

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: ‘HEART-SOWING AND SEWING MISSION’

4.1 Introduction:

This chapter and the next four chapters (Chapters Five to Eight) discuss in depth the life story of each Charismatic lay leader, tracing the origin of their interest in the ministry of healing back to their extended family bloodline. The study examines the impact of the religious experiences of these Charismatic leaders and how they attempt to synthesise the old and the new experiences.

4.2 Introduction: Early Life of Musa Emmanuel Dantani

Musa Emmanuel Dantani¹ was born to a Christian home in Abakaliki (now in Ebonyi State) around 1967.² His father, Emmanuel Dantani, was a hunter before he converted to the Christian faith and joined the army. Musa did only Primary One to Four under the care of his father in the army. He attended the Evangelical Church of West Africa (now Evangelical Church Winning All – ECWA), and later the Church Of Christ In Nigeria (now Church Of Christ In Nations – COCIN) with his father. Musa was brought back home and raised in the Muslim home because of the fear that the Biafran War might still escalate and he might be killed.³ While at home, his paternal uncle, Danladi Adamu Usman, hindered him from continuing with Western education, but took him to a Qur’ānic school where he learnt and mastered the whole *Qur’ān*.

¹ His father was a soldier by profession. Musa’s given name was ‘Tsonabavyon’. However, when he was brought home from Abakaliki, his paternal uncle, Danladi Adamu Usman, a Muslim, renamed him ‘Musa’. The former name ‘Tsonabavyon’ gradually faded away. Musa Emmanuel Dantani, Interview, 13 October 2009 & 8 March 2010, Wukari; Joseph Sanfo Zhema, Interview, 19 February 2011, Wukari.

² All my interviewees – including Musa himself – were not certain about Musa’s birth date. His father died more than a decade ago. If he were still living, maybe he could have given the precise birth date of Musa. The common understanding is that Musa was born during the Nigerian-Biafra War (1967-1970).

³ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009 & 8 March 2010.

His father, Dantani, was from the Mbakpa clan,⁴ the spirit mediumistic group who identify with the Jukun in their history of warfare, inter-married with the Jukun and shared the Jukun worldview and culture. The Mbakpa (also known as the Aba-kwa-riga or Maguzawa or Kutumbawa or Katsinawa) are from the Hausa traditional religion and culture in northern Nigeria. Their belief in spirits (*bori* [Maguzawa], *iskoki* [Hausa] or *aljanu* [derived from the Arabic *jinn*]) is crucial and forms the core of their religious worldview, tradition and culture.⁵ The Mbakpa practise *bori* (the Jukun-Wâpan of Wukari call it *jôn kpa*) ‘spirit possession’ or ‘mediumistic possession’ or ‘ecstatic possession’;⁶ and venerate spirits because of the belief that spirit beings can enter into union, bond and friendship with human beings. They believe that spirits (*iskoki* or *aljanu*) are divided into two broad categories: first, the *iskokin gona* (spirits of the farm) or *yan birni* (town dwellers) or *farfaru* (fair-complexioned spirits or ‘white spirits’) which are tame spirits that settle on farms near human beings and bestow good fortune and wealth to their adherents;⁷ second, the *yan dawa* or *yan daji* (the wild bush dwellers) or *bakaku*, (dark-complexioned spirits or ‘black spirits’) spirits are regarded as dangerous and capable of harming human beings with serious illnesses and misfortunes.⁸

⁴ The Jukun-Wâpan of Wukari call them *mbakpa*, meaning, ‘those born outside the booth’. In other words, those who do not have a particular dwelling place. This perception is drawn from the fact that they were historically prisoners of war from Kano (and other neighbouring places such as Katsina, Daura, Zaria and Bauchi). Another name given to them by the Jukun-Wâpan of Wukari is *tswenka*, meaning, ‘house of lies’ or ‘town of lies’ because they were held to be liars in diverse aspects. Still, the Jukun-Chamba Takum call them *Aba-kwa-riga*, meaning, ‘those who sew shirts’. They specialise in sewing clothes, dyeing cloths and the purveying of medicine. Bitrus Tsokwa Angyunwe, Interview, 10 February 2011, Wukari. However, most historical writers trace their root to the pre-Jihadic rulers of Kano. They claimed to be the first inhabitants and therefore the autochthonous people of Kano. This ethnic group had resisted the Islamic religion in their early history. For example, the etiology of the name ‘Maguzawa’ revealed that there was one traditional ancestor of the Hausa known as ‘Bama’. Bama was so named because he is said to have refused *sallah* (the Muslim prayer). This is because whenever he was invited to pray he would reply, *sai gobe*, meaning, ‘until tomorrow’. His colleagues therefore nicknamed him ‘Bamaguje’ from the expression, *Bama gujen sallah* (‘Bama-runner-away from prayer’) because he always ran away from prayer. The term ‘Bamaguje’ is derived from *Maguji* (sing.) and *Maguda* (pl.) both meaning, ‘runner(s)-away-from’, fugitive(s) or deserter(s). Hence, the Maguzawa in their early history rejected Islam. The Hausa Muslims regarded the Maguzawa traditional religion adherents with utter contempt, disdain and apathy. On the whole, the Maguzawa are still regarded by their kinsmen, the Hausa Muslims of Kano, Katsina, Daura, Zaria and Bauchi in northern Nigeria, as *arna* (‘infidels’). See Umar Habila Dadem Danfulani, ‘Factors Contributing to the Survival of the *Bori* Cult in Northern Nigeria’ in *Numen* Vol. 46, No. 4 (1999), pp.412-447 (415).

⁵ They emphasise more the spirits rather than deities. This, however, does not in any way obliterate belief in God, the mystical forces, deities and ancestors in their traditional religion. Their worldview portrays a picture similar to those of other African people, with the belief in the existence of spirit, human and mystical realms. Danfulani, ‘Factors Contributing to the Survival of the *Bori* Cult in Northern Nigeria,’ p.416.

⁶ Danfulani, ‘Factors Contributing to the Survival of the *Bori* Cult in Northern Nigeria’, p.415; G. Abdu, ‘The Spirit World of the Maguzawa: Hausa Traditional Religion’ (Unpublished MA Dissertation, University of Jos, Nigeria, 1990), p.v.; A. Shuaibu, ‘*Bori* Cult: The Survival of Hausa Traditional Religion in an Islamic Environment’ (Unpublished MA Dissertation, University of Jos, Nigeria, 1990), p.86.

⁷ M. Crowther, *The Nigeria Story* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), p.31; Shuaibu, ‘*Bori* Cult: The Survival of Hausa Traditional Religion in an Islamic Environment’, p.173f.

⁸ Danfulani, ‘Factors Contributing to the Survival of the *Bori* Cult in Northern Nigeria’, pp.421-422.

Whereas the *farfaru* are easy to manipulate and are potentially friendly to human beings, the *yan daji* are difficult to tame and are mischievous.

Most of the Mbakpa (men and women) operate with spirits. In the Jukun community, they are mostly herbalists, spirit mediums and diviners; they have sound knowledge of medicinal herbs, leaves, barks, flowers and fruits and their pharmaceutical properties and recipes. They give local medications, protective and destructive charms, amulets and talismans, commonly known as *guru* and *laya*. In Wukari, the Mbakpa owned the *nanakutome* (mermaid goddess in the form of a crocodile which lives in the Gbonkpa-Marmara pond in Wukari) believed to wield the security of the society in all its ramifications.⁹ Musa's bloodline is drawn from the Mbakpa traditional religion which has some bearing on his thought forms.

The second thing that shaped Musa's life was his Muslim faith and visionary impact. According to Musa's account,¹⁰ he was trained and mentored by six Muslim *ulama* (scholars in Islamic religion) in the *Qur'ān* as a *tablic* (reader). He travelled with the *ulama* to many places basically to recite the *Qur'ān* and invoke spirits. This led to a further development of his primal religious worldview, tradition and culture. His primal religion, especially the mediumistic practice, often involved invoking either good or bad *bori*, as the case may be. He asserts that the *ulama* often used parts of the books of Psalms, Lamentations and Proverbs wrongly to invoke evil spirits. They would usually do this at 12:00 midnight, using 'strange' tongues.¹¹ He notes that while he was with the *ulama*, many Christians visited them for invocations of different sorts. Even more so, while he and the *ulama* were engaged in this practice of recitation and invocation, he was hearing voices and seeing visions of impending afflictions that might befall him in life. So, the sixth and the last *Alim*, an Iraqi, gave him a bunch of charms and amulets for protection against evil forces, but he refused to accept them.¹² His attitude and reactions made the *Alim* and his uncle, Usman, to conspire against him and to attempt to charm and poison him, but all to no avail. He claims that before any evil plan is lodged against him, 'God' usually reveals to him in a vision and by vocal utterances, thus warning and cautioning him. With this, both the *Alim* and his uncle described him as a 'diviner' and 'spirit medium'.¹³ The last *Alim* developed much interest in him and

⁹ Caleb S.O. Ahima, Interview, 31 January 2011, Wukari.

¹⁰ Musa, Interview, 8 March 2010.

¹¹ Musa, Interview, 8 March 2010.

¹² Musa, Interview, 8 March 2010; Zhema, Interview, 19 February 2011.

¹³ The *ulama sufi* who mentored him believed in, and worked with, myriads of spirits, usually at 12:00 midnight. They invoked and cursed people. Dantani, Interview, 8 March 2010.

wanted to take him first to Jos, then, to Iraq; but he resisted the *Alim*'s plan.¹⁴ Hence, from his explanations, one could deduce that he was a victim of his traditional background and Islamic experiences.

The third issue that shaped Musa's thought was a habit of inter-faith studies, while he was still in the Muslim house. He was motivated when he found a book written by Sheikh Ahmed Huisen [Hoosen] Deedat, *The Choice: Islam and Christianity*,¹⁵ which compared the Christian and Islamic faiths. According to Musa, in the course of this enquiry, he came to know that the Christian faith was greater than the Islamic faith. From there, he became suspicious of the Islamic faith, critiquing it and debating with his *Alim* about the validity of Islamic religion.¹⁶ One day in March 1979, he experienced a change in his life and suddenly began to speak in 'strange' tongues. He then engaged in a twenty-seven day uninterrupted dry fast.¹⁷ After this, he gradually developed a habit of sneaking out to worship with the Christians intermittently without the notice and consent of his uncle. Later, he sensed that his uncle might get to know and possibly expel him. He therefore ran away to Wukari (about 27 km from Tsokundi) in early 1980 and continued with his Christian life there.¹⁸ Still, in the Christian faith, he continued to see visions and receive revelations and dreams, just as he had done in his Mbakpa traditional religion and Islamic faith. It was when he returned to the Christian faith in 1982 that he had started Primary Four at St Mary's Primary School, Wukari, having first left while with his father in the Nigerian Army. He wrote the secondary school entrance examination at the end of the session, passed and gained admission into Government Science Senior Secondary School (GSSSS), Wukari (1984-1990), proceeded for his diploma courses at Sword Ernest Bible School, Adamawa (1995-1997) and Emmaus Bible School, Jos (2000-2002), and his Bachelor's degree with Cornerstone University, Jos (2005-2008). During his school years, especially from 1987 to 2001, he held various positions in the Christian Youth Fellowship of the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN), such as Bible Study Secretary and Prayer Secretary.

¹⁴ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009 & 8 March 2010.

¹⁵ He was a world renowned Muslim scholar of comparative religion, writer, charismatic public speaker and Islamic missionary of Indian-South African descent. He was best known for his numerous inter-religious public debates with evangelical Christians, as well as pioneering video lectures most of which centred on Islam, Christianity and the Bible. He founded the Islamic Propagation Centre International (IPCI), an internationally renowned Islamic missionary organisation. He published several booklets on Islam and Christianity, distributed freely far and wide. Even today, his lectures are being delivered on Peace TV and many other Islamic channels. Accessed 11 August 2012, <http://www.indiansinafrica.co.za/Personalities/shaykh-ahmed-deedat-1918-2005;> http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmed_Deedat.

¹⁶ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009.

¹⁷ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009 & 8 March 2010.

¹⁸ Musa, Interview, 8 March 2010.

The above life story shows that Musa's spirit mediumistic descent shaped his early life. His Islamic faith further influenced his life and character of spiritism in combination with *sufism*. His Muslim *Sufism* or *Tasawwuf*,¹⁹ which involved him in diverse practices, including the invocation of spirits, seriously impacted his life. Elements of his former religious faiths and practices (spirit medium and *sufism*) were carried over this time and are evident in his Christian innovations. Therefore, his pre-Christian life did not die off with the Christian impact, but was rather reinforced, transformed and renewed in his Christian life of extreme asceticism, prayer and dry fasting, as well as devotion to personal study, all of which informed his ministry.

4.3 Experiences

After Musa left for Wukari and continued with the Christian life, he started experiencing healing power in him when around June-July 1980, he prayed for three people: a mad woman, a sick brother and an epileptic, and all of them received instant healing.²⁰ Gradually, news about his healing gifts reached many people. Many sick people came to his house for counselling and prayer-healing. At this time, almost all who came to him with varying ill health problems either received a lasting healing instantly or later. This experience further motivated him to be zealous in studying the Word of God, counselling and praying for people. He later joined a catechism class and was baptised in the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN), Puje LCC in 1982.²¹

While he was on his Christian journey, he often felt bad about the evil powers he had inherited from his traditional family and the ones he acquired in his Islamic faith. This was because he started passing through some misfortune and suffering, including the peeling off of the outer skin on his entire body.²² It was then that he began to reflect constantly on the history of his identity. He began to wonder: Could it be that his forefathers had transferred a curse to him through his father? For his hunter father rarely shot at an animal and missed and he too had learnt never to beat anyone with his bare hand lest the person should die. He thought that his forefathers had probably made a covenant with evil spirits, but failed to meet

¹⁹ *Sufism* in Islam is an ascetic or mystic religious brotherhood and *Tasawwuf* basically refers to mysticism. See Peter B. Clarke, 'Glossary' in *West Africa and Islam* (London: Edward Arnolds, 1982), p.264.

²⁰ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009.

²¹ Local Church Minutes dated 10 February 2009, LCCP/17/2009.

