



THE PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF PENTECOSTALS IN RELATION TO THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC IN THE CITIES OF CAMEROON. CASE OF YAOUNDÉ CITY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates Pentecostals perceptions and practices towards the COVID 19 preventive measures as instituted by the government of Cameroon. In the study we used the case study design emphasizing the qualitative research method with the techniques of observation and interview used to collect data. The sample population was chosen using the purposeful sampling technique. Five influential Pentecostal churches of above 500 congregants each Sunday, with television channels, and/or educational institutions chosen and informants selected from the five churches. At the end of our study, we discovered that the Pentecostals beliefs system and their perceptions of COVID 19 influenced their practices in their control of the pandemic.

KEY WORDS: COVID 19 Pandemic. Pentecostals, perceptions, and practices,

INTRODUCTION

The Corona virus disease named SARS-CoV-2 as suggested by the international committee on taxonomy started in Wuhan-China in December 2019. Ozdemir (2020) notes that the new coronavirus was the reason for the pneumonia cases of unidentified etiology in Wuhan, spread by large droplets resulting from coughing and sneezing by infected persons. Just as these infected droplets can travel for about 1-2 meters before dropping on surfaces, the virus can equally survive on these surfaces for days. But can be destroyed in less than a minute by proper disinfectants. Touching the infected surfaces with the hands and touching the nose, mouth, and eyes within the survival period will lead to the infection with its incubation period expected to be 14 days after exposure. It has been observed that the clinical characteristics of the new coronavirus is fever, dry cough, fatigue, sore throat, dyspnea, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea (Ojong; 2020). In some cases it develops into pneumonia, pulmonary failure and death with pneumonia being the most common severe manifestation distinguished mainly by fever, dry cough and dyspnea which explains why the control of people is first of all done through temperature checks (UHCR; 2020). According to WHO (2020) recovery time after hospitalization is 2 weeks for mild cases and 3-6 weeks for severe cases, while fatality mostly occurs in elderly patients (50 years and above). The disease from its onset was declared deadly and projections made that 25 percent of Africa will be infected given that epidemiologically they were not ready in terms of medical infrastructure to control infected cases (Banda et al; 2021).

Information on COVID 19 pandemic as a deadly virus coupled with its preventive measures met with controversial

social beliefs and social reactions. Social belongingness was more or less expressed as people were faced with the challenge of following the lifestyle changes that were being implemented by the global respect of the preventive measures of the new coronavirus or maintaining the beliefs of their social groupings. In Cameroon the Pentecostals were found going against government instructions of social distancing, wearing of facemasks, and vaccinating against COVID 19.

The Pentecostal movements have as biblical foundation the coming of the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles chapter two. According to the apostolic archives, modern day Pentecostal movement began in 1906 with the Asuza street revival, which was a revival meeting that took place in Los Angeles California. It was later spread by Pentecostal missionaries to other parts of the world. In Cameroon it began with the full gospel and the apostolic mission about 5 decades ago but today we recognise that the movement has grown so fast and still grows because they believe they are called to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ as empowered by the Holy Spirit. Their spirituality is based on the interpretation of the scriptures by the Holy Spirit as they teach and preach with energy and efficiency (Dena; 2016). They believe in the holy trinity: God the father in heaven, Jesus who came with his atoning blood to save humanity from eminent destruction and is coming again, and the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth as a guarantee as Christians wait for the second coming of Christ. They equally believe they are saved by grace but living physically in the dominion of Satan and his cohorts of demons and agents manifesting through sickness, poverty, curses, suffering and general misery. Finally they believe in a satanic agenda of having a one world



order which is a system of one world government; a satanic prophetic agenda to oppose the reign of Christ in the hearts of men through the mark of the beast as stipulated in Revelation chapter 13. With all of these in mind, they have as paramount activity to stop the advancement of the kingdom of Satan through faith healing, casting out of demons from demons possessed persons, and resistance to whatsoever they believe opposes the advancement of their cause. They do this by constantly meeting together during weekly worship services, and organizing evangelism and healing crusades. With the constant development of information technology their activities and teaching can reach millions of people through television channels and social media platforms.

