

Chapter 11

Health and Well-Being in Zimbabwe's Pentecostal Churches



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Abstract This chapter focuses on the practice of healing and the understanding of well-being in Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches. It discusses Pentecostal healing as a conversion strategy. Focus is also on the healing methods and the biblical basis of the whole practice. The social role of Pentecostal healing in a context of failing medical services is also analysed. Lastly, the chapter analyses the extent to which Pentecostal healing practices and understanding of well-being relate with indigenous practices and beliefs.

11.1 Introduction

Healing and well-being of individual members are amongst the major concerns and practices of Pentecostal charismatic churches in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in the world. A. Matimelo (2007) has also shown how health and well-being are at the centre of Pentecostal practice in Ndola, Zambia. Hunt (2000:74) also notes correctly that although Pentecostalism throughout its history has been concerned with healing, “the scope and variety of healing by neo-Pentecostals has extended to a far greater degree than their earlier counterparts.” This chapter analyzes the beliefs and practices of members of the Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe regarding the issues of health and well-being. Specifically we consider what Pentecostals understand to be the causes of diseases, the common diseases diagnosed and the methods of therapy. Having established this we then consider the possible influences of Pentecostal views of health and healing including possible factors that make Pentecostal healing popular in Zimbabwe. Among the churches to be discussed include the currently popular United Family International Church (UFIC) of Prophet Emmanuel Makandiwa and Spirit Embassy of Prophet Uebert Angel. Research shows that the majority, if not all followers, of the Pentecostal charismatic churches in Zimbabwe believe in faith healing; and that healing is the major attraction of these churches (Gunda 2012 and Biri 2012). On television, radio, internet and other forms of media

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campaign, Pentecostal churches highlight healing as they advertise their services. Although some Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches like Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA) have established modern medical facilities like hospitals and clinics, in general, faith healing, the type of healing which is common in biblical texts is the commonly practiced and the most attractive. This chapter is based on literature that has been produced on Pentecostal healing practices as well as data collected by the authors through participant observation and analysis of Zimbabwean Pentecostal healing sessions posted on youtube¹ and Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches television stations such as Spirit Embassy's Miracle TV and ZAOGA's Ezekiel TV.

11.2 Pentecostal Understanding of Health and Well-Being

To understand Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches' engagement with health issues we need to first establish their general understanding of health and well-being. As we shall discuss later in this chapter, Zimbabwean Pentecostals are influenced by both the traditional and the biblical worldviews of health and well being. They therefore consider health not only to be the absence of a disease in the body but the complete wellness of the person in the body, the mind and the spirit. A health person is also one who has right relationships with all other people, the environment and the spiritual beings, in this case, with God.² Health and well-being are understood holistically. Thus when a Zimbabwean or an African in general, say they are well, they refer to all going well in their bodies, in their fields, at their work places, where they worship, with their children, with their wealth, be it money or cattle; in short, all aspects of their lives will be going well. A person is therefore ill/not well when this completeness/wholeness is broken. Zimbabwean Pentecostals believe wellness is what God wants for his children, the born-again. The gospel of prosperity (see Chap. 8 in this volume), as preached by these Pentecostals, has to be understood from this standpoint. This gospel, also called health and wealth gospel, insists that God provides for physical and material needs, along with spiritual needs, as long as people heed his commandments and have sufficient faith.

11.3 Causes of Diseases and Ill-Health

The general belief among Zimbabwean Pentecostals is that the Devil is responsible for human suffering be it through diseases, poverty or lack of any kind. Let us take, for example, Uebert Angel of Spirit Embassy Church's words to his congregation in

¹ See chapter 9 of this volume for discussion of the pros and cons of Youtube as a source of data.

² T. Shoko (2007) discusses in detail the Karanga (a Zimbabwean sub-ethnic group) beliefs on health and well-being.