²² Musa is dark in complexion but the peeling of his outer body turned him light in complexion from face down to his feet, as if it were burnt in a fire.

the demand and therefore caused these mishaps to befall him. He remembers that his father had been a very stubborn man; but Musa even superseded him in stubbornness. Much closer home, Musa thought that his personal past life might have brought a curse on him and, worse still, could extend to his descendants. He needed Jesus Christ to break the yoke on him.²³

In a similar vein, he thought that the social decadence resulting in wars, clashes and violence could possibly be due to covenants that the community forefathers had made with evil powers in exchange for their military skills. Also, upon settling in the land, the leadership compromised by giving up the land to the settlers looking for arable farmland, especially the Tiv and Hausa-Fulani. The early inhabitants had failed to meet the requirements of treaties with spirits and the present generation is now suffering. Reviewing Musa's thought and reflection, it is obvious that he links the misdeeds of his forefathers, his father, his own and the present social decadence as the same organic development. The corporate sin of the past can affect the present and future generations. Musa's contention, though, is that the present inhabitants, especially the Christians in the society, are ignorant of the underlying cause. For this, they fail to engage in corporate confession, rejection and nullification of the generational curse. He asserts that this is the probable fundamental cause of frequent and unending social decadence.²⁴

This further motivated him within his society to continue to seek the face of God through intermittent prayers and dry fasting in the mountains, forests and deserts in his determination to break, bind and renounce the evil powers inflicting misfortune and suffering on people. He believes that God has called him to be an intercessor, to 'weep' for God's intervention for the past sins of his forefathers, the present sins of his family and descendants, and the entire land. According to him, 'the Holy Spirit has been speaking to me in visions, auditions and dreams about the fate that might bedevil the land if repentance is not made... Voices always tell me to "do this" or "do that" for me...'²⁵ The frequency of his spiritual experiences convicted him to embark on an extreme ascetic life through long-term dry fasting, waiting for what the Lord would want him to do in life.

²³ Musa, Interview, 8 March 2010 & 8 February 2012.

²⁴ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009 & 8 March 2010.

²⁵ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009 & 8 March 2010.

4.4 Social Contexts

Musa conceptualises the perennial politico-religious and socio-economic disruptions (discussed in Chapter Two) as setbacks due to generational curses on the society. Although he agrees with the traditional view that there are personalities behind misfortunes and suffering, he sees those incidents as agents, but points to the underlying ultimate cause as a ‘generational curse’²⁶ resulting in social decadence. A few Jukun leaders and Christians define curses in reference to the use of words, or an appeal, implicit or explicit, to cultic deities and spirits, including ancestors by a maternal or paternal uncle (or any other senior relative) to witness a person’s wrongdoing and to visit punishment either through sickness or prolonged misfortune and suffering.²⁷

Generational curses in this study, as understood by Musa, refer to certain events and some rather inexplicable behaviour, mishaps and occurrences which plague the society with intense regularity and repeated accuracy.²⁸ This perception is drawn from the traditional view discussed in Chapter Two that a patient at a medical clinic is not an individual human person, but a ‘composite of a wider social matrix’. It follows that whatever a person does has a direct bearing not only on himself, but also on his nuclear family, his extended family and the entire society eventually. The Bible has accounts about iniquity permeating family lines from one generation to another. Musa insists that a curse comes as a result of sin and is irrevocable by human effort. God’s intervention is then required to revoke the curse (Isa. 43:26). Jesus Christ has the power to revoke the burden and yoke of generational curses if we confess and repent of the sins of our forebears and ours.

Musa links the social happenings to spiritual causes because of their prolonged and long-lasting results. This makes him delve into the traditional foundation of the society to point out

²⁶ By ‘generational curses’, he meant the occurrences that can be traced to more than two generations within a society. Nevertheless, the presence or absence of generational curses are not indications of goodness or wickedness of a society; rather, it is an indication of what has taken place in the past generations of a society which one may or may not be aware of. In other words, generational curses work whether one is aware of their existence or not, and whether or not one believes in them. Many people are unaware that some of the recurring struggles they have been facing stem from underlying generational curses. Others however feel that the Christian impact had automatically taken care of any underlying generational curses. Indeed, it is true, Musa seeks, but this is just one side of the coin. He does believe there is still the need to work head on to finish the remaining part. There are several genuine Christians who have struggled with or are still struggling with generational curses in their own lives. Some proudly argue that a loving God cannot allow such things to happen to His children. Such people are ignorant of the fact that generational curses know no boundaries; they affect every race, all status acquired and every gender. Musa, Interview, 2 February 2012.

²⁷ Emmanuel Agbutonku Angyu, Interview, 18 February 2010, Wukari; Nuhu Useini Adi, Interview, 22 February 2010, CRCN Station Wukari; Joel Tanko Aji, Interview, 9 February 2011, Wukari; Bitrus T. Angyunwe, Interview, 10 February 2011, Wukari; James Orume, interview, 17 February 2011, Wukari.

²⁸ Musa, Interview, 2 February 2012.

the probability of an evil covenant between the early inhabitants and evil spirits; the possibility of breaching covenant vows with the evil spirits in the history of the society; and the possibility of shedding innocent blood. Yet the present inhabitants have not broken, renounced, or rejected it on behalf of the forebears. He concludes that it is probable that the social misfortune and suffering are due to generational curses.²⁹ These curses may have been transmitted to the present generation because they were not checked and renounced. Musa's contemplation and conceptualisation of uncertainties in the society in reference to generational curses are deduced from his youth. He has been hearing of the Jukun's military skills and victories. Yet somewhere along the way, the Jukun military might have disintegrated and the Jukun are now living in sparsely populated towns. Even though Wukari is the capital city, it is continually facing unrest. If it is not because of the unbreakable yoke of curses, what else could possibly be the cause? If not because of a covenant with evil forces, why are such deep-seated questions and fears still gripping the society? When will there be ethnic, political, social and economic peace? Could it be that all the required spiritual measures taken by the traditional leadership to placate the transcendent powers for intervention failed because their powers were temporal and limited and, therefore, could not affectively counter the curses?³⁰

Turning to his mother church, the CRCN, Musa thinks that it has ignored or failed to engage in corporate confession, repentance and prayer with dry fasting to seek God's face and favour to cancel the curse on the land. Musa believes that 'the generational curse is [the] sin of the past progeny transmitted to the present posterity'.³¹ Nevertheless, Jesus Christ has the ultimate, permanent and eternal power to break the yoke of the curses, if genuine corporate confession is made. Although throughout Jesus' ministry He had defeated the evil powers,³² they are still operating, even if in an insignificant way. It is the role of the evangelical churches, especially the CRCN, to intercede on behalf of other religions for God to cancel the untold perennial hardships in the society. The CRCN needs to be the pioneer and role model in this task of guiding its members toward spiritual commitment by repenting and confessing the sin of past and present generations. This will allow God to restore the society to its original state. For Musa, this could be led by a ministry determined to constantly intercede

²⁹ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009 & 8 March 2010.

³⁰ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009 & 8 March 2010.

³¹ Musa, Interview, 8 March 2010.

³² Adamu M. Eyab, Interview, 17 November 2010, Takum; Philip D. Aboki, Interview, 12 November 2010, Wukari; Nuhu F. Pamciri, Interview, 16 November 2010, Takum.

and plant God's 'seed' in the hearts of people in view of the magnitude of past and present sin and its fate in the society.

Before Musa started his ministry, 'Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission', which had the goal of addressing some pertinent issues happening in the society, he observed that sin and wickedness had contaminated and destroyed the society, bringing serious decadence in all its ramifications. For example, there had been cases of shedding innocent blood through political violence, ethnic conflicts, armed robbery, abortions, wars or battles; sexual perversion of various kinds; economic hardships; political unrest and injustices; occult forces (secret societies), witchcraft, pornography, alcoholism, and drug addiction,³³ to mention but a few. He felt that the society needed intercessors who would stand in the gap, particularly prayer warriors, who would confess the sin of the past and present generations that brought about immeasurable misfortune and suffering. Only Jesus is able to atone for the sins of the society and to break the vicious cycle of spiritual problems.

Prior to the establishment of the ministry, Musa concentrated in studying Old Testament (OT) passages that talked about 'God punishing the society from the third to the fourth generation because of the sin or disobedience of the parents'. He meditated on those passages to ascertain where the sin of the forefathers affected later generations and how the affected societies were released from such circumstances. In Musa's explanation, the social experiences in the OT and the contemporary Jukun society's experiences are to a large extent similar. In his study of the New Testament (NT), he concentrated on passages that depict Jesus as fulfilling the OT because He is the Priest and Lamb that takes away the sin of the world. He conceptualises that the mission of Christ among other things was to break the burden and yoke of perennial sin on humankind.

In his study and meditations, he realises that curses have an underlying cause. Proverbs 26:2 describes the curse as a bird flying in search of a tree to perch on and make its nest. Thus, a curse is not an accident but has a root cause. According to Musa, the cause is the sin of our forefathers transmitted to us, their posterity. He believes that a born-again, Spirit-filled Christian can still live under the bondage of generational curses from his forebears unless he confesses, rejects and renounces the sin of the forefathers transferred through the bloodline. If the accursed fails to confess and repent of the said sins, the curses already in the bloodline

³³ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009, 8 March 2010 & 8 February 2012.

will continue to permeate the life span of later generations. He describes the sin of the forefathers as a 'wound that was healed but the scar is still there'.³⁴

This view is drawn from the African primal view of 'inheritance through blood kith and kin'; and from the Charismatic theology which further develops from the OT but uses the new adage of the 'generational curse'. Taken together, they show that both good and bad behaviour can run through a person's bloodline. This also acknowledges that there are circumstances of battered relationships where harmony is required to redeem the failings of the past and present in order to ensure restoration. In this case, corporate confession and repentance on behalf of the failings of past ancestors is necessary. Although we are not physically involved, if we are born into such an accursed family, we are imputed with its punishment. Musa's notion of the 'generational curse' seems to presuppose that most of the failings are attributed to the forebears and not to the present generation. It assumes that the present generation is fairly innocent, but imputed with the yoke of its progenitors. Nonetheless, contemporary sin is as alarming as past sin.

In his study and meditation, Musa focused on some OT characters that facilitated the corporate confession and repentance of their society's sin. He discovered that there were circumstances that called for corporate confession and repentance (Lev. 26:40ff and 2 Chron. 7:14) to ensure the restoration of that society. He asserts that corporate confession and repentance of the sin of the forefathers are not in essence praying for the conversion of the deceased forefathers. Rather, it is a means of leading the present society to reflect on past failings and to be cautious to live a befitting life. It is a means of warning the present families and members of the society not to deviate as their forefathers did and thus incur wrath on the subsequent generations. It also serves as a means for social conversion as the inhabitants reflect on their past sin.³⁵ Musa draws six factors³⁶ for the corporate confession and repentance from the Bible:

First, social decadence needs corporate confession and repentance just like Jeremiah confessed his sin and the sin of his nation, Judah, and Jerusalem, his city (Jer. 3:25; 14:20). Moreover, Ezra (9:6-7), Nehemiah (1:6-9) and Moses (Lev. 26:40-42) prayed for God's favour to turn around the ills in their societies.

³⁴ Musa, Interview, 2 February 2012.

³⁵ Musa, Interview, 8 March 2010 & 2 February 2012.

³⁶ Musa, Interview, 2 February 2012.

Second, in the OT, society members confessed the sins of their forebears, family and personal sins (Exod. 34:7; Lev. 26:40ff; Neh.1:6-9; 9:2; Jer. 3:25; 14:20; Ps.106:6; Dan. 9:20; Ezra 9:6-15; Lam. 5:7). Animal blood was used as a symbol for cleansing. In the NT, Jesus is the Priest and the Lamb (Jn.1:29; Matt. 26:28; Mk.14:24; Lk. 22:20; Heb. 9–10; 1 Jn. 2:2; Jas. 5:16).

Third, biblical passages that seem to suggest a discontinuity of ‘generational curses’ (cf. Deut. 24:16; Ezek.18:20; Jer. 31:29-30) caution posterity to repent and make a break with ‘generational curses’; if not, they too will be affected (cf. Ezek.18:21-31; Jer. 3:25; 14:20). Nevertheless, Jeremiah 32:18 and Ezekiel 34:7 show a continuity in the repercussion of sin on the posterity if the later generations continue to walk in the sinful ways of their forebears. A few of my respondents argued that past and present sin had been turned around by the atoning work of Jesus Christ, and the impact of the Christian faith right from conversion.³⁷ They cited Hebrews 2:14-15, Romans 8:2, Galatians 3:13, 26-27 and Colossians 1:12-14 among others as their proof texts. Yet, in all fairness, despite the conversion and repentance, there is always the possibility that a few members of an extended family could engage in serious misconduct. If such behaviour is tolerated and not properly checked and frowned upon, it will spread over several generations. Conversion is therefore not to be seen as an exclusively single action, but a process whose end belongs to the future.

Fourth, the present generation is obliged to confess and repent of the failings of the forefathers due to its priestly role (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. Lev. 26:40ff; cf. Jer. 3:25; 14:20; Ezra 9:6-15; Neh.1:6; Dan. 9:8, 20; 10:13, 20).

Fifth, the Bible does not confine us to seeking forgiveness for our sin to the exclusion of others. For instance, Moses sought for the forgiveness of Israel because they turned to worship the golden calf (Exod. 32:9-14; 34:8-9; Deut. 9:18-29; 10:10-11; Ps.106:23). Moses identified himself directly with Israel in their sin (Exod. 34:8-9). Moreover, Moses asked God’s mercy and forgiveness, when Israel rebelled by refusing to enter Canaan after the spies brought defeatist’s reports (Num.14:13-20). Corporate intercession always restores the whole society (Gen.12:3; Exod.19:6; Isa.19:21, 25; 56:7-8; Rom.15:9). In Jonah, God expressed His desire to save the unbelieving society (Jonah 3:10; 4:11).

³⁷ Eyab, Interview, 17 November 2010; Aboki, Interview, 12 November 2010; Pamciri, Interview, 16 November 2010.

Sixth, the sins of the born-again Christians are forgiven in Christ but this should not deter them from continual confessing and repenting from personal and generational sins. There is a need to continue cleaving to the Lord, confessing personal and corporate sins (Lev. 26:39-42; cf. 1 Jn.1:7, 9; Heb. 9:22). Confession and repentance are fundamental to forgiveness and restoration from social and spiritual decadence.

Seventh, Christ redeemed us by grace through His blood (Gal. 2:16; 3:13; Rom. 3:31; 6:14; 8:4; 13:8); but that did not nullify the 'generational curse' stipulated in the law (Exod. 34:7) if confession and repentance by faith in Christ are not made.

Musa's approach seemed to be a response to the evangelical theology which holds that past and present sin has been turned around by the atoning work of Christ Jesus and the impact of Christian faith right from conversion (Heb. 2:14-15; Rom. 8:2; Gal. 3:13, 26-27; Col.1:12-14). He believes that the work of Christ has transformed and renewed us from Adamic sin which led to a curse on Adam's descendants. The evangelical view strongly strengthens the validity of the redemptive work of Christ and the issue of grace. Musa's emphasis on 'corporate' sin and its resultant effect are known by evangelicals but not emphasised enough. Obviously, sin and healing have a 'cosmic scope' in terms of the relationships with God, humanity and nature. Healing (or conversion) is not an exclusively single action, but a progressive one.

It is important to state categorically that despite his studies and meditations on the Scriptures, Musa was still a layperson, and had not gone through any theological training. However, he had a little knowledge of the Bible through his personal devotions in the Word of God.

