

Christocentric Healing and Deliverance Ministry: Practice in Lagos Mainland Anglican Diocese

Agaranna, Henry Okezie (PhD Student), Ogidiolu, Ayodeji PhD, & Ogunniyi Amos Olayinka (PhD Student),
Odei, M.A, PhD

Department of Religious Studies Faculty of Humanities Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo

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***Corresponding Author:** Agaranna. Henry Okezie

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Abstract

Healing and deliverance are present in virtually all religions in the world, and they have been some of the most contested in scriptures based on divergent perceptions in practice. Extant scholars have focused on various aspects of Christocentrism, but with scant attention paid to the practice approach and challenges in the Anglican Church. This laxity has created some sort of unbalanced perception as to the Christocentric practice in the various dioceses in Nigeria. Thus, this paper examined the Christocentric healing and deliverance ministry practice in the Lagos Mainland Anglican Diocese to ascertain the concept of Christocentric healing and deliverance, ascertain the practical approaches to healing and deliverance in the Anglican Diocese of Lagos and the challenges involved in Christocentric healing and deliverance. An in-depth Interview (IDI) was deployed as the methodological framework with a focus on priests in the Diocese and church members. The study found that Christocentrism is a dominant approach deployed in the Mainland Diocese of the Anglican Church of Lagos for healing and deliverance. Furthermore, it was revealed that the Diocese used a multifaceted approach which focuses on faith, teachings, prayers, fasting, laying of hands and professional counselling. However, scepticism, individual understanding and exploitation are some of the challenges experienced in the diocese. But these factors have not deterred the church from continuing and emphasising a Christocentric approach to healing and deliverance. Thus, it is recommended that Christian churches should focus on the Christocentric paradigm, which can erase doubts and misleading information as to the genuine essence of the concept.

Keywords: Christocentrism, Scepticism, Pentecostalism.

Original Research Article

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Introduction

Healing and deliverance are present in virtually all religions in the world. This is because health is a significant aspect of humanity, and religion is meant to draw mankind to the creator, with numerous benefits that come with returning to the maker, of which healing and deliverance are crucial parts (Hefner, 2016). This reality has often been discussed in several scholarly and social spheres with different meanings and importance attached. However, the issue of healing and deliverance is tackled differently depending on religious doctrines, sects and cultures. That is why the two concepts of healing and deliverance are considered topical in recent times (Hagin, 1987). Christian religion is perhaps one of the major faiths that cannot do without healing and deliverance. They are

part and parcel of the doctrine of Christ. But again, healing in the bible cuts across the Old and New Testament with slight variation in practice (Wenham & Walton, 2011).

Healing and deliverance go hand in glove, and in so many instances, they seem inseparable because one leads into the other. For instance, healing has to do with the restoration of the body, spirit and emotion. It is expected that in the course of daily life, the physical body can be affected in one way or another other and if it is not taken care of can affect other aspects of life. People seek healing from religious houses, and at times, the essence is that healing comes from reverence to deities and higher spiritual beings (gods). The issues arising in this context are that healing is carried out in different ways. Some are considered diabolic, while others are in line with scriptures or Christian ethics. Even, within the Christian

denominations, healing approaches are problematic and widely debated. This paper is interested in the debate on Christian-related healing. To put it more succinctly, the paper tilts towards the Christian doctrines of healing in the Pentecostal denomination.

On the other hand, deliverance is about setting someone free from demonic oppression and spiritual bondage. Again, there are several approaches to deliverance depending on the religious sect involved. However, several powers can help in deliverance, and the case of retrogressive tenors has been examined in recent times. History is replete with several cases of deliverance, and in religious texts. It is important to note that the current paper situates healing and deliverance within the context of Christianity and Jesus Christ as the healer. Although this issue has been debated, the reality is what this paper interrogates.

In peculiar terms, the present Pentecostal church movement in Nigeria and across the globe relies on healing and deliverance as major tools of evangelical and spiritual reawakening (Nunez, 2015). These two instruments are part and parcel of the daily teaching and practices of the Christocentric gospel. Recently, global scholarship on religions and philosophy has focused on healing and deliverance ministry because of a plethora of issues that require interrogation, especially as regards, methods of practice of healing and deliverances in different Pentecostal churches across the world, particularly Nigeria, where healing and deliverance have remained questionable. Most of the questions arise because of the lack of alignment of healing and deliverance aiding to the scriptures.

