

**A STUDY OF MARK 2:1-6: EXORCISM OF PHYSICAL ILLNESS FROM THE SPIRITUAL
WORLD IN PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES OF BUNIA/DRC**

BY

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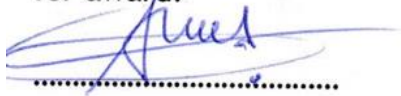
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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO BISHOP TURCKER SCHOOL OF DIVINITY AND
THEOLOGY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD OF A DEGREE OF MASTER OF
DIVINITY OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

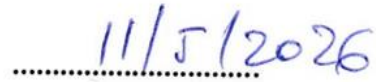
May, 2026

DECLARATION

I, Konduabo Simbilyabo Desire declare that this research work is my original work and has never been submitted to Uganda Christian University or any institution of learning for award.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Konduabo', written over a dotted line.

KONDUABO SIMBILYABO DESIRE

A handwritten date '11/5/2026' in blue ink, written over a dotted line.

DATE

APPROVAL

This is to certify that this research project entitled “a study of mark 2:1-6: exorcism of physical illness from the spiritual world in Pentecostal churches of bunia/DRC” has been done under my supervision.



Dr. EMMANUEL MUKESHIMANA

SUPERVISOR



DATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My gratitude to the following people due to their involvement in my life and time of my study:

The Gospel according to John records the word of Jesus, arguing “*because without me you can do nothing*” (John 15:5b, NABRE). Therefore, I thank God for giving strength. I recognize that I have come from this far not because I deserve it, but because of his grace and mercy. Praise be to the name of the highest.

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ABSTRACT

Grounded in Mark 2:1-6, this study explores how Pentecostal churches in Bunia/DRC, understand physical illness as a manifestation of spiritual forces and address it through exorcism. Since it was not possible to include all Pentecostal churches in Bunia, the research was limited to city of Refuge, city of the Rest, FEPACO (Fraternité Évangélique de Pentecôte en Afrique au Congo) and Christco (Christ in Congo).

This study employed both analytical and empirical methods. The analytical method enabled the researcher to engage with scholars and recent related studies, while the empirical method made it possible to observe the real practice of exorcism in Pentecostal churches in Bunia.

The study had four objectives. First, it sought to exegete Mark 2:1-6 in order to uncover the meaning and significance of the passage and to show how it may speak to contemporary Christians in FEPACO, Christco, city of Refuge, and city of the Rest. Second, it aimed to identify the forms of physical illness present in Pentecostal churches in Bunia, and it found that these illnesses are numerous and varied. Third, it analyzed the healing of physical illness through exorcism in Bunia's Pentecostal churches. The research showed that exorcism is often practiced alongside prayer, water, anointing oil, fasting, and other methods. Finally, the study proposed Mark 2:1-6 as a model for healing physical illness through exorcism.

The study collected data from a purposive sample of 40 Pentecostal members drawn from FEPACO, Christco, city of Refuge, and city of the Rest. In each church selected for study, the participants including pastors, intercessors, and sick people or relatives of sick people. Because the research was conducted in Bunia, Eastern Congo, while the researcher was based in Mukono, Uganda for academic studies, the respondents were interviewed through WhatsApp

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1. Background of the study

Mark 2:1-6 supports the prophetic message of Isaiah 9:1-2 that the region of Zebulun and Naphtali (Galilee, including the area around Capernaum, beyond the Jordan) would see “a great light,” leading people toward renewed joy. Before Jesus’ ministry, many communities around the Sea of Galilee lived with numerous diseases and lacked joy, even though they had developed practices to treat illnesses. These efforts, however, did not successfully heal every sickness.

When Jesus began his ministry, these people experienced a restoration of the joy they had long lost. The placement of Capernaum in Galilee as Jesus’ base is also portrayed as prophetically meaningful: people living under oppression were promised liberation by the Lord. The name “Galilee” is understood as “circuit,” suggesting movement or being “stuck” in a repetitive condition people were immobilized and dwelling in darkness for different reasons until the “light” (Jesus) came to them. Families who had carried their sick relatives for a long-time sought Jesus, and the sick were healed through exorcism.

In this account, Jesus’ healing is closely connected to exorcism. The surrounding audience believed that illnesses must be driven out, because in their understanding sickness resulted from sin. The exorcism, moreover, was connected to faith that became visible through the actions of four men who brought the paralytic. Jesus’ teaching on living as “doers of faith” is illustrated suddenly in their supportive actions. In many Pentecostal churches, sick people are also brought with the expectation that prayer will bring miracle healing; however, healing may not occur when faith is not demonstrated through concrete actions.

In the Pentecostal churches in Bunia, sick persons are often brought by relatives who encourage them to approach the pastors. These pastors typically ask the guardians of the sick person to confess sins and affirm belief in Jesus before directly engaging with

the patient. This means that the people surrounding the sufferer play an important role in interpreting the spiritual causes of illness.

After observing the faith of the four men, Jesus pronounces forgiveness “Son, your sins are forgiven.” This statement shows that Jesus treated paralysis as something rooted in spiritual illness. In Jewish cultural thought, bodily suffering was commonly linked to sin, and suffering was often interpreted as evidence that God was angry. Consequently, the paralytic and those around him understood the situation as connected to divine wrath and therefore sought forgiveness.

Within this context, there is strong evidence that Jews viewed sickness of the body as the result of sin. For that reason, when Jesus healed the man by pronouncing forgiveness, it was not surprising that Jesus interpreted paralysis in spiritual terms.

Similarly, many African scholars who study African Traditional Religion and related traditions argue that, although God is understood as the giver of life, people may also believe that God is responsible for many forms of human affliction. They note that while magic, sorcery, and witchcraft are widely regarded as causes of individual diseases, it is also common especially for calamities and epidemics—to interpret suffering as God’s punishment for human wrongdoing. Therefore, people may be directed toward God as the one from whom healing should be sought.

In the same way, Pentecostal believers in Bunia often teach that sickness and suffering result from human misbehavior toward God. As a result, they believe that receiving healing requires seeking God’s mercy and forgiveness.

Jesus is presented as the one with authority to forgive sinners and to release them from suffering. In Matthew 28:19-20, the claim is that Jesus has been given all authority, both spiritual and physically the Father. Accordingly, as part of the Great Commission, Jesus sends his disciples with power to cast out demons and to lay hands on the sick. In Mark 6:13, the disciples, acting with that power, anoint the sick and heal them.

The ministry of Jesus is understood as a continuing ministry: the church today is expected to follow Jesus and his disciples. However, in some Pentecostal churches, many sick people remain unhealed. Even after pastors lay hands on them, these individuals may still be affected by what is understood as possession or ongoing suffering. Some pastors also use radio broadcasts to call people who are sick to come for exorcism, yet healing may not occur afterward.

Considering these challenges, this study draws on Mark 2:1-6 to respond to the situation of Pentecostal believers in Bunia who are living in spiritual darkness. The aim is to help clarify the “right exorcist” and to explain how exorcism from the spiritual world results in physical transformation.

1.2. Problem statement

Many people who are physically sick come to Pentecostal churches in Bunia seeking for exorcism. These churches often organize regular prayer sessions daily, weekly, and monthly for those who want healing. However, an important observation challenges this practice: some sick persons who were reportedly exorcised in previous weeks reappear in the lists for exorcism in the following weeks. This recurring pattern raises questions among believers about whether the exorcism they receive is genuine or merely claimed. It also creates confusion, especially when proclamations such as *“you are healed in the name of Jesus”* does not appear to bring noticeable change. Moreover, when believers understand exorcism through the example of Jesus’ ministry in Mark 2:1-6, the issue of timing becomes significant. In the biblical account, Jesus heals the paralytic when he perceives their faith; in contrast, exorcism sessions in Bunia take many days, and in some cases no lasting solution is reported.

1.3. Research objectives

- 1) To conduct an exegetical study of Mark 2:1-6.
- 2) To identify the physical illnesses that are brought for ministry in Pentecostal churches in Bunia.
- 3) To examine how exorcism is practiced in Bunia Pentecostal churches for cases of physical illness.

- 4) To propose a model for understanding and implementing physical healing through exorcism, drawing on the narrative of Mark 2:1-6.

1.4. Research questions

1. How should Mark 2:1-6 be exegeted to understand exorcism of physical illness from the spiritual world?
2. What kinds of physical illnesses are reported and presented for exorcism ministry in Pentecostal churches in Bunia?
3. How is healing through exorcism carried out in Pentecostal churches in Bunia for cases of physical illness?
4. How can Mark 2:1-6 be proposed as a model for physical healing through exorcism?

1.5. Literature review

The topic of exorcizing physical illness within a healing ministry has attracted significant scholarly attention, especially regarding how sick people recover physically. The review examines Biblical and Pentecostal theology perspective on exorcizing physical illness, focusing on an exegetical analysis of Mark 2:1-6, which describes Jesus healing a paralytic man through the faith of four men. Existing research highlights how these narratives informs and shapes exorcism ministry in Pentecostal churches.

1.5.1. Biblical understanding of exorcism

John C. Thomas examines how New Testament writers connect the Devil, disease/sickness, sin, healing, forgiveness, and exorcism/deliverance. The monograph constructs a comparative New Testament theology of these relationships and ends with implications for Pentecostal theology and ministry. While he ends with theological implications for Pentecostal theology/ministry¹. However, he doesn't provide a focused account of how this exact pericope functions within Pentecostal

¹ Thomas, J.C. *The Devil, Disease, and Deliverance: Origins of Illness in New Testament Thought*. 1998.

illness and demonology reasoning in Bunia. The current research investigates how Pentecostal churches in Bunia interpret Mark 2:1-6 and how that interpretation shapes actual exorcism practices for physical illness.

Olusola Igbari investigates exorcism using Mark's Gospel narratives as a framework, asking what exorcism is and how contemporary churches address it. The chapter argues for a paradigm shift toward deliverance ministry in light of Jesus' example and the reality of demonic forces affecting people's lives². "While Igbari provides a Mark-based rationale for deliverance ministry today, there remains a need for a pericope-specific, context-grounded study of how Mark 2:1-6 is read and used by Pentecostal churches in Bunia/DRC to interpret and treat physical illness through exorcism."

James E. Lanpher notes that Graham H. Twelftree has argued that Jesus' very presence provoked a struggle with demons and enabled Jesus to cast them out even from a distance distinguishing him from other first-century exorcists. Lanpher also highlights another differentiating feature: Jesus was the first exorcist to interpret his own exorcistic activity as evidence that God was at work through him, signaling the in-breaking of God's kingdom.³ Building on this, the present study seeks to show Pentecostal pastors who incorporate witchcraft ideas into exorcism that their practice does not align with Jesus' model, and therefore should be reconsidered in light of Jesus' example.

1.5.2. Pentecostal understanding of exorcism

While Bergunder shows that Pentecostal exorcism resonates through phenomenological parallels and inter-religious competition in South India⁴, there remains a need for a Bunia/DRC study of how Pentecostal churches interpret Mark 2:1-6 and translate that reading into specific exorcism practices for physical illness.

² Olusola Igbari. *Study on Exorcism in Mark's Gospel. Implications of Jesus' Perspective for Today. Selected Topics in Humanities and Social Sciences* vol. 8, 94-102. <https://doi.org/10.9734/bpi/sthss/v8/13191D,2021>.

³ See James E. Lampher writing a journal on Jesus' exorcist of Graham H. Twelftree and giving its summary

⁴ Bergunder, M. *miracle healing and exorcism: the south Indian Pentecostal movement in the context of popular Hinduism. international review of mission*, 90: 103-112. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-6631.2001.tb00265.x,2001>,

In Pentecostal churches, the healing of physical illness is often understood alongside exorcism and deliverance. Drawing on New Testament models, Pentecostal pastors are typically described as exercising healing as Jesus empowered his disciples to minister to the sick through the Spirit, rather than relying on special religious garments or clerical status.⁵ Consequently, healing and exorcism are frequently presented as ongoing ministries within Pentecostalism.

Moreover, African contexts prior to European missionary arrival are commonly cited as containing prophetic figures and healing practices. Examples often mentioned include Wade Harris in Liberia, Joseph Babalola in Nigeria, Simon Kimbangu in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Joseph Appiah in Ghana.⁶ These historical references are used to argue that healing and exorcism were not introduced for the first time by European missionaries, but rather developed within African religious experience.

At the same time, scholars and practitioners note that Pentecostal churches differ in how they approach exorcism and healing. Although most Pentecostal groups affirm that healing and spiritual deliverance can occur, they vary in their emphasis on physical ailments, spiritual oppression, or both. Much of the existing work on exorcism and healing within West African Pentecostalism (especially Nigeria and Ghana) discusses exorcism practices without consistently distinguishing whether the target of ministry is specifically physical sickness or spiritual affliction.⁷ This study therefore addresses that gap by examining how physical sickness is understood and treated through exorcism in Pentecostal churches in Bunia, Democratic Republic of Congo.

While Sebastien Kalombo Kapuku demonstrates how protestant churches in Kinshasa, and even some Catholic circles, increasingly adopt Pentecostal traits centered on miracle and visible spiritual power. It situates this “pentecostization” in a longer history of Pentecostal expansion in DRC and notes the movement’s mixed social

⁵ Asamoah-Gyadu K. *“Missionaries without robes”: lay charismatic fellowships and the evangelization of Ghana*, Pneuma, 1997. p. 167

⁶ Opoku Onyinah. *The movement of the Spirit around the world in Pentecostalism*, Church of Pentecost, Ghana, 2013. p. 276

⁷ Opoku Onyinah. *The movement of the Spirit around the world in Pentecostalism*, Church of Pentecost, Ghana, 2013. p. 276

effects, from responding to hardship to sectarian drift.⁸ Though he spoke of expansion of the study in the whole DRC, there is no sign showing that churches of Bunia situated in eastern part of Congo were in his deep interest. For that reason, this study differs from his, because it deals with Pentecostal churches in Bunia on exorcism practices.

1.6. Theoretical framework

The framework used in this research is analytical, which opens the way of using the already existing literature in the study of physical healing through exorcism. There are some books on the connection between sickness and sin, Pentecostal deliverance and exorcism, the powerful healer and exorcist, African Instituted Church and deliverance. This literature has helped the researcher to find out the solution of healing physical sickness through deliverance in Pentecostal churches of Bunia basing on Jesus' model.

The phenomenological analytical framework has intervened in this research to find the reality on the feelings and experiences and produce in depth description of the phenomenon.⁹

1.7. Justification of the study

The main reason of choosing this topic is due to the researcher's observation on the practice of deliverance and exorcism of physical sick person, which is becoming a competition in the Pentecostal churches of Bunia. The researcher who was intercessor in the 39th Emmanuel community has experienced some sick people who came to their church and that they have been declared delivered in other churches but the sicknesses have not yet departed, so looking for other church that can answer to their request.

Being aware that the omnipresent Jesus is alive everywhere as long as the worshipers worship Him in truth and in spirit, he responds when they need exorcism,

⁸ Sebastien Kalombo Kapuku. *La pentecotisation du protestantisme a Kinshasa*, Afrique Contemporaine, 2014

⁹ Pelin Yuksel et al "Theoretical frameworks, Methods, and Procedures for Conducting Phenomenological Studies in Educational settings". Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry 6 (1) (2015):1-20

<https://www.nim.nih.gov/books/NBK196190/>

he will answer their prayers if not so, people will continue in their sufferings without answer. This is the reason that led the researcher to select this topic.

Another fact is that each of Pentecostal churches of Bunia proclaims to be the only church where people get healing and deliverance for the purpose of gaining believers in number, and after all those who joined the church don't find what they were expecting.

The following fact is the weakness of big denominations like Roman Catholic, Anglican church and (Church of Christ in Congo) not being involved deeply in the practice of healing and exorcism during their worship services. They were to make well exorcism since they send their pastors to different Theological Schools and they are well equipped but unfortunately.

1.8. The purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to inform Pentecostal churches (sects) of Bunia that physical healing through exorcism is a ministry that started by Jesus Christ. Therefore, if they still knowing that they are his followers, they ought to practice exorcism while looking at the master. This research draws more the Pentecostals minds to Jesus rather than to their prophets, apostles and pastors.

Pentecostal churches are aware that people are moving from one church to another to look for healing but they are not getting it. Unfortunately, they are not sitting together and bring that issue on the table so that they find solution for believers who have faith that the word of God is true and miracle of God can happen at any time. When they read the Bible and find where Jesus or disciples healed the sick persons and He still healing up today, but when they want to experience, they don't give a good testimony.

1.9. Hypothesis

Out of this problem statement formulated above, this research comes out with the following hypotheses: Pentecostal churches of Bunia would have been involved too much in exorcism of the physical sick persons because of their politics of gaining

members. Exorcism of Pentecostal churches would have not had positive impact since the same people declared exorcised and healed, are the same coming for healing every day. In the view of that many people of Bunia would have been asking themselves whether Pentecostal churches are working with true God who is the healer, deliverer and the powerful exorcist.