The Pentecostal churches in Cameroon were battling with the new coronavirus from its onset. To some, it was satanic agenda to implement the new world order. To others it was the end of time which was a sign that Christ was coming very soon and the pandemic was a call for repentance. This was a sure sign to some others who thought the pandemic was God's punishment for sins (Onyekachi; 2021). Some others thought that it was just a natural occurrence as any other disease just like influenza, malaria, and others. The most controversial teaching came from Christ Embassy with conspiracy theory subscribed by its founder Reverend Dr. Chris Oyakhilome. All of these perceptions drastically shaped the practices of Pentecostal Christians towards the new coronavirus. This study investigates how the various perceptions of Pentecostal churches affected their behavior and practices with the coming of the new coronavirus.

This study was conducted in the city of Yaoundé in Cameroon. It is the administrative capital of Cameroon and the 2nd largest populated city in Cameroon with more than 2.8 million persons after the city of Douala which is the economic capital of Cameroon. Here, is situated the ministry of public health which is the main body dealing with public health system in Cameroon. Though it's a city endowed with numerous health facilities both international, public and private, it was a high risk zone for the COVID 19 pandemic owing to the fact the coronavirus was a new disease meaning health facilities to deal with the specificities of COVID 19 were not available. Secondly, the population density especially popular quarters where more than eight person could be found in a one bedroom flat owing to the socioeconomic crisis in the North West and South West Regions, and the Boko Haram in the northern region of the nation. The influx of refugees from other regions of the country and even from other nations of the sub region such as Central African Republic and Chad has left so many on the streets of the capital city of Yaoundé. Seth et al (2020) in accessing the risk factors for COVID 19 pandemic amongst the ten administrative regions in Cameroon notes that for epidemiological reasons the cities of Yaoundé, Douala, and Bertoua are high risk zones. But the highest number of COVID 19 cases per 100 000 person by September 2020 were declared in Yaoundé and Douala respectively. This because the urban areas of these regions where coronavirus was dominant are densely populated. Meanwhile the East region comes third because of the high level of epidemiological risk

factors of patients with hypertension, diabetes, lung, and kidney diseases.

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

The case study design used helped us to generate in-depth information to explain the phenomenon at stake in its natural context. For this purpose we used the qualitative research methods and the techniques used for data collection were interview and observation. In this study we employed both the semi structured and structured interview to collect data from five churches in the city of Yaoundé in Cameroon. In order for us to obtain the information needed, we used the purposeful sampling technique to choose the study population. Though there are many new churches in the city of Yaoundé there are not many that have the capacity to influence a great number of persons. These churches; Light World Mission International church, Christ Embassy Cameroon. Communate missionnaire de reveil, Cathedrale des signes et prodiges, and Abundant life faith Center International Cathedral were chosen because they have the capacity to influence more than five hundred people through their church services, TV channels, schools and social media platforms. For this purpose we decided to take 10 informants from each church making it 50 informants both females and males. As per the key informants we had one from each church being the head pastor or residence pastor. We got information from both church leaders and Christians because the leaders we noticed as information transmitters from governing body to the Christians and from Christians because they are called to adjust their behavior as information triggers down. The views of our primary informants were recorded, analysed and presented in this article. The data was analysed using descriptive research method which gives room for detailed analysis free of researcher's bias in the description of the phenomenon

This study was inserted into three theoretical frameworks. The theory of multiculturalism by Lupton, Postmodernism according to Best & Keller (1991, 2001), and the Pentecostal approach according to Jorg Srolz (2011). The Multiculturalism explains how culture affect health behaviour of different populations such as the Pentecostal or new churches, and in tend the use of contemporary health care. The postmodernism on its part prone that discourse on medicine and biomedical sciences be deconstructed and recreated to include new ways of addressing health and healthcare (MALCOLM; 1975) This responded to the fact the Pentecostals or members of the new churches belief that divine healing is an alternative way of health care. The Pentecostal approach explains that healing and miracles are possible by the power of the Holy Spirit and are not only rooted in scripture but are visibly occurring on regular basis both in healing services and everyday life. This enabled us to understand the practice of health care among the members of the new churches.