Harare, "The Devil owns your workplace, your bank and the marketplace. When you get paid, he leaves you with a few dollars to put in a bank he also owns...."³ According to him the suffering people experience in the form of lack of money is therefore caused by the Devil and his host of evil spirits. It is this enemy of God responsible for sickness in the body. Zimbabwean Pentecostals believe different evil spirits are responsible for the different calamities that people suffer. There is therefore a spirit of poverty, a spirit of cancer (often exemplified as a cat or a monkey), a spirit of HIV, a spirit even of death. For instance, while praying for a Zambian couple who had a fatal car accident which left them with some deformities), Prophetess Beverley Angel of the Spirit Embassy Church in Harare, told the couple that she was seeing a spirit of death haunting that family and that that spirit manifested in accidents.⁴

Diseases, ill-health, poverty, failure and other maladies are lumped together in terms of their origins. They are believed to be caused by demonic powers/forces instigated by the Devil who is inimical to health and success. Financial failure is also seen as a disease. But as we have shown above, the Devil works with a host of other malevolent spirits to cause diseases and suffering among people. He/She is viewed as even having relatives as the words of Beverly Angel testify, "The Devil is a liar, so is his mother-in-law".⁵ In Zimbabwe the common demonic spirits mentioned by Pentecostal preachers and healers are ancestral spirits. Hitting traditional religion on the soft spot, as it were, ancestral spirits are accused of causing suffering and diseases among the living. These ancestral spirits are identified in terms of what Pentecostals call 'generational curses'. As explained by Reverend Chipunza of School of Deliverance in Harare, generational curses are misfortunes befalling people because of the evil done by their ancestors.⁶ They can be responsible for broken marriages, failure to get married, poverty over generations of families, illnesses and all other misfortunes including births of disabled children.

Zimbabwean Pentecostals also consider sin to be a source of illness and ill-health. If the sin was by one's progenitors then it results in generational curses. But one may be ill also as a result of his/her direct sin. Failure to tithe, for example may result in illness or general lack of prosperity in one's life.

11.4 Common Diseases Diagnosed by Pentecostals

Pentecostal healers in Zimbabwe do not give much attention to common diseases like headaches, flu and stomach aches. Those suffering from these are prayed for for healing. However, commonly diagnosed are 'serious' diseases that call for miraculous healings. Back aches, cancer, HIV, deafness, dumbness, paralysis,

³ <http://www.spiritembassy.org/miracles>, accessed 20 January 2012.

⁴ <http://www.miracletv.co> uploaded on October 27, 2011, accessed 12 January 2012.

⁵ www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfvShIPQDwo, accessed 12 January 2012.

⁶ www.youtube.com/watch?v=taj7sLNkYZO, accessed 25 January 2012.

barrenness, drug and alcohol addiction, mental confusion, sugar diabetes, kidney failure, hypertension, marriage failures and witchcraft are some of the diseases diagnosed. Illness or disease is defined broadly in these churches. As we have seen in their definition and understanding of well-being above, anything that disturbs and troubles humanity physically, emotionally, spiritually or otherwise, fits into the category of disease. Lately, Emmanuel Makandiwa has added excess weight to 'diseases' and is providing instant weight loss.⁷ The lame bound to wheel chairs or crutches are put in the category of the ill and are healed miraculously.⁸

Like Jesus of the Gospels, Pentecostals also diagnose demon possession. These demons may be associated with ancestral spirits, spirits of witchcraft or any other demonic forces instigated by the Devil. As discussed below, these demons are mainly the ones dealt with in deliverance sessions.