1.10. Research design and methodology

This research was aimed at helping the Pentecostal churches of Bunia to practice the true exorcism of the physical sickness among believers. In this part, the researcher presents the sources of information used, the sampling techniques and population, methods of data collection, the study used empirical to find out the real issue of exorcism within the Pentecostal churches of Bunia and Biblical analysis to relate the selected scripture.

1.10.1. Research design

The research design used for this study was qualitative in nature. The emphasis was on the analytical exegesis of Mark 2:1-6 to confirm the real physical healing through exorcism by the powerful healer and exorcism of the early century. Having understood why and how the paralytic man was healed, the researcher suggests that Pentecostals of Bunia would follow this model in their sessions of healing, and exorcism since it opens the way for evangelization of God's kingdom.

1.10.2. Area of study

The research was conducted in the Pentecostal churches or sects of Bunia in Democratic Republic of Congo. Having seen the mushrooming of these churches, the research selected the Pentecostal church named city of refugee, Christco, FEPACO, and the city of peace. The reason for their selection is due to their involvement in deliverance and exorcism of the physical sicknesses in the region.

1.10.3. Study Population, Sampling Method, and Sampling size

For this study, the researcher aimed to get data from the Christians of Pentecostal churches, pastors and the sick persons in need of healing

In the sampling techniques, the researcher considered certain factors to select the respondents: the religious background, education, social status, and economic status among others.

The size of the sample was 40 respondents which included: 7 pastors, 10 intercessors, and many sick persons, some who were healed and others are still looking for healing.

1.10.4. Data collection Procedures

The researcher was given a letter from Uganda Christian University (Bishop Tucker school of Divinity and Theology) to introduce him to the respondents. This letter played a good role in helping the respondents to know that the research has been conducted for the academic purposes. The researcher administered two questionnaires to respondents via WhatsApp, since he was living at Uganda Christian University main campus by then.

1.10.4.1. Strategies for data collection and analysis

The researcher processed and analyzed data by following the objectives and questions.

1.10.4.2. Limitations

This research was done using two methods. In library, and another in different Pentecostal churches of Bunia. In the side of the empirical method, the researcher faced challenge of the instability of network when calling people in Bunia via WhatsApp, Pentecostal Pastors refused that the researcher takes picture during exorcism session and all the materials like water, anointing oil used for exorcism. Another challenge was the lack of stable source of income, and yet the respondents needed data so that they could be online.

The nature of topic scared many people; they thought that the researcher will to criticize their belief and create and report the Pentecostal churches to the government because they are keeping any people in prayers without taking them to hospitals.

1.11. Research ethics

Being formed, informed, and transformed, the researcher ensured to acknowledge the use of other authors who wrote about healing, Pentecostalism exorcism. The researcher proposed the use footnotes, and reference in the bibliography.

Concerning the respondents, the researcher assured them of respect and to keep confidentiality of their respective personal views.

1.12. Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher clearly introduced the problem faced by Pentecostal churches in Bunia and stated the study objectives in the form of research questions. The chapter also reviewed relevant literature that addresses the topic from different perspectives, explained the methodology to be used, and set out the purpose of the study. This is an initial scan, so a more targeted search could surface additional closely related papers.

CHAPTER TWO: EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF MARK 2:1-6

2.1. Introduction

In Mark 2:1-6, Jesus' return to Capernaum reveals his divine authority, even as it begins to provoke opposition from the religious leaders. The passage says that a large crowd gathered to hear him teach, and in the middle of his teaching, some people brought a paralyzed man to him, showing their faith that Jesus could heal their friend. Before healing the man physically, Jesus first declares that his sins are forgiven, implying that the deeper problem is spiritual as well as physical. Because the law of Moses teaches that only God can forgive sins, the scribes begin to question Jesus' authority and accuse him of acting like God. This chapter seeks to explain the meaning of the passage by focusing on the faith of those who come to Jesus, his authority to forgive sins, the start of conflict with the scribes, and the idea that restoration of the person comes before physical healing.

2.2. Authorship of the Gospel of Mark

The author of the Gospel according to Mark doesn't show himself up at the beginning. who he wrote Mark did not begin by writing "The Gospel according to Mark" at the top of the first page. The names of the gospel were added in the second century when early Christian communities began to differentiate the gospels from each other. They made research to identify these authors, for the case of the Gospel according to Mark. The early Christians in the second century found that this Mark was the companion and the interpreter of Peter, who was executed in Rome around AD 64.¹⁰Moreover, David E. Garland argues that the author of this Gospel did not identify himself or announce his purpose or methods as other ancient historians did, but as he quotes Adela Yarbo Collins saying that the author of the Gospel according to Mark was probably following the precedent of biblical historians, who also did none of these things.¹¹In the saying of Marcus J. there was no need to this author to identify himself

¹⁰ Marcus J. Borg. *Meeting Jesus in Mark*, Great Britain, 2011 p 13

¹¹ Adela Yarbo Collins. *Mark, a commentary*, Minneapolis: fortress, 2007 p34

because he was well known by his original addressees.¹² This Mark would have been the one recorded in Acts and Paul's and Peter's letters. Indeed, in Acts 12:25 and 13:5, John Mark is presented as "helper" or an "assistant", whom Luke 13:5 also recognizes as being among the eyewitnesses saying "just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first eyewitnesses and servants of the word of God." B. T. Holmes quoted by David E. Garland asserts that in the Papyri, Mark is recognized as "the man who handles documents and delivers their contents." The Gospel according to Mark is taught to be the 1st written Gospel and that others laid on it to write theirs. All these accounts narrate that Mark was Peter's interpreter, sitting on his feet when he was preaching and wrote whatever he heard him preaching about Jesus Christ after his death.

In the Gospel according to Mark, Jesus is portrayed as a miracle worker and crucified Lord. Mark is a man in hurry, no breath, no time to lose, He uses immediately a lot, and the writer shows that time is short as we headed to the cross for crucifixion. Many commentators argue that the intended audience of Mark are people who have already believed, and this is demonstrated in the introduction, in chapter one, where he quotes the scripture from prophet Isaiah. This quotation means that these people knew the book of Isaiah and probably, they are Jews.

2.3. Mark's source of information

Mark was closer friend to Simon Peter, the great apostle of Jesus. In 1Peter 5:13, Peter calls him "my son Mark." The fact that he was a friend of Simon Peter and learnt about Jesus from him. Mark's Gospel is nothing other than a record of the preaching material of Peter.¹³ Papias, an historian who lived about 100 years after Markas quoted by this same author says that Mark was Peter's interpreter, he recollected what he heard Him preaching about Jesus without omitting nor falsifying anything that he heard.¹⁴

¹² Joel Marcus. *Mark 1-8*, University of Michigan, 2000 p. 17

¹³ John Hargreaves. *A guide to St Mark's Gospel*, London SW1P 4ST, 1995, p.77

¹⁴ Idem

2.4. Intended audience of Mark

Mark wrote for a Christian groups or communities living in the Roman empire, most of whom were not Jewish. He wrote for evangelists and others people who taught about Jesus or read the passage about Him in the worship service. He wrote as for the persecuted Christians in the early century, who were victims of the Roman authority because of their faith. Mark, the disciple of a martyred teacher but risen writes to encourage the believers to have hope because the one they are following has power on everything. The quotation of the Old Testament and the talk about the kingdom of God without explaining what is the kingdom of God demonstrate that Mark writes to people who were already believers in the early century.¹⁵ This means that these people knew what Kingdom of God means. Therefore, the author of the Gospel informs them that the door of that kingdom is open to people who believe and repent from their sins because Jesus, the Son of God forgives such people.

2.5. Historical background of Mark 2:1-6

Mark wrote to a Christian audience facing persecution of many sorts to hinder their faith. In year 64 AD, Nero, the Roman emperor, started fire on the city of Rome to destroy alle Christians he had arrested for their faith.¹⁶ Tacitus cited by Leo Dupree Sandgren argues that the Raman historian who thought that Nero sought to distract the angry crowds and seized upon the growing sect of Christians:

First, Nero had self-acknowledged Christians arrested. Then, on their information, large numbers of others were condemned, not so much for incendiarism as for their anti-social tendencies (odio humani generis). Their deaths were made farcical. Dressed in wild animal's skins, they were torn to pieces by dogs, or crucified, or made into torches to be ignited after dark as substitutes for daylight. Nero provided his Gardens for the

¹⁵ John Hargreaves. *A guide to St Mark's Gospel*, London SW1P 4ST 1995, p. 78

¹⁶ Leo Dupree Sandgren. *Vines intertwined: a history of Jews and Christians from the Babylonian exile to the Advent of Islam*, Marquette University, 2011, p. 3

*spectacle, and exhibited display in the Circus, at which he mingled with the crowds, or stood in a chariot, dressed as a charioteer.*¹⁷

This quotation has said a lot about the persecution of Christians who accepted Christianity and rejected all kinds of worship of idols and other Roman gods. Torture was growing exponentially, on the point of pushing them to abandon Christianity.

Mark 2:1-6, which is a sub-unit of Mark 2:1-12, was written to the Roman Christians during the Roman persecution. Mark, the interpreter of apostle Peter, was being urged by the audience of Peter in Rome to write the gospel for them in order to consolidate their faith.¹⁸ Mark wrote the book for the Christians in Rome and Italy between AD 60-70, a period of great persecution. It is meant to encourage, guide and support the Christians in a situation of intense crises during the reign of Emperor Nero.¹⁹

Mark wrote to his audience who lived in the early century, probably didn't see Jesus physically, to show them that Jesus had authority of healing physical sickness and forgiving sins, because He is the Son of God. He tells them that God created the world safely without sickness, but because of the fall of man in the garden of Eden, Human body became weak and attacked by sickness. Therefore, Jesus Christ came to restore human being in God's kingdom, so that he may live as he was supposed to live in the beginning, thus where Mark connects the physical and spiritual healing.

The scene of the healing of the paralytic man occurs in Capernaum. Jesus has done miracles in the previous chapter before He goes in the surrounded region and that made Him known in all the region of Galilee. When He comes back, people had faith to Him. When Jesus forgave the man's sin, the scribes sited to listen to his teaching didn't agree with that act, because in Jewish setting only God is can forgive and so,

¹⁷ Tacitus, the histories and annals, translated by C.H. Moore and J. Jackson. 5 vols. LCL. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967-1970, quoted by Leo Dupree Sandgren 2010, p 232

¹⁸ Daniel Nii Aboagye Aryeh (2018). *An exegetical discussion of Mark 2:1-12*, the journal of the African theological seminary, pp. 3

¹⁹ Isaiah Ola Abolarin. *Jesus' personal identity disclosure: an exegetical study of Mark 2:1-12*, Ogun, state, Nigeria, 2020 p.36

tension of opposing His teaching started. Mark captures his audience's attention that this is from where emerged the crucifixion of Jesus.

2.6. Literary context of Mark 2:1-6

The Gospel according to Mark is divided into five literary parts. Mark 1:14-5:53, titled: the ministry in Galilee, in this part, the writer of the Gospel indicates the beginning and the end of unit or sub-unit by the use of time or day. These five parts follow themselves chronologically to give coherence and understanding. This research shows just the part from which Mark 2:1-2 is extracted.²⁰

Mark 2:1-12 healing the paralytic person, Mark 2:13-17 dinner in the house of Levi, Mark 2:18-22 discourse about fasting and religious ascetism, Mark 2:23-28 dinner (heads of grain corn). From this highlight, the text for this research is a sub-unit of the unit, titled the healing of the paralytic which is under the section: Jesus in Galilee or ministry in Galilee.²¹

2.7. Analytical exegesis of Mark 2:1-6

The name "exegesis" was originally used to designate those exegetical methods deliberately derived from the theories of the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss.²² Analytical exegesis aims at elucidating the meaning and significance of texts.²³ Therefore, the analytical exegesis of Mark 2:1-6 will depict a clear meaning of the message covered to understand how and why the paralytic man was healed through exorcism by Jesus in the first century

V. 1 *"and when Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later, the news spread quickly that he was back home."* (Mark 1:1, NLT)

²⁰ Daniel Nii Aboagye Aryeh. *An exegetical discussion of Mark 2:1-12*, the journal of the African theological seminary, 2018, p. 3

²¹ Idem

²² Daniel Patte. *Structural Exegesis for New Testament*, Augsburg Fortress, 1990, p.3

²³ Idem, p.4

2.7. 1. When Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later

Mark wrote the book for the Christians in Rome and Italy between AD 60-70, a period of great persecution. It is meant to encourage, guide and support the Christian in a situation of intense crises during the reign of Emperor Nero. With chapter 2:1, it is a section that begins with a series of conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders are recorded. “παλὶν” (again or once more). It is a peculiarity of Mark that he notes the recurrence of scenes and places in his narrative.²⁴ Capernaum “Καφαρναούμ” as “the headquarter for the work in Galilee” which is “now the home of Jesus”. The story gives a “vivid picture of Jesus’ popular success.” This is seen in the crowds filling the house “and even the door”, called this “Markan detail” and that “the house was packed inside and there was a jam outside.

The return of Jesus to Capernaum indicates his intentionality in returning to a place that was significant for his ministry. It symbolizes a homecoming, an acknowledgement of the connections he formed while there.²⁵ Jesus’ return to Capernaum was targeting different people, because Capernaum was strategically located on the route of *Via Maris* connecting the Mediterranean regions. Probably there was a mixt up of population from Rome, Greece, the local Jews.

Mark preaches his audience that the place where they are, is a chosen place of Jesus’ mission and He is coming again for the second time. In other words, Israel is where Jesus established God’s kingdom but it is not yet fully established, Jesus has gone for a while and these people must be waiting for His return for the second time. Jesus’ coming for the second time will be seen by the whole earth as the disciples saw Him ascend as it is written in Matthew 24:30-31.²⁶ There is a call for both Jews and gentiles to be aware that Jesus is coming again, He will not delay.

²⁴ Isaiah Ola Abolarin. *Jesus’ Personal identity disclosure: An exegetical study of Mark 2:1-6*, Ogun, state, Nigeria, 2020 p.36

²⁵ Pastor David. *Mark 2 :1 meaning and commentary*, Bible Hub, 2025, p. 6

²⁶ Pastor Agyemang. *Jesus is coming again*, Ezra Publishing Ltd, 2024, p. 20

For the readers of Mark, the return of Jesus could sound very significant because they were waiting for it. And so, it was a way of telling them that even when He was on the earth Jesus was thinking to come back to fulfill His mission in short time.

2.7.1.1. Several days later

Frederick William Dancker (2015) in the Greek-lexicon for New Testament argues that, several days later is combined in the Greek word *διήμερα* meaning a period between sunrise and sunset. After establishing Capernaum as his headquarter, Jesus couldn't stay for long days without coming back. The author says that Jesus didn't spend many days out of Capernaum, he just made a pause of a few days as He was preaching in the surrounding region and then he came back. Probably Jesus didn't take long time in other side of the sea because he wanted to finish His mission started earlier in Capernaum.

Looking at what Jesus did earlier for some needy (the physical sick and demon possess people) in Capernaum, He ought to come back as early as possible, because he didn't yet reveal himself to them. It is not only the matter of revealing to them who he was, but these people needed to be taught a divine teaching.²⁷ The context connects with Revelation 22:7 "*and behold, I am coming soon*". Jesus knew the need of these people to be the lack of teaching with authority which is not found elsewhere except in Him. Jesus' ought to come very quick because of love of showing them the kingdom of God.

The early community of Mark, living under the crucial time of the Roman empire, were encouraged by this message that Jesus' coming back will not delay. He gives hope to the readers that His return is in few days, it will not take long time. This is even an information that Jesus is with them in their respective place.

2.7.1.2. The news spread quickly that he was back home.

"Jesus was in the house". Mark did not mention which house but the phrase implies that Jesus used a residence in Capernaum as a home base for his travels. In the house

²⁷ Isaiah Ola Abolarin. *Jesus' personal identity disclosure: an exegetical study of Mark 2:1-12*, Ogun, state, Nigeria, 2020, p. 36

there, his presence could not be concealed, since his fame has been known everywhere (1:29) because of the miracle and healing. So, a large crowd gathered in the house and by the door that there was no more space.²⁸

People in Capernaum have missed the good teachings of Jesus for some days, because of the mission He went to do on the other side of the sea. Since His presence could not be hidden because of his previous miracles of healing and cast of demons, as it reads in chapter one, as result everybody in the region heard about Him and once, He came back, the News of His return couldn't be hidden to anybody.