OUTBREAK OF COVID 19 IN CAMEROON

Sopponntouba (2020) records that the first case of the coronavirus was declared in Cameroon on the 6th of March



2020 and on the 17th of March 2020 government measures to reduce its spread were out. These measures were edited on the 24th of March 2020 and 30th April respectively. But before then, on the 18th of March 2022, the government declared Cameroon's land, air and sea borders closed and so all flights were suspended with the exception of cargo flights and vessels transporting consumer products and essential goods and services. The issuance of entry visas were suspended, public and private training institutions of various levels of education were closed, gatherings of more than 50 persons were banned while school and university competitions were postponed. Social spots such as bars, restaurants and entertainment spots were to be closed after 6:00pm. Meanwhile a system for regulating consumer flow was set in markets. Besides, urban and inter urban transportation were to be taken in extreme necessity as drivers of buses, taxis were to avoid overloading. The logistics necessary for the implementation of COVID 19 response plan was to be requisitioned as required by competent authorities. As per communication, preference was given to electronic communication for public administration in cases where 10 people needed to come together while missions abroad of public and para public employees were suspended. Finally the public was urged to strictly observe hygiene measures recommended by WHO including regular hand washing with soap, avoiding close contacts such as shaking of hands or hugging and covering the mouth when sneezing.

THE EFFECTS OF COVID 19 PREVENTIVE MEASURES ON PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

The outbreak of the COVID 19 with its preventive measures was a direct opposite of the practices of the Pentecostal churches in the city of Yaoundé- Cameroon. Social distancing of at least one meter square and the ban on meetings of not more than 50 persons affected the number of persons meeting during services. Each Pentecostal church has an average of two meeting days per week and during these meetings, they collect offering, tithes and seeds of faith (financial donation made when trusting God for rapid intervention in a case). So the ban had a negative effect on the income of Pentecostal churches. According to the general overseer of Light World mission International, *This covid 19 has affected the spread of the gospel because we cannot more organise crusades and even go out on group evangelism because close contact is not allowed and people are afraid to gather or even interact. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the gospel of love and we sometimes demonstrate it by giving a hug or/and hand of fellowship during our worship services. Also, during prayers especially during healing and deliverance services we lay hands on people and help catch those who fall under the power of the Holy Spirit so that they will not injure themselves. Now our services are not more charismatic and so lacks the Pentecostal flavor.* Generally, the social distancing especially affected affect most social and religious activities of the church such as weddings, child presentation, family or group thanks giving programs

All of these meet with resistance from Pentecostal's churches to implement the preventive measures but this

equally meant the spread of the virus amongst members of this religious sect and their acquaintances was eminent. But government measures to implement these preventive measures even by coercion was sure, by this the government of Cameroon opted for the release of intelligence officers to spy on Pentecostal churches. In the process the general overseer of Communaute Missionnaire de Reveil was call up for questioning. The threat of banning institutions that will not respect the covid 19 pandemic preventive measures instilled fear resulting in its adherence though denominations like the Christ embassy categorically refused to adhere especially during their worship services.

