ministry” (1984:34). Jesus was the origin and the *raison d’être* of the Apostles ministry in general and the healing ministry in particular.

While dealing with the healing ministry in the early church, it is important to tackle the issue within the scope of prayer especially the sacraments.

### **3.3. The healing power of the sacraments**

Prayer is an open door to God which not only reveals who God is, but also brings the awareness of who one really is. McManus (1984:39-40) is clear in the matter: “In our prayers we ask God for strength in our weakness, healing in our sickness, forgiveness in our sinfulness, joy in our sorrows, light in our darkness [...] These prayers reveal our God. Our God is a God who saves, who heals and delivers from evil, who comforts, enlightens and strengthens his people.” The liturgy of the Catholic Church is in this way a concrete sign that healing may have been neglected, as pointed out earlier, but it has been not completely abandoned. There remained, among the seven sacraments of the church, those that kept healing elements in them and they are rightly called sacraments of healing. In the following section three of the sacraments in which the healing character remains faithfully attached and so have managed to survive the course of time are discussed.

#### *3.3.1. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation*

Historically, this sacrament has had various names at the different epochs of the life and history of the church. It was called confessions, the sacrament of forgiveness; currently it is being called the sacrament of penance and reconciliation, also known as the sacrament of healing. A few questions need to be asked at this point concerning the change in terminology. Why is it called the sacrament of healing? What does the sacrament heal? Because sin is an offence against God the sacrament brings in a restorative element which is more than just forgiveness. Recognising the above, Jim McManus (1984:42) argues that:

Sin is an offence to God, but it also inflicts a wound not only on the sinner, but on his or her neighbour[sic], and indeed on the whole church. Parents sin by neglecting their children, but they also wound their children by this neglect. Children sin by abandoning their parents and not

showing them gratitude and love, but they also wound their parents by such a lack of love. For the sin itself there is divine forgiveness; for the wound of sin there is divine healing.

This opens wide the understanding of the sacrament of penance and reconciliation, not only as an isolated incident in one's life rather as both a personal and communal dimension. One's sin can bring about many difficulties and divisions and hurts to self, neighbour and the whole community. Beyond the forgiveness offered, the sacrament goes further to reach the sequels of the action.

The hurt caused by sin can still be very visible long after a well-done confession. When taking the case of someone whose little finger has been cut off by another for example, although the victim might have forgiven the perpetrator, they still need to deal with the scar of the physical wound left by the cut. The same goes for other types of wound and hurt that leave the person somehow vulnerable. The whole person is in need of healing when they come to the sacrament of penance and reconciliation; not just the soul, but the body, mind and spirit. It is in this case important to agree with McManus (1984:52) who states that: "the sacrament of reconciliation has been given to us by Christ for the healing of the whole person. But without confession, without the grateful acknowledgement in the presence of God of our need for forgiveness, there can be no healing". While dealing with the sacrament of reconciliation, it is important to bear in mind the African Ubuntu, which opens to the communal understanding and African worldview. As much as sin affects individuals the more it disorganises the society. Therefore, reconciliation should consider the social level as well. Magesa (2004:249) reminds that: "the communal nature of African societies and the perceived communal effects of wrongdoing make it necessary to symbolise reconciliation as a communal act". Besides the sacrament of penance and reconciliation, the other sacrament that is there to offer healing is the sacrament of the sick.

### 3.3.2. *The sacrament of anointing of the sick*

This sacrament is the one most commonly feared among sick people. Throughout history it has gone from one extreme to the other. From the sacrament of comforting people with anointment of oil, it went so far as to become the sacrament of extreme unction. Brought forward to provide life, it came to offer death. McManus (1984:57) laments this shift saying that: "Unfortunately this sacrament, which we used to call extreme unction, became associated with death rather than with healing. Thus when the priest was called to a sick person it was a sign of the gravity of the situation rather than a sign of hope or recovery. But, even [...] the Christian community had some evidence of the healing power of Christ at work". Despite the fact that

church officials as well as other members believed in the healing power of this sacrament, people who received it and the family members did not have enough faith to believe that this could actually bring the sick person back to health or back to life. The words 'extreme unction' were strongly printed on their minds and they believed that it simply meant the immediate preparation to go and meet the creator. However, this situation or understanding of this sacrament could not remain the same.

In its new name, sacrament of anointing of the sick, it has considerably changed the perceptions of both the sick and those people who now view it as a tool towards wellness and healing. From the forgiveness of sins to different forms of healing, physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological, this sacrament is the action of the Holy Spirit and the encounter with the divine presence. In the introduction to the New Rite of the Anointment of the Sick we read: "This sacrament gives the grace of the Holy Spirit to those who are sick: by this grace the whole person is helped and saved, sustained by trust in God, and strengthened against the temptations of the Evil One and against anxiety of death [...] A return to physical health may follow the reception of this sacrament if it will be beneficial to the sick person's salvation" (McManus 1984:59). This clearly shows that the whole healing activity or healing ministry is not only opened to healing, but rather brings together all the people involved to set their minds on the greater reward, that is, salvation; which is, a permanent state of grace, of wellness. This sacrament carries the seeds of the healing ministry, moving people from a bad state to a more acceptable or a perfect one.

### 3.3.3. *The sacrament of the Holy Eucharist*

Often called the 'source and summit of the Christian life', the Eucharist has great importance in the Catholic Church. It is not only the source and summit, but also the healing grace beneficial for all recipients of the sacraments; namely human beings. The church intensifies this understanding of the Eucharist in this document of the Second Vatican Council by Austin Flannery (1975:765) *Decree on the ministry and life of priests*, states that: "the other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate are bound up with the Eucharist and are directed towards it. For the most blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself ..." Despite this central role of the Eucharist in the RCC, one may ask how this sacrament is a sacrament of healing.

The celebration of the Mass or the Eucharist is a moment filled with the Holy Spirit. It involves different levels of personal commitment on the part of those participating. Personal or self-evaluation at the beginning of the Mass helps one discover and brings alive one's sinful state; which appeals to a higher power to help get rid of. This can be called forgiveness or it can be called healing. McManus (1984:75) reminds of the following: "While the church seeks to make us aware of our sinfulness right at the beginning of the Mass, she also makes us aware of God's healing love [...] culminating in the great act of faith before communion when we cry out, 'Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.'"

Similarly, there is a string of prayers during the Eucharistic celebration that contains great healing power. And above all, the real presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in the appearance of bread and wine makes it a more complete healing opportunity for those who consume them with faith and reverence. Healing is indeed present in the Eucharist, because "all these prayers for healing within the Mass indicate how strongly the church believes in God's healing love and how she expects that healing power to be experienced in the Mass. Does our faith correspond to the faith of the church? Do we believe as strongly in divine healing?" (McManus 1984:75).

The last aspect in which the Eucharist is healing is the word of God. The liturgy of the Word during the Mass is not just hearing the word but is a wonderful healing time for those who participate fully. This is so because, according to McManus (1984:85), "all healing comes through the word of God. The word of God should not just be heard, it should be celebrated".

Along with these sacraments of healing there are some other times of healing in the RCC. For instance healing services are often organised in parishes during which sick people and others gather together to feel the presence of God and say prayers of healing. Many people find themselves well or better after these prayer sessions. As the title of Francis MacNutt' book implies "*A Nearly perfect crime: how the Church Almost killed the Ministry of Healing*" for a long time an emphasis on healing was not favoured by the RCC. However, it has been rediscovered and now is back at the centre of her ministry, partly as a result of an internal challenge.

#### **3.4. Internal challenge from the Catholic Charismatic Renewal**

As stated earlier, Pentecostalism took the mainstream churches by storm and the movement that followed could not remain external to these churches. The Spirit was at work on

either side. A return to the movement of the Holy Spirit was becoming more urgent, caused by the challenge of PCCs. As far as the RCC is concerned, the CCR movement brought in new insights or revived other aspects, among which was the centrality of the Holy Spirit, the personal relationship to Jesus Christ and the stress on the ministry of healing. In order to clarify this Konings (2003:32-33) argues “Pentecostalism has converted an increasing number of ‘nominal’ Christians, and all main-line Churches have come under pressure to adopt Pentecostal forms of religious expressions in their liturgy”.

It is obvious that mainline churches were faced with a dilemma in terms of the new developments on their doorstep. For the RCC the entire revival movement “can in part be traced to the monumental changes ushered in by the Second Vatican Council, spread around the world and was experienced by both prelates and laity. Officially, the movement began in 1967, simultaneously at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA, and in Bogota, Columbia.” (Burgess 2003:xix). This quotation elucidates the fact that the CCR began in a university setting, meaning that the first Catholic Charismatics were educated people who could understand the shifts that were occurring. That is why coupled with the Council’s call for renewal of the church and the CR, the first “CCR had a sense of mission to the Catholic Church” (Burgess 2003:481). Since then the CCR has grown from strength to strength to become an internal challenge to the RCC today, pushing the changes to be effective within this church.

One of the positive contributions of the CCR is the openness of the RCC to the ecumenical movement. With the revival coming from another movement, members were and still are more inclined to accommodate and pray with people from other religious groupings; this being true of the international and the local situation in Cameroon.

Even if CCR have kept the elements from the Pentecostal origin, they have developed practices that are distinctive and particularly catholic. Among others we can cite the celebration of the Eucharist, the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and other expressions like seminars and retreats on which members can have quiet time or train new comers. The CCR is an organised movement with The International Council of Catholic Charismatic Renewal that does the coordination role not a supervision one.

In Cameroon, the Charismatic movement has followed the same trajectory as the international movement. There are many charismatic groupings within the Catholic Church, the best known being the Communauté Charismatique Colonne de Feu (CCCCF) (Charismatic Community Pillar of Fire) founded in October 1975 by young Catholics working for the

development of the Archdiocese of Yaoundé; another being the *Fraternité Charismatique Ephphata* (CCE) (Charismatic Fraternity Ephphata) “founded on 30 September 1976” by the late Reverend Father Meinrad Hebga, a Cameroonian Jesuit priest (Lado 2009:24). These are the two main RCC Charismatic movements in French speaking Cameroon. Members of both groups were among the respondents interviewed during the fieldwork for this research.

Other charismatic groups in Cameroon include The Emmanuel charismatic prayer group, the Maranatha prayer group and *La Communauté de Cana* (The Cana Community), Speaker One recalls the beginning of the first two Catholic Charismatic groups and the impact they had in people’s lives:

And with time the Ephphata group started to take much space. The groups such as Colonne de Feu (Pillar of Fire) took the importance afterwards. And that made that the charismatic Renewal became a force in the Church of Cameroun, especially Yaoundé, Douala where that was exercised. And suddenly it became a phenomenon of attraction, people came, there were some healing, change of heart, forgiveness between Christians therefore that drew much people.

Accordingly, we can see that from its very beginning in Cameroon, the CCR elicited a positive response from the people.

These groups are constantly reminding the RCC that the Spirit needs to be released to renew both the church and the people. It is important to mention here that these charismatic groups are mostly comprised of laity, which is why clashes are sometimes inevitable between CCR groups and church authorities. The healing ministry is one of the most important sources of conflicts. How, when and who gives the laity permission to lay hands on the sick people are causes of concern for church authorities.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

It has become obvious that the healing ministry has always been part of the RCC’s mission. Although this ministry was neglected and almost lost at a certain moment of the church’s history, it has managed to remain alive. From Jesus to the present-day healing ministers, there have been many different approaches to the ministry of healing. Although ‘the nearly perfect crime’, according to MacNutt, is brought forward, the crime was not committed; in this way the healing ministry remained alive in the RCC throughout history. The least we can say is that “The policy of the Church has been most wise in maintaining a certain equilibrium of forces between these two modes of healing. Churchmen have felt that they were not exclusive of each other but

complementary.” (Walsh 1928). This quotation raises the question of authority, which has also caused discomfort among the RCC healing ministers, whereby each must see their ministry being scrutinised and some of them even banned for exercising healing ministry at all because it is not authorised by the local bishop.

