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A comparative analysis of Schleiermacher's theology of miracles and the idea of miracle working in the United Family International Church (UFIC) of Prophet Emmanuel Makandiwa

BY

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This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts Honours Theology and Religious Studies at Midlands State University

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Certificate of Supervision

I hereby certify that I personally supervised this dissertation in accordance with departmental regulations and the universities general regulations. On that basis, I confirm that this dissertation is examinable.

Title of Dissertation: A comparative analysis of Schleiermacher’s theology of miracles and the idea of miracle working in the United Family International Church (UFIC) of Prophet Emmanuel Makandiwa

Name of Supervisor

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Declaration by Student

I, Zhou Isaac (**R101869G**) sincerely declare that this dissertation is my original work that has not been previously submitted in any other university. Proper citation and acknowledgement in line with the copyright laws and ethical requirements of the department of Theology and Religious Studies at Midlands State University have been strictly adhered to in writing this text.

Name of Student

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Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------|--|
| AFM | Apostolic Faith Mission |
| AIDS | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| CBZ | Central Bank of Zimbabwe |
| HIV | Human Immuno Deficiency Virus |
| RBZ | Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe |
| STC | Senga Training Centre |
| UFIC | United Family International Church |
| UFICM | United Family Interdenominational Ministries |
| ZAOGA | Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa |
| ZBC | Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation |
| Zimpapers | Zimbabwe Newspaper Group |

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This dissertation is a comparative analysis of Schleiermacher's theology of miracles and the idea of miracle working in the United Family International (UFIC) of Prophet Emmanuel Makandiwa. This chapter offers insights into why the area of study has been of interest to the researcher while highlighting the background of both parties' understandings about miracles. It covers the background to the study, statement of the problem, aim and objectives, research questions, research methodology, literature review, scope, limitations and structure of the dissertation.

1.1 Background of the study

The research is aimed at comparing the ideas of Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1799) to the beliefs of the members of United Family International Church (UFIC) of Prophet Emmanuel Makandiwa on miracle working. Schleiermacher is a prominent scholar of philosophy of religion who wrote about miracles in his book, "On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers" (1799). It is also specially aimed at determining the invergencies and divergencies between Schleiermacher's theology about miracles and opinions or perceptions of the members of the United Family International church. It seems that Pentecostal believers together with some Protestants and Catholics believe in the working of miracles by the divine power while on the other hand Schleiermacher and other scholars of philosophy of religion like Sigmund Freud (1927) and Karl Marx (2002) deny the existence of miracles ever.

Scholars like Karl Marx (2002) and Sigmund Freud (1927) even go to the extent of denying the existence of God and gods. This automatically phases out the idea of a miracle. This is because as Hume (1976) defines a miracle, it is associated or attached to the absolute, supernatural and in simplest term God or gods. Thus, in order for us to have a miracle, there should be a miracle worker or a causer or initiator. How then can we account for a miracle in the context of scholars who do not believe in the existence of God and scholars who do not believe that the miracles reported in churches are real?. For example, miracles are reportedly happening in UFIC with Prophet

Makandiwa but some people of Zimbabwe do not believe that the miracles are real. They believe that people are being deceived with fake miracles to think that miracles are really happening. Numerous miracle stories are reported in Newspapers like The Herald, Daily News, B-Metro, H-Metro in magazines and some are being broadcasted on radios and televisions about ongoing miracles in UFIC of Prophet Makandiwa. It is this differentiation that left the writer driven to investigate on the perceptions of UFIC members on miracles vis-a-vis Schleiermacher's understanding in line with people who deny the real occurrence of UFIC miracles.

Schleiermacher reduces a miracle to simply an event which has nothing significant attached to it. He gives other names to what people everywhere call a miracle. The names include an event, a strange thing, a sign, an indication, a wonder or a mental condition of the observer. This is difficult to apply in the context of UFIC which strongly believes in miracles happening by Makandiwa. More so, Karl Marx (2002) reduces religion to the social concept and therefore, a miracle is just an illusion. Freud (1927) sees religion as an opium of the poor and a miracle as just "pie in the sky". This show that these scholars share a common belief that all testified miracles are not real, but they are a fake creation of the mind which is yearning for them. However, whilst they believe this, UFIC miracles as they are reported seem to take the dimension of addressing the needs of the poor and the social problems of the people. This is apparent in the so-called "miracle money" and "miracle gold" which allegedly left some members of the denomination rich within a short time and "miracle weight loss" which allegedly rectified some people's social problems. However the purpose of this research is not to label this denomination or to take these miracles as real or unreal but specifically gather the ideas of its members and compare them to those of Schleiermacher.

1.2 Problem Statement

Some people in Zimbabwe hold conflicting ideas as to whether United Family International miracles are real or unreal. Some members of the denomination also find it easy to agree and even testify more about the miracles that they believe happen in their church and in their lives as evidenced. in Newspapers, television, radio and in other social networks. Hence Schleiermacher's denial of the existence of miracles seems difficult to apply in the modern world where miracles seem to be the language of the day especially with UFIC members. Therefore, the researcher felt the need to intermediate between Schleiermacher and the UFIC members. The investigation into this issue shall build a bridge between the two conflicting ideas, the assumption being that both ideas should not be dismissed but should be reconciled, analyzed and made to work together in harmony. In this

research, the aspects given below would therefore be given special attention and will contribute to the chapters of the paper:

- Understanding of miracles by Schleiermacher and other scholars of religion, for example, scholars mentioned above.
- Understanding of miracles by UFIC members, especially miracles that are happening in their church.
- Similarities and differences of UFIC and Schleiermacher's understanding.
- The importance of UFIC miracles to the people, the church and the nation.

1.3 Main Research Question

The fundamental question that led to the researcher embarking on this project is, "On what grounds do United Family International Church define their miracles and how do we account for them in the face of Schleiermacher's denial?"

1.3.1 Sub-Questions

What distinguishes Godly miracles and mere event or illusion and is it possible for a mind to create a miracle when it is not there?

Are there any differences between miracles happening in UFIC and those happening in other churches? If any, what are they?

What cause some people to deny the reality if UFIC

1.4 Aim

The aim of this research is to enable Zimbabweans to understand the positions of both Schleiermacher's and the United Family International Church members all together in relation to miracles happening in UFIC.