Deducing from Musa's perception, restoration of social harmony needs corporate efforts. This follows that individual effort for harmony is subsumed within the corporate. In this case, Musa focuses more on mass conversion and somewhat denigrates individual conversion. Musa stresses more on the corporate pursuits of social harmony, but emphasises less the individual pursuits. Musa perceives that individual failings have direct bearings on the entire society, just as corporate failings affect all individuals in the society. The issue is that the individual is a composite and not a single entity in African and OT understanding. The weakness of Musa's perception is therefore in over-stressing corporate efforts to the neglect of the individual effort.

Musa's assumptions and thoughts are broadly applied to the 'Text of Guided Prayers' (see *Appendix 6: Guided Prayer Text for Retreats and Conferences – Breaking and Reversing the Curses*). The prayers encompass a corporate confession of sin (that is, sins of the forefathers and the extended family, as well as social and personal sin). For him, the sins already committed and those that are being committed are the underlying cause of social, political, economic and religious misfortune and suffering. The text consists of confessing and repenting, binding, breaking, rejecting, renouncing, declaring, and thanking God for the restoration experienced in the society. The general belief is that all the doors of generational curses are closed against Satan and his acolytes, the ultimate cause of the burden and the yoke.

4.5 Emergence of 'Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission'

Musa has been known to be zealous in studying and meditating on the Word of God, and living an extremely ascetic life with prayer and dry fasting.³⁸ He claims to have felt the urge to pray and fast for the healing of his homeland, Wukari. He traces the thought of starting a ministry to the touch he received in 1979 when he suddenly began to speak 'strange' tongues and proceeded on the subsequent twenty-seven-day dry fast. From 1980 to 1990, he embarked on seeking the face of God, praying about how, where, and when to start the ministry. While in his spiritual reflections, he received 'spiritual experience' in Owerri in 1992, urging him to come back home and stir up the fire of renewal and offer prayers for the restoration of his homeland. The voice pointed out to him that the constant acts of bloodshed (ethnic clashes, politico-religious conflicts and violence, armed robbery on roads, abortion and so on) committed on Wukari land were not mere incidents but generational curses on the land. In particular, his forebears had made treaties with evil forces in the course of their military exploits and later, when they settled in the land, the forebears had again compromised by allowing the influx of their neighbours – the Tiv and Hausa-Fulani – without circumspection of future threats to the Jukun aborigines.

³⁸ Bitrus Tanko Dan-Maigona, Interview, 7 October 2009, GSSS Office Wukari; Philemon G.A. Garjila, Interview, 7 October 2009, Wukari; Isaiah Magaji Jirapye, Interview, 17 February 2011, Nyasama Suite Wukari; Jacob M.I. Kabra, Interview, 4 March 2010, CRCN Gindin Dorowa; Iliya Kposu, Interview, 4 March 2010, Nwonko; Douglas D. Kenkenji, Interview, 7 March 2010, Nwonko; Micah Kenkenji, Interview, 7 March 2010, Nwonko; Ahima, Interview, 31 January 2011, Wukari.

The perception of generational curses motivated Musa to establish a ministry that would help plead for divine forgiveness and for the restoration of the land. The ministry was to help mend the fragmentations that had resulted in disharmony and also sow the seed of God in the hearts of people to continue to seek the face of God.³⁹ He used twenty-five to thirty Christian youth and made a call in 1995 at Tudun Wada in response to his 1992 ‘spiritual experience’ where he engaged in a thirty-day dry fast, interceding and weeping for the land.⁴⁰ Next, he held a three-day dry fast and retreat programme at Tunari from 28 to 31 January 1996.⁴¹

He named the ministry ‘Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission’.⁴² The ministry has a dual focus and burden for social intercession and mission. The ‘Heart-Sowing’ works through the prayer retreats (with the goal of becoming a big ministry), while the ‘Sewing Mission’ oversees the mission focus and evangelism (with the goal of planting churches). Whereas the former is the foundation, the latter is the building. The aim was to start as a movement which would later grow to become a church (if his mother church LCC Puje rejected him). Musa maintains that generational curses brought diverse upheavals on the land which needed the planting of ‘seeds’ (God’s Word) in people’s hearts.⁴³ He explains this explicitly in the ministry’s profile or flyer that his concern is ‘renewal and heart transformation’ (cf. Lk.1:17).⁴⁴ On the whole, the ministry’s aim is to pray for the restoration of Wukari land against ethno-religious crises resulting in social, economic and political and religious problems.

The burden of the ‘Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission’ ministry is to help Christians and non-Christians alike to review the past and present sins of the society and to cry to God for restoration. This is necessary because sin resulted in the curses being placed on the land: since God had withdrawn His guidance, security and sustenance of the land had ceased and the ancestors, cultic deities and spirits cannot break the yoke of the curses. The society, in this case, the Christian community, needs to repair the battered relationships through sowing the Word of God in people’s hearts. What ways could this be done? This leads us to the procedures, means and methods of restoration.

³⁹ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009 & 8 March 2010.

⁴⁰ However, not all the youth who availed themselves of the prayer and fasting opportunity withstood it to the end. The exercise ended with eighteen (18) youth. Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009 & 8 March 2010.

⁴¹ Musa, Interview, 8 March 2010; Kabra, Interview, 4 March 2010.

⁴² He claims that he started the ministry in the CRCN so that the CRCN would serve as an instrument to reach outsiders. He argues that he is a mediator and intercessor not only for the CRCN, but for other denominations in Wukari as well. He insists that there is no need for the CRCN to hijack it. In his words, his ministry is ‘an interdenominational Christian ministry with a missions and revival mandate to reach all and sundry for Christ’. Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009 & 8 March 2010.

⁴³ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009, 8 March 2010 & 8 February 2012.

⁴⁴ Adapted from the ‘Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission’ ministry profile.

4.6 Procedures of Restoring Social Harmony

4.6.1 Diagnosis

Diagnosis is a process of identifying and determining the underlying cause of a misfortune and suffering through revelation, especially a vision or dream or trance or audition.⁴⁵ Like the traditional African diviners, herbalists and the AICs, the ‘Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission’ employs cultural knowledge and the community’s norms and values. In determining the underlying cause, the ministry always probes into the socio-cultural, political, religious and physical situation of the patients. Either the patient or a relative (if the patient cannot do it) always does the narration of the inward feelings and disposition. While the narration is going on, Musa the leader would be listening, examining and posing questions at intervals. Like the diviners, he guides the narration towards the history of the sickness and of relationships of the patients with people in the society.

In all his diagnostic procedures, Musa would try to find out the frequency or intermittency of the situation back to the forefathers via the parents. Consequently, he will perceive that the underlying cause is the sin of the forefather which led to a curse transmitted to the client. In most cases the causes are primarily attributed to sin for which God has to employ His justice on the doer and on his or her posterity.⁴⁶ On some occasions, once he tells the client that it is the sin of the forefathers imputed on him, the client often urges him (the leader) to identify the personality. The client always insists on knowing the personality because it is thought that knowing the personality will give an opportunity to ask for forgiveness and reconciliation to be freed from the anger of the offended person.⁴⁷ Their pressure is not exclusively on knowing the identity of the witch, for example, but on knowing the person who connived with a witch or sorcerer, or used occult powers to inflict misfortune and suffering. Sometimes when the pressure is too much on the leader, he would mention the person [but maintain a high confidentiality and strongly caution against revealing the identity] claiming to have known the agent through ‘spiritual experience’, especially audition.⁴⁸ At other times, when he discovers that the accused person will be interrogated, he would describe the experience as a

⁴⁵ See Philomena Njeri Mwaura, ‘A Theological and Cultural Analysis of Healing in Jerusalem Church of Christ and Nabii Christian Church of Kenya’ (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Kenyatta University, Kenya, 2002), p.271.

⁴⁶ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009, 8 March 2010 & 8 February 2012.

⁴⁷ Bitrus Bako Waziri, Interview, 17 February 2010, Wâpan-Nghaku, Wukari.

⁴⁸ Observation, Wukari, ‘Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission’, 13 October 2009.

‘spiritual attack’.⁴⁹ He claims that in such a context, the Holy Spirit does not allow him to reveal the personality.

Nevertheless, Musa is sometimes sceptical about revealing the identity of the purported perpetrator because it may create enmity, long-term disharmony or reciprocal hatred between the client and the accused.⁵⁰ The issue of ‘spiritual experience’ is very crucial because he states variously that he does things based on what the ‘Holy Spirit’ reveals to him either through dreams or visions or auditions. For him, revelation is the underlying empowerment of his ministration. He always asserts that over time, God always reveals to him before any case comes to him, how it will happen, when or where it will happen and what to do to ensure restoration. This practice of revealing the cause of misfortune and suffering is also shared among some AICs, for example, the Zionist churches in South Africa.⁵¹

Musa’s so-called ‘spiritual experience’ that guides him to identify an alleged perpetrator is a direct development from his *Sufism*. He is rejuvenating the old practice in the name of Christian ministry. Even if God revealed to him the evildoer, it is for his self-edification and admonition. It is not to be disclosed, thus causing commotion in the society.

Moreover, the ministry, like the Jukun traditional healing systems,⁵² retains patients with supposedly serious spiritual illnesses or complications for counselling and prayers until the conditions are seen to have vanished or been dealt with.⁵³ This is comparable to the ‘in-patient’ treatment in medical science. However, the patients with minor problems visit as arranged for prayer-healing. This is categorised as ‘out-patient’ treatment. Musa has a separate or private room which he ‘consecrates’ for attending to prayer-healing patients.⁵⁴ Thus, he employs both the ‘in-patient’ and ‘out-patient’ processes as done in biomedical and herbal systems.

⁴⁹ Observation, Wukari, ‘Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission’, 13 October 2009 and 8 March 2010.

⁵⁰ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009, 8 March 2010 & 8 February 2012.

⁵¹ Oosthuizen, *The Healer-Prophet in Afro-Christian Church*, p.52.

⁵² See Dennis A. Ityavyar, ‘The Wholeness of African Traditional Medicine and health Care System’ in Boer & Ityavyar (eds.), *Wholistic Health Care: Social and Political Dimensions*, Vol. 2 (Jos, Nigeria: CHAN Wholistic Health Care Project, 1994), pp.1-15 (5).

⁵³ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009, 8 March 2010 & 8 February 2012; John Caleb, Interview, 22 October 2009 & 3 March 2011.

⁵⁴ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009, 8 March 2010 & 8 February 2012. See Ityavyar, ‘The Wholeness of African Traditional Medicine and Health Care System’, p.6.

4.6.2 Confession and Repentance

Confession and repentance for past and present sin form part of the diagnosis of the underlying cause of misfortune and suffering. It is a process that leads to restoration. The ministry believes that any patient seeking restoration must first of all know his or her waywardness, confess it, and repent of it, knowing that Jesus Christ has the power to break the burden and yoke, and bring about restoration. This perception is similar to the traditional Jukun confession of a sick person to the wronged person (whether still alive or deceased) as noted in Chapter Two. The victim, or, in some cases, his relative can confess on behalf of the victim to ensure prompt healing. Beyond this if the person wronged is dead, confession must be made because he has already handed the issue to mystical powers to deal decisively with the victim.⁵⁵ The confession must take cognisance of the sin of the forefathers (known and unknown), personal sin, family sin and communal sin. A patient who is not able to follow those procedures may be restored to health [by God in His common grace] temporarily.

Musa claims that almost all patients that came to him in search of restoration were first guided on the need to confess and repent so as to be restored to wholeness.⁵⁶ In his view, these processes are cathartic to restoration from infraction. The confession and repentance that Musa is stressing are no different from similar concepts in the traditional understanding.

4.7 Means and Methods of Restoring Social Harmony

As already revealed, Musa's burden is to restore society to its wholeness in his intercessory role. The ways of restoring this is to recall past mistakes, acknowledge the waywardness of the past generation, confess and repent on their behalf, and then, confess and repent of the present sin of the families and society at large. There are models through which these could be achieved. This section seeks to discuss these models one after the other.

⁵⁵ Musa, Interview, 8 February 2012.

⁵⁶ Musa, Interview, 8 February 2012.

4.7.1 Word of God

The 'Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission' tends to make the Word of God central in its beliefs and practices. The leader or an assigned person usually gives scriptural exhortations before proceeding to restoration prayers. The ministry believes that the Word of God is not only 'powerful', but also a 'tablet' for all situations one is passing and could be passing through.⁵⁷ By 'tablet', Musa meant that God is the solution, whatever misfortune or suffering one may be encountering. Besides, the ministry believes that the Word of God carries with it everything necessary for life and death and it is the 'general medicine for life'. Beyond this, many characters in the Bible based all their being in the Word of God, the main source of restoration. Ignorant people continue passing through diverse curses because they are not always meditating on the Word of God and praying daily for restoration.⁵⁸ Anyone who constantly meditates on the Word of God is virtually eating *life* into his or her body. The leader concludes by citing Acts 4:12 and states that there is no other name through which restoration is received except by Jesus Christ.⁵⁹ The adherents are guided to fight all generational curses bedevilling their families and the society with the aid of the Word of God. In the traditional African conception, God, ancestors and cultic deities, spirits are purveyors of power and stand against the disruption of witches, wizards, sorcerers and other evil forces. However, in this ministry, the Word of God is said to have power to ward off all misfortune and suffering if the patient believes in the Word.⁶⁰

The leader takes seriously his personal spiritual devotion to the Word of God. He also instils into the lives of his adherents this practice and the perception that constantly staying with the Word of God has the potency of breaking, binding, rejecting and renouncing all curses. This model often renews the faith of nominal Christians who have been wayward. Besides, unbelievers who patronise the ministry are guided on the value of depending on the Word of God – the power and tablet – to break the yoke of all curses. Many members testify publicly to this change in their lives at their meetings.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Observation, 'Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission' warfare day meetings over time.

⁵⁸ Kenkenji, Interview, 7 March 2010.

⁵⁹ Musa, Interview, 8 February 2012.

⁶⁰ Musa, Interview, 8 March 2010 & 8 February 2012; Kenkenji, Interview, 7 March 2010.

⁶¹ I deduce this from the several observations I carried out during the Ministry's meeting days and counselling sessions over time.

The ministry discourages visits to traditional healing homes believed to be satanic loci.⁶² It believes that medicine men and herbalists consult oracles, as well as invoking spirit powers before collecting and administering treatment. Herbalists often wash their eyes spiritually before going to search for herbs and the spirits often guide them to the required herbs.⁶³ Musa stresses that Matthew 11:28 enjoins patients to come to Jesus Christ with whatever burden and yoke, and He will restore their condition. Moreover, 1 Peter 5:7 encourages casting all problems on God because He always cares. In Musa's interpretation, the two passages emphasise the 'I'. The 'I' is neither the medicine man nor the herbalist, but Jesus Christ. Moreover, the ministry understands biomedical health centres as arena where those who have a weak faith can go and confirm their restoration through scientific tests and discoveries.⁶⁴ The ministry on the whole does not encourage taking medication from the hospital. The ministry always alludes to Proverbs 29:18 to refer to the lack of vision that takes patients to either biomedics or herbalists in search of healing. The leader asserts that such patients become wanderers, blaming other people and God.⁶⁵

However, information received has revealed that when the members see the sickness persisting beyond control, they secretly go to the medical centre for treatment. Nevertheless, once they are cured of their conditions, they claim to have been healed through prayers.⁶⁶ The ministry claims to hold to Jesus' exclusive healing power in restoring health. It further claims that Jesus Christ encourages His children to 'ask in his name,' and will restore all circumstances to normalcy. Nevertheless, the ministry only admits that depending on the Word of God for restoration does not mean that one should refrain from taking other natural things created by God for building up body organs.