PENTECOSTAL'S PERCEPTION OF DISEASE AND COVID 19

Illness, disease or sickness explains a state of abnormality in the proper functioning of the body of an individual. It comes with pain, body weakness, and at times deters the mobility of the individual and can even lead to death. Slows down or stop daily activities of the individual. It equally affects family finance and family members for fear of losing a love one in the process. This explains while in every social grouping be it a nation or community, there is a well-structured health care system depending on the culture and belief system of the people. In Cameroon and city of Yaoundé in particular, emphasis is laid on modern medicine visible through its infrastructure of hospitals, health centers and pharmacy found practically in almost every quarter in the city. Its primary health system lays emphases on preventive health care rather than curative. Apart from modern medicine there is also alternative health care systems which is represented by traditional and faith healers. Faith healing here is a health care system practiced by the Pentecostals. So while on earth waiting for their master Jesus Christ to come take them home as written in the book of John 14:2, they equally have to prosper in their health as written in 3 John verse 2. This good health can only be assured through laying on of hands on the sick to recover (Mark 16:17) or praying and anointing the sick with oil for them to get well (James 5: 16). From the organisational structure of all the churches we visited the aspect of healing was clearly visible through healing departments: healing college with light World International Church, healing schools with Christ Embassy and healing prayer lines during crusade or healing altar calls during services. The general overseer of Light world mission international church said that *Christ through the Holy Spirit heals all manner of diseases via the supernatural gift of healing he gives to men.* Given that behind every sickness is a particular spirit, *when we cast out the spirit the illness leaves the human body equally.* It is assumed that by faith in the healing power of Christ, that is faith of the sick person and the faith of the person representing Christ the healer, the patient will be healed. The general overseer of Cathedrale des Signes et Prodiges said *There is no sickness God cannot cure and this can be done through prayers. We are followers of Christ and in many instances in the bible Jesus healed the sick and even raised people from death.*



In the Pentecostal view, illness of all kinds are not God's work but due to evil forces, sin, or devil. Devine healing is made possible because Christ has already suffered for humanity's sins on the cross. He can heal and illness whatsoever be it a small ailment (e.g. a headache), a mental problem (such as depression), or very serious physical maladies (cancer, AIDS) it follows that healing is never just physical but by definition, physical, mental and spiritual simultaneously (Jorg; 2011)

Since the Pentecostal churches belief in divine healing of all type of diseases, they have place a system in place to cater for those that are sick as we earlier said. But the way it is done depends on particular assemblies and the instruction the lord personally to the head pastor as believed. In Christ embassy they believe that healing comes as a result of the patient's understanding what the word of God says on divine healing and the laying on of hands on the patient. This explains the reason for the healing school where patient are taught on the word of God to build up their faith. But in most prophetic churches, they might lay hands, use anointing water, anointing oil, anointed handkerchief or whatsoever the pastor prays on. The Christians have been taught to believe that when pastors pray on these objects, the anointing God has deposited on the pastor will be transferred on the object and when sick persons gets in contact with any of these object, they will be healed as was the case with apostle Paul in Acts of the apostles chapter 19 verse 12; on the other hand, a prayer cell leader in Abundant Life Faith Center International Cathedral healing comes through mind transformation in conformity with the word of God and faith in divine healing. To some Pentecostal churches Covid 19 was not different from other diseases. Though many never admitted having seen their member sick of Covid 19 believed would be healed by Christ if ever they discover the signs and symptoms.

Apart from divine healing, Pentecostals also belief in contemporary medicine and herbal healing. The general overseer of Light World Mission International told the research team that in his organization there are medical doctors and once a while they have counselling meetings with patients with blood diseases and what they must do to leave healthy even as they pray. They also advise them to go to the hospital when they are sick because the hospital treats while God heals. *Here in church we advise that HIV/AIDS patients should continue taking their antiretroviral drugs and also abstain from sexual immorality as well. As per Covid 19 initially we did not believe it was real but numerous deaths made us told our members to wear their face mask (Homemade mask) and wash their hand frequently...* The Pentecostal Christians also believe in herbal healing. The general overseer of light World Mission International also told us that they permit their members to consult herbal healers or do personal herbal healing therapies because these herbs are from the influence of evil spirits and equally because most pharmaceutical drugs come from leaves, backs of trees and grass. So, he advice his Christians to do vapourised covering with herbs. The residence pastor of light World mission

international branch church in Nkolbikonho Awae- Ibikonho Awae-Yaounde admitted that she hard Covid 19 attack and was healed by prayer and by a herbal concoction of cloves, ginger, pineapple rinds, and lemon juice.