11.5 Pentecostal Therapeutic Methods

With the understanding that diseases have a spiritual cause, Pentecostal healing practices are meant to address these negative spiritual forces. Hunt (2000:75) notes the following about Pentecostal healing practices, "Faith ministries operate with the conviction that they are able to manipulate spiritual and physical powers through the 'force of faith'. The positive power (God) is 'activated', and the negative (Satan) is confronted and negated." Words and actions are therefore directed against the spiritual forces understood to cause the diseases. Healing thus involves words of command against the spirits: "By fire and by power I command you devil, out of him", "I bind the spirit of barrenness in you in the name of Jesus." Healing is also done by touching, kicking and slapping in the Spirit. Common these days is healers' efforts to make sure that the ill fall down in the process of healing. In the name of laying on of hands in prayer, these authors have witnessed healers literally pushing down the ill with the church ushers positioned to 'catch' the falling. Although we understood that many fall because they are pushed, the explanation by the respondents was that the falling is demonstration of the effect of the Spirit. Some Pentecostal healers like Uebert Angel demonstrate healing power by symbolically pulling the ill down. Angel also kicks and slaps the evil spirits symbolically. Studying Botswana Pentecostals, Nkomazana and Tabalaka (2009:137–159) identified the following as the common healing methods used by Pentecostals: laying on of hands, anointing with oil, worship, healing at a distance, healing by faith and healing through the name of Jesus. Zimbabwean Pentecostals also do use these methods but differ in what they emphasise. For example, there is no widespread use of healing oil among the Zimbabwean Pentecostals referred to in this chapter. Also, although these churches do claim to heal people in hospitals and their private homes, their most publicised healing practices are mainly held in healing sessions in the church

⁷ www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_a80A17oIO, accessed 6 July 2011.

⁸ www.youtube.com/watch?v=-UvGsyGIpUE, accessed 6 July 2011.

services. These sessions can be held during the week but the most significant ones are those held after the Sunday services. Often Sunday services are divided into three sessions: praise and worship, preaching and prophecy characterized by miracles, healings, deliverances or some other names given by the specific churches. Prophecy and healing can take over half the time of the whole service. As a result some churches' services last from 7 am to 5 pm with healing and prophecy taking the last 4 hours. As we mentioned above, these healing services are given different names in the different churches. In ZAOGA, for example, they are called Deliverance Explosions while they are called Deliverance Sessions in UFIC and Times of Prophecy in Spirit Embassy. UFIC has three healing sessions per week and ZAOGA has weekly deliverance explosions (Biri 2012). What Stolz (2011) says about Ian Andrews of International Association of Healing Ministries (AIMG) fits very well with Zimbabwean Pentecostal healers' practices. The figure of the healer is very important in the whole healing session. He/She directs the process through calling for a song, asking believers to take certain bodily postures, pronouncing 'words of knowledge', that is prophecies, announcing healing commands, touching the ill and many other acts of healing.

In Spirit Embassy, healing is preceded by prophecies of people's house numbers, names, dates of birth, cell phone numbers and even the amount of food one has eaten. According to Uebert Angel, this is meant to convince believers that God knows everything about them. Convinced that God knows them personally, the people are ready to receive God's healing. The belief and teaching is that they will now know that God can heal them as he knows their health conditions. Pentecostal healing practices can be viewed as an attempt to change reality by almost magical means (Hunt 2000:75). Some Zimbabwean Pentecostal healers are known for using healing mediums. For example, Makandiwa's cream jacket is known for possessing healing powers (Biri 2012). Like Paul's handkerchiefs and aprons in Acts (19:12), it can even be used to perform healing in the absence of Makandiwa himself. Stories have also circulated on the use of magical towels by members of UFIC. These towels that are sold for US\$3 can be used to wipe something that one wishes to acquire, e.g. a car, with the hope that the person is going to possess it in future. Uebert Angel relates an incident when his car raised a child from death.⁹

Other mediums of healing used by Zimbabwean Pentecostal prophet healers are pictures of the prophets, car bumper stickers and wrist bands. Most members of UFIC have huge posters in their homes bearing the pictures of Emmanuel Makandiwa and his wife. The posters bear different messages such as '*Ndiri mwana wemuporofita*' (I am a child of the prophet), '*Imba ino inochengetwa nemuporofita*' (This house is protected by the prophet). The posters can be displayed in the bedroom, in the living room or at the house main entrance. Car bumper stickers bear similar messages such as, "This car is under 24 hours prophetic surveillance." Wrist bands are a new invention that became very popular with UFIC and Spirit Embassy members. They bear several protective messages such as, "By fire or by thunder", "2014, Year of Ruach" or the common, "Jehova Chikopokopo" (Jehovah, the Helicopter) for

⁹ www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfvSHIPQDWo, accessed 6 July 2011.

