



# **Christians' attitudes towards traditional medicine**

by

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## **DECLARATION**

As required by university regulations, I hereby state unambiguously that this work has not been presented at any other university or any other institution of higher learning other than the University of KwaZulu-Natal and that, unless specifically indicated to the contrary within the text, it is my own original work.

 .....

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30 July 2021

As candidate supervisor, I hereby approve this thesis for submission.

 .....

**Dr Xolani Sakuba**

30 July 2021

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## ABSTRACT

This study involves a close examination of the real factors behind the persistent negative attitude toward the use of traditional medicine by the majority of Charismatic/Pentecostal churches in Africa; with a view to determine the extent to which one can confidently state that it is based on sound theological grounds.

This study comprises how I observed/noted (not argued) that despite this, those whose attitudes should have by now been transformed by the prevalence and dominance of the discourse that permeates this work are strangely the ones who continue to harbour negative sentiments towards traditional remedies. Unlike other studies, which are based on an ideo-philosophical argument, this study rather constitutes observation, which, by itself, has turned out to be a critique of an existing ideo-philosophical argument.

Theologians have done a sterling job in terms of highlighting the significance of retrieving and rejuvenating African culture; however, none of these theologians has tackled the subject of the Christian's attitude towards indigenous medicine as a standalone project, even where this appreciation for traditional medicine is observed. Still, it does not receive unique appreciation as an issue that needs to be attended to. It is mired in the controversy of the unclearness between *inyanga* and *isangoma*. Senghor and his Negritude concept, Nkrumah with Pan-Africanism, Nyerere with the Ujamaa philosophy, and Kenyatta with the African economic cooperation ideology are the leading proponents of the revitalisation of African culture after colonialism, and they discuss all these concepts, except the Christian's attitude toward indigenous medicine, and it is this gap that I intend to close. I am therefore not reinventing the wheel. It is also worth mentioning that most of the existing literature points to colonialism and missionary projects and the reflection of the damage that was birthed by the two, even in the post-colonial discourse. It is, however, my observation that there is another phenomenon that is missing, which is the human reaction to normality.

Based on the main objective of this study, which is to contribute to a better and more informed understanding of this attitude with a view to develop a sound theological response to this enduring phenomenon, this study followed grounded theory as a methodological approach. Another truth behind the evasiveness and attitude of Charismatic/Pentecostal churches and communities towards traditional medicine is that scientists only discovered medicine from the trees, herbs, and flowers already produced by God. Many of the medicines

in pharmacies originate from God's creation. This submission in no way denounces the excellent work undertaken by scientists around the subject of medicine, but affirms that they only discovered what was already existing and that even the ability to discover is granted by God. Also, the inclusion of African traditional medical systems in the cosmopolitan mainstream would play a pivotal role in decreasing the burden of health institutions and offer an alternative way of healing. Finally, we need to educate and remind one another of forgotten normality and that forgetfulness is a result of the evolution of means of accessing intended good and that evolution is as a result of an ongoing human disposition to discover new reality.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AIC	African Independent Church
ARV	Antiretroviral
ECG	Enlightened Christian Gathering
USA	United States of America

## TERMINOLOGY

The following terminology is used throughout this research study:

- **Herbal medicine:** The oldest known form of healthcare, which entails using plants to treat diseases and promote health (Merck & Co. 1997: 1706).
- **Traditional medicine:** The *World Book Encyclopaedia* (1996: [sp]) defines traditional medicine as ancient and cultural-bound medical practice, which existed in human societies before the application of modern science to health. Every human community responds to the challenges of maintaining health and treating diseases by developing some form of medical system.
- **Traditional healer:** According to Richter (2003), these are practitioners who are of indigenous African descent. They are of two kinds: the first are those who serve in the role of diviner-diagnostician (or diviner-mediums), and the second are those who are healers (herbalists).
- **Ethnocentrism:** The practice of judging another culture by the standard of one's own culture (Maconis & Plummer 2012: 157). It is an idea that positions one's views and ideology as better than any others. This judgement is authoritative and a cardinal sin for every human being who practises it.
- **Colonialism:** According to Maconis and Plummer (2012: 351), colonialism is the process by which some countries/nations enriched themselves through political and economic control of other countries.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 CHRISTIANS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS TRADITIONAL MEDICINE**

This research project seeks to reflect on the historical background behind the persistent negative attitude toward the use of traditional medicine by the majority of Charismatic/Pentecostal churches in Africa. This study involves a close examination of the real factors behind this attitude; with a view to determine the extent to which one can confidently state that it is based on sound theological grounds.

### **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

A great deal has been written about the participation of church in discourses that involve matters that are viewed as either secular or as falling outside the domain of the church. Most of these reflections have taken place especially within the framework of the ongoing discourse on the nature of the relationship between the church and the state or the church and culture. One of the key features of this discourse has always been the realisation that the Charismatic/Pentecostal tradition tends to distance itself from any issue that it deems as secular or cultural in outlook. For example, it would seem that the only time this tradition is interested in matters of national or political interest is when such matters involve sensitive issues such as state policy positions on emotive ethical issues such as abortion, euthanasia, matters relating to sexuality, distribution of condoms at schools, and other related matters. As this background shows, Pentecostal and Charismatic theologians are known for their critique and rebuke of either policies or social patterns that they view as incompatible with what it means to be a proper Christian. The latter involves a number of expectations pertaining to how authentic Christians ought to conduct themselves in the public domain, with special emphasis on the dos and don'ts of an exemplary Christian life. These strict rules, for lack of a better description, may range from moderate to extreme; with the latter involving areas where there is no room for compromise. While many adherents of this tradition, just like in any other tradition, comply with some or all of these expectations, the reality is that there are those who continue to experience a great sense of internal conflict. This is especially the case with regard to aspects of these expectations that place Charismatic/Pentecostal Christians on a collision course with aspects of their cultures that continue to be of significant value to them and their immediate communities. One such area involves questions around the use of

indigenous/traditional medicines by so-called “saved Christians”. Not only am I saved, I am also the leader of a Charismatic/Pentecostal church who happens to feel very strongly about this conundrum<sup>1</sup>. After many years of reflecting on this dilemma, I made the decision to embark on a study to critically examine some of the historical factors behind my religion’s objections to the use of traditional medicine. To accomplish this, the study was structured in the following way: First, I focus on the historical factors behind these attitudes. In this regard, I draw from a number of scholars within the domain of both African theology and African philosophy. Second, I focus on the concept of normality. Here I explain what I mean by normality or the nature of normality. Third, I examine the extent to which these factors constitute a classic example of an expression or manifestation of what happens when human beings encounter normality. Fourth, I investigate how this challenge can be addressed by way of examining what could be a responsible theological intervention. In this regard, I focus largely on the value of distantiation as a missiological method to manage normality.

### **1.3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Any discussion about the sensitive issue of the compatibility versus incompatibility of traditional knowledge systems with one’s Christian identity must recognise the role of African people’s perceptions of the legacy of the history of the encounter between the West and Africa. African Pentecostal and Charismatic Christian communities’ attitudes towards indigenous medicines can be traceable to this long and rich history. For example, the obvious unreadiness of a typical contemporary Charismatic Christian to differentiate between aspects of Western culture and Christianity can be traced back to the fact that the then custodians of the Christian faith, namely missionaries, drew no distinction between Christianity and Western culture. This, by the way, was unavoidable given that all theology and, by extension, Christianity in general, are contextual. The question of the place of indigenous knowledge systems within the framework of modern or post-modern African Christianities, especially in relation to such aspects as the symbolic meaning of indigenous or traditional medicines, has always been at the centre of the ongoing discourse on the interface between the Christian versus African identities of many modern Africans. This ongoing discourse must be

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<sup>1</sup> At this point it might be necessary to acknowledge that some might find my reference to Pentecostalism in Africa to be a gross generalisation given the complex/diverse nature of Pentecostalism throughout the African continent, which means that Pentecostalism is not a monolithic phenomenon but very diverse and finds expression in many different ways. In this study, the understanding of Pentecostalism is informed by my experience, especially in KwaZulu-Natal, from where I come. Even within this demarcated zone, Pentecostalism may be expressed in different ways but the generalisation is for strategic purposes.

understood within the framework of what has come to constitute the post-colonial African discourse broadly as it is reflected in the work of Africa's political and intellectual elite, both in the field of theology and African philosophy. To have a good grasp of the extent to which the subject of the relationship between African and Christian identities within the broader post-colonial African discourse, a quick overview of the nature of this discourse (in the form of a brief review of the work of leading thinkers in this tradition) is necessary. This is because such an overview might be useful in terms of helping one to understand the extent to which the post-colonial African discourse becomes an intellectual home for any question that seeks to understand the paradoxical tensions between Christian and African identities.

To accomplish this, a literature review for this study is framed along the lines of the following themes: first, portrayals of African religions and cultures in Western scholarship; second, the legacy of colonialism; third, mission Christianity; and, last but not least, the post-colonial condition. Based on this structure, some of the literature that might be perceived by others as outdated, which I personally view as classic and worth mentioning, is strategically employed to form examples and references to my arguments. It is also worth mentioning that most of the existing literature points to colonialism and missionary projects and a reflection of the damage that was birthed by the two, even in the post-colonial discourse. However, in my observation, it became evident that there is another phenomenon that is missing, which is the human reaction to normality. This is tackled at large in Chapter Four of this study.

### **1.3.1 Portrayals of African religions and cultures in Western scholarship**

Within the framework of African people's understanding concerning the background of the current attitudes of certain members of the Charismatic/Pentecostal churches towards indigenous African health systems, there are those who would point to the lasting legacy of the manner in which early Western scholars negatively portrayed indigenous African worldviews and cultures in Western discourses about Africa. For this reason, it might be helpful to take a brief look at who the individual Western scholars are that these Africans were referring to. Most African intellectuals would point to the work of then prominent Western scholars such as Levy Bruhl, a Belgian missionary/anthropologist by the name of Placide Tempels, Georg Hegel, and Emmanuel Kant.

Prominent African scholars such as Harvey Sindima have argued that Africans in general have no choice but to deal with the devastating effects that came as a result of a number of racist presuppositions about Africa and her people<sup>2</sup>. One would remember that the racist theory that formed part of the intellectual discourse in the West, and then subsequently ended up being used by Western countries as a justification for colonialism, portrayed Africans as uncivilised and uncultured. Not only that, this literature portrayed Africans as people who had no knowledge of God, and this feature rendered them morally inferior. This is clearly reflected in a pool of literature that Western theorists, in the form of philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, missionaries, explorers, and novelists such as Joseph Conrad<sup>3</sup> wrote about Africa and her people. Among these scholars, who can forget the work of the likes of Georg Hegel, Levy Bruhl, Levi Strauss, Marcel Griaule, Paul Revert, Robert Knox, and others who wrote extensive reports that contained evidence of how inferior Africans were compared to their Western civilised counterparts.<sup>4</sup> One of the prominent African scholars whom I alluded to earlier in this section is Harvey Sindima (1995: 129), who makes the following observation about the literature that these thinkers produced:

This literature entrenched the negative attitudes of whites towards Africans, whether they went to Africa as colonialists, traders, or missionaries. The objectivity of these studies was not at all questioned in the West. The general understanding about Africa was clear: Africans could not think in abstract terms, had no system of thought, and were interested in magic and superstition. In addition, they were biologically and morally inferior, and unprogressive and uncivilized as a result of their biological inferiority.

A typical example of what Sindima (1995: 129) refers to in this quotation is the work of Levy Bruhl. In most of his writings, Bruhl portrayed Africans as a complete antithesis of Europeans in that they were barbaric, uncivilised, and devoid of any knowledge of God. Another group of scholars who shared similar sentiments with Bruhl includes prominent architects of Western cultures and worldviews such as Rousseau, who spoke about the “noble savage”, Kant and his portrayals of the “negro”, and Hegel and Gobineau and the manner in

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<sup>2</sup> For more on this, see Chapter Three.

<sup>3</sup> For more on this, see Achebe's (1977) “An image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's ‘Heart of Darkness’”, Brantlinger's (1996) “‘Heart of Darkness’: Anti-imperialism, racism, or impressionism?”, Conrad's (1994) *Heart of Darkness*, Murfin's (1996) “A critical history of Heart of Darkness” (1996), and Said's (1994) *Culture and Imperialism*.

<sup>4</sup> It may be noted that most of these rejected the views of figures such as Thomas Hobbes (who believed in the equality of all human beings), Edward B. Tylor, Herbert Spencer, James Frazer, and L.H. Morgan.



which they spoke negatively about the “African”. All these scholars shared images that were very close to Bruhl’s formalisations of the “primitive mentality” of non-Europeans, especially Africans.

The literature that I refer to in this section points to work that featured thoughts that many Western scholars, including early missionaries, held for a long time about Africa. These are the views that were imposed on Africans about themselves and their cultural worldviews, including their traditional healthcare systems. The next section of this literature review focuses on the legacy of colonialism.

### **1.3.2 The legacy of colonialism**

Apart from the impact of the manner that Europeans were portraying African religions and cultures in an extremely negative way on African attitudes towards certain aspects of their cultures and health systems in particular, a number of scholars would, albeit indirectly, also point to the impact of the legacy of colonialism as one of the main factors behind this phenomenon. Among scholars who, if they were asked, would share this view is Kwame Nkrumah. Scholars such as Kwame Nkrumah writes about issues such as this in his book on consciencism. Nkrumah further develops his thoughts on these issues, albeit indirectly, in his campaign for Pan-Africanism or the drive for a united Africa. Who was Nkrumah and what was his contribution to this broader campaign? Kwame Nkrumah became the first president of Ghana after independence. Kwame Nkrumah was one of the African intellectuals or leading thinkers who felt very strongly about the negative impact of European activities on Africa. As alluded to earlier, such activities were largely characterised by the missionaries working together with colonial agents or administrators. One of the key features of his political ideology was Pan-Africanism. Nkrumah held a strong view that one of the ways through which Africans could retrieve their identity was through a process within which Africans throughout the continent could unite as one nation. Nkrumah’s Pan-Africanism was about retrieving and rehabilitation Africanness, which includes indigenous knowledge systems about Africa and, by extension, reviewing the attitude towards such things as African medicine. However, Nkrumah knew, as did others, that Africans are more vulnerable against Western indoctrinations when they are divided. One of Nkrumah’s philosophies is that of reconstruction of the so-called “African personality”, which, after experiencing a crisis, demanded a major overhaul. According to Nkrumah (1964: 69), “African personality” is “defined by the cluster of human principles which underlie the traditional African society”.

Nkrumah was convinced that consciencism would offer an intellectual map that would enable African society to digest Western, Islamic, and Euro-Christian elements of Africa and develop them in such a way that they fit into the “African personality” (Nkrumah 1964: 79).

Another scholar whose thoughts are an indication of the impact of colonialism on African cultures and later African people’s perception of their cultures and religions is Leopold Senghor. Having realised the devastating impact of colonialism on black Africans, Senghor and his peers started a movement called Negritude. The link between the concept of Negritude and Senghor’s views on the impact of colonialism on African people’s perception of themselves, including their subsequent attitude towards traditional healthcare systems, might not be obvious. However, one can clearly deduce that part of Senghor’s campaign for the retrieval of certain features of traditional African worldviews formed part of his attempt to reverse the negative impact of colonialism on African attitudes about themselves. This would have included the manner in which Africans subsequently started to look down on their traditional forms of healing, both psychologically and physically. Through his concept of Negritude, Senghor was reacting to the perception that African culture was not as developed and did not deserve the same respect as that of European countries. Referring to Negritude, Senghor (1973: 27) argues that all literary expression of the black man has reference to this theme, as it is impossible to speak of him without recalling the historical fact that has marked him most deeply: servitude, either directly through slavery or indirectly through colonisation. Obviously, a number of ideologies and concepts came into being as a shield against the colonial sting. According to Markovitz (1969: 5), Senghor argued for the necessity to stimulate in all the people of Senegal a new awareness, a sense of commitment, and “moral awakening” in order to achieve unity and economic development. Senghor hoped to address himself to the mass of the peasants and not just to be an intellectual elite, to tell them to recreate and strengthen the old-fashioned type of community, and to throw off colonially induced bourgeois attitudes and training (Markovitz 1969: 28). The Negritude concept was never meant to be anti-white but aimed at the elevation, promotion, and recognition of the African culture, which was on the verge of being completely swallowed by the European and Western culture. Senghor promoted engineering and technology as the key to a Senegalese economic future. His Negritude concept was critiqued by some for only appealing to the elite and not the masses and for also lacking the charisma to attract and spread the influence to the masses. Those who sympathised with the Negritude concept argued that Negritude served as the precursor to decolonisation and the restoration of “Black

Pride”. According to Pal Ahluwalia (1999: 38), Negritude should be seen as a movement that became crucial as far as the process of decolonisation in Africa was concerned as it eventually led to political independence.

Another prominent figure in this list would be Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. Once again, it is worth noting that Nyerere does not necessarily address the subject of African people’s attitudes towards their traditional healthcare systems directly; let alone those of African Pentecostals. Be that as it may, one could still argue that a lot can be deduced about his thinking on the impact of colonialism on people’s attitudes towards traditional African health assets from his published thoughts and views on the impact of colonialism on Africa. Having realised the devastating impact of colonialism on his home country and in Africa in general, Nyerere started the famous “Ujamaa philosophy”, which was an alternative economic system that was based on African cultural values of Ubuntu and communitarianism. This move by Nyerere was designed to restore dignity and reinstall appreciation of African values and traditional norms among his people. Nyerere believed that indigenous African knowledge systems were not necessarily incompatible with certain features of the modern world and economic systems; rather, he saw these as complementary. Similarly, this was his way of contributing to what was the broader wave of African nationalism, which was sweeping through the sub-Saharan region at the time. Among Nyerere’s peers one can also mention prominent African scholars such as Kenya’s Jomo Kenyatta, who wrote a seminal book titled *Facing Mount Kenya* (2011), as well as Nnamdi Azikiwe from Nigeria.

In this section of the literature review, the focus was on the extent to which for many in the broader spectrum of African scholarship would have pointed to the legacy of colonialism as the main factor behind the current attitudes of the members of the Pentecostal tradition on African healthcare systems. In the next section, the focus shifts towards what many would see as the role of missionaries and their imposition of Western Christianity on African people.

### **1.3.3 Mission Christianity**

Another area that many prominent African scholars have examined with interest is that of the role of mission churches in Africa. There are those who would attribute the current attitudes of Charismatic/Pentecostal traditions to the role of mission churches, which were established by missionaries throughout the African continent. At the forefront of those who hold this position would be African theologians. Most African theologians, such as Kenya’s John

Mbiti, Nigeria's Bolaji Idowu, and Tanzania's Charles Nyamiti (perhaps with the exception of Nigeria's Byang Kato and other African evangelical theologians), have written extensively about the devastating impact of the attitude of missionaries towards African religio-cultural worldviews. For example, Mbiti (1975), in his seminal book titled *African Religions and Philosophy*, notes how missionaries found no salvific value in traditional cultures and therefore failed to appreciate how Africans used their own cultures as tools with which they received the gospel. A most notable contribution in the area of attempts to address the legacy of mission theologies is highlighted by scholars whose work focuses on the role of African Independent Churches (AICs) and their ministry of healing (such as Anderson, Oosthuizen & Hexham, Turner, Sundkler, and Ndiokwere). To substantiate my submission, I further draw from the philosophy of John Mbiti.