There are a number of other instances where healing is carried out within the RCC. Among the seven sacraments recognised we have enumerated three sacraments of healing. However, the sacrament of baptism is not forgotten, as it brings with it the grace of innocence; that is, it heals the wounds of original sin leaving the newly baptised pure and whole. During catechetical programme called the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), the catechumens progress from a sinful state to one of free children of God. They go through a variety of stages, one of which is minor exorcism and three weeks of scrutiny or purification; this is a healing process for the candidate.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### CHALLENGES TO THE RCC'S MISSION: FIELDWORK – ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

#### 4.1. Introduction

##### 4.1.1. Methodology

The fieldwork conducted in this research made use of the oral history techniques. Oral history offers modern researchers tools of great importance in their research. One of these tools, which was used in this essay in the field of Theology, is the interview. These interviews, twenty in number, were conducted with Pentecostal pastors and laity and Roman Catholic priests and laity, and explored the research question: “How can a true and liberating pastoral healing ministry be established in the RCC?” In an attempt to answer this question we identified a list of topics and other themes obtained from the interviews.

For a number of reasons only a few of the above-mentioned themes will be discussed in the critical analysis section. Firstly, not all the topics are directly related to the aim or objectives of the essay; and secondly, because of the constraints on the space allocated for this dissertation. Accordingly, the report will concentrate on the most essential elements, which will enhance the dissertation and the topic.

##### 4.1.2. Fieldwork report

The first issue when starting the fieldwork was how to find people to interview. After the proposal had been presented to the School Higher Degrees Committee and the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee and had won their approval, we travelled to the capital city of Cameroon, Yaoundé. As reported earlier in the dissertation, the method used for selecting the informants was the snowball sampling or a “friend-of-a-friend-approach”. In this regard we had to find one healing minister and from that one inquire about another one they might know, and so on. The qualitative non-empirical research took the form of interviews which were conducted from 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010 to 4 January 2011 and recorded by means of an Olympus Digital Voice Recorder.

The interviews took place in a variety of environments and situations. While securing an interview was already a tremendous achievement, managing to meet the interviewee and find a

place for the interview to take place was even more challenging. Interviews were conducted at the Pallottine Seminary house, in the offices of some of the informants, on the verandas of private houses, in churches and in libraries of institutions. There was therefore a mixture of quiet and prayerful atmospheres, noisy churches with loud music or the noise of cars and people passing by, or just simply a chorus of birds.

## **4.2. Content and critical analysis of the interviews**

### *4.2.1. Introductory remarks*

As a prelude to this account, the overriding aim of this study is to answer the question: How can a true and liberating pastoral healing ministry be established and enhanced in the RCC? By true and liberating healing ministry we mean healing that is directed at ameliorating human suffering precipitated by sickness, and which brings into bold relief the liberation from physical, social, psychological and spiritual incarceration. Thus, the locus of the healing process is the suffering human person. The thesis of this study is informed by the in-flux of people (especially in the urban areas of Cameroon) to the PCCs in search of a holistic and liberating healing experience. It should be noted that many urban dwellers are pauperised people eking out a living under unbearable conditions. This study will advise that healing among PCCs present a clarion call to the RCC to develop an integral and liberating healing ministry geared towards the emancipation of people from unenviable suffering and evil machinations.

We found it useful to conduct a combination of one-to-one interviews with relevant authorities in both the RCC (in Yaoundé) and TACC – lay people and clerics alike – in order to illuminate the thematic concern of the study, which appertains to the way a true and liberating healing ministry can be put in place in the RCC. To this end, twenty interviews were carried out. A *précis* of these fieldwork interviews, in view of the stated aim of this study, will be integrated under apposite themes. In particular, excerpts from the interviews will be used to corroborate these themes. Accordingly, these themes gathered will help to crystallise the central thesis of the paper and to show that healing in the PCCs constitutes a significant influence on the increasing number of healing ministers in the RCC and their *modus operandi*. It is hoped that the emergent thematic concerns of the interviewees will help to chart a more holistic, integral, liberating and ecumenical trajectory for the healing ministry of the RCC. The essay will therefore make use of the thematic analysis. To fulfill confidentiality requirements, the names of the different

interviewees will be codified as Speaker One, Speaker Two, Speaker Three, and so on according to their respective numerical sequence.

#### 4.2.2. *Thematic concerns from the various interviews*

##### 4.2.2.1. *Dereliction of duty: Roman Catholic ministers and the healing ministry*

One of the important thematic concerns that emerged from the interviews was that of gross dereliction of duty on the part of clerics and ministers within the RCC. In particular, Speaker One, an RCC priest, whose interview we secured on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 at his community residence in Yaoundé, observed that the centrality of healing, both spiritual and physical, in many PCCs has jolted the RCC out of its customary healing lethargy and seeming imperviousness. Speaker One asserts: *“Thus in fact undoubtedly the sister churches are teaching us [Roman Catholic Church] this dynamism which Christ gave to his Church is getting lost, and therefore it should be revived again.”* In another instance, the same speaker notes: *“But this charismatic Renewal, let say, it is through the Protestants at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that indeed this return took place; it is a revival which the whole of Christendom in this field is benefiting.”* This is in line with the evocative title of MacNutt’s (2005) book *The nearly perfect crime: how the Church almost killed the ministry of healing*, confirming that there is a real problem in the RCC as far as a healing ministry is concerned.

Thus, this revitalisation, says Speaker One, *“Laid the stress on the Healing Ministry... And let say especially the presence of Holy Spirit in the Church. I think that it is, thanks to that, that conscience of this reality was taken up again.”*

Confirming the observation of Speaker One, Speaker Five, an Apostolic deaconess who was interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2010 at the Pallottines community house in Mvolyé-Yaoundé, noted that that the Catholic Church has particularly been in the vanguard of physical healing; but unequivocally affirmed that an emphasis on the spiritual, faith or divine healing aspect is still lacking. In her words:

You see, we are trying also, we are struggling to do what we have not been doing, the physical healing aspect. So you people have been doing that you see; they Catholics, they have schools, hospitals, dispensaries, all those things healing the physical body, which is very necessary. Now if the spiritual aspect also can be added, I mean if that spiritual healing can also be added into what you people are doing, it will be wonderful, and then mankind will be liberated from all the storms of life. Yes!

Echoing the sentiments of the previous speakers with regard to the lack of a healing ministry in the RCC, Speaker Seven, an RCC priest whose interview we secured at his family house in Obili-Yaoundé on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2010, places much emphasis on the fact that the happenings in the PCCs have surprised the Church out of its customary healing lethargy and awakened her to the importance of a healing ministry in the life of the people. The following words of the seventh speaker crystallizes this point,

*Maybe because what revival churches do, I think ... anyway what I retain is that they [PCC] have drawn our attention in the Catholic Church for events where... in fact that we are missing because we are too theoretical, but they themselves have drawn our attention to tell us that in actual practice, Christians have not only the soul and spirit, but they also have the body. So what we profess in theory, we must put into practice.*

Further, the seventh speaker notes that the faith that we profess as Catholics is not “*a dead faith, but one that is active; and actually Christ himself, has healed the sick and gave this power to men so that they can intercede with their brothers. So I think that despite deviations, if someone wants to do it in Revival churches, he is on track.*” In other words, Catholics should take the ministry of healing seriously as it is a very important aspect of people’s life - although it is often neglected or insufficiently explored in the Catholic Church. This is one thing we need to learn from the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches who have prioritised the healing ministry. It would seem that Speaker Seven is suggesting that there is a gross dereliction of duty on the part of healing ministers in the RCC. In particular, Speaker One considers that PCCs are in the vanguard of this rebirth in the church while the RCC seems to be lagging behind. Speaker One observes: “*I think that in this domain the evangelical churches have pushed us to pay great attention to the needs of our flocks. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal came to awake the conscience of the persons in charge for the Catholic Church.*”

Nevertheless, on the issue of the paucity of ministers involved in the healing ministry of the Church, Speaker Fourteen, a lay woman Catholic minister who gave us an interview on 06<sup>th</sup> December 2010 at Saint Vincent Pallotti parish Nlongkak-Yaoundé, noted that the RCC is not doing enough to engage a healing ministry. She states,

*Every Roman Catholic Priest should be interested [in healing ministry] because it is parts and parcel of the ministry. You cannot just talk to somebody about heaven, now I am talking of earth now, how do I live when am not happy, I am not well, not heaven now, now is earth first; if I want to live for the next 100 years, now I am only 40 but I am only sick and dying, you must bring a solution.*

This shows that there is a real concern and need for healing ministers. Once again, the view that the Pentecostal and the Apostolic churches awakened the RCC to the importance of a healing

ministry was expressed by Speaker Eighteen who granted us an interview on 08<sup>th</sup> December 2010 in his office at the Catholic University of Central Africa Yaoundé, is a Catholic lay minister and he says: *“You know with the so-called new churches or Pentecostal revivals, it is they who have made the whole world to notice the opportunity to heal through prayer. It is so widespread that our Church, the Roman Catholic Church could not be untouched.”*

Furthermore, Speaker Eighteen notes that *“It was the will of our Lord Jesus Christ himself that the Catholic Church is not excluded or is not a kind of dead church. I also think it is a kind of revival within the Catholic Church; but a well-controlled one, in such a way that there be no disorder.”* At the same time Speaker Eighteen laments the lack of interest in the healing ministry shown by Catholic priests. In his opinion, *“The call is that more priests should invest themselves in this ministry and mentor since they have a role to play, the role of mentors, but also the role of prayer, because, I am sorry, but I must say now, the priesthood is not driving around in big cars and live as a rich. That is nothing, nothing at all. They are reduced at just [celebrating] mass.”* In addition, Speaker Twenty who is a Catholic priest was interviewed in his parish office of Mbalmayo on 07<sup>th</sup> December 2010, traces the dereliction of duty on the part of Catholic priests to their seminary training which when it is not simply lacking in seminary programmes often fails to emphasise the healing aspect. In his words, *“In seminary, we do not learn to do healing prayers, same as with Pallottine priests. But, it is with elders or those already in the ministry that we acquire the information... In seminary, we do not have a course on exorcism, none. Certainly, in my time there was not any, I do not know if these days they do offer that.”* Despite their scarcity, those in healing ministry need to imitate Jesus the Healer and source of every healing.

#### 4.2.2.2. *Healing, a divine mandate*

Among the themes that emerged from the interviews, that of healing has a special place in church ministry. Speaker One affirmed that there is a symbiotic relationship between ministerial priesthood and healing ministry. This Catholic priest traces the trajectory of the healing-ministerial priesthood to the person of Christ and his divine mission. He admits:

*It [healing] is a ministry, I think, which belongs to the mission of a priest. Christ while coming was confronted with the reality of people who were sick, of which comes cure physical, spiritual, moral, psychological, and Good News announced; which cannot be done without being accompanied by this ministry [of healing].*

In another instance, the same speaker notes that the ministry of a priest should have a healing dimension: “The Gospel, the Word of God when well preached or announced would normally be accompanied by such outward signs, i.e. healing, healing people who see that God accompanies internal and external actions. That is really it, relieving people.” These quotes from Speaker One seem to crystallise the fact that healing is an effective way of responding to the needs of the needy - *a sine qua non* condition for any ordained minister in the RCC.