1.5 Objectives

In view of the above, in search of information regarding the different concepts of miracles between Schleiermacher and UFIC members, this study is designed to accomplish the following objectives:

- Identifying the concepts of miracles from Schleiermacher
- Identifying the concepts of miracles from UFIC members.
- Compare and contrast the idea of miracles in both Schleiermacher and the United Family International Church.
- To analyze the importance of UFIC miracles to the church and the nation.

1.6 Research methodology

It part of the research provides a clear and concise description of how the study will be undertaken. It discusses the methods that will be used to collect data pertaining to the understanding of miracles by Schleiermacher and UFIC members. It mainly focuses on the data collection method, sampling procedure, sources of data, and data collection procedures.

The researcher intends to use qualitative research method. Rutman (1996) point out that qualitative research allows the subjects being studied to give much 'richer' answers to questions put to them by the researcher. It may also give valuable insights which might have been missed by any other method. It provides valuable information to certain research questions in its own right. In the context of this research, qualitative method allows the researcher to choose only articles with information regarding UFIC miracles and ideas about miracles. Qualitative analysis is also relevant to improve the quality of the findings. The few people selected will represent the whole church's understanding.

Again, the researcher will use more than one method of collecting information in order test some

assumptions or hypothesis. This is because data in this nature of a question is obtained in either formal or informal settings and usually involves verbal and non verbal acts and responses. . In this study effort will be made to use a variety of methods such as shown below:

- Books written by Schleiermacher and other commentaries about his philosophy
- Newspapers and magazines
- Observations
- Interviews
- Questionnaires.

Newspapers, magazines and broadcasting studios

Information regarding the miracles happening in UFIC is reported in the newspapers and magazines. They provide current information on daily, weekly and monthly bases and therefore their information is relevant to this study. Radio and television provide the empirical evidence of miracles happening in UFIC through video recordings and audio sermons.

Observation

The researcher will employ participant observation by attending UFIC church services in order to gain a self understanding of the spirituality of its members outside of information that will be given in questionnaires and interviews

Interviews

Interviews will be conducted with the few specific members of the United Family International Church to note any other aspects that may have been left out on the questionnaires and also to include the views of the illiterate if there might be any. These interviews will be unstructured such that an answer to one question will lead to another and sometimes that the members do not recognise that they are being observed.

Why using unstructured interviews

Unstructured interviews allow respondents to express their attitudes feelings and motives about a particular issue sometimes involuntarily because of their flexibility. Again, the members of the

church and the general public should not recognise that they are being observed because this might cause them to hide some necessary information. Further to that, as a participant observer unstructured interviews will help the researcher to collect information from even the least member and also at any time as this will be informal

Questionnaires

These will be used to collect information from many members to whom interviews might not apply. They will be used to gather information about their basic beliefs about miracles and how they perceive Schleiermacher's.

1.7 Justification

This study is important because it seeks to bridge a gap between Schleiermacher's understanding and that of United Family International Church members. This research is therefore meant to reconcile Schleiermacher's disbelief of miracles as they are perceived, to the modern world where miracles are popping out daily. A comparative analysis of the theology of Schleiermacher and those of UFIC members will also help improve the understanding of the spirituality of UFIC church and would lend it the integrity it deserves.

Again, UFIC miracles are new as they started with the beginning of the church in 2008. Therefore, very few have been written about these miracles especially in relation to various people understanding that these miracles are not real. Therefore, there is need to have these miracles written down for future references. Above that, Makandiwa seems to introduce forms of miracles which fall in a class of their own. In the Bible, it seems as if there is no any record of these miracles happening.

Additionally, the need to research on this issue is further necessitated by people's zeal to understand how the UFIC miracles are happening. Miracles of UFIC especially "miracle baby" have been a subject of hot discussion by many people, some defending them and some disagreeing on their reality. This shows that people want to hear more about them especially the understanding of UFIC members themselves about their miracles. Therefore there is need for a detailed explanation of these miracles and UFIC understanding, thus is the thrust of this research.

1.8 Scope

Many scholars who wrote about miracles either touched them from a philosophical or a Christian point of view and their outcomes were limited to their time. These researchers include Schleiermacher, (1985) in his “On Religion, Speeches To Its Cultured Despisers”, Strenski (2006) in his book “Thinking About Religion”, Proudfoot (1985) “Religious Experience” and many others. This research will only focus on miracles happening in UFIC and not in any other church.

On the other hand, newspapers and magazines record miracles happening in UFIC but do not go deep in analyzing them. These papers also provide a biased analysis of miracles, either supporting the miracle worker (Makandiwa) or destroying or tarnishing his or her image, for example, Makandiwa has been portrayed positively by The Herald whilst the Daily News delegitimizes Makandiwa as a true prophet. They also do not compare the ideas of various scholars and people about miracles.

With the above background of the research taken by other scholars and information recorded by publishing media the researcher felt that gaps were left. Firstly, the above researchers did not account for the modern day miracles. Their researches are also broad as they looked at miracles in general and not specifically miracles of a certain denomination. Secondly, they did not account for the social and economic functions of miracles. Therefore, whilst this research is aimed at comparing the ideas of UFIC members to those of Schleiermacher about miracles, the research will also look at the social and economic functions of miracles as well as their impact on the Zimbabwean societies.

1.9 Literature Review

Different scholars define literature review differently depending on their understanding of how it contributes to a study undertaken in a given context. Cooper (1998) views literature review as a process of gathering information from other documented sources and documenting it. With this background of literature review, the researcher enriches the research by some information related to miracles from other documents. This will add some more insights on the critical points under investigation. According to Schleifer (2006) literature review has an advantage of refining the problem under study, clarifying possible techniques to be used in collecting data and eliminating or reducing the mistakes available in other documents or bridging the gap left by other documents

On the other hand, Tuckman (1972) has the idea that literature review enables the researcher to see why the study is necessary. Hence this section of literature review is aimed at updating the reader about the gaps which were left by previous researchers about miracles, that is, from the look of things there might not be published books about UFIC miracles and yet no one has bothered to compare UFIC ideologies to those of Schleiermacher in as far as miracle working is concerned. This therefore shall be the main thrust of this section as it is of the whole project.

Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1958) in his book, “On Religion, Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers”, drew a conclusion about a miracle from a philosophical point of view. He reduced a miracle to simply a mental condition of the observer or as simply the religious name for event. He argues that every event even the most natural and usual becomes a miracle as soon as the religious view of it can be the dominant. Schleiermacher draws a distinction between his idea of a miracle and that of the other people. To him, all is a miracle whilst to other people the inexplicable and strange alone is a miracle. The view that everything that happens is a miracle denies the existence of a miracle because if everything is a miracle then nothing is.

Seemingly, Strenski (2000), editor of the book, “Thinking about Religion” is of the idea that miracles related by the Gospels have had no reality. Miracles are things which never happened but only credulous people believe they have seen them. There was even no intervention of the Divinity. He rejects the existence of the supernatural, and argues that when a person admits the supernatural,

such a one is without the province of science and he accepts an explanation which is non-scientific. The gospels are therefore mere books like others and their miracles are false. This implies that even miracles believed to happen in churches today are only products of a non-scientific believer and are not real.

Further to the above, Proudfoot (1985) in the book, “Religious Experience” collected various definitions and ideas about a miracle or miracles from different scholars and philosophers including Schleiermacher. He collected information from Hume (1976), Kant (1960), Schleiermacher (1958) among others. His idea however that is what people call a miracle may vary according to their familiarity with and explanations of the subjects and events in the world around them, but it will always be something they judge to be anomalous with respect to the natural order.

The Newsday of 21 January (2013), there are reports about some UFIC followers who found themselves clutching pieces of gold and diamonds in their hands during a church service conducted at City Sports Centre in Harare on 20 January (2013). It shows that Prophet Makandiwa had earlier on warned his congregation to brace for miracles and that the miracles were meant for people who doubted his ability to perform supernatural wonders. The paper also reported a healing miracle where a woman’s left leg was restored to its size as it showed instant visual changes stretched up to the size of the right leg.

Lloyd Gumbo, reporter of the Herald on 5 January (2013) reported that Prophet Emmanuel Makandiwa and Eubert Angel enabled congregants to miraculously receive money in their pockets and bank accounts and ecocash accounts. This is alleged to have happened at “Botswana Miracle Night Crusade” and at the “Crossover Night” at City Sports Centre in Harare.

Phyllis Mbanje of H-Metro of 22 March (2013) reported about a baby who was claimed to have been born after a “three day pregnancy” following a miracle prayer performed by Prophet Makandiwa. The baby was a boy and was born on 18 November 2012. His mother, Mrs Moffat was once interviewed on Radio Zimbabwe by Matilda Moyo to confirm the miracle baby. There are also

miracles in which some followers lost weight after being prayed for and some people's hair were growing at the same time.

1.10 Reasons for choosing the topic

There are two main reasons that led to the researcher choosing this topic and these are:

- The researcher's interest in the subject of miracles.
- The current situation in Zimbabwe where miracles are popping out almost everyday.

1.11 Limitations

The researcher faced the following challenges in carrying out the research:

Since the data about UFIC members' perceptions and beliefs about miracles was collected using questionnaires and interviews, some respondents were reluctant to divulge information which they perceived to be their confidentiality.

- The researcher also faced lack of adequate financial resources which restrained on the scope to be covered by the research.
- Time was also limited in obtaining information for the research and producing a viable document.

1.12 Structure/Outline of the dissertation

This dissertation is composed of the following sections and chapters:

a) Chapter Two: Schleiermacher's understanding of miracles

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of Schleiermacher's understanding of miracles. It explores how he defines a miracle or miracles and what makes him define in that way. It also analyses Bible

miracles in relation to Schleiermacher's understanding. Lastly the researcher discusses the reasons put forward by Bible scholars to deny Bible miracles. This will give the readers a strong background of Schleiermacher's position and also of how other people view Bible miracles.

b) Chapter Three: Identifying the concept of miracles from UFIC

Chapter two explores the beliefs and perceptions of UFIC members about miracles especially miracles happening in their church as they are presented in the media. It comprises of the source of power to work miracles, an analysis of the presentation of miracles in the media, current criticisms of these miracles and their defense by Makandiwa and his followers.

c) Chapter Four: Participant's views vis-a-vis Schleiermacher's theology

This chapter examines the views which were gathered from UFIC participants about their miracles and about Schleiermacher's position using research instruments. The chapter contains an analysis of questionnaire and interview responses and also what was deduced from observations conducted. Lastly the chapter contains a comparative analysis of Schleiermacher against UFIC members' views.

d) Chapter Five: Importance of miracles, summary, recommendations and conclusion

This will be the last chapter which comprises of the closing remarks. It contains a discussion of the importance of miracles to the church, its people and to Makandiwa himself. It also has some recommendations to the UFIC and a conclusion of the whole research.

e) **REFERENCE LIST:** This is a list of all the sources of information used to come up with this research. It includes books, newspapers, dissertations, journals, magazines and so on. Interviews and observations will be referred too.

f) **APPENDICES:** Here, the researcher attached sample copies of questionnaires and interview guide questions.

CHAPTER TWO

SCHLEIERMACHERS UNDERSTANDING OF MIRACLES

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is an assessment of Schleiermacher's understanding of miracles. It is not only an expansion of the previous chapter's section of literature review that touches merely on his conception of a miracle. It includes, miracle as a mere sign or indication, miracle as a wonder, miracle as a mental condition of the observer and a miracle as simply an event, each of which will be discussed in this chapter. Miracles have been studied by prominent scholars, particularly Bible miracles and most Christian denominational miracles are recorded in the media. This chapter shall touch most of them in relation to Schleiermacher's understanding. The understanding of miracles by Schleiermacher is closely linked to his background therefore his background shall be partially considered also. The sub-chapters to be found in this chapter include; the introduction, Schleiermacher's understanding of a miracle, the background of miracles in the Bible in relation to Schleiermacher's view and the denial of Bible miracles by Schleiermacher and other scholars.

It is assumed by the researcher that Schleiermacher was seriously affected by his background and his writings contain some elements of his past experiences. Therefore the scholar's background is important for revealing the extent to which his background affected his understanding. According to information on the Encyclopedia of Religion, (accessed on 20 September 2013) he was born on 21 November 1768 in Breslau in the Prussian Silesia by a Reformed Church chaplain of the Prussian army. He became educated to the extent of becoming a professor and he later become a pastor at Landsberg and then at Pomerania.