Spirit Embassy members. These media need to be understood against the traditional religion of most members of the Zimbabwe Pentecostal churches. It can be argued that posters and car bumper stickers replace the traditional practices of 'protecting' the home through charms while wrist bands are a replacement of *madumwa* (wrist charms) that were worn to protect one against malevolent spirits.

Contact is considered very important in the Zimbabwean Pentecostal healing practices. The use of towels, cars and healers' clothing we mentioned above can be understood from this perspective. They provide the presence and contact of the healer. Laying on of hands specifically provides that contact. Because of the often unmanageable numbers of people seeking healing, Zimbabwean Pentecostal healers heal also by 'remote' control means. There are reported cases of those healed by getting in contact with a television set or radio transmitting the man of God's healing message. In large gatherings, Uebert Angel and Andrew Wutawunashe of Family of God ask the ill to touch the specific parts of the body experiencing pain. It is believed that the personal touch is as good as the healer's touch. At a gathering in Gaborone, Botswana, Uebert Angel asked believers to use their cellular phones to call their sick relatives at home and deliver to them a word of healing from him. The call provided the means of contact which would transmit the healing powers.

Music also plays a key role in Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches therapeutic practices. Often the healing sessions are preceded by a time of praise and worship and then a short sermon given by the anointed man/woman of God who is the healer. Music creates an atmosphere of divine visitation which in some cases is evidenced by outbursts of *glossolalia* (speaking in tongues). In the Family of God, for example, speaking in tongues is often initiated by the pastor with the congregation joining in. Drums and guitars on low tempo will continue playing even as the healing session proceeds. Sometimes the levels of tempos are varied, from low to high and vice versa, in an apparent attempt to carry people through different levels of spiritual experience. These authors have noticed that when the tempo is low, people pray in low voices, but as the tempo is raised, they also lift their voices with others vigorously shaking their bodies. Sociologist, Percy (cited by Hunt 2000:78), should be right when he opines that the worship in charismatic churches may also be interpreted as a medium of exchange. He says, it appears the assumption in these churches is that, in return for excitable and passionate praise, there is some form of divine reward anticipated. This, he concludes, is a form of pseudo-mystical, mechanistic religion, where enthusiasm is 'exchanged' for an experience of the presence and power of God. It is this climate of divine presence that allows for the performance of miracles, healing included.

Prophetism, or what sociologists like Hunt (2000) and Stolz (2011) call words of wisdom, also play a very important role in Zimbabwean Pentecostals' therapeutic practices. Most of the Zimbabwean Pentecostal healers are called prophets (Chitando et al. 2013). Even if they may not carry the title 'Prophet' in their name, they are believed and claim to be prophets. Prophecy here is understood as the ability to see and reveal the hidden as well as the ability to hear from and communicate with God. It is the prophetic power that enables the healer to speak a voice of exorcism and to command illnesses to go. Through the power of prophecy, the healer is able to

identify the root causes of ill-health and to prescribe healing. With the understanding that lack of money is a form of disease, the prophet of God also speaks words of 'healing' to cash machines and bank balances. Hunt (2000:82) seems to be describing Zimbabwean Pentecostals when he says,

There may be an attempt to deal with bank overdrafts or financial insecurity. Bank balances may be commanded to 'come in line' with the 'power of Jesus'. Being 'in the red' may be dismissed as 'a lie of the devil'. Hands might be laid on members of the congregation for the 'multiplying of finances', to cast away 'a spirit of unbelief', to combat 'harassing circumstances' in peoples' lives by 'coming against' the evil spirits responsible.