In further defence of the healing - divine mandate nexus, Speaker One takes the mandate of Christ as a point of departure:

*Christ himself gave us the example, in such manner by sending his apostles he said to them, here are the signs which will accompany those who will believe: they will drive out the demons, they will drink the poison and that will do them no harm. It is part of the mission of the one who wants to announce the Good News. And it is in this direction that for me I do not make dichotomy between the life of the priest and the ... assistance to the Christians in their problems.*

Thus, the healing ministry is regarded by this speaker as a realisation of the priestly mandate to care for the pastoral need(s) of the people entrusted to him in imitation of Christ - the compassionate one. As Speaker One reckons:

*Thus I said to myself that I cannot claim to be a priest, without binding that, Christ showed himself like that, he started by announcing his Father, he was compassionate towards those who came to him. Everywhere he went, people as soon as they learned that he was there, came with their sick, and naturally he cured them.*

According to Speaker One, his inspiration for the healing ministry hinges on this compassion of Christ: “*I started from this idea that the priest is that who must be compassionate and attentive to the suffering of the others and not to simply be satisfied to announce the Good News without being attentive to those he announces that Good News.*” One of the points made by Speaker Six, a Catholic priest whose interview we got in his community office at Mvolyé-Yaoundé on 09<sup>th</sup> December 2010, is closely aligned to this theme of healing as a mandate from Christ. When asked what he understood about the healing ministry, his response was that the healing ministry is specifically a spiritual ministry ordained by God. He argues: “*I think the healing ministry that Christ gives us is first of all a spiritual ministry. When Christ was raising the dead, it is not that we should go to graveyards to raise dead people. It is that, those people who are dead spiritually, may come back to true life, like the Prodigal Son who passed from death to life ...*” In another instance, the Speaker Six maintains that “*I think from the side of healing there is at least a domain on which we can think about to try and make you understand what the healing*

*ministry is, concerning spiritual problems, satanic, diabolic and all the rest.*” In a similar vein, Speaker Four, an apostolic pastor, observes that the ministry of healing is one that derives from God.

In particular, when asked how he would define the healing ministry, the Speaker Four, an Apostolic pastor who gave us an interview at the Pallottine community house on the 03<sup>rd</sup> December 2010, noted that *“It is the manifestation of God through man ... God cannot come down again to do like in the days of old alliance passing through man; so healing is a divine intervention in particular intervention ...”* Also attesting to the divine aspect of healing, Speaker Three, an Apostolic pastor who was interviewed in his parish office at Obili-Yaoundé on 03<sup>rd</sup> December 2010, notes that a healing minister is merely an instrument in the hands of God who is the source and summit of all healing activities and works this healing through the power of the Holy Spirit, because:

*The healing ministry is a ministry that is not based on human intellect, it's not based on human effort, it's depending on the power of the Holy Spirit; the Spirit of God comes and influences the human spirit, subjecting all your weaknesses, bypassing all our ideologies and then God manifests himself so that what happens would not be attributed to man; everybody would say God has done it. So it is a divine ministry, it is from above...*

Furthermore, Speaker Three notes that the Holy Spirit is the channel through which God communicates the healing touch: *“Without the baptism of the Spirit, no healing ministry. It is the Holy Spirit that heals. So we call the Holy Spirit, the healing Spirit of God.”* The role of the Holy Spirit in healing makes it an integral part of the liberating mission of the Church. According to Maxwell (2006: 106) and Shorter (1985: 3), it is the Holy Spirit who has that power to heal both body and soul; which is the integral liberation. The Holy Spirit can indeed liberate the whole person. It is therefore obvious that *“This emphasis on divine healing is noticeable in Pentecostalism throughout the world, support resting on OT and NT texts, reinforced by occurrence of healings throughout history”* (Warrington 2008:267). Once again, we see different speakers, from different denominations, confirming the symbiotic relationship between the healing ministry and the divine mandate given by God to healing ministers.

This correlation between healing by humans and divine healing is again crystallised in the interview with Speaker Seven, a Catholic priest. He insists that there is nothing special about the healing ministry *vis-à-vis* other ministries in the church. He notes that the healing ministry is a symbiotic relationship between the priestly ministry and the ministry of healing - which is also the ministry of the sick. In his words: *“Well, uh ... I do know it [healing] is a ministry like any other.*

*We are Priests and Christians ask us to pray for their activities, their problems, their joys, their sorrows. And as a servant of the Lord and their servant we must do.*” In another instance, this speaker corroborates this nexus between the priestly ministry and healing: *“This ministry is ... I still say that we must distinguish two stages. Because I cannot separate that from my state of a priest until the appointment as chaplain, and if you ask me how I appreciate the chaplain work, then I can tell you, but if not I told you, the service of the sick is part of the priestly ministry.”*

Furthermore, to the question about the source of the healing ministry, Speaker Twelve, a Catholic lay minister who gave his interview at the Pallottine community house in Mvolyé-Yaoundé on 04<sup>th</sup> December 2010, clearly stated that *“It is God who heals.”* Similarly, Speaker Thirteen, another lay Catholic healing minister, notes that *“The ministry of healing is a ministry that helps us bring back the sick person to God; ‘because all true healing comes from God’ [my emphasis].”* Confirming the above source of healing, Speaker Fifteen, a lay apostolic healing minister whose interview we obtained at the Pallottine community house in Mvolyé-Yaoundé on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2010, says that: *“It is God who does the work.”* Speaker Sixteen, an apostolic Evangelist who granted us an interview in his parish office at Dakar-Yaoundé on 09<sup>th</sup> December 2010, was even more lucid with regards to the source of the healing ministry. He noted that: *“The healing ministry is a gift from Jesus himself to the church. And it is operated through the power of the Holy Spirit. So when you become the servant of God, you receive the call of God.”* Similarly, Speaker Seventeen, an Apostolic pastor who was interviewed in his parish office in Yaoundé on 05<sup>th</sup> December 2010, notes that *“We rely on Jesus Christ. He is the one doing the healing. We just ask, and we just have faith in him but he is the one that does it.”* Speaker Eighteen was no different from the previous speakers in his opinion about the foundation and source of the healing ministry. In referring to the text of Mark 16:15-18, he stated that

*This [healing] ministry takes its legitimacy from Jesus Christ himself through the end of the Gospel of St. Mark where he himself said, ‘Go throughout the world proclaim the Good News. Those who are baptized and converted these signs will accompany them: in my name they will cast out demons, in my name they shall lay hands on the sick and they will be healed and if they drink any deadly thing, nothing bad will happen to them.’*

Reiterating the point that healing has its source and summit in God, Speaker Nineteen, a lay apostolic woman whose interview we secured in her pastor’s residence in Mbalmayo on 07<sup>th</sup> December 2010, notes that: *“Even when you pray for the sick people, it is not you who heals people but you are asking God for healing. And he will do his will, because it is at him you are talking to, it does not depend on people.”* In short, as Speaker Sixteen noted: *“There is no way you can separate the healing ministry from the gospel.”* This brings into bold relief



Domingues'(2000: 80) point that genuine healing has its origins in the healing ministry of Jesus which was an anticipation "of God's offer of universal eschatological salvation" All other healing ministers are henceforth bound to follow in the footsteps of their Master, Jesus Christ, if they want to be truthful, genuine liberators.

The response to the inquiry about how they receive this mandate is very interesting. The Speaker Seven does not lay claim of having been called in a dramatic way from heaven into the healing ministry. According to him, he simply came into the ministry in ways that are primarily unbeknown to him. On the theme of calling, Speaker Eight, a lay Catholic minister who gave us an interview in the garden of the Kon-Yaoundé parish on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2010, affirms the divine aspect of the healing ministry. When asked about what prompted him to start his healing ministry, the response was that it was a special mandate from God. He describes the moment he was called to his vocation with these words:

*I think it was happening at Mvolyé, in the Church of the Holy Spirit. We were there, and during the worship, a brother who did not know me, told me, 'I do not know you, I have a prophecy for you: the Lord is sending you to your brothers to restore peace in their hearts, to proclaim the good news of salvation'. He told me, 'I do not know you but this is what the Lord told me in the crowd, that brother', and he laid his hands on me ... That's how I came to this ministry.*

In answer to the question of how he perceives the ministry of healing and deliverance, Speaker Eight noted that healing is part of evangelisation which Christ commanded his Church to carry out after he had gone. He says:

*In the community we see the ministry of healing and deliverance as a ministry of evangelization. Because the goal is to evangelize and while we evangelize the good is done; and we are not, as it is often said, the followers of "Jesus Saves and Heals". We are followers of the Kingdom that Jesus preached and still preaches. And while we preach, we have the power to do good, that is to say to get through the intercession, healing of those in need and the deliverance of those who need it, with God's grace.*

Finally, Speaker Ten, a lay apostolic minister was interviewed at the Pallottine community house in Mvolyé-Yaoundé on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2010, also affirms the fact that healing is contained in the divine mandate received from God. To use his words:

*Healing ministry we could say is an aspect of the gospel ministry. The healing accompanies the gospel. You see, the Bible says, go to the world and preach to every creature, baptise them in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, teach and observe all things. And in the book of Mark the Bible says that and I will be with you and the signs shall accompany those who believe in my name they shall cast out demons and lay their hands on the sick and they shall be healed. So the healing ministry accompanies the gospel. It is the proof of the fact that the gospel is authentic.*

#### 4.2.2.3. *Healing from witchcraft and evil machinations*

On the conception of healing as a response to a need, another dimension emerges. This dimension is the recurring belief Africans, in general and Cameroonians in particular, have in the existence of witches, malevolent spirits and evil machinations. Healing is therefore perceived by the people as a way of dealing with this situation. Speaker One attests:

*It [healing and prayer] answers indeed the kind of expectations Christian and non Christian population had. In villages, people complain about the presence of the witches, complain about the presence of the spirits, complain about the attacks of this or attack of that; and then they understood one can say, that prayer can help them out of all that. Thus, wherever there are prayers [for healing], people go there.*

Added to this, he notes that,

*It is not simply to speak the word, but to announce the word supported by actions. Yet most often we are simply preaching, saying Mass, and then we forget that side, and that is what makes the testimony. And if we take it seriously, sincerely speaking, we would not see all these desertions. Some people go to the Pentecostals because they preach to them and at the same time they act.*

By the above quote, this speaker implies that lack of active commitment in healing has warranted the exodus of people from the RCC. Still on the theme of witches and evil machinations, the comments of Speaker Six are quite instructive. In particular, in response to the question about the difficulties experienced in the course of his healing ministry, he noted that the Church, especially its hierarchy, must develop a more positive attitude towards the phenomenon of witchcraft since it is not only a mental but extra mental reality. He stresses: *“The first difficulty is that the Church should have a more open eye concerning the phenomenon of witchcraft. There are lot of priests like me who are just trying their luck whereas many people are blocked. In order to help them we do not know exactly what to do ...”* This speaker considers it important for Catholic Church leaders to unite towards a common reflection on how best to tackle the reality of witchcraft and evil machinations in the lives of people, beliefs that are often denied by some church leaders but strongly ascribed to by the grassroots faithful. Asked about the joys in his healing ministry, the same speaker believes that there is nothing fulfilling as seeing people full of life after they have been delivered from the bondage of suffering and evil spirits. This point is crystallised in the words of Francis MacNutt (1999:11-12), namely that Jesus “came to share God’s own power to transform the evil in our lives that we cannot control simply by our own will-power”.

The Speaker Six cited an instance where: *“There was a young lady under a spell; she came to see me and I gave her olive oil and prayers and after nine days she became very*

*beautiful.*” In another case of a young lady who was alleged to have been delivered from the attacks of evil spirits, the Speaker Six opined: *“During the thanksgiving mass, I had tears in the eyes and it was for me a great source of joy.”* For his part, the Speaker Eight avers that the powers of a true priest surpass that of witchcraft and this explains why people usually run to the priest to find solace from evil afflictions and machinations. In his words: *“When we meet the priest, it is only an outlet from the witch doctor, because the priest would be more powerful than the witch doctor.”* By extension, this speaker notes that a Christian who truly lives according to the word of Christ is a potent force against evil and witchcraft:

*Because if people live a Christian life it is the light of Christ shining and it attracts the faithful and even lay people ... So if there are people who live the truth, who make the effort to live, real Christians who are really trying to live as a Christian, they are the light of the world, and they do not need to do extraordinary things to enlighten the world in that they live ordinarily all that Christ teaches ... it enlightens and it attracts.*

However, this “goodness” in these people is what attracts some to use and abuse.