Once again, as it has become custom with most of these scholars, it is worth noting that while Mbiti's writings are clearly directed at addressing issues of African culture and its compatibility with Christianity, he nevertheless does not outrightly address the issue of the impact of the work of missionaries on African people's attitudes towards their traditional healthcare systems. However, by way of deduction, one can infer what Mbiti's thoughts were on this matter. Mbiti's approach to theology stems from a strong belief on his part that Africa had all that was needed to develop her own Christianity. While Mbiti uses the term "indigenisation" in his writing, his usage was not with regard to Christianity but that the gospel had to be communicated in ways that made sense to the people in their cultural contexts. People had to make sense of the gospel on their own terms; hence the importance of ensuring that proper means of communicating the gospel were being employed. The only tools needed to evolve a viable form of Christianity are the gospel, faith, and culture (Mbiti 1978: 276). Mbiti identified indigenisation as a useful form of communication of the gospel. Mbiti strongly believed that evangelisers had to take into consideration the structure of African societies. According to Mbiti (1978), Africans are communal beings that are inseparable from their families or clans. For this reason, Mbiti (1978) believed that a process of evangelisation cannot separate an individual from his/her family or clan. African pre-Christian cultural heritage consists of such aspects as the way people live, behave, and act, as well as their physical and intellectual achievements (Mbiti 1975: 7). Without culture, we would not hear the gospel, we would not believe the gospel, and few would inherit the promises of the gospel. Mbiti (1978: 311) believed that African religion(s) prepared African people for the Christian faith. It is worth noting that while many African theologians agreed

with Mbiti on several aspects, if not all the aspects, of his argument (for example, see the work of Bolaji Idowu, Charles Nyamiti, John Pobee, Gabriel Setiloane, Kwame Bediako, Kwesi Dickson, Ezra Chitando, and many others), it would be fair to also mention that African theologians did not hold a homogeneous view on this matter. For example, other African theologians such as Byang Kato in 1975 disagreed with Mbiti and other African theologians such as Bolaji Idowu on the compatibility of African culture with Christianity.

Another reference to the devastating nature of the role of the missionary enterprise in Africa comes in the form of a novel that was penned by Chinua Achebe in 1958. The message of this novel, titled *Things Fall Apart*, is very significant in this research study because it enables us to trace the sources from which the footprints of colonialism emanate, and some of these footprints are the attitudes of the Charismatic/Pentecostal churches towards traditional medicine. Things fell apart when Okonkwo received a message: “The missionaries had come to Umuofia, they have built their churches there, won a handful of converts and were already sending evangelists to the surrounding towns and villages” (Achebe 1958: 130). The other challenging message was that the white man (missionaries) had introduced a new God who is the creator of the world and the question was about the position of their known, old gods. The white man labelled their gods as not gods at all. They are gods of deceit who tell you to kill your fellows and destroy innocent children (Achebe 1958: 132). The Igbo community worried who would protect them if they abandoned their gods and followed the white man’s God. Okonkwo was astonished by this new dispensation where their religion and customs were labelled as bad and the new lunatic religion was praised by the white man. Another disturbing story was that the white man had also built a trading store and for the first time palm oil and kernel became things of great value, and much money flowed into Umuofia (Achebe 1958: 161). Okonkwo could not take it and ended up committing suicide.

In this section of the literature review, the focus was on the extent to which certain prominent African scholars, theologians in particular, viewed the role of the work of the missionaries as a major factor in so far as the attitudes of Pentecostal Africans towards African healthcare systems are concerned. The next section concludes the literature review by examining literature on post-colonialism.

#### **1.3.4 The post-colonial condition**

Probably the most recently talked-about factor behind the current attitudes of not only African Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians but also those of Africans in general towards

their religio-cultural worldviews is that of the post-colonial condition and how it shapes African people's perceptions of themselves. Most post-colonial scholars lament the fact that while the institutional component of colonialism might have been dismantled through a number of historical struggles that Africans have waged against this demon, colonialism has found a new lease on life in the form of globalisation. From this view, one sees the emergence of terms such as "neocolonialism" and "neoliberalism". For those who support this position, through the guise of the neoliberal project, the West has found new strategies to continue to undermine African religions and cultures. One such strategy, for example, according to those who share this view, is the use of the intellectual elite who use progressive intellectual discourses such as feminism and other suspected neoliberal projects to undermine African religions and cultures.

The work of a number of prominent African scholars who have made significant contributions to the current discourse on post-coloniality as both a historical and a political condition is worth mentioning at this juncture. Among these scholars are the likes of Achille Mbembe, Hommi Bhabha, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Edward Antonio. For purposes of time and scope, I find both Antonio's and Mbembe's accounts of post-coloniality to be sufficient. Antonio (2009: 7) argues that either we accept the impossible idea that nothing has changed since the first encounter took place, or we recognise that colonialism was itself a network of historical movements that divided time in terms of "before" and "after" – a division that was not unknown to its victims.

#### **1.4 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

This research comprises a literature research study conducted through the search for information captured in various books, journals, and articles about the concept related to the research problem as cited in the background section. There shall be no ethnography, case studies, or in-depth interviews.

#### **1.5 KEY RESEARCH QUESTION**

The key research question that this study seeks to answer is: What are the historical factors behind the Charismatic/Pentecostal Christian's ongoing negative attitude towards traditional medicine?

## **1.6 RESEARCH SUB-QUESTIONS**

The study also seeks to answer the following research sub-questions:

- What is normality, and to what extent are these factors a reflection of human encounters with normality?
- What would be a sensible theological response to this conundrum?

## **1.7 OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this research study are:

- To reflect on the role of the missionary project in Africa.
- To investigate the role of the alliance of the missionary project and colonialism.
- To explore the extent of the background of the origins of Western medicine in the triumph of a modern scientific worldview in the West, including the relationship of the proponents of the latter to Christianity.
- To investigate the impact of the unfortunate conflation of the Christian faith and Western culture / African traditional religion (the role of *isangoma*) and African culture (the role of the African traditional herbalist).

## **1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK UPON WHICH THE RESEARCH PROJECT IS CONSTRUCTED**

In this study, I acknowledge post-coloniality/post-colonialism as a discursive theoretical context from which this study emanates. This means while post-coloniality, with its twin concept of decoloniality, is central to this study as an intellectual environment within which this study is located, it is not the aim of this study to either defend, validate, promote, or use post-colonialism either as a tool or a theory in this study. Rather, it serves as a discursive context.

One of the main features of post-colonialism or post-coloniality is that it is both a discursive context and a historical condition. As such, most Africans, myself included, are part of this context. This is regardless of whether one is an ardent supporter of coloniality/decoloniality as a theory or not. In other words, the current discourse on post-coloniality/decoloniality affects all those who are directly affected by this condition. The discourse on either post-colonialism or post-coloniality is fraught with complexities. For example, there are those

who believe that colonialism has ended and there are those who would strongly argue that colonialism has taken a different guise in the form of globalisation. According to Antonio (2009: 7), it is predicated on the fact that one of the most distinctive features of the post-colonial situation in Africa today is the massive presence of Christianity. Such a substantial presence did not, of course, always exist (Antonio 2009: 8). Colonialism left Africa with new mental slavery thoughts of dependence. This was strategically inserted under the banner of enlightenment and development. More than any other region, Africa thus stands out as the supreme receptacle of the West's obsession with and circular discourse about the facts of "absence", "lack", and "non-being" of identity and difference, of negativity – in short, of nothingness (Mbembe 2001: 4). Mbembe (2001: 5) argues that the first has to do with the extraordinary poverty of the political science and economics literature on Africa, and with the crisis of its languages, procedures, and reasoning. Mbembe (2001: 5) further reflects, on a positive and encouraging note, that the issue is not that nothing has been achieved or that there have not been remarkable advances. His concept of no-being and nothingness of Africa paints a picture that reflects no advancement, no achievement, no reasoning, and no life at all; it is purely a reflection of a "thing" and not people with some good stories to tell. There is also a view that colonialism is in alliance with missionary enterprises in its evilness but left infrastructure and education and introduced Africa to Christianity, which we witness even currently. Even during the era of colonialism, Africa still had life and, if not, we would not be talking about decolonialism today.

As the previous section indicates, coloniality and decoloniality have become some sort of twin concepts. In other words, one cannot speak of the one without mentioning the other. As a result, any reference to post-coloniality presupposes the importance of realising decoloniality as a mechanism to address coloniality. For example, Africa is now permanently immersed in the hegemony of the colonial system and is persistently trying to save herself. It is my view that, instead of devising some means to reverse and to eradicate colonialism, Africa needs to focus more on how to create a space for the integration of Africa's own systems within the prevailing dominant Western system. If we want to execute any strategy to decolonise anything, we need to know exactly what we are decolonising because it is impossible to decolonise everything. Mateus (2006: 433-450) argues that the empire uses "democracy" as an umbrella term for the kind of political regime that it would like to see installed all over the world. The adoption of democracy, as an approved global system on its own, forces countries to be accountable to the global community. By the mere fact that



African countries are part of the global village, where organisations such as the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, and other international organisations are dominant, Africans will always pay the price if they dare implement any decolonising moves towards rectifying some of the imbalances of the past, especially if the move is not favourable to the empire. When Zimbabwe forcefully returned the land to the rightful owners, its currency drastically decreased in value until the new government reversed the land matter. When South Africa proposed the expropriation of land without compensation, the empire (American president Donald Trump) gave the order to look and follow very closely to what would transpire with this proposal. In my view, this and other empires' interferences have led to implementation delays. It is clear that decolonisation in this journey of expropriation of land without compensation will not be an easy one; not because it is illegal to execute, but because it has received the disapproval of the empire. The empire has economic power, controls the world's top industries, which are investors in many African countries, and is also influential in science and the world of technology.

## **1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Primarily, it needs to be mentioned that this research study is informed by observation, as cited in the introduction. By and large, the motive of embarking on this study was motivated by the same observation that has precisely manifested in various platforms like comments during preaching, meetings, radio talk shows, and church conferences. In other words, the object of interest in this phenomenon that I have been observing is the attitudes of the Charismatic/Pentecostal churches towards traditional medicine. Based on the main objective of this study, which is to contribute to a better and more informed understanding of this attitude with a view to develop a sound theological response to this enduring phenomenon, this study followed grounded theory as a methodological approach. Grounded theory is methodology that is employed in both qualitative and quantitative research studies with a view to develop a theory from the data. For example, when a researcher uses grounded theory, the main focus is not on existing literature or theory, even though the study itself can have a literature review. In a study that is based on grounded theory, data are of paramount importance in that it is from the same data that a researcher generates a theory.

In this study, the focus is neither on the strengths nor the weaknesses of the existing research or body of knowledge on why members of Charismatic/Pentecostal churches continue to exhibit negative attitudes towards traditional health systems. Rather, based on the data that

have been collected, the main focus of this study is to develop a new theory on why this continues to be the case. This stems from the fact that while a researcher who follows grounded theory acknowledges the importance of existing literature and subsequent theories, the researcher does not use this literature as primary data for his/her study. Grounded theory research discourages forcing the data to fit into preconceived theories. Grounded theory was introduced by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 when they proposed a new kind of qualitative research that they called grounded theory. Unlike theories that existed at the time, grounded theory focused on the discovery of theory from data – data that a researcher would systematically obtain and analyse (Glaser & Strauss 1967: 1). The main purpose behind the introduction of this theory, according to Glaser and Strauss (1967: 32), was to introduce a rigorous new method of qualitative research that would enable the systematic collection, coding, and analysis of data. The flexibility of the grounded theory approach should not be misunderstood, particularly when it is also used in quantitative research. I also reflected on the suitability of qualitative research to derive theory from data. One major advantage of a grounded theory approach, and its relevance to this research study, is that it allows space to methodically obtain data and the generation of theory instead of preconceived theories. Glaser and Strauss (1967: 33) emphasised the necessity that researchers should conduct a study “without any preconceived theory that dictates, prior to the research, ‘relevancies’ in concepts and hypotheses”.

In the true nature of grounded theory, the data that I have been analysing in this study form part of what I have been observing about the nature of the human phenomenon. While this study follows grounded theory as the main methodological approach, it is worth noting that parts of this study include a review of literature as one of its methods, thereby partly making this study a literature review. For this dimension of this study, the following materials were used: published books, essays from edited volumes, articles from academic journals and popular magazines where necessary, doctoral dissertations (published or unpublished), newspapers, magazines, and unpublished manuscripts. Grounded theory follows a qualitative approach or is a qualitative method. The purpose of using a qualitative method in this research is mainly to be able to analyse the thoughts and attitudes of the Charismatic/Pentecostal community towards indigenous medicine within the context of the nature of the human phenomenon. In this method, data are collected through observation and analysing what comes forth from the literature, as well as prevailing patterns in the nature of the human phenomenon. I also followed a thematic approach as part of my methodology, and the collection and analysing of data were tackled simultaneously.

Glaser and Straus (1967: 33) further sought to improve qualitative research; first, by moving it from overemphasis on description to what they saw as the more useful realm of theory; and, second, by making it more rigorous through a more systematic methodology. One of the reasons I chose grounded theory for this study is that it allows me as a researcher to declare my reflexivity or my direct involvement in this study. McGhee et al. (2007: 334) state that reading the literature could be an integral part of grounded theory research, and explain that the researcher's reflexivity serves to ameliorate some of the problems of bias. Moreover, the researcher's reflexivity is strengthened through the use of the memo system, which is a means of maintaining self-awareness of the issues and of the attendant liabilities of researcher entanglement with the research (McGhee et al. 2007: 335). I want to confirm that although this study fluctuates between the inductive and deductive approach, it mainly leans towards the inductive approach, and the literature acknowledges the deductive approach. McGhee et al. argue that "use of literature or any other pre-knowledge should not prevent a grounded theory arising from the inductive-deductive interplay which is at the heart of this method" (2007: 334).

#### **1.10 ANTICIPATED PROBLEMS / LIMITATIONS / SCOPE OF STUDY**

I consider the Christian attitude towards indigenous medicine in Africa as a broad and interesting area of research. This study therefore required guidelines and limitations in order to prevent incomplete and non-specific analysis. The Charismatic/Pentecostal influence, in which I grew up, inadvertently limits the portrayal of other doctrines and systems with which I have less experience. In particular, the research study employs two subjects within which the whole presentation evolved, namely:

- It is an academic study that contains religious and historical connotations.
- It revolves around the subject of the Christian attitude towards indigenous medicine in Africa.

There are no anticipated problems that may occur during the process of this study.

#### **1.11 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS**

A range of collected materials, ideologies presented, research, and personal understanding have been put together with a view to reflect on a very clear area of research. This dissertation is structured in four sections. Section One comprises the background. Section

Two tackles the missionary and colonialism role in relation to the Charismatic/Pentecostal communities' understanding of healing and denunciation of traditional medicine. Section Three focuses on the findings related to the historical factors that contribute to the attitude of Charismatic/Pentecostal communities towards indigenous medicine. Section Four investigates the role of the nature of human relations with normality. With this in mind, the following schema was adhered to:

**Chapter One** contains a general introduction to the study as a whole, with special attention paid to the problem statement, study objectives, research methodology, and definitions of terms.

**Chapter Two** examines colonialism and its negative influence on indigenous African cultures and, by proxy, on traditional forms of healing. This chapter therefore includes a broad discussion of both the post-colonial as well as the decolonial project as it takes place within the framework of the post-colonial intellectual tradition. This is done with a view to understanding the nature of the African Christian's attitude towards indigenous medicine in Africa.

**Chapter Three** broadly explores the concept of medicine and healing and reflects on the African centres of healing and the role of traditional healers. The African perception of health and the context of herbalism are also explored in this section.

**Chapter Four** reflects on the concept of the human encounter with normality and the inevitable relations between religion and culture in the West and in Africa.

**Chapter Five** concludes the thesis.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **HISTORICAL FACTORS BEHIND THE ONGOING DENUNCIATION OF TRADITIONAL AFRICAN REMEDIES BY CHARISMATIC/PENTECOSTAL COMMUNITIES IN AFRICA**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

To understand the post-colonial discourse in terms of pragmatics as to why Africans seem to undermine themselves and look down on who they are, or why they are embarrassed about things perceived as African, one must first understand the basic design of the colonial project. A brief interrogation of the pre-colonial state in Africa will help to understand the amount of looting, delegitimisation of culture, and stripping away of African people's identity that took place from the time of the arrival of the colonists from Europe. It should be clearly understood that Africa knew and worshipped God, had their own culture, their own successful systems of attending to various ailments, and lived life to its fullest<sup>5</sup> even during the pre-colonial era. Having said that, I would like to highlight that, by saying Africans had successful systems, I am by no means suggesting that traditional African cultural worldviews were immune to challenges that we see in other cultures<sup>6</sup> (wherein culture can be hijacked or be in the service of those who use it for their own self-interests), such as how cultures can be subject to the whims of those who are at the helm of those societies. Rather, my argument is that, like all cultures, African cultures served a very crucial role despite obvious challenges that may be found in all cultures, including cultures from the West.

In substantiation of the above submission, Hayes (1998: 161) argues that in Egypt, during the time of the Roman persecution, many Christians fled from the cities into the desert and, even when persecution eased off, some stayed in the desert to pray. During that time, a spiritual movement was formed. According to Hayes (1998: 161), this spiritual movement, which began in Africa, was exported to other parts of the Christian world. During the fourth century CE, a theological dispute within the Christian church erupted, which led to the Nicene Creed being adopted by the First Council of Nicaea in 325 CE. It was the African theologian Athanasius of Alexandria (296-373 CE) who wrote the definitive book on the subject (Hayes 1998: 161).

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<sup>5</sup> I am fully aware of the element of generalisation of this thesis as an African matter, which some people may find problematic. However, although it is a matter that is pervasive in Africa, for the purposes of this thesis, I employ it as a concept from within the Pentecostal/Charismatic church to which I belong.

<sup>6</sup> See literature review in Chapter One.

This brief historical backdrop is essential to help us understand the profound contribution that Africans made towards the fashioning of Christian theology, which impacted the historical development of the church long before the colonial era. We can then conclude that Africa had life before colonialism. It is imperative to investigate the nature of this colonial project that completely reshaped the original and traditional face of Africa.

## **2.2 THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF THE COLONIALISM PROJECT IN AFRICA**

To understand the role of the colonial enterprise in Africa, it is prudent to first examine the nature of this project. I briefly navigate the design of the colonial project, which will then serve as a foundation from which I can source specific factors that contribute to the attitudes of the Charismatic/Pentecostal churches towards indigenous remedies. It was cited in Chapter One that this attitude can be traced back to colonialism.

The notorious Berlin Conference, which took place in Germany under Otto von Bismarck, the German chancellor during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, gave birth to a number of atrocities that still affect Africa to this day. One of the remaining colonial footprints that Africans still experience is not only physical, but also psychological, where the colonisation of the African mind completely altered the way that Africans think. The European leaders gathered at the Berlin Conference (1884-1885) to decide on the political boundaries of Africa without Africans being present. By parcelling out great swathes of African land to the European powers and deciding for the first time its national borders, the beginning of the African colonisation project was set in motion. It was at the Berlin Conference that Africa was reshaped and the pendulum of life took a very painful direction that took many decades to swing back in Africa's favour. The Berlin Conference thus became the mother of all devastations and instituted the looting that Africa has experienced since that time. The European leaders had one purpose and that was to colonise Africa.