Indeed, the way and manner churches carry out healing and deliverance have been interrogated in recent times. The social media and conventional media have exposed several such cases, causing intense debate recently. How the Anglican Church, specifically the Lagos Mainland Anglican Diocese, practice these two important aspects of religious creeds requires clarification. Scholarly attention has not been given to healing and deliverance in the Anglican Church, and this position needs to be properly addressed. It seems, though, the Anglican Church does not carry out healings and deliverances as much as other ministries and denominations have been exposed in the media. Given the above situation, the current paper examines the Christocentric healing and deliverance ministry practice in the Lagos Mainland Anglican Diocese to ascertain the concept of Christocentric healing and deliverance, ascertain the practical approaches to healing and deliverance in the Anglican Diocese of Lagos Mainland and the challenges involved in Christocentric healing and deliverance. To generate data for the paper, an in-depth interview was conducted with priests in the Diocese and church members. The approach adopted for the In-depth Interview was face-to-face, and this brought about close interaction with interviewees who expressed their views freely.

Conceptual Clarifications

Healing is a major factor in most world religions that cannot be overemphasised. The idea is that man is a tripartite being composed of a spirit, soul, and body. All three parts can be damaged or inflicted in one way or the other in the course of existence, which inadvertently requires fixing or healing. According to Nunez (2015) healing the three parts is directly

connected. Physical healing has to do with the body, which is matter or substance and can be seen and touched. Emotional healing is connected to the mind and the soul, and spiritual healing is that which affects the spirit man. Emotion and spirit are not material and cannot be seen or touched physically, but they can be felt by the body. To say it more succinctly, their activities affect the body significantly.

Invariably, physical Healing is the rebuilding of the physical body and health. Health is the state of the body in total and effective functionality without any form of weakness or defect. Health has to do with the various human organs that function effectively to create well-being. When any of the organs is affected, the resultant effect is sickness or ill health, which demands treatment, either medically or spiritually. The spiritual aspect is crucial to this paper. While medical line utilises clinical measures to treat ailments and diseases, spiritual interventions may deploy prayers, fasting, songs, chants, hymns, laying of hands and other rituals depending on the religious body, sects and denominations. Healing of the emotions implies taking care of such things as rejection, hurt, traumas and offences, often caused by a close person in a family, group or community. Hollinger (1988) explains that certain acts, such as wickedness, harsh words, cheating in relationships, mistrust, etc., are the triggers of emotional traumas that require healing. If such issues are not addressed, a person becomes physically paralysed even though the impact is on the mind and not on the physical body. This dimension buttresses the point earlier made that the tripartite parts of man are interconnected and are inseparable.

Spiritual Healing is quite different from the rest in the sense that it has to do with issues outside the physical and emotional realms. Anderson (2001) asserts that spiritual healing directly involves the restoration of man's relationship with God, the maker. Ortlund (2009) added that it has to do with breaking spiritual strongholds, which involve spirits, demons, and ancestral connections. Padgett (2006) observes that when there is a spiritual yoke, an individual may find it extremely difficult to break forth or achieve success in the physical world.

On the other hand, deliverance is different from healing, although oftentimes they are used interchangeably in the Christian context to mean the same thing. As far as deliverance is concerned, there is the presence or affiliation to an external being or force that brings about negative energies that affect people and society at large. Nunez (2015) posits that deliverance is the casting out or disconnection of a demonic spirit from someone who has been held down. Two things are involved here: the presence of a spiritual being in the host body that controls the actions, thoughts of the host (person), and the demonic spirit cannot depart from the host body without being cast out by force and by a higher spirit or powers. The process of casting requires fasting, prayers and other spiritual engagements.

According to Nunez (2015) deliverance can also be seen from the point where curses and ungodly relationships exist. Curses are pronouncements against an individual for negativity and retrogressive impacts. It is never meant to lead to a good and happy life. Curses can also come in the form of an ungodly relationship with demons and spirits, such as spirit-spouse,

possession and affliction. Walker (2007) asserts that a curse can be generationally patterned in such a way that people can hardly break free since it is a recurring decimal in the family lineage.

Incidentally, there is a strong relationship between healing and deliverance. To put it more succinctly, healing and deliverance are often seen as interconnected. Some believe that spiritual oppression can contribute to physical or emotional ailments, and therefore, deliverance may be necessary for complete healing. Conversely, healing can be a part of the deliverance process, as it can weaken the influence of negative spiritual forces. Both are seen as demonstrations of God's love, power, and desire to restore wholeness to individuals.

Conceptualising Christocentric Healing and Deliverance

The Christocentric concept is fast evolving and is becoming a dominant paradigm in the Christian discourse today. This concept is premised on Jesus Christ as the epicentre of Christian theology. It revolves around the activities of Jesus that led to the realities of his followers and are enskinned in the New Testament as well as the Old Testament. The essence of the concept is to see Christ as the author and the finisher of the Christian faith and the hope and saviour of humanity. It also deals with Jesus Christ as the truth and the way. In addition, Christocentric suggests that all scripture should be interpreted in light of the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ, recognising him as the fulfilment of Old Testament promises and the key to understanding God's nature and will. Thus, the Christocentric approach also influences how Christians live their lives, encouraging them to centre their actions, decisions, and priorities on Christ.