#### 4.2.2.4. *The business of healing: rapacious and dubious prophets*

Another thematic concern of great importance is closely linked to the previous section. Hard-on-the-heels of the burgeoning interest in the healing ministry as a panacea to evil machinations and witchcraft, certain people, within and outside the church, take advantage of people’s needs in order to exploit them. The result is that the healing ministry has become a lucrative enterprise that can serve as a recipe for getting rich and getting rich quick. And nothing is spared in the attainment of that ignoble goal. This point, which recurred throughout this research, is affirmed in the interview with Speaker Three. In response to the question as to why men and women, both lay and ordained, are increasingly entering the healing ministry, the Speaker Three begins by asserting that many people prefer the healing process because of the high cost of scientific methods of treatment. He states:

*Because the populations today desire the healing and medical science is not meeting up the needs of the suffering world, so they want to have it done supernaturally; where it would not cost them any financially involvement because mankind are suffering to the extent that money cannot even meet up with the healing of the body medically or scientifically.*

In particular, Speaker Three emphasises the point that in recent times, there has been a proliferation of pseudo-healers who are only motivated by the lure of personal gain and the ignoble goal of attracting people. As such, the kind of healing, if any, that they perform is only temporary.

Because, as the Speaker Three says: *“At the end of the day, you discover that what they received was not permanent, it was just there either because they want to make money out of people, so they look for powers.”* But he notes that God cannot be deceived: *“In as much as God is true, God is not a liar, his word is true...”* Further, he continues, saying that the healing which Jesus Christ initiated is free for all: *“The healing ministry is the divine ministry free of charge.”*

Impoverished conditions often drive people into using the healing ministry as a channel for money making and viewing healing seekers as naive and vulnerable customers. The Speaker Three observes that: *“The condition of people and the craving for daily living, some people who cannot make a living think that, there is the only means they can earn a living, so they employ themselves to do those fetish activities in the name of the Lord, and since people see that some results are coming out from there they follow not knowing the kind of people.”* This point is in agreement with Akoko’s (2007: 12-13) observations. He discusses the origin of Pentecostalism in Cameroon, how it developed and how it is still active today. For him the main reasons for the growth of this Movement are social and political instability and, particularly, the economic crisis, that is, the economic recession and poverty encouraged people to join the PCC.

Still on the issue of poverty and the vulnerability of healing-seekers, the comments of Speaker Eight are instructive. In particular, when asked about what attracts people to the healing ministry, he noted, though in passing, that the state of absolute misery and impoverishment often led people into the healing ministry: *“What attracts people in our society today; there is first the misery, the misery surrounding the impoverishment of populations ...”* In contrast, Speaker Three prioritises the importance of researching the background of the healing minister and the Church before approaching the particular ministry, as some of them have a dubious background:

*But I would advise that before you go to somebody to pray for you, find out the background. How long has that Church been in the country? Is it a recognized Church? “If I go to the other part of the nation would I still see this ministry?” Who is this man? Who ordained him? Find out and know the background before you fall into wrong hands. Where there are true prophets, there are also false prophets and all depends upon the individual to know, to follow where you would have lasting solution.*

Continuing the theme of rapacious and dubious prophets, Speaker Four uses the word ‘bread seekers’ to describe those false prophets – wolves in sheep’s clothing – who enter into the healing ministry for what they can get from the people not what they can offer. In his words:

*Bread seekers are people who claim to be called by God and they manipulate people through the Word of God to have through what they need. So they are not for God, they are after the people, after their money. Just I can say, they are not like what Jesus said*

*they are not after the sheep, but they are looking for the milk. These are bread seeker and we have them everywhere.*

In many instances, says Speaker Four, these people “*twist the Word of God and give wrong interpretation to the people just because they want to benefit something*”. Thus the quest for material comfort has become the order of the day.

Akin to the sentiments expressed by the previous speakers, Speaker Four goes a step further by suggesting that ministers involved in the healing ministry must abstain from excessive love for mundane things - especially money. He recalls: “*When we started to pursue materials things you cannot join the two together. Let God reward you. Let God talk to somebody, keep away material if we want to see the hand of God using us, we must be devoted...*” This theme is an important one. When asked why people are flooding the healing ministry, the Speaker Six unequivocally stated that much of the motivation was premised on the ignoble quest for material possessions - especially money. Increasingly, people see the healing ministry as a very lucrative business that is worth exploiting for their own self-enrichment and self-aggrandisement. That is why he states: “*One could say that the majority of priests that go to this ministry it is because ... it is a ministry that is fruitful, there is money in there. But I think there are fewer priests that really engage in this ministry.*” With these words, it seems obvious that there are many counterfeit ministers who disguise themselves as healing ministers only to exploit the people for their own end. It follows therefore that people ought to be careful in their choice of healing minister.

Strikingly, many of the interviewees unanimously agreed to the fact that the pseudo-healing ministers were famous for their exaggerated displays and dubious miraculous claims. In view of this, the RCC becomes all the more suspicious of the ministry of healing. The above can be gleaned from the words of Speaker One:

*And with time, as healing and deliverance were now done anyhow, anybody could rise and say that he is exorcist<sup>1</sup> (healing minister), priest or not priest, he learned how to make some prayers, either in the Revival group, or quite simply because someone went outside [the country and] saw others do, then he returns, then constitutes himself in an exorcist (healing minister) and starts praying for people.*

Lamenting the abuses present in the healing ministry, Speaker One notes,

*The result of all that, the prayer for the sick, healing and exorcism, became a business, so much so that the laity got involved and I had the impression that it had become rather a lucrative one... then there are some who do not hesitate to charge while requesting from the sick person to provided so much and so much thousands of CFA Francs. And people who want their release, organize themselves to give what is required.*

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<sup>1</sup> It is common in Cameroon to call any healing minister an exorcist. So its use in this essay goes more in that sense since we do not treat of that topic.

The cautionary stance assumed by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, in the light of these happenings, is elucidated by Speaker One:

*Then suddenly, in the Catholic Church, one was obliged to be rather careful and not let the priests make exorcism (prayer of healing) anyhow, because indeed the problem was being shifted. Instead of helping Christians to convert to Jesus Christ, it became the means of spectacle shows, it became who would be the greatest exorcist (healing minister), and therefore it was losing sight of the fact of what ought to be done and I believe that the bishops and the priests tried at certain time, it was difficult for certain people ...*

The point about fake healing ministers seems to have been an important one as it can be noted once again from the interview with Speaker Seven.

Asked how he perceives the healing ministry, the Speaker Seven feigns ignorance but later goes on to list certain critical points: “No, as I say ... I cannot know, I’m not going there, I do not know how they do it but it’s hard to judge from afar. Perhaps there are those who in good faith may truly want to help the sick brothers and sisters through prayer and so on.” This notwithstanding, the Speaker Seven also notes that “Some may have other reasons that escape me, it can be to have money, since there is demand for money everywhere; it can be also to have a reputation, have connections with ... I do not know, with people well placed, etc ... I do not know.” Talking about the unreasonable demands for money, Speaker Seven blames parishioners, especially in the Catholic Church, for responding quickly to the excessive demands for money in so-called “Revival Churches”. In particular, the Speaker Seven laments the fact that many parishioners in the Catholic Church prefer to spend their money on Pastors in the so called “Awakened Churches” rather than on the Catholic Church where they belong. In his words:

*But I say they know when they go there, even those who had no money, suddenly find money to give to pastors of revival churches while here with us sometimes it is deplorable that they say they have nothing etc ... and normally we offer services for free, but when they go there, they are asked for money and suddenly they have money, then they tell us here they cannot go to hospitals etc ... but there they have money to give ...*

In response to the question about how true healing ministers can be identified from fake ones, the Speaker Seven brings in another dimension: “Ignorance, lack of education and catechesis, perhaps we should insist on it.” For Speaker Five from TACC, however, when asked what should be the criteria for an ordinary Christian to differentiate between a *bona fide* and a counterfeit healing minister, her response is:

*This is where the Holy Spirit is very important...when you have the Holy Spirit you have the spirit of discernment, whereby you can discern... So when you have the spirit of the discernment, by the time that somebody is coming ahead in front of you to tell you*

*anything that is not really necessary, you will just get it, I mean there will be an instinct, you tell that this one no.*

Still on the topic of discernment, Speaker Nine notes that *“the Word of God helps us to discern who is from God and who is not from God.”* It is useful to attest to the reality of money-thirsty pastors and warn Christians against them. Speaker Nine, however, suggests:

*We have some report that people do it because of love of money. But when you are a leader called by God your first preoccupation must not be having money but let the kingdom of God be explained and people will be saved. That is the burden you must have as a minister of God.*

Sadly, such is not often the case! In a similar vein, Speaker Ten notes that the love of money and the healing ministry are incompatible and should not be promoted. He says: *“If you see a man of God who is charging people with money, it is not biblical, you have to run away because God said you must give healing to people free of charge”.*

Similarly, there are many unauthorised healing ministers parading themselves in the Church and destroying the faith of the people. Speaker Eleven, an RCC priest who was interviewed at the presbytery of Mvolyé parish Yaoundé on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2010, has this to say: *“We have charlatans who come here to interfere in this ministry, and people who even pretend to pray, but engage themselves in pure syncretism, and they destroy the faith of the congregation.”* He continues by noting that from the relationship between the message they preach and what they practise in their lives, one should be able to discern whether they are of God or not. Simply because: *“The tree is recognised by its fruits.”* Further, the same speaker notes: *“There are already people who are trained to monetize [healing] ministry, who get paid. At the moment there is this practice, there is nothing authentic. It becomes a trade. And the message itself that is given, if this is not a message that helps to keep the faith despite the failures, then we must understand immediately that it is no longer on track.”*

The issue of fake pastors who are constantly looking to enrich themselves through the healing ministry continues on as Speaker Twelve hints:

*For the managers, there is a problem, and the problem is that the prayer for the sick gives a lot of money. At least we can eat and drink because we went to pray for X or Y. So sometimes it is no longer the exercise of charity, it becomes a means of survival. And at the moment we become self-blocking to ourselves, because we no longer act according to the Gospel, according to Christ.*

In other words, the Speaker Twelve's point is that money can compromise the authenticity of our healing ministry. As for Speaker Thirteen, a RCC lay minister interviewed at St Vincent Pallotti Parish Nlongkak-Yaoundé on 03<sup>rd</sup> December 2010, notes that:

*What we witness nowadays is that there is much of patronage. People are at the quest for money. While the Word of God says "you have received freely give freely". People sell handkerchiefs, so to speak, simony; they sell holy water and other bottles for F CFA 2500 as I see on TV and everywhere else.*

The issue of the rapacity of many modern healing ministers is taken up by almost all informants. Speaker Seventeen, a TACC pastor, notes that, "*Nowadays there are so many false so called pastors who get involved in the healing ministry just because of money. You see, so today it is difficult for some people to believe that people who exercise healing do it not because they want money.*" On the question of how to discern fake healers from genuine ones, Speaker Seventeen notes that the yardstick should be the quest for money, since: "*When you come to someone for healing and deliverance who ask you to give him money directly or indirectly then you should know that something is false in that person because the bible says "you receive freely give freely."*" Speaker Twenty, an RCC priest, is of the same opinion. When asked about how to discern among ministers, he notes:

*There is a saying that "you recognise a tree by its fruits", it is by being with priests. Some priests do not seek reward; they pray for people, they lay hands on people without asking something. People can make a difference between those priests who want rewards and those who help them because they want to.*

According to Fernando Domingues (2000:80):

Jesus' wondrous healing and exorcisms were not intended to increase his own popularity, nor respond to popular craving for the miraculous, nor even simply to deliver those people from suffering. The latter may have been the immediate motivation for some cures and acts of deliverance, but the whole healing activity of Jesus finds its full meaning only as a proleptic realisation of God's offer of universal eschatological salvation, which would be definitely accomplished in the mystery of Jesus' own death and resurrection.