Uebert Angel relates an incident when he was living in the United Kingdom and was visited by members of his church.¹⁰ He had no food in the house and his bank balance stood at negative 2 British Pounds. He says he prayed to God for miraculous intervention to the extent of even asking his wife to start boiling the water in anticipation of divine provision of something to cook. He then went to the cash machine where he commanded it to allow him a withdrawal. Through his prophetic words of power, his account was credited with 2000 British Pounds which allowed him to get money to feed the visitors. Whether this really happened or not we could not establish but what this is meant to do is to show that the lived experience of the prophet-healer is in itself a Zimbabwean Pentecostal therapeutic practice. To bring their listeners to faith, the healers often use their examples as figures of faith. Often these are stories of a 'rags to riches' type. The healer himself/herself is an example of what faith in God can achieve. In one Pentecostal church in Harare, the minister's wife's illness and the divine intervention in her healing is used as a therapeutic tale. 'If it happened to me or my wife,' so is the message to the ill, 'it can happen to you too.'

11.6 Possible Influences of Pentecostal Practice of Healing

The Africa traditional religion has been identified as one strong influence of Zimbabwean Pentecostal understanding of health and well-being. Biri (2012) has made a very strong argument for this. Using the example of healing practices from ZAOGA and UFIC, she writes, "... Zimbabwean Pentecostalism has shown a great deal of innovation by re-sacralising, re-interpreting and re-defining traditional symbols such as artifacts" (Biri 2012:42). Biri goes on to identify ways in which ZAOGA and UFIC members use mediums like towels and images of church founders for healing. She correctly argues that that follows Shona traditional healing practices. The traditional religious influence is also noticed in diagnostic practices of the churches. Diagnosis is not just the identification of the disease, but also its root causes which is often located in the spiritual realm. Thus writing about the Shona, Shoko (2007:133) notes that the *n'anga* (traditional healer)'s diagnosis involves

¹⁰ nehandaradio.com/2012/...uebert-angel/comment-page-2, accessed 3 June 2013

detecting and revealing the unknown and hidden causal elements of illness and disease. This is what we find Pentecostal healers doing. For this, Biri (2012) therefore finds close affinities between Zimbabwean Pentecostal and traditional healing practices. Along the same line Shoko and Chiwara (2013:217–229) make a comparative analysis of Prophet Makandiwa of UFIC and the *n'anga* (traditional healer) concluding, “Prophet Emmanuel Makandiwa can be regarded as both Christian and traditionalist....His call resembles that of a *n'anga* initiated with *njuzu* (mermaid) spirit.... It therefore means his UFIC is a ‘christianised version of tradition’ or traditionalized version of Christianity” (229).

We should note, however, that although their healing practices are close to traditional healing practices, in words Pentecostals denounce traditional religion and the traditional healing practitioners. Gunda (2007:242–243) captures this position perfectly when he notes, “African Pentecostals rejected traditional healing wholesale, consigning both the malevolent spirits afflicting the sick and the practitioners mediating within the realms of the Devil.” In this chapter, we argue that despite their public attack on African traditional practices, the Pentecostal charismatic church members in Zimbabwe, perhaps, are subconsciously affected by these traditional religions in one way or another. We say so because African Traditional Religions (ATRs) are part of Zimbabwe’s way of life, even though some members of the Pentecostal churches attribute their (ATRs) healing practices to the Devil, just like what the mainline white Christian missionaries did. However, it is likely that the impact of healing and health among African Pentecostals has its origins in ATRs which heavily influences their beliefs. That healing is amongst valued practices of African traditional religions is affirmed by Anderson (2000:2) who says, “In many religions of the world, and especially in African religions, a major attraction for Pentecostalism has been its emphasis on healing.” He argues further that in these cultures, the religious specialist or the person of God has power to heal the sick and ward off evil spirits and sorcery. The similar view was raised by Mbiti (1969:169) and Magesa (1998:159). These two East African scholars maintain that each African community has in place mechanisms of dealing with forces that are against life, for instance, diseases, drought, floods, barrenness, curses and witchcraft. According to them, to Africans, these problems do not just happen accidentally, but they are caused by certain forces that include human agents who may make use of witchcraft or magic to harm individual lives. Likewise, modern Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe also believe that problems that are faced by followers are a result of the works of the Devil and his legions of evil spirits. This may be the reason why Ndung’u (2009:87–104) argues that the healing and deliverance that take place in many charismatic churches and sanctioned by the Bible are in line with the African worldview.

