

**THE RISE AND PATRONAGE OF AFRO-SPIRITUAL  
HEALING HOMES: A CHALLENGE TO THE  
CHURCH HEALING MINISTRY**

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*BY*

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis was set to investigate the reasons why some church members who take ill, seek traditional means of healing. Such quest often end them in patronizing African cum spiritual Healing Homes. The study further aimed at exploring the nature and operations of these Healing Homes together with factors contributing to their rise and multiplicity. The goal was to identify challenges that demand the response of the Church healing ministry.

The Thesis is divided into five Chapters. Chapter one is about the introduction to the entire study whereby, information like statement of the problem, necessity for the study, methodology and meaning of some terms were presented. The second Chapter centered on the Biblical basis for healing. Chapter three discussed Perception of healing in Traditional African society. It also examined the African cum Spiritual healing homes. This was followed by a theological evaluation of healing methods. The fourth chapter discussed reasons why these Healing homes are patronized and the attendant effects of such patronage. As a sequel, the challenges to the Church healing ministry were identified. Thereafter, Strategies for effective Church healing endeavours were suggested. This study lent credence to the fact that, such strategies would constitute a wholistic approach in addressing the health needs of Church members and to forestall their patronage of Afro-Spiritual healing homes. In chapter Five, there was the conclusion and recommendations stemming from the research.

## Conclusion

The need for man to be in complete health cannot be over emphasized because 'Health is wealth'. Human life (body) is very precious to God. Throughout the Holy Scriptures, God demonstrated His love for human-kind. The climax of such demonstration was in His act of sending Jesus Christ to the world to redeem mankind. Man also considers his life as precious. Sickness is seen as a threat to his existence, routine, comfort and aspirations. This suggests why many people, including Church members become restless and consequently go any length in quest for healing.

Nevertheless, God is the Sovereign and Ultimate Healer. It is God who allows a sick person to be healed irrespective of the measure(s) he takes. However, this does not mean that all healing measures are approved by God. Afro spiritual healing measures are not approved by God for His children, Christians or any people. Some of these unchristian measures include: the making of sacrifices and rituals; burning of incense, candles; making of incisions; divination; use of charms; magic; invocation of spirit forces and all that is done with recourse to nature gods and deities. Christians should not embark or agree to employ such means in their bid to secure healing.

It is pertinent at this juncture to say that, any Church which embraces these aforementioned forms of healing endeavours, ceases to be a true Church of the Living God. It will be more appropriate to call or group it among the Afro spiritual Healing Homes.

Furthermore, the use of physical objects like oil, water, piece of cloth, rod etc in the process and context of healing has a potential problem. Such objects or materials will gradually and inevitably be thought off and seen as one having the healing power. This is most likely in the African environment due to its belief system. Eventually, there will be

a shift of faith and dependence from God to material things like: oil, water, handkerchief. Any healing endeavour which has the likelihood of shifting members' faith from the Supreme God to something or somebody else should be discouraged. While discouraging the use of objects, there must be a continual emphasis and demonstration of absolute faith, holy living and persistent prayers as pre-requisites for receiving Divine Healing.

Finally, the Church's efforts in ensuring the good health of her members (and in preventing member's visit to Afro spiritual Healing Homes) should not make the church loose her focus on the salvation of souls and the Great Commission. Jesus Christ healed the sick but did not loose track of His redemptive mission on earth. The disciples and the early Church worked to see to the fulfilment of the Great Commission. The contemporary Church should do likewise. Every opportunity to minister to the sick should be employed to lead people, sinners, Church members to repentance, faith in the Lord Jesus and commitment for God's service.

### **Recommendations for Further Research and Planning**

This research questionnaire (which investigated "why people go for Afro spiritual healing") was administered only to a sampled population in urban city of Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria. The writer would like to recommend that similar research questionnaire be administered in other towns, villages, cities to ascertain areas of agreement and variance with the finding's made in this particular research work.

Secondly, this research is centered only on why people, Church members visit the spiritualists for healing. The writer would also recommend that an investigation be made on 'Church pastors and Afro spiritual Healing'. Whether some Church pastors visit the spiritualist for healing, and if they do, what are the reasons for such visit? What is the outcome and how can such habit be curbed.

Thirdly, there should be a (regular) forum like the Minster's Conference, Pastor's meeting during convention in session, Baptist Institutional forum, where Church pastors will be exposed to the reasons why some church members visit the Afro spiritual healers and deliberate on ways of arresting such trend. This is because, the writer observes that, many pastors are ignorant on why their members visit the spiritualists. A few other deny such occurrence.

Finally, the usual convention Health week observed annually in the Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC) Churches should be reviewed and re-instated. Such will afford the Church an opportunity to have a week long discussion and exposures on health issues and matters relating to Afro spiritual healing can be addressed.