When it comes to Christian theology, history has been fashioned mostly by the hands and minds of those who seem to appreciate and echo the contributions of the Western European influence while, at the same time, silencing the same contributions when the sentiment has an African name on it, particularly during the early propagation of the Christian gospel. As an African, it is humbling to know that Africans contributed extensively to the moulding of Christian theology across the globe, as cited by Hayes (1998: 161). Colonial history has painted Africa as a dark continent, a continent in dire need of enlightenment and evangelism,

yet rich in minerals, which were not considered good for Africans. Most of the shelved African history was designed by foreign authors whose definition of Africa and her culture is deemed by some Africans, including myself, as not accurate. It is not accurate because it was viewed from a Western and European experience and did not accommodate an African view. History has created a narrative that nothing can be offered by Africa other than a plentiful supply of slaves and, of course, its mineral wealth. The architects of the colonial project had a purpose to accomplish, and I closely attend to this in the following section.

### 2.3 THE PURPOSE OF THE COLONIAL PROJECT

At the commencement of the Berlin Conference on 15 November 1884, Von Bismarck rose to welcome the delegates and presented his speech in French. He began with a pious declaration that took them back to the “three Cs”, namely Commerce, Christianity, and Civilisation, and the ideals of Livingstone (Pakenham 1991: 241). According to Pakenham (1991: 241), the aim of the conference was to promote the civilisation of the African natives by opening the interior of the continent to commerce. Von Bismarck then defined three limited goals:

- 1) Free trade for the Congo;
- 2) Free navigation of the River Niger; and
- 3) Agreement on the formalities for the future annexation of African territory, which meant a set of rules acceptable to all countries (Pakenham 1991: 241).

One of the most significant submissions Von Bismarck made at the Berlin Conference was on the rules for the “scramble for Africa” by the Western nations, but which would not debate the divisions or lines of the distribution itself. It is very clear that the European leadership did not have equal powers with respect to the deliberations being made at the conference; instead, Von Bismarck maintained the upper hand. The detailed themes below are indicative of the specific aims of the colonial project that was set in motion:

- **Industrialisation:** During this era in Europe, northern factories needed raw materials to be manufactured into finished goods. Africa was very attractive to European countries, not as a dark continent, nor as a legitimate trading partner, but as a consumer of their products, which later became the dumping ground for European products. The purpose of the colonial project was never to assist or bring enlightenment to Africa as a dark continent, but purely for economic

manipulation. It was deliberately and ideologically designed to build and benefit the economy of the Western European powers.

- **Extension of trade:** Africa was identified as a new, expensive marketplace for European goods. Their agenda was intensified when they discovered Africa's richness in minerals, iron, rubber, gold, platinum, and other natural resources. They began to exploit Africa – a stratagem that continues to this day. In South Africa, European companies mine raw gold, transport it to Europe for refining, and return it back to their old market (Africa) as expensive watches, necklaces, and other jewellery for Africans to buy.
- **Competition:** Western European countries such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and others competed and conspired together to colonise more countries in Africa in order to gain more platforms for their trade. Armies were advanced, railway lines were built, and new roads were constructed just for their goods to easily reach new African consumers. These infrastructures were built, not for Africans, but to be able to easily and quickly exploit Africa.
- **Agricultural land:** Western European countries wanted more agricultural land to grow their crops for their industries back home. The beauty, weather, size, and richness of the African soil for agriculture might have attracted them to grab the African land for their agricultural benefit.

The above articulation clearly displays the purpose of the colonial project and, behind this purpose, a specific attitude towards African cultures developed. In the following section, I explore and interrogate the attitude of the colonial administrators towards African culture. This interrogation is significant in the sense that it shows how Africa was looted of her culture and resources.

## **2.4 THE ATTITUDE OF THE COLONIAL ADMINISTRATORS TOWARDS AFRICAN CULTURE**

### **2.4.1 The history of culture**

Culture is a human effort to understand the reality held on earth and such effort depends solely on God's creation. One of many classic examples of this human effort is the Basotho garment (blanket and hat made of grass). The cold weather of Basotho land demanded that the people design something to protect them from the cold; hence they came up with a



blanket and hat to cover their body and head. Over a period of time, the same dress code has now been sacralised as their identity and part of their culture. The same dress code, which was first meant to attend to weather challenges, is now more associated with Basotho ancestors than mere dress, particularly to those who worship ancestors. This is purely the act of manipulation of God's creation. Mbiti (1973: 7) defines culture as follows:

The word culture covers many things, such as the way people live, behave and act, and their physical as well as their intellectual achievements. Culture shows itself in art and literature, dance, music and drama, in the styles of building houses and of people's clothing, in social organisations and political systems, in religion, ethics, morals and philosophy, in the customs and institutions of the people, in their values and laws, and in their economic life.

God first created human beings before he spoke to them. He created human beings with capability, and one of these capabilities was the ability to govern themselves. Sakuba (2019) states: "Because culture is a form of self-government, it is a form of systematising reality which is nevertheless chaotic at times." This ability is not owned by human beings. God is the author of the possibility and one of the primary infrastructures that God has installed in His creation is the mind, including everything and anything that the mind can do. The mind was invented by God, unaided by human beings. The device (mind) that human beings use to produce culture is therefore an integral component of God's grace or free gift. Through this device (mind), human beings produce culture. In turn, culture produces tools that enable a human being to hear God when He speaks. God's words plus culture (product of the mind) thus equal Christianity. African Christian theology, through inculturation, states that no culture is better than another culture. Indeed, all cultures lead back to God. In the final and most sophisticated analysis, God is the true author of what is perceived as human culture, together with all its faults. This does not mean that God is responsible for some of the faults of culture, because God allows human beings free will. When Eadie (2002) interprets Ephesians 1:4, he argues that God's grace fits men for heaven, but his continued sin leads to his ruin.

The greatest absurdity introduced by the Western colonists was that of ethnocentrism<sup>7</sup>, which had the effect of cohesively imposing Western culture onto Africans and elevating it above

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<sup>7</sup> See Section 2.3 regarding a view from Africa's socialists' intellectual elite.

that of African culture. Idowu (1965: 14-15) advocated a situation where Africans could approach Jesus Christ through and from within their cultures, using their languages, thought forms, and traditional worldviews as the foundation. African culture was not only graded as secondary to that of Western culture, but, in some instances, Africans were forcefully ordered to denounce it.

The concept of culture as a way of living excludes a way of living that came as a result of forceful external interference by people whose ways of living are different from those of a certain group. Hopkins (1992: 19) reflects on the significance of culture in the Christian religion. Christianity is about the connection between deity and humanity. While we may not fully comprehend the culture of God because of our human limitations in the operation of God's deity, we nevertheless fully understand that the human part of Christianity is culturally influenced. There are even concerns relative to the culture of globalisation and its impact on the movement of Black Theology as a global phenomenon and how culture underlies all social practices as patterns of globalisation or forms of human energy (Hopkins 1992: 64). From the Black Theology point of view, there is a need to democratise culture. According to Hopkins (1992: 64-65), culture can be divided into four different approaches:

- 1) Culture is approached from the vantage point of African ethnicities;
- 2) Culture is engaged from the view point of what it means to be black;
- 3) Culture is approached from the position of marginalised voices; and
- 4) Culture is intended to form an interdisciplinary orientation.

As a point of departure from the subject of the attitude of the colonial administrators towards African culture, I now briefly navigate the impact of colonialism on the missionary project.

#### **2.4.2 The impact of colonialism on the missionary project**

The search for African Christology extends beyond formal written expressions to include informal expressions; for example: in worship, prayer, preaching, artwork, drama, gestures, and symbols (Stinton 2004: 17). In each African society, religion is embedded in the local language; to understand the religious life of the people, one therefore needs to know their language (Mbiti 1975: 27). Mbiti (1975) also overtly displays the distinction between oral and academic theology. In my view, oral theology has been the one that carried the African praise and worship from the beginning until the start of Western European influence with the coming of its missionaries. African indigenous worship was invaded and replaced by

something foreign. Christianity did not come to teach Africans how to worship because Africans already knew that. Instead, it was presented as being superior to the indigenous ways of worship and eventually positioned as a replacement. To counter the disdain with which local cultures had generally been regarded during colonial times, Africans made intensive efforts to reaffirm their identity and integrity in many spheres of life, including names, dress, music, dance forms, architecture, and other indigenous expressions that affect church life and practice (Stinton 2004: 7).

In their endeavour to take the Christian gospel and its attending culture to the world, the Western missionaries failed to evaluate their own culture. They confused their middle-class ideals and values with the tenets of Christianity. In this process, Western theology was transmitted unchanged to the new and developing churches in other parts of the world, including Africa. It is an axiom that the discharging of the gospel towards Africans was not going to be easy, but possible purely because of the cultural complexity of the African people. The readymade Western European Christian theological culture was not only a spiritual influence on Africans, but affected their political, social, and economic positions. This process nearly caused the destruction of indigenous African culture, where one negative effect was the denunciation of traditional medicine by the Charismatic/Pentecostal church community.

### **2.4.3 The missionaries' attitudes towards Africans**

According to Hayes (in Maimela & Koning 1998: 162), the missionaries were influenced by their culture to have a particular mental picture of what the church “ought” to look like. Missionaries saw themselves as superior to Africans. I believe their behaviour was propelled by the fact that they had a knowledge advantage and saw themselves as educators of the Africans, whom, at that time, were considered to be in need of enlightenment. They considered their culture worthy to be imposed on Africans and created no space for African culture.

The European missionaries who came to Africa during the 19<sup>th</sup> century were usually instilled with the enlightenment worldview. Enlightenment was a movement in Western Europe that emphasised the empirical study of nature and rational reflection on it (Hayes in Maimela & Koning 1998: 173). Hayes (in Maimela & Koning 1998: 173) further states that many early missionaries from Europe were themselves artisans and had grown up with the capitalist

mode of production that they sought to introduce to Africa. According to Hayes (in Maimela & Koning 1998: 174), in order to evangelise Africans, Western missionaries came to believe that they must get Africans to abandon African problems and accept European enlightenment. Western missionaries were very convinced that Africa needed “civilisation” before evangelisation. The construction of schools (where Africans were taught to read scriptures), clinics, and hospitals where healing was approached in a cosmopolitan way, were part of their strategy to introduce civilisation to Africans. A number of African countries still benefit from such establishments even today.

## **2.5 STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY THE COLONIAL AND MISSIONARY AGENTS TO DELEGITIMISE AFRICAN CULTURES**

### **2.5.1 The role of education**

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, the author of the book *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986), reflected on his anger towards the isolationist feelings that colonial education causes. He argues that the process annihilates people’s belief in their names, languages, environment, heritage of struggle, unity, capacities, and ultimately in themselves. Meaningful African names, such as Khuzimpi, Babheke, Ntozakhe, and many others were summarily replaced with Western stylised names, such as John, Peter, Cynthia, etc., which only carried meaning for the colonisers. This practice was so indoctrinated in the African mind that it continues to take place among Africans even in the absence of the colonisers. Large numbers of African people were given foreign names at the school entry level when they were young, as well as in the workplace, and even in sports. These names became official to the extent that when individuals applied for their identity documents, they had to use their European-imposed names as their first names.

### **2.5.2 Education as a strategy to acquire social status**

Because education is key to the preservation of life and the maintenance of its social structures, it is used in many societies to promote social coherence and social change. I am reminded of the HIV/AIDS pandemic that ravaged the world during the early 1990s where, in South Africa, every state department was obliged to educate its people about the pandemic. As a result, several taboos and myths about HIV/AIDS were debunked and the number of infections eventually dramatically decreased. Education is a major tool that can be used to dismantle the chains of poverty.



Walters and Roth (1972) identified the following features of indigenous African education:

- Its close links with social life, both in the material and spiritual sense; and
- Its collective nature, its many-sidedness, and progressive development of the child.

Walters and Roth (1972: 261) further argue that there is no separation of education and productive activity or any division between manual and intellectual education. While pre-colonial African education may be identified as being more informal, it nevertheless produced sound personalities that played meaningful roles in their society. Informal education such as organising religious rituals, practising medicine, hunting skills, and other communal practices shaped the same Africa that was dismantled by the colonial anti-social spirit.

### **2.5.3 Education for a better quality of life**

Walters and Roth (1972: 261-263) argue that in pre-colonial Africa, the literacy rate was high to the extent that there were universities in Egypt, Morocco, and Mali; each testimony to the high standard of education achieved in Africa before the colonial intrusion. Following their invasion of Africa, the Europeans imposed their curriculum without adjusting it to African conditions. As for its content, the schools equipped the African with little more than elementary knowledge of the English language for an economic future in which a senior clerkship was the upper limit of permissible advancement. In terms of need and desire, there were hundreds of candidates for school vacancies (Coleman 1986: 55).

### **2.5.4 The role of the church in undermining African culture**

The emergence of Ethiopian churches between 1880 and 1915 constituted a period of new imperialism and the scramble for Africa (Hayes 1998: 163). According to Hayes (1998: 163), imperialist ideology swept across Europe, convincing countries such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom of their superiority to all other nations and their right to seize territory in Africa. New missionaries came to Africa but they were less sympathetic to African ideals, aspirations, and culture than the earlier missionaries. Hayes (1998: 163) argues that these new missionaries tended to be racist and superior to the African clergy who were then beginning to be ordained in greater numbers. Could it be that these new racist missionaries had less to do with missionary work, but were used simply to fulfil the industrial-expansionist agenda of the West? This was achieved under the banner of missionary work to gain easy and

undisturbed access and penetration of the African continent. The African church leadership displayed their dissatisfaction with the way they were treated as inferior by their Western missionary counterparts to the extent that they broke away to form new denominations independent of white control. Several AICs were thus formed out of this dissatisfaction. In the following section I discuss how, even to this day, Western civilisation is promoted through music and fashion.

### **2.5.5 Economic incentives and the promotion of Western civilisation through music and fashion**

I was once asked by my daughter about my desire to visit countries both on vacation and for purposes of Christian ministry. To her great surprise, I responded that Europe and Western countries such as the United States of America (USA) were not on my list. When she enquired further, I responded that South African television and the print media were doing such a sterling job of promoting the affairs of Europe and Western countries like the USA that it seemed as if the USA was in Africa! Our national radio stations, local music, and fashion have been found to be competing with their Western and European counterparts and this is seen as normal and accepted. There was an uproar by local musicians some years back about the issue that there was limited coverage of local music both on South African radio and television stations. Indeed, it is considered normal to have a cinema packed by African youths who are both knowledgeable of and attracted to American culture when, on the other hand, South African cinemas are relatively empty when a local movie is shown. South Africans annually celebrate what is called the “July fashion show” during the Vodacom Durban July, a lucrative horserace held on the first Saturday of July since 1897 at the Greyville Racecourse in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. This event even attracts people from abroad. What astonishes me is that a large portion of this show is dominated by local fashion designers who showcase their designs in foreign culture and fashion, which mostly feature Europe and the West. The colonial thinking around the subject of culture has so much infected our African systems that it has become abnormal to operate outside of it or to even disassociate from it.

According to Nwanosike, Onyije and Eboh (2011: 10), far from giving people confidence in their ability and capacities to overcome obstacles or become masters of the laws that govern external nature as human beings, colonial education tends to make Africans feel inadequate and unable to do anything about the economic or social conditions of their lives. The African

educationalist, Abdou Moumuni, therefore concluded that “colonial education corrupted the thinking and sensibilities of the African and filled him with abnormal complexes” (cited in Walters & Roth 1972: 273). Christian theologians and missionaries have often been described as the “colonisers of the minds and spirits of non-Western religions as heathen” (Roberts 1983: 107). Africans are still dancing to the same old colonial song even today.

South Africa’s unemployment rate reached a high of 27.6% in the first quarter of 2019, according to Statistics South Africa. While there are several factors that contribute to this, for some African elders, the general feeling is that African people who are currently in political leadership positions are dismally unable to create more employment opportunities, which were easily produced during the period of white rule. Some elderly Africans also compare the filthy streets of South African cities such as Durban, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and others to those during the time of white rule, when they were often described as being very clean. The problem according to such elderly Africans is the absence of white rulership. Their minds have been so ravaged and soaked by the colonial narrative that they believe that the white race does things better than the black race.

According to the biblical narrative in Numbers 14:2-3 (New International Version),

[a]ll the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, ‘If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness! Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt?’

The Israelites’ minds were so indoctrinated by the orders and life of Egypt that it was difficult for them to identify with what God said he would do through his promises. This is, by the way, what we observe within the Charismatic/Pentecostal church communities where the colonisers’ lectures about the goodness of cosmopolitan medicine and barbarism of traditional medicine have been perfectly injected into the African mind. Another classic example is the complete rejection of the African way of healing by Africans. It is imperative at this point to reflect on how Africans responded to the mission-colonial enterprise.



## **2.6 AFRICA'S RESPONSE TO THE MISSION-COLONIAL ENTERPRISE**

Barrett (1968: 154) thinks that the main cause for the rise of the AIC movement is socio-political. In this, he sees AICs as a manifestation of many protest and resistance movements that arose during the colonial period<sup>8</sup>. Barrett (1968: 154) further states that the “common root cause” for the entire AIC movement is a reaction to the European mission, which had exhibited a “failure in love” in their attitude to African people. While several factors have contributed to the rapid growth of AICs even during the post-colonial era, there has also been a remarkable exodus of AIC members to the Charismatic/Pentecostal churches even to this day.

### **2.6.1 The post-colonial intellectual narrative**

This context includes acknowledging the many ways in which cultural and other forms of protest against coloniality are catechistically indebted to the history of colonialism (Antonio 2006: 2). If it is true that all human utterances are shaped by their social and historical contexts, then to insinuate a colonial and post-colonial background for inculturation is in fact to understand some of the ways in which it is shaped by its context (Antonio 2006: 2). Antonio (2006: 2) argues that since one of the basic features of Africanism is its refusal to privilege anything Western, then it can be dismissed as simply one more instance of neocolonialism.

First, we now live in a post-colonial world and, if so, in what way, and if not, in what respect is the claim that we do misleading? Although the word “post” literally designates an “after” and intimates a real “beyond” and thus seeks to say something about, or at least seeks to gesture towards, the possibility of the end of formal colonialism and its political and cultural aftermath (Antonio 2006: 4), many scholars today hold that the history of the injustices that these inequalities have produced can be traced back to colonial times (Antonio 2006: 4). Indeed, in a crucial sense, globalisation is historically a product of certain long-standing processes that had their foundation in colonial relationships (Antonio 2006: 4). The “after” can only be understood through its generative “before” and its impact on the present.

Second is the privileging of accounts of knowledge of colonial relationships at the expense of indigenous and native worldviews (Antonio 2006: 6). Either we accept the impossible idea that nothing has changed since the first encounter took place, or we recognise that

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<sup>8</sup> For more detailed information, please see Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* as discussed in Section 1.3.3.

colonialism was itself a network of historical movements that divided time in terms of “before” and “after”, which is a division that was not unknown to its victims (Antonio 2006: 7). Modernism, in its fear of the past, installs the present and the future as the eternity of endless progress (Antonio 2006: 7). Antonio (2006: 7) argues that the denial of the “after” or the “post” in post-colonialism is also politically dangerous since it freezes the agency of the colonially subjugated by evacuating it of any transformative possibility. Be that as it may, a number of decolonisation discourses have already been suggested and implemented.