Be that as it may, one cannot fail to see the influence that biblical stories of healing have on Pentecostal healing practices. Pentecostal healing narratives are so close to the Gospels narratives in which Jesus heals people from physical ailments, exorcises demons and raises people from death. Writing on Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches, Togarasei (2009:40) therefore speaks of Pentecostal healing as some form of “dramatizations of biblical stories of healing.” As we have seen above, there are

several claims of healings of the paralysed, the dumb, the deaf, those with flow of blood as found in Gospels stories. Some prophetic figures in these churches resemble the Old Testament prophets such as Elijah the Tishbite, Elisha, Isaiah and others. For example, Prophet Uebert Angel endeavors to show his prophetic powers on the criterion that a prophet's word should come to pass (Deut. 18:22). The church website¹¹ has a number of prophetic signs and utterances made by the Prophet. In one of the prophecies, Angel says he had a vision while he was prophesying and helping a patient who was bedridden and hospitalized. A relative had come for consultation on behalf of the sick. The prophetic word of Angel went as follows: "I am sorry, there is very little I can do for your relative, I see him in heaven." The site reports that sad news of the death of the patient came a day after the man of God prophesied. Prophet Angel argued that his predictions were not a result of diplomacy, but that the power of the Holy Ghost was manifesting truths through him. He argued further that glory should be given to God because it is by God's mercy and grace that miracles, signs and wonders do happen.

Members of the Pentecostal charismatic churches in Zimbabwe interpret the Bible literally (see Chap. 15 in this volume); as such, they believe (at least in word) in everything that is recorded in the Bible. Following this line of thought, the Pentecostals believe that with God, everything is possible. Through prayer and faith in Jesus, they believe that the modern day diseases that are regarded as incurable, which include viral diseases among them HIV and AIDS can be healed. Cancer, blood pressure and sugar diabetes, which claim many lives in the modern age, can be cured through the power of the Holy Spirit. To modern Pentecostals in Zimbabwe, the terms curing and healing are used interchangeably.

From the foregoing, it can therefore be concluded that Pentecostal concept and practice of health and well-being is influenced by both traditional religion and culture and the Bible. Although they publicly denounce traditional religion, their healing practices prove its influence beyond doubt. It is possibly because of this 'inculturation' that their healings have become popular in the country. Taringa (2013:203–216), writing about prophet healing in African Independent Churches (AICs), is even more emphatic concluding, "... AICs prophets can therefore be regarded as ATR fundamentalists who have rescued Shona traditional religious healing paradigm from oblivion" (203). This can also be said of Pentecostal prophetic healers.

11.7 Why Pentecostal Healing Is Popular in Zimbabwe

Research findings elsewhere have shown a correlation between faith/divine healing with the economic status of an individual or a country. It has been established that in rich countries where the health care system is good, divine healing is not as strong as it is in poorer countries with bad health care systems (Stolz 2011, Matimelo 2007).

¹¹<http://www.spiritembassy.org/miracles>, accessed 2 December 2012.

This is because it seems rational to try all kinds of alternative cure if everything else has failed. At a UFIC healing service,¹² one woman said she had tried all means to lose weight, from Chinese soaps to jogging and weight loss diet but had failed. Having tried everything with failure, she had to go and try the Makandiwa divine instant weight loss.

When in agony, in grief and pain, it is natural that humans seek comfort and alleviation of such suffering and tribulation. Since 2000 Zimbabwe has experienced acute socio-economic and political problems. There have also been persistent droughts resulting not only in economic and political challenges but also diseases. Economic problems have resulted in the general run down of all modern medical systems. Doctors and nurses left the country for greener pastures while the government failed to stock up medical resources in the hospitals. Until the formation of the Government of National Unity in 2009, the public health system had completely come to a halt. The only source of modern health facilities were private practices that in a country with the majority of its people living in abject poverty, only an insignificant percentage of the population could afford. It is no surprise that a phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism was witnessed during the same time. Facing severe challenges of this nature, people sought alternative sources of health and well-being. In the face of devastating diseases such as HIV and AIDS, a lot of people, both the infected and the affected found comfort and refuge in Pentecostal churches. These churches offer to their followers healing and hope.