This quote offers a perspective for viewing a genuine healing ministry; the one that churches and society at large are looking for. Genuine or true liberating healing, says Domingues, is that healing which is not bound to personal gratification and self-glorification, materially or spiritually; nor is it about looking for miraculous cures at any cost, nor collecting the last money people have got for the life of the family. Rather, the healing ministry is for leading God's suffering people to their final salvation.



#### 4.2.2.5 Speaking in tongues

At the outset, it should be stated that there is no distinction between what the Pentecostals call “baptism of Spirit” and what RCC calls “effusion of the Spirit”. Speaker One notes that in Pentecostal churches baptism of the spirit is often subsumed under speaking in tongues: *“Somebody who is not able to speak in tongues, for them, has not yet received the baptism of the Spirit.”* Be that as it may, Speaker One notes that the baptism of the spirit is not usually accompanied by speaking in tongues. He insists that there are many gifts that flow from the Spirit all of equal importance. In the words of Speaker One,

*You can receive the baptism in the Spirit, the effusion of the Spirit without there being any spectacular manifestation. One can very well; of course it is wished that it be expressed that way, but that one can even receive other gifts that are not speaking in tongues. One can receive the charisma of teaching, the charisma of the word of science, the charisma of healing, say the charisma of prophecy without necessarily receiving the charisma of speaking in tongues.*

Speaker One concludes that what is important is that those who wait for the gifts of the spirit open themselves to it: *“Well, what is expected of all those who participate in the seven weeks seminar, is that they agree to open themselves to be able to speak in tongue. That it is when this fact indeed happen, it can become spectacular.”*

#### 4.2.2.6. The Liberating Power of Healing

Healing is perceived as being capable of liberating people from the shackles of suffering and oppression both physically and spiritually. This essay follows the pattern of liberation found in healing. Describing a healing experience in which he relieved a distressed woman of acute bodily pain, Speaker One notes: *“When we speak of liberation, I said that right now, we will release you more because what you carry inside your body must be removed. We will remove it through the massage with blessed olive oil accompanied with prayers of deliverance”* [emphasis added]. He gives us a more graphic insight into the power of healing as a liberating force:

*So when she will come when we will start, I will show her how to massage, from the head to the feet, it hurts a lot, and as when we massage it comes out, it comes out, it comes out, one week up to ten days, all that was evil in the body is released. Once you press the hands she no longer feels pain, the woman becomes another person, she rediscovered her body and what did not work around her begins to work properly. Her businesses that are blocked reopen; that is what is called liberation. You see, in this sense, it liberates up a lot.*

Bringing happiness to people's lives is the goal of healing. This point resonates with the point made by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), namely that every human being is made for full realisation and a good life, hence, healing has often understood that the "utmost goal for human being is happiness" (CDF, 2000). Indeed, healing takes people from the subjugation of suffering to the joy of being healed and well again. MacNutt (1999:11-12) notes that Jesus: "Came to share God's own power to transform the evil in our lives that we cannot control simply by our own will-power" (see also, Lado 2009:120; Domingues 1999:442,444).

When asked about her understanding of the healing ministry, Speaker Five opined that healing was designed by God to help to relieve the burden of people who are suffering from one illness or another. God has instituted the ministry of healing because of his compassionate love for his people. In this Speaker Five attests: "*Because God cares a lot about mankind, and he believes that if only mankind can believe that He can do it, then he will do it in order to lessen the burden that many people are going through.*" She brings in here the notion of the faith of the healing seeker. For her however, "*this ministry [of healing] is another way in which God wants to use people, men of God, even individuals to take away some of those things that are troubling their lives like sicknesses, terminal diseases, infections and all those things.*"

This liberating aim of healing is echoed by many speakers in the interviews. When asked about his understanding of the healing ministry, Speaker Nine, who was interviewed in his government office in Yaoundé on 08<sup>th</sup> December 2010 notes:

*The understanding I have, is that ... the healing ministry come because God loves us and God wants us to be in good health; so that we can serve him in this world. So, God want us to be in good health, and then we can serve him. That is why God puts in place the healing ministry for our body to be well so that we can serve him.*

The pertinent point that emerges from this quotation is the fact that God's plan is that people should be liberated from ill health so that they can serve Him better. A popular sentiment expressed by many of the interviewees is the fact that they are always glad to see people relieved from the clutches of sickness and the fetters of sufferings. For example, Speaker Eleven responded, when asked about his goal as a healing minister, that his overriding goal is that

*people who are suffering must discover that the love of God has not abandoned them. God continues to love even in suffering. And they must understand that God did not create this event, suffering or death, he does not want us in suffering, God desires our happiness; but the enemy has come to introduce the tests, difficulties, suffering or death in our lives, and he is to blame ...*

Equally, Speaker Fifteen notes that what prompted her to join the healing ministry is the utter happiness in sympathising with those who are in serious suffering. In particular, she is motivated by *“The joy of seeing these people who have lost smile who can smile again, who can again find joy in life, who are able to decide to start over.”* Speaker Sixteen also notes that *“the Joy one experiences in seeing others in joy. It is this joy. It is this joy of others that makes my joyful”*. This transformation after healing has taken place is common to all the interviewees’ experiences and is what is really expected. That is why even Speaker Seventeen stated: *“What gives me joy is when I pray for somebody, when I plead to the Lord that he should heal somebody, then I see that person healed, leaving from his sick state or from his demonic possessed state to a normal state; when he is healed and happy, I am happy.”*

Similarly, Speaker Eighteen describes the joy that comes from restoring people back to a sound state of health. As he says, “You see people desperate or in an extreme situation I would say, ready to die, and then through prayer, they rise. You see, you are happy, you give thanks to God. At least you know you do not waste your time.” The joy of healing was echoed by Speaker Nineteen who is very aware of the welcoming spirit that invades those who have been liberated, and transformed by healing ministry. She recalls: *“I feel happy when people welcome me, when they receive me. I have happiness into my heart. I feel happy when, after praying for someone, he comes and tell me that I prayed for him and God answered my prayer.”* This liberation goes beyond the spiritual aspect of life; it even embraces Christians’ social conditions. Speaker Twenty crystallises this theme in the following words:

*I feel so happy when someone comes to me and say: “My Father, I was searching for a job and now I found it. I was ill, now I am healed. I had difficulty to get pregnant and now I have a baby.” I tell myself that God hears sinner’s prayers, such as me. It is really my great happiness and that gives me the courage to carry on with my ministry. When God heals someone through the humble priest that I am, it is really my great pleasure.*

#### 4.2.2.7. Faith and healing

##### 4.2.2.7.1. Miracles and cultural difficulties

The healing ministry presents many difficulties that ministers have to face and appears not to be a straight forward journey, at least not for those who want to do it the right way. In answer to the question ‘What are the challenges you face in your ministry?’ Speaker Three notes that it is often difficult to lead people of different cultures and traditions in the faith.

*There are so many areas of difficulties because the big pool you meet come from different traditional cultural backgrounds, they have something they believed before so, for you to penetrate their cultural barriers and establish faith in God; grace of God and patience, it is not the thing you do overnight ... (Speaker Three).*

Speaker Four observes that healing *per se* is a gift of faith from the almighty God. He draws our attention to the fact that a minister in the healing ministry, or in any ministry at all, should strive not only to talk but also to do the work. *“A good preacher cannot say: Do what I’m telling you don’t do what I do, when you teach theory you must also teach practice, they should see it in you. If you want to talk about healing, there is no way you would minister to people without building their faith...”*

Speaker Five takes up this argument to submit that no healing can take place without a complete faith in God. Indeed, faith is woven into the very tapestry of any healing process. Describing her healing experience with people, she notes the following:

*Since I believe that he can do it, I go ahead and try to raise the faith of the person through the word of God he promised in his word where he is talking about healing and how he performs healing himself, and when the person’s faith is up, with faith, the faith of the person, my own faith and the presence of the Holy Spirit, it will be so easy; you just pray and leave it for God himself to finish it. So I have faith that, with the Holy Spirit in me and with me belief in the word of God, no case will be impossible with God.*

This speaker stresses the importance of faith in the healing ministry: *“you cannot get what you don’t believe; I mean you cannot expect to receive what you don’t believe in ...”* In particular, Speaker Five believes that there is no illness that cannot be cured through the healing ministry and prayer, insofar as the healing minister has absolute faith in God.

She emphasises this point as follows:

*All form of illness there is no exception. If you believe then you can do all things through my name, that is, through the name of Jesus... So I believe that, whether it be any type or disease, HIV/AIDS, I have seen people who have been healed of that, yes of HIV/AIDS which we know today that there is no cure for it but people are being healed through prayers.*

Still on the theme of faith, healing and miracles, Speaker Seven agonised over the fact that one of the complications that he encounters in this ministry of healing is a gross lack of faith, especially on the part of the ministers themselves. He claims that sometimes it is the healing ministers themselves who stand in need of strengthening their own faith, and not so much the people. And this lack of faith on the part of pastors sometimes belies the healing process. In his words: *“For Christians, they have no problems, but that Christians will be converted the day when their pastors*

will start to be converted. The harder is on the side of the pastors, not the Christians. It is they who are converted, it must start there, and I think that's true."

Speaker Nine is equally unequivocal when it comes to the role of faith in the healing ministry. In his own words:

*Mmm ... I can say that the healing ministry is based on faith. It is based on faith: the faith sometimes... the faith of the minister who operates, sometime the faith of the person. It is not in any case that we pray for, we see God operate. Sometimes, the person just understand the word of God and operates like the word of God is asking and he sees his case change. Sometimes, it is not that we have made a special prayer on the person. So the healing ministry is based on faith. As just said, the faith that God wants us to be healed...Faith is very important. When you have faith in God the healing can flow easily.*

Similarly, when asked about the difficulties he experiences in his healing ministry, Speaker Eleven notes that his colleagues are often sceptical with regards to the authenticity of his healing. In his words: *"Sometimes they doubt, some doubt about what we do, they wonder about what father does, 'does he actually healed? Is there no posturing by those who say they are sick, those who walk with him?'"*

Quite aside, Speaker Eleven, who is a RCC priest, states that some of his difficulties come from the hierarchy of the Church. In his words: *"Some priest said that I act outside the Church, they were telling patients not to come to pray with me. Well then the bishop, the first bishop would not accept this ministry. Well anyway, he said I was making him to be unhappy because I was exercising a ministry he had not authorized..."* In the same vein, Speaker Eighteen echoes the whole question of authority in healing ministry. He says: *"I think the first difficulty is misunderstanding or problem with priests, ordained ministers, because all the time they ask who has given you permission to pray for the sick, who has given you permission to lay hands?"*

Still on the question of the difficulties experienced in the course of the healing ministry, speaker twelve agrees with Speaker Eleven that faith is a crucial part of these difficulties. In his words: *"the first difficulty that we encounter is the faith of the leaders who do the ministry, but also the faith of the sick. Patients do not believe in their prayers, and that is very difficult."* And in the absence of faith, speaker twelve asserts that *"the prayer itself does not bear fruits."* In line with Speaker Twelve, Speaker Seventeen notes that faith is a major challenge that plagues the healing ministry. In his words: *"healing ministry goes with faith, it is not magic. You, the servant of God, exercising the ministry you have to have faith that it is the Lord doing it. Then the sick also has to have faith that it is not man, it is God."* Furthermore, Speaker Seventeen observes that

the “challenges are that you might be praying for somebody who does not have faith in God and that person might end up not being healed because you are not the person performing the healing... it is the Lord that heals, and the Lord does it on your faith ...” In line with the theme of lack of faith or presence of doubt, Speaker Nineteen asserts that

*The difficulties I sometimes encounter are when I go to preach and some people do not believe. Moreover, sometimes when I go to the hospital to preach to ill people, some of them do not want that we pray for them. And when they refuse, you give up because you cannot pray for someone without his consent. You pray for someone when he accepts [and believes in] that offer.*

#### 4.2.2.7.2. Instant miracles versus perseverance

When asked about the reason why there is a constant exodus of people from their churches to the healing ministry, Speaker Five responds that increasingly people are in search of instant miracles and immediate action. In her words: “we saw that many people leave their church because they want instant blessings, they don’t believe that there is time for everything.” Closely tied to this point is lack of perseverance which Speaker Seven alludes to as a major spoke in the wheels of the healing ministry. This point is particularly true of the people who are ever so impatient when it comes to healing. In the words of Speaker Seventh:

*On the faithful side is perseverance, because we always believe that prayer, even a well made prayer must necessarily lead to healing, to get what we ask of the Lord. But the Lord also is not there to solve our little problems. So now I’m starting to make them understand that no, it’s true and you can pray and the Lord meets your demands immediately, but he may also grant a period of two days, two weeks, two months, two years ...*

This speaker opines that, at times, healing takes time, and that people must have the ability to wait on the Lord:

*You see that it is in prayer and with time that we can get that experience because people believe that because they did not get what they ask of the Lord their prayer was not granted, this is not true! This is not true! Your prayer can be heard even after your death, because what you ask for your children, maybe the Lord does not grant you right away, but after your death...*

With these words, the Speaker Seventh emphasises the need to be patient with the Lord and persevere in prayer.