### **2.6.2 The decolonial discourse**

When Helen M. Sweet reflected on some of the findings of a research conference on “The Healing Ministry of the Church”, held at Umphumulo Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mapumulo, KwaZulu-Natal, in 1967, she alluded to a conspicuous gradual change in attitude on the part of some professional medical missionaries, as having a growing awareness of some commonalities between traditional healing and Western missionary medicine in contrast with secular biomedicine.

In South Africa, Africans were severely disadvantaged in terms of access to healthcare services as a result of racial division long before apartheid was formally introduced in 1948 (Sweet 2009: 330). By the mid-1970s, when the apartheid state began to take over many of the mission hospitals that had developed from the early beginnings of the colonial project, the provinces of Natal and Zululand together had the highest concentration of mission hospitals in South Africa (Sweet 2009: 331). These missionary hospitals were mainly situated in deep rural areas. The question is, where did people go for medication before the establishment of missionary hospitals in these rural areas? It is an axiom that people of this area were using their own indigenous ways of healing. The follow-up question is: What happened to the said old indigenous ways of healing in this community? African people had their own traditional ambulances (cows pulling beds) to transport patients to the nearest *inyanga*. In 1961, Dr Keen, a general surgeon at a non-European hospital in Johannesburg, described the surgeon’s approach to African patients as different by necessity from that of a physician or obstetrician. His personal experience was drawn particularly from rural medical practice in Swaziland in the 1940s, where many of those who came to the hospital had already received treatment from their own doctors and came to hospital as a last resort, in a state of suspicion and doubts strongly tinged by feelings of hope. He argued that “in these cases, we were competing with the herbalists and witchdoctor and must adopt the right tactics and do better than the

witchdoctor at his own game” (cited by Sweet 2009: 336). According to Myamwaya (1992: 42), some societies dichotomise illness where a patient is referred to an indigenous practitioner and some to the cosmopolitan medicinal system, depending on the outcome of the generic diagnosis.

At the Umphumulo Lutheran Theological Seminary, Dr Wolfgang stressed the holistic nature of the traditional healers’ approach and their “intelligence and flexibility in their astonishing capacity for adjusting to a changing cultural pattern in a new era” (cited by Sweet 2009: 338). Three aspects were also noted as being of particular importance:

- 1) The traditional African understanding of health and healing should be sympathetically studied since it is an essential part of the background of the church’s work in Africa. In the past, it has too often been dismissed as pagan and unworthy of attention by the church.
- 2) Much of the traditional African understanding of health and healing is based on a spiritual and even theistic view of the world, and has much to teach by its positive emphasis on the need for healing the whole person, by its sense of community, and by its consciousness of the reality of spiritual powers in the world.
- 3) While there are non-Christian ideas in this understanding that need to be carefully distinguished and set aside, there are also practices that the church could rid of their pagan associations and use in its ministry of healing.

## **2.7 CONCLUSION**

The issue of the colonisation of the mind and spirit of African people by Western missionaries during the colonial era negatively impacted the transplantation of the Christian gospel into Africa. The concept of the universalisation of salvation will always be a challenging issue because of cultural and religious backgrounds. I therefore make the submission that even if the missionary work was from Africa to the Western countries, we would experience the same challenges because of the diversified nature of religion and culture. Roberts (1983: 107) thus argues that theologians can have their lives and thoughts enriched by this experience precisely because they view the faith of other people from inside their own system of belief and thought. In my view, while we can strive for theological egalitarianism, we will never accomplish it because of our diverse cultures and religions;

however, this does not reduce the significance of respecting, cherishing, and loving any culture foreign to us.

## **CHAPTER THREE:**

### **HEALING AND TRADITIONAL REMEDIES: THE TENSION BETWEEN THEORY AND METHOD**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter Two the focus was on the role of the mission-colonial enterprise on current attitudes towards traditional African remedies among Charismatic/Pentecostal church communities. The chapter argued that it was during the course of the colonial and missionary enterprise movement that a campaign, wittingly or unwittingly, was undertaken to undermine the role of indigenous knowledge systems throughout the African continent – a move that resulted in a situation wherein Africans themselves started to doubt both the validity and efficacy of the indigenous knowledge system. In this chapter, the focus shifts to examining how the very same historical factors went on to effect shifts in the understanding of healing at a theoretical level. The use of traditional remedies can be viewed as a method through which those who use such remedies realise healing in one form or another. As such, one could view healing as a theoretical (praxis) concept that can be realised and practicalised through a method, which, in this case, would be the use of traditional remedies as a method employed in the pursuit of healing. A method is always a mechanism towards achieving a goal and, in this case, the goal is healing. In other words, one could argue that a method derives its validity from a theory or concept of whatever reality. This affected the African theory and eventually changed their method for healing subjects. In this chapter, the focus zooms in on how that influence led to changes in how African people began to think about what healing is and how that subsequently led to changes in their methodology of intervening in healing and abandoning their own methods of healing. Once again, in this case the reality is healing. Against this backdrop, one must ask the following questions:

- What is healing?
- What are some of the prevailing notions of healing?
- How has the notion of healing evolved in African societies?
- What are some of the leading factors behind this evolution?

### **3.2 WHAT IS HEALING?**

No single word can fully describe the meaning of healing. Indeed, healing can be understood from several perspectives. At the International Conference on Primary Health Care, Almaty (formerly Alma-Ata), held in Kazakhstan (formerly Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic), 6-12 September 1978, the global community came together to deliberate on several health-related issues relating to the protection and promotion of health. The conference portrayed healthcare as the key to the attainment of the goal of “Health for All”. In the Alma-Ata Declaration, the conference defined health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Africans have a different perspective of healing. While an African philosophy on healing in no way denounces Western medicine, it nevertheless maintains that there are some diseases that cannot be treated by Western medicine; for example, spiritual healing. From an African perspective, the supernatural understanding of spiritual power and spiritual beings is an area that is well understood. Several Bible texts reflect on healing from another dimension. Hence, Jesus is shown healing through faith, prayer, and the laying of hands: “Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness” (Matthew 9: 35, New International Version). Healing can also be described from a psychological point of view. It is worth mentioning that healing involves a number of facets. According to Herholdt (2018: 41), the range of factors that contribute to physical wellness is wide and contains many elements such as nutrition and weight management, but also less obvious factors such as the way relationships support wellbeing and how a positive attitude can assist healing. It is worth mentioning that there was a shift from the African healing perspective to Western modern science during the introduction of Western missionary projects.

#### **3.2.1 The shift from a traditional healing perspective to modern science healing**

The introduction of Western medical science brought a significant shift in perspective. When the Western missionaries arrived, coming as they did from a modern scientific world, they taught that healing was due to the production of antibodies, and that sickness was due to bacteria invading the body, genetic deformity, physiological malfunction, etc. Central to this evolution in thinking was the question: To be healed, is to be healed from what? This shifted the object of healing, because in traditional African society, to be healed is to be delivered

from an external evil force, which is perceived as the cause of sickness. A traditional healer would diagnose an external force that was perceived as the reason behind a sickness, such as when someone had administered sorcery against a person or had bewitched them. Hence, even if a person had been involved in a car accident, the ailment would be physical, but the cause would have been an evil spiritual force. Even the preventative measures would have to attend to the spiritual force that was the cause of the accident. In Western society, if there are too many accidents, they pass laws to prevent reckless driving, which has nothing to do with spirituality.

The dominant culture that was introduced states that the root of a person's healing is at the bacterial level and not because someone had cast a spell on them. The Western medical profession view has always had a scientific explanation, both in terms of illness and healing. Within the Western scientific view, the cause of sickness is external to the body and biological, such as bacteria; from the view of traditional healing, the cause is perceived as entirely an external spiritual attack. The African's exposure to Western primary healthcare through various healthcare centres, other general Western ways of healing, and the observable efficiency of Western healthcare that instantly brought observable results, brought a major shift to African traditional ways of healing and the adoption and acceptance of Western medical systems. One clear example of the Western scientific healthcare system is the pharmacological production of antiretroviral (ARV) medication, which has dramatically saved the lives of millions of people infected with HIV/AIDS on the African continent. Several members of my own family have died due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, where traditional healing was approached from the outside, dealing with spiritual forces sent against the infected person through the practice of traditional rituals and prayer. When ARVs were introduced, some of my family members were snatched from the dark pit of death and are to this day living meaningful lives. Much is taking place around the subject of healing; not only in society but in general, as well as in our churches. The subject of healing and health in general is not immune against myths. The following section briefly articulates some myths.

### **3.2.2 Myths about health**

The following are some of the myths about health, as cited by Herholdt (2018: 54-63):

- **Health has only to do with physical wellbeing:** While some people are quick to seek medical help, others who are mentally, spiritually, or socially ill may go for years without the realisation that they need help.
- **Illness can be cured by receiving treatment:** We fail to see that a tablet or pill sometimes only applies to the symptom(s) and not the real cause.
- **Of all the professions, medical doctors know the most about health:** The truth is that medical doctors do not specialise in health at all, but in sickness.
- **I have a body:** To say that you have a body is a way of objectifying the body, which propagates a split between the human psyche and the body.
- **Health is a single state of existence:** People easily become despondent when they endeavour to heed all the prescriptions for a healthy life and in the end still experience illness.
- **My body will take care of itself:** There is an inherent mechanism in the body that will take care of itself and this is only true of a healthy body that can draw from its own energy and resources.
- **I only need to be concerned about my health when I become sick:** People think that health is the absence of disease and consequently they feel healthy when they are not aware of any disease.
- **I need a doctor when I am not feeling well:** This often provides a false sense of security to the patient; the patient still carries on with what is often a harmful lifestyle.
- **A higher power determines the days of my life and nothing I do can change that:** This is a cheap way to make God responsible for your own neglect.
- **My doctor will take care of my health and I feel safe under his/her treatment:**  
A doctor does not have the time to take care of every patient. Everyone has the duty to accept responsibility for his/her own health.
- **It is too late to start worrying about my health now:** Fortunately, it is never too late to take up your own responsibility.
- **I will wait for symptoms to tell me when something is wrong with me:** Symptoms often appear only in the final stage of a disease.



- **A healthy lifestyle requires money; I am too poor to afford health:** Health starts with a healthy lifestyle, which includes good nutrition and moderate exercise.

Our approach to health should not focus on simply one area of our bodies; if we want to see health in its totality, we should have a holistic approach to life.

### **3.2.3 The meaning of a holistic approach to healthcare**

According to Herholdt (2018: 42), wholeness is based on a worldview that all things are connected, organised, ordered, and ultimately meaningful and intelligible. A person cannot be viewed as an entity with many parts; for example, a body with eyes, legs, a head, etc. A bucket with water is still a complete bucket even without water. It is a different story if the handle and screws have been disconnected from the bucket, because then the completeness of the bucket has been compromised. In the case of a person, we can view him/her as an entity with many facets that complete a person. A person is not a leg, hands, or body, but all these parts complete a person. If one side of a human body is ill, for example, with a headache, the complete body becomes affected and the whole life is affected too. What then is life in relation to healing?

### **3.2.4 What is life in relation to healing?**

Life is a process that begins at conception and is terminated by death. My own epistemology about life is that it is not programmed, but is influenced by the choices we make during the process of growth. Indeed, there are things we do not choose, but we are born into them; e.g., to be born into a family, or the issue of gender and nationality, to name a few. During our growth as human beings, we are constantly exposed to various evils, as well as good or bad choices to make. During this process of growth, we are naturally expected to employ some responsibility. It is important to realise that while God's purpose has always been favourable, in the "Fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden", sin damaged the perfect divine plan. The entrance of sin therefore caused God to alter His plans by introducing the plan of salvation to bring humankind back to His original plan. In this, Strong (1977: 353-354) suggests that the ultimate objective of God's plan of salvation was that of God's glory; it was also all inclusive and unchangeable. The salvation plan of God is also aimed at dealing with the subject of illness and diseases.

- **Illness:** This is indicative of the absence of happiness and joy in life. It also reflects that there is deficiency in a human person. While some deficiencies may not be medically related, they can result in medical sickness. Psychological attacks in the form of hatred, aggression, and other challenges may be transformed into illness that often may demand medical attention.
- **Disease:** The absence of illness is the absence of disease because disease is simply a symptom of a specific illness. Careful, natural prevention of illness guarantees the absence of disease. Disease mainly has to do with the vital signs of the human body, whereas illness also concerns emotions, lifestyle, motivation, spiritual awareness, social support, overall appearance, and the enjoyment of life (Synergetica Academy 2010: 19). The Alma-Ata Conference defined health and wellbeing as a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. A careful consideration of this definition is not contrary to my submission, which says that “absence of illness is the absence of disease”. According to the Alma-Ata Declaration, every human being has a certain degree of disease. This definition is based on a holistic approach to health and healthcare. This brings us to the conclusion that every human being naturally has various diseases, but the one we do not need is the one that is a symptom of a specific illness. Now that a definition of life has been attended to, let us next attend to the definition of health.

### 3.2.5 What is health in relation to healing?

It will always be difficult to clearly define health due to its complex nature and the fact that it comprises many aspects, including social, psychological, emotional, and spiritual aspects. There are various views on how to define health; e.g., the view of health as average value, health as the experience of wellbeing, and health as a resistance resource. The following points describe health in different contexts and then make some comparisons:

- **Biological health:** According to Synergetica Academy (2010: 29), in the biological context, disease may be viewed as the physiological impairment of the functioning of an organism. This may be caused by the invasion of a micro-organism, or by other factors in the internal or external environment. There has been a recent view that factors other than the purely biological play

a role in health and disease, and this discovery has introduced a new discipline of psycho-neuroimmunology.

- **Mental health:** There is an argument reflecting on psychological phenomena that influence physical health. In my view, this influence may not always be from psychological to physical, but can also be the other way around, where the disease in the body (physical) passes an emotional message to the mind (hopelessness). Mental health therefore depends on both the social environment and the physical state. It is affected by the outside environment and is not controlled only by itself. Mental health depends on a total person's coping skills.
- **Healthy behaviour:** It is amazing to see the role that behaviour plays in a person's life. Our future is also determined by the kind of behaviour we express towards ourselves and other people. Our health can be minimised, hurt, and ruined by the kind of behaviour to which we expose ourselves. While smoking tobacco, alcohol abuse, and sexual behaviour can easily introduce us to various kinds of diseases, drinking enough water, exercising, and a good diet can easily prevent disease and lead to good health. Healthy behaviour can be defined as adaptive behaviour (Synergetica Academy 2010: 30).
- **Health and social life:** According to recent research, there is a significant correlation between the health of a person's social network and his/her longevity (Synergetica Academy 2010: 31). Married people have more frequent contact with family members, friends, and relatives compared to single people. Single people have a lower mortality rate than married people. A person's social network is viewed as a resource of resistance in the provision of support in times of stress and loneliness. Health is then defined as a state that is desirable and necessary for the fulfilment of certain strategic roles or obligations (Synergetica Academy 2010: 31).
- **Health and culture:** Health is a complex and dynamic interplay between physiological, psychological, behavioural, and social factors (Synergetica Academy 2010: 31). During the traditional Zulu feast where a cow is slaughtered, one part of the cow's meat that is particularly enjoyed during the feast is the intestines. While there is a lot of fat in the cow's intestines, during this feast we often do not take any serious note of the fact that such fatty intestines are not good for our bodies. We simply enjoy it in the name of

celebration. What measures can we therefore employ to ensure that we approach health from a preventative angle?

### **3.2.6 Preventative health**

This is an approach that looks at the life of a person before the manifestation of an ailment and seeks to establish ways to prevent the occurrence of a sickness or disease prior to its attack. It is a concept that moves away from treating the disease and focuses more on prevention. It encourages people to be the physicians of their own lives. Medical physicians and high-tech medicines are established means for curing diseases; in other words, they attend to an already existing problem.

The governments of the world spend a great deal of money on primary healthcare systems and the management thereof. Each system has its own profit and loss account. In my view, a large portion of the budget is spent on the side of profiting healthcare suppliers, whereas by increasing and maximising healthcare delivery, we can also minimise losses through preventative healthcare. The construction of additional hospitals, additional posts for hospital staff ranging from medical practitioners to nurses, increasing the purchase of medication to cope with the ever-increasing number of patients in healthcare institutions, and other related costs can easily be minimised if we all take the initiative of preventative healthcare. All the above-mentioned factors indicate that there has been less focus on the issue of preventative health, particularly on the part of African communities. Preventative health cannot be divorced from self-care and natural healthcare, as discussed in the following section.

### **3.2.7 How should we ideally perceive health?**

One's perception of health has an enormous effect on a person's life. While some people live a good life, others die prematurely due to their wrong perceptions of life. The following briefly focuses on positive perceptions concerning health:

- **Good health:** Enjoying good health has to do with a number of aspects, not only with physical wellbeing. There is a relationship between the psyche and the body. Some argue that in order to enjoy good health, people need to be taught to attend to all their physical and emotional relations and not just one aspect.

- **The curing of illness:** This is achievable not only by receiving treatment, but by employing spiritual counselling and even, in some instances, through technological attention. Correct diet and exercise play a large part in curing illnesses. While pills and drugs may bring stability to an illness, they may not bring about complete and permanent healing to the body. Medical attention alone to the physical body may not be sufficient for its complete healing.
- **Medical doctors:** Medical practitioners are not health specialists; instead, they treat already existing diseases. It is thus not prudent to place your health on the shoulders of a medical doctor as they cannot guarantee quality of life. This responsibility must be an individual one.
- **The perception of being “a body” is better than the perception of “having a body”:** That of being a body overtly reflects on the acceptance of the fact that there is an integration between the human personality and the human body itself. It is also indicative of the intimate connectivity that exists between the self and the body.
- **The body has an inborn mechanism that attends to its own challenges:** While this is true, it needs to be noted that a weak body will always find difficulty healing itself. Healthy eating, taking regular exercise, and drinking enough fresh water will always boost the immune system and thus assist the body to mechanically defend itself against possible ailments.
- **Doing deliberate damage to our bodies is a very dangerous exercise:** We need to eradicate the taking of substances that are known to expose us to various sicknesses, such as smoking tobacco, eating fatty foods, and drinking sweetened carbonated drinks.

Because the ultimate objective in this chapter is to critically explain the subject of healing, the following section reflects on it in the context of herbalism.

### 3.2.8 Healing within the context of herbalism

According to the Alma-Ata Declaration, the simplest definition of a herb is that it is a plant that has medicinal use for people, separate from its existence as a plant growing in the garden or in the wild (Van Wyk & Wink 2004: 8). A few such herbs, as cited by Van Wyk and Wink (2004: 16), include gums such as *Aloe vera*, bulbous herbs such as *Allium sativum* (garlic), woody stemmed plants such as *Zingiber officinale* (ginger), and stigmas such as saffron, etc.