Complete withdrawal from all medication while holding on to divine healing (with the exception of anointing oil and holy water) is problematic and denigrates the power of God in nature. It relegates to the background the skill that God has given to professionals to bring a cure. God owns nature and uses it for the wellbeing of humankind. It is reported that two of

⁶² Musa, Interview, 8 March 2010 & 8 February 2012; Kenkenji, Interview, 7 March 2010.

⁶³ Musa, Interview, 8 February 2012; Kenkenji, Interview, 7 March 2010.

⁶⁴ Musa, Interview, 8 February 2012

⁶⁵ Musa, Interview, 8 March 2010; Kenkenji, Interview, 7 March 2010; Adi, Interview, 22 February 2010.

⁶⁶ Moses Y. Fisseh and Ezekiel B. Sallah, Interview, 4 March 2010.

his members who faced protracted illnesses were demoralised and died because they each refused to take medicines alongside the prayers.⁶⁷

4.7. 2 Prayer and Fasting

Musa's ministry also places prayer and fasting next to study of and dependence on the Word of God for restoration. Fasting is a preparatory model to receiving divine impartations for restoration. This is because fasting generates spiritual strength. The ministry members through the facilitation of the leader engage in a dry fast at stipulated places (mountains, forests and deserts) and periods (foreseeing social upheaval at various levels) whenever they have any 'spiritual' mandate.⁶⁸ For about a decade now the ministry has been fasting every Tuesday, asking God's powers for the restoration of the society.⁶⁹ The time frame for the fasting varies according to their 'spiritual experience'. The ministry is drawing from the concept of traditional African religion where designated places such as mountains, hills and sacred sites are regarded with awe and as places of divine impartation.⁷⁰ It is believed that God is associated with sacred places of power for progressive impartation. Wherever and whenever a person engages in fasting in such a place, it is transformed from being an ordinary place to being a sacred place with God's presence. In such a place a person communes with God, God opens the eyes of the devotees to see the deplorable state of the society and energises them to have that desire and empathy to seek His forgiveness. Thus, fasting in such places ensures power and bravery. The ministry also engages and encourages members to pray from 12:00 midnight through 3:00 am (sometimes until 6:00 am) in their various homes.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Hajara Gimba at Yaku Baba was paralysed by a stroke in January 2010, James Ahijo Hamman at Tudun Wada died on 27 January 2010 at Musa's residence in the course of prayer when the deceased was supposed to seek medical attention alongside prayers. Moses Y. Fisseh and Ezekiel B. Sallah, 4 March 2010.

⁶⁸ Musa, Interview, 8 February 2012; Kenkenji, Interview, 7 March 2010.

⁶⁹ Moses Y. Fisseh and Ezekiel B. Sallah, Interview, 4 March 2010.

⁷⁰ See Harold W. Turner, *History of an African Independent Church* Vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p.62; Christian G. Baëta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, (London: SCM Press, 1962), p.94; G.C. Parrinder, *Religion in an African City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), p.124.

⁷¹ The reason for praying at such times, the Ministry asserts, is because of the experiences and testimonies they receive from former perpetrators of evil convicted by the Holy Spirit. It is revealed that evil forces operate during such times. Maintaining the discipline of prayer at during periods will destabilise the activities of the evil forces. Besides, it is the time that God's empowerment is imminent on His children for restoration. Beyond that, the evil forces often schedule their activities between 12:00 midnight and 3:00 am in their secret domain. By 2:00 am they would have finished their mission and been on their way back home by 3:00 am. The perception of the Ministry is that perseverance in spiritual encounter through binding, rejecting and renouncing evil forces generally weakens the evil forces. Dantani, Interview, 8 March 2010.

The locus of fasting does not matter as much as the faith behind it. It is good that fasting become part and parcel of a believer. This is because evil spirits operate without being confined to space and time. Specifying a locus and specific time for fasting is therefore an attempt to confine the operation of evil forces to a specific place and time. Moreover, emphasis on fasting almost to the total neglect of some of the church's core mission, such as evangelism and conversion, is one-sided.⁷² The mission of the church considers both power encounters resulting in healing and evangelism leading to the conversion of souls. It is equally true that flexibility in fasting could sometimes lead to laxity and make one susceptible to continued visitation by generational curses. Thus, the frequent spiritual exercises of the ministry, especially fasting, are due to the belief that evil forces are real and operate in various forms. Fasting serves thus to confer immunity and guard against any spells.

4.7.3 Prayer Retreats and Conferences

Prayer Retreats and Conferences are other means and methods of social restoration. All the spiritual experiences from 1979 through 1996 were preparatory for renewal through 'Prayer Retreats and Conferences'. As indicated, many times 'spiritual experiences' have been part of Musa's perception of revelation on what, how, where and when to do one thing or the other. His initial intention for the ministry was for it to be interdenominational and to start from his home church, the CRCN, which he considered the first beneficiary of the fruits of renewal of the land. He approached CRCN local churches, in particular, at their council meetings in search of opportunities for Prayer Retreats and Conferences. All the local churches that were approached wholeheartedly consented. Musa's conferences in the CRCN local churches took place between 1997 and 2003, particularly during the Christmas periods, from 23 to 31 December every year. He made the first call at Gidan Idi in 1997 with a seven-day dry fast and Prayer Conference. Other conferences featured a three-day dry fast in Gindin Dorowa (1998), Nya-kwala (1999), GSSSS Wukari (2000 and 2003), and Ibi (2001 and 2002).⁷³ The programme generally featured prayer sessions,⁷⁴ preaching, Bible Studies, dry fast, laying-on

⁷² Ajaver, Interview, 25 October 2009; Ahima, Interview, 19 October 2009; Eyab, Interview, 17 November 2010.

⁷³ Dan-Maigona, Interview, 7 October 2009; Dantani, Interview, 13 October 2009 & 8 March 2010; Jirapye, Interview, 17 February 2011; Fisseh, Moses Y. and Ezekiel B. Sallah, Interview, 4 March 2010.

⁷⁴ The Appendix to this chapter shows the prayer text for the restoration of social harmony commonly used at various Prayer Retreats and Conferences.

of hands and application of anointing oil for healing, deliverance or exorcism.⁷⁵ Many CRCN pastors, Charismatic lay leaders and elders supported this ministry and its programmes at its formative stage.⁷⁶

In addition to the scheduled annual Prayer Conferences, the ministry always met twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) for prayers at a designated and consecrated house. The designated places also served as places for the consecration of the intercessors. Whenever, the intercessors (also known as ‘the prayer warriors’) return from Sunday worship or any other designated spiritual meeting, they would quickly meet at the ‘consecrated house or place’ to consecrate themselves from any contamination they might have experienced. The belief is that they might have been contaminated in the course of shaking hands, conversation or sharing seats. It is believed that a close physical neighbour can be an enemy, a perpetrator of sin leading to a curse affecting the bloodline and society. It is probable that Musa draws this perception and practice of consecration from his Islamic faith where ablution is a means of cleansing or consecration. Although among the Muslims, water is used for washing before prayers, this ministry uses prayer as a means of maintaining holiness, and to refrain from any evil that could result in a curse.

The ascetic life of Musa and his followers had not been adequately translated into harmonious relationships in the family and society. The expressions of the ministry tend to be at odds with what it professes. Moreover, its expression becomes chaotic in the family and society. This issue would be discussed later under ‘Setbacks in the Ministry’.

4.7.4 Prophecy

The ministry’s leader is addressed as ‘Prophet’. This is because, according to them, ‘God has endowed him with prophetic insight to reveal hopes and dooms to the society’.⁷⁷ The adherents are developing from the ‘spiritual experiences’ of the leader through audition and dreams, for example. In African Christianity, a prophet is associated with receiving the Holy Spirit for diverse healing engagements⁷⁸ and often has contact with transcendent powers

⁷⁵ Dan-Maigona, Interview, 7 October 2009; Jirapye, Interview, 17 February 2011.

⁷⁶ Dan-Maigona, Interview, 7 October 2009; Jirapye, Interview, 17 February 2011.

⁷⁷ This is the expression I often heard the adherents use in addressing their leader.

⁷⁸ Gerhardus O. Oosthuizen, *The Healer-Prophet in Afro-Christian Church* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), pp.3-4, 7, 9, 15.

through vision and audition.⁷⁹ However, in the Bible, especially the OT, a prophet is a ‘seer’ or a ‘man of God’ (1 Sam. 9:6, 9). This is because all that the prophet predicts comes true. Prophets from both OT and NT received divine revelations and proclaimed them.

Like the prophets in the AICs and the OT, this leader claims to possess all the roles: he receives revelations, has constant contact with God, receives voices from God and can predict the future. It is these claims of prophetic empowerment that make him claim to have foreseen the fate of the society, and he is described as a ‘weeping prophet’ (or rather intercessor), pleading that God restores the societal harmony.

Moreover, the ministry members call the leader ‘Bro’ (short form of the English, ‘brother’). The members ignore the varied meaning of ‘brother,’ but use it strictly in reference to ‘God’s representative’ who reveals mysteries. Musa himself confirmed to me times without number that ‘I have natural attractions and gifts that come from God. I have never received a word from God, passed on to people and become a failure’.⁸⁰ The ministry sees him as ‘God-sent’ and he does not make any mistake. Hence, disobeying his instructions is the same as disobeying God. This perception and practice is common among the traditional older AICs, where their leaders are highly respected possibly because of the fear of God’s wrath in times of disrespect.

4.7.5 Holy Water

In African traditional religion, water is used for various rituals to effect healing. It is used for washing and sprinkling on the sick, and drunk by the sick, in the understanding that it will help drive away evil forces in the sick person.⁸¹ In the same vein, this ministry has a strong belief in the use of holy water for the restoration of health through repelling and expelling measures. Three ministers: Revs X, Y, and Z and two elders of the CRCN, erstwhile members of the ministry: Mr Q and S⁸² all informed to me that whenever this ministry holds a Prayer Conference in a town close to a river, it always creates a space in the programme for cleansing or exorcising evil spirits in the river. In all places where this practice was carried

⁷⁹ Oosthuizen, *The Healer-Prophet in Afro-Christian Church*, pp.16.

⁸⁰ Musa, Interview, 8 March 2010, Wukari; Musa Emmanuel Dantani, Cell phone call by author, 28 May 2013.

⁸¹ Ndiokwere Nathaniel, *Prophecy and Revolution* (London: SPCK, 1981), p.278.

⁸² Names not divulged for security reasons.

out, the ministry leader would guide and facilitate the practice. He would take all those that attend the conference to the river, usually in the evening, between 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm.

The members would line up along the edge of the water body (a stream, or a pond, or a river). He would ask the people to fetch water and wash their face, hands and feet. After that he and two selected individuals would enter the river. He would first fetch water in the calabash and wash his face, hands, and feet. The selected persons would do likewise. Then, he and his acolytes would fetch water in that same calabash, come up and meet the people lined up at the edge of the river.

One of the acolytes would hold the water calabash. He would ask the rest of the people to walk slowly towards him, one by one, opening their mouth, while he (the leader) would dip his right hand into the water calabash, fetch a little quantity and sprinkle forcefully on the face of the individual and mention particular prophetic utterances, saying: 'Your enemies are with you in the house.' 'Your enemies are liars.' 'Witches and wizards after your life will fail.' 'You are passing through generational curses.' 'You still have many battles ahead of you before deliverance.' 'Be careful of what someone will give you, never receive it no matter how good the thing is.' 'Many evil eyes are against your progress, you need to confess your sin, your parental sins to be able to overcome.' 'God has given you the power to break the curses, why are you still afraid?' 'Receive the power of God.' 'You are the head not the tail.' 'Rejoice for God has answered your prayers.' 'Go! Continue to do God's work.'⁸³ The prophetic utterances differ from one person to another. Some prophesy fortune and success while others foretell misfortune and doom.

Some of the utterances are similar in content and focus. However, the content of the utterances reveals doom and impending doom and restoration and impending restoration. Many respondents informed me that on occasions, the ministry leader fetches water from a certain well in either Government Science Senior Secondary School (GSSSS) Wukari or in a certain water body in Kano. He would then pour the water neatly in a ten-litre water jar and give to his members to keep safely in a hiding place in the home and to drink it carefully until

⁸³ Narration by observer-participants at the prayer conference on 28 January & 5 September 1996, Tunari; 23-31 December 1997, Gindin Dorowa; 23-31 December 1998, Nyakwala. Dan-Maigona, Interview, 13 April 2010; Ezekiel B. Sallah, Interview, 4 March 2010, CRCN, Gindin Dorowa.

the next conference in a year's time.⁸⁴ A respondent revealed to me that the water he fetches from a well dries up immediately upon fetching.⁸⁵ This happens because it is not ordinary water but consecrated before it gushes out of a well. Musa always advises his members to drink the water so as to restore health and ward off evil forces against them. My further investigations on the matter showed that it is based on mere hearsay from third and fourth sources who had not themselves experientially witnessed any ceremony.

This ministry uses holy water for three major purposes as expellant, repellent and consecration. It therefore serves as an antibiotic and prophylactic. In the Jukun traditional society, it is believed that evil within a person must be removed through an emetic.⁸⁶ On the other hand, evil can be planted on the body, and water can wash it away.

4.7.6 Circumcision: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

This is one of the practices among others about which it is difficult to obtain verification. It is said that this ministry practices Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) on married women (and sometimes on single ladies) to control or halt the curse of extreme sexual drive. FGM is a term used to describe traditional practices that involve the cutting of female genitalia, for cultural and religious reasons.⁸⁷ Other commonly used terms are female circumcision, female genital cutting or female genital surgeries. FGM is practised in many African societies and beyond. If Musa really engaged in FGM, the practice is seriously frowned upon and banned by policy makers, activists and professionals, in various fields because of immediate,

⁸⁴ None of my respondents is able to determine precisely the site where the well water or the running water is fetched. In any case, most of the respondents affirm that he gives his members such consecrated water. Besides, those who were in the ministry also attest to it. The site and source of the water remain uncertain, probably due to fear of desecration of the water by another power, making it harmful and useless. Anonymous, Interview, 7 April 2011, Wukari.

⁸⁵ Anonymous, Interview, 13 February 2012, Jalingo.

