

**WHOLENESS AND HEALING IN COMMUNITY:  
TOWARD UNDERSTANDING EFFECTIVE AFRICAN  
CHURCH INTERVENTIONS FOLLOWING COMMUNITY  
VIOLENCE**

by

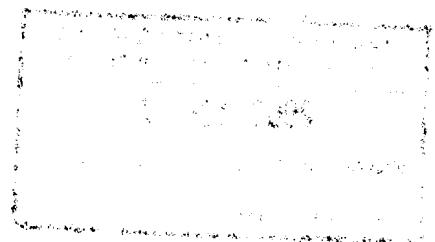
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**June 2002**



## ABSTRACT

Wholeness and Healing In Community is a study that seeks to understand what are the effective interventions, which the African church has made and is able to make in bringing healing to a community gripped by violent conflict. In this study it is assumed that the church is an existent and potentially effective institution with infrastructure that stretches from the smallest community to an international web. In the midst of Africa's social, political, and economic turmoil there lie both causes and consequences, which are the brokenness of body and mind, emotions and choices. This woundedness, which is both individual and collective, needs to be made whole or the next generations are likely to continue a cycle of violence, hate and mistrust. The biblical concept of shalom is developed and used as the vision toward which interventions must attempt to move. The qualitative methodology and process of this work sought to not only study church interventions but to assist in the transformation of church leader thinking about their role.

This study has three primary strands: 1) the individual background and experiences of the researcher who has spent nearly thirty years in the midst of conflict on the African continent, 2) a literature review that surveys literature from several disciplines and, 3) a field research. The field research consisted in the filming (or securing already made films) of nine situations in which there was a claim made that community healing had either occurred or had been assisted through a specific set of interventions. The film from these nine situations in five countries (eight in Africa) were then edited into nine 15-30 minute film documentaries which were screened in their entirety to four different focus groups of African church leaders for their evaluation and reflection. Their evaluations are reported and evaluated in this study. In order to comprehend the study and its findings, it is strongly recommended that the films be viewed even though they are summarized here in written form.

A list of effective interventions is the outcome of this study. This is perhaps the most comprehensive listing of holistic healing interventions. A potential use for this catalogue is suggested. It is recommended for church leaders as well as Non Governmental Organizations, which seek to work in situations of violence on the African continent.

## **Dedication**

Special thanks must be given to those who have helped make this study a reality. First to my wife Debbie who encouraged me to begin. She was joined by my colleagues at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, all of whom encouraged me to keep on. To my promoter Dons Kritzinger and to friend Paul Heidebrecht go a special thanks for their special role in reading, critiquing and encouraging the completion.

But none of the research would have meaning without many on the continent of Africa who have entered my life and given me perspectives that could only come from people who have become culturally closer to me, and have shown me the hope of triumph in and through Christ.

It is to that hope of redemption made sure in the work of the Redeemer that this research is dedicated.

Karl Dortzbach

## Table of Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1.	An overview of this study	8
1.2.	The Research Question	10
1.2.1.	World Views.....	12
1.2.2.	Theological issues .....	13
1.2.3.	Healing.....	15
1.3.	Need for this research	16
1.4.	Beneficiaries	20
<b>2.</b>	<b>CHAPTER TWO: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....</b>	<b>23</b>
2.1.1.	Biblical Terms for Health and Healing.....	23
2.1.2.	Healing roles.....	24
2.1.3.	Health as Shalom .....	27
<b>3.</b>	<b>CHAPTER THREE, RULERS FOR HEALING: LITERATURE REVIEW; MEANINGS, DEFINITIONS, AND MEASUREMENTS .....</b>	<b>35</b>
3.1.	Introduction	35
3.2.	Cosmology	37
3.2.1.	African Cosmology.....	38
3.2.2.	Cosmology and Healing.....	40
3.2.3.	Cosmology and Healing in Africa.....	41
3.2.4.	What is Holism? .....	42
3.3.	Models of holism	44
3.3.1.	Toward an African holistic health model .....	45
3.3.2.	Toward an understanding of holistic health.....	46
3.3.3.	Shalom.....	47
3.4.	Understanding healing	48
3.4.1.	Health definitions .....	48
3.4.2.	Medicine and health.....	52
3.4.3.	Problems within the Christian community .....	53
3.4.4.	Problems in understanding healing.....	54
3.4.5.	African traditional healing.....	56