African traditional medicine in its various forms is a holistic system involving both body and mind (Van Wyk & Wink 2004: 12). Herbalism is not a new concept in the field of healthcare, and has always been part of wellbeing. Its challenge is not having been properly structured and documented throughout the past ages, thereby creating unnecessary misconceptions within civilised communities. Herbalism has been associated with witchcraft more than that of natural healing, which has damaged its relevance to the concept of natural healing. Another challenge is that of the transfer of knowledge by elderly knowledgeable communities to younger generations. This has been repeatedly questioned by the scientists of the Western cosmopolitan medicinal system. While it is readily acknowledged that ancient Africa did not have the hospitals and clinics it has today, most plantations were used for food and health reasons and people were naturally healthy. According to Van Wyk and Wink (2004: 12), the Khoi-San people of Southern Africa, considered to be one of Africa's most ancient cultures, possessed a remarkably diverse *material medica*, which typically included general tonics, fever remedies, sedatives, stomachic tonics, diuretics, laxatives, and numerous wound-healing plants.

### **3.2.9 History of herbalism in the African world view**

The systematic study of plants can be traced back to the fourth century BCE. The famous Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BCE) was the son of a Greek herbal physician who founded the first botanical garden in Athens (Stern 1994: 4). Stern (1994: 5) has shown that together with the invention of the printing press during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, herbalism became so popular that the period 1500-1700 CE became known as the Great Age of Herbalism. According to a 1993 survey conducted in the USA, some 34% of the population had used herbs as an alternative therapy during the preceding year. By 1997, this figure had increased to 42% (Gottlieb 2000: xvi).

South Africa has its own rich knowledge regarding the use of herbs for healing and this information has been passed down from generation to generation simply by word of mouth. According to Van Wyk, Van Oudshoorn and Gericke (2000: 7), South Africa has well over 30 000 species of higher plants, of which approximately 3 000 species are used as medicine, with the most used and traded medical plants amounting to 350 species. The impact of this tradition brings the experts of medicinal plants of South Africa to the conclusion that "traditional medicine will survive well into the next century, strengthened by modern medicine, not subsumed by it" (Van Wyk et al. 2000: 10). According to Palmer (1985: 17),

the earliest record of the medicinal use of plants dates to 1649 when 15 sick sailors were placed in the care of the Khoi-San people and healed from their boils within two weeks.

### **3.2.10 Function and synergistic of herbs relative to a holistic understanding**

Many ailments such as allergies, asthma, cancer, and heart disease seem to be connected to social and environmental problems; in the words of Hoffmann (1995: 11), they reflect our alienation from nature and “natural lifestyles”. Herbalism, however, does not focus on treating a specific organ; instead, the approach is a holistic one where the focus is on the mental, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual parts of a person. Hoffman (1995: 10) thus argues that holistic medicine deals with “the body as a whole and integrated system, not a collection of isolated parts ... it acknowledges that people have feelings, minds, and spirits as well as bodies.”

We can trace the relationship between different organs within the body through a holistic approach and show that there is no distinction between the body and the mind when employing herbal medicinal remedies. Bays (1996: 166) thus warns that those emotions that people often hold onto can become stored in the body and ultimately lead to certain disease conditions. The ultimate objective of the holistic approach in herbalism is not to combat disease, but rather to assist the innate healing ability of the body to restore balance and enhance total wellness. The synergic function of herbs relative to this holistic understanding is also viewed as preventative medicine. If herbal medicine forms part of the regimen of preventative medicine and is used properly, then there will be less need for allopathic medicine. It is also important to note that herbal medicine is not in competition with allopathic medicine, but is complementary in nature. Herbal medicine is not just a human concept but God’s concept. Table 3.1 briefly tabulates some of the scriptures that echo my philosophy on healing.

### **3.2.11 Biblical connotation of herbs**

Table 3.1 reflects on some of the different herbs used for different purposes, including healing, in the Bible. Concerning the therapeutic category of herbs, I employed the same descriptions as those used by Van Wyk and Wink (2004: 11). Psalms 104: 14 states: “He caused the grass to grow for the cattle, and herbs for the service of man.”

**Table 3.1: The Bible and the healing properties of herbs**

No	Text	Interpretation	Herb	Description	Origin	Use	Notes
1	Exodus 30: 23	Anointing oil	Cinnamon	Evergreen tree with leathers	Sri Lanka	Antioxidant	Aromatic
2	Song of Songs 4: 14-15	Admire the beauty	Turmeric	Stemless leaves with yellow and white flowers	India	Heal peptic ulcers	Used for dyspeptic complaints
3	Esther 2: 12	Women's ointment	Myrrh	Thorny shrub	Somalia	Mouth and throat infection	Lowers blood cholesterol levels
4	Genesis 3: 18	Thorns and thistles	Milk thistle	Biennial herb	North Africa	Disorder of the biliary system	Generates new liver cells
5	Numbers 11: 5-6	Food eaten in Egypt	Garlic	Perennial herb	Central Asia	Antiviral	For the common cold

Source: Van Wyk and Wink (2004: 11)

Having cited the biblical connotation, it is also prudent to reflect on the African perspective on healing.

### **3.3 AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES ON HEALING**

#### **3.3.1 African religion**

As pointed out previously, Africans are notoriously religious, whereby each people group in Africa has its own religious system, beliefs, and practices (Mbiti 1969: 1). Traditionally, African people have believed in unforeseen spiritual forces, with the understanding that the world around them is surrounded by various souls, spirits, and powers that they must contend with, as well as relate their life and activities towards. These forces are perceived as an “extent of life” and “part of the universe, integrated with the social order and its environment” (Turaki 1999: 34). It is further believed that these forces contribute to both good and evil.

As Nürnberger (2007: 21) points out, African religion is pragmatic, almost utilitarian in nature. It has no time for ontological descriptions or metaphysical speculation. When life runs smoothly and there is no trouble, one is not particularly concerned about the ancestors or any other unforeseen forces for that matter. I beg to differ with this view, in that Africans are equally concerned about the ancestors when things run smoothly, as well as when faced with



problems. Indeed, it is normal practice for Africans to slaughter a goat, chickens, or a cow to the ancestors as a gesture of giving thanks for a special accomplishment. Africans offer their sacrifices to the ancestors when they need something and offer thanks when those needs are met. If Africans offer sacrifices to their ancestors, what then is their relationship with God and how do they worship Him?

Concerning the African idea of the Supreme Being and nature, God is not only the source of all power, but is also in human beings, plants, and all other objects, although God as the Supreme Being transcends them all. As a result, African people understood and were aware of God's presence in the world even before the modern period. In what follows, I discuss the basic understanding of African people about a number of issues concerning African society.

### **3.3.2 An African view of humankind**

According to African thought, humankind consist of two major parts, namely:

- 1) the immortal soul (or spirit), which goes to the spirit land after death; and
- 2) the tangible body, which rots in the grave.

Depending on how they lived, the deceased person can be transformed into an ancestral spirit or become an ordinary or malevolent spirit. An ancestral spirit can also become an ordinary malevolent spirit if there are no longer any living descendants (Nyirongo 1997: 99).

A question may arise as to when an ancestral spirit becomes a spirit. An ancestral spirit is generated by a dead man or woman and they may be a good or bad spirit depending on the life that person led before death. During the burial ceremony of a dead person, particularly an elderly person, there are specific rites that are observed to allow the process of transformation to take place in the perfect way. If the funeral rites are performed incorrectly, the spirit of the dead person will be lost or will cause misfortune in the family. To ensure the proper execution of the funeral rites, an elderly person within the family is approached to lead the entire process. In this, it is evident that elderly persons and the spirits of the dead are highly respected in the African community. In more recent times, the dead are given gifts during their funeral, which include expensive blankets, pillows, and pillow cases and even cultural mats. This is done so that they will rest well and be able to take care of the family. These traditional ceremonies are often very emotional affairs and consist of well-respected rituals. It

is also imperative to understand the African model of healing as a connection point for the medical section of this research.

### **3.3.3 An African model of healing**

In some cases, the client's ailments are revealed to the traditional healer before the arrival of the client. In the case of the emerging Western model, the practitioner depends on the information given by the client. The client's problems are revealed spiritually, frequently in the form of dreams on the part of the traditional healer. Often, when the health status of the client is revealed in advance, it comes with a specific diagnosis. The client respects more the influence and message of the ancestors behind the traditional healer, than the traditional healer themselves. Hence, when a prescription is given, it leaves no room for the client to object or make an alternative decision. The emerging Western model brings scientific proof overtly to the client through sophisticated apparatus used during the process of diagnosis. African people possess a specific mentality when it comes to health and wellbeing.

### **3.3.4 African ideas on health and wellbeing**

Health and wellbeing are constituent parts of life. Health or wholeness means a normal relationship with the living, the living dead, and with God. The wellbeing of life is also taken very seriously. As such, murder and killing to marry and/or to beget children and all kinds of sicknesses are regarded as serious threats to life. Health or wholeness in Africa is both physical and spiritual. Traditional healers unite the roles of both doctor and priest, thereby combining medicine and religion.

The health of an individual relates to the health of the wider community and society at large. Illness is often viewed as resulting from the breaking of spiritual and/or temporal relationships. Traditional healing is almost a process of liberation from whatever caused the illness.

The healing process is achieved through a complexity of relationships involving people, animals, plants, ancestors, and the Creator God. The process of healing involves not only medicine, but prayer as well. It is thus important to reflect on the African view of salvation as it connects with prayer. According to Gaba (1978: 391-399), Africans understand salvation not in terms of receiving eternal life alone, but also in acquiring wealth and good health. Another highly respected role around the issue of healing is that of intermediaries.

### **3.3.5 African perspectives on intermediaries and spiritual forces**

Africans in general believe in spiritual or unseen forces. During seasons of drought, for example, the Zulu people used to pray to Nomkhubulwane (the mother of rain) to bring rain. According to many Africans, the real function of the ancestors is the same as that of Jesus. It thus becomes difficult to worship Jesus Christ because they view him as equal to their ancestors in terms of function. To make matters worse, they have not physically seen Jesus. Although Africans may not have seen their ancestors, they are able to trace them back in their family histories. Africans direct each sacrifice they offer to their gods. According to Turaki (1999: 34), while the ancestors hold a preeminent place in traditional society, if they are not worshipped, they are at least highly revered. Africans believe that following death, the human spirit unifies with the human soul and, as such, attains supernatural powers that transform them into ancestor spirits. Due to their new powers, they pose a threat to the living. Ancestors depend on God and they interact with God and humankind. As the spirits are invisible, ubiquitous, and unpredictable, the safest thing is to keep away from them. If they appear too frequently to human beings, people feel disturbed. When the spirits possess people, they are blamed for all kinds of illnesses such as mental problems and epilepsy (Mbiti 1969: 80).

African theologians and scholars differ in their opinion as to the recognition of ancestors with the making of sacrifices and offerings. While some view it as an act of reverence, others see it as an act of worship. These differences in interpretation are mainly due to the emotional attachments that some African theologians and scholars have to their ancestors. This tends to colour and weaken their discourse on the theological role of ancestors in the African community. In discussing this subject further, some important theological questions need to be raised:

- Are ancestors worshipped or revered?
- What role should ancestors play in the Christian community?
- Should Christians practise the ancestral rites of their traditional religion?

Nyirongo (1997: 54) confirms that, in practice, there is no one single spirit or person who plays the role of a mediator. An African often prays and offers sacrifices to as many intermediaries as they can in order to enhance the potency of their requests. The more power one can harness, the greater one's chances of success (Nyirongo 1997: 54). According to Turaki (1999: 34), African theologians and scholars have generally agreed that Africans revere and worship divinities either as end in themselves or as intermediaries. Some are of the

opinion that worship is ultimately accorded to God, even though it is through intermediaries. There is a general acceptance by Africans that God is not worshipped directly but only through intermediaries. Still others understand that the African worship of intermediaries is an end in itself and can therefore be called idolatry, since it is not God who is being worshipped. The theological arguments, interpretations, and views put forward in this area are many and varied and need to be evaluated in light of the Bible and the Christian faith. Some important questions remain, which include the following:

- **Is the African worship of divinities an end in itself, or is it God who is ultimately worshipped through them?** This is the understanding of many Africans, but is it biblically incorrect? In order to discover how we can know God and how He should be worshipped, we must turn to the Bible because it is within the Bible that God reveals Himself fully. Hence, as Nyirongo (1997: 18) claims, if a person shows empathy for African traditional rites, or as some African theologians have done to turn to the Bible to support or validate the worship of divinities, they are bound to go astray.
- **Are African divinities or intermediaries gods in their own right, or are they only mediators between God and men?** African religion claims that African divinities are mediators between humankind and God. This is biblically incorrect, because the only true mediator between God and humankind is the Man-Christ Jesus.
- **Are traditional religious beliefs and practices idolatry or true worship of God?** Biblically speaking, such practices amount to idolatry. Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14: 6, New International Version). If through African religious beliefs and practices a person can come to the Father without the mediation of Jesus, then such worship is not directed at God, but at false gods.
- **When do ancestors become intermediaries?** African religion assumes that becoming an intermediary takes place immediately after death. As Nürnberger (2007: 116) confirmed: “If ancestors are tools of God, then is God not also in the power that the ancestors wield over us? Can they not also act as instruments of God? Of course, they can. They have done so when they were alive. They brought us up, taught us morality, gave us foundations of life that were rooted in communal assumptions.” It seems best therefore to conclude

that ancestors are tools and instruments of God only when they are alive and that death immediately deprives them of the prerogative of being used by God.

- **Who qualifies them to be intermediaries?** According to Nyirongo (1997: 54), it is generally believed that only the spirits of good people qualify as intermediaries. Although emphasis is placed on the good life the deceased person lived, where “in the flesh” is the most important qualification, it cannot stand on its own (Nyirongo 1997: 54). It therefore seems best to conclude that intermediaries are qualified by living people and not by God.

Humankind will always err if it continues to find its own way of worshiping God. Worship should only be conducted as God intended. If God’s commands are to be obeyed, then intermediaries are not to be worshipped. Intermediaries are often people who had the opportunity of worshiping God through Christ but chose otherwise. In ignorance, people often position them next to God simply because of their impending death. Some who died while in prison still serving their sentences were quickly positioned close to God when they died.

Even logical thinking will show that intermediaries are not next to God, but that Christ is next to God. There is only one mediator between humankind and God and that is the risen Christ. Traditional African religious beliefs are thus idolatrous and result in false worship. People elect the intermediaries, not God; we therefore have no confirmation that what has been elected has also been approved by God. Biblically, it is important to know that God elected Jesus His Son to be the mediator between Himself and humanity. On this basis alone, it is important to denounce the work of intermediaries as understood by some African people.

Turaki (1999: 34) views the African community and its relationship with God as being communal. For him, it is unthinkable for any African to regard religion as something requiring a personal decision. The perspective of the African community concerning their relationship with God differs completely from that of the Western worldview. The starting point of Western Christianity is that of the individual. Personal salvation, confession of faith, contrition, and forgiveness are the key aspects of an individual’s relationship with God. African communal practices, on the other hand, are positive, especially regarding social matters. The reception of Christianity by African people does not necessary bind Africans to understand and interpret Christianity solely according to the Western worldview. Enlightenment was just an introduction of new experiences with God, but was not everything. We need to interrogate the African communal understanding of God. If it leads to the

introduction of intermediaries and disputes salvation as a personal encounter with God, then it contradicts the purpose of salvation.

Africans consider traditional healers to be vehicles in the spiritual realm. African traditional healers are expected to understand all the activities of the spirit world. The process of healing comprises both temporal and spiritual mechanisms. Sicknesses are healed through a combination of herbal remedies and logotherapy, including words of prayer, communication, incarnations, general counselling, etc. These systems are used to address the mental, spiritual, and physical components of an illness or malady. Traditional healers speak on behalf of ancestors and they also claim to be able to relay messages from God to people; we therefore need to agree that there are instances where healers occupy the position of intermediaries.

During the early centuries following Christ, the church fathers, scholars, and teachers developed various Christologies ostensibly based on the Christian-Judeo sacred texts. The focus of their studies was very diverse and some became challenging to the church. Many scholars attended to the deity of Christ, while others concentrated their studies on the humanity of Christ, and the virgin birth of Christ. All these theologies were attempts to understand the person and work of Christ as portrayed in the Christian Bible. After being evaluated and tested by the church, some interpretations were found to be heretical. The attention paid to the African concept is insufficient. Many African views are not based on the Bible, but on life in general. As a result, Christology has not received much attention. It therefore seems unfair to compare the two positions. The point of departure in this subject is that the understanding of intermediaries by Africans is not biblically correct and that the role of ancestors as understood by Africans is not biblically correct. It seems best to conclude that African perspectives and the various Christological heresies have something in common. As a result, there is a need to attend to these positions carefully. There is a very thin line between attending to intermediaries and ancestors, but the concept is different.

I now briefly discuss the African concept of ancestors.

### **3.3.6 The African concept of ancestors**

According to African religion, at death, the human spirit of the departed unifies with the human soul and attains supernatural powers, thereby making them ancestral spirits. Due to their new powers, an ancestral spirit often poses a threat to the living as they hold unlimited powers over the lives of the living. The ancestors are perceived as *batho* (people) *badimo*

(gods) but not as gods. They are servants of the Supreme Being or God. They take care of their dependants under the Supreme Being's supervision. Interaction between the ancestors and the living is vital participation and not worship. The word "worship" is reserved for *Modimo* (God). The ancestors are without physical limitations and, as such, possess better insight. Some writers who are sympathetic to African religion tend to regard the ancestors as agents of good, whereas any suffering linked to them is accepted by relatives as chastisement or punishment for wrongdoing (Mbiti 1969: 16).

Becoming an ancestor is a passage into the past, even though this past has power over the present. The resurrection of Christ provides a passage into the future of God, even though this future may gain power over the present. Using the Apostle Paul's terminology in 1 Corinthians 15: 45, the ancestors belong to the genealogy of the "first man Adam" or the genealogy of the "flesh". Christ became the second Adam, the "new creation", the spiritual being (Nürnberg 2007: 96). Africans use different ways to connect with the ancestors.

The Zulu people have a special area at the back of their huts called the *umsamu* (sacred place), which is a place specially reserved for making offerings to the ancestors (Thorpe 1991: 33). The *umsamu* is a point of connection with the ancestors and is divided into two sides: the right side is for men, and the left is for women. The burial place or grave is another point of connecting the living with the ancestors. The grave is where the flesh rests and the ancestral spirits assume their supernatural responsibilities. A branch of a tree called *Umphafa* is used to connect the spirit of a dead person to that of the family. At the spot where the person died, a branch or *Umphafa* is laid down and dragged until it reaches the gate of the house where the person resided before death. At the gate, the deceased person is introduced as an ancestor to the family and thereafter brought inside the house. Another common way of communicating with the ancestors is through dreams. According to Nyirongo (1997: 82), in a person's dreams, the soul can leave the body and meet with the ancestral spirits. In dreams, the ancestral spirit reveals the wishes, blessings, warnings, and causes of misfortune that the descendant is experiencing (Nyirongo 1997: 82).

### **3.3.7 An African view of salvation**

Because humankind's identity is realised by incorporation into and participation in the larger community, Africans understand salvation not in terms of receiving eternal life or being in a

relationship with God, but follow different principles (Gaba 1978: 391-399). These include the following:

- An individual experiences salvation through rebirth at the initiation ceremony, when he/she is incorporated into the tribe as a full human being.
- An individual receives salvation by a process of dying and living in the next life, e.g., in becoming an ancestor.
- An individual experiences salvation as he/she approaches old age. The aged know all the secrets and wisdom of the community.
- An individual experiences salvation by acquiring wealth, good health, many children, and a plentiful supply of food.
- An individual experiences salvation by winning approval from the tribe, being well thought of, or one's family or clan, thereby bringing a feeling of wellbeing and security.