Over the years, scholars have discussed the relationship between the Christocentric concept and healing/deliverance. They have linked healing and deliverance to Jesus Christ in the bible. Many have also advocated that healings and deliverances in Christianity must follow the pattern that was established by Christ in scriptures.

Christocentric Healing and Deliverance Ministry Practice in the Lagos Mainland Anglican Diocese.

The Lagos Mainland Anglican Diocese is one of the Anglican churches that strongly believes in Christocentric healing and deliverance. Ascertaining the practical approaches to healing and deliverance in this Diocese is the mainstay of this aspect of the paper. Given the above, an In-depth interview was conducted with four (4) priests and three (3) members of the Diocese. In an Interview, a clergy acknowledged that:

Firstly, it is important for us to clear the air about the position of the Lagos Mainland Anglican Diocese on healing and deliverance. We believe in Christ's concept of healing and deliverance, and nothing outside it must be practised. So, every member, irrespective of status, understands the position of the church in respect of this (*In-depth Interview, 2025*).

Based on the above statement, there is no doubt about the church's stand on Christocentric healing and deliverance. Such practices are carried out in total submission to scriptural injunctions. From this point, the researcher proceeded to inquire about the practical approaches to healing and deliverance in the church under review. According to a clergy member during an in-depth interview:

Several practical approaches exist as far as healing and deliverance are concerned. The truth is that different Christian denominations have diverse approaches. However, in this Diocese, the practice is, in a way, done with the integration of faith, spiritual practices, and sometimes, professional guidance (*In-depth Interview, 2025*).

Considering the above statement, it can be deduced that the church practices a multifaceted approach to healing and deliverance. That is to say, combining faith, spiritual practices and professional guidance. It also means that the Diocese recognises the place of medical treatment in the administration of healing, and that is the essence of incorporating professional guidance. On the aspect of professional guidance, a church member during the interview stated thus:

The Diocese has medical professionals who often play advisory roles. What they do is not discourage members from believing in the healing power and deliverance of Jesus Christ, but at the same time, they encourage such people to go for tests in particular areas of the ailment to determine exactly what the health issue is. This approach has helped to remove speculations and also makes it possible for pastors to know exactly what to pray for (*In-depth Interview, 2025*).

The above can be referred to as professional counselling services. It was gathered during the interview that these services is usually opened to all members or those afflicted with ailments in the church premises. This approach can greatly help individuals to address deep-seated issues that may be hindering their healing.

Additionally, faith application was also stated as one of the approaches to healing and deliverance in the Diocese. According to the submission:

Faith is a very important part of healing and deliverance. The scripture says that without faith no one can please God or obtain anything from Him. This is how essential faith is in the healing and deliverance ministry. It was added that faith goes with prayer, laying on of hands, administration of anointing oil, and the use of a mantle. All these are approaches used in various healing and deliverance ministries (*In-depth Interview, 2025*).

During an interview with a clergy, an important approach to healing and deliverance was also mentioned:

I must confess that we deploy teaching and discipleship in the healing and deliverance ministry. You see there is a serious need for the congregation to have a clear understanding of what the Bible says about healing and deliverance before embarking on spiritual warfare. When there is a proper comprehension, power is released to bring about instant healing and deliverance (*In-depth Interview, 2025*).

Challenges Involved in Christocentric Healing and Deliverance

Understanding the challenges that may have cropped up in the course of practising Christocentric healing and deliverance was a dominant issue of the paper. Hence, the following data from interviewees is apt and value-laden.

According to a priest, during an in-depth interview:

It is obvious that there are challenges when it comes to healing and deliverance. As a matter of fact, these two practices have attracted intense debates over the years. One of the challenges is that there is a public view of faith-based healing and deliverance as a suspicious act. Many people out there perceive healing and deliverance as acting and not reality. This is because of the way other denominations practice it in recent times. As the larger society debunks faith-based healings and deliverances, they create doubt and suspicion, which eventually affects how even members of the congregation react towards healing and deliverance. It is important to state that doubt and fear are the two enemies of faith-based healing and deliverance. Oftentimes, deliverances and healings are carried out, but without results because of fear and faithlessness (*In-depth Interview, 2025*).

From the above, the paramount issue here is scepticism. This state of the mind doubts the authenticity of something. It merely clouds the mind from seeing any possibility of something happening, and this is the ingredient or fire that burnt out faith and belief, which are sacrosanct for the manifestation of miracles, healings and deliverance.