Schleiermacher's definition of a miracle is that it is just a natural event like other events. He does not rule out the fact that these events happen but denounces our belief that they are God's direct intervention into the defined world order. He believes that what we call miracles everywhere are nothing but just events like other events. What makes those events unique is their strangeness in our eyes and their strangeness does not make them to be classified as miracles as though they have a significant difference.

2.1 Schleiermacher's understanding of miracles

Schleiermacher published various works but this research is derived from his first and most sticking publication, "*On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*" (1799), which talks about miracles. According to Otto (1958) the book appeared in 1799 and it aimed to recapture the position of religion which was lost in the intellectual world where it was now threatened with total oblivion. It aimed to lead religion out of the remote corner into which it had been cast.

It is in the above mentioned book, (*On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, 1799) that Schleiermacher discusses miracles. To avoid much rambling, the passage which attracted attention to this study is as follows:

What is a miracle? What we call miracle is everywhere called sign, indication. Our name, which means a wonder, refers purely to the mental condition of the observer. It is only in so far appropriate that a sign, especially when it is nothing besides, must be fitted to call attention to itself and to the power in it that gives it significance. Every finite thing, however, is a sign of the Infinite....Miracle is simply the religious name for event. Every event, even the most natural and usual, becomes a miracle, as soon as the religious view of it can be the dominant. To me, all is miracle. In your sense, the inexplicable and strange alone is miracle, in mine it is no miracle. The more religious you are, the more miracle would you see everywhere..... A phenomenon for them must be marvelous before they will regard it as a miracle.... (On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers, 1799, Pg 88)

With a close look at the above speech, it is more easy than difficult to observe that Schleiermacher denies the occurrence of miracles as unique from natural events. An event is just a natural phenomena which fashions the day. It can be an occasion, a scenario, an incident etcetera. All these names show that there is really nothing unique about an event. Thus, Schleiermacher does not see the reason to marvel at an occasion which a religious person has decided to call a miracle.

Again, Schleiermacher sees what people call a miracle as just a sign or an indication, a sign that there is God who can cause anything to happen. That is why he says that every finite thing is a sign of the Infinite. This means that what people marvel at, is a sign that is caused by the Infinite, not necessarily a miracle as religious people believe. The word Infinite is written in

capital letters, an indication that what is referred to as Infinite is God. Hence Schleiermacher believes that God is the initiator of events that people call miracles to show that he is God.

More so Schleiermacher is of the idea that every event, even the most natural or usual becomes a miracle as soon as the religious view of it can be the dominant. This implies that a miracle is just a natural event that happens in the context of religion or which is witnessed by a religious person. This drives home the point that even the most common thing that happens almost every day and people are used to it will be regarded as a miracle as long it happens in a religious context.

Again, Schleiermacher is of the idea that all is a miracle to him. This is because he believes that every event that happens everywhere is caused by the Infinite (God) and all that is caused by God is a miracle. He sees no reason in differentiating some events caused by one God as miracles and some not. Depending on his definition of a miracle, what some people regard as non-miracles are all miracles to him. This drives home the conclusion that nothing is a miracle because if all is a miracle, then nothing is.

Schleiermacher also believes that to a religious person or a miracle believer, anything strange that happens in a religious environment is a miracle. He is of the idea that the more religious one is, the more miracle one would see everywhere. This shows that people define miracles depending on their levels of religiosity. In other words there are some who see miracles everywhere whilst some only see miracles here and there, in some events and not others. However every religious person believes that every strange thing (new thing to him/her) was caused by the Infinite's interference in world order and therefore is a miracle.

Above the above, a phenomenon to miracle believers should be marvelous before they call it a miracle. This explanation seems to dismiss the point that a miracle is a Godly intervention into world order. It means that, even if a thing is done by God directly, as long as it is not wonderful, not strange, and not amazing, it is not regarded as a miracle. The question that still remains unanswered and also difficult to answer is what distinguishes a miracle from a non-miracle?

2.2 Effects of Schleiermacher's definition to our understanding of United Family International Church miracles

It is of paramount importance to look at how scholars of religion define a miracle or miracles, among whom Schleiermacher is found. This helps to shape the findings of the study and to allow diversity of ideas pertaining to miracle working in general and for comparative purposes on data analysis. This will also enable the researcher to compare and contrast UFIC members' ideas with those of Schleiermacher and other scholars. Therefore, scholars shall be classified into two groups; those who take Schleiermacher's position of denying the occurrence of miracles and those who think in line with UFIC members to agree on the occurrence of miracles.

To begin with, Schleiermacher (1799), denies the occurrence of miracles either in the Bible or in Christian history and denominations. His conclusion took a philosophical approach when he reduced a miracle to simply a "mental condition of the observer" or simply "a religious name for event". His argument is that every simple or common event becomes a miracle as soon as the religious view of it becomes the dominant. This affects our understanding of UFIC miracles like "miracle money", "miracle gold", "miracle lose of weight" and "miracle baby" among others if we take Schleiermacher's idea in the context of UFI church. What it means then is that miracles that allegedly happen in UFIC are nothing but just the illusory hopes of UFI church members.

Schleiermacher (1799), in his speech accessed from the internet on (16 August 2013) adds that the more religious one is the more miracles would one see everywhere. More so, from his book, "On Religion: Speeches of its Cultured Despisers", a phenomenon for that person must be marvelous before he or she will consider it a miracle. Thus for something to be marvelous it should be strange. But if people are used to it, it will no longer be strange and in the some way it will no longer be marvelous, and lastly it will no longer be a miracle to a miracle believer. In the face of UFIC miracles then it means that the so-called "miracle money", "miracle gold", "miracle baby", "miracle lose of weight" and so on are just illusory hopes of the members who regard them marvelous and therefore miraculous. These events are not usual to them and therefore miraculous. However, to Schleiermacher whether these reported miracles are real or unreal they are just events like other common events, and they are given the name "miracles" by religious observers and reporters. Taliaferro (1998) then

observed that the idea of all that happens being viewed as a miracle will be a practical denial of the miraculous, because if everything is a miracle then nothing is.