The Greek verb *ἤκούσθη* shows that the information was heard in all the region, and everybody was aware of his presence in the house within Capernaum. The person who spread the news of his coming back is not known, but it true that people heard of his presence. It is also clear that the information heard was not only of his physical presence but of the preaching he has commenced as usual.

Jews-Christians in the first century met in individual houses for prayer, this message would have given them hope that thought Jesus is no longer physical present but He continues to be with them. The figure of Jesus being at home, enhanced Jews-Christians to feel comfortable when praying in house churches after the destruction of the Temple by the Romans.

Mark communicates that Jesus is in every house-churches where the Jews- Christians gathered for the good news. By writing that *Jesus was at home* Mark encouraged them about the accessibility of Jesus from where they were praying. In other words, though the Romans have hindered the public Christian gathering, Jews-Christians must have faith that Jesus is approachable in their private session of prayer. Tacitus (annals 15:44) argues that Nero, the Roman emperor killed Christians by the incendiarism because they were worshipping other God than the roman deities. The name of Jesus disturbed the whole roman empire until the emperor got annoyed and started to kill Christians.

²⁸ Isaiah Ola Abolarin. *Jesus' personal identity disclosure: an exegetical study of Mark 2:1-12*, Ogun, state, Nigeria, 2020, p. 36

2.7.2. Personalities of Jesus in Capernaum

Many people with different teachings have a wrong understanding of the person of Jesus. The controversy still, present since some understand Him as a human being without His divinity and others recognize His divinity as son of God, having the divine power. Understanding the person of Jesus is central to knowing and having a relationship with God. Moreover, Spader (2013), stated that a proper understanding of the person of Jesus is fundamental to growth and maturity in faith, it has much to do with how people live their lives.²⁹

In the first century, the Docetism denied the humanity of Jesus while the Ebionites denied his divinity. In the 4th century, Arius argued that Jesus was truly God; and the council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. said that Jesus was fully divine and equal with the father.³⁰ Later in the century, Apollinarius argued that Jesus' divinity was a replacement of his humanity. But in 381A.D. the council of Constantinople declared that Jesus was fully human and fully God. Another view of the person of Jesus was the dual personality view by Nestorius, he argued that there were two distinctive persons in Jesus, one was human and the other was divine.³¹

The acceptance of humanity of Jesus doesn't raise many disputes because he lived among human being. But His divinity still has opposition. This is what is seen even with the scribes in Mark 2. The intention of the author of the gospel according to Mark is to write the good news of Jesus as starts in 1:1. While reading this gospel, the personalities of Jesus are not clearly described and there is no attempt to pass a personal judgement on the stories narrated and all the people in stories are connected to Jesus in the presentations.³²

The teachings and miracles that Jesus had done before he went on the other side of the sea have made him known by everybody in Capernaum. Jesus doesn't present

²⁹ Spader, D. *The humanity of Jesus*. Available at: www.sonlifr-humanity-of-jesus-2.pdf-Adobe Acrobat, Reader DC, 2013 pp. 17

³⁰ Isaiah Ola Abolarin. *Jesus' personal identity disclosure: an exegetical study of Mark 2:1-12*, Ogun, state, Nigeria 2020, p. 34

³¹idem

³²Isaiah Ola Abolarin. *Jesus' personal identity disclosure: an exegetical study of Mark 2:1-12*, Ogun, state, Nigeria, 2020, p. 35

himself like a political leader nor a religious but what he does, is to preach God's word with authority and heal those who were in need. The fact that his teaching differs from pharisees' teaching made him to be known. Mark 1: 28 "*the news about Jesus spread quickly throughout the entire region of Galilee*" for "*he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.* (Mark 1:22, ESV). The fact that Jesus preached with authority, the religious leaders in Capernaum did not see with good eyes, they were happy of it but against Jesus because he reduced them and their teachings into nothing. Therefore, the only thing they had to do, was to criticize him negatively so that people may not follow him.

With a thorough reading of Mark 2:1-6, the reader comes out with the knowledge of different personalities of Jesus Christ, not only for the early believers but also for the contemporary Christians. It is very important to understand Jesus' personality in Capernaum because of the attention that the crowd gave him and his teaching. Among those personalities Jesus is seen as:

2.7.2.1. Jesus, the teacher

From the Greek word, Διδάσκαλός meaning teacher. In Mark 2:2, the author of the Gospel records that Jesus was teaching the word of God to the gathering people in the house where He was staying after He had come back to Capernaum. James T. Dillon (1995), in his book: *Jesus as a teacher; a multidisciplinary case study*, argues that Jesus was a Jewish religious teacher in Palestine around the year 30 A.D. he quotes the Bible saying that Mark 1:14 describes Jesus as a religious teacher in Galilee after the first teacher who was called John the Baptist.³³ This author acknowledges that Jesus was well known in His character as teacher.

The description of Jesus as religious teacher is not to be rejected since he lived in Galilee and he was teaching as well. But the teaching of Jesus differs from teachings of many other teachers of the laws (scribes) of that century. Jesus' status as a teacher and his conflict with scribal authorities are intrinsically related, with Jesus' status as a teacher being a central factor in why the conflict with scribal authorities

³³ James T. Dillon. *Jesus as a teacher: a multidisciplinary cases study*, University of California, 1995, p. 1

arose, in other words, what he taught and how he taught were very different from others.³⁴ According to Chris Keith, Jesus had no right to teach publicly since He was not a member of the authoritative scribal elite class, yet he acted as if he were.³⁵

According to the Gospel of Mathew, Mark, and John, Jesus's followers often referred to him as "*rabbi*," a word used in Aramaic and Hebrew that technically means "my great one" the term is used for the pedagogical figure.³⁶ It is for this reason that John in the Gospel of John 1:38 gives a transliteration of the *rabbi* as *didaskalos* for his Greek readers. People who were surrounding Jesus recognized Him as a *rabbi* and teacher, "it is more than a safe bet that Jesus was a teacher".³⁷ Moreover, Chris Keith asserts that some scholars like Bruce Chilton et al (2010) comments that "*rabbi*" is the best historical designation for Jesus".³⁸

If Jesus taught some ideas that conflicted from those of some other teachers of the law, we would expect some disagreements.³⁹ Jesus is qualified to be a good teacher, more than other teachers who studied by then. The teachings of Jesus were not mere teachings, in fact, Mark doesn't even give the content of His teaching in verse 3 but he rushed quickly to miracles and healings.⁴⁰

2.7.2.2. Jesus as miracle-worker

The study of the Gospel according to Mark shows that Jesus did a lot of miracles. The stories narrated in Mark give the impression that performing miracles occupied a great deal of Jesus' time.⁴¹ The fact that the first section of Mark is about the miracle stories doesn't mean that Mark wants to portray Jesus only as a miracle worker or

³⁴Chris Keith. *Jesus against the scribal elite*, Baker academic, 2014, pp. 6

³⁵Idem

³⁶Idem p. 17

³⁷ Dale C. Allison. *Constructive Jesus: memory, imagination, and history*, Grand Rapids, 2010, p. 17

³⁸ Bruce Chilton et al. *Rabbi as a title for Jesus," in a comparative Handbook to the Gospel of Mark* NTGJC, 2010, p. 561

³⁹ Craig S. Keener. *The historical Jesus of the Gospel*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009, p. 38

⁴⁰Idem

⁴¹ Graham H. Twelftree. *Jesus, the miracle worker*, Intervarsity Press, 1999, p. 57

powerful healer and exorcist but he wants to capture the attention of his readers using the miracles to describe unto them the personality of Jesus⁴².

The perspective of miracles written in the Bible tells the readers about the supernatural status of Jesus. The understanding of Mathew 12:27 as well as Luke 11:19 demonstrate that in the first century, pharisees were also able to cast out demons by using the source of Beelzebub. Thus, where they are confused, thinking that Jesus is using the same power. According to Eric Eve, around the time of Jesus there was a class of charismatic miracle-working holy men, with whom Jesus may usefully be compared. The well-known are: Honi the circle Drawer who was famous for making rain in the first century BCE. The other is Hanina who lived in first century C.E, and known to have worked a number of miracles, including some healing which resemble those attributed to Jesus.⁴³

In the first century, the Mishna exalts the Honi in high level of being as an over-confident boaster who tries to blackmail God by standing in circle and refusing to budge until God send rain.⁴⁴Eric Eve (2009) borrowing the words of Werner Kahl says that the real miracle worker is only God, though He may choose sometime a human as an intermediary or an intercessor.⁴⁵

The gospel according to Mark has the highest concentration of miraculous material of any of the Gospels. The miracles in Mark are not at random selected and written but they are arranged with one to another and purposed and centered on Jesus.⁴⁶the fact which shows that Mark wants to demonstrate that Jesus is the miracle-worker is seen in verse 3, where he doesn't give the content of the preaching of Jesus but his emphasis was on the miracle that was coming. One of the personalities of Jesus as

⁴² Graham H. Twelftree. *Jesus, the miracle worker*, intervarsity Press, 1999, p. 59

⁴³ Eric Eve. *The healer from Nazareth, Jesus' miracles in historical context*, Great Britain, 2009, p. 13

⁴⁴idem

⁴⁵Ibidem, p. 19

⁴⁶ Ibidem, p. 92

portrayed by the author in the Gospel according to Mark, is that Jesus is the miracle-worker. Capable to surprise the audience with an unexpected miracle.⁴⁷

2.7.2.3. Jesus, the forgiver of Sins

The Greek word *ἄφεσις* meaning send away or pardon is to be related to the ministry of Jesus by the fact that in most of his healing action Jesus started by forgiving the sin of the one suffering. Drawing to the comments of Tobias Hägerland, he argues that by forgiving sin in Mark 2:5b, Jesus wanted to put himself in the culture which regarded illness as an outcome or punishment for sin. Jews knew very well that they ought to search for a divine forgiveness.⁴⁸ Therefore, when Jesus pronounced the statement “my son your sins are forgiven” he was revealing himself to the gathering crowd in Capernaum that he is God because God alone forgives sin and even the teachers of the law were aware.

Tobias Hägerland in his book *Jesus and forgiveness of Sin* that Jesus’ act of forgiving the sin of the paralytic man was to show the early generation that He (Jesus) was the realization of Isaiah’ eschatology. The book of Isaiah speaks about the marvelous events that belong to the future restoration of the nation “on that day” by the anointed One. Going deeper, Tobias H. says forgiving and healing, Jesus demonstrates that He is the Anointed One and that day has really come. Moreover, he gives the examples that connect that day as written in Isaih to what the Anointed One was doing practically: the poor are evangelized (Isa 61:1), blind regain their sight (29:18), crippled walk (Isaiah 35:6), deaf hear (29:18), and dead are raised (Isaiah 26:19). The forgiveness and the healing of the paralytic man correlate with the “crippled walk”.⁴⁹ As they knew Torah, by that action, Jesus was telling that the time of restoration of God Kingdom has come.

In Mark 2:5b, by forgiving the paralytic man’s sin, Jesus revealed Himself that he is the Anointed One of God as prophesied by Isaiah in chapter 35:6. The personality of

⁴⁷ Eric Eve. *The healer from Nazareth, Jesus’ miracles in historical context*, Great Britain, 2009, p. 92

⁴⁸ Tobias Hägerland. *Jesus and the forgiveness of Sins*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 180

⁴⁹ Idem p. 197

Jesus as forgiver of sin, could help the congregation in understanding Jesus as the one they were waiting for long time to heal their broken hearts and wounds.

2.7.2.4. Jesus, the healer

One of Jesus' personalities throughout the Gospels is being a healer. Eric Eve in his book: *the healer from Nazareth* argues that though the Gospels depict Jesus as a healer, He didn't cure people by either ancient or modern medical means, but by the word of command and the laying on of hands.⁵⁰ Looking Jesus' act of healing in eschatological terms, Tobias Hägerland asserts that Jesus portrays himself in the Gospel of Mark as the son of the father having power to heal and bring joy in an destroyed world, where people have no joy.⁵¹ In the perspective of professor Marcus Dods, in his ministry, Jesus considered the healing of disease an important, or even an essential, feature of his work is apparent both from his practice and from his words. Jesus was not proud of healing the sick people that they may be convinced that he was the Messiah, but because he was pushed by divine love which made him the Messiah to help and establish God's kingdom.⁵²

Although the human efforts are necessary in the search for healing, the theology of Christianity shows that only God has the full power of healing. Many of the Gospels' accounts are occupied with account of Jesus' healing by God's power.⁵³ When John the Baptist sent his disciples to ask about the identity of Jesus the latter presented himself as the healer who was giving the blinds their sights, enabling the lame to walk, the lepers to be cleansed, the deaf to hear, and the dead to be raised.⁵⁴ Jesus came to proclaim and establish God's kingdom among men., to manifest God's presence and love. This he did more effectually by his works of healing than by his teaching.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Eric Eve. *The healer from Nazareth, Jesus' miracles in historical context*, Great Britain Great Britain, 2009, p.51

⁵¹Tobias Hägerland. *Jesus and the forgiveness of Sins*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 180

⁵²Professor Marcus Dods, DD. *Jesus as healer*, New College, Edinburgh, Scotland, p. 169

⁵³ Tyler J. Vanderweele. *Healing and Jesus*, University of Notre Dame, 2024, p. 218

⁵⁴ Mathew 11 :1-6

⁵⁵ Professor Marcus Dods, DD. *Jesus as healer*, New College, Edinburgh, Scotland, p. 170

2.7.2.5. Jesus, the exorcist/ the deliverer

Graham H. Twelftree on the analysis of Jesus the exorcist, argues that people who lived during Jesus' time, witnessed him as an exorcist. While concluding, he is of the view that exorcism was a part of the ministry of Jesus whom he calls the historical Jesus.⁵⁶ James E. Lanpher in his journal on Jesus the exorcist comments that Graham H. Twelftree has confirmed that Jesus' presence made demons to struggle and He was able to cast them from a distance which made him different from other practitioners of exorcism in the first century. Another point that differentiated Jesus from others is the fact the he (Jesus) was the first exorcist to claim that God was acting through his exorcistic actions and that they indicated that Kingdom of God operating.⁵⁷

Taking Mathew and Luke as his witnesses, Graham H. Twelftree, in his book *Jesus the miracle-worker* argues that these evangelists agree that exorcism was an important aspect of Jesus' ministry and go so far to suggest that Jesus' dealing with the demons possessed is of the central significance in understanding Jesus and his ministry.⁵⁸

Quoting some non-Christian writers like Josephus who says that among those who were powerful healers in the first century, Jesus was part of them and they were all exorcists. The Babylonian Talmud records that Jesus was killed because he practiced sorcery and according to Celsus as cited by Graham H., Jesus had magical power and he was an exorcist. According to non-Christian source of the early century, Jesus was remembered as powerful exorcist.⁵⁹

The New Testament account about Jesus' exorcism brings a clear connotation saying that Jesus was an exorcist. The example is the following: *the saying Jesus cast out demons by Beelzebul, in Mathew 12:28 and Luke 11:20* it is said that Jesus exorcized by the Spirit of God, the saying a disciple that they saw someone casting out demons in the name of Jesus, all these demonstrate that Jesus was an exorcist.⁶⁰ Showing himself and acting as the powerful exorcist during his time, Jesus attracted the

⁵⁶ Graham H. Twelftree. *Jesus the exorcist: a contribution to the study of the historical Jesus*, Tübingen, 1993, p. 137

⁵⁷ See James E. Lanpher writing a journal on Jesus the exorcist of Graham H. Twelftree, and giving its summary.

⁵⁸ Graham H. Twelftree. *Jesus the exorcist: a contribution to the study of the historical Jesus*, Tübingen, 1993, p. 138

⁵⁹ Graham H. Twelftree. *Jesus the miracle worker*, Intervarsity Press, 1999, p. 282

⁶⁰ Idem

attention of people, thus, there is no doubt to see people carrying the paralytic to him in order to get solution.

This verse is all about the coming back of Jesus to a place well known to Him, Jesus doesn't take longtime to come back to his established headquarter of his mission because people ought to hear the true Gospel and discover His kingship. Therefore, as longer as people hear of his coming, they ought to rush and gather to hear the good news.

V 2 “soon the house where he was staying was so packed with visitors that there was no more room, even outside the door. While he was preaching God’s word to them.” (Mark 2:2 NLT).

2.7.3. Soon the house where he was staying was so packed with the visitors

The geo-social life of a small town like Capernaum would have played a key role in the gathering of people as soon as the information was noised. It is easy for an information reach out everybody in a small town. Jesus' influence in the region begins to grow exponentially, the number of people who came to listen to His teaching is no longer countable, instead it is now a crowd. The Greek verb *συνήχθησα* meaning a crowd being brought together shows that Jesus has captured the attention of many people. Some commentators argue that the Jews were hospitable, they left the doors of their houses open, so that everyone could enter at any time. Thus, why this house was full of people. The exploration of this language means also that there were no cases of robbers reported in the region, since they were allowed to enter the house of their friends without permission.