PENTECOSTAL PERCEPTIONS ON COVID 19 PANDEMIC

The organizational structure of Pentecostal churches in the city of Yaoundé determines how information flow within the organization. The highest authority in the organization is the general overseer or the lead pastor of the organization. He holds absolute power in the kind of information that enters and is served to members because it is believed that he is the person to whom the commission and the mission statement of the organization was given to by God. This means that what the bible has not said and whatever God has not told him during his/her private prayer or fellowship time with God, will not be transmitted to the church members. Though the Bible is the foundation of all teachings in the Pentecostal churches, each church organisation has a specific orientation according to what the main pastor believes is his calling. This means that a particular organization will hold firm only to what is taught and accepted in their ministry by their main pastor. According to their organizational structure, these churches have the capacity to influence many lives through their church services, crusades, schools, television, door to door evangelism, social media platforms, and the continuous establishment of branches of their churches to other quarters of the city, regions and even other nations.

The perceptions and practices of the general overseer related to COVID 19 were what was believed generally to be authentic and transmitted from the general overseer through subordinate pastors, branch pastors, heads of departments, and to the members. As per the COVID 19 pandemic what we noticed was that there were diverse believes amongst the Pentecostals and even within same organisations depending on educational levels and members belonging to other social organization such professional organisations. This was evidently noticed as some members were always having their face masks while others had to be reminded in most instances. Those who worked as administrative workers especially in government ministries, the medical core, and the universities were always with face mask and hand sanitisers. We equally noticed that majority of Christians in the Pentecostal churches are school dropouts, job seekers and those working in the informal sectors especially as small business holders. They have limited knowledge to understand crucial societal phenomena especially the Covid 19 and so depended mostly on what their pastor said. This was proven with phrases such as 'our pastor said', 'in our church we believe that', and 'that is not what we do in our church'. During the study w noticed that there were three sets of opinion within the Pentecostals related to the covid 19 pandemic. Those who believe that it does not exist as an identified disease at all, those who believe it exist but can be treated and finally those who believe it exist but can be healed by faith in Jesus Christ.

Those who believe that it does not exist at all relates the realities of the time to a conspiracy by the dark kingdom



through their agents to reduce the population of the world, fulfill end time prophecy as stated in the book of the revelations of John chapter 13 (Tezanu; 2021). When we met the key informant from Christ Embassy she said that *in our organization, we believe that COVID 19 exist but it is man-made and not as fatal as WHO presents it to the world. It is not a pandemic but same as other coronaviruses like influenza (common cold) and also has a cure thereby not requiring all the measures put forward by WHO as preventive measures. The face mask as they say does not prevent the people from contacting the virus but it causes people to die because with the mask people do not breathe well. We believe that the strategy of propagating the disease as incurable causes more people to die out of fear and this substantiate why patients are allowed to die in hospitals because they believe that there is no treatment. Meanwhile 'chloroquine' has been used by many medical doctors with effective result.* Apart from that they equally believe that COVID 19 is not a pandemic but what they call the *COVID 19 fiasco* meaning it is a plan from those who militate for one world government or new world order to control the world. She noted that *there is no pure form or isolated form of the virus through a microscope. This means that nobody has been able to use the microscope to isolate the virus proper to COVID 19. You see all the signs and symptoms that have been brought forward as signs and symptoms of COVID 19 are equally associated with other diseases like malaria, typhoid, and common cold. This means the signs and symptoms are not peculiar to COVID 19.* As per the COVID 19 vaccine, *we believe it is not an ordinary vaccine but an evil agenda, created to alter the DNA of those who take it. The vaccine carries the virus itself, a microchip, and has the potential to edict the human DNA. Moreover, they say it does not prevent people from being infected by the virus and worst still it is an experimental vaccine. This explain why many people who have taken the vaccine behave abnormally while others have died.*

On the other hand, the Abundant Life Faith International Cathedral believed that the pandemic was real and could be prevented as well treated if attended to early by the hospital. With all of these they believed that divine intervention was possible even as other measures were necessary. The general overseer insister on the respect of the preventive measures set by the state. And it was reflected on the wearing of face mask, washing of hand with soap before entering the church.