The Nguni resolutely, defiantly, and, at times, aggressively, resisted and opposed conversion to Christianity, because of its assault on the traditional requirement of *lobola* ("bride price"), which is one of the cornerstones of customary relations. The Christian religion was perceived as destroying the African way of life. The Zulu people were also concerned with what they understood was the Christian subversion of women, which gave them expectations that ill-benefitted them to return to Zulu society and with the individuality it fostered among its converts. The Nguni leaders were also sensitive to this issue. To them, a convert to Christianity meant the loss of a follower (Kiernan 1990: 18). It is evident that this had a negative impact on their understanding of Christian salvation. The Zulu king found it difficult to identify himself with Christian salvation if such salvation meant the abolition of Zulu cultural activity (such as *lobola*).

Although we still experience several barriers that prevent African people from receiving personal salvation in Jesus Christ, we are grateful to know that there is nevertheless an ever-growing number of African people who daily confirm the deity of Christ by receiving salvation in His name. Be that as it may, it needs to be mentioned that there are challenges for healing in the church today.



### 3.4 HEALING AND CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR THE CHURCH

The war against healing is now being fought from within the church through the shenanigans of a few popular leaders within the Charismatic/Pentecostal church community. Some leaders in the church are the alleged perpetrators of evil; some being charged with attempted murder, money laundering, and rape, while others are charlatans who practise bogus healings right inside the house of God. The question is thus: To whom should ordinary Christian members turn? Even those churches not currently infected by such shenanigans and bad behaviour are affected by the blowback received from society in general. Many in the Charismatic/Pentecostal church are now suffering from an abnormal sickness, where they live in fear and want to defend at all cost against this insidious attack against the miraculous, including the practice of indigenous medicine.

Some of the current Charismatic/Pentecostal megachurches have become big business schemes where church leaders enrich themselves at the expense of the members or followers who continue to be poor. False prophecies are given with the intention of psychologically enticing church members to give of their money extravagantly. The false resurrection of the dead is another example of the many shenanigans witnessed in some South African churches today. People are paid monthly salaries to recruit members of the general public, who in turn supply the pastor with their personal information in advance so that during the church service they will be prophesied upon and act as if the prophecy is genuine when it is not. Others will act as if they are extremely ill or physically challenged and miraculously recover immediately after the pastor has prayed for them. Still others are enticed by money and personal fame to feign death, so that they can be “brought back to life” by prayer and the laying on of hands by the pastor from coffins placed in prime positions on the platform in full view of the cameras and shown on large screens to an expectant congregation. In this regard, *The Natal Mercury* (2019b) reported that Pastor Alph Lukau, the leader of Alleluia Ministries International located in Sandton, Johannesburg, gained public infamy after publishing a YouTube video of him supposedly resurrecting a dead man. The claim made by the church was that the man had died the previous Friday. The then chairperson of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, Thoko Mkhwanazi-Xaluva, voiced her anger and called for the regulation of the traditional and religious sector like other professions. The International Federation of Christian Churches in South Africa, under the leadership of Pastor Ray McCauley, slammed this claim of resurrecting a dead man and labelled it as an abuse of people’s beliefs.

### **3.4.1 Healing in the Pentecostal tradition**

Healing can be viewed from various perspectives; it can be viewed from a spiritual, psychological, and/or physiological perspective. In this section, I intend to briefly explore healing from the position of Pentecostal tradition. This will be executed first by defining the term “Pentecostal”.

The term “Pentecostal” refers to divergent African churches that emphasise the working of the Spirit in the church, particularly with phenomena such as prophesy and speaking in tongues, healing, and exorcism (Anderson 2004: 103). More in general, and quite similar to AICs, Charismatic/Pentecostal churches stress the importance of the Holy Spirit above biblical doctrines and provide room for prophecies, dreams and visions, speaking in tongues, prayer healing, and deliverance from evil spirits (Meyer 2004: 452). Hayes (1998: 174) argues that while the enlightenment missionaries sought to solve the problems of witchcraft by building schools to teach people that witchcraft did not exist, the African evangelists they had trained were preaching a Jesus who could cast out demons. Like the earlier advocates of divine healing, even though they suffered from severe illness and many of their missionaries died from tropical diseases, Pentecostal churches remained unshaken in their conviction that physical divine healing had been restored to the church in the worldwide revival of the last days and was both an indispensable ingredient of the message and the means by which the nations would be brought to faith in Christ (Anderson 2007: 35). Different Pentecostal traditions vary in terms of symbols and emphasis.

Although most AICs can be called “Pentecostal”, many of them have few connections with classical Pentecostalism and are very different from it in several ways (Anderson 2004: 105). There are external differences like the use of healing symbolism, including blessed water, many other symbolic ritual objects representing power and protection, forms of government and hierarchical patterns of leadership (sometimes including hereditary leadership, not a stranger to Western Pentecostalism!), the use of some African cultural practices, and the wearing of distinctive robes or uniform (Anderson 2004: 105). These uniforms and robes are sacredly made such that each colour, usually green, red, and white, carries a specific meaning related to healing. Anderson (2004: 108) states that the early emphasis of Lekganyane’s ministry was healing; at first by laying on of hands, but as the church developed, he began to bless various objects like strips of cloth, strings, papers, needles, walking sticks, and water for healing and protective uses by his ministers. For some Charismatic/Pentecostal churches,

participation in holy communion and immersion in running water are necessary to complete the process of healing. One may argue and ask what then is the role of Jesus Christ in this healing tradition?

It would be unjust for me to explore the subject of healing and fail to mention the name Jesus, the man who performed many miraculous works of healing mostly by a mere utterance of a spoken word. Warrington (2008: 269) argues that the healing narrative was intended to result in the question being asked: “Who is this man?”, closely followed by the more spectacular question: “Is he God?” In addition to relieving suffering, the healing ministry of Jesus is thus to be recognised as demonstrating His messiahship but, much more importantly, His deity, as well as providing opportunities for non-believers to come to faith in Him. Finally, it is my view that any authentic salvation or healing, either scientific or spiritual, has one source and author, which is God.

### **3.4.2 The influence on and attitude of the church toward healing today**

*The Natal Mercury* (2019a) published a report about the members of the Enlightened Christian Gathering (ECG) church protesting outside the Pretoria Specialised Commercial Crime Court, where their leader, Prophet Shepherd Bushiri, and his wife, Mary, were appearing on charges of fraud and money laundering amounting to R15.3 million. Oupa Mokoena of the African News Agency reported that the members of the church were chanting “Release Major One” outside the court and some took out small bottles of anointing oil believed by many to have supernatural powers and began spraying the police cars with it. In Old Testament times, anointing oil was used when a king was inaugurated into office. “So, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David” (1 Samuel 16: 13, New International Version). In the New Testament church, anointing oil was also used as a symbol of the unction of the Holy Spirit upon those who came to the elders for prayer for healing. “Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord” (James 5: 14, New International Version). Sadly, anointing oil today is used to generate funds for the pastor. Members of the ECG church bought anointing oil, specially prayed over and blessed by Prophet Shepherd Bushiri, and kept it on their person as a talisman to repel negativity, protect them, and bring good fortune during times of trouble. In this instance, it is recorded that the oil was used to spray the police

vehicles<sup>9</sup>. Church leaders also try to avoid using indigenous therapies because some of these therapies, especially divination services, are associated with evil spirits (Nyamwaya 1999: 33). *The Natal Witness* (2018) reported that the Pietermaritzburg-based Thy Word Harvest Ministries had healed a female church member who was HIV positive. Pastor Thamsanqa Sambulo stated that he had to cut himself and the female church member to demonstrate that she had been healed. After cutting himself and the woman, they joined their bleeding wounds together, thereby mixing their blood. The pastor and the female church member then went back to the congregation to declare that he could not contract HIV and that the female member was healed. When the subject of regulating the churches was raised, Pastor Sambulo agreed that while some pastors were bogus, he was against the regulating of churches. He stated: “How can you regulate God?” The same newspaper reported about Nonhlanhla Gcwensa from Mpumuza, outside Edendale, Pietermaritzburg, who lost her 22-year-old daughter Deborah Ngcobo in 2016 after sustaining severe burn wounds while attending a night vigil healing service at the church. It is alleged that the pastor mixed methylated spirits, paraffin, Jeyes Fluid, and water together. He then lit a candle and started spitting the mixed “remedy” from his mouth towards the young woman. After the incident, the pastor was arrested and charged with attempted murder, but the case was later withdrawn due to lack of evidence. According to a statement made by the mother, regulating churches would bring justice for other victims who may suffer the same fate as her daughter. Having articulated the challenges of healing and perspectives from different mentalities, it is prudent to conclude that behind every medical or healing discovery there is a primary source, which is God.

### **3.4.3 What would be a sensible theological response to this conundrum?**

What follows is the search for the character and nature of God’s relationship with the world. If we consider the subject of God as the producer, we can comfortably view God as the source of Himself and what He produces. In my view, this is both humanity and divinity. God is the one who sent forth His Word, gave the Holy Spirit, and, finally, made the earth as His final product. The church is the beneficiary of this product. There can be no producing without a producer and a product (Cunningham 1998: 57). God is the author of the universe and the source of everything; without Him nothing exists. God produced Himself to be able to produce every other thing. God became God to Himself before becoming God to His

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<sup>9</sup> A number of African religious leaders are fully aware of the role and significance of the usage of oil but very sceptical to continue using it for various church ordinances purely because it has been used by some leaders as a money-making scheme inside the church and not for the purpose it was biblically designed for.

creation. God is God because of Himself. He made Himself to come into existence so that any other thing may exist. He produced Himself in eternity. He does not depend on anything, but produced everything to depend on Him. God produced divinity as his eternal environment. If God was able to produce Himself, surely He was also able to produce other members of the Holy Trinity as well? If we disapprove of this submission, then we denounce the fact that God is the source of Himself first, before becoming everything and everyone else's source. This understanding in no way disapproves of the unity or oneness of the Holy Trinity in operation; rather, my endeavour here is to assert the fact that the production was impossible without the producer. Agreement with this submission should then lead us to critique that which is being produced now.

#### **3.4.4 What are the products?**

God became the product of Himself first before producing His products, the world, and its people. Cunningham (1998: 58) argues that while God produced our knowledge of God through the defining revelation in Jesus Christ, He also empowered us to receive this revelation through the instrument of the church. The church, wisdom, and knowledge are all God's products. In my view, we will not have sufficient space to comprehend and articulate specifically and fully what God produced, as described by Cunningham (1998). For the sake of being relevant to this research project, however, let us weed out the narrative of herbs and traditional medicine as one of God's products that has been discovered by scientists. I also submit the truth behind the evasive attitude of the Charismatic/Pentecostal churches towards traditional medicine. Scientists only discovered medicine from the trees, herbs, and flowers that had already been produced by God. Many of the medicines on the shelves in pharmacies originated from God's production.

### **3.5 CONCLUSION**

For most Africans, the material body is considered a temple. The point of connection with God (*usimakade*) is through *umsamu*, inside their houses. This gives Africans a good reason not to attend a Christian church where they would probably have an opportunity to hear the gospel of Christ. The African understanding of Christian salvation, as cited by Gaba (1978: 391-399), often prohibits Africans to even think of Christ as the source of salvation. The African interpretation of salvation has more to do with life now than life after death. The available systems and traditional resources such as herbs to heal the sick, elderly women who

act as midwives during the delivery period, many children as a blessing from the ancestors, wealth in the form of cattle, etc., are all viewed as being self-sufficient and therefore depreciate the role of Christ in the lives of Africans. In addition, Africans often fail to understand that the source of their positive systems and traditional resources is that of God through Christ and not through the ancestors.

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **THE INEVITABILITY OF THE HUMAN RESPONSE TO NORMALITY**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, I endeavour to interrogate the discourse as cited in the previous chapters where Charismatic/Pentecostal communities find it normal to purchase and consume a normal, known herb (traditional medicine) only when it is from laboratories and packaged and displayed on pharmacy shelves. When the same traditional medicine is presented raw, then it is associated with witchcraft and evil spirits to the extent that any member of this community found to be using it can even be expelled from the church. This is a practical standpoint I observed and a gap that requires critical investigation. I now want to focus on employing a theory behind this dilemma. One may understand the denunciation of traditional medicine by Charismatic/Pentecostal communities as acquired knowledge from the colonial and other systems and that it was never inborn knowledge. In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* published in 1690, Locke concluded that all human knowledge is acquired knowledge<sup>10</sup>. It is my view that this attitude, knowledge, and behaviour towards traditional medicine can be traced back to the rich history of colonialism. The following is a brief reflection on the subject of normality, which will help us to understand the human encounter with normality.

#### **4.2 A QUICK GLANCE AT THE ROLE OF THE NATURE OF HUMAN RELATIONS WITH NORMALITY**

##### **4.2.1 Normality versus morality**

Normality involves survival, existential necessities, and basic and essential needs. Normality transcends and neutralises morality. Morality involves religion and tradition. The difference between normality and morality is speed; for instance, the traditional way of drawing water from the river in morality is a bit slower compared to normality where the modern<sup>11</sup> way brings water through a pipe system into the house. The transportation of a patient by traditional cart is slower than ambulance transportation. Williams (in Sampson, Samuel & Sugden 1994: 151) argues that we can get a grip on the way that the question of morality has brought modernity into collision with Christianity by remarking on some features of

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<sup>10</sup> See John Locke's explanation of the doctrine of innate principles in his book (1961: 13).

<sup>11</sup> See Nürnberger's (1997: 14) unpublished manuscript.

intellectual history. In this submission, I briefly want to reflect on how the empire still controls normality; for instance, educational design by the empire is normal and any other kind of education outside it receives no accreditation or secondary approval. Indigenous medicinal education transported through oral means is considered as not normal. Indigenous practitioners are obliged to attend cosmopolitan medicinal learning institutions for acceptance by the medical system and shelve their traditional indigenous knowledge and systems because these are not normal. These normalities have left an indelible scar on the mind of the Charismatic/Pentecostal communities today. The current African status leaves us with the question of whether our Africa is in shape or shapeless.

Our African communities in particular have been indoctrinated by colonial systems to the extent that they identify easily with its modern scientific way of life and struggle to associate with their own indigenous ways of living. The dress code does not resemble the African attire, politics, education, social matters, and religious positions. All these present a foreign picture that is less indicative of the African indigenous way of life. It is the same indoctrination that has produced visible white supremacy, denouncement of Africanness, and concretely induced African self-hate. Colonialism became instrumental in shaping the perception of Africans to the extent that they systematically ran away from who they are. We are searching for Africa in Africa and have difficulty finding her. The Western pharmaceutical companies, for instance, take the very known African herb, package it, and bring it back to be consumed by Africans, and this is considered normal and accepted. This submission by no means disputes or degrades Western medicine, but it is purely an endeavour to show how African medicine has been systematically expelled to die a natural death. In South Africa and other African countries, we are continuously witnessing the same experience where Western companies come and dig raw material (e.g., gold) from African soil, process it, and bring it back as expensive necklaces and watches for Africans to buy. This is pretty much accepted as normal. It is now clear that humans respond to various aspect differently and such responses become normal to them.

#### **4.2.2 Manifestations of human response to normality**

According to Sartre (1946: 4), the first principle of existentialism is that man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. As human beings we go through a process of fashioning ourselves. Sartre (1946: 4) explains what he means by stating that “existence precedes essence”. It means that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world, and



defines himself afterwards (Sartre 1946: 4). Sartre (1946: 4) further states that if man as the existentialist sees himself as not definable; it is because, to begin with, he is nothing. There is a time when we are born into a particular family and then go through a process of making our choices or reflecting on specific identities. For instance, being born in a traditional unchristian family and in the process of life, we can make a choice of being born again or receiving Christian faith. Equal to the choices we make, we are also not immune against the influences of the so-called “significant others”.

#### **4.2.3 The role of significant others in normality**

The motivational narrative alludes to the fact that human beings are enough and know that they are normal, but the reality is that they also have anxiety related to seeking the recognition and approval of others. It is a struggle where the “me” does not recognise itself but looks for the recogniser. Who are these significant others? These are our number one constituency, the heathen or detractor; antitheses who are able to generate the most criticism about us. These are our main conversational partners and sometimes our nemeses. Even when they are less powerful than us, they are so significant that they shape our sermons and our daily lives and they are the reason for our calling. These are significant cohorts who come out with all beautiful critiques and continue to shape our identities. These are people from whom our own identities are derived. It should be noted clearly that every human being is wired to yearn for recognition from their significant others. We all have an inborn inability to recognise and accept ourselves and therefore desire this recognition of normality from others, even when they are less advantageous than us. Our significant others hold a specific power over ourselves. We also find ourselves in a relationship with what we want to be removed from us but at the same time, not on a permanent basis. For instance, those who own funeral parlours sympathise and want to serve families by burying their loved ones with dignity, when at the same time they benefit financially from the same death that they do not want to see. Temporarily, it is the death they do not want to see but need to benefit from more deaths for their survival. This role of significant others somehow connects with what Sartre (1946: 6) refers to as anguish when he navigates the subject of making choices.

#### **4.2.4 Anguish**

Sartre (1946: 6) explains exactly what he means with anguish. He begins by saying that the existentialist frankly states that man is in anguish. His meaning is as follows: when a man

commits himself to anything, he fully realises that he is not only choosing what he will be, but is at the same time a legislator deciding for the whole of mankind (Sartre 1946: 6). My mind is then attracted to the story of creation and when man fell into sin (Genesis 2: 17, New International Version). God gave an order and coupled it with a choice: “Of the tree of knowledge, you shall not eat: for in the day you decide to eat, you shall surely die.” The picture of the entire globe and the life of humankind we observe today were simply designed by the choice made in the Garden of Eden as alluded to above. Biblically, the decision and choice of only two people affected all of humanity. When I think of Africa today, I am also reminded about the choices made before the German chancellor during the scramble for Africa in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century birth of colonialism, when Africa was sliced like a cake among the colonisers. Africa was presented with a different foreign shape from the decision and choices made in her absentia. This choice painted the horrible picture we see today. Sartre (1946: 6) further drew on the story of Abraham (Genesis 22: 2, New International Version), when God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering in Moriah. Sartre (1946: 6) makes a very serious submission that there is absolutely no proof that the command proceeded from heaven and that it was not from hell. Sartre (1946: 6) argues that if a voice speaks to me, it is I myself who must decide whether the voice is or is not that of an angel. It lies with a person to choose whether it is a good or a bad voice. To echo what Sartre (1946: 6) alludes to, I conclude by stating that we are the results of the choices we make. Each time we choose something, we instantly release power to that which we have chosen and subject ourselves to it. We are then driven and directed by that which we have chosen and when we decide to object after choosing, we instantly operate outside normality or cause disorder. Another interesting area of normality is its manifestation according to the African perspective.