⁸⁶ Angyu, Interview, 18 February 2010; Adi, Interview, 22 February 2010; Aji, Interview, 9 February 2011; Angyunwe, Interview, 10 February 2011; Orume, Interview, 17 February 2011.

⁸⁷ Emmanuel Monjok, E. James Essien & Laurens Holmes, 'Female Genital Mutilation: Potential for HIV Transmission in Sub-Saharan Africa and Prospect for Epidemiologic Investigation and Intervention', *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, Vol. 11, No.1 (April 2007), pp.33-42 (34); Allison T. Slack, 'Female Circumcision: A Critical Appraisal', *Human Right Quarterly*, Vol.10, No. 4 (November 1988), pp.437-486 (440-441); Efua Dorkenoo, 'Combating Female Genital Mutilation: An Agenda for the Next decade', *Women Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No.1/2 (Spring – Summer, 1999), pp.87-97 (88); Melisa Wright, Rites Vs. Right: The Case of Female Genital Mutilation (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Acadia University, 1999), pp.42-47.

intermediate and long-term implications.⁸⁸

The FGM practice is a violation of human rights. Articles 3 and 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights state that ‘Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.’ Also, ‘No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.’⁸⁹

The World Health Organisation (WHO) classifies this practice into four types:⁹⁰ Ritualistic Circumcision involves nicking of the clitoris;⁹¹ *Sunna* Circumcision comprises the removal of the prepuce, clitoris and labia minora;⁹² Excision or Clitoridectomy involves the total removal of the clitoris, labia minora and the labia majora;⁹³ and Infibulation or Pharonic Circumcision involves the cutting of the clitoris, labia minora, labia majora and the prepuce.⁹⁴

The FGM allegedly practised by the leader of this ministry is partly the first type of ‘ritualistic circumcision’. It is postulated that he only cuts off the clitoris. It appears that the religious rationale for this practice is to help deter the female members from sexual drives

⁸⁸ Dorkenoo, ‘Combating Female Genital Mutilation’, pp.89-90; Slack, ‘Female Circumcision’, pp.450-455; Wright, *Rites Vs. Right*, pp.42-47. Immediate complications of FGM include severe bleeding, pain, sudden shock and death, anaemia, urinary infection, tetanus due to unsterilized instruments used. Intermediate complications involve delays in healing with myriads of infections such as pelvic, uterus and vagina infections as well as scars. On the long-term complications, it will block menses and accumulate blood in the vagina and uterus, infertility, urinary tract infection resulting in painful experience during urination. Abscesses and tough scar tissue will increase maternal and child morbidity and mortality due to obstructed labour. There are also psychological effects and sexual problems; for example, it will impede women’s sexuality from lack of pleasure and sensation during sex. There is risk of HIV/AIDS due to unsterilized instruments used for FGM.

⁸⁹ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights [as adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948]. Accessed 28 July 2013, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>, Articles 3 & 5.

⁹⁰ World Health Organization I, *Classification and Definitions of Female Genital Cutting* (Geneva, WHO, 1995).

⁹¹ Slack, ‘Female Circumcision’, p.441; Monjok et al, ‘Female Genital Mutilation’, p.35; Dorkenoo, ‘Combating Female Genital Mutilation’, p.88; Wright, ‘Rites Vs. Right’, p.18.

⁹² Slack, ‘Female Circumcision’, p.441; Monjok, et al, ‘Female Genital Mutilation’, p.35; Dorkenoo, ‘Combating Female Genital Mutilation’, p.88; Wright, ‘Rites Vs. Right’, p.18. The Muslims call this practice *sunna*, from the Arabic meaning ‘tradition’ of Mohammed. It is thought to be the type of female circumcision recommended in Islam. See Asma El Dareer, *Women, Why Do You Weep? Circumcision and Its Consequences* (London: Zed Press, 1982), p.2.

⁹³ Slack, ‘Female Circumcision’, p.441; Monjok et al, ‘Female Genital Mutilation’, p.35; Dorkenoo, ‘Combating Female Genital Mutilation’, p.88; Wright, ‘Rites Vs. Right’, p.18; Efuia Dorkenoo, *Cutting the Rose: Female Genital Mutilation, the Practice and Its Prevention* (London: Minority Rights Publication, 1994), p.34.

⁹⁴ El Dareer, ‘Attitudes of Sudanese People to the Practice of Female Circumcision’, *International Journal of Epidemiology* Vol.12, No. 2 (1983), p.138. See also Dorkenoo, ‘Combating Female Genital Mutilation’, p.88; Slack, ‘Female Circumcision’, p.441; Wright, ‘Rites Vs. Right’, p.18.

and to strengthen their religious participation.⁹⁵ The belief is that women are more emotional and susceptible to an unabated sexual appetite. The practice is therefore a means of curtailing, controlling and discouraging promiscuity. More importantly, the ministry believes that an extreme marital sexual drive by women in their marital homes will hinder their commitment to God's work, in this case, long-term prayer and dry fasting. This perception is drawn from the teaching of the leader that there is no marriage in heaven and sexual feelings are therefore a curse and distort devotion to the Word of God.⁹⁶ In other words, the rationale for the FGM practice is to safeguard women from nymphomania, hysteria and masturbation which could lead to promiscuity, thereby hindering the extremely ascetic life and commitment to God's work.⁹⁷ Discouraging extreme sexual relations in marriage ensures restoration. Once this emotion comes under control the women will not engage in infidelity that will lead to the release of generational curses on their children and later generations.⁹⁸

Musa's focus in controlling the female sexual drive is based on the fact that female orgasm rises slowly, but takes a longer time than male orgasm which is fast and short-lived. Hence, he does not say that men have no extreme sexual drive.

Although FGM is usually practised in secret, it was disclosed at the December 2001 Prayer Conference in Ibi. The information leaked out through several means: Version A reveals that the issue got to the notice of the public while those who engaged in the practice were discussing it casually during the conference.⁹⁹ Version B says that the information came out during the labour of a pregnant woman at home under the guidance of a traditional midwife, her mother-in-law. The pregnant woman was over-stretched and nearly lost her life and the unborn child. The traditional midwife discovered that the woman in labour had no clitoris, and so inquired why her clitoris was missing. The woman in labour at first refused to say, but the midwife instilled fear in her that if she concealed the truth and refused to say, she would

⁹⁵ Interviews with many respondents (who intend to remain anonymous) appear to reveal that Musa taught this message of abstinence from sex in secret and threatened the victims not to reveal it because it is covenantal. It is believed that if they reveal it, they will certainly die. Furthermore, it is postulated that most of those apparently affected deny having undergone genital mutilation. It is also said that most of those that were mutilated experience relational difficulties with their husbands. Most of the women divorce their husbands while some of the husbands divorce their wives because the women adherents no longer value their marital commitment.

⁹⁶ Adi, Interview, 22 February 2010; Fisseh, Moses Y. and Ezekiel B. Sallah, Interview, 4 March 2010; Kabra, Interview, 4 March 2010; Zhema, Interview, 19 February 2011.

⁹⁷ Angyu Bala, Interview, 13 April 2010, Wukari.

⁹⁸ Dan-Maigona, Interview, 7 October 2009; Fisseh & Sallah, Interview, 4 March 2010; Zhema, Interview, 19 February 2011.

⁹⁹ Both Musa E. Dantani and the women whose genitals were reportedly mutilated still conceal and deny the practice. The issue is still discussed in secret. Dan-Maigona, Interview, 7 October 2009; Kabra, Fisseh & Sallah, Interview, 4 March 2010.

not give birth and she would also die with the unborn child. Out of fear, she said it was ‘Musa who mutilated my clitoris’.¹⁰⁰

Musa denied vehemently that he has been practising FGM.¹⁰¹ It seems to me that he instils ‘spiritual intimidation’ in those women that participated in the practice by threatening them that revealing the truth may result in misfortune. More importantly, if Musa actually engages in FGM, the affected families might conceal the practice because of the stigma that might result for the victim, the family and the society within which she lives. Also, if he really engages in such a practice, it may be for the religious purpose of upholding the ascetic life and promoting celibacy.

Nevertheless, what makes this practice unverifiable and uncertain, and possibly an assumption, is that when the GCC mandated four RCCs to investigate and report, there was no precise determining factor to hold on to. Some said the families of the alleged victims closed all doors to the investigation. Even today, the certainty of the matter is in doubt. The conclusion is that ‘no one has the real fact about the alleged FGM practice by Musa because none of the alleged victims came out to admit to being mutilated’. It follows that it is hearsay information, which attempts to question his integrity since none of my informants could indicate succinctly where, how and when Musa conducts FGM.

4.7.7 Laying-on of Hands and Anointing Oil

Another means that this ministry employs in order to deal with social decadence is binding, rejecting and renouncing curses by the laying-on of hands and the application of anointing oil in prayers. This is commonly practised across Christian religious persuasions, especially the AICs, Charismatics and other Faith-Healing movements.¹⁰² However, there are cases where the ministry leader refrains from laying hands when he perceives that a strong power is resisting. In such a situation, the leader will use vocal utterances to inquire about the source

¹⁰⁰ I conceal the identity of the informant, the old woman and the labouring woman, for security purposes.

¹⁰¹ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009, 8 March 2010 & 8 February 2012.

¹⁰² Musa, Interview, 8 March 2010 & 8 February 2012. See also J. R. William, ‘Laying-on of Hands’ in Stanley M. Burgess & Eduard M. Vander Maas (eds.), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), pp.834-836.

and mission of the power. Once the source and the intended mission are determined, the leader carries on resisting the inferior power that intends to thwart the restoration.¹⁰³

The reason for the laying on of hands to deal with social decadence is the belief that misfortune or suffering is almost always renounced and nullified by the laying-on of hands in prayer. An interview with a minister of the Cherubim and Seraphim Order, revealed that the laying-on of hands is an ‘invocation of power from God to cast away, reject, renounce, nullify, resist any misfortune planned or transferred to a person in whatever means’¹⁰⁴ to ensure restoration to normal status.

The ‘Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission’ does not only lay hands but also applies the anointing oil to restore health. The ministry reports that the oil is used in two ways: it is given to the sick person to drink to cure the stomach ailment; it is also rubbed all over the body to repel any evil deposited on the body.¹⁰⁵ In all these processes, the aim is to exorcise any evil both inside and outside the patient. The oil is therefore used as an emetic, a repellent and medicine. When the ministry uses the oil as an emetic and medicine, a small quantity is given to the patient to drink. Once the patient drinks it, he or she vomits all the deadly substances inside, thus protecting the patient from harm. On the other hand, when the ministry uses the oil as a repellent, the members are guided to rub it all over their body to cleanse any dead substance deposited on the body by evil powers. It is also believed that the smell of the oil is another means of preventing any evil intention to inflict sickness.

The ministry has two basic beliefs on the efficacy of the anointing oil: the oil is used to ‘break any yoke’ of generational curses in the life of the patient and his or her later generations; and the oil is also used to consecrate or commission members for leadership. The ministry claims that the method of either laying-on of hands and application of the oil has been guided over the years in the course of the leader’s ‘spiritual experience’. Moreover, neither the laying-on of hands nor the oil has power in themselves but the power comes from the source, Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

¹⁰³ Observation, Weekday Prayer Retreat, 7 March 2010.

¹⁰⁴ Augustine N. Eze, Interview, 6 February 2012, Cherubim and Seraphim, Wukari.

¹⁰⁵ Observation, Weekday Prayer Retreat, 7 March 2010, Wukari.

4.7.8 Tithing and Seed Sowing

Another means of restoration from any generational curse is said to be tithing and seed sowing. The ministry conceptualises tithing as a ‘channel of personal communication with God and door opener to break curse that might have been linked with one’s assets’.¹⁰⁶ The members believe that once a person tithes rightly, God will continue to protect, guide and sustain the family from curses. Tithing is conceptualised in a broad form to comprise one’s personal life, one’s increase now and in the future, and other things that have to do with the person. Tithing always makes God reverse trouble in one’s house. The ministry stresses diverse types of tithing: personal tithing, children’s tithing, clothes’ tithing, work tithing (salaries, farming, business and more), and whatever a person has or does.¹⁰⁷ They believe that God requires one-tenth as an obligation from His creatures to strengthen His relationship even to the next generation. These tithes must be given to the priest, in this case, the ministry leader. This is because he is accountable to God as he constantly intercedes against any curse; past, present and future. This tithing is taken very seriously in all the places that this ministry is planted and adherents are afraid of making the mistake of failing to pay their tithes.

This perception is further developed in the concept of seed sowing. The leader, in his interpretation of ‘seed sowing’ in reference to the OT practice, asserts that most people who come to see a Prophet (otherwise, ‘seer’ or ‘man of God’; cf. 1 Sam. 9:6-10) often bring something (monetary, or its equivalent) with them. This is for the prophet to sow a ‘seed’ in their lives,¹⁰⁸ the reason being that whatever Musa pronounces often happens (as he claims).

In the view of this ministry, tithing and seed sowing are expressions of gratitude for God’s providence, protection and security. The leader, therefore, always emphasises the giving of tithes and seed sowing to encourage his members to keep their required spiritual obligations. It is scriptural that tithing is compulsory for a believer to fulfil. However, the way the leader stresses the obligation makes the members afraid of possible repercussions if they cannot give. The collection of tithes and seed sowing as characterised have a monetary motive and represent the means of wooing, extorting and exploiting the gullible and vulnerable to release

¹⁰⁶ Musa, Interview, 8 February 2012.

¹⁰⁷ As regards tithing for the children, the parents must remove something, especially monetary, in their names for God to speak protection and blessings into their lives. If the children have grown up, and are, say, 10 to 15 years old, the parents must treat them as apprentices and remove the tithes to give to God. Dantani, Interview, 8 February 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Dantani, Interview, 8 February 2012.

the substances which rightfully belong to God. This is a subtle way of siphoning the money that should go into the church coffers.

4.7.9 Imprecatory Utterances

Imprecatory utterances, cursing and swearing are closely related. Imprecatory utterance in this study refers to a prayer where a divine being or supreme power is appealed to, to deal decisively with the agents of misfortune or suffering. The members of the ministry meet every Tuesday and Wednesday at 2:00 pm in their ‘consecrated house’¹⁰⁹ for intercessions. They often employ imprecatory utterances as means of binding, renouncing and rejecting any curses in the family.

First, the prayer leader after a short scriptural exhortation would draw the attention of the members to the malice and menace of curses created by the past generation and transferred to the present generation. He would then ignite motivation, enthusiasm and empathy, especially on the deplorable state of the cursed inhabitants. Second, the prayer leader would remind the adherents that there are evil agents working tirelessly to inflict curses on the inhabitants. This procedure sometimes leads to a radical prayer approach mentioning that ‘witches and wizards are in this town...’ ‘There are witches and wizards in ...[mentioning the name] this or that family’; ‘Mr or Mrs ... [mentioning the name] is a witch.’ ‘Somebody will die.’ ‘There is going to be drought, plague, famine, or earthquake in the land;’ or ‘There are fornicators and adulterers in the town’.