The density of the crowd comes to prepare boundary for the coming event of healing and demonstrates the reason of the four people to climb up the roof in the following verse. Many commentators asserts that the gathering of people as soon as the message was spread explains how the city of Capernaum was too small and information could reach people quickly. Indeed, in such situation, some people came for curiosity, others for healing since Jesus had healed some in as recorded in first

chapter, and other group would have come to listen to the authoritative teaching of Jesus Christ.

In the line of God's kingdom, the message that Mark passes to his audience is that people coming from far rushed very quick and filled the house. Mark doesn't speak about those who were in the house. This means, visitors knew the importance of Jesus while those living with Him were still blinded. In this context, Mark speaks to Jews people that they are absent-minded but the gentiles are coming from far and fill the kingdom of God in their sights. And saves as an encouragement to rush and part of Jesus' listeners.

The house is packed because Jesus' power to heal and the strong power to bring the good news of the kingdom of God into people's consciousness. But according to him it seems reasonable to suppose that if Jesus believed his principal message of the kingdom was carried through preaching, people's stubborn focus on his miracle working outside that context would make him angry.⁶¹ Mark calls the Jews and Christians to know that they are members of the house from where Jesus is preaching and they must put all their attention to Him, and not give the opportunity to those who are coming from very far. The message targets the gentiles or those who are still far as well, Mark tells them that there is hope for them to come and listen to Jesus, because He is hospitable, He doesn't see the origin anyone.

Though The early Christian community met in houses but grew rapidly as recorded in the book of Acts 6:7 the growth happened rapidly because the work of the Holy Spirit. This verse came to encourage them that the meeting in houses didn't start by them even during Jesus Christ, people gathered in house to listen God's word. Reading that people were packed in a house to hear the word of God, enhanced this community's faith, knowing that they were still in the same tradition of that of Jesus' time. Mark taught them that their gathering was not only a mere assembly but they were to listen good news and see miracles.

⁶¹ Megan Mckenna. *On your Mark: reading Mark in the shadow of the cross*, Maryknoll, 2006, p. 45

2.7.3.1. While he was preaching God's words to them

The use of conjunction “while” in this statement is important, it signifies that there will be an event happening within another or when another still going on. In this case, the event that will be cross-cut is the preaching of God's word to them. Jesus' mission was to tell the truth of God's kingdom to people and here He is accomplishing his mission. This cross-cut shows that Jesus' priority was the preaching of good news rather than healing the sick or casting out demons.

In the first century, the word has been preached to people wherever they gathered. However, homes were not for public preaching rather some teachers of law preached at home in private. Jesus does the opposite, people came and didn't take them to a public place, rather he started preaching them at home.

All those who had come to Jesus had been listening the good news being preached with authority. The community of Jews and Christians who lived in first century were invited through this passage to listen to Jesus who gives an authoritative teaching. Probably, the author calls the audience to focus on Jesus' teachings and avoid all association with false teachings raised in the first century. The Jews-Christians in Mark's context are prepared to focus on Jesus' teaching though some events are coming, tempting them to remove their attentions from Him. The account tells them that God's word still ongoing, there is no stop and Jesus will not allow His word to be stopped by any event or anybody.

Part two of this verse demonstrates that Jesus' priority was the preaching of God's word. Mark gives the believers of his time hope that miracles will happen while hearing Jesus' message continually, so this could keep this community to gather together and have appetite of God's word. They were to be the agents of going in the community and bring those who were weakened by the political attack of the Romans against Christianity in the houses of prayers.

V3. Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. (Mark 2:3, NIV)

2.7.4. Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man

As Jesus was speaking to the crowd, there was an interruption by the arrival of those brought the paralytic on a mat “*κραββαττόν*”; when they were unable to get to Jesus through the crowd, they carried the paralytic to the roof by the stairway on the side of the house to the flat roof which then was unroofed.⁶²

The event of coming bringing to Jesus a paralytic man happens while Jesus is still preaching God’s word to the gathering people, composed by the visitors in a big number. People will see miracle because of their commitment to hear God’s word. The surprise is that the arrival of these men didn’t have any impact on the going on of preaching, neither themselves didn’t disturb the attentive audience.

Having heard that Jesus was at home in Capernaum people came from everywhere. Suddenly, a big number of people uncountable because of the movement of walk from their place to Jesus’ place. The Greek verb *ἔρχονται* (they came) by changing place or position with the implication of bringing someone.

The people who brought the paralyzed man were not numbered because of the position they have been taking to help one another. The observer acknowledges that both were taking one direction, coming from their place to Jesus. These people demonstrated their love toward their fellow, who was unable to walk. This is understandable, in the early century, people had no ambulance to carry the sick person, but they made a local stretcher to help them.

Mark preaches to his audience the true faith, it is not just to have faith to Jesus but to show mercy to those in need. Isaiah 58:10 and James 2:17 show that faith goes hand in hand with action. The passage was teaching Jews and Christians to love and show mercy to such people in need. It was an invitation for them to observe freedom of others when they are at worship in looking the example of those who brought the lame man.

⁶² Isaiah Ola Abolarin. *Jesus’ personal identity disclosure: an exegetical study of Mark 2:1-12*, Ogun, state, Nigeria, 2020, p. 36

Among these people, there were some who had challenges and wanted to be seen as those who were suffering more than other and even disturb other when listen to God's word. Mark advices them to leave other people in peace during worship and to find their way of meeting with Jesus without creating any distraction in the place of worship. Above all, this scripture shows the degree of love and demonstrate by these people and faith they had, in their minds, Jesus is the only person able to give healing to their friend.

Jesus' teachings allowed many to know the love toward the sick people, since those who believe in Him though they are, they will recover. Thus, the early Christianity devoted itself to relieve physical suffering by responding to human need.⁶³

The Bira (ethnic group in the DRC) in the year 1990, lived in a big distance from the hospital, although that boundary, when one of them fell sick, all men could carry the sick person. They helped one another to avoid tiredness.

A thorough reading of Mark 2:3 bring out that people who brought the paralytic man were many, but only four were to carry. Indeed, he is right when someone looks at the stretcher, he realizes that it needs only four people and others will be substitutes.

2.7.4.1. Paralyzed man

The paralyzed man, recorded in the Gospel according to Mark 2:3 is a man who was depending totally on other people. The Greek word *παραλυτικός* means a lame person. This man cannot do any movement because of the weakness of his muscles.

Mark doesn't tell us if the man was born paralytic or he fell sick and then he became paralyzed, thus where the conception of the Jews started to work. Because they believed that such illness was the punishment of God against the person who would have committed sin in his life or it could be the punishment due to the sin of his parents.

⁶³ Sarah E. Becker. *Awaking to mutual, reciprocal need in plague and epidemic disease: the origins of early Christian health care*, Oakland University, 2021, p, 77

Mark's audience were taught about restoration of the body in God's kingdom. It teaches them to support those who are showing the weakness in following the true doctrine, in other words, they were invited for mutual assistance. To help someone who cannot give back. A lame person but his friends are not discouraged to find for him a cure. Paralyzed man represents a person who depends on others. Mark invites his community to look at such people who cannot supply to their own needs.

2.7.4.2. Carried by four men

The Markan scholarship, Mark explains that the use of passive voice is to show that the paralytic man was depending on other people in both physical and spiritual ways.⁶⁴ He was well carried; all four corners of the stretcher had a person. It means this man was protected. *παραλυτικὸν αἰρόμενον ὑπὸ τεσσάρων*. The four men represent the whole group of men who came bringing the man. Some commentators say that this support was beyond a physical support, these men carried their friend both physically and spiritually.⁶⁵ The verse shows that the paralytic man brought by many people (some men) replacing themselves on the way so that they may not get tired. And in the second part it appears clear that the four men had a lot of energy because of the exchange they had with others.

The Greco-Roman civilization had influence on the daily life of people during Mark evangelization. This civilization was known for social inequality, by the example of the paralytic man being carried, Mark invites his fellow to support those in need without any idea of retrocession. Many people assist those who will assist them one day, but this example teaches about the help of the need.

The community to whom Mark wrote this message in the early century faced persecution. They were divided to two, some faith would have been weakened, injured and they were discouraged to follow Christianity. Mark strengthened them to apply the mutual support in the matter of faith as people helped the physical weak persons to approach Jesus. The reading throughout the Book of Acts confirms that the

⁶⁴ Benjamin Pascut *The so-called "passivumdivinum in Mark's Gospel*, Cambridge, 2012, p. 314

⁶⁵ Idem, p. 315

early Christians were in a big number poor, slaves and sick persons. Those who were still strong were encouraged to help the weak people not only to participate in Christian-gathering as church but help them to reach where Jesus was to be found meaning to keep their faith, despites challenge they were facing.

V 4. And, when they were unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him, and after digging an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralyzed man was lying. (Mark 2:4, NASB).

2.7.5. When they were unable to get to him because of the crowd, they removed the roof

Although there was “no record of a verbal expression of faith, the action of the man’s friends is sufficient to indicate their confidence in Jesus’ healing power... and their determination to draw on it for their friend’s benefit. Jesus saw “faith of the four men and of the man himself. There is no reason for excluding his faith. They all had confidence in the power and willingness of Jesus to heal this desperate case.⁶⁶ Jesus saw their action as an expression of faith.⁶⁷ Christopher D. Marshal in his book “faith as a theme in Mark’s narrative revised by C. Clifton Black (1991) argues that the four men refused to be deflected from their goal, since they had been blocked by the human obstacle at the door and by the physical barrier of the roof which separated Jesus from them.⁶⁸

The crowd teaches Mark’s audience about the challenge they may face during their commitment of bringing others to Jesus. The crowd was for them an obstacle that could limit their faith to Jesus’ coming to liberate them from the Romans. In the early century, many start to doubt whether Jesus will come and give freedom to those under domination of the Romans. In the political side, this crowd could mean the Roman power who wanted to silence Jewish insurrection. Brian w. Jones states that in year 67-70, Titus subdued Jerusalem and captured John, the son of Levi who was

⁶⁶ Isaiah Ola Obolarin. *Jesus Personal Identity Disclosure: An exegetical Study of Mark 2:1-12*, Ogun, state, Nigeria, p 36

⁶⁷ France, R. T. *The New International Greek Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, 2002: Eerdmans.

⁶⁸C. Clifton Black. *Faith as a theme in Mark’s narrative*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 111

Jewish leader. So, Romans regarded Jews and Christians as enemies and wanted to silence their freedom of worshipping Jesus.⁶⁹

The early community were informed that in supporting the weak to reach where Jesus is, they will find obstacles which will try to discourage them in their goal. They ought to make their faith in action by using other ways to help the weak, and marginalized people to reach Jesus.

In the early century, the growing movement of Christianity was viewed with suspicion by the authorities and the people of Rome because of the refusal of worshipping their gods. In Acts 25:1-12, the author narrates that Paul was appealing to Ceasar, which probably means that they were not safe. The first state-driven persecution of Christians happened in the reign of Nero and that it involved the deaths of Peter and Paul, and the mass execution of Christians in the aftermath of the great fire of July 64 C.E. as recorded by Tacitus.⁷⁰

The political challenge such this, was blocking Christians to worship freely and so, some were forced to leave their faith. In this context, the example of removing the roof is to tell them they will face challenges but they ought to overcome them by finding other ways to reach their goal which will not be taken for granted, since Jesus sees their efforts.

V 5. *Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “my child, your sins are forgiven.” (Mark 2:5 NLT).*

2.7.6. Seeing their faith

Faith is seen by the real action of men who brought the paralytic. *Καὶ ἰδὼν Ἰησοῦς τὴν πίστιν*⁷¹ They accompanied their faith by several actions as recorded in this passage: they carried, they climbed the roof, they opened and lowered the man. Jesus knew their determination, and He knew that they have faced obstacles for entering vertically. He knew that they had faith to Him alone as says Paul in his epistle to

⁶⁹ Brian w. Jones. *Emperor Titus*, Palgrave Macmillan, 1993, p. 117

⁷⁰ Brent D. Shaw. *The myth of the Neronian persecution*, the journal of Roman studies, vol 105, 2015, p. 73

⁷¹ Barbara A. et al. *The Greek New Testament*, Deutsche Bible Gesellschaft America Bible society, 2014, p. 122

Galatians 2:16. The paralyzed man also demonstrated his faith by accepting to be carried, because it is not an obligation to be brought. In reality, anybody can see faith but everyone can see the action of faith thus why Jesus teaches with a practical example.

The examples of Abraham found in Genesis 15:6 and of Rahab in Joshua 2: show that human being is justified by the action, rather than faith alone. While in the early century, the heretical movement called Marcionism argued that a man is justified by his faith alone, regardless of his work.⁷² For Martin Luther if any element of justification lay decisively with the human will or with a human work, there could be no assurance of salvation.⁷³

The believers of the early century, reading this, were encouraged to follow the true faith found in the Bible and needed by Jesus. At the same time, this scripture discouraged them not to follow the teaching of Marcion, the heretic man. Mark calls the early believers to accompany their faith with action.

Jesus sees their faith through the work they have done; the bible tells that faith alone is useless and dead. James 2:7 explains that true faith goes hand in hand with work, and this what is demonstrated in the scene of the healing of paralytic man.

The readers of Mark must show their faith by doing action. This might address the issue of inequality brought by the rule of the Roman empire and so, believers ought to live in good terms with those in need. They must be different from others who could not assist their friends.

2.7.6.1. Faith

The word faith comes from the Greek word *πίστιν* which means the state of being someone in whom confidence can be placed, faithfulness, reliability, fidelity, commitment. John B. Cobb, revised by Benjamin W. McCraw (2015) posits that “faith” is primarily juxtaposed with “reason” it is one believe without rational justification.

⁷² Robert M. Grant. *Heresy and criticism*, Westminster, 1993, p 33

⁷³ Carl R. Trueman. *Grace alone salvation as a gift of God*, Zondervan, 2017, p 125

The beliefs may be affirmed on the basis of authority or as private illumination or simply as the result of decision.⁷⁴The epistle to Hebrews chapter 11:1: *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1, ESV)*

The people who brought their friend to Jesus relied all their trust to Jesus, having been convinced in advance that Jesus has the power of healing their friend. These men had hope that Jesus will heal their friend before they realized his healing.

According to Brian Treanor, faith is divided to two: there is “faith that...” and “faith in...”, the first tends to concern itself with making claims about some particular thing and the latter has to do with one’s fidelity to and trust in a reality. He concludes saying that to have faith in something is to recognize and affirm its worth.⁷⁵Faith by itself cannot be seen until it transforms an individual. An individual who is transformed by faith will show what he believes in action.

2.7.6.2. Faith in action or work

Men who carried, climbed, opened and lowered the paralytic man demonstrated their faith in doing a wonderful action, that Jesus saw it himself. Faith is not justified, and neither God nor people can see whether an individual has faith or no. thus, what James, servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ in his letter (James 2:14-26) encourages his fellow Jews to put their faith in practice. It means, they ought to apply practically what they have believed in the scripture. Many in Christianity have faith but when it comes time for showing it through action, they are not able. The Bible is requesting to be the doer of faith.

2.7.7. My child, your sins are forgiven

The paralytic man being called by Jesus “*my child*” shows that he was accepted to be part of Jesus’ family which is the kingdom of heaven. *Τέκνον ἀφίενταί σουαί ἁμαρτίαι.*⁷⁶ Jesus showed him compassion and love. Therefore, the paralytic man by

⁷⁴Read faith and trust to find how an individual can get what he wants as longer as he has trust to the authority or power to whom he submits his thought, International Journal for philosophy, pp. 35

⁷⁵ Brian Treanor. *Faith*, UCL Press, 2022, p 277

⁷⁶ Barbara A. et al. *The Greek New Testament*, Deutsche Bible Gesellschaft America Bible society, 2014, p 122

deserved every good thing found in the house of his father. The good thing was the healing of his body. But unexpectedly, Jesus begins with the spiritual healing because of the sin the man had done but it was to show the scribes that He had authority to forgive the sins. The biblical understanding of Jesus' statement is rooted not only from the divine nature of Jesus but also from the Jewish culture convinced that every suffering referred to someone's sin. In other words, according to the Jews, sick person was the man against whom God was angry. And so, having that in their minds, the four men, including the paralytic himself knew that the wrath of God was on this man because of sin he has committed, therefore they were to look for forgiveness.