There are some scholars who support the definition of Schleiermacher. Holland (1965) cited in Taliaferro (1998) thinks in line with Schleiermacher when he postulates that the kind of thing that outside of religion we call “luck” is in religious parlance the grace of God or a miracle of God. This supports Schleiermacher’s idea that an event becomes a miracle as soon as the religious view of it can be the dominant. This forces us to think that if “miracle money”, “miracle gold” and others would have happened in African Traditional Religion (ATR) they would have been given the term “magic”, and outside of religion, they would have been called “luck”, and in science they were to be called “new discoveries”. This denies the existence of a miracle that is universally viewed as a miracle.

Moreover, Freud (1961) cited in Strenski (2006) explains any religious experience including a miracle in terms of the psychodynamics of human mind. He asks, what explains at all the existence of such a religious experience (miracle) and in some people and not others? In simplest terms, the inuniversality of a miracle denies its existence ever. In other words, those who view an event as a miracle are just expecting it to happen which will cause them to allude to it while in actual sense the miracle would not have happened. In the face of UFI church, this attests to the view that the so-called “miracle money”, “miracle gold”, “miracle loss of weight”, and so on are believed to have happened only because the alleged beneficiaries were expecting them to happen. The *Newsday* of 21 January 2013 reports that Prophet Makandiwa had earlier on warned his congregants to brace for miracles as a new dispensation that God had ushered them into. Therefore, the fact of members expecting miracles and that other people do not believe that they are real, according to Freud (1961) denies their historicity.

However scholars like Hume (1963) and Swinburne (1970) among others cited in Taliaferro (1998) define a miracle from the standpoint of a religious person and their definitions employ the involvement of the supernatural. Hume (1963) defines a miracle as a violation of the laws of nature brought by a supernatural agent. Swinburne (1970) objects Hume's definition by saying that for an event to become a miracle, it must contribute significantly towards a holy divine purpose for the world. He adds that extra-ordinary events lacking religious significance are more appropriately characterized as magical or psychic phenomena rather

than as a miracle. To this end, Taliaferro (1998) concludes that a miracle may be defined as an event brought by God for a holy or divine purpose, an event that differs from God's general creative activity of sustaining the cosmos and the nature in existence. This supports Prophet Makandiwa's words reported in the *Newsday* of 21 January 2013 when he says that the miracles that are happening in his church are God's doings to prove a point that he is God and Makandiwa is his prophet. Above that, Lockyer (1961) adds that miracles were designed to symbolize the spiritual blessing that God is able and willing to bestow upon the needy people's hearts. However, the question that still remains is, why some people deny the occurrences of UFIC miracles when they are comfortable with other miracles in the Bible and in other churches?

2.3 The background of miracles in the Bible in relation to Schleiermachers view

The Bible is a record of miracles, parables and stories of people who are believed to have lived during the time when the power of the supernatural was highly manifesting. The Bible miracles from the Old Testament to the New Testament drew the attention of many writers. Some believe in their historicity while some do not believe that they happened in reality. The purpose of looking at Bible miracles is to discover the origins of Christian miracles and their form. It may also allow us to see how the first Christian community differentiated miracles from non-miracles.

Lockyer (1961) collected various views about Bible miracles including the definitions from the Biblical standpoint. Thomson cited in Lockyer (1961) asserts that the bible does not set itself to define a miracle from the standpoint of nature or science but from the standpoint of the moral source, the moral power, the moral aim, and the moral effect which they represented. This shows the Bible's silence in as far as miracle definition is concerned. Therefore, Webster, Thomson and Taylor, cited in Lockyer (1961) agree on the idea that for a miracle to happen there is need for the divine power to intervene and disturb the harmonious natural objects as witnessed in the bible. According to Thomson, cited in Lockyer (1961) the term miracle in the Bible is used to describe the wonderful phenomena accompanying the Jewish and Christian revelations especially at critical moments. He adds that the biblical conception of a miracle is that of some extra-ordinary work of a deity transcending the

ordinary powers of nature and wrought in connection with the ends of revelation. This implies that anything wonderful or extra-ordinary that happened out of the Jewish or Christian arena and got a chance to be recorded in the Bible is not regarded a miracle even if it was done by the supernatural power or a god. To this end, one may deduce bias in the Biblical miracles and if that stance is inherited by Christians and Jews today, then their judgment pertaining to miracles and magic is still biased and therefore not reliable when it is considered solely outside of the views of non-Christians and non-Jews.

The phrase "... in connection with the ends of revelation" by Thomson concerns the purpose of miracles. According to him, Bible miracles were designed to symbolize the spiritual blessing that God is willing to bestow upon the needy hearts. They are also evidence that the Bible is God's divinely inspired word. Without its miraculous context we could not accept it as a supernatural book (Lockyer 1961). This idea is in line with Prophet Eubert Angels' thinking, a friend and companion to Makandiwa, that "miracle money" was for exemplary purpose to show people that it can happen and Makandiwa's thinking that these miracles are signs and wonders God does to prove a point, a point that Makandiwa is his prophet. (Newsday 21 January 2013)

2.4 Denial of Bible miracles

In the face of Schleiermacher and other mentioned scholars who deny the existence of miracles in and outside church, Trench (1894) regrets the effects of their views stretching to the peripheries of non-scientific believers, that is the Church. The tragedy, according to him is that many so-called Christian preachers and teachers, modernistic in their outlook apply the rationalistic treatment of the miracles. Lockyer (1961) also laments that several theological colleges and schools subtly deny the miracles of the Bible and thrust young men out into the ministry with a rejection of the supernatural. Who knows, maybe this is the case with Schleiermacher who was a professor in Theology by then. The views of these two show that miracles are now given a different light and a different interpretation even by the miracle workers themselves. But is this the truth of all, including Makandiwa and his followers? I personally don't think so.

Taliaferro (1998) postulates that there should be little appeal to miracles as evidence of God because there seems so little in the way of plausible candidates for what may be described as miraculous. In line with his thinking, Strenski (2006) denies the occurrence of the Biblical miracles by questioning the historicity of those miracles. According to him, if we understand a miracle to be a God-caused intervention into nature, how can we tell it was God who caused the event? Head (1997) adds that human beings only see the event but not God causing it. Therefore the two's judgment is that since we do not see God, then we should not attribute an event to God's causation.