With this extreme enthusiasm, all the intercessors said to have felt the yoke of curses in the families and societies would start to fall down, rolling, crawling and crying out loudly. It is also symbolic of pouring out their hearts for God to intervene. At this point, they would be uttering imprecations that the perpetrators of evil leading to curses should die or be ousted from the community by ‘God’.¹¹⁰ Whenever these and other prayer items are mentioned by the prayer leader, the general response is ‘Let the enemies die’.

The concept of imprecatory prayers is drawn from some OT passages that depict the ousting of evildoers, witches and wizards, for example. The prayer items are characteristic of impending threat, doom, misfortune, sudden death and other unusual happenings. The use of

¹⁰⁹ ‘Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission’ Profile, p.2.

¹¹⁰ Moses Y. Fisseh and Ezekiel B. Sallah, Interview, 4 March 2010.

the term ‘enemy’ by the ministry is broad and includes witches and wizards or Satan and his cohorts, as well as any ‘human being’ who does not support their beliefs and practices. This is because anyone who opposes their beliefs and practices is seen as a wolf in sheep’s clothing. These ‘enemies’ could be hiding in the church or any part of the society and, if not dealt with, will continue to cause chaos.

Nevertheless, in the situation where the leader is not able to attend the mid-week prayer retreat, he will send his ‘prophetic’ prayer items. On many occasions, his prayer items are considered last, for it is always the crown of the intercessory meeting. The items are so ‘heavy’ that once they are read, the intercessors will start crying, jumping up and down, falling down, crawling and rolling in the mode of prayer because of the belief that what the leader pronounced would definitely result in God’s wrath on the evildoers and the society. Their belief is that if they do not pray and reject and renounce those incidents, they will also be affected as members of the society. This leads them to such extreme emotional reaction.

On some occasions, the leader’s usual prediction is that any member intending to desert the ministry will face misfortune and possibly die unless he or she repents and holds fast to the ministry’s task. Most of the prayer items of the leader focus on doom, while a few focus on restoration. The items concerning doom are impending flood, intermittent drought, undesirable plague, consequential famine, unusual accidents, untimely death and earthquake. Others are God’s judgment, pains and suffering, hardships, sicknesses, division and separation in the body of Christ, as well as battles and crises in the spiritual realm. The restorative items are that people will hunger for spiritual food (the Word of God), and the realisation of blessings on families and the society.¹¹¹

The process of imprecatory prayers is ‘spiritual intimidation’, with the leader threatening his members with death if they fail to obey or attempt to turn a deaf ear to his orders. This presupposes self-glory, rather than God’s exaltation. In fact, observation has shown that the demeanour or disposition of the members does not show any freedom and joy, but rather expresses threat and fear. Despite their constant prayer and acclaimed consecration after any spiritual meeting, they are still living in hardship.

One recurrent perception that runs through the expression of the members and the means and methods of restoring social wholeness is the ‘spiritual experience’. These methods motivate

¹¹¹ Adapted from ‘Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission’ prayer items in the Leadership Training Manual, February 2010.

and burden them to break the purported yoke of the generational curses. It is noteworthy that the ministry does not want anyone to query this practice.

4.8 Impact of the Ministry on Church and Society

The ministry, 'Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission', initially frowned on moral misconduct, promiscuity, rape, abortion and drug addiction in the society in its attempt to maintain social harmony. The belief was that evil forces worked behind such misconduct to threaten people's wellbeing. The ministry placed a great emphasis on misfortunes – social, economic, politico-religious struggles – as threats of 'generational curses' transmitted from the forebears to posterity.¹¹² Musa always attached spiritual meanings to people's mishaps. The ministry used the youth to engage in extreme ascetic life, including prayer and fasting in the mountains, deserts and forests in an attempt to effect restoration from social decadence and to guard against 'generational curses.'¹¹³ Musa also involved the youth in 'walking prayer' sessions through the streets of Wukari and in other surrounding villages at night, binding, rejecting and renouncing the in-roads of evil forces.¹¹⁴ The ministry also challenged youth and school dropouts to seek knowledge and to update their educational careers. This was because the ministry considered the Christian youth as potential transformers and future leaders of the church. The ministry touched the lives of pupils and students who seemed to be a nuisance in their families and society. Most CRCN local churches, then, opened their doors to host the ministry's retreats and conferences.¹¹⁵ This exercise impacted the church and halted waywardness among the youth.

Another impact was that the ministry instilled spiritual discipline and devotion to study the Bible. With all these signs, many thought that Musa was 'God-sent' to intercede for restoration from social decadence.

The traditional society also benefited from his practices because of the prayers offered against misfortunes in Wukari and the surrounding villages.¹¹⁶ Evil powers are said to disrupt harmonious relationships in the cosmos. This was what the traditional society had been

¹¹² Angyunwe, Interview, 7 February 2011; Eyab, Interview, 17 November 2010; Pamciri, Interview, 16 November 2010; Emmanuel M. Sumgbadu, Interview, 12 December 2010.

¹¹³ 'Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission' Profile, pp.1-2; Musa, Interview, 8 March 2010, Wukari.

¹¹⁴ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009, 8 March 2010 & 8 February 2012.

¹¹⁵ Ahima, Interview, 19 October 2009; Jirapye, Interview, 17 February 2011.

¹¹⁶ Dantani, Interview, 8 March 2010, Wukari.

fighting in the course of its observance of family and state cultic worship. The ministry was seen as deepening their pursuits.¹¹⁷ Although in my investigation I did not come across any record of Musa converting people of other faiths to Christianity, his ministry helped calm down the youth and made them helpful in the church. Musa was famous, popular and won many followers to himself. His words were taken with all seriousness as being infallible. No one at the time has questioned his ‘spiritual revelations.’¹¹⁸ Most of his followers, especially the youth, who were zealous to study the Word of God, depended on his teachings more than on those of other ministers of the church. In short, Musa’s followers perceived him to be ‘God-sent’. His ministry impacted the church and society, especially since the youth were becoming useful.

4.9 Setbacks in the Ministry

Despite its influence and popularity, issues began to emerge in the ministry that were at first submerged under its popularity. Musa’s ministry was only useful for a period of four months (December 1995–April 1996). The ministry later became questionable in its practices. Its prospects and future became bleak and precarious with its attendant breach of peace in the family and the society. It is possible that excesses of the ministry were not initially noticed because the leadership of Musa’s church did not give adequate spiritual oversight of Musa’s inherent beliefs and practices. Also, the church leadership left Musa alone to carry out what he claimed God had told him to do.

Over time, however, excesses and setbacks started to appear in the church and society. The excesses, like yeast and the proverbial rotten apple, started to affect families in the church and later the society in general.

Musa started ‘well’ but was later accused of being a fanatic and of preaching and teaching falsehood, breaking homes, and disturbing the public peace (that is, he enticed women, girls, boys and children to rebel against their spouses and parents). Children rebelled against their parents and the church leadership, wives and husbands were fighting each other and various divorce cases were reported. The practice was getting so much out of control that the church, the traditional leadership and the law enforcement agents had to intervene to bring a lasting

¹¹⁷ Fari Gambo, Interview, 15 October 2012, Wukari; Makailu Usman, Interview, 18 November 2009, Wukari.

¹¹⁸ Jirapye, Interview, 17 February 2011.

solution to the unlawful situations. In April 2010, the church and traditional leadership jointly wrote to the law enforcement agents about the unlawful practices and described the beliefs and practices as ‘Christian Haram’. The letter called for the authorities to ‘intervene now before it becomes too late’.¹¹⁹ This letter gave the summary of Musa’s ministry and the consequent unlawful acts affecting the church and society (see *Appendix 7: Complaint against Unlawful Activities of Brother Musa...*).

Musa’s Local Church Council (Puje LCC) was the first to delve into the investigation. Later the issue reached the Regional Church Council (RCC) and the General Church Council (GCC). Almost at the same time, the Jukun traditional council and the security agencies, particularly the Police DPO, SSS Boss and CAN were involved in studying the practices.

However, before discussing the reaction of the traditional leadership and the law enforcement agents, it is important to give an overview of Musa’s excesses which later led to unlawful acts. First, according to his acclaimed ‘spiritual experience’, Musa predicted that the food and drinks served at a 1996 thanksgiving service of the church were poisoned, and ordered that no one should eat or drink anything. The church leadership rebuked him and asked the church intercessory group to pray for him, saying, ‘This is a false spirit that has entered and led him [Musa] to say so’. All participants ate and drank without any harm.¹²⁰ Since then, his local church leadership has been sceptical and suspicious of the source(s) of his gifts, beliefs and practices. Moreover, Musa granted me an interview during which he revealed that sometimes when he sits in church worship, he would see that all the elders sitting by the altar have engaged in diverse evils, but none of his co-worshippers has the gift of vision and discernment.¹²¹

Musa’s experience further generated various unlawful acts. For instance, Musa loved male-female partnering during Prayer Retreats. Both men and women (married and unmarried) like to be accommodated under the same roof (room) during their Prayer Retreats. Married women left their spouses to follow Musa, while younger ladies and gentlemen were on the road for a long time for Prayer Retreats, moving from one village to another. The married women concerned did not listen to their husbands and insisted that they were doing God’s

¹¹⁹ ‘Complaint against Unlawful Activities of Brother Musa Emmanuel Dantani of Wukari Local Government Area’, a letter jointly written by CRCN LCC Nayi-Nawa and Traditional Leadership: Tudun Wada Village Head & Tapare District Head, dated 14 April 2010.

¹²⁰ Luka D. Awudu, Personal Communication, 13 October 2009, Wukari.

¹²¹ Dantani, Interview, 13 October 2009.

work, and that their husbands were agents of the devil standing in their way.¹²² The intensity of their behaviour resulted in the extensive divorce of wives. This became a common phenomenon in Wukari and the surrounding villages such as Jibu, Tapare, Nayi-Nawa, Tudun Wada, G/Dorowa, Nya-kwala, Nwonko and Tunari, among others.

Another issue of concern had to do with exorcising evil spirits in a river. Musa organised a Prayer Retreat at Tunari in January 1996. During the prayer session, he took some people to the river and performed ablution and sprinkling. He further guided the adherents to invoke the power of the 'Holy Spirit' on evildoers who had been causing havoc in the society. Right from that episode, a woman came back home mentally deranged and has remained so to date. The woman would go to the marketplace on Sundays, seize Muslims and force them to come and worship in the church. All medical efforts failed to arrest this situation.¹²³ The CRCN Tunari leadership saw Musa's ministry as heretical, fanatical and operating with strange forces, and therefore banned him from organising any programmes there. Undeterred, Musa secretly connived with Mr Samson Pu'a, the church Secretary, and organised a programme in the bush around the Tunari area. The church leadership discovered it and removed Mr Pu'a from his leadership position.¹²⁴

The members of the ministry also engaged in exorcising trees believed to be harbouring evil forces. They believed that the evil forces were agents of curses perpetrated in the society leading to infertility of the land.¹²⁵ Relevant to this was the 1996 Prayer Retreat that Musa organised at Sohwa-Wukari during which some youth went to the bush and exorcised evil forces and felled many trees suspected to have harboured evil forces. A few of the youth that engaged in the exercise came back mentally deranged. It took some time for prayers to be offered for them and medication administered before some came back to their senses.

The most pertinent issue that has been causing a disturbance of the peace is Musa's teaching. Musa taught that Christmas day was a day set aside to worship idols in a particular social context and that Christ was not born on Christmas day (25 December). Therefore, instead of observing Christmas Day, it was better to embark on a dry fast and prayers, pleading with Jesus Christ to take away the iniquity in the society. Christmas Day celebration, according to Musa, was rather worshipping idols, instead of celebrating salvation. Christmas should not be

¹²² Jirapye, Interview, 17 February 2011; Lazarus Magaji, Interview, 21 February 2011, Wukari.

¹²³ Kabra, Interview, 4 March 2010.

¹²⁴ Kabra, Interview, 4 March 2010.

¹²⁵ Magaji, Interview, 21 February 2011.

a day of joy but a day of corporate confession of sin. He also taught that before Jesus was born, Joseph and Mary, His biological parents, had suffered. Their suffering pointed to the unforeseen suffering that might befall humanity. The only way to ward off this misfortune was to engage in the ascetic exercise of prayer and fasting, asking God to break the impending yoke on humanity.¹²⁶

All those who received this teaching started querying the validity of the Christmas celebration by the church since the underlying issues of impending misfortune and suffering were not being addressed. Various ministers took the pain and time to explain this for the understanding of the lay membership. The church started seeing heresies in its beliefs and practices. This also made the church leadership halt all December Prayer Conferences within its domain.

In addition, Musa taught that there was no marriage in heaven, so marriage in this world was nonsensical (Matt. 22:23-35; Mk.12:18-27; Lk. 20:27-40). This perception caused members to hold the view that one could break his or her marriage if the other partner was disturbing, persecuting and hindering them from devotion to the ascetic life, or from interceding for the sin imputed on the families in the society.¹²⁷ The members spend more time praying at night than at any other time. Moreover, Musa taught that Christian marriage in the church was not necessary and should not be a compulsion on people. Those who got married as unbelievers were to divorce their spouses or take fresh marriage vows, if they were both believers. Furthermore, if one of the partners was an unbeliever, the believing partner was to divorce the unbelieving spouse. This divorce was to take effect even if the couple had children. The believing spouse could also renounce the children since they were born in sin, and if the believing partner accepted them, he or she would be carrying a curse on himself or herself.¹²⁸

This teaching broke many homes because women who married as unbelievers saw no need to continue with their marriages. Besides, the time designated for prayers at night prevented married couples from fulfilling their marital duties, especially if either the husband or wife was committed to praying from 12:00 midnight to around 6:00 am. Whenever either of the parties (non-member) demanded sexual intimacy, the member would consider the other as the devil trying to thwart God's mandate to pray. This resulted in fights among the couples. With time, the church gradually recorded many divorces.

¹²⁶ Obadiah Tahwa, Interview, 27 May 2012, Wukari.

¹²⁷ Moses Y. Fisseh and Ezekiel B. Sallah, Interview, 4 March 2010.

¹²⁸ Tahwa, Interview, 27 May 2012.

Moreover, children who were members of the ministry also committed themselves to extensive prayer, disobeying the dictates of their parents by failing to carry out their responsibilities and refusing to obey their parents' instructions. Some of these children were beaten, expelled and disowned by their families. They did not listen to the counsel of any authority, church or traditional leadership. People wondered why Musa's ministry members in all the places where he established his ministries always resisted direction, guidance and counsel.