The last category of Pentecostals are those who believe that even as COVID 19 is true, it cannot infect them because they believe in the saving grace and power of Christ through eternal life in Christ. These category of believers were found in all of the churches. So as they are in Christ through the new birth by faith, they cannot be sick and even if they are sick, they will be healed by the healing power of Christ during prayers. One this set of believers told the research team; *I have faith that I cannot be infected even if the disease exist, I live and walk by faith and not by sight.*

During our study we realized that apart from Christ Embassy many members of other Pentecostal churches do not have proper knowledge on how COVID 19 manifest, it signs and symptoms. But they could easy talk about the control

measures. This shows that COVID 19 within this social grouping was not perceive as a serious threat to the members of the community. it equally explains that their head pastor did not deem it necessary enough to train the members of the organization of the issue of COVID 19. So lack of appropriate knowledge also contributed in their refusal to put in place the control measures with the seriousness it merited.

Lack of COVID-19-related knowledge, positive perceptions, and preventive practices was detected and seems widespread. In particular, 56.6% (95%CI: 45.9-67%) of the health care workers (HCWs) and medical students had poor knowledge about COVID-19 and only 46% (95%CI: 15-77) of the total study sample had positive perceptions towards COVID-19 (Bhagavathula; 2020)

From many studies on perceptions and practices relations to COVID 19 we would realize that lack of adequate knowledge seemed not evident that it could even be traced among health workers as in the case of the study above. When the population is not knowledgeable enough, there are poor practices (Yutong et al; 2021).

a- Pentecostal practices related to COVID 19

In all social groupings people's attitudes and practices are influenced by their habits and beliefs and this is proper to Pentecostals of the city of Yaoundé. From a greater perspective their practices related to the preventive measures to control the spread of covid 19 were influence by their beliefs. From the onset few denominations refused categorically to follow the measures but subsequently had to adjust because they were met with government shutting down stubborn churches.

The first adjustment that was very noticeable in all of the churches were the provision of sanitary buckets, liquid soap and hand sanitisers. Mercy (informant) informed us that for Covid 19 preventive measures, the first reaction of their church was to buy sanitary buckets which were placed at the entrance of the church. Everybody entering the church was asked by the protocol to put on their face mask and wash their hand before entering the church house. Another bucket was sent to the Sunday school while others were placed in front of the rest rooms for toilets that had not initially prevue wash hand sinks. Aghor and Esther (informant) member were always reminded during church announcements to comply with the instructions at the entrance of the church and to regularly put on their face mask. Those who present their facemask at the gate did were not allowed to enter to enter the church premises.

The next adjustment that was observed was to do with the presentation of worship services. The respect of social distance was given priority as chairs were arranged in a one meter square distance from each other as was stipulated by the state. As a result churches increase their number of worship services per worship day. Catheequally commdrade des siges et prodigies move from one service per Sunday to three services. Christ embassy Obili moved from one service



to two services though they did not believe in the existence of the disease but just to observe the rule stated by the state. Light world mission international church went live Facebook and Abundant life faith center international cathedral went live on Facebook during worship services. Equally, Communate Missionnaire des Reveil and Cathedrale des Signes et Prodiges went live on satellite during worship hours. Notwithstanding the adjustment, the number of worshippers during worship services reduced because the partial lockdown restricted a lot of movements. People who were from nearby towns to fellowship in the city could not more freely move.