#### **4.2.5 Manifestation of human response to normality in Africa**

All human beings and societies are subjected to an inborn notion of desiring to be recognised, affirmed, and accepted by others. There is an intrinsic sense of insufficiency when it comes to self-approval. The Zionist church wants to earn the identity of the mainline churches while preserving its own traditional identity. The Shembe church still wants to use the Bible although at the same time it wants to reflect more on traditionalism. They feel very happy when Western people show interest in their internal Shembe church beliefs. When a renowned African artist is nominated for an Academy Award, it becomes a headline in local newspapers. The group Ladysmith Black Mambazo (*Isicathamiya*), traditional acapella

musicians, gained more recognition when they were twice called for Academy Awards, and this echo is far less significant when they are nominated for a local award. There is a generic yearning within African people to be approved by the West in their endeavours – be it economics or arts. It became normal for local South African radio stations to play Western music up to the point where local musicians vented their dissatisfaction about how much air space is taken by Western music. Our own film industry and cinemas are populated by Western-style movies and are highly supported by our very own youth in particular. This becomes a completely different story when our own productions play in the very same cinemas. The empire still controls normality but is allowed to escape when it comes to survival level. Normality at a survival level compels the pendulum to swing towards its direction.

#### **4.2.6 Normality at a survival level**

Normality can be adopted or stolen. Normality can create itself if it is connected to survival; for instance, my friend's sister, who happens to be a very staunch Charismatic/Pentecostal member from kwaNongoma (Northern KwaZulu-Natal) fell very ill. She was taken to various doctors and could not be helped. One of her "unsaved" relatives took her to a herbalist in Ladysmith, where she was given traditional medicine to take for a period of three weeks. Just before the third week was over, she was completely healed from the wounds around her stomach. She then became an official marketer of the same traditional medicine used to heal her. That which was abnormal for the church members and her immediate family suddenly became normal. Africans, including myself, can be very critical about the historic evils of the West to Africa, but when it comes to survival, issues of life and death, we do not question anything, we take Western medication, use their educational system for survival, use various transportation modes designed by the West, etc. A severe headache requires a Panado tablet even when the Panado comes from the enemy. The efficiency of Western medicine overrides all historic evil politics when we talk about survival; something very abnormal instantly transforms its status to normality on the survival level. Having articulated the subject of normality, the following section unearths facts about the inevitable relationship between religion and culture as it carries bearings of the dilemma mentioned above.

### **4.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND CULTURE**

In one of the sections to follow, I briefly navigate the views of Richard Dawkins and Alister McGrath about religion and science. It is significant to mention at this juncture that culture can be defined differently. Cassidy and Osei-Mensah (1976: 83) argue that people are not just one great homogeneous group. Cassidy and Osei-Mensah (1976: 83) further state that people form their own groups, which then take on special symbols of identification, such as language, notions of what is accepted or unaccepted behaviour, styles of art, architecture, patterns of power, and so forth. Culture assists people to be aware of who they really are or to discover their sense of identity. Through culture, we make sense of ourselves and the surrounding world (Macionis & Plummer 1997: 161). According to Mbiti (1975: 27), the gospel was revealed to people, not in an empty void or space, but in the context and language. For instance, when Jesus Christ prepared His disciples for the propagation of the gospel, He taught them in the Hebraic language, attended Jewish customary gatherings with them, and where they did not understand, He used parables. It is within our culture that we must wrestle with the demands of the gospel, and it is within our culture that we must propagate the gospel of our Lord (Cassidy & Osei-Mensah 1976: 84).

During the transplantation of the gospel in Africa by Western missionaries, who are custodians of the Christian faith, Western culture wittingly or unwittingly became part of the transplantation and was never divorced from the Christian faith, but was granted equal status by being christened. This created a dilemma within the African communities (as the recipients of the Christian faith) where they were then compelled not only to learn and embrace Christian faith but also Western culture, which was done at the expense of their own native cultures. This resulted in a forceful denunciation of African culture and heritage. In my view, it is also during the very same era that the African church in particular (Charismatic/Pentecostal churches) adopted a negative attitude against indigenous medicine. If culture is a receiving blanket of Christian faith, then the question is: Which culture did Africans use to receive the Christian faith from Western missionaries? Let us then further navigate the relationship between religion and culture in the West.

This section is pivotal in the sense that a great deal of what is being observed in the modern church has a connection to the reformation era when the relationship between culture and religion was overtly exposed. It would be prudent to briefly describe modernity to enable understanding the influence it had over African traditional and cultural systems during the

propagation of Christian faith by missionaries. Hunter (in Sampson et al. 1994: 13) defines “modern” as a term that comes from the Latin *modo*, which means “just now”. He further defines it as “recent”, “present”, or “contemporary”.

Many of the private individual successes in the church today have been christened in the sense that the success of every Christian person, particularly in reference to material things, is labelled as the fruits of salvation. One may critique this submission and ask how would the success of a non-Christian person be labelled then? It would be very interesting to understand the backdrop of this philosophy and to navigate the factors behind it. By and large, this modern revolution became the same tool that devoured the nuclear and communal traditional systems in Africa and promoted individualistic success<sup>12</sup>. Nürnberger (1997: 13) reflects on one of the characteristics of modernity as follows: “Personal ingenuity can only emerge when individuals are free to develop their potential to the full. Thus, while traditionalism is based on subordination, modernity is based on emancipation.”

Nürnberger (1997: 2) argues that

[c]enturies back a new dynamic was born among the civilization of humankind. It began in the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea and shifted to North Western Europe. Building on older civilization in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, it combined Greek and Hebrew perception of reality into a unique synthesis. The Greeks contributed the insight that reality was structured according to dependable principles, which can be explored by empirical research and rational thoughts.

To elucidate this further, it is necessary to critically investigate how Western culture became christened.

#### **4.4 A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF HOW WESTERN CULTURE BECAME CHRISTENED CULTURE**

According to Hayes (in Maimela & Koning 1998: 173), at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, methods of industrial mass production were also being developed, partly as a result of the enlightenment approach. Enlightenment was a movement in Western Europe that emphasised the empirical study of nature and rational reflection on it (Hayes in Maimela & Koning 1998: 173). It is during this era when missionaries carried civilisation to Africa. Evangelisation was

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<sup>12</sup> My submission is in no way trying to blanket the good presented during this modern revolution in Africa but the idea is to reflect on its influence in comparison to traditionalism.

ushered into Africa through civilisation, and the two could not be separated. Many of the missionaries from Europe who invaded Africa grew up with this capitalist system and used it during the transplantation of the gospel into Africa.

Martin Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli's reformation was a reaction to the Catholic tradition. This was the evangelical revolution where they emphasised that for people to know who God is and to understand His grace, they do not need an intercessor or priest and they do not need a priest for the forgiveness of sins, but every believer can have access to the Scripture and God's salvation. For them, theology was primarily concerned with the exposition of Scripture (McGrath 1998: 132). This submission was very rebellious to the Catholic traditions where people had to privately approach a priest for the forgiveness of their sins, as well as the communal approach to some spiritual aspects. There was a major shift from a communal belief where people waited for the direction and the interpretation of the scriptures by a priest to more individual-centred beliefs where they were exposed to approach the throne of God directly with no intermediary influences. According to McGrath (1998: 127), Luther was particularly concerned with the doctrine of justification, which formed the central point of his religious thought. The justification by faith is a free gift from God, and Calvin alluded to the fact that salvation is a private thing, which brought a shift from the communal to the private approach to salvation. Calvin argued that God sprinkles salvation and you will know that you are saved or if your faith bears fruits. Romans 9: 18 says: "So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills" (New International Version). This submission motivated people to work very hard in order to bear the fruits of success, and this endeavour spilled over even outside the church. It is my view that the current idea of capitalism for many countries can be directly traced from this shift that began in the church. If we agree with this submission, we can also agree that the sense of a communal approach, as it was before the private approach, as suggested by Calvin, was defeated and discouraged by the church. I am in no way trying to either promote or denounce any system at this juncture. However, I perceive it as prudent to overtly present the historical factors behind capitalism so as to understand exactly its origin and how it captured the minds of the African generation today.

According to Weber (1930: 32), people filled with the spirit of capitalism today tend to be indifferent, if not hostile, to the church. He further questions the meaning of their restless activity, why they are never satisfied with what they have, and thus appearing so senseless to any purely worldly view of life. They would perhaps give the answer, if they know any at all:

“To provide for my children and grandchildren” (Weber 1930: 32). Weber (1930: 32) describes capitalism as a system full of greed for gain and impulse to acquire profit. The transportation of this capitalist system became part and parcel of culture. In the West, there is a sense in which Western culture became christened. The Western culture cannot be separated from the Christian faith due to this move of wanting to become successful (gospel plus culture equals Christianity). People used cultural tools to interpret and reveal the truth. When God reveals the truth, He finds people in their context. The culture that comes from that sort of reproduced itself. Luther questioned the tradition of the Catholic church in relation to its cultural interpretation of the Bible (*Sola Scriptura*). Luther wanted people to focus directly on the scriptures and be free from Catholic-developed cultures and interpretation of scriptures. For the reformers, the slogan *sola scriptura* (“by Scripture alone”) thus implied not merely one, but two differences from their Catholic opponents; not only did they attach a different status to Scripture, but they disagreed over what Scripture actually was (McGrath 1998: 148).

I now want to reflect on some of the origins and developments of major concepts of culture, particularly in the West. I find it prudent to do so because the Western cultural influence is vividly traceable in the daily lives of African people. To elucidate this submission, I employ a few philosophies from different scholars who have conducted remarkable and extensive research in the field of the relationship between religion and culture. These are scholars such as Boas and Alfred Kroeber, to name a few. According to Okot P’Bitek (1970), Western scholars who conducted studies on African religions were looking in the wrong places for they were looking for physical evidence (Imbo 2004: 366). P’Bitek (1970) argues that one of the factors that contributed to this was that these scholars were not aware who the real experts on African religion were. Instead of going to ordinary men and women, they were busy looking for metaphysicians and theologians (Imbo 2004: 366). Boas shares the same sentiment when he states that for one to clearly understand a specific culture, a properly detailed study must be conducted. Boas objects to the notion that the cultures of some races hold a superior position and are more advanced than the cultures of other races. In Boas’ view, there are no cultures that are more progressive than others. Instead, he is convinced that cultures are products of diverse contexts with inimitable historical backgrounds. Kroeber (1952) views culture as a separate and different phenomenon from that of the individual, society, and organism, and, equally so, he is convinced that the configurations of culture were influenced by the history of a particular set of cultural values. Kroeber (1952) holds the notion that through history and past experiences, human beings can understand their cultural

phenomena and that culture is acquired through learning. The decolonisation process of a lot of information propagated by the West to Africa is now gradually taking shape, but before we tackle the context of this process, we need to attend to Western medical scientific achievements as a case in point.

#### **4.5 WESTERN MEDICAL SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS AS A CASE IN POINT**

The history of Christology is embedded within the history of human development in terms of how humanity evolved over time. Each generation will have its own interpretation of the gospel as to who Christ is, who God is, and what the meaning of salvation is. Each interpretation will reflect whatever ideology is prevalent within a particular generation. The transportation of the gospel to pagan lands by Paul and the role of church fathers such as St Augustine, Tertullian, and others ushered humankind into the period of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (c500-1500 CE), which was the time of scholastics such as Thomas Aquinas and others when people were reading a great deal. It was a period when people experienced the rise of scholasticism. European pagan religion was the receiving blanket for the salvific gospel. After the reformation era (1500-1750 CE), the Europeans began to reject or have a hermeneutic suspicion of Christianity. They wanted to display their dissatisfaction with Christianity. They wanted to identify with their European scholars and realised how mundane the work of the scholars was, and this anxiety ushered them into the era of enlightenment or the modern period.

Aristotle argued that God gave human beings all the software to find God and that this software is the mind. Pelagianism indicates that God created the world and withdrew from it. For Pelagius, God created humanity and provided information concerning what is right and what is wrong, and then ceased to take any interest in humanity, apart from the final day of judgement (McGrath 2007: 366). Grudem (1994: 315) argues that the biblical doctrine is not deism (which teaches that God created the world and then essentially abandoned it)<sup>13</sup>. According to McGrath (1998: 33), Pelagianism came to be seen as a religion of human autonomy, which upheld that human beings are able to use their initiative in their own salvation. St Thomas argued that when you are born, you have the instinct to seek God. Some scholars argue that human beings have what they need and therefore do not need God. This is contrary to Aquinas (in McGrath 2007: 177), who believed that “everything that is moved is

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<sup>13</sup> Hebrews 1: 3 tells us that Christ is “upholding the universe by his word of power”. The Greek term *phero* literally means “to carry”. It is clear that you cannot carry something and be away from it at the same time.



moved by something else”; the mover behind any scientific discovery is therefore God. This revolution ushered humanity into the period of enlightenment, which became a period that completely rejected the church and God, but also unleashed human creativity and inquisitiveness. There were no more limits to knowing, which gave rise to the scientific revolution. This was an era that tested the limits of the human mind, the limit of what is possible, advances in medicine and biology were made, life expectancy increased, the quality of life improved drastically, influenza rarely killed people anymore, and when there were complications with the eyes, science could mostly solve it. Droughts could easily be managed and there were no more deaths from cholera. Science became people’s solution to their dilemmas.

All these achievements gave rise to modernity, where certain thinkers overtly declared the death of God; that there is no God but us (people). During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, authority was stripped from traditionalism and shifted to an individual autonomous rational self and science grew remarkably. Natural science reached its highest peak where the law of evidence brought revolution to humankind, and this era gave birth to atheism. When modern humans seek solutions for daily problems, or when they dream of future states of prosperity, they turn to science and technology, rather than to deities (Nürnberg 1997: 14).

It was during this era that traditional systems were subjected to a severe challenge. The packaging of herbal medicine, the introduction to new scientific medicinal systems, and the growth of pharmaceutical institutions took over. Much of what we inherited in Africa, as far as the Western culture is concerned, is the modern culture. Christians’ attitude towards indigenous medicine can also be traced back to this era.

In relation to what was explored above, it is now clear that some Christian communities are ignorant of the fact that a number of architects of science are atheists – the same scientists behind the discovery and packaging of cosmopolitan medicine and pharmaceutical production. These scientists do not believe in the God we serve. Atheists like Dawkins (2006: 33) claim that science is incompatible with religion, but wax ecstatically about nature and the universe. Science is rational and evidence based, while religion extends to beliefs and miracles. Dawkins (2006) also claims that religion is evil. This submission is in reference to various acts of merciless killings witnessed by the world, such as the bombing of the Pentagon in the USA by extremists associated with Islam. According to McGrath (2007: 14), in 1916, active scientists were asked whether they believed in God who actively

communicates with humanity, and to whom one may pray “in expectation of receiving an answer”. Forty percent believed in this kind of God, 40% did not, and 20% were not sure. The survey was repeated in 1997 and there was a slight increase in those who did not believe (McGrath 2007: 14). Another claim made by Dawkins (2007: 35) is that there are a number of Jewish atheists who observe Jewish rites on the basis of their identities and connection with the murdered Jews and loyalty to Jewish ancient traditions and not because they believe in the Jewish God.

A widespread assumption, by nearly everybody in our society except the non-religious, is that religious faith is especially vulnerable to offence and should be protected by an abnormally thick wall of respect – in a different class from the respect that any human being should pay to any other (Dawkins 2007: 42). The said vulnerability is currently what I personally observed within the Charismatic/Pentecostal church in a way that when the subject of traditional healing and herbalism is discussed, it instantly becomes a no-go area but, at the same time, discussions about Western medicine are openly and easily approved. As Christians, we are certainly not used to challenging religious ideas as alluded to by Dawkins. I also agree that we often display our vulnerability when our religion is offended. Some scientists present their calculated reasons for not believing in God when our religious communities in particular are less rational in their approach to life; not because of their intellectual state but because of the belief system and understanding of life, which are more than that of the scientific world. Scientists only approach life from a rational angle, while the community of faith extends to spiritualities and their thinking goes beyond rationality. The world of the unseen and its impact make less sense for some scientists, but the community of faith understands it very well. It should be well understood that scientists are not masters of everything in life but are specialists<sup>14</sup> of specific discoveries, which are also prone to new discoveries and evolution. If science is finite and static, then it is not absolute. When ARVs were first discovered, a number of capsules were taken by patients and after some time the number of these same capsules were dramatically reduced. This is indicative of a positive growth and advancement of science. McGrath responded to Dawkins’ argument that science is the only tool they possess as scientists to understand the world. McGrath (2007: 14) argues that this fundamental question in human knowledge has been much discussed by philosophers of science, and often ignored by those who, for their own reasons, want to portray science as the only viable route to genuine knowledge.

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<sup>14</sup> See Nürnberger (1997:7).

When missionaries invaded Africa, they baptised Western science and denounced African traditional medicine. *Sangomas* (diviners)<sup>15</sup> affirm indigenous herbs and use them for their spiritual work but at the same time reject the biblical principles of the creator or producer of the same herbs. Finally, the Charismatic/Pentecostal church from where I come not only associates herbalism and traditional medicine with witchcraft but completely rejects its usage by the Christian community. I am perturbed because many of our African people, like myself, grew up using traditional medicine; for instance, our cough mixture (*iboza*) was from one of the household plants, constipation was easily cured by *ukuchatha* (bowel cleanser), and African females used *ibomvu* (red powder) to protect their facial skin from the scorching sun during their work in the field. A number of these basic herbs were planted around the house. It should be understood that my objective in this research is not to discredit my Charismatic/Pentecostal Christian church but to positively contribute to strengthening and increasing knowledge about indigenous medicine. I also intend to liberate traditional medicines from the shackles and misrepresented ideologies of *sangomas* and missionaries. I have tackled the subject of relations between religion and culture in the West; therefore it is now time to reflect on the same subject in the African context.

#### **4.6 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND CULTURE IN AFRICA**

First and foremost, we need to understand that African Christians, Charismatic/Pentecostal churches in particular, possess a very limited, and in some cases a negative, attitude about their own African culture. There are factors that contribute to this notion. One of these factors has to do with the influence of colonial and missionary projects in Africa. Secondly, we have those who, at all cost, seek to defend the Christian identity from anything associated with African culture. This is done to ensure that the Christian faith does not compete with African culture. The notion that culture is a receiving blanket of religion is not accepted in this view. A number of things have received a transfiguration from what it was meant for to something very cultural. For instance, there was a point in time when *umqombothi* (African sorghum beer) was just a drink to quench thirst that people enjoyed for pleasure and relaxation. In the olden days, people devised ways of fermenting this drink, and fast forward to now, it is used as a cultural symbol. When you are presented with *umqombothi* now, you receive it as a cultural art beer, not just a beer to quench thirst.

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<sup>15</sup> Over the years, criticism has been levelled against the Zionist tradition of practising the double role of being a priest and a *sangoma* (mixing Christian principles with traditional practices).

There was also a time when the African dress code of *ibheshu* (leather cover of the male lower abdomen) was a genuine human invention that became the solution to look stylish and it was approved by people and found normal. Fast forward to now, human beings added a sacred value to it. It was invented as a normal dress code, which evolved over time to become a cultural thing. This is now an ongoing thing where cultural advocates continuously preserve and defend it as a culture, not just a dress code. The ultimate objective in this defence is purely a fear of losing this indigenous cultural heritage. Some cultural advocates want to preserve it for commemorations and seasonal celebrations. What then is the position of God in this whole philosophy of cultural human endeavour?