It is true that Jewish culture associated sickness with sin, but for these four men, it appears as unexpected, since their main goal was the healing of their friend. Jesus who knows the real challenge decided to start from the root of the affaire. It shows that Jesus restored the paralytic to be part of God's kingdom, because the healing is for those who are in the kingdom of God. Ireneus in his book *against heresies* argues that repentance and forgiveness are the key point to enter in the communion with God.⁷⁷ In the same perspective, the apostle Peter speaking to the gathering people the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2:38:

Peter said to them, "repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy spirit. (Acts 2:38, NASB)

Jesus begins by the forgiveness of man's sin so that he partakes the kingdom of God and he had to receive every good thing he wanted. It means that the paralytic man was far from the kingdom but what Jesus did, He first took him back and then, gave him the physical need, he wanted. This was to inform the early believers nobody can be restored while he is not living in communion with Jesus. Therefore, a must for repentance.

⁷⁷Thus, the reason why the introductory part of Mark, the author informs his readers that Jesus was telling people that the kingdom of God near, and to enter it, they have to repent from their sins.

The destruction of the Temple in year 70 C.E by the Romans led by Titus was one reason for the weakening faith of many. According to their teaching before the coming of Jesus, healing was a ceremonial done in the temple. By this event, Mark teaches them that healing and forgiveness comes directly from Jesus and doesn't stop in Temple as they may think. The Jewish Temple was a place of unity, purity and holiness, the place of intercession between the divine and the human.⁷⁸ Mark teaches also that Jesus doesn't reject physical sick persons who come as it was opposite in the Jewish culture.

2.7.7.1. Jesus' authority to forgive sin

The gospel according to Mark describes very to the audience, the person about whom the book is talking. It says: *the beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the son of God. (Mark 1:1, NIV)*. In the very beginning verse, Mark demonstrates that Jesus is the "Son of God", this is a declaration of saying that as relationship with the divinity of God. It is declaration that "Jesus Himself was God" and "equal with God" in Gospel according to John 5:18, the religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus because he was calling God His father, making himself equal with God. In Mark' account, Jesus' authority to forgive the paralytic man's sin was God's authority because in the very beginning, he told his readers that Jesus was God Himself living among His people.

Probably when Titus destroyed the temple in year 70 A.D, Christianity separated from Judaism, doubt started to circulate if He would have power, why the Romans subdued Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. The message of Jesus' power to forgive sin gave hope to the readers who were doubting of the person of Jesus in the early century.

2.7.7.2. Exorcism

Exorcism and deliverance confuse many people. It is good to know that exorcism is the attempt to control and cast out or expel evil spirit or demons from a habitat, person, place or item. Deliverance however, is wider in scope than exorcism, is a

⁷⁸ Marx, Dalia. *The missing temple: the status of the temple in Jewish culture following its destruction*, *European Judaism: A journal for the new Europe*, vol. 46, no.2, 2013, p 61.

process of being saved or set free. This is the process of liberating, rescuing or setting free a person, a place, an object from demonic or negative force domination.⁷⁹

Exorcism differs from deliverance, James Collin says that in Christian context, exorcism is a related to sacramental rite by which evil influence, more specifically, an evil personality which has in some sense taken possession of human subject, is removed. And deliverance doesn't focus on the aesthetic appeal of liturgy to alleviate some forms of demonization.⁸⁰ People are divided into groups according to these two practices aiming the same goal. The charismatic or Pentecostals criticize exorcism, saying that it is idolatry. A big number of people are ready for deliverance because they are convinced that Jesus has abolished the rite.

In Pentecostals churches, believers don't avoid to use "exorcism" due to an association of the word with "people using ancestral power, and as the result they suggest that they use the word deliverance."⁸¹ "to focus on healing in the history of Christianity is to attend to important elements of continuity amid the jumble of competing doctrines, innumerable churches, disparate behaviors, and historical development."⁸²

Believers are facing challenges to recognize where the deliverance according to the Holy spirit is because everyone involved in this ministry pretends working with Him, but the reality in the field shows the opposite. Dumitescu, in his book *a historical survey of healing and exorcism* states "if for the apostolic church miraculous healings and exorcism were natural, these became more and more problematic with the institutionalization of the church after the Constantinian revolution. Indeed, according to the general church history, since that period the validation of divine authority has changed to the validation of individual holiness and sacred objects and rituals.

⁷⁹ Sowah Ablorh. *Deliverance practice in contemporary Ghanaian neo-prophetic churches*, semantic scholar.org. 2018

⁸⁰ James M. Collins. *Exorcism and deliverance ministry in the twentieth century*, Wipf and stock Publishers, 2009, p. 15

⁸¹ J. Brown. *Pentecostalism and deliverance or exorcism?* Lagos, Nigeria, 2011, p. 15

⁸² Porterfield, Amanda. *Healing in the History of Christianity*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 3

In most cases, both exorcism and deliverance are done to healing both physical sickness or spiritual. Many pastors have said that for physical diseases they don't have drugs to give to patient but the only thing they give is to speak spiritually and then, manifestations come physically. The restoration of paralytic man in God's kingdom made him countable for good health, because in God's presence there is no pain. The book of Revelation 21:4 says: *He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or crying or pain, for the old things has passed way.*

The forgiveness of sin declared to the paralytic man played double role. In one hand it was to associate him with God's kingdom since nobody can inherit it without being part. In other hand, it played the role of exorcism. On the exorcism of the paralytic man, Jesus didn't use anything apart from his word. In some other parts of the New Testament, Jesus uses thing from the nature to cure the sick. These two ways of healing give bath to two different perspectives of healing. There is healing by exorcism.

Verse 5 demonstrates that Jesus heals and forgives those who partake his family. From this same verse, it is clear that Jesus doesn't reject any sick or weak person but he welcomes both and give them a good rest because He has a divine authority which was been put to doubt by the religious leaders of His time.

V 6. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and there asking themselves, (Mark 2:6, KJV)

2.7.8. But there were certain of the Scribes sitting there

The conjunction “*but*” introduces an opposition. Whatever Jesus did was contracted by the religious leaders because of taking Him as a simple human being rather than a divine being. Coming from the Greek word *γραμματέύς* meaning an expert in the law, scholars versed in the law, scribes⁸³. The scribes are the people trained in the law of Judaism, experts in the opinion of proper conduct. they appear several times in the book of Mark as critics of Jesus. in this pericope, of “blasphemes” the supposed blasphemy consist in the assumption of the Divinity prerogative. Who is able except

⁸³Frederick William Dnaker. *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament*, Cambridge, 2021, p. 182

one God?” The statement of the scribes is undeniable but they ignored the possibility of a man speaking for God. Jesus is accused of doing what God alone “One God” (Deut. 6:14) can do not that he claims to be God (Guelich 1989. The danger of blasphemy is a serious one that calls for death penalty (Lev. 24:15, 16).⁸⁴ This is called for in Mark 3:6 and actually invoked at his trial (Mark 14:64). The scribes charge Jesus the presence of scribes in account comes to oppose what Jesus has done to the paralytic man. Grammatically, the writer shows that opposition by the use of the conjunction “but”, to mean, there is something which is coming to contract the previous. During public teachings, the presence of teachers of law was recognized and they were given a respective place in front, because they had a task to accomplish, they were evaluating every new *Rabbi*. They were sent officially by the religious council to attend any teaching in order to avoid a teaching that could contract with the Jewish law.

In the book of Torah, the human teachers are not given independence of divine authority, any prophet neither a rabbi had forgiven sin. The opposite is that they asked God to forgive people’s sin and God Himself declared to “forgive iniquity and transgression and sin” Exodus 34:6-7. Moses requested God to pardon people’s sin in Numbers 14:19-20. Aware of forgiveness in the law of Moses the group of scribes present at Jesus’ teaching in the house in Capernaum realized that He was blaspheming.

The passage tells us that Jesus started to get opposition from the religious leaders accusing Him to bring a false teaching that contract Moses law. And this is what will take Him to the cross. Believers of the early century were reminded through this scripture that those religious leaders were still present, opposition the teaching of Jesus. In the previous verse, it has been said that the teaching of Jesus’ good news faced opposition through heretic movements.

The congregation of Mark by their time learnt that the opposition of the religious leaders begun earlier. They ought to continue with the belief in Jesus’ miracles

⁸⁴ Isaiah Ola Abolarin. *Jesus’ Personal Identity Disclosure: An Exegetical study of Mark 2:1-12*, Ogun, State, Nigeria p. 37

instead of being weakened by the Jews who still unbelievers but work as religious leaders. The early community was also encouraged to rise their concerns openly during their prayer instead of criticizing silently something they don't understand well in Christianity.

2.8. Conclusion

This chapter examined Mark 2:1-6 and showed that Jesus responds to those who come to him with genuine faith, a faith expressed through action. It highlights his divine authority to heal and forgive, and shows that he does not turn away the weak or the sick, but welcomes them and meets their needs. The passage also presents the opposition of the Jewish religious leaders, who failed to understand Jesus and treated him as only an ordinary man. Finally, it warns against keeping criticism silent and encourages people to speak openly about their concerns so they can be addressed.

CHAPTER THREE: THE IDENTIFICATION OF PHYSICAL ILLNESS IN PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES (SECTS) OF BUNIA

3.1. Introduction

The news of healing of physical sickness through exorcism is reported in many Pentecostal churches in Bunia. While medical services, government and private hospitals are in the city, the sick persons continue to seek for the spiritual intervention found especially in the Pentecostal churches. This chapter doesn't want to focus only on the information as spoken but it wants to find the real cases and talk to pastors and the sick persons who have join the Pentecostal churches in Bunia. This chapter will look the power of the Holy Spirit attracting the sick persons to be part of the Pentecostal members, the compassion of Pentecostal churches towards the sick persons, the demonization of every sickness in Pentecostal churches in Bunia, and the denial of falling sick of the Pentecostal churches' members.

3.2. Historical background of Pentecostal churches called sects

Pentecostal churches are protestant sects that emphasize spirit baptism as an experience different from conversion and evidenced by speaking in tongues (Acts 2:1-13). These churches teach the inspiration of the Bible, salvation by conversion, revival, instantaneous sanctification, divine healing; and claim to be a restoration of original Christianity.⁸⁵ Pentecostalism, in its contemporary form, constitutes a Christian religious movement that emerged in the early 20th century. The term "Pentecost" derives from the account in the Acts of the Apostles (2:1-7), which depicts a moment of profound spiritual fervor. The movement arose against the backdrop of global upheaval in religious thought, acquiring its symbolic identity through the experiential phenomenon of baptism in the Spirit. Its origins are commonly traced to 01 January 1901 at C.F. Parham's Bible school in Topeka, Kansas and its subsequent popularization through the Azusa Street Revival of

85 S. A. Owoeye. *Marriage in the deeper life Bible church*, Asia Journal of Theology Vol. 22 No 2, 2008 p. 294.

1906.⁸⁶Pentecostalism may be defined as that stream of Christianity rooted on Pentecost experience which emphasizes personal salvation in Christ as a transformative experience of the Holy Spirit. The initial experience, such as pneumatic phenomena as “speaking in tongues, prophecies, vision, healing, miracles and signs and wonders have come to be accepted, valued and encouraged among members as evidence of the active presence of God’s spirit.⁸⁷The observance of the “Bill of Human Rights’ and religious freedoms as enshrined in our national constitutions have contributed to the proliferation of Pentecostal multiplicity in Africa and beyond. The mushrooming of Pentecostal ecclesial bodies is a health development in any country but the challenge is that some of them have manipulative, syncretistic, distorted teachings or commercial agenda.⁸⁸

The growth of Pentecostalism has contributed a lot in the spread of Christianity in all the world. The Pentecostal and charismatic movements in all their multifaceted variety constitute the fastest growing group of churches within Christianity today.⁸⁹ According to some often-quoted estimates there are over five hundred million adherents worldwide, found in almost every country in the world.⁹⁰Coming back to Africa to narrow this point it is said that before the Pentecostalism came to Africa the manifestation of the spirit had been prominent in the lives of some persons, referred to as prophets. These prophets would have broken from the mainline churches; some were former traditional priests who had accepted Christ. Among these prophets, history records William Wade Harris of Liberia, Joseph Babalola of Nigeria, Simon Kimbangu of Congo DR. and Joseph Appiah of Ghana. They aimed at the establishment of African Instituted Churches encouraging the ministry of prophecies, healing and casting demons.⁹¹

⁸⁶Mayuka G. Bondo. *Pentecostalism in the Democratic Republic of Congo: A glance at the past, present and future through the lens of three fundamental dimensions*, aosis.co.za, 2026

⁸⁷ Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu. *African Pentecostal/ Charismatic Christianity*, World Pulse, 2011, p 15

⁸⁸ Machael George Gadamer. *The evolution and evaluation of Pentecostalism in Global contexts*, London, 2011, p.11

⁸⁹A. Anderson. *An introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 1

⁹⁰Idem

⁹¹ Opoku Onyinah. *The movement of the Spirit around the world in Pentecostalism*, Church of Pentecost, Ghana, 2013, p. 276

In eastern Congo, Pentecostalism developed through the Community of Free Pentecostal Churches in Africa (CELPA), whose national headquarters are in Bukavu. CELPA has been established in Congo since 1922, under the impetus of Norwegian missionaries from the Norwegian Free Church Mission. Pastor Barrat and Lévi Péthrees, both expelled from their original churches, joined forces to send the first expedition, made up of the Swede Axel B. Lingren and the Norwegian couple Gunnerius Tollefsen and Hanna Veum, in August 1921. It should be noted in passing that Pastor Barrat is the founder of the Pentecostal Church of Norway. This Scandinavian missionary team, from Sweden and Norway, benefited from the experience of the Norwegian Tollefsen, who had previously worked as a missionary in Luebo in collaboration with the American Presbyterian Mission in Congo. It was he who persuaded his compatriots to become interested in evangelizing eastern Congo.⁹²

In the North-Eastern Congo, especially in Bunia, Pentecostal churches called sects such as: the city of refuge, the city of Rest, FEPACO (Fraternité Evangélique de Pentecôte en Afrique au Congo), Christco (Christ in Congo), etc. emphasize the presence of the Holy Spirit. Believers are convinced that the signs that marked the first community of Christians in the early century as recorded in the Book of Acts are to be expected today with the same outcomes. In Bunia, churches like FEPACO have been triggered by the development of mission model built on a process of glocalization that promotes an indigenous theology, a local theology for missions and well-being and a comprehensive view of prayer for all needs.⁹³ Thus, the reason for many physical sick people to join Pentecostal churches in Bunia.

3.3. The presence of the Holy Spirit for healing the sick in the sects of Bunia (city of refugee, city of the rest, FEPACO and Christco)

Pentecostal churches of City of Refugee (in French: cité de refuge), city of Rest (in French: cité de Repos), FEPACO and Christco put their emphasis on the presence of Holy Spirit as it is recorded in the Book of Acts. The Holy Spirit is the helper of

⁹² Sebastien Kalombo Kapuku. *La pentecotisation du protestantisme a Kinshasa*, Afrique contemporaine, 2024

⁹³ George Pirwoth Atido. *Church Revitalization in Congo: Missiological insights from One church's efforts at glocalization*, International Bulletin of Mission Research, 2017, p. 1

Christians, as Jesus Himself promised to His disciples. When the Holy Spirit is among people, it means that God Himself dwells in the midst of His people. Where the living God dwells, there is no sickness neither suffering. Pentecostal churches of Bunia are of the view that in their churches the presence of God is fully and therefore, there is no door for physical sickness.

The fullness of God in City of Refuge, city of Rest, FEPACO and Christco in Bunia is not only proclaimed by themselves but the surrounding people, when testimonies of healing by exorcism are taking place regularly. These revival churches focus on daily prayer and claim to keep themselves far from sinful nature. They know very well that God's manifestation can happen only in a place where people fear Him.

The work of Holy Spirit is to restore, empower and strengthen the church of Christ. Pentecostal members through their teachings have come to realize that if they focus on the Holy Spirit alone the body of Christ will be empty and dry. Many pastors who started Pentecostalism did wonders because they were walking in the light of the Holy Spirit.

The experience has shown that any pastor's prayer can heal the sick person if the Holy Spirit doesn't accompany the process of healing and deliverance/exorcism. Some pastors who are not walking with Holy Spirit pray and people get healed because they are working with the devil. In the book of Acts 8:9-10, a man named Simon was good at miracles but his power was not coming from God.⁹⁴In that same perspective, the Apostle Paul warns Christians of Corinth in 2 Corinthians 11:14 saying "And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light". This means that the source of deliverance and exorcism in Pentecostal churches is not only God but some other pastors are demonic.

The presence of the Holy Spirit within the FEPACO, Christco, city of Refuge and city of rest has helped many people to come out from many physical challenges. Currently, people are coming from different regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo to look

⁹⁴ ESV 8 :9-10

for healing and deliverance either for themselves or for their relatives. One of the pastors of city of refuge said:

The mission of city of refuge is to bring back the holy spirit that has disappeared for a long among the people of Bunia. And where the holy spirit is, there is no sickness.