As person tithes, offerings and seeds of faith, churches opened bank accounts, and mobile money accounts through which these monies could be channeled. During worship services, these account numbers were displayed on screens and announced during church announcement to remind members of their financial responsibilities. In spite this, church finances drastically reduced as Ngong (informant) noted that *during the pandemic, they were unable to pay the rent of the church accommodation and the effects even dwindled down till after the pandemic because some members who left then never came back*. Only the headquarters of the churches were able to adjust effectively but the branches that were not financial stable to go live or Facebook had to bear the consequences of not collecting offerings and tithes from member who could not make it to church. It was equally noted that not all who worshipped off site were motivated enough to send in their monies through mobile money or bank or electronic wallets. However, financial difficulty during the pandemic was not only an issue of Pentecostal churches but also other social groupings, individuals and even the government because of the lockdown. But it was accentuated with those who were getting their income from daily hustle.

Moreover, adjustments were also made the level of church ceremonies and social gathers. Ebangha Esther (informant) told the research team that during the pandemic in their church, wedding ceremonies were suspended except the couples accepted a restricted number of people during the ceremony. Child presentations and baptisms were also suspended since this had to do with direct body contacts and at times require many people to be at ceremony ground. Group retreats for spiritual reinforcement were also suspended. Mercy (informant) told us that in their church, their department stopped meeting once a week for their departmental retreats. Other social gathering in churches were also suspended. An informant in light World Mission told us that the pastor's solidarity meetings for baby showers and other solidarity ceremonies were suspended.

To some Pentecostal denominations all these practices adjust to ignore long time church practices were done in all sincerity but to others it was just a way of acting in order not to attract the sanctions of the state. Pastor Mirabel (informant) said in their church wear face mask just in public places and not during services. What they were actually doing was that they came along in church meetings with their face mask but put it on when they notice government control authorities were around. An informant said *we did all of these*

just to please the government and for our worship services to continue and not that we believe it was preventing us from COVID 19. Our Man of God took time to educate our members on the realities of COVID 19 as I have told you that is why in Christ embassy during services we don't wear face mask and none of our members and even our relations will take that vaccine

CONCLUSION

This study presents the perceptions, attitudes and practices of Pentecostal churches in the city of Yaoundé related to the COVID 19 pandemic. The paper reveals that from the onset of the pandemic, most Pentecostal Churches resisted the preventive measures place by the government to help prevent the rapid spread of the new coronavirus because the preventive measures were a direct opposite of the ways and practices of Pentecostals. Not only that but the partial lockdown did not give them room to operate their services as usual and so they thought it was a spiritual attack on advancement of the gospel of was Jesus Christ. As per their ancient practices Pentecostals the spiritual and financial power of their organisations is in their social gathering and obedience to God through his word and they are ready to do anything to stand against that which has and will come to destroy these belief system.

But later there was acceptance partly because of government intervention and partly because few believed in the existence of the disease. In any case the acceptance was not total as visibly noticeable, not all Pentecostal members were wearing mask during church services. It had to do with both congregational belief system and other individual socialization processes. In the question to accept the changes the Pentecostals had to adjust their practices to confirm to government rules. These adjustments had a negative impact the running budget of the organization (many members could not more pay the tithes and offerings) and memberships (lockdown hindered fluent long distance movement)

In any case, the socio-economic consequences that came with Covid 19 were not proper to the Pentecostal churches alone but became a universal socio-economic crisis (Fagbemi & Along; 2020, Sopponntouba, R.; 2020). Apart from affecting all social groupings, it also affected almost all aspects of life such as household's finances, education, children, women, and even government policy (UNICEF et al; 2021). The significant concern here is that the attitudes and concerns of the Pentecostals are not proper to Pentecostal churches in the city of Yaoundé but an ideology of a particular group of people spreading rapidly beyond cities and nations and even penetrating rural areas through their various organs and continuous missionary or evangelism programs for their impact is felt in every quarter of the globe and every sector of the society⁶. It is evident that perceptions shapes the level of knowledge obtained and finally practices in specific groups. So the collection of data on perceptions and practices related to COVID 19 with specific group cultures might help in setting up educative intervention measures that will depend on the knowledge of community members.



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