God is the source and creator of things while human beings are only graced with discovery abilities. It may be true to say that mistakes do happen during the discovery process; for instance, when *impepho*<sup>16</sup> (incense) was discovered, it could be that it was never meant for what it is used for now. *Impepho* happened to be one of God's plants that smells good but over a period of time it was baptised by *isangoma* (diviners) as a sacred plant. It then graduated from a state of being a normal plant into sacrality, which connects it with spiritualities. The question is, who was behind this process of evolution and what chemistry was used to single it out from other plants as sacred, and at what point did this plant develop a sense of sacredness? It has been stolen from God and appropriated as a sacred plant. We do not know what God's intention was for this plant. The same incense has now been injected with spiritualities. Human-crafted sacredness turns to compete with God's sacredness. This sacrality developed an attitude within the Charismatic/Pentecostal community; hence, some distance themselves from any cultural activity that connects with incense. One may argue that Charismatic/Pentecostal communities do not fear incense but they reject the spirit endowed upon it. To continue with this African cultural matter, we also need to analyse how African culture became African traditional religion.

#### **4.6.1 A critical analysis of how African culture became African traditional religion**

It is paramount to understand first that God has always been in Africa; He did not come with the missionaries. According to Sakuba (2013), African cultures constitute what one may call God's design for how God intended African people to live. To dig deeper into this subject, I employ Charles Nyamiti's philosophy. He is one of the leading African scholars on the

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<sup>16</sup> **Note:** This incense/*impepho* is not the one cited in Exodus 30: 1, which was in the Tabernacle but a particular plant used as incense by some African traditional healers and *sangomas* to burn during their ceremonies.

concept of religion and culture. He began his career in Kipalapala Senior Seminary in Tabora, in his home country of Tanzania. It is here that he received his foundational training in philosophy and theology. Charles Nyamiti is perceived by many African scholars, mostly the evangelical scholars, as a very controversial scholar. This controversy is based on his submission that Jesus is an ancestor. He uses metaphorical language and argues that if you want to teach an African about matters of faith and crucial truths about the gospel, you must use conceptual categories that an African understands. When you do that, you need to understand the cultural conceptual category, understand its cultural symbolic and philosophical meaning, and take that cultural category and creatively allow a Christian concept, such as Christ, to be incarnate and transform that cultural category; using the cultural category as a soil to plant a Christian truth so that truth can come out of an indigenous soil so that people can understand. According to Nyamiti (1978), people who claim that they are using accurate language to describe who God is are lying to themselves because we do not have the capacity to fathom the true nature of God. We use our human language to describe who God is, not God's language. One of the major factors contributing to this in Nyamiti's (1978: 37) view is that most authors tend to generally confine themselves to the positive aspects of African cultures or those aspects that are compatible with Christian theology. As a result, certain aspects such as magic, polygamy, superstition, poverty, disease, and ignorance are among those that are usually omitted. Nyamiti (1978: 40) observes that African theologians have not yet reached a point where they are able to effectively adopt African cultural elements into "sacred science". Be that as it may, African Christian theologians John Pobee, Vincent Mulago, and John Mbiti, to name a few, launched a detailed ethnographic study on African traditional religions and cultures. This was, in my view, another means to restore the African identity that was looted during the missionary project.

#### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

Herholdt (2018: 219) argues that human evolution has taken us on a road far beyond the ideal of a perfect and idyllic garden state to a world where technology, professional sophistication, science, culture, and industrialisation serve as necessary tools to meet the increasing and pressing needs of human survival. In the introduction of this chapter, I explained how human beings deal with normality for survival. I also articulated what normality is and noted that normality is a means that human beings employ to realise intended good. Intended good is the perfect and good life that God created for us to enjoy; for instance, human beings have built

boats to cross to the other side of the world, they are continuously searching for better ways to heal, create innovations in communication technologies, find better ways of transportation, etc. Be that as it may, we need to be aware that all of these human endeavours are just discoveries; even science is part of God's plan and does not fall outside God's providence. Human beings did not develop scientific possibility but discovered what was already developed. God is the author of all possibilities. This discovery and evolution is an ongoing process in fulfilment of intended good. Finally, we need to educate and remind one another of forgotten normality and that forgetfulness is a result of the evolution of the means of accessing intended good, and that evolution is as a result of an ongoing human predisposition to discover new reality.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

After many years of reflecting on this dilemma, which has over the years been ravaging the minds of my own Charismatic/Pentecostal community, I made the decision to embark on a study with a view to critically examine some of the historical factors behind my religion's objection to the use of traditional remedies. This was done with the view to understand and acknowledge the strength of my religion, while pointing out the observed limitations within the same church. I therefore find it unethical to throw out the baby with the bathwater. This analogy is indicative of the fact that, besides this conundrum, there are many positive aspects within the Charismatic/Pentecostal church. Be that as it may, I am also aware that this presentation has a possibility to generate a debate within the same church.

Based on the findings, I conclude by stating that most Charismatic/Pentecostal church members are not aware of some of the facts around the subject of traditional medicine. I am also aware where this conundrum comes from. From an academic position, I made the decision to objectively defend the church against both inside and outside detractors. In conclusion, I presented the facts about the historical factors that contributed to the denunciation of traditional medicine by the Charismatic/Pentecostal church. In other words, this is how this rejection may be understood. To unpack this, I thematically follow the research problems and objectives as cited in Chapter One. The following conclusion is executed in line with the key research question, namely "What are the historical factors behind the ongoing denunciation of traditional African remedies by Charismatic/Pentecostal Christian communities in Africa?"

### **5.2 CONCLUSIONS IN TERMS OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEMS**

#### **5.2.1 Research Problem 1: The role of the missionary project in Africa**

In his 1992 study of African indigenous medicine, David Nyamwaya reflected on indigenous healthcare workers who are incorporated into the cosmopolitan health professional ranking system. They ask for uniforms and other regalia to show that they are no longer indigenous and that they now wish to appear as cosmopolitan and "modern" as possible. It must be

pointed out here that the incorporation of indigenous healers into the cosmopolitan professional ladder is the surest way of killing them professionally (Nyamwaya 1992: 41).

### **5.2.2 Research Problem 2: The role of the alliance of the missionary project and colonialism**

Denunciation of African culture: The greatest paradox introduced by the Western colonists and missionaries was that of ethnocentrism, which had the effect of cohesively imposing Western culture onto Africa and elevating it above that of African culture. By so doing, African culture was not only degraded as secondary to that of Western culture but, in some instances, was forcefully ordered to be denounced. This is one area where Africans lost not only their indigenous medicine but the entire African way of life. During the transplantation of the gospel into Africa by Western missionaries, who are custodians of the Christian faith, Western culture wittingly or unwittingly became part of the transplantation and was never disassociated from the Christian faith but granted equal status by being christened. This created a dilemma within the African communities (recipients of the Christian faith) where they were then compelled not only to learn and embrace the Christian faith, but also Western culture. This was done at the expense of their own native cultures. This resulted in a forceful denunciation of African culture and heritage. In my view, it is also during the very same era that the African (Charismatic/Pentecostal) church in particular adopted a negative attitude against indigenous medicine. If culture is a receiving blanket of Christian faith, then the question is: Which culture did Africans use to receive the Christian faith from Western missionaries?

The issue of the colonisation of the mind and spirit of African people by Western missionaries during the colonial era has negatively impacted the transplantation of the Christian gospel into Africa. The concept of the universalisation of salvation will always be a challenging issue because of cultural and religious backgrounds. I therefore make the submission that, even if the missionary work was from Africa to the Western countries, we would experience the same challenge because of the diversified nature of religion and culture. Roberts (1983: 107) thus argues that theologians can have their lives and thoughts enriched by this experience precisely because they view the faith of other people from inside their own system of belief and thought. In my view, while we can strive for theological egalitarianism, we will never accomplish it because of our diverse cultures and religions. However, this does not diminish the significance of respecting, cherishing, and loving any culture foreign to us.



According to P'Bitek (1970), Western scholars who conducted studies on African religions were searching in the wrong places because they were looking for physical evidence (Imbo 2004: 366). P'Bitek (1970) argues that one of the factors that contributed to this was that these scholars were not aware of who the real experts on African religion were.

### **5.2.3 Research Problem 3: The extent of the background of the origins of Western medicine in the triumph of a modern scientific worldview in the West, including the relationship of the proponents of the latter to Christianity**

God as the producer of all medicines: God was the product of Himself first before producing His products, namely the world and its people. Cunningham (1998: 58) argues that God produced our knowledge of God, through the definite revelation in Christ, but also in empowering us to receive this revelation (through the practices of the church). The church, wisdom, and knowledge are all God's products. In my view, we will not have enough space to comprehend and articulate specifically and fully what God produced, as cited by Cunningham (1998: 58), but, for the sake of being relevant to this research project, let us weed out the narrative of herbs and traditional medicine as one of God's products against the scientists' discovery works.

Our African communities in particular have been so indoctrinated by colonial systems that they identify easily with it and struggle to associate with their own indigenous ways of living. The dress code does not resemble the African attire, politics, education, social matters, and religious positions anymore. All these present a foreign picture that is less indicative of the African indigenous way of life. It is the same indoctrination that has produced visible white supremacy, denouncement of Africanness, and concretely induced African self-hate. Colonialism became instrumental in shaping the perception of Africans so much that they systematically ran away from who they are. We are searching for Africa in Africa, but have difficulty finding her. Contemporary Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians find it normal to collect medicine from a pharmacy and, in the same breath, find it extremely difficult to collect medication from the herbalist shop. The Western pharmaceutical companies, for instance, take well-known African herbs, package them, and bring them back to be consumed by Africans, and this is considered normal and accepted. It is the same story with our gold, where Western companies come and dig raw material from African soil, process it, and bring it back as expensive necklaces and watches for Africans to buy, and this also is pretty much accepted and normal.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, authority was stripped from traditionalism and shifted to an individual autonomous rational self, and science grew remarkably. Natural science reached its highest peak where the law of evidence brought revolution to humankind, and this era gave birth to atheism. It was during this era that traditional systems were subjected to a severe challenge. The packaging of herbal medicine, introduction to new scientific medicinal systems, and the growth of pharmaceutical institutions took over. Much of what we inherited in Africa, as far as Western culture is concerned, is the modern culture. The Christian's attitudes towards indigenous medicine can be traced back to this era. In relation to what was explored above, it is now clear that some of our Christian communities are ignorant of the fact that a number of architects of science are atheists – the same scientists behind the discovery and packaging of cosmopolitan medicine and pharmaceutical production. Some of these scientists do not believe in the God we serve. Also, the governments of the world are spending a fortune on primary healthcare systems and management. Each system has its own profit and loss nature. In my view, a huge chunk of the budget on the side of profit can be increased to maximise health deliveries when we also minimise losses through preventative health. The construction of additional hospitals, additional posts for hospital staff ranging from medical doctors to nurses, and an increase in the purchase of medication to cope with the ever-increasing patients in our health institutions and other related costs can easily be minimised only if we all take the initiative of preventative health. All of the above-mentioned indicates that there has been less focus on the issue of preventative health.

#### **5.2.4 Research Problem 4: The impact of the unfortunate conflation of the Christian faith and Western culture / African traditional religion (the role of *isangoma*) and African culture (the role of African traditional herbalists)**

The church wants to defend itself: The war against healing is now attacking from within the church through recent shenanigans. The question is, on whom should the church lean? When the church leaders are the culprits, who should be directing the church when the pastor is attending court for attempted murder, money laundering, rape, and practising fake healing right inside the house of God? This is what the Charismatic/Pentecostal church is subjected to in our days. Churches that are not currently infected are affected. The churches are now suffering from an abnormal sickness; they live in fear and therefore want to defend themselves at all costs and this has changed their attitude towards a number of things, including indigenous medicine.

Some of the current Charismatic/Pentecostal megachurches have become business schemes where church leaders enrich themselves at the expense of the members or followers who continue to be poor. The prophecies are faked with a mission to entice church members to offer their money extravagantly. The fake resurrection of dead people is one of many shenanigans witnessed in some of our churches today. People are paid monthly salaries to recruit others to supply the pastor with their personal information in advance so that, during the church service, they will be prophesied upon and act as if the prophecy is genuine when it is not. Others will act cripple or physically challenged and miraculously recover immediately after the pastor prays for them. This conundrum is another contributing factor towards the denunciation of indigenous medicine by Charismatic/Pentecostal communities.

God is the source and creator of all things and human beings are only graced with discovery abilities. It may be true to say that mistakes do happen during the discovery process; for instance, when *impepho* (incense) was discovered, it could be that it was never meant for what it is used these days. *Impepho* happened to be one of God's plants that smells good, but, over a period of time, it was baptised by *isangoma* (diviners) as a sacred plant. It then graduated from the state of being a normal plant to sacrality, which connects it with spiritualities. The question is, who was behind this process of evolution and what chemistry was used to single it out from other plants as sacred? At what point did this plant develop a sense of sacredness? It has been stolen from God and appropriated to be a sacred plant. We do not know what God's intention was for this plant. The same incense has now been injected with a certain spirit. Human-crafted sacredness to compete with God's sacredness. This sacrality developed an attitude within the Charismatic/Pentecostal community; hence, some distance themselves from any cultural activity that connects with incense. One may argue and say that Pentecostal and Charismatic communities do not fear incense but they reject the spirit endowed upon it. In addition, Africans often fail to understand that the source of their positive systems and traditional resources is that of God through Christ and not through the ancestors.

Finally, this research study is not based on assumption, as cited by Meyer (2004), when she speaks about religion and the public sphere. There is an assumption that Charismatic/Pentecostal communities are distancing themselves from politics. They do not want to be part of it and Meyer (2004) critiques such assumptions because Charismatic/Pentecostal communities are interested in politics and in fact they are part of politics. According to Meyer (2004: 463), some scholars saw AICs as proto-nationalist

organisations. Others regarded them as inferior to political activity. I have made my presentation about the attitudes of my own Charismatic/Pentecostal church towards indigenous medicine; not only based on empirical evidence as a researcher, but also as part of this great community.

### **5.3 CONCLUSIONS IN TERMS OF THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

#### **5.3.1 Research Objective 1: To reflect on the role of the missionary project in Africa**

My proposal for the integration of traditional medicine into the mainstream professional healthcare system is that traditional healers should not expose their traditional medicine to absorption into and killing of its existence by Western medicine. Modernity has a tendency of occupying the centre and pushing others to the periphery and, when dissatisfaction is registered, it tries to accommodate through silent swallowing until it becomes the only one controlling the centre again. If traditional practitioners are trained, dressed, and offer medical services in the cosmopolitan system, then we will eventually have no traditional system. The proposed integration should not be a merging of the two systems, but support and creation of an equal space for traditional medicine to play its significant role in the African medical system as it was during the pre-colonial era.

#### **5.3.2 Research Objective 2: To investigate the role of the alliance of the missionary project and colonialism**

God first created human beings before He spoke to them. He created human beings with capability and one of those capabilities was the ability to govern themselves. Because culture is a form of self-government, it is a form of systematising reality, which is chaotic at times and that ability is not owned by human beings. God is the author of the possibility, and one of the primary infrastructures that God installed in His creation is the mind, including everything and everything that the mind can do. The mind was invented by God; unaided by human beings. The device (mind) that human beings use to produce culture is therefore an integral component of God's grace or free gift. Through this device (mind), human beings produce culture. In turn, culture produces tools that enable a human being to hear God when He speaks. God's words plus culture (product of the mind) are thus equal to Christianity. African Christian theology, through inculturation, states that no culture is better than another culture. Indeed, all culture leads to God. In the final and most sophisticated analysis, God is

the true author of what is perceived as human culture, together with all its faults. This does not mean that God is responsible for some of the faults of culture, because God allows human beings free will.

P'Bitek (1970) argues that Western scholars who conducted studies on African religions were searching in the wrong places because they were looking for physical evidence (Imbo 2004: 366). Instead of going to ordinary men and women, they were busy looking for metaphysicians and theologians (Imbo 2004: 366). Boas shares the same sentiments when he states that for one to clearly understand a specific culture, a properly detailed study must be conducted. Boas completely objects to the notion that the cultures of some races hold a more superior position and are more advanced than cultures of other races. In Boas' view, no cultures are more progressive than others. Instead, he is convinced that cultures are products of diverse contexts with inimitable historical backgrounds. Kroeber (1952) views culture as a separate and different phenomenon from that of the individual, society, and organism, and he is convinced that the configurations of culture were influenced by the history of a particular set of cultural values. Kroeber (1952) holds the notion that, through history and past experiences, human beings can understand their cultural phenomena and that culture is acquired through learning. Had Western scholars followed the recommendations as cited by Boas, P'Bitek, and Kroeber (1952), Africa would not have denounced her own indigenous medicine.

### **5.3.3 Research Objective 3: To explore the extent of the background of the origins of Western medicine in the triumph of a modern scientific worldview in the West, including the relationship of the proponents of the latter to Christianity**

I submit the truth behind the evasiveness and attitude of Charismatic/Pentecostal communities towards traditional medicine. Scientists only discovered medicine from the trees, herbs, and flowers already produced by God. Many of the medicines in pharmacies originate from God's production. This submission in no way denounces the excellent work contributed by scientists around the subject of medicine, but affirms that they only discovered what was already existing and that the ability to discover is granted by God.

#### **5.3.4 Research Objective 4: To investigate the impact of the unfortunate conflation of the Christian faith and Western culture / African traditional religion (the role of *isangoma*) and African culture (the role of the African traditional herbalist)**

In conclusion, I need to reiterate that no one is immune from the influences and the power of assumption. The human mind has the ability to create a picture and assumptions about something until empirical evidence comes into play. In her endeavour to trace the shift from the AICs to the Charismatic/Pentecostal communities in terms of research and followership, Meyer (2004) calls on us to be careful of the dangers of assumption. Meyer (2004) presents this paradox of how to be a Christian and African at the same time as an African challenge only, whereas people had to grapple with the same experience in every part of the globe where Christianity was introduced. I may have fallen in the same court of assumption and also agree that no human being is immune from such. However, this research is based on the ongoing evidence witnessed from within the said community and by the researcher who is part of the same Charismatic/Pentecostal community.

While we may not fully comprehend the culture of God because of our human limitations in the operation of God's deity, we nevertheless fully understand that the human part of Christianity is culturally influenced. This is in relation to the subject of Western cultural ethnocentrism as alluded to in the above research problem. I have also discovered that huge budgets are provided for primary healthcare that can be redirected to preventative health and thus minimise the ever-growing number of ailments in our nation. The inclusion of African traditional medical systems in the cosmopolitan mainstream would also play a pivotal role in decreasing the burden of the health budget.

For most Africans, the material body is considered a temple. The point of connection with God (*usimakade*) is through *umsamu*, inside their houses. This gives Africans a good reason not to attend a Christian church where they would probably have an opportunity to hear the gospel of Christ. The African understanding of Christian salvation, as cited by Gaba (1978: 391-399), often prohibits Africans to even think of Christ as the source of salvation. The African interpretation of salvation has more to do with life now than life after death. The available systems and traditional resources such as herbs to heal the sick, elderly women who act as midwives during the delivery period, many children as a blessing from the ancestors, wealth in the form of cattle, etc., are all viewed as being self-sufficient and therefore depreciate the role of Christ in the lives of Africans.

Finally, we need to educate and remind one another of forgotten normality and that forgetfulness is a result of the evolution of means of accessing intended good and that evolution is as a result of an ongoing human disposition to discover new reality.

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