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3.4.6.	Miracle vs. Natural .....	58
3.4.7.	Healing or wholeness?.....	61
3.4.8.	Personal healing .....	63
3.4.9.	Communal Healing .....	67
3.5.	Understanding Community	71
3.5.1.	Biblical Community .....	71
3.5.2.	African Community.....	73
3.5.3.	Elements of Community.....	75
3.5.4.	Relationships in Community .....	77
3.6.	Measurements for healing	79
3.6.1.	The difficulty of measurement.....	79
3.6.2.	Types of measurements .....	81
3.6.3.	Measurements .....	83
3.7.	Interventions	86
3.7.1.	Qualities of Interventions .....	86
3.7.2.	Table : Units of Intervention in Biblically Holistic Health and healing ministry.....	88
3.7.3.	Qualities that the Church must promote.....	89
3.7.4.	Qualities needed for forgiveness .....	91
3.7.5.	Animator roles.....	93
3.7.6.	Animator Roles of the Church in History .....	97
3.7.7.	Kinds of interventions.....	99
<b>4.</b>	<b>CHAPTER FOUR : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>123</b>
4.1.	The steps of this research	123
4.2.	State-of-the-art methods	124
4.3.	Differences in Qualitative and Quantitative Methods	129
4.4.	Qualitative Research: outlines of this research	133
4.4.1.	Objections to using a qualitative research method for this study .....	133
4.4.2.	The purpose of this study.....	134
4.4.3.	The starting point: theoretical framework.....	136
4.4.4.	Knowing where we are: triangulation .....	139
4.4.5.	Case studies .....	140
4.4.6.	Sampling.....	142

4.4.7.	Evaluation or analysis questions.....	144
4.5.	Summary of choices used in this inquiry	145
4.6.	Assumptions	147
<b>5.</b>	<b>CHAPTER FIVE: RIVERS OF HEALING--CASE STUDIES .....</b>	<b>148</b>
5.1.	Overview	148
5.2.	South Africa	151
5.2.1.	Overview.....	151
5.2.2.	Video Dialog .....	162
5.2.3.	Khulumani.....	165
5.2.4.	St. James CESA .....	168
5.3.	Rwanda/Burundi	173
5.3.1.	Overview.....	173
5.3.2.	Africa Enterprise: Healing Hearts.....	180
5.3.3.	Africa Revival Ministries: The Living Church.....	187
5.3.4.	JRMD:Rebuilding Hearts and Homes .....	191
5.4.	Kenya	195
5.4.1.	Beyond the Disaster Counseling Programme.....	195
5.4.2.	Transformations.....	199
5.5.	USA: Martin Luther King Jr.	203
<b>6.</b>	<b>CHAPTER SIX: RESULTS OF HEALING INTERVENTIONS.....</b>	<b>210</b>
6.1.	Collection of data	210
6.2.	Data array	210
6.3.	Data Analysis	211
6.4.	Participant Analysis	211
6.5.	Data Analysis, Results of Interventions	214
6.6.	Further observations from each film:	218
6.7.	Analysis of healing interventions:	221
6.8.	Future research topics.	234
6.9.	Summary of Conclusions	235
<b>7.</b>	<b>CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY, HEALING THE NATIONS .....</b>	<b>237</b>
7.1.	A broken world in need of healing	237



7.2.	Narrative Theology and healing the brokenness	238
7.3.	Holistic healing needed	240
7.4.	The identification of community healing	244
7.5.	Nine Stories of Healing in Community	246
7.6.	Indicators of healing	252
7.7.	Uses of indicators in program creation	253
7.8.	Uses of indicators in program evaluation	254
7.9.	Implications for training and funding	256
7.10.	Healing Interventions of the Church	258
<b>8.</b>	<b>APENDICES</b> .....	<b>260</b>
8.1.	Interview Consent Form	260
8.2.	Video case study summary	261
<b>9.</b>	<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>262</b>