Some pastors and the team of prayer⁹⁵ contacted during this research argue that they pray under the guidance of Holy Spirit. One day, when some missionaries from America went to visit a Pentecostal church in Bunia, they confessed in public to have met the presence of God. According to the pastor who is the leader of that church, since that day, many people trust and have hope that they are following the right God and the Holy Spirit has never departed from them.

In such context, the news of that church is spreading in all the city of Bunia and every week new members are coming to join the church. Some are not joining to seek the face of God. In that seeking purposes are either to get money, marriage, children, jobs, peace in the region since the eastern part of Congo disturbed by neighboring countries, and many stay in those churches to look for health and deliverance.

3.4. The tangible cases of physical illnesses in the City of Refuge, city of rest, FEPACO and Christco

The sub-Sahara Africa today is totally inconceivable apart from the presence of Christianity. The mentioned part of Africa is where Christian activity is growing faster and it is noticeable within the Pentecostal strand of Christianity.⁹⁶ Moreover, the Pentecostal movement in its forms constitutes the fastest growing group within Christianity in the contemporary world.⁹⁷ Many people have joined the sects of city of Refuge, city of Rest, FEPACO and Christco in Democratic Republic of Congo because of sickness and their aim is to look for healing. During data collection, pastors and many

⁹⁵ This is the intercession team found doing exorcism in Hoho, one of the quarters within the city of Bunia, they were coming from the city of refuge main branch of Bunia town.

⁹⁶ Kwabena Asamoah G. *Pentecostalism in Africa and the changing face of Christian mission*, mission studies, vol xix, No 2-38, 2002, p 17

⁹⁷ Opoku Onyinah. *The movement of the Spirit around the world in Pentecostalism*, church of Pentecost, Ghana, 2013, p 273

people, especially women confessed that the cases of physical sick people are many in the church. They argued that the fact of having many sick people is because the churches are handling their issues⁹⁸ and people are get healed in the name of Jesus Christ.

Physical illnesses are reported and confirmed by churches members in the sects (city of refuge, city of rest, FEPACO and Chrisco) in Bunia in Democratic Republic of Congo. The sampling done in this study shows in all these churches, there are cases of physical illness.

Many of sick people found in different stations of these churches confirmed that they have been waiting for recovery more than six months. Pastors in charge of healing ministry in those sects said that those who delay over than six months are the people who started praying from other churches and they were filled with bad Spirit. In Bunia, many people suffering with physical diseases find refuge in different Pentecostal churches because of the advertising of miracles of healing. Some other churches name themselves, the city of refuge, city of Rest, Christco etc. The current observation shows that every day, during the week the sick people with their relatives choose one Pentecostal church, where there is fire of prayer to seek for healing of their fellow.

Jesus Christ commanded His disciples in the gospel according to Mathew 10:8, “*heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy and drive out the demons*”.⁹⁹The Pastors of city of refuge, city of rest, FEPACO and Christco in Bunia are applying this passage strictly and the fact that people are still coming with sicknesses and being healed that means God’s support is within those churches. The reason why Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity has grown so significantly is its insistence that Jesus Christ still heals today, the miracles recounted in the Gospels are not only parables but a teaching on how the same Jesus continues to heal and taken as model for Christian’ healing. it is said that the fact of looking for the

⁹⁸ Pentecostal churches (sects) of Bunia are able to take care of sick people in many ways like: finance, health, social etc.

⁹⁹Mathew 10 :8, NIV

physical healing may not be understood well for the western world like UK, for those in Africa, some people struggling with the ill health and don't have healthcare, the healing promise is an attractive message for survival.¹⁰⁰ There are many types of physical illnesses in Pentecostal churches of Bunia some are:

3.4.1. Fever

At the introduction of this chapter, it is said that Pentecostal churches of Bunia are becoming hospitals without knowing themselves. The data collection of this study has found that some people are coming with fever to be prayed for. This people believe that Jesus Himself prayed for Peter's mother-in-law in (Luke 4:38 NIV) "Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her." The believe is rooted in the Bible, taking back to the early century where hospital where not many and available for everybody, but Bunia is a city and the head quarter of the province of Ituri where hospitals and medical treatment are available to every.

A group of men and women suffering for fever, and have just come for prayer confirmed that prayers have power to heal fever because they were not feeling well before they came to the church but now, they can talk and stand outside with others.¹⁰¹ They recognized that recovery was not yet done completely but they believe that they will completely be well. The only one pastor in charge of exorcism and healing ministry at city of refuge commented that fever is nothing before the God of Jules Mulindwa.¹⁰² Fever is not the only illness found in Pentecostal churches of Bunia to be exorcized but there are many others.

¹⁰⁰Martyn Percy et al. *The study of ministry: a comprehensive survey of theory and best practice*, London, 2019, pp, 366

¹⁰¹ The group of women found in prayer for exorcism in city of refuge (cité de refuge) in Bunia town/ Democratic Republic of Congo.

¹⁰² Prophet Dr. Jules Mulindwa is the church founder of the city of refuge in Democratic Republic of Congo. The believers of this church pray to his God (prayer to the God of prophet Jules Mulindwa)

3.4.2. Physical disability

Pentecostal churches especially (city of refuge, city of rest, FEPACO and Christco) have a high participation of people suffering with physical disability. These people have joined these sects, because they were told that God worshipped in these churches is able to make the lame persons to throw their stuff and start walking by themselves. A lame woman who had left city of rest argued that she went there thinking that what she had been hearing in the radio was true, but after six months she did walk normally, *“these people want just to increase the number of their Christians healing is not there.”*

The responsible pastor of the mentioned sect (Pentecostal church) responded to the woman by saying: God doesn't work in human being perspective, the people who don't have faith can limit God to work in six month but for us God is unlimited, and he Jesus healed the paralytic man in Mark 2 and healed the sick at the pool in John 5:8. This same Jesus is able to heal the lame and those having different disabilities.¹⁰³

Some members of these sects (city of refuge, city of rest, FEPACO (Nzambemalamu in lingala) meaning God is good and Christco argue that the presence of people suffering with physical disabilities in the churches looking for healing could not make other people to wonder because Jesus Himself did it and gave the church the right to continue with his ministry. They quote Mathew 10:” according to them, physical disabilities are part of illness and therefore, they authority to pray and exorcize over them. While other sicknesses are well known by the people some others are still a big challenge since they are not able to mention the exact name.

3.4.3. HIV/AIDS

Pentecostal churches in Bunia have addressed the problem of diseased and infections that affect many people in the region and that cannot be cured by modern medicine. Many people who test positive for HIV believe that Jesus can still healing them. Although HIV has no known cure, Pentecostal pastors in Bunia often proclaim during public preaching that those suffering from the infection should come to the church for

¹⁰³ Responsible Pastor of the city of the rest, found in Bunia in Democratic Republic of Congo

prayer, since many have reportedly been healed. As a result, and many people attend, and some testify that they have been cured.

When people living with HIV in Bunia join these churches, they are often encouraged to stop taking medication and rely instead on faith in Jesus for healing. When some pastors were asked about this practice, they said that many people have been healed and that prayer for such cases continue every week, since Jesus entrusted his servants with the authority to heal all kinds of illness without exception.¹⁰⁴

During investigation to find out the truth, one of the families reported that their mother was HIV positive and she was taking drug and her health was ok, and she was lecturer at Teaching Training College of Bunia. But when city of Refuge came in 2021 in Bunia, the woman started praying there and the prophet told her to stop swallowing medicine. After two weeks, the woman died, and so, it is not true, that church cannot heal HIV with their prayer.

These investigations either from the pastor or from the Christians made this research to confirm that the HIV positive people come for prayer in the Pentecostal churches to look for healing as many other people with other kinds of illness.

3.4.4. Unknown illness in Pentecostal churches (city of rest, city of refuge, FEPACO and Christco)

The unknown illness exists very well; it is reported that some people were admitted in the hospitals but medical personnel didn't find anything like illness. Instead of wasting their wealth, they encouraged them to go home. As the pain continued these suffering people decided to seek solution in one of the Pentecostal churches of Bunia. The Pentecostal church tried to ask God to reveal the illness nothing came out as the exact name of the illness.

A woman who has been told to go back home from the referral hospital of Bunia with his young boy of 10 years old said:

¹⁰⁴ One of the pastors of city of Refuge found at the church during prayer for healing and exorcism.

It is not easy; I was admitted in the referral hospital of Bunia with my young boy of 10 years old. The little boy could scratch himself everywhere, but the diagnostic couldn't show us the exact illness the young boy was suffering from. We came here at Christco, thinking that God could reveal to his servant (pastor) the illness or heal it completely but nothing had happened the boy is not doing well.

Two pastors of FEPACO (Nzambe malamumu) confirmed the case of the unknown illness, they say that that case is among the complicated cases, because they are praying for something not well known. They are convinced that God is aware of the hidden thing to human sights. According to them people ought to have faith because God they serve will unwrap the hidden illness and therefore, they will pray and exorcize it while knowing the sickness very well. The Pentecostal members in general have different beliefs when it comes the matter of look at the origin of illnesses.

3.5. Beliefs about physical illness in the city of refuge, FEPACO, Christco and city of rest

Pentecostal members of city of refuge, FEPACO, city of rest and Christco believe that physical illnesses exist but they are not caused by the same source. Some think that they illnesses are due to natural or biological causes. This category of people is not confused, they think that nature has power on the living creature, especially human being. According to them, if they are sick, it is because the nature has decided so.

The second group argue that sicknesses are caused by the evil spirit and curse from elders. This group relates illness to the lineage of the suffering persons. The spiritual causes have of illness have negatively many sick persons who come for prayer of exorcism in these sects of Bunia. Something that they are physically sick because their grand-mother cursed them. A lady in need of exorcism said:

Every kind of physical illness attack me and I am the custom of prayer and exorcism because I am told that my ant said that I will be falling sick every time, unfortunately she is no longer alive. Only prayer will save me.

Most of people coming for prayer and exorcism in FEPACO, Christco, city of the rest and city of refuge argue that illnesses are caused by the spiritual world. Thus why, they have coming to get solution form the powerful spiritual world (church of Christ).

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter examines how physical illnesses are understood and identified in Pentecostal churches in Bunia (FEPACO, Christco, the City of Refuge, and the city of the Rest). It finds that participants believe the Holy Spirit is actively working in these churches, and that cases of physical illness are common. Many people therefore look to these Pentecostal churches for encounters with Jesus through exorcism and healing. They attribute physical illness to causes such as nature, spirits, or curses, but emphasize that only Jesus can truly heal, even when some pastors do not behave properly.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE ANALYSIS OF HEALING BY EXORCISM IN PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES OF BUNIA

4.1. Introduction

Many of sick persons join Pentecostal churches for the purpose of being healed by exorcism. Cases of exorcism are reported several times in different Pentecostal churches of Bunia. This chapter is not against exorcism rather it wants to analyze the impact of exorcism in the physical health of patients who came to Pentecostal churches with the hope of being healed from the diseases they were suffering. This chapter also provides tangible cases of sick people healed by exorcism and others who were not healed despite of exorcism declared upon them, the compassion preserved to the weak and sick persons coming for exorcism the divine authority by which exorcism is done, and the critics facing Pentecostal churches due to exorcism they are performing in Bunia.

4.2. Background of healing by exorcism in FEPACO, Christco, city of refuge and city of the rest in Bunia

Healing by exorcism is frequently reported by people who joined the Pentecostal churches with purpose of being exorcized. Pentecostal churches themselves proclaim that the aim of their installation in Bunia is to give health to those whom Satan has been disturbing with sickness. Pentecostal churches of Bunia see every physical sickness to be caused by an evil spirit. Therefore, every healing of physical sickness must go through the process of deliverance, which means the interaction of the individual with the pastor, if the sick person is unable to speak, his friends will tell the origin of his sickness to the pastor, the following step is confession and then will come the step of exorcism to declare healing to the person.

Other Pentecost Pentecostal churches of Bunia, instead of deliverance prefer exorcism. These churches have convinced many people to come with water, either in a bottle or jerrycan and when the pastors lay hand on it, that water is used as holy water to cleanse every disease and purifies the human body which was suffering.

Some churches ask to their believers to bring their underwear, especially for women because of the revelation they got, saying that the devil bring his attacks from women's underwear. Some of Pentecostal churches heal the sick people with their handkerchiefs etc.

The healing of physical sickness either by exorcism in Pentecostal churches of Bunia is happening frequently and people themselves are testifying every day. Many theologians are seeing these things happening but they have never prioritized it as a scientific study.

4.3. Exorcism practices in Pentecostal churches of Bunia case of City of refuge, City of the Rest, FEPACO and Christco

The performance of exorcism prayer is conducted differently in different Pentecostal churches of Bunia and it is conducted in different ways. Some conduct it daily, weekly and occasionally. Pastors of Pentecostal churches, especially of the mentioned sects above have different methods to conduct exorcism prayer.

4.3.1. Exorcism with Prayer alone

Prayer covers everything and it is the helmet of spirit. While some pastors argue that prayer is the only method which is able to produce a good exorcism, because it is the only good moment when a person is in communication with God, some are of the view that it is not enough. Pentecostal churches like city of refuge, city of the rest, FEPACO and Christco are not convinced that prayer alone can be a good method to perform exorcism. Some Christians, respondents of the questionnaire of this study argue that prayer has power, if someone prays with faith, exorcism can happen and the sick person can be healed.

A man who has been looking for exorcism in city of refuge affirmed it, by saying that he attended exorcism prayer with faith without adding any other method, he got healed. The researcher wanted to know the truth, he contacted one of the pastors of the mentioned church. The latter commented that such Christians have never

confirmed such testimony in public during the service or the broadcast session. The church's policy for exorcism doesn't work with prayer alone.

When this study wanted to know more about the church policy concerning exorcism methods, pastors didn't give out, but from the questionnaire, the respondents made it easier. It is clear that the church submits the needy for exorcism to fasting, laying on hands and anointing oil.

4.3.2. Exorcism with fasting

Jesus Himself told the disciples that there are some diseases and illnesses that cannot be casted out with prayer alone until they accompany their program with fasting. Most of the cases of exorcism prayer are done in fasting mood. Pastors, including the prayer team and the sick people are told to observe fasting the day of their prayer in these mentioned sects of Bunia.

Fasting is an act where Pentecostals encounter the divine power. David Lambert in his journal *fasting as Penitential Rite: A Biblical Phenomenon?* Argues that fasting is a period of preparation and repentance to be washed in the blood of the Lamb and then enter the communication with God when an individual is holy.¹⁰⁵ Rooted in the Bible, Pentecostals pray and fast the day of prayer dedicated to the sick because Jesus Himself told His disciples in Mathew 17:21 that some of sickness doesn't come out easily except by prayer and fasting. The sects of city of refuge, city of the rest, FEPACO and Christco in Bunia have kept that passage in practice, they don't allow people to attend exorcism prayer if they are not fasting.

Pastors of FEPACO, city of rest, city of refuge and Christco find easier to check and evaluate the sick people in such condition of prayer and fasting because God is present to guide with kinds of prayer. Many have been healing in the session of prayer and fasting. A Christian of one of the Pentecostal churches of Bunia argued that he was suffering for headache but when he participated in prayer and fasting organized

¹⁰⁵ David Lambert. *Fasting as Penitential rite: A biblical phenomenon?* Harvard Theological Review, 2003, p, 481

by the church, he never feels that pain again. According to a pastor, the sick people don't feel comfortable if pastors don't lay hands on them during exorcism.

4.3.3. Exorcism with laying on hands in the sects of Bunia

Pentecostal pastors of city of refuge, city of the rest, FEPACO and Christco in Bunia have been supposed to be anointed by the Holy Spirit. Whatever, they will touch and say the word of blessing, it will be blessed. The Pentecostal-Charismatic world is highly diverse, and core shared conviction regarding Christ's ongoing healing, deliverance and exorcism ministry through the church have been incarnated in the various cultures and denominations that it finds itself in resulting in different styles of ministry.¹⁰⁶ The Pentecostal conviction of laying hands on the sick persons derives from Jesus' promise in the Book of Mark 16:17-18: *they will speak in new tongues... lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.*¹⁰⁷

The laying-on of hands on the sick people have a positive psychological impact in the sick person. The Pentecostal churches inherited this practice from both eastern and western churches, baptism and Catholic who suppose that the act of laying-on hands is the method to confer both grace, character and impartation of the Holy Spirit. They believe also that this practice was applied by the servants of God in the New Testament account. A thorough reading of Acts of Apostles shows that laying-on hands was common in the early century, for example in the Book of Acts 9:7 Ananias by laying-on his hands restored the sight to the stricken Saul and at the same time conferred the Holy Spirit. In Samaria, the imposition of hands of Apostles on the disciples was directly followed by the manifestation of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17). In Acts 19:6, Paul laid his hands upon them the Spirit of God came upon them, they spoke in tongues and prophesied etc. Opoku Onyinah comments that in Nigeria the Apostolic church believed in the restoration of the five-fold ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. They also believed that the laying-on of hands by apostles and prophets follows the baptism of the Spirit and manifestation of

¹⁰⁶ Martyn Percy et al. *The study of ministry: a comprehensive survey of theory and best practice*, London, 2019, p 371

¹⁰⁷ Mark 19 :17-18, NIV

spiritual gifts and other supernatural occurrences.¹⁰⁸the act of laying-on hands practiced in Pentecostal churches is understood as the transfer of power of the Holy Spirit from the one person to another, because the Holy Spirit dwells, there must be healing.