Still on the theme of impatience when it comes to healing, Speaker Eleven was quite unequivocal in his detest for people who are always in a hurry for the healing power of God. In his words:

*They are looking for the wonderful, where you can easily relieve is what they want... they go to the priest authorized by the church, they go to the pastors of the sects, they go to the wizards of neighbourhoods, they are everywhere simply because they want a cure at any cost, so without further discernment and that is unfortunate... God himself promises salvation he said himself even if he delays, wait, he will come ...*

In common with Speaker Eleven, Speaker Fifteen bemoans the impatience of people with regards to the gift of healing. In his words, people

*... get tired, and they say, it bothers me; since I came here to pray, I was told that I was here for such a thing and I did not get it; I would have even stay at home, or I would have gone elsewhere. There are many who go like that, but return again. That's the main problem; people want to get things right now.*

In contrast with the fifth speaker notes that most people are easily deceived by ministers with sugar-coated tongues but questionable characters. Moreover, people sometimes leave their churches when they realise that they are more knowledgeable in the faith than their leaders. This may leave them frustrated and make the service less motivating. As the Speaker Five puts it,

*... at times you find yourself in a place where you discover that what you know is above the person that is leading you. So with this, sitting on the spot, it would be so boring, so many people in this case will start grumbling, criticising, they will not grow again. So the next thing they will do is, they will leave and go to a place where they can be well fed.*

Added to this, the Speaker Five notes that sometimes ministers of the church can be quite intimidating in their approach and foist rules on the people: *"They don't see anything about the grace that Christ brought. They only see but, thou must not do this, thou shall not do that; they impose on the people. They make the people become as children, as captives."* In view of this approach, the fifth speaker notes that *"most often people would not want to stay and be intimidated, I mean be controlled like children, they decide to leave such place and look for where they will serve God in liberty."*

According to Speaker Seventeen, spiritual healing should take pride of place over physical healing. In his words:

*the most important thing is the spiritual healing, having a relationship with the Lord because the word of God says we should seek first the kingdom of God and, his righteousness; and all other things shall follow. So, the most important thing is not the physical healing; it is the spiritual healing and when the spiritual healing is there, it is supposed that the physical healing shall follow ...*

#### 4.2.2.8. Collaborative healing ministry: the spirit of ecumenism?

It is instructive to note that collaborative ministry is prioritised by a number of the interviewees, as it opens ways for possible partnerships, in the field of the healing ministry between the two churches, that is, the RCC and the TACC. When asked about the status of the relationship between the TACC and the RCC healing ministers, Speaker Three responds that he is not against the Catholic ministry but rather sees them as companions in the common healing ministry of God: *“We don’t have any problem with them instead we appreciate them ...”* Further, he notes *“I’m happy to hear that Reverends Fathers too they pray for the sick, if it would happen to be in their program, I would share the service. If they ask me to pray, I would pray, because we are one people one Lord.”* In a similar vein, to the question of collaboration between the RCC and TACC, Speaker Four reckons that there is a good space for collaborative ministry. To his mind, both denominations are bound together in the ministry of Christ and are therefore companions on the journey. He defends his point from the Bible:

*The Bible says that the Disciples of Christ saw another group of persons casting out demons somewhere; they came to Jesus, look we have seen some people casting out demons like us, he said those who are not against us, they are with us. Now if we handle one God I do not know how we cannot collaborate.*

Some believe that the differences between the Catholic Church and the Apostolic churches are in –name only. Speaker Four says: *“... I don’t see any boundary, what is separating us is a name; my Church, my Church. But Catholic don’t think they are in heaven; and the Apostolics, they are in heaven. We have one heaven and we are serving one God, we can collaborate.”* Confirming his belief on the teachings of the RCC, Speaker Three opines that the Blessed Sacrament, as practised by the Catholic Church, is the body and blood of Christ and that it is capable of healing anyone who has absolute trust in it. He states: *“...the sacrament of Holy Communion, I tell the people it is the body and blood of Christ, approach the table by faith; it is your faith in him who has giving his body and his blood that would work out on something for you.”* This coming from an Apostolic pastor reinforces indeed, the emphasis the RCC places on the sacraments as great sources of liberative healing because “sacraments are visible signs of an invisible healing: ‘medicine’ for immortality” (Marsch, 1989: 1).

With regard to another instance where this collaboration can be seen as consolidating a common understanding of the sacraments in use in both churches, Speaker Three notes:

*What would make your difference is your faith as you approach this table, I say even if you are sick, the body of Christ, that was broken would heal your broken body, and take it by*



*faith, you would see miracle happening so there is power in the sacrament, when the individual takes it or approached it by faith.*

When asked the question “How do you think that healing ministry can be a uniting factor between the Apostolic and RCC?”, Speaker Three answers that uniting under the same word would be a good way of bringing both denominations together under the same banner. In his words: “*When we all agree that Jesus can do it and we stand on that word together, we say Lord have your way and together we follow the direction of the Holy spirit. You are doing it and support it because you believe what I believe.*” Putting Jesus at the centre is key to this endeavour.

Thus the Speaker Three contends that both denominations should not let “*our ideologies, our principles, our practices, our methods would not affect that word ...*” When asked “how do you think you can work with the Pentecostal ministers in this [healing] ministry?” Speaker One, for his part, notes that there is real apathy towards the Catholic quest for ecumenism. He believes that: “*There are Pentecostals, Baptists for whom, there is nothing we can do; they do not want to do anything with Catholics. It is Babylon; it is they say, they do not know the Bible, they are worshippers of the Virgin Mary, they are this, they are that, they are the papists.*”

In view of the above, speaker one reckons that “*with these people [the Pentecostals] you will hardly do anything at all. They think they have it all, know all, when it is like that what do you want, you cannot do anything.*” Here emerged some of the difficulties that will need to be dealt with if sustainable ecumenism is to take place. Be that as it may, Speaker One notes that there are shining exceptions as there are some Pentecostals “*who are open, and who feel that from the moment you are a man of God, from the moment you pray, ok? No problem, we go together.*” In other words, some Pentecostals are warm towards those they perceive as ministers of God irrespective of their denomination. However, Speaker Six leans towards an apathetic stance on the question of collaborative ministry.

Indeed, in response to the question about the possibility of the Catholic Church collaborating with the Pentecostal Churches, Speaker Six – a catholic priest – is less that positive about the prospects. For him some healing ministers in the Pentecostal churches have been predominately driven by the inordinate love of money and the overt concern for healing. He points out that:

*I see it hard to collaborate. I think that Tsalla Essomba<sup>2</sup> is an impostor who does not seek the wellbeing of people. He, instead, seeks his own wellbeing, his money; there is only one thing that interests him: it is the miracle of healing. You cannot focus your pastoral life, your apostolic life on deliverance, healings and miracles. People who do miracles, those are story tales, those are people who are cheating; it is impossible ...*

Speaker Two, however, is unambiguous in his belief that there is common ground for a collaborative ministry between the RCC and other PCC in the area.

In particular, when asked “what are the elements that can help your church work with Catholic Church?”, Speaker Two, an apostolic pastor interviewed in his parish office in Yaoundé on 05 December 2010, notes: “*We cannot even find that there is a difference between the Catholic Church and us. Because we are the Apostolic Church, and the Apostolic church believes in the doctrine of the apostles. And the doctrine of the Apostles is the Bible and the Catholic Church believes in the Bible.*” Thus, he insists that both the RCC and the PCCs are essentially underpinned by the Bible. This notwithstanding, he notes that there is a point of departure for the two denominations: “*Maybe if we can talk about difference it is at the baptism only. Because we baptise by immersion and the Catholic Church baptises by their means they have learned.*” In any case, Hollenweger (1999:147) highlights the importance of a collaborative ministry for these churches. He reminds us, “generally speaking, neither the secular nor the religious press seems to have spotted the significance of one of the most important events in the religious scene of our century: the official Roman Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue, which began in 1972 and is still in progress ...” (Hollenweger 1999: 147).

Still on the topic of ecumenism, Speaker Eleven did not mince his words in saying that he has no affiliation with Pentecostal ministers as they have nothing in common with the RCC. In his words: “*I think I have none, I have no relationship with Pentecostals, because we move in different portfolio and spiritualities. Frankly I do not have one.*” When asked about the reason for his stance, he avows that:

*There are some [Pentecostal] pastors who are asking the Christians to burn down our prayer books, to throw away the rosary to stop using it and to go and get the laying on of hands. At this level, there is no possible cooperation anymore when this kind of intolerance is allowed; we can no longer work together. So that is exactly the problem we face with the Pentecostals. They are so radical that they want people to go only to them, they do not want to hear that people come to us, that they use our sacramentals, that they use our holy water, that they pray the rosary, that they turn to the Virgin Mary, do not, do not, do not ...*

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<sup>2</sup> Tsalla Essomba is the founder of a Pentecostal movement in Yaoundé called “Go and tell”. He has told his followers to burn their rosaries, for which he and his group were roundly criticized.

On the same mood he continues *“that is why I said earlier that there is no communion between Pentecostals...and us [Roman Catholic Church].”* In contrast, Speaker Twenty is positive about ecumenism between the RCC and PCCs. He admits: *“personally, I would not mind to work with a pastor. For me, we all pray the same God. If I have to invite a pastor to my church, I have to get permission from the bishop; otherwise it would create confusion in the Christian’s mind. Indeed, we pray the same God but we have different ways to worship him. If we could meet half way, I would not mind.”*

Taking it from there, Speaker Sixteen suggests that *“first of all there must be a forum for all those who are interested, for those of us who are in the healing ministry to come together as forum.”* On the viability of such a forum, speaker sixteen notes that:

*It is up to the leader of the church to work for the common good of the nation, leaders of the church say please we want all those who are in the forum of healing ministry of the Apostolic Church and the Catholic Church come together to share their experiences, to share their views, for more enlightening of those who are in the ministry to pray together and why not you know change platform.*

Speaker Seventeen maintains that it should be noted that there should be no discrimination among churches since all are one under the same banner of God. He says:

*All of us are serving the same Master, our Lord Jesus Christ, so the collaboration is that, you know, in heaven, in heaven, there will be no Catholic, no Apostolic, no Presbyterian, no this, all of us shall be children of God. And it will be good for the Church, the body of Jesus Christ to start practicing how to live heaven already here on earth.*

These practical aspects came up a number of times in the research.

#### **4.3. Conclusion**

This chapter has dealt with the analysis of various information obtained from the fieldwork and has offered the views and understandings of healing ministers in the RCC of Cameroon and TACC, both ordained and laity; as well as females and males.

