

Shifting notions in maternal health of Johane Masowe Chishanu of Chitekete, Gokwe, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The study explores the maternal health delivery system of Johane Masowe Chishanu of Chitekete (JMCC), Gokwe in Zimbabwe. The Church is growing tremendously and has become popular, owing to its approach to maternal health. The study aimed to find out how the JMCC's approach to maternal health relates to the biomedical delivery system. We wanted to find out how the JMCC handles this delicate balance in their search for maternal health services with a view to tapping from their experiences in recommending integration between the two systems. The study is both empirical and theoretical. It employs qualitative phenomenological exploration and, makes use of the existing literature on the JMCC's approach to maternal health issues. The theory of changing beliefs and enduring faith underpinned the study. Past researches on African Independent Churches (AICs) in general tend to focus on how their beliefs and practices influence negative health-seeking behaviours. They have often concluded that AICs are through and through part of the problem in health matters and not part of the solution. The study explores the extent to which the JMCC is positively reinterpreting its beliefs and practices in order to handle the sensitive maternal health issues in the context of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

Contribution: Researches have been conducted on maternal health systems and the pandemic of HIV and AIDS in apostolic sects in Zimbabwe in general, and the main focus has been on the Johanne Marange Apostolic Church. Little has been written on the Johane Masowe Chishanu's (JMC) maternal delivery system, especially about the JMCC, Gokwe.

Keywords: maternal health; Johane Masowe Church; religion; qualitative phenomenological approach; enduring faith; changing beliefs.