It was also pointed out during an interview with a member of the Diocese that:

You see, another challenge to healing and deliverance as practised in the church is the difference in individual interpretation of the bible, which may lead to disagreement about the power and nature of God's healing and deliverance. Just as we have healing and deliverance in the church, these also exist outside the church, and sometimes, it is seen as faster outside. I have heard a believer saying that she has waited for so long and what she has been praying for has not surfaced. People like that may be tempted to go to ritualists, and Babalawos to get it done quicker, irrespective of the consequences that may come up in the future (*In-depth Interview, 2025*).

He added that:

Misuse and Exploitation, which are products of the commercialisation paradigm in churches today, also affect the way people, especially non-believers, perceive healings and deliverance. These days, you find pastors and men of God attach financial or material demands on healings and deliverance, which Jesus carried out free of charge. This has to do with psychological exploitation. You hear sermons like "you have to give to receive". This kind of message points to materialism, which has easily crept into the church healing practice. Some pastors even do it on television without shame. However, this is not the case in the Diocese. We do everything

healing and deliverance according to the word of God (*In-depth Interview, 2025*).

Discussion of Findings

This discussion is centred on the Christocentric healing and deliverance ministry as practised in the Lagos Mainland Anglican Diocese. The study was also to ascertain the practical approaches to healing and deliverance in the Diocese as well as examine the challenges involved in the practice. The first important aspect was the agreement by the interviewees that the Christocentric healing and deliverance concept is the dominant practice in the Diocese. This statement clears whatever assumption that may have sufficed before now. Having established the core, the issues put forward for clarification were the approach deployed by the Diocese to administer healing and deliverance to members. It was revealed that in the process of administering healing and deliverance, several factors were considered, such as faith, teachings and professional counselling. Faith is a strong principle of the Christocentric concept, which cannot be ignored. As a matter of fact, the manifestation of healing and deliverance relies on it. The scriptures have stated that "without faith no man can please God". Therefore, if faith is a determining factor that must be emphasised before, during and after healing and deliverance, then it could be deduced that the Diocese is practising in line with Christocentrism.

Furthermore, the essence of teaching people who need healing and deliverance is apt and Christocentric in nature. The idea is to make people understand the position of the scriptures on healing and deliverance. Once there is a good understanding of the scriptural backings and earlier miracles that Jesus performed, faith can be built. After all, the scripture says that "my people perish for lack of knowledge". This implies that "faith comes from hearing, and hearing the word of God". It is when knowledge of the word of God about healing and deliverance is domiciled in a believer that healing take place. It is also at this point that prayers can be carried out with anointing oil, laying on of hands and the use of a mantle, which are scriptural in the New Testament. This finding is in line with the position of Walker (2007) on healing and deliverance ministry.

Additionally, the aspect of counselling was also revealed as an approach to healing and deliverance. One may wonder why there is a need for professional services in the healing and deliverance ministries. The argument is that diverse ailments manifest in similar symptoms, and in a situation where an individual or the church cannot determine the nature of illness, there is a need for professional counselling services often organised by the Diocese, as found out during the interview session. This approach helps to ascertain the root cause of ailments and, by so doing, the ground is set for specific prayers. This is because the scripture talks about praying amiss. That is to say, prayers can be directed towards a wrong course and may be ineffective. This does not mean unanswered prayers, as many may deduce.

More so, the paper investigated the challenges that the healing and deliverance may have experienced in the course of carrying out Christocentric healing and deliverance. It was

acknowledged that public perception of faith-based healing and deliverance is somewhat inaccurate. This means that many do not agree that healing and deliverance, especially those claimed to have taken place, are false. A lot of believers are affected by this posturing, and when that is the case, there is the instruction of doubt, which is a major killer of the Christocentric concept of healing and deliverance. This argument is even more potent when believers are ignorant of the World. They easily fall into popular opinion. Another important aspect of this discussion is the challenge that emanates from experiences and stories of pastors and ministers of healing and deliverance in different denominations exploiting members and defrauding them of their money during healings and deliverance. Although most Diocesan members may not agree to this position in totality, once in a while, such thoughts creep in when there is a call for a healing and deliverance service.

Conclusion

Christocentrism is a dominant approach deployed in the Lagos Mainland Anglican Diocese for healing and deliverance. This concept emphasises total adherence to the doctrines of Christ in the healing and deliverance ministries in the Christendom. The Diocese dwells on a multifaceted, approach which focuses on faith, teachings, prayers, fasting, laying of hands and professional counselling.

However, scepticism, individual understanding and exploitations are some of the challenges experienced in the diocese. But these factors have not deterred the church from continuing and emphasising a Christocentric approach to healing and deliverance. Thus, it is recommended that Christian

churches should focus on the Christocentric paradigm, which can erase doubts and misleading information as to the genuine essence of the concept.

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