The Thematic Analysis method used identified more themes in the interview data than were actually discussed in this section. Although some of the undeveloped themes formed part of more major ones, we briefly mention those that could also have been developed in this research study, namely: the holiness of the healing seeker and of the healing minister; the minister as an instrument of the healing God; healing as God’s love and mercy on the downtrodden; syncretism

in the healing ministry; the potential of God to use one's sickness to show love and concern to that person - which portrays patience and the love of the Cross of Christ; the difficulties in exercising this ministry; educating the faithful on that ministry and on ecumenism - that is, trusting that other churches have something good to offer; that a healing ministry course must be introduced in the training of priests at seminaries. These themes, although less important than the ones discussed in this chapter, confirm that the healing ministry is an important element in the life of the people and the life of the church. The diversity of themes that emerged from the people in the field attests to the complexity of faith healing and healing ministry. From the incomprehension of healing and healing ministers to the denial of miracle healing, from mistrust to the misappropriation of the healing ministry, all confirm that the topic was worth being investigated.

The next chapter will present an understanding of how the healing ministry ought to be conducted following not only human patterns, but also going the way of Jesus Christ in terms of how he conducted his healing ministry and why he "went around doing good" (Acts 10:38).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS/REFLECTION

#### 5.1. Introduction

The concept of faith healing, divine healing or spiritual healing, as it is variously referred to, which we are dealt with in this dissertation, has proven to be essential in the life of both individual Christians and of Christian Churches of all denominations worldwide. The high level of involvement of Catholics who have lately started flocking to the healing ministry and the observation of the way this ministry is exercised nowadays are indications that this ministry has become a major phenomenon. Some questions thus need to be asked. For instance: Why do people commit themselves to a healing ministry? Are these new healing ministers really genuine people who are out to ensure the welfare, the wellbeing and the liberation of the vulnerable people of God? What is the place of and role played by Jesus Christ in the healing ministry? Answers to these questions will help, in turn, to answer the research question: “How can a true and liberating pastoral healing ministry be established in the RCC?”

#### 5.2. The healing mission of Jesus

The premise taken from the book of Genesis (1:31) instructs us on the goodness of God’s creation and reads: “God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good”. The “goodness” here referred to means that harmony and peace were to prevail. Consequently this goodness and innocence of the whole creation needed to be restored after the fall. Saint Paul reminds: “we know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons [sic], the redemption of our bodies” (Romans 8:22-23). In response to this we read in Acts (10:38) that Jesus came and “He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him”. This is why understanding the mission of Jesus Christ is a key element in terms of grasping the meaning of the healing ministry in the church.

On opening his public ministry, Jesus read this passage of the Prophet Isaiah found in Luke (4:18-19) or Isaiah (61:1-4):

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.

These words are the public declaration of Jesus' own mission on earth. More than a proclamation, it is a programme of activities to be executed by him. This is a ministry of healing human beings in their entirety; This was a holistic healing ministry that brought back smiles to the lives of the people Jesus ministered to. His ministry addressed poverty, injustice, and healing for physical and non-physical ailments; he brought back hope for the hopeless and liberation for the oppressed. God worked many miracles through Jesus (Acts 2:22-33). The New Testament is full of Jesus' healing activity which reveals one aspect of the mission of Jesus, that is, healing.

Healing is a meeting point between humans and God; as sick persons find themselves in a desperate situation and open themselves to prayer in search of help from God, it is likely that the meeting point between the two will produce the expected healing. Prayer in this case brings humanity to the divinity and divinity brings healing to humanity. The will of the seeker, the sick person and the will of the healer, Jesus Christ, need to match in order to produce the expected effects, bearing in mind that, at last God is free to grant healing or not; irrespective of any human involvement. A passage in the gospel of Luke (5:12-16), the healing of a leper, presents a wonderful dialogue between Jesus and a leper: the leper says: "Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean" and Jesus replies: "I do will it. Be made clean". This leaves us wondering why Jesus really healed.

### **5.3. Why did Jesus heal? Healing: a foretaste of salvation?**

Jesus Christ performed many miracles healing during his mission or public ministry. Those healings brought the presence of Jesus into the healed lives and changed their lives for the better; leaving them in jubilation and praise. The new beginning for many of those whose lives Jesus touched was a reality. They could taste what it would be like for Christians who join eternity to discover and enjoy the fulfilling presence of God already here on earth. Saint John the evangelist reassured everyone that "this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you have sent, Jesus Christ" (Jn 17:3). The knowledge of God implies the knowledge of the One who has sent Jesus Christ. The effective knowledge of God is the healing many, if not all, are seeking.

There is one question that still needs some answers: Why did Jesus actually heal? Did he heal just to make people happy or was there more to it? Domingues (2000:80) gives us the essence of why Jesus healed people:

Jesus' wondrous healing and exorcisms were not intended to increase his own popularity, nor respond to popular craving for the miraculous, nor even simply to deliver those people from suffering. The latter may have been the immediate motivation for some cures and acts of deliverance, but the whole healing activity of Jesus finds its full meaning only as a proleptic realisation of God's offer of universal eschatological salvation, which would be definitely accomplished in the mystery of Jesus' own death and resurrection.

This is a superb summary of the guidelines for Jesus' healing activity, which any healing minister should follow and apply in their own ministry. In chapter four of this thesis many healing ministers - both lay and ordained - from both PCC and RCC complained about their colleagues who have entered ministry not for the reasons mentioned by Domingues, but rather for their own selfish interests. In answering the question why did Jesus heal, Bate (1995:163-164) building on Kelsey (1973:88-89) argues that:

Jesus healed because he cared for people, because he was hostile to what made them sick and because he wished to bring them to repentance for their sins and conversion to the Kingdom. Jesus' caring is a manifestation of his compassion: the experience of suffering with those who suffer which is a direct consequence of the Incarnation and which attitude is brought to fullness on the cross.

Healing ministers are hereby called on to refrain from any form of personal gratification. Like Saints Peter and Saint John in (Acts 3:11.26), they must be able to say with pride "... why are you amazed at this, and why do you look so intently at us as if we had made him walk by our own power or piety ...". The platform laid by St Peter and St John is a wonderful example for anyone engaged in the healing ministry. Instead of trying to promote themselves and publicly parade before humans to gain their appraisal and become famous to the detriment of the vulnerable poor, healing ministers ought to learn and 'give God what is God' namely that 'to God be all the glory'.

The healing ministry in this case regains its original meaning which is the liberation and restoration of what was lost and then found, bringing Jesus and God back to the centre and salvation as the climax of the healing ministry. McManus (1984:94) agrees with this when he writes that: "Spiritual healing is liberation from all destructive habits of sin and from every bondage of the devil. In the Mass we proclaim, *Lord, by your cross and resurrection you have set us free. You are the Savior[sic] of the world.*" Liberation and different forms of healing are good, but Warrington (2008:269) aptly states:

A major reason for the records of the healing ministry of Jesus is to teach readers about him [...] The physical restorations, although important to those healed, also revealed truth about the healer [...] His (Jesus) healing powers are signposts to him and not simply to a more successful healing ministry.

Jesus' healing mission was to reveal God and draw the hearts of the people to God, not to focus on actual healing aspects, but rather to go to the source of healing and hope for life without pain in the kingdom, which is salvation.

Against the backdrop of the conditions prevalent on the African continent, many Africans are craving for healing and liberation. They are looking for that moment of change, of transformation to happen in their lives, in their families, in their countries and in the continent at large. Healing ministry is directed at this. People want to feel better; they want to see change in themselves, in their families, and in their environment, simply because that is the traditional African view of healing; to move from the bad to a more acceptable state that embraces the whole of life.

#### **5.4. The concept of wholeness/fullness in healing**

The aspiration for a healthy life is a leading factor in the individual quest for the fullness of life, for the wholeness of the being, to be at peace with oneself. Although aware that the fullness of redemption will only appear sometimes later, people however need an abundant life in the here and now. Since Jesus declared boldly "I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10). We believe that the wholeness of life is achievable.

The notion of 'abundance of life' or 'life in full', as it appears in the above-mentioned verse, opens wide the possibility of entering the life of God and transforming one's own life. Union with God is what one is looking for and is, in a sense, fullness or wholeness in God. According to Adeso (2001:133), Jesus

Has entered people's situation to bring them that restoration and fullness of God. He will go deep down even into its most painful, dreary moment of death to bring also that liberation and fullness of life in people. [...] This is so that through him alone people might reach the fullness of life ...

This transformation, restoration is what people attain after the process of healing.

Taking it from Milingo (1985:24-25) we want to make more explicit the notion of wholeness that faith healing is there to procure to the sick people by stating that:



The healing we want to define is basically a supernatural work, a continuation of the liberating, saving, and protecting work of Jesus Christ [...] In our context healing means taking away from a person a disturbance in life which acts as a deprivation of self-fulfilment and which is considered an unwanted parasite. In whatever way we take it, the expected result is to release someone from stumbling block to human fulfilment. [...] so 'to heal', in our context, means to heal the whole person.

The holistic healing ministry approach is needed in the RCC in order to have a church that is made up of freed people who are active in their participation and are capable of relating to other Christians in a mature way.

### **5.5. A call for unity through healing ministry**

Everybody is longing for that moment in life when there will be no disturbances or difficulties of any kind but, until that moment occurs, the healing ministry is therefore a call to all people of all works of life and all denominations. Healing can in for that reason bring about the unity so highly expected by all Christians in order to answer the cry of Jesus: "So that they may be one, Father ..." (Jn17:21).

Many of the people interviewed during the fieldwork expressed their unease about the fact that divisions within and that this situation needed to be reversed. Speaker One, a healing ordained RCC minister, after stressing that there are Pentecostals who do not accept cooperation said: "*On the contrary, you have some who are open, and who feel that from the moment you are a man of God, from the moment you pray ok, no problem we go together.*" In the same vein Speaker Four, an Apostolic healing pastor stated:

*The Bible says that the Disciples of Christ saw another group of person casting out demons somewhere; they came to Jesus to report: "look, they said, we have seen some people casting out demons like us". He said to them: "those who are not against us, they are with us"(cf Lk 9:49-50). Now if we handle one God I do not know how we cannot collaborate.*

If there is one thing in the world that can bring about unity in the Church of Christ, it is a human being, particularly a suffering human being. During the research many Pentecostal and Catholic healing ministers pointed out how they receive sick people across denominations without any difficulty. They reminded us that "we all pray the Our Father prayer" without asking what it really meant for each grouping. Speaker Four stated that there should be collaboration among healing ministers across denominations for two reasons: to relieve the people and to assume Jesus' wish of unity. He says:

*No it depends for me; I don't see any boundary. What is separating us is a name: 'my Church, my Church'. But Catholics don't work their own heaven; and the Apostolics, their own heaven. We have one heaven and we are serving one God, we can collaborate. Just as you called me (for the interview), I have never entered here, I only knew that all this area is catholic area, but I have never have an opportunity to enter here; but you called me. I say this is change let me come. We are discussing and this is how it starts, we are creating relationship gradually it grows tomorrow we begin to cooperate. There must be a beginning. To me I don't see any difficulty there. Yes.*

## **5.6. Conclusion**

The research question, “how can a true and liberating pastoral healing ministry be established in the RCC?” was answered and clarified in this chapter where it has been carefully shown how the healing ministry today should be modelled on Jesus and those who came after him, the Apostles.

During his missionary activities, Jesus often told those he had healed: “Tell no one, but go to the Temple ...”. This was to demonstrate to all that the healing ministry and the cures brought about were not meant to put on a show and bring people’s attention to the person of the healer nor of the healed. This is contrary to what is happening today. Nowadays, healing ministers use the media to announce the ‘great deeds’ they have achieved: they use radio, TV and billboards in town and city streets.