Pentecostal healing is also popular in Zimbabwe because of the strong influence of religion among the people. Because of this, health issues are also religious issues. The fact that in Zimbabwe, like other developing countries especially in Africa, health issues remain a religious problem has been raised by Gunda (2007:229–230). Gunda argues that in many communities of which Zimbabwe is no exception, healing and health issues are of a major concern. Religious assets are therefore invested for the achievement of health and well-being. Fasting, prayer and offerings are some of these assets invested. The situation regarding diseases and sickness in developing countries differs from that of the developed nations where vast amounts of money are invested in fighting diseases scientifically through research and development of medical frameworks. However, in Zimbabwe when the government failed to invest in public health, Pentecostals and their African Initiated Churches counterparts invested more religious assets into health and well-being. A number of people in Zimbabwe are also not satisfied with only the scientific explanations of diseases. They want to know the deep causes of diseases which they often attribute to the spiritual world in form of witchcraft, for example. Thus, as Gunda (2007:229–230) says, the Western world's perception of disease as a scientific problem is "far from achieving the desired results" especially in countries such as Zimbabwe where religion is believed to have an ability to help curing all types of diseases. Such beliefs show the role of religion in as far as the country's health delivery system is concerned. Whereas diseases like cancer and barrenness can be explained scientifically,

¹² www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfvShIPQDWo, accessed 2 December 2012

many religious people cannot accept a scientific explanation of bad dreams. This is where Pentecostal healing comes in. It attempts to explain the origin and causes of such diseases. Anderson (1999:1–5) explains this attraction, “Preaching a message that promised solutions for present felt needs like sickness and the fear of evil spirits, Pentecostal missionaries were heeded and their full gospel readily accepted by ordinary people”. This could be one of the reasons why charismatic Pentecostal churches are mushrooming in both Zimbabwe's urban as well as communal lands. In short, Pentecostal healing practices resonate with people's indigenous beliefs about health and well-being. In a context where Christianity is associated with modernity and upward social mobility and traditional religion with tradition and backwardness, Pentecostal religion in general and healing practices in particular, offer an attractive package.

11.8 Conclusion

Generally, Pentecostal churches seek to address the needs of individuals holistically. Besides their concerns for the need for individuals to be physically fit, they also consider the need for full health and well-being in all spheres of human existence. A born-again child of God must not live a life of lack. Thus accessing basic necessities in life is a mark of true religion. Anything that is negative in the life of a believer is attributed to the works of darkness and the Devil among Pentecostal charismatic followers. This ranges from poor health, sickness, lack of food, poverty, barrenness and so forth. Miracles and wonders, healing and protection from the evil spirits inhabiting the universe are amongst the promises given to members of the modern Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe and other parts of the world. The Pentecostal church in Zimbabwe promises to heal and cure all sorts of diseases and sicknesses; as a result of such claims, multitudes of people flock to this type of church in order to receive or to witness the miracles. Amongst the benefits promised to followers is financial prosperity. By preaching the gospel of prosperity, we argue that the modern Pentecostal church helps to adapt Christianity to the difficulties and challenges faced by Zimbabweans that include economic depressions, problems pertaining to health and well-being of individuals, natural forces that are beyond human control and man-made disasters. In this chapter, we assumed that though Pentecostal churches are found almost everywhere in the world and among varied cultures, the species share almost the same values, beliefs and practices. With this assumption, we have utilized some information on other Pentecostal churches outside Zimbabwe in order to reinforce our generalizations concerning Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches' conception and practice of health and well-being. The chapter has considered what Zimbabwean Pentecostals understand to be the causes of diseases, the common diseases diagnosed and the methods of therapy. Having established this, we then considered the possible influences of Pentecostal views of health and healing including possible factors that make Pentecostal healing popular in Zimbabwe.

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