

Healing Practices in Johane Masowe Chishanu Church: Toward Afrocentric Social Work with African Initiated Church Communities

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ABSTRACT The social work scholarship in Zimbabwe and South Africa has neglected issues to do with religion and spirituality. This study focused on an African initiated church called Johane Masowe Chishanu (JMC) in Zimbabwe where it originated and in South Africa where it is visibly growing. The study sought to examine the healing practices in Johane Masowe Chishanu Church. Data was collected from the church's prophets (N=15), assistants to prophets (N=6) and chronically ill people (N=9) who sought assistance from the church, through interviews from a community in Buhera District in Zimbabwe and Seshego Township in Limpopo Province, South Africa. It was found that assumed causes of illness among the members of Johane Masowe Chishanu Church include among others, avenging spirits, witchcraft and punishment. Methods employed to heal illnesses include stones, leaves of the hissing tree, burying the problem, singing and pointing to the east.