Hume (1963) in Strenski (2006) propounds the idea that God was supposed to have created a unified world and thus any break in natural regularity such as a miracle, seem to contradict the ideal of divine omniscient foresight. He adds that if God was perfect he must have created a perfect world. If he is perfect, Hume (1963) then asks why it is necessary for him to intervene in it by means of a miracle. These questions are a plain denial of an appeal to Bible miracles being done by the omniscient God. Thus, either these miracles did not happen at all or they happened with God who is not perfect.

On the other hand, Strauss cited in Strenski (2006) argues that Bible miracles are not historical but Christians, for instance, proclaimed Jesus' resurrection when Jesus did not really reanimate but only swooned like Lazarus did. Christ also never healed lepers but only pronounced them clean. Paulus and Woolston cited in Lockyer (1961) believe that at Cana, Jesus did not turn water into wine but a new supply of wine was provided.

Bultmann in Guthrie (1990) rejects the historicity of the gospel accounts of miracles when he makes various suggestions as to how these stories arose. Firstly, they appear in the Bible as a result of a dramatization of Jesus' sayings. For example, the healing of the blind man illustrates the saying that Jesus is the light of the world. Secondly, some alien stories could have been transferred into the Bible and attached to Jesus. All this attributes the development of Bible miracles to the creation of the community. Thus, miracles are not happening as they are reported, but churches craft the stories and report them or they dramatize the sayings of their preachers. This again draws our attention to Freud and Schleiermacher who both see miracles as the mental condition of the observer.

2.6 Conclusion

In the face of the above discussion, the question that remains is, how do we then account for “miracle money”, “miracle gold”, “miracle baby”, “miracle loss of weight” and other healing miracles that are reportedly happening in UFIC. Are they not a creation of UFIC members as Butlmann believes or they are mental conditions of UFIC members and other observers as Schleiermacher and Freud believe? With these questions in mind, UFIC shall be approached indirectly through the media and directly through interviews, questionnaires and observation in the chapter to follow.

CHAPTER THREE

IDENTIFYING THE CONCEPT OF MIRACLES IN UNITED FAMILY INTERNATIONAL CHURCH

3.0 Introduction

Since I want to examine complex ideas about miracles as they are reported in the UFI Church of the Prophet Makandiwa, I assume that I should take the time to understand the context in which they were developed. As a result, before analyzing the understanding of UFIC members about miracles, I must first of all acquaint myself with information about the founder of the church, that is, Prophet Makandiwa and how the church came to be and how it looks like. This chapter therefore shall look at the Prophet's life, religious experiences which brought about the church and the church itself including how they view a miracle or miracles.

3.2 The background of Prophet Emmanuel Makandiwa

Little information is accessible about him that makes it difficult to trace his biography, for he just appeared prominent recently and started his church very recently. More so, his church, (UFIC) also seems not to have many primary books by him or by his church believers. Makandiwa seems not to value his background or even his life experiences much. He seems very reluctant to write about himself or his church as other church founders do. Information presented here was taken from the internet, newspapers and other media including the general public.

According to Obey Mawoneke, in his dissertation (2010), Emmanuel Makandiwa was born in December 1977 into a family of small farmers and his parents are Elders in the Apostolic Faith Mission church (AFM) in Muzarabani district in Mashonaland. He is believed to have grown up using the name Shingirai Chirume. He attended his secondary school at Muzengeza High School and after completing his secondary education, he started to help his parents to organize some "crusades". It is believed that the year 1993 marks his turning point when he

began to spend his time in “crusades” with the late Pastor Mukwaira. In 1995, he is believed to have received a call from God “to deliver his people from the bondage of Satan and he began to hold crusades frequently. Because of these crusades, he allegedly teamed up with a Pastor in AFM that is Reverend Munyengeterwa.

Prone to his call, Makandiwa went to do his pastoral studies at AFM’s Living Waters Theological Seminary in Harare from 2000 to 2002. From the college he worked under the tutorship of Reverend Madzivire in Bulawayo and was later given an assembly in Shangani where he became well known for his “demonstrations” of the power of God. Makandiwa’s popularity boomed when he was pasturing in Chitungwiza, Hebron District, with his unique sermons. In 2008, he was in Harare where he conducted some lunch hour services with a group called United Family Interdenominational Ministries (UFIM) which prompted his expulsion from AFM. This gave him the opportunity to stabilize his church alone which came to be known as United Family International Church (UFIC). However, before establishing his church to full operations he is believed to have gone to Ghana to meet his so-called spiritual father, Prophet Victor Boateng.

3.2.1 The source of power for Prophet Makandiwa

The issue of the spiritual father is the one that makes some people not to believe that Prophet Makandiwa’s miracles are really from God. There is also a shared belief among some people (even AFM church members) that his expulsion from AFM church was a result of serious differences over the source of his healing power. Some pastors and leaders from other churches have also questioned his source of power to heal and prophesy. This is because there is a shared belief among some people that the so-called Ghanaian Prophet Boateng is not a true prophet of God but is a disguising prophet and a real “n’anga” or “sangoma” as they call him who uses satanic powers to empower his customers. More so it is alleged that some African prominent pastors and church leaders get power from him.

According to The Herald of 23 February 2013, “a Ghanaian Newspaper, ‘Daily Guide’ has revealed that over one thousand seven hundred pastors and ‘Men of God’ from different parts of Africa have approached the seemingly most powerful ‘sangoma’ in Ghana for powers to perform miracles. The prophet’s name given in The Herald is “Priest Nana Kwaku Bonsam”

and his god is called “Kofi-Kofi”. The name given here is different from the name given in the social network, which is “Boateng”. This forces us to think of the reliability of their sources of information. It might mean that one of the sources has given wrong information or both. However, to confirm that the traditional man is seriously consulted by many people, The Herald Online (23 February 2013) published that many business people and celebrated church founders’ top-of-range cars were seen parked at his shrine at Sa-Peiman village in Nsawan.