The laying-on of hands during prayer for the sick in Pentecostal churches is to be analyzed strictly because many have given testimonies about it. These testimonies have shown that many people have been delivered and healed by this act, it means that God who worked with Apostles and many people in the early church is still working up to now in Pentecostal churches of Bunia.

The laying-on hands on the sick person in Pentecostal churches of Bunia is not only the work of pastors, but for every believer since both have been baptized by the power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁹ According to some Pentecostal scholars, every person can impose his hands on a sick person and get deliverance and healing. In FEPACO, Christco, city of refuge and city of the rest, the practice of laying-on-hand is frequently done during exorcism prayer. The session of exorcism is some-times followed by the anointing oil.

4.3.4. Exorcism with anointing oil on the sick in the sects of Bunia

Recorded in the Bible, in the epistle of James *“is anyone among sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”* (James 5:14, ESV) he sects of city of refuge, city of the rest, FEPACO and Christco in Bunia practice the anointing oil during exorcism. Some people agree and say that when the oil was applied on their body, they were healed totally. Others don’t agree with them. Their view is that Christ has transformed all those traditions, if someone wants exorcism Jesus alone is the real exorcist, there is no need of applying oil on a person.

¹⁰⁸ Opoku Onyinah. *The movement of the spirit around the world in Pentecostalism, church of Pentecost*, Ghana, 2013, p, 277

¹⁰⁹ Pentecostal-charismatics are gathered in the community of brothers and sisters. Every one member is able to conduct exorcism as longer as he or she keeps him (herself) pure before God.

Among the respondents of this study, one said:

I have catholic background, I know well the bible, the use of anointing oil in Pentecostal churches is not against the scripture. The day, one pastor the pastors of Christco applied oil on my head, I recovered automatically, then and there.

One day, during his Block placement, the researcher saw a pastor convincing the team of pastoral visit about the anointing oil. The pastor asked for cooking oil in that house where pastoral visit had been carried, and told every body who had come for that visit to get oil, and lay hand on the woman who had been suffering for poison. This shows that members of Pentecostal churches of Bunia have the belief that anointing oil has power exorcism prayer.

The researcher did all the best to found the woman who had been anointed to ask her whether she got healed after that practice. She said no, but she confirmed that she was healed in Kampala in the hospital.

4.3.5. Exorcism with water

Water is among of methods used for exorcism in many Pentecostal churches. In Bunia, the Pentecostal churches are not different from others in worldwide. The sect called city of refuge is well known for the use of water for exorcism. Every day, people carry water from home, either in jerrycan, bottle or bucket to be blessed at the church and being used at home or at work. Those who are travelling put it in a bottle whenever they feel thirsty, they will mix with normal water and drink.

This water is used to accompany the process of exorcism. It is said that it cleanses all illness in the body. Many of the respondents have revealed that when prophet pray for that water it is no longer normal water. Water has power to heal every kind of illness.

According to some members, many have been healed by using water alone without even prayer. A woman asserts:

We don't jock with that water, when the man of God lay his hand and pray for it, it becomes more than water, more that medicine given at the hospital, thus, for us we just come here and get water for free charge.

The use of water has influenced many people and many have accepted it, despite of some who don't share the same belief. The city of refuge has been the powerful Pentecostal church known for healing by exorcism. But the same people are still coming for healing as if the exorcism done is not giving a total healing.

4.3.6. The outcomes of healing by exorcism in the sects of Bunia

Many pastors access the healing of a person who has been suffering by the testimony, and physical recovery. According to many of pastors, the proportion of exorcized people who get healed after each session is higher. But when looking at the faces of the people who usually come for exorcism and healing prayer, the finding tells that these are the same people.

Pentecostal pastors of Bunia are informed of health, they argue that after exorcism session being done, though an individual gives his testimony of being exorcized and feeling well, they usually encourage such people to go to hospital for checkup. Some pastors say that exorcism prayer is done while the person is encouraged to seek medical treatment alongside prayers.

A pastor of these argued that they pray while other are taking medicines, they don't forbid them treatment. God blesses someone who has at least something in his hand. They encourage members to take care of themselves and come for prayers.

4.3.7. The use of witchcraft for exorcism in FEPACO, city of refuge, city of the rest, Christco in Bunia/ DRC.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is one of the African countries known for witchcraft and sorcery. Evans-Pritchard (1937) quoted by Opoku Onyinah (2013)

argues that the witchcraft in Azande tribe¹¹⁰ seek to understand why specific mishaps occur to particular person and not to others and at particular places and times.¹¹¹ Pentecostal churches, being deep in Africanization of Christianity find that looking to know the real origin of suffering for someone, using African magic is not an issue as longer as the problem is known and the focus is now to look for healing.

The fear of God is no longer among them, instead of focusing their minds on God, and wait until God himself reacts for the healing of an individual, they have taken God's place and authority. The use of magic and witchcraft is reported by many people in Pentecostal churches. Some of them say that the things they while praying with pastors in Pentecostal church has discouraged them and therefore, they will no longer go back to look for their help because what they are doing is demonic.

This reminds about Jesus' discussion in Mark 3:22, when scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying that "He was possessed by Beelzebul" Jesus told them that Satan cannot cast out Satan. In the same way, Pentecostal churches, using witchcraft to cast the demons and healing the sick are doing nothing. They are adding more sicknesses in people, thus where the need of healing doesn't end because the situation is going worse instead of recovering.

Witchcraft cannot help people to gain their spiritual and physical health. Pastors' ought to come back to Jesus and start a new life with Him. This connects with the argument of one of the Pentecostal pastors who said: "pastor of one of the churches said that the healing that happens during prayer and fasting for the sick needs a sacrifice from both, the pastor and the sick person himself."

4.4. Claim of healing by exorcism in Pentecostal churches of Bunia

Exorcism differs from deliverance by the fact that the prophet or the pastor involves in the use of ritual and prophecies. The methods of healing and exorcism differ from

¹¹⁰ This ethnic group is found in Democratic Republic of Congo; they relate every sickness and natural event to something in their African perspective world.

¹¹¹ Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande, Oxford: Clarendon. The Azande are an ethnic group found in Democratic Republic of Congo, and history doesn't forget their practice of magic and witchcraft.

one church to another. Some prophets and pastors argue that that difference is due to the revelation that every pastor or prophet receives from God. Believers confirm that when the pastor receives a revelation, there is no doubt to whatever he tells them to do.¹¹²

The use of exorcism in healing ministry among the Pentecostal churches of Bunia has become common and the needy people don't care about the way it carried. For them, what matters is the healing. The exorcism takes place a day well-programed in a week, when the participants are encouraged to speak in public how they have been witched and healed by the ritual prayer organized by the church.

Pentecostal pastors of Bunia focus much on exorcism, some use white and black doves to heal and protect the people in need. The people who come to search for this kind of exorcism are the physical sick people and the politicians who want to keep their position in the government. This is how the Pentecostal churches are not only for the Pentecostal believers but even people from other denominations come to look just for the help and go back to their respective churches.

Exorcism organized by the Pentecostal churches of Bunia doesn't cure the ill persons nor keep the politicians in their position because it is some kind of witchcraft incarnated in these people. Commentators on healing and exorcism argue that many sick people subordinated in these practices, do come and claim the healing to attracted other people to come to church and make the pastor or the prophet rich.

Many Pentecostal churches have enslaved people with exorcism. Some people are today enslaving to walk with water everywhere in their back, since they are told that without that water they will not live or they will be bewitched in their place of work. With this, Pentecostal churches have taken away the minds of people, instead of focusing on God, their faith is now on the creatures.

¹¹² Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande, Oxford: Clarendon. The Azande are an ethnic group found in Democratic Republic of Congo, and history doesn't forget their practice of magic and witchcraft.

4.5. The belief on creatures for healing and protection in Pentecostal churches

Exorcism which is not connected to the Bible, it ends up leading people to idolatry. Pentecostal churches have been using exorcism without understanding its impact on Christian faith. Today, many of people who have seen and have been encouraged to use one of the creatures to protect them don't want to leave the practice. The Bible from Old Testament to New Testament recognizes the presence of plant serving for healing. Then Isaih said, "prepare a poultice of figs." They did so and applied it to the boil, and he recovered, *2Kings 20:7. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?... Jeremiah 8:22. ... the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations, Revelation 22:2.* These scriptures show that use of plant and other creature is not sin but believers must put it as gods.

Exorcism has taken people to idolatry without knowing. This is why in the previous sections we have been arguing that God is no longer in Pentecostal churches because of the pride and the idolatry that is taking place. The belief in plants, water, fire, and some animals to be the protectors of believers is to move far from Christianity. Thin is how humanity has fallen, Pentecostal members ought to be responsible of keeping the commandment of God and walk with Jesus Christ accordingly.

The fall of Pentecostal churches in the use of exorcism for the glory of God has affected many Christians and the entire Christianity. As said in chapter three that Pentecostalism has expended Christianity all over the world. This means its failure will impact negatively Christianity everywhere in the world. Therefore, as longer as Pentecostal churches have decided to leave God and give more importance in creature, thinking that the healing is coming form them. This means they are operating with witchcraft to deliver the sick people in need.

4.6. Failure of Pentecostal pastors of Bunia in healing by exorcism

The failure of healing by exorcism is recorded in the New Testament, when the disciples were not able to cast the demons from a young boy brought to them in the absence of Jesus. The disciples failed to cast out the demons because they were

surrounded with the unbelievers' people and they themselves didn't have faith.¹¹³ It means that exorcism requires faith from side of the minister and the person in need of deliverance. The Pentecostals fail to heal through exorcism because of lack of faith that comes either from the minister or from the needy persons. Another report says that many pastors in Pentecostal churches fail to deliver the physical sick persons because of the pride. The Bible is clear, it says in the epistle of James 4:6, "*God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble*". Pentecostal pastors have become arrogant because of healing that they have been at the beginning when Pentecostalism was created. The act of healing in most of Pentecostal churches is just words and lie but in actual sense the Holy Spirit has departed from many, as result, there is dryness and emptiness.

Any healing through deliverance can happen without faith to God, the Pentecostal pastors ought to build their faith on God and not mixing Him with other practices that oppose the will of God. The dryness of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal churches have broken the faith of many people who trust in them. And as seen in the historical background of Pentecostalism, this dryness has negatively impacted Christianity, since the growth of Pentecostalism is a good movement that is converting many to Christianity. Despite of the efforts, they are doing to try to couch up, but if they don't look the origin of their failure, they will continue to be the topic of critics.

Critics of people who went to seek for deliverance in Pentecostal churches but didn't find it are many outside. These critics are not a mere speaking but the speech of destroying the future of Pentecostalism in DRC/Bunia. The healing by deliverance was common in Pentecostal churches of Bunia but currently, they are able to make it because of the depart of the Holy Spirit from them.

4.7. Conclusion

This chapter has been analyzing the healing through exorcism in Pentecostal churches of Bunia. The study has discovered that exorcism is accompanied by different methods like prayer, water, laying-on hands, anointing oil etc. despite of good service

¹¹³ Frank Hammond. *Obstacles to deliverance*, Impact Christian Books, Inc, 2002 p 2

they are offering to the people, Pentecostal churches have fallen in many areas because of pride, lack of faith and rejection of the need people coming from the poor background families. This research suggest that they may continue in helping people in exorcism and in case of failure they may ask themselves as Jesus' disciples asked the reason they were failing to cast out the demon".

CHAPTER FIVE: MODELS FOR EXORCISM OF PHYSICAL ILLNESSES IN PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES OF BUNIA

5.1. Introduction

The exegetical analysis of Mark 2:1-6 in chapter two of this study showed that Jesus healed the paralytic man in a holistic way, restoring both his physical condition and his spiritual standing. The chapter also presented Jesus Christ as a powerful exorcist recognized in the early centuries, even though many people at the time confused him with other practitioners of exorcism. In Mark 2:1-6, Jesus simply said, “My son, your sins are forgiven,” without touching the paralytic man or using any ritual object. By calling him “my son,” Jesus also demonstrated compassion and included the suffering man within his family of faith. Because Jesus emerges in this passage as the true model of exorcism, unlike other practitioners who had no real power, this study encourages Pentecostal churches in Bunia to follow the pattern of Mark 2:1-6. It proposes several models to make exorcism of physical illness to be more practical.

5.2. Practical Models for exorcism of physical illness in Pentecostal churches of Bunia

Exorcism of physical illness in Pentecostal churches of Bunia should be approached more carefully. A lack of understanding in this area can lead to improper exorcism practices. On the basis of the biblical perspective examined in this study, seven practical models are proposed to guide Pentecostal churches of Bunia to conduct a true and helpful exorcism: walking with the weakened and the sick people, addressing repentance before rushing for expulsion of illness connected to demons, a calm declaration of God’s word rather than a dramatic confrontation with illness during exorcism, exorcism rooted in Jesus’ authority rather than a spectacle, the proclamation of God’s Word rather than the use of ritual objects such as: water, fire, anointing oil, and handkerchief, theological discernment to distinguish physical illness from the spiritual and exorcism without charge/pay.

5.2.1. Walking with the weakened and sick people

Walking with the weakened and the sick people is a model based on spiritual encouragement, social support, and follow up of the sick people before and after exorcism session. This model aims to understand the weak as people who can not stand by themselves in any situation. Therefore, they need support in different ways. For the case of this study, the weakened people need support from those who are spiritually, and socially strong to accompany them.

Spiritual walk

Walking alongside weak and sick people is essential in exorcism ministry. This model brings them close to church members, where they are encouraged to take their needs to God alone, they are given hope that Jesus can transform their suffering into joy, and remain present when they feel hopeless. When the sick people are left alone, it is clear that they feel isolated, but when mature believers come close to them, they find comfort and are strengthened to trust Jesus as the answer to their problems.

Walking with them in spiritual perspective involves: daily gathering for prayer either from their respective houses or from the churches, bringing testimonies of those who were like them but they came out by God's grace through walking with the weak as model (encouragement of mature believers). During such support the weakened and the sick people end up opening their hearts to attend exorcism prayer session.

Social walk

Social support for weakened people is important because they are overwhelmed and need help in every aspect of life. In practice, this model shows them that they are not abandoned physically or financially. Church members visit them regularly, encourage them, and remind them that they still belong to the community and are not rejected by society. This kind of support includes human, financial, and economic assistance. Human being cannot live without other human despite his status. The sick or weakened people once realize that others are showing compassion toward them, they

start to recover by themselves while attending prayers for healing and exorcism. This model by itself is a cure.

Follow up

People who have been weak or sick and have received healing or exorcism prayers still need continued attention, even after they begin to recover. This ongoing care helps them stay engaged with God's word and remain connected to society, so they do not fall back into sickness or weakness. Because human beings are social, isolation can make a person vulnerable; likewise, those recovering after exorcism may backslide if church members do not continue to support them and remind them to keep their focus on God.

The idea returns to the concept of healing: even in modern medicine, follow-up is essential to confirm that a person has fully recovered or still needs treatment. In the same way, an exorcism prayer session should not end simply because the person says he feels better; those in charge should keep on them daily until they are fully strengthened physical and spiritually.

5.2.2. Addressing repentance before rushing for expulsion of illness connected to demons

Mark 1:14-15, KJV.¹¹⁴ Shows that Jesus first called people to repentance. This model is about the recognition of human being as both spiritual and physical, with the physical reflecting the spiritual. From this perspective, repentance becomes essential to the healing and exorcism of sick people. This means that exorcism session must be divided to two different sessions: repentance and expulsion of illness.

¹¹⁴ *"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: **repent ye**, and believe the gospel."*

Repentance

Some people seek healing and exorcism prayers while still burdened by sins committed against God or against other human beings. In the Gospel of John 9:31¹¹⁵, the Bible teaches that God does not listen to sinners, so even a sick person seeking prayer, if he is not yet in good term with God and his fellow, he should first repent his wrongdoing and openly turn to Jesus. Only then, as a forgiven member of God's family, he is expected to be heard and answered.

Repentance is more than simply saying "*I'm sorry*"; it involves a real transformation of the heart and conduct. It starts within the person and is then shown outwardly in his actions. God alone knows who has truly repented. In relation to this study, the understanding of repentance as a basic in exorcism is required, since the aim is to seek God's glory without genuinely sharing the same conviction. A true repentance opens the way for expulsion of illness and demons.