The 'Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission' also engaged in witchcraft accusations. These accusations started from within the intercessory team of the ministry during the December 1997 Prayer Conference in Gidan Idi. Some of the intercessors accused Mrs X of disguising herself as a vulture, cat and cow and of poisoning the water they were using at the Conference. The intercessors interrogated the purported evildoer and she was eventually prohibited from attending their intercessory meetings.¹²⁹ In December 1998, it was allegedly reported¹³⁰ that the purported witch killed a minister of the CRCN at CRCN G/Dorowa; that she blocked one Victoria Angye Micah's menstrual circle and took away her uterus; and that she allegedly removed her own daughter's umbilical cord.¹³¹ During investigations, the basic cause of the accusations could not be established. However, it caused serious problems for the church and society. First, the family of the accused reported Musa to his local church. The Council of elders spent time seeking to calm the situation and encouraged them to forgive each other.¹³² However, the son-in-law of the alleged 'witch' took a drastic measure by taking the matter to the traditional council for their hearing and intervention. He accused the alleged 'witch' of aborting his wife's pregnancy through witchcraft and ruining his assets, especially his car. His son-in-law advocated for a trial by ordeal of the alleged 'witch' because of the alleged misfortune she caused his family. He also divorced his wife and married another one. It is also reported that the elderly son of the alleged 'witch' stood against Musa because of the witchcraft accusation against his mother. He later had a tragic accident, which left him paralysed and he died after seven years.¹³³

¹²⁹ Rauta Ishaku Fugu, Interview, 14 November 2009, G/Dorowa.

¹³⁰ There are two versions of this report. Version A says that the intercessors accused Mrs X of being a witch. Version B says that in the course of prayer at the December 1998 Conference in G/Dorowa, Mrs X was convicted of her evil deeds by the Holy Spirit and started revealing her nefarious acts.

¹³¹ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009, 8 March 2010 & 8 February 2012; Micah Kenkenji, 7 March 2010.

¹³² Magaji, Interview, 21 February 2011.

¹³³ Anonymous, Interview, 14 November 2009, Veenstra Theological Seminary, Donga. The wife spent about six years away from his house. However, he later acknowledged that it was the devil that interrupted their marriage. He re-united with his wife in 2004.

The witchcraft accusations and consequent misfortunes made many people question the nature of Musa's ministry and wondered whether it was Christian or the operation of evil forces in the name of Christ. Besides, I was informed by various sources that all those who stood against the ministry always faced misfortunes and died in the end. This seemed to support what the leader told me personally that 'no one who points an accusing figure at a prophet survives'. He added, 'It is like the victim goes into his thatched room and pulls the roof down on himself'.¹³⁴

The ministry schedules intercessory prayer sessions on weekdays: Tuesdays (fasting), Wednesdays (intercessions) and Fridays (spiritual warfare). One of the intercessors (who wants to remain anonymous) revealed to me that when he first joined the intercessory team, he was given *shunwu*, a substance squeezed from a shrub to drink. This substance normally would upset his stomach, then he felt nauseous, in frenzy and perceived that his enemies had surrounded him, and, finally, he was ready to fight the enemies, seen or unseen. This substance motivates a tireless burden for prayers. Whenever this substance is taken, all those who did not support their practices are seen as enemies. On their day of spiritual warfare, they use imprecatory utterances to curse and pronounce doom on those whom they perceive to resent their beliefs and practices. Besides, the members always moved in groups, slept together (male-female) at any programme they or the church organised. They did not eat food prepared by others. They always appeared in the same attire wherever and whenever they participated in the church programmes. They frequently returned to their 'consecrated house' for prayers of consecration after Sunday worship. They believe that handshakes, conversation and sharing seats with others in the church might have contaminated them. The setbacks are alarming. The ministry in many instances impedes the dignity of human rights and creates chaos in the church and in society.

4.10 Responses: Church and Society

The underlying cause that provoked the CRCN, LCC Puje to delve into a study of this ministry arose when the issue of Musa's 'moral misconduct' surfaced. His local church affiliation was the first to confront him in November 2001 after he preached in the church. The problem was not with the sermon, but with his moral misconduct.

¹³⁴ Musa, Interview, 8 February 2012.

After the sermon, a member of the church, Ms. Faith Gambo, approached the resident pastor, Rev. Philemon G.A. Garjila, and queried him on why the church allowed Musa to mount the pulpit when he had committed moral offences such as impregnating Ms. Victoria Angye Micah, aborting the child, impregnating her a second time and, finally, throwing the child into a stream in Kano.¹³⁵

On hearing this, Rev. Garjila convened an emergency Council meeting, and brought the concern to the notice of the Elders. The Council invited Musa and enquired about the accusation. Musa responded that Victoria was given to him by her parents in 1997 to train in the office of a prophetess. He added that the decision of the parents coincided with his 'spiritual experience'. While the lady was staying with him she developed a sickness in which she had a discharge and lost consciousness. He took her to the hospital but all Western medication failed. He then discovered that it was a 'spiritual attack'. He consulted with the parents of the lady who allowed her to stay with him in Kano for prayers. During the entire stay, he never had any familiarity with her. He returned the lady to her parents because of rumours against their staying together. The parents however insisted that the lady should continue to stay with him. The Council confronted him about the act of abortion, which was why the lady had the discharge. He denied the issue of 'discharge' but used a Jukun slang, *Gban chape*, meaning, she is 'losing water'. The Council admonished him severely and dismissed him.

The Council then inaugurated a four-man committee to investigate the matter in the surrounding villages and in Wukari town: Messrs Emmanuel T. Nacho (G/Dorowa), Lazarus Magaji (Nwonko), the late Ayuba G. Danjuma and Joseph M. Vyonku (within Wukari).¹³⁶ The delegates came back with a unanimous report about Musa's moral misconduct with Victoria [later his wife]. This broke up many families in Nya-kwala, Gindin Dorowa and Nwonko, resulting in a record number of divorces.¹³⁷

First, in response, the Council summoned Musa on 14 November 2001 to enquire about the pregnancy of Victoria that led to her discharge. Musa reacted rudely and disrespected the Council. Second, the Council realised that he had indeed been having sexual relations with Victoria. Third, he disrespected the Council.¹³⁸ Based on the above reasons, the church

¹³⁵ Faith Gambo, Interview, 10 October 2009, Wukari; Caleb S.O. Ahima, Interview, 31 January 2011, Wukari.

¹³⁶ Local Church Minutes dated 14 November 2001, TG/139/2001

¹³⁷ Local Church Minutes dated 14 November 2001, TG/139/2001.

¹³⁸ Local Church Minutes dated 24 November 2001, LCCP/703/2001.

placed him under discipline. Although Musa later came to the Council twice pleading to be reinstated into membership, he did not show any remorse for his sin. The Council refused to accept his plea.¹³⁹

Since Musa insisted that he had not had any sexual relations with Victoria, the Council on 4 April 2002 invited Rev. Caleb S.O. Ahima, Bro. Enoch Aboki, Bro. Adashu, Ms. Faith Gambo, Bro. Musa Emmanuel Dantani, Mr. Kefas B. Tsokwa and the Committee of East Community Bank for in-depth discussions on 10 April 2002.¹⁴⁰ Ms. Faith gave a comprehensive report about what she had seen, insisting that Ms. Victoria gave birth to a baby girl on 29 May 2001 in Kano and that she had actually held the baby and given thanks to God for a safe delivery. Ms. Faith noted that Bro. Adashu was her witness. Here are her words:

Victoria gave birth to a baby girl in Kano and it was announced in one of the churches where I worshipped. I quickly ran to the maternity site of the said hospital. I held the baby girl in my hand and gave thanks to God. While I was there, Musa came in with a certain nurse and met me holding the baby. Musa quickly rebuked me and asked, 'What brought you here, a spy and liar?' After this, Musa took the new baby girl and threw her into one of the streams in Kano.¹⁴¹

Rev. Ahima added that Ms. Victoria had come to him for prayers on 6 June 2001. After prayers, he took her to the hospital for a check-up. Dr. Ejimofor, the medical doctor, reported to him in writing that there was evidence that a living being had been evacuated from Ms. Victoria's womb. Rev. Ahima presented the document to the Council. The content of the medical report [which I have at my disposal] reads:

The above named patient has been examined and found not to be pregnant now. However, there is existence of previous *distinction* of the above. This distinction could have resulted from either pregnancy, liver disease or severe chest infection. The last two conditions would have necessitated prolonged admission in the hospital. In the absence of this history, we can conclude that there must have been an earlier pregnancy. Thanks, signed - Dr. Ejimofor; date - 6/6/2001. [See *Appendix 8: Re-Victoria Micha*].¹⁴²

Bro. Musa denied Ms. Faith's report, claiming that:

¹³⁹ Local Church Minutes dated 26 January 2002, LCCP/753/2002; Local Church Minutes dated 21 February 2002, LCCP/789/2002.

¹⁴⁰ Local Church Minutes dated 4 April 2002, LCCP/938/2002.

¹⁴¹ Gambo, Interview, 10 October 2009; Local Church Minutes dated 10 April 2002, TG/191/2002.

¹⁴² Complete text of the test result attached to the Local Church Minutes dated 4 April 2002, TG/191/2002.

Victoria was under spiritual attack. I went there with the Nurse praying and binding the evil forces. After that something came out of her vagina like a white thread, went and stood, composed itself and became a grasshopper. Later it started picking the toilet papers that the Nurses used in cleaning her vagina and swallowing all the bloody papers. Then the thing developed eyes, turning at all directions – North, East, South, and West. After this certain developments started surfacing: hands, nose, mouth, legs, female organ, then, the grasshopper became a baby. After this, Faith Gambo came in and embraced the baby and kissed her.¹⁴³

The Council confronted Musa with several questions that he was not able to answer cogently. For instance, ‘What you threw into the water, was it a grasshopper or a baby?’ ‘A baby,’ he replied. ‘If a baby, were you doing sacrifice?’ He stood mute. The church therefore confirmed his discipline because of moral misconduct and murder. The Council summoned Musa and banned him from preparing for his December 2002 Prayer Conference and wrote to sister local churches of the CRCN accordingly.¹⁴⁴

From the local church minutes accessed, I found evidence of twelve¹⁴⁵ meetings and dialogues between Musa and the church leadership, all in an attempt to bring Musa under its spiritual guidance before reaching the Regional Church Council (RCC) Wukari, and then the General Church Council (GCC), the highest decision-making body of the CRCN. But Musa totally denied all that was said about him and his ministry. Musa’s issue reached the GCC through RCC Nya-kwala alongside the General Secretary’s report to the GCC.¹⁴⁶ The reports reached the GCC that Musa was practising Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), among other practices. The GCC mandated four Regional Church Councils (RCCs): Kente, Ibi, Nya-kwala and Wukari to carry out an in-depth investigation of the practices.¹⁴⁷ The November 2006 GCC mandated RCC Wukari to quickly suspend Musa from all spiritual functions in the CRCN.¹⁴⁸ RCC Wukari submitted a comprehensive report on Musa at the November 2008

¹⁴³ Philemon G.A. Garjila, Interview, 7 October 2009, CRCN Station Wukari; Ahima, Interview, 31 January 2011.

¹⁴⁴ Local Church Minutes dated 14 December 2002, LCCP/1168/2002.

¹⁴⁵ Local Church Minutes dated 14 November 2001, TG/139/2001; Local Church Minutes dated 24 November 2001, LCCP/703/2001; Local Church Minutes dated 26 January 2002, LCCP/753/2002; Local Church Minutes dated 21 February 2002, LCCP/789/2002; Local Church Minutes dated 4 April 2002, LCCP/938/2002; Local Church Minutes dated 10 April 2002, TG/191/2002; Local Church Minutes dated 14 December 2002, LCCP/167/2002; Local Church Minutes dated 10 February 2009, LCCP/17/2009; Local Church Minutes dated 23 April 2009, LCCP/40/2009; Local Church Minutes dated 21 May & 27 June 2009, LCCP/59/2009; Local Church Minutes dated 25 June 2009, LCCP/68/2009.

¹⁴⁶ GCC Minutes dated 19-23 June 2006, GCC/420/2006 & RCC NYK/391/2006.

¹⁴⁷ GCC Minutes dated 19-23 June 2006, GCC/420/2006; GCC Minutes dated 11-15 November 2006, GCC/450/2006 (h) & GCC/498/2007 (c).

¹⁴⁸ GCC Minutes dated 11-15 November 2006, GCC/450/2006; GCC Minutes dated 25-29 June 2007, GCC/475/2007 (‘h’ & ‘i’); GCC Minutes dated 5-9 November 2007, GCC/498/2007 (c).

GCC. After an in-depth analysis of the report, the LCC Puje through RCC Wukari was mandated by the GCC to direct Musa to bring his ministry under its oversight.¹⁴⁹

The LCC Puje continued to consult with Musa as mandated by the GCC. The main issues that the LCC Puje raised with Musa were a reminder to guide his ministry not to disturb the peace in the society; to bring his ministry under the auspices of the church leadership; to reschedule his December Prayer Conference programme as it coincided with the Christmas festivities; and to consent to the authority of the church Council and obey the church constitution.¹⁵⁰ Musa did not consent to any of these requirements.

During the same period that the LCC Puje was still consulting and dialoguing with Musa, similar serious issues emerged in Nayi-Nawa, Tudun Wada and Tapare. These were small villages situated northwest of Wukari with population ranging between five hundred and seven hundred. All his members in Nayi-Nawa had problems with their families and were fighting and divorcing their wives. The Council invited the members to a 24-hour prayer session with the church intercessors in the church (if they wanted) with oversight and spiritual guidance from the resident minister. Prompted by Musa, the members did not consent either. As a result, the Council deposed all his members in leadership positions in the church.¹⁵¹

The Council later summoned all the members and inquired one after the other. They all said, 'We shall not consent to the church's decision'. For this, the Council placed them (twenty in number)¹⁵² under church discipline.

Besides, the Council wrote a letter to Musa's local church, LCC Puje Wukari, to warn him of his unlawful acts, and to order him to desist from patronising Nayi-Nawa because of the enticements and the troubles he was causing to her members (See *Appendix 7: Complaint*

¹⁴⁹ GCC Minutes dated 10-14 November 2008, GCC/553/2008 ('e' & 'f').

¹⁵⁰ Local Church Minutes dated 10 February 2009, LCCP/17/2009; Local Church Minutes dated 23 April 2009, LCCP/40/2009; Local Church Minutes dated 21 May & 27 June 2009, LCCP/59/2009; Local Church Minutes dated 25 June 2009, LCCP/68/2009; Local Church Minutes dated 14 November 2001, TG/139/2001.

¹⁵¹ Local Church Minutes dated 29 March & 24 April 2009, LCC/NAY/755/09.