According to Wonai Masvingire, repoter of the NewsDay of 1 June 2013, Boateng was a guest speaker at UFIC International Convention Conference. In his sermon, Boateng confirmed the miracles and accused the Zimbabwean media for attacking Makandiwa, accusing him of stealing people’s money through “miracle money”, and for driving flashy cars while letting politicians going scot-free. Masvingire further reported of the occurrence of miracle cash deposits into members’ bank accounts, a baby conceived and born within three days and the miracle weight loss. Some congregants received messages from eco-cash, and some from their banks informing them of the amount of money that was transferred into their accounts from the unknown people. Therefore this shows that Boateng is Makandiwa’s spiritual father as it is suspected.

Apart from the above, there are allegations that there are some similarities between Makandiwa and the Ghanian Boateng. It is alleged that Prophet Makandiwa’s miracles are similar to Priest Nana’s. Furthermore, it is reported that Ghana’s Daily Guide once quoted him saying that he once produced “miracle money”, “miracle gold watch” and a handkerchief before being highly respected. He also planted mango and cocoa seeds and they germinated on the same day. Again he killed a housefly, resurrected it and allowed it to fly round. Nana was also quoted saying that he can plant a palm tree and make it grow the very day. The most interesting story is that he was once a pastor and he saw that it does not pay enough. It is with this background that some people believe that Prophet Makandiwa acquired power from the Priest Nana. However, Makandiwa’s sermons proved evidence that he also believe in a spiritual father of some sort. His pastors also believe that He is their spiritual father as he has his spiritual father. They believe that a religious person cannot survive without a spiritual father. This however could not solely rule in the allegations that he has a spiritual father in Ghana until full evidence is found.

3.3.0 An analysis of current miracles of United Family International Church

“Miracles as an integral part of the Bible provide evidence that it is God's divinely inspired word” (Thomson cited in Lockyer 1961). This assertion by Thomson is the same shared by UFIC members as is plainly indicated in the newspapers and also as Prophet Makandiwa exclaimed on Zimbabwe Television that “God wants to do every miracle but he has no one to use, if he could find one, he will perform them”. Thus miracles in UFI church according to the church members are evidence that Prophet Makandiwa is used by God and UFIC is a spirit filled church. This section of the research shall explore miracles as they are reported in newspapers and other parts of the media, for example, the radio recordings, television, etcetera. These will allow the researcher to acquire a general understanding of UFIC members’ ideas before digging deep into them by means of questionnaires, interviews and observations.

Before the surprising miracle money, moral gold, miracle baby, miracle loss of weight and so on emerged Prophet Makandiwa was well known for his powerful sermons, and his favorable messages being on the topic of prosperity. It is from mid 2012 when he became famous through Zimbabwe and even in neighboring countries for his miracles and prophecies that have been confirmed to be true by a great number of people. Some people have been reportedly healed of diseases including HIV/AIDS by prophet Makandiwa.

Makandiwa also seemed to have acquired great riches over a short period of time. Some people confirmed that in his first years of pastoral ministry he was not so rich. From the time he started to do the most shocking miracles, his riches grew rapidly. He is now one of the richest pastors in Zimbabwe whose service setup is almost similar to that of a Nigerian T.B. Joshua. His sermon also show that he is a type who does not believe in poverty or lacking as he believes that only declaring a word will make things to exist.

3.3.1 United Family International Church miracles in the media

The Zimbabwean newspapers attract our attention to “miracle money”, “miracle gold”, “miracle loss of weight” and many others as they allegedly happen in UFIC. According to an

unmentioned reporter of The Newsday Online (2013), some UFIC members turned ecstatic after they found themselves clutching pieces of gold and diamonds in their hands after a prophetic prayer from Prophet Makandiwa at City Sports Centre on 20 January 2013. The same story was reported by Takunda Maodza, reporter of The Herald Online of 6 February 2013. In this story, congregants reportedly received miracle money in their pockets, some instantly lost weight, some having hair covering their bald heads and their missing teeth replaced, while gold dust and other precious minerals fall during church services. These miracles followed after Prophet Makandiwa and Angels had declared that a Christian revival was sweeping across the country and bringing with it miracles.

The pictures of people who were there at the service discussed above show people who are overjoyed. Some are raising their hands high with their mouths open and their faces flashing some smiles. This shows that they were making some joyful noises celebrating these miracles as they were happening. It is also a clear sign of acceptance to the miracles and some people may consider the actions an ecstatic sign. My judgment is that UFIC members were happy to receive these miracles because they were eagerly waiting for them as per the promise. This also shows their strong belief in miracle working because I assume that a person who does not believe miracles was to be caught in a surprise seeing people in joy.

In another miracle story Charles Mushinga, editor of the H-Metro of 22 May 2013 reported the death of a “miracle baby”. The baby was allegedly born after a “three day pregnancy” which developed after a miracle prayer was made by Prophet Makandiwa. Also, Neneranda Langa, reporter of the Newsday of 21 February 2013 reported of this same miracle story where Mrs Moffat, the mother of the miracle baby narrated that they went to UFIC on 18 November 2013 where Prophet Makandiwa prayed for female congregants who had pregnancies with complications. Before this service, she was not pregnant and she had ended her menstrual periods on 15 November. After the service and a miracle prayer, she and her husband went back home only to find herself suffering labor pains. On the third day, her belly began to grow rapidly to the size of a pregnant belly when she was in the kombi to Chitungwiza. She was taken to Chitungwiza hospital where she delivered a miraculous boy baby who was very strong and healthy.

Interesting enough, is that the baby's mother who was recognized as Mrs. Moffat by Phyllis Mbanje (2013) was once interviewed on Radio Zimbabwe by Tilda Moyo, commonly known

as Tilda Karidzamimba to confirm the miracle. She was interviewed on 3 February 2013 at a Sunday morning program of things happening in Zimbabwe. She and her husband confirmed the miracle baby when she narrated the story. She said that the Prophet Makandiwa had declared when praying for mothers who had pregnant problems that there would be a miracle pregnancy and deliverance within a space of hours, days or weeks. Thus when she began to experience some labor pains on her back and belly she remembered the declaration. She was taken to the hospital only to be given some medication. Upon boarding a kombi to Chitungwiza, she said, her belly miraculously ballooned and at Chitungwiza Hospital she gave birth to a bouncing boy. The miracle was a surprise even to herself and her husband as she said, "...both of us got surprised", and "This shocked both my husband and I"

However the Baby's death did not shock much, the people who were already suspecting the real humanity of this baby. He unfortunately died on Monday (20 May 2013) after suffering from diarrhea and vomiting since the precious week. Efforts by the Harare Hospital medical practitioners to have the baby alive were fruitless as he died. It however interesting again to note that the boy's burial was run by the church members and they were in a hurry. His burial, according to Mushinga (2013) was even privatized and the H-Metro was following the proceedings from afar, to Warren Hills graveside because they were denied access to information and pictures by the security. They were even threatened to be beaten if they continue pressing forward.