Expulsion of illness

The expulsion of illness is an important part of exorcism, but many pastors rush into it without properly preparing the ground. It should always go hand in hand with repentance; in other words, illness should not be expelled too early or treated as a separate act. This is the stage where the pastor stands and proclaims God's word with authority, linking the physical realm with the spiritual one.

The removal of illness from a person's body marks the visible confirmation that healing has already taken place spiritually and is now manifested physically during the healing and exorcism prayer session. At this moment, both the person and the pastor leading the session must be fully prepared and closely connected to Jesus, the supreme healer and exorcist.

¹¹⁵ "We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him", John 9:31, ESV.

5.2.3. A calm declaration of God's word rather than a dramatic confrontation with illness during exorcism

A quiet proclamation of God's word, rather than a dramatic struggle with illness, should shape the setting of exorcism prayer. This approach emphasizes the atmosphere of the prayer session, the pastor's knowledge of scripture, and the theological posture of the person leading the healing and exorcism session. In this model, everything centers on presenting God's word as the instrument of exorcism, without shouting or making too much noise.

Attitude of declaring God's word

In this model, the attention is driven to the atmosphere that reigns when exorcism is being conducted. It takes back to know how God's word can be declared to people suffering with illness during exorcism. This includes the value that people give to God's word. Knowing well that God Himself respects His word more (Psalm 138:2)¹¹⁶ He inspects people to bring this Word with that greater respect.

The calm attitude of declaring God's word reflects the consideration given, and it shows that He is not a comedian, nor a dramatic producer. This same attitude helps people who have come for prayer of healing and exorcism to put in their minds that God they have come to encounter is serious and respectful God.

Knowledge of the scripture

Knowledge of the scripture is presented as a source of comfort for people who are suffering, because it assures them that the God they have been seeking is speaking to them, giving them hope for healing. During prayer sessions of healing and exorcism, the person leading the prayers should emphasize this biblical message throughout the entire session, choosing words that resonate with and affect participants' lives. In this study, participants especially want to be reminded that God, (Jesus) is close to those who repent and is able to heal all kinds of illnesses.

¹¹⁶“ *for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name*” KJV

Theological attitude of the one conducting exorcism

The theological attitude of the one conducting prayer session for exorcism and healing is very relevant since people have a look at him and whatever he does communicates a message to the congregation. In calling it “*theological*” the study is not forcing pastors or evangelists or prophets to go for theological schools but to keep their attitude as the formed, informed and transformed ministers in the area of exorcism and healing.

Pastors, evangelist or prophet conducting exorcism and healing prayer session has to make sure that his behavior or attitude doesn’t turn the place of healing and exorcism to a place of drama where people are just confused and therefore, they are like sheep without shepherd. The goal is to make sure that God’s word is brought clearly in calm way rather than being transformed to dramatic and confrontation place where people are playing games.

5.2.4. Exorcism rooted in Jesus’ authority rather than a spectacle

Exorcism rooted in Jesus’ authority rather than a spectacle is one of the models that emphasizes Jesus as the powerful exorcist, having given authority by the father to heal every illness. This model considers only one source of power to heal and all other sources are seen as games and spectacles.

Jesus’ authority

Authority of Jesus is the powerful authority above all authorities. Drawing from the study, all exorcism that doesn’t recognize this authority is just a game and people are wasting time to watch a spectacle. Therefore, exorcism rooted in Jesus’ authority is a real and true model to help people come out from their sicknesses. People who know how to recognize an exorcism rooted in Jesus’ authority never waste their times to stand where people are doing spectacles in the name of exorcism. However much, the building looks nice or the powerful name of the pastor or big number of people etc. But if the authority of Jesus is not involved in the prayer session everything is just a waste of time. Therefore, Jesus’ authority is paramount.

5.2.5. The proclamation of God's Word rather than the use of ritual objects (water, fire, anointing oil, and handkerchief)

The proclamation of God's Word rather than the use of ritual objects such as water, fire, anointing oil, and handkerchief is a good model to conduct exorcism without any criticism. This model emphasizes the focus on God's Word, the power of the Word and the meaningless of the ritual objects.

God's Word

The Biblical understanding of God's Word is Jesus. and Jesus has been given the power over everything as this study has discovered in the previous chapter. John 1:1-3 states it in the same perspective.¹¹⁷ Related to this point, one must understand that God's word is the source of all other things. Therefore, it is foolishness to believe in other things and to leave the one who made them. Exorcism that puts God's Word at the center of its practice will never fail to succeed.

Power of the Word

This model demonstrates that the proclamation of God's Word is not merely saying some thing compared to others but it has power that is able to silence the demons, to expulse the illness in the human body and to heal completely. The power of the Word surpasses the power believed in ritual objects such as water, fire, anointing oil, and handkerchief.

The consideration that an individual puts in his mindset that the Word of God has power to heal brings an automatic healing within him, and nobody else will talk to him about the ritual objects to have power of healing illnesses.

The meaningless and powerless of ritual objects

¹¹⁷ *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John ... all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. 1:1-3, ESV*

As listed in the study but not all, the ritual objects are first of all made either by the Word (water and fire) or by human being (handkerchief and anointing oil). It is not good to worship the works of the master than the Master Himself. The ritual objects are still made and cannot have power on human, rather human being is the one controlling them; therefore, they have no power on him unless God, the creator Himself allows.

5.2.6. Theological discernment to distinguish physical illness from the spiritual

Theological discernment to distinguish physical illness from the spiritual emphasizes that there are illnesses which are supposed to be treated as physical but hidden as spiritual and some are spiritual but come out as physical. Therefore, the theological discernment helps to determine whether it physical or spiritual and how to treat it.

Discernment of physical illness

The theology of helping pastors and people committed to exorcism prayer session to discover whether the sickness brought for prayer is physical or spiritual is very important because it confuses. Discernment of physical illness helps the pastor to encourage the patient to start medical treatment alongside prayers. This model needs to have a skill in counselling to convince the patient to go for check-up and to collaborate with medical personnels as well in order to find the real health issue and then continue with prayer while knowing very well that it is a physical problem.

The discernment of physical illness needs a collaborative team; this is among the people committed in the ministry of exorcism and healing. They may have some medical personnels among them, these are supposed to be taken as diagnosticians. This system will help to determine as quick as possible whether the sick needs prayer at first or other things.

Discernment of spiritual illness

This model emphasizes the inner illness. In other words, the diagnostic of such kind of illness demands to be deep in faith and in Holy Spirit. This model is helpful though it is not addressing directly the issue of physical illness, which the aim of this research but it helps the one conducting exorcism of physical illness to put aside this case and to know that it is not his.

5.2.7. Exorcism without charge/pay

Exorcism should be carried out without charging any fee, in Matthew 10:8 ¹¹⁸ Jesus presents healing ministry as a gift from God. Therefore, ministry through exorcism is not meant to be commercial but a free service that God's servants offer, and it is a service that the ministers of God are commissioned to give to God's people for free. When this model is practiced in the church during exorcism, the owner (God) of the ministry is happy and pour healing in abundance among people. This model emphasizes: benevolence, servanthood, awaiting the reward from the master.

Benevolence

Being called for ministry one should know he is serving benevolently but expecting his pay from the one who called him for ministry and that is Jesus Christ. The benevolence model in exorcism is very important because the person who prays for the sick is not the one who heals. Therefore, exorcism has Jesus as the person with the final say. For this reason, it is not good enough to charge before prayer for the sick looking for exorcism. Benevolence attitude demonstrates that exorcism is Jesus' ministry given for free to the world.

Servanthood

Drawing from exorcism without charge, the concept of servanthood comes in to define the one commissioned for this ministry as doing stewardship. In other words, he is to combine all data and give the report as he waits for the reward depending in his master. This model also informs the minister that he has to be humble, though

¹¹⁸ *heal the sick, cleanse those who are suffering, and cast out demons, freely received, freely given. "You received without paying; give without pay" (Mathew 10:8. ESV).*

people are being healed when he prays with them because he is just a servant but not the master.

Awaiting the reward from the master

Awaiting the reward from the master is a model falling under exorcism without charge and emphasizing that the minister must not focus on charging people while conducting exorcism but he must be aware that he was called by Jesus and commissioned to the ministry by the same and therefore, Jesus knows when He will pay and in his ways.

When a minister has this model in his mind, he will not disturb the sick people looking for exorcism. The minister will just conduct exorcism accordingly, with joy knowing well that Jesus has seen and ticked his work and as for all servants deserve pay, he will be paid as well.

5.3. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has proposed practical models for exorcism of healing illnesses in Pentecostal churches of Bunia, drawing its foundation from the exegesis of Mark 2:1-6. The passage presents Jesus Christ as the true model of healing and exorcism: one who acts with authority, compassion, and power, and who restores the whole person, both physical and spiritually. For that reason, ministry to the sick should not be reduced to dramatic display, ritualism, or financial exploitation, but should reflect the character and method of Jesus. The chapter has shown that effective exorcism must be accompanied by pastoral care repentance, calm proclamation of God's Word, discernment between physical and spiritual illness, and continued follow-up of the weak and sick. It has also emphasized that exorcism should remain a free act of service grounded in the authority of Christ rather in objects, spectacle, or personal, gain. If Pentecostal churches in Bunia adopt these models, their ministry of healing will become more biblically faithful, pastorally responsible, and spiritually also their restoration into a life of faith, dignity, and hope in Christ.

CHAPTER SIX. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

6.1. Conclusion

This study examined Mark 2:1-6 in relation to the exorcism of physical illness from the spiritual world in the Pentecostal churches of Bunia, DRC. Chapter two focused on an exegetical analysis of the passage in order to uncover its meaning and significance for exorcism and healing.

Chapter three identified physical illnesses among the congregations of FEPACO, Christco, City of Refuge, and City of the Rest in Bunia. After engaging with people in Bunia, the study found that cases of physical illness are real and that many people seek healing in Pentecostal churches. It also observed that a wide variety of illnesses are brought to these churches for exorcism.

The chapter four analyzed physical healing through exorcism in these Pentecostal churches. It found that City of the Rest, City of Refuge, Christco, and FEPACO use methods such as prayer, water, laying on of hands, anointing oil, and fasting. At the same time, the study noted that exorcism in these churches is sometimes hindered by factors such as pastors' pride and lack of faith.

Finally, the study presents the healing account in Mark 2:1-6 as a model for physical healing that the churches of FEPACO, Christco, City of Refuge, and City of the Rest in Bunia should follow. Among its models is: walking with weakened and sick people, Active faith support for the sick in the sects of FEPACO, Christco, city of refuge, and city of the Rest, addressing repentance before rushing for expulsion of demons, a calm declaration of God's word rather than a dramatic confrontation with demons during exorcism, exorcism rooted in Jesus' authority rather than a spectacle, the proclamation of God's word rather than the use of ritual objects (water, oil, fire, handkerchief) during exorcism, theological discernment to distinguish physical illness from the spiritual, and exorcism without charge.

6.2. Recommendations

After uncovering the healing of the paralytic man in chapter two, in chapter five, the research has proposed Mark 2:1-6 as model to follow by Pentecostal churches of Bunia in the issues of physical healing by exorcism. But still the recommendations are relevant since the text didn't touch every issue of Pentecostal churches of Bunia.

The Pentecostal churches should build hospitals or medical centers closer to their churches so that they may take care of the sick while on medication. This enhance the holistic ministry, which is not seen clearly in Pentecostal churches, they just build churches without knowing that people need also medication.

To reduce the number of physical illnesses in Pentecostal churches of Bunia, pastors should stop telling lies that they are able to deliver people but they should tell them that God alone is able for that.

The sects of FEPACO, Christco, city of refuge and city of the rest ought to collaborate with other churches (protestants) in exorcism ministry in order to simplify the task. This is very important because they have been undermining others, while both are serving the same Jesus.

This study is not against the healing of physical sicknesses through exorcism by Pentecostal but it recommends that the process should be done in order so that the name of the Lord alone be magnified at the end.

The study recommends the church of FEPACO, Christco, city of refuge and city of the rest to stop using water, oil, and things in the place of God, if they using, their focus ought not to be in those materials but in God alone.

Pentecostal pastors of city of refuge, city of the rest, Christco and FEPACO have to give God His honor and to remain His servants.

6.2.1. Suggestion for further research

The study is still opened for many who would want to take the direction of the current research. A researcher would:

1. Look to find the biblical strategies of healing the physical sickness by exorcism.
2. The biblical perspective of taking care of the sick persons.
3. A comparative study of healing between pastor with Holy spirit and the other using witchcraft.
4. Teaching Pentecostals the focus on forgiveness of sin during exorcism
5. The cotemporary methods of taking the weakened people to Jesus relating to Mark 2:1-6
6. Biblical strategies of dealing with opponents in ministry.

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Appendices one: physical illnesses and healing practice through exorcism in Pentecostal churches of Bunia (FEPACO, Christco, city of the rest and city of refuge)

Dear respondent, my name is **Desire Konduabo Simbilyabo**, a student, studying theology at Uganda Christian University. I am researching on the study of Mark 2:1-6, exorcism of physical illness in Pentecostal churches of Bunia/DRC. I kindly request you to fill this questionnaire; the information is for the academic purposes.

Instructions:

- Participation is voluntary and confidential
- Do not write your name
- Just tick in the box and where there is blank space fill with the information needed.

Section A: Respondent (sick individuals seeking for exorcism)

i. Background information

1. What is your age

☐ under 18 ☐ 18-30 ☐ 31-45 ☐ 46-60 ☐ 60 above 60

2. Gender

☐ male ☐ female ☐ prefer not to say

3. Education level

☐ no formal education ☐ primary ☐ secondary ☐ university

4. How long have you attended this church?

☐ less than 6 months ☐ 6-12 months ☐ 1-3 years ☐ more than 3 years

ii. Physical illnesses

2. What type of illness are you experiencing?

☐ chronic pain ☐ fever ☐ physical disability ☐ unknown ☐ others (specify)

3. How long have you had this illness?

☐ less than 1 month ☐ 1-6 months ☐ 6-12 months ☐ more than 1 years

4. Have you sought medical treatment before coming for prayer?

☐ yes ☐ no

5. If yes, what type of treatment?

☐ hospital ☐ traditional healer ☐ pharmacy

iii. Beliefs about illness

6. What do you think is the cause of your illness?

☐ natural ☐ spiritual causes (evil spirits, curses) ☐ both ☐ not sure

7. Who influenced you to come for exorcism?

☐ self ☐ family ☐ pastor ☐ friends ☐ other:

iv. Experience with exorcism prayer

8. What happens during the prayer session?

.....

9. Did you experience any physical change after prayer?

☐ yes ☐ no

10. If yes, describe the changes

.....

.....

vi. Perceived healing

11. Do you feel healed after the prayer session?

☐ completely healed ☐ partially healed ☐ no change

12. Would you recommend exorcism prayer to others?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ not sure

Section B. PASTORS (prophets, apostles or evangelists)

Background

1. What is your age:

2. For how long have you been in ministry

☐ less than 5 ☐ 5-10 ☐ 10-20 ☐ more than 20

3. Church denomination:

ii. identification of illnesses

4. What types of physical illnesses are commonly reported in your church?

☐ chronic pain ☐ fever ☐ physical disability ☐ unknown ☐ others (specify)

5. How do you determine whether an illness is physical or spiritual?

.....
.....

iii. Exorcism practices

6. do you often perform exorcism prayers?

☐ yes ☐ no

7. How long do you conduct such prayer?

☐ daily ☐ weekly ☐ occasionally

8. What methods do you use during exorcism?

☐ prayer ☐ fasting ☐ laying on hands ☐ anointing ☐ other.....

iv. Healing outcomes

9. How do you assess whether someone is healed?

.....

10. Do you advise members to seek medical treatment alongside prayer?

☐ yes ☐ no

Appendices two: Pictures showing Pastors in exorcism services in FEPACO, CHRISTCO, CITY OF REFUGE AND CITY OF REST.

CHURCH OF THE CITY OF REST IN BUNIA



This picture shows Pentecostal members of city of the Rest drawing near to their pastor at the altar for prayer of laying-on hands anointing oil.

1. CHRISTCO CHURCH IN BUNIA



Time given to refuse all sorts of physical illness during the service

2. PENTECOSTAL CHURCH OF FEPACO IN BUNIA



Pastor of FEPACO praying for a baby who has been disturbed by demons.

CHURCH CITY OF REFUGE IN BUNIA



Picture showing prophet Jules Mulindwa of the city of refuge laying on hands during exorcism session.

Desire Konduabo Simbilyabo

A STUDY OF MARK 2:1-6: EXORCISM OF PHYSICAL ILLNESS FROM THE SPIRITUAL WORLD IN PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES ...

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