¹⁵² The list is as follows: Briskila Bulus; Saratu Obadiah; Dauda Ifraimu; Josiah Iliya; Jostina Ishaya; Rhoda Ifraimu; Felicia Istifanus; Matthew Bello; Magdalene Joshua; Mary Kefas; Jemmimah Matswende; Lydia Caleb; Keziah William; Keziya Obadiah; Favour Messa; Dinatu Amos; Grace Bulus; Monica Eli; Solomi Jonathan; and Rebecca Matthew. See Local Church Minutes dated 29 March & 24 April 2009, LCC/NAY/755/09.

against Unlawful Activities of Brother Musa...).¹⁵³ The content of the letter indicated the following concerns: first, all his members were rebellious in the church right from the time they aligned with Musa; second, all married women members of his ministry disobeyed their husbands, claiming that they preferred to be divorced rather than desist from walking with Musa; third, two women (Mrs Felicia Istifanus Jalo and Mrs Saratu Obadiah Maikano) members of this ministry left their marital homes, and all efforts by the church to reconcile them proved futile. Many more families were in confusion; fourth, they were still praying in their ‘consecrated house’ (Mr Matthew Bello), in spite of the Council’s insistence to bring the prayer under its auspices. The Council had summoned them four times on the matter and they still resisted; fifth, they claimed that even if the CRCN were to reject Musa’s ministry, they would continue to be his members whenever he opened his church; sixth, they maintained that the church hated and envied Musa’s ministry; and seventh, Musa was to desist from coming to Nayi-Nawa for the peace of the church and society [see *Appendix 9: Damuwarda Bro. Musa Emmanuel Ke Jawowa a Gu Nayi-Nawa*].¹⁵⁴

The LCC Puje summoned Musa again and pointed out to him the complications his ministry had generated in the church and society. In spite of all these cautions and admonitions, Musa failed to consent and amend his practices.¹⁵⁵ The Council then reported the matter to the RCC in Wukari. The RCC took over the matter, but Musa still continued to rebel. The RCC finally forwarded the matter to the GCC in June 2009. After an in-depth study of the reports, the GCC mandated the LCC Puje through RCC Wukari to place Musa under discipline.¹⁵⁶ Musa was disciplined by the CRCN for rebellion, stubbornness and disobedience to the leadership of the church drawn from the Local-Regional-General Councils. The GCC strongly reiterated the decision that CRCN should not give him any opportunity to exercise any spiritual practice or to operate his programmes within its domain, especially preaching and prayer-healing. This rule applied to any Charismatic ministry lay leaders under the auspices of the *Gidan Addu’a*. In other words, this decision applied to any of the Charismatic lay leaders who failed

¹⁵³ ‘Complaint against Unlawful Activities of Brother Musa Emmanuel Dantani of Wukari Local Government Area’ a letter jointly written by CRCN LCC Nayi-Nawa and Traditional Leadership: Tudun Wada Village Head & Tapare District Head. The letter was written to the Police DPO via Nya-kwala Regional Church Council (RCC Nya-kwala), dated 14 April 2010 reiterated the issue.

¹⁵⁴ Japheth N. Babale (Assistant Secretary), ‘Damuwarda Bro. Musa Emmanuel ke Jawowa a Gu Nayi-Nawa’, a letter from LCC Nayi-Nawa to LCC Puje, dated 2 April 2009.

¹⁵⁵ Local Minutes dated 10 February 2009, LCCP/17/2009; Local Minutes dated 16 April 2009, LCCP/39/2009; Local Church minutes dated 23 April 2009, LCCP/40/2009; Local Church Minutes dated 21 May & 27 June 2009, LCCP/59/2009.

¹⁵⁶ LCC Puje placed Musa under church discipline on 25 June 2009 and announced on 29 June 2009. See Local Church Minutes dated 27 June 2009, LCCP/59/2009.

to comply with the CRCN leadership's decision from the LCC to the RCC.¹⁵⁷ Even today, Musa claims that he did not undergo any discipline. The so-called discipline only spoilt his relationship with some people, whereas it boosted his relationship with other organisations and with God. He lamented as follows:

The CRCN said it has disciplined or excommunicated me, but it is mistaken. It would have been better to fight the devil, than to fight a believer. The CRCN has been asking people to fight my ministry members and their families. This has been the case since 2003, when some key ministers of the church enticed the CRCN leadership to excommunicate me because my teachings are said to be heresies. One thing is that none can send me away from God. The second rigid stance of the CRCN against me was in 2006 which was published in the CRCN Magazine, the Beacon, advocating my excommunication. All this is to spoil my relationship with people, but not with God. Moreover, this publicity has linked me with many people and organisations more than ever.¹⁵⁸

In spite of the church's disciplinary action against Musa, he continued to organise the Prayer Conference, especially in CRCN Yamini on 2-4 April 2010. This programme caused a serious tension and threat among the people. Militant youth invaded the venue and dealt with the intercessors decisively while people fled for their lives.¹⁵⁹

Both the Village Head of Nayi-Nawa and the District Head of Jibu summoned Musa's followers at separate times and cautioned them, but still they turned a deaf ear. The District Head in turn took the matter to the *Abon Acio* (that is, the traditional prime minister, second to the *Aku Uka*). He, too, summoned Musa, but Musa maintained that all the accusations were not true of him and his practices. The traditional leader also gave his authoritative warning, and an even more serious one came from a district head in Wukari whose wife Musa had enticed. When this issue reached the *Abon Acio* for the second time, he saw that the issue was affecting the wider society. He therefore handed the matter over to the security agents, specifically, the Police DPO and SSS Director. Musa was detained at the police station for questioning. It was at this point that the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) intervened, saying that it was a religious case and it would handle it. The CRCN however stood its ground, insisting that Musa had been under church discipline since 2009 and that he had

¹⁵⁷ GCC Minutes dated 1-5 June 2009, GCC/566/2009 ('iii'); GCC Minutes dated 16-20 November 2009, GCC/592/2009 ('g').

¹⁵⁸ Musa, Interview, 8 March 2010.

¹⁵⁹ 'Complaint against Unlawful Activities of Brother Musa Emmanuel Dantani of Wukari Local Government Area', a letter jointly written by CRCN LCC Nayi-Nawa and Traditional Leadership: Tudun Wada Village Head & Tapare District Head. The letter was written to the Police DPO through the Nya-kwala Regional Church Council (RCC Nya-kwala), dated 14 April 2010.

always resisted both the church leadership and the traditional council. Therefore, it had nothing else to say about it. In every case, Musa's response was that all the accusations were based on 'hatred and envy of his gifts and ministry'.

With Musa's continuous rebellion, enticements and disruption of the community peace, Bulus Babale of Nayi-Nawa in late 2009 sued Musa in the Area Court Grade I Wukari for enticement, deception and disturbance of his family peace.¹⁶⁰ The litigation was based on the fact that Musa enticed his wife and children to rebel against him. He did all he could to take control of his family, but all in vain.

All efforts to bring Musa under control proved futile. Finally, the security agents summoned Musa, CAN, and CRCN Nayi-Nawa, over the letter jointly written to him by the church and the traditional council (See *Appendix 7*). The security agents examined every word and every clause in the letter. Musa neither denied nor defended any of the issues raised in the letter. In the end, the law enforcement agents forced Musa to provide all his credentials and to sign a form indicating that he was one of the terrorists causing confusion in Taraba State. Today, Musa's ministry is under close surveillance by security agents.

4.11 Comments on Setbacks in the Ministry

Musa at the early stage seemed to have been following the right path in the new faith. The church and society had no problem with him. He served in various capacities in the CRCN Youth Fellowship in the LCC Puje. Owing to some inexplicable reasons, Musa deviated from the primary focus. This deviation could be attributed to a secret inner conviction and desire that opposed his expressions. It seems that Musa had a secret agenda hidden under the guise of advancing the Christian faith.

Many factors led to his deviation. He seemed to have failed to humble himself, listen to admonition and take correction. Musa revealed to me as quoted that 'I am so stubborn but I fight for my rights. I do not bend on my rights. I had better die than do so. I do not seek temporal favour from man'. He adds that 'God always speaks to me, and nobody should

¹⁶⁰ 'Complaint against Unlawful Activities of Brother Musa Emmanuel Dantani of Wukari Local Government Area', a letter jointly written by CRCN LCC Nayi-Nawa and Traditional Leadership: Tudun Wada Village Head & Tapare District Head. The letter was written to the Police DPO through the Nyakwala Regional Church Council (RCC Nyakwala), dated 14 April 2010.

interfere in my dealings with God.’¹⁶¹ On the other hand, his local church leaders cannot absolve themselves from earlier errors. When Musa started his ministry, his church leadership did not have close oversight of him and his gifts or give him proper spiritual mentorship. Yet when later Musa was becoming extremist and causing havoc in the church and society, the church turned around and started blaming him, while ignoring its own initial failings. This made Musa frequently insist that his church control was basically a calculated plan to hijack his ministry, create hatred against him and impugn on his integrity. His case moved from the church to the traditional council and security agents before ending in legal action and litigation.

It seems that Musa’s experiences in moving from one religion to another made it difficult for him to determine what to do and what not to do in his Christian faith. This made him indulge in some inexplicable practices.¹⁶² He claimed to be restoring social harmony but ended up enticing, rebelling and breaking social peace and order through the wrong teachings given to his members. He gave people the impression that he had dual abilities: the power to discern the personalities behind curses in families and society, and the ability to pray for and restore social harmony. However, his practice had been creating enmity, instilling fear and intensifying reciprocal and prolonged rage in the society where he established his ministry. None of the places escaped the havoc. His members frequently resisted all authority, were rigid and did not welcome any threat to their position.

What makes me agree with the reported nature of Musa’s practice to some extent is that both the traditional council and the church leadership that had earlier supported the ministry looked at Musa’s beliefs and practices with circumspection in the end. This was because the practice affected both the church and society. In my investigation, I used oral information as well as supporting written documents, especially correspondence and church minutes for my analysis. I conclude that the issues are not generally the church and society engaging in this character assassination, but they are responding to the reversed beliefs and practices that did not exist during the formative stage of the ministry.

Musa also tends to undervalue the place of medical science and traditional herbal treatment. His perception also limits God’s sovereignty in using nature for His unrevealed will. But

¹⁶¹ Musa, Interview, 13 October 2009, 8 March 2010 & 8 February 2012.

¹⁶² This conclusion is reached because of the nature of his practices which depict, as it were, an extraordinary gift but do not resonate with godly conduct. Moreover, pride, public recognition and display control his status.

CRCN and other evangelical bodies believe that God created nature for the use of humankind.

The ministry employs some practices that are not in keeping with the biblical records. For example, fetching and pouring water (holy water) into ten-litre water jars, and giving it to the members to drink slowly and secretly for one whole year. If the water was 'holy' as claimed, what is wrong with keeping it in the open for the entire family to drink? This practice neither finds a place in traditional Jukun religious practice nor in the Bible. This makes people suspicious of the sources of Musa's 'spiritual experience'. As already noted, many respondents pointed out that almost all who opposed his ministry faced misfortunes and even death. He himself repeated this to me. On some occasions, those who turned away from this ministry and joined the church usually went through serious deliverance. Such people manifest almost similar behaviour. For example, during deliverance, they cry out loudly, crawling and rolling on the ground, screaming, 'Musa, we shall not leave you!'¹⁶³

Musa also stresses seriously that spiritual discernment is the key to his beliefs and practices. However, the issue is that the 'Spirit' is a force or power that can influence a person's thoughts, emotions and actions. There is the Spirit of God, a spirit from the devil and a spirit that comes from one's own perception.¹⁶⁴ His 'spiritual experiences' may be illusions or hallucinations. Hallucinations are classified into three kinds: corporeal, imaginative and intellectual. In corporeal hallucinations, one could claim to see things and hear voices. In imaginative hallucinations, one could imagine seeing things or hearing voices. In intellectual hallucinations, one could sense the presence of an unseen power.¹⁶⁵ Musa's conceptualisation of 'spiritual experiences' seems to be diffused because he stresses hearing voices speaking to him, seeing things vividly in the spirit world and also feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit, all of which often happen simultaneously. Indeed, a discernment of the Spirit can help the gifted discern intended evildoers and evil deeds. It may be equally possible that a counterfeit discerner acts in a similar way. A counterfeit discerner that falls under this pretence always claims to have been discerning what the Spirit is mandating him to reveal. In contrast, godly discerners often foresee danger and refrain from causing chaos and confusion in the society. One may rightly conclude that Musa's beliefs and practices are dynamic, complex and

¹⁶³ A'asseh, Interview, 13 February 2012.

¹⁶⁴ J.S. Setzer, 'How can I Determine When It is God Who Speaks to Me in My Inner Experiences?' *Journal of Pastoral Counselling* Vol.12 (1977-1978), pp. 41-54.

¹⁶⁵ Rachel Julian, 'Spiritual Discernment in Psychiatric Patients' in *Journal of Religion and Health*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Summer 1987), pp.125-130 (128).

difficult. They seem to link to traditional practices but sometimes detract attention away from them.

4.12 Conclusion

Musa first envisioned his ministry as a restorer from social decadence. He seemed to have followed this vision at the formative stage of the ministry. His initial motivation and burden was that ‘our generation is getting more deaden (*sic*) in deep moral decadence. We [intercessors] therefore cannot fold our arms, watch this generation ravage and deprive... Let us all awake to outlast (*sic*) these challenges’ [see *Appendix 10: Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission Profile*].¹⁶⁶ Musa’s ministry was initially attractive to many in the society. It seems it was because his ministry resonated with the common pursuit of harmony in society by the traditional council, Christian leadership and Islamic leadership. Based on my investigation, none of the existing religious bodies desired upheavals, clashes, violence and such situations. When Musa came up with this burden, it was unique and all the religious bodies rallied around him in support. In fact, many local church councils of the CRCN welcomed and hosted the Prayer Conferences and Retreats. Some of the ministers and elders of the CRCN supported the crusade in cash and kind in the early stages. Musa’s initial motivation and burden was wonderful, but short-lived. Many factors were responsible: it seems Musa later failed to humble himself and listen to the church leadership and traditional council. He had always felt that the leadership hated him. Musa’s rigid stance without adhering to advice later led to interrogation by law enforcement agents and subsequent litigation. Security agents tightened their control by tracking his movements and programmes very closely.

The ministry’s practices would appear not to be entirely consonant with either Jukun traditional practice or biblical teaching. This ministry has heretical and fanatical tendencies. None of the villages where he established his ministry – Jibu, Tudun Wada, Tapare, Nayi-Nawa, Tunari, Gidan Idi, Gindin Dorowa, Nya-kwala, Nwonko, Ibi and more – has escaped havoc. Those who later left the ministry back to the church have to pass through a strenuous deliverance exercise by the CRCN minister. Beyond these, people are asking why those who oppose Musa’s ministry face misfortunes, especially mysterious sickness and death. It seems that Musa’s experiences while moving from one religion to another made it difficult for him

¹⁶⁶ ‘Heart-Sowing and Sewing Mission’ Profile, p.2.

to discern what to do and what to ignore in his Christian faith. Thus, instead of restoring social harmony, he ended up enticing the youth, rebelling against the church leadership and disrupting the peace and order in the society.