Among the many other things Jesus did, healing played a predominant part. His mission comprised healing which was continuing the goodness of God toward human beings. That ‘Jesus went around doing good’ suggests an answer to the question of why did Jesus really heal. It came to be understood that it was because he wanted to reveal himself to humanity; he wanted to bring people to know and love God and so to have a foretaste of salvation, which is living permanently with God. Because of the union with God, the healing ministry becomes a preparation for each individual to come to God. The notion of wholeness or fullness in one’s life is an open door to health and to union with God which is salvation. Sick people are free to seek healing wherever possible, within Christendom, which gives to the healing ministry an ecumenical overtone. That is why those in the ministry are challenged to cooperate and work together to bring to God’s people the fullness and wholeness Jesus left to them when he said in Saint John (10:10): “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly”.

## CHAPTER SIX

### GENERAL CONCLUSION

#### 6.1. Introduction

The healing ministry is a broad ministry that ministers to the person in totality. It is not limited solely to -physical or bodily healing, but is intended to lead to wholeness or fullness both the minister and the health seeker. This is why the healing ministry can include such aspects as the healing of memories, the healing of relationships, the healing of the wounds of sin, spiritual healing and, of course physical healing. This project tried to make all aware and to bring churches together in bringing their members, especially young people, to accept Jesus Christ and to allow themselves to be surprised by him. - because the surprises of Jesus are beyond expectation and they are always good surprises.

To accept to be surprised by Jesus is a great step forward in faith formation, which is an important element for any healing. In this essay we have discussed that the healing ministry is PRIMARILY a matter of faith. It is a meeting point for two wills: the will of the healing seeker and the will of God, the Healer. The healing minister is simply an instrument in the hands of God who in his discretion can heal straight away, delay the healing process or decide not to heal at all.

The healing ministry is a ministry of compassion towards those members of Christ body who are downcast, broken and oppressed. Asamoah-Gyadu (2005:165) provides an overview of the subject of this the thesis, namely that healing ministry, which is open to wholeness and the joy of God. He states:

The deployment of divine resources, that is, power and authority in the name or Blood of Jesus – perceived in pneumatological terms as the intervention of the Holy Spirit – to provide release for demons-possessed, demon-oppressed, broken, disturbed and troubled persons, in order that victims may be restored to ‘proper functioning order’, that is, to ‘health and wholeness’; and, being thus freed from demonic influence and curses, they may enjoy God’s fullness of life understood to be available in Christ.

The mentality within mainstream or traditional churches, including the RCC, must change in order to accommodate the evolution and aspirations of young people. Many of those who have problems and feel left out of the church accuse her of being more a culture than a religion that cares about leading faithful to salvation; the youth say “it is not lived and therefore it does not attract”.

## **6.2. Recommendations that emerge from the findings of this study**

In the words of Eloi Messi Metogo (2006:8): “Catholics and Pentecostals will therefore have to engage in a theological debate on rebirth in the Spirit, inculturation and salvation”. Accordingly we add that this dialogue, between the RCC and the PCCs, is also needed in pastoral fields where more practical aspects in the life of churches will be used. Healing will be one of such aspects. In line with Robeck (in Warrington 2008:178), we recommend: “That areas agreement should be identified, strength affirmed and weaknesses acknowledged. Patience and forgiveness is needed on the part of all as well as a greater realisation of the universal nature of the Church”. Hence dialogue between the PCCs and the RCC, which has been long on the go on an international level, needs to take place in local churches in Cameroon.

Besides the theoretical part of such a dialogue, we recommend some practical aspects that, if achieved, can bring some clarity in the healing ministry not only for the RCC but also for other churches.

- Bible sharing and Bible study

One of the recurring issues during the fieldwork was that the Holy Scripture was identified as an area of similarity between churches. Besides serving the same God, the word of God as a source of action was the same for all groups. In this sense, organising common Bible sharing and Bible study groups involving both members of TACC and the RCC would be a good starting point for collaboration.

- Healing workshops and other seminars

In terms of the understanding that health seekers will go wherever healing is offered, we recommend creating instances where healing workshops and other seminars can take place at different levels. Not only will these break down some of the barriers but they will also create a forum of education for healing ministers as well as the faithful. The need for education and clarification for both church leaders and for their healing ministers is crucial in order to avoid confusion among the faithful. Moreover, a tradition will slowly be established which will see the two churches breaking down the barriers of incomprehension and laying down a better understanding and healthier working atmosphere that might eventually engage other denominations.

- Network of healing ministers

When the above has been achieved, the data collected will create a network of healing ministers around the city of Yaoundé first, or wherever the gathering took place, this will then gradually cover the entire country and even cross borders. This database will also be made available to all healing ministers and church leaders who could use it for referrals whenever necessary.

- Training in the holistic healing ministry

The preparation of healing ministers to make use of a holistic approach to healing in Bible schools, in seminaries, in universities and colleges that are forming church leaders should not be an option, but a priority. This will not only widen minister' understanding of the person as a whole, but also of the person in pursuit of fullness or wholeness.

These recommendations are not based on mere observation but rather are the fruits of the data analysis. During the research we came across healing ministers from both the RCC and the TACC who recognised and were opening debates in this regard. The analysis simply brought them to light. We have found that a certain empathy exists between the two churches, which, if nurtured, will create the potential for implementing these proposals.

### **6.3. Conclusion**

As we conclude this study, we can say that the work brought to light a number of issues that were not apparent at the beginning of this study. The first point is highlighted by this dissertation is that there are many Catholics, both lay and ordained who are getting involved in the healing ministry in Cameroon. After analysing the data, we discovered that actually there are not as many as initially estimated. Indeed, those committed to the ministry attest to a *lack* of healing ministers; because more and more, sick people are yearning for spiritual, faith or divine healing, which leaves those involved overburdened. This is the reason why the healing ministers interviewed in this study are convinced that there is a great need for more to become involved, both clerics and lay people, in order to start practise in that particular ministry.

Many Catholic healing ministers agree that the resurgence of the healing ministry within their church is indeed a challenge that comes to them through the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement; and in this way they are almost obliged to adjust the mission and apostolate of their church by adapting healing elements within worship, as well as using what they already have to

make it more effective and meaningful to the faithful. This challenge comes with a rediscovery made by many of the RCC healing priests that healing is not something to be acquired separately, but rather that it is part and parcel of their ordination to the priesthood and so it cannot be left aside. Accordingly they must use it for the liberation of God's vulnerable people. Hence, every catholic priest is expected to revive the healing ministry that lies within them and which they acquired during their ordination. In this way the healing ministry will regain its lost prestige within the RCC.

Future research and investigations can be done on deepening the understanding on factors associated with Christian involvement in the healing ministry.

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**INFORMED CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PROJECT**

I .....

Hereby freely and voluntarily accept to offer my interview as part of Fr Ambroise B. Bayiha’s Masters Research Project. I know that it is an academic exercise and I am also aware that my participation is voluntary and will give me no financial gain whatsoever. I do understand that I can discontinue my participation in the project at any time should I feel the necessity; and this without any inconvenience. I therefore give my consent that these conversations can be taped and used for the purpose of the research.

Signature of the Interviewee.....

Signed at .....

Date .....

Telephone no ..... Cell  
.....

E-mail .....

In the presence of (interviewer).....



### FORMULAIRE DE CONSENTEMENT

Je soussigné .....(l'interviewé(e),

Déclare volontairement and sans contrainte que j'accepte d'accorder une interview pour participation au projet de recherche du Père Ambroise Bayiha Bayiha en vue de l'obtention d'une Maitrise en Théologie. Je suis conscient(e) qu'il s'agit d'un exercice purement académique et je sais que ma participation est volontaire et sans rémunération quelque nature. Je sais aussi que je peux interrompre ma participation à ce projet à tout moment si nécessité se posait; et ceci sans aucun préjudice. Voila pourquoi je donne mon consentement et autorisation, sans réserve, pour que nos conversations soient enregistrées et utilisées pour le compte de ladite recherche.

Signature de l'interviewé (e).....

Signé à  
.....

Le (date) .....

No de téléphone ..... Cell  
.....

E-mail .....

En présence de  
l'intervieweur.....

## **QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TOOLS**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

#### **FOR CATHOLIC HEALING MINISTERS**

1. Can you tell us who you are?
2. How will you define your ministry?
3. How did you come to the healing ministry?
4. What made you decide to get involved?
5. Why, according to you, are so many priests today getting involved in healing?
6. What is your relationship with healing ministers in the PCC?
7. How will you describe healing in the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches?
8. How do you link your ministry with the doctrine of the RCC on healing and exorcism?
9. Catholics believe in the healing power of the sacraments. What is your view on that?
10. What are the challenges you face in your ministry?
11. What are the fulfillments? What makes you happy, that keep you going?
12. What is the goal, the aim of doing the healing ministry?
13. In which way do you think your church can collaborate with PCC on the basis of healing?
14. What would you do differently in your ministry from now on?
15. Is there anything else that you would like to say?



**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**  
**FOR PENTECOSTAL MINISTERS**

1. Can you tell us who you are?
2. How will you define your ministry?
3. How did you come to the healing ministry?
4. What made you decide to get involved?
5. How will you describe healing in the Roman Catholic Church?
6. Why, according to you, are so many priests today getting involved in healing?
7. What is your relationship with healing ministers in the RCC?
8. Catholics believe in the healing power of the sacraments. What is your view on that?
9. What are the challenges you face in your ministry?
10. What are the fulfilments? What makes you happy, that keeps you going?
11. What is the goal, the aim of doing the healing ministry?
12. In which way do you think your church can collaborate with RCC on the basis of healing?
13. What would you do differently in your ministry from now on?
14. Is there anything else that you would like to say?

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**  
**FOR PENTECOSTAL LAY MINISTERS**

1. Can you tell us who you are?
2. What is your understanding of divine healing?
3. How did you come to the healing ministry? What made you decide to get involved?
4. Why, according to you, are so many RCC priests today getting involved in healing?
5. Is there anything else that you would like to say?

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**  
**FOR CATHOLIC LAY MINISTERS**

1. Can you tell us who you are?
2. What is your understanding of divine healing?
3. How did you come to the healing ministry? What made you decide to get involved?
4. Why, according to you, are so many RCC priests today getting involved in healing?
5. Is there anything else that you would like to say?

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**  
**FOR FOCUS GROUP**

1. What are your relationships with healing ministers from the other church (PCC or RCC)?
2. How do you think PCC and RCC healing ministries influenced each other?
3. Have you ever participated in healing activities with members of the other church?
4. In which way do you think your two churches can collaborate together?

## **SPEAKERS IDENTIFIER AND DENOMINATION**

SPEAKER ONE:	RCC PRIEST
SPEAKER TWO:	APOSTOLIC PASTOR
SPEAKER THREE:	APOSTOLIC PASTOR
SPEAKER FOUR:	APOSTOLIC PASTOR
SPEAKER FIVE:	APOSTOLIC DEACONESS
SPEAKER SIX:	RCC PRIEST
SPEAKER SEVEN:	RCC PRIEST
SPEAKER EIGHT:	RCC LAYMAN MINISTER
SPEAKER NINE:	APOSTOLIC LAYMAN MINISTER
SPEAKER TEN:	APOSTOLIC LAYMAN MINISTER
SPEAKER ELEVEN:	RCC PRIEST
SPEAKER TWELVE:	RCC LAYMAN MINISTER
SPEAKER THIRDTREEN:	RCC LAYMAN MINISTER
SPEAKER FOURTEEN:	RCC LAYWOMAN MINISTER
SPEAKER FIFTEEN:	APOSTOLIC LAYMAN MINISTER
SPEAKER SIXTEEN:	APOSTOLIC EVANGELIST
SPEAKER SEVENTEEN:	APOSTOLIC PASTOR
SPEAKER EIGHTEEN:	RCC LAYMAN MINISTER
SPEAKER NINETEEN:	APOSTOLIC LAYWOMAN MINISTER
SPEAKER TWENTY:	RCC PRIEST