

This study investigates the continued proliferation, appeal and impact of African Instituted Churches in Kenya that concentrate mainly on the healing ministry. It undertakes an analysis of the healing beliefs and practices of Jerusalem Church of Christ and Nabii Christian Church of Kenya. These churches emerged in Kenya in the 1980's through African initiatives. They are part of the Holy Spirit Movement of Western Kenya that has its roots in the Holy Spirit Movement of Western Kenya that has its roots in the Holy Spirit revival in the Friends African Industrial Mission and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada in 1927 and 1930s respectively. The study is significant for it has shed light on the interaction between the way these two churches respond to and interpret the gospel message of healing, in the psychosocial and spiritual predicaments of their adherents. The churches have followers in parts of Nairobi, Western, Rift Valley and Central provinces.

The study employed a case study methodology. The study sample comprised leaders and members of JCC and NCCCK selected on the basis of gender, age, educational background, position in church and length of membership. In the sample too, were people who have experienced healing and others who have not.

The instruments used to collect data were interview schedules, participant observation and checklists for focus group discussions. A total of 138 informants were interviewed.

From the data analysis the study has shown that these churches' understanding of health, illness and healing is influenced by both African religio-cultural and biblical backgrounds. This is the basis of their appeal to people of all walks of life in Kenya. In these churches culturally perceived illnesses for example those arising from witchcraft, sorcery and other mystical factors are acknowledged and addressed. Healing is mediated in a manner understandable to the people, for the prophet-healer and patients share a similar assumptive world and healing is also mediated in a caring and loving communal context. Healing is conducted in the name of God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

The study has shown that the JCC and NCCCK have made a contribution to an understanding of the theology of healing from an African perspective and the affirmation that sickness is part of the evil activity at work in this fallen world. Healing is also mediated in a holistic manner that takes into account all levels of being, namely; physical, mental, psychological, spiritual, social and environmental. This is an approach that is evident in both traditional African and Judeo-Christian contexts. The study has revealed that healing in the JCC and NCCCK context means salvation, liberation, coming to understanding, catharsis, and transformation. It also has an immanent, transcendental and eschatological dimension.

From the findings, the study concludes that for the Church in Africa to provide a holistic, effective and meaningful healing ministry, it needs to take the African concepts of health, illness and healing seriously. On the strength of these findings and conclusions, the study recommends the evolvment of a holistic, multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral healing ministry by the Church that addresses social, physical, cultural, spiritual, medical, psychological and environmental needs. Negative aspects in the healing beliefs and practices of JCC and NCCCK particularly over spiritualization of evil and employment of traditional healing methods and perceptions that contradict the gospel message, need to be addressed and curbed. The study also recommends that the Kenyan Government should address the economic, social and political issues that necessitate a search for integral healing.