The radio also broadcasted the "miracle weight loss" clip on 08 June 2013 at 0000 midnight. On this video clip, Prophet Makandiwa prayed for healing powers to move around the church after declaring that people were going to be healed of their sicknesses. At this service, the first person who lost weight was a woman who come to the stage where Makandiwa was standing, holding her skirt which was no longer tight on the waist. She was asked by Makandiwa about what had happened and she narrated that as he was praying she just felt her skirt loosening and it was about to drop when she held it by her hand. The other woman was holding a skirt and having a baby and she claimed the same. On a different note, a girl narrated that she only found herself naked when her skirt had dropped after the prayer. The girl was seriously in tears of joy and amazement. She said that she was becoming worried of her future because no man was proposing love to her because of her body which was too big. She even did no longer have the size of the clothes for hers were above normal. She was then taken by Mai

Makandiwa to buy new clothes on the following morning.

3.4.0 Current criticisms of these miracles

The numerous miracles by Prophet Emanuel Makandiwa and his colleague Eubert Angels are open to various criticisms by the media, government officials and the general public. Not ignoring the main drive to this project, the denial of these miracles as either ungodly or unreal attracted Makandiwa's defense of himself and his miracles. It is important to look at this denial and the defense too.

3.4.1 Critics to these miracles

The Herald published an opinion written by Jonathan Mbiriyamveka entitled "Bizarre healing session on ZBC TV" where Mbiriyamveka was very critical about Makandiwa's prophecy and miracles to the extent of referring him to a "voodoo" (religious witchcraft) in the West Indies. The use of the word "bizarre" in this case, I assume, is kind of a satire attesting to some kind of miracles highly above human imagination and that are difficult to understand. It might mean that the miracles are not miracles per se but they are acts of magic. This is the most commonly shared idea among the general public and with some journalists.

In the NewsDay of 08 January 2013, Richard Mupenede (reporter) quoted the former finance minister Tendai Biti challenging Makandiwa and his Friend Angels to produce \$10 billion required to retire government debt and to fund the referendum respectively in order to prove authenticity of their "miracles". Biti said that if they were printing real money they were to deposit the money in the "our" (treasury) account at CBZ bank. It was also revealed by Biti that "miracle money" altered national money supply without regulatory approval.

More so, according to Langa (2013) the former Deputy Prime Minister Aurthar Mutambara once castigated the concept of the miracles allegedly happening in Zimbabwe. He referred to them as "dubious". Mutambara said that we have better things to show tourists in Zimbabwe than miracle babies and miracle money as shown in the quotation bellow;

We have our own spiritual attractions like Mbuya Nehanda and national shrines like Great Zimbabwe and Matopos to show and the concept of religious organisations who produce miracle babies and miracle money as tourist

attractions is dubious. (Newsday Online, 21 February 2013)

Further to that, on “miracle baby, Tapiwa Mujuru, a Methodist Church’s former Bulawayo Youth Leader was quoted again denying the miracle baby in the paper of 4 February as shown below;

Where on earth have you heard that? Even Jesus himself, son of God who performed so many miracles and was born of a virgin, had to endure nine full months in His mother's womb. What kind of a miracle is that where a woman gets pregnant and gives birth within 3 days? There is no God who is responsible for such a miracle. (Newsday Online, 21 February 2013)

Again, stories such as, “Inside Makandiwa’s power the Daily News focuses on how Makandiwa accrued cash and managed to buy a 61 piece PA system and a 500 KVA power generator which is believed by many to be a miracle, including the members of the church. However, the use of punctuation on the words “power”, “man of God” and “prophet” clearly shows how the writers Thelma Chikwanha and Chris Goko try to show the contested terrain on Makandiwa’s source of power.

3.4.2 Defense of United Family International Church miracles

Whilst some people deny the occurrence and or the credibility of the so-called “miracle money”, “miracle baby” and “miracle weighty loss” among other miracle stories reported of UFIC according to Prophet Eubert Angels, these miracles are, “... for exemplary purpose to show people that it can happen”. He thinks that to try to deny miracles that one sees is like a religious murder, which is a crime. Prophet Angels went on to challenge the journalists to attend one of his church services and count the money on one Sunday, claiming that him and Makandiwa were not making a killing from church offerings. These statements by Angels are a self-defense against the denial of the miracles and suspicion by some people that these miracles are ungodly or unreal.

According to Langa (2013) Tourism and Hospitality Minister Mzembe defended Angels and Makandiwa saying that the two should not be persecuted as they constituted the country’s tourism because of the international response to their “religious attractions”. He endorsed religious tourism as a source of revenue. However, it seems as if it’s now a political warfare

of some sort because he seems like responding to Biti respectively when he says that if treasury needed the money, it should go to a church led by its minister as quoted;“If Treasury wants miracle money and solutions, it must go to church led by its minister,” said Mzembi.

On the other hand, the reporter of Zimeye (5 February 2013) reported that Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) Govenor, Gono authorizes miracle money, ruling that it does not interfere with money circulation. He said that there is no contradiction between what the Prophets have been doing and the laws of the land. He lamented that he is concerned with the misunderstanding concerning laws governing anti-money laundering as well as the prevention of the funding of terrorisms. He concluded that the miracles, signs and wonders of this nature will not result in the growth of the broad money supply and he did not expect the liquidity situation of the country to change. This may as well force us to think that the answer was hitched to politics. However, whether it is political or not, the bottom line is that Gono authorized Makandiwa and Angels to perform the miracles of that sort.

Defending himself from allegations that these miracles make people lazy, Angels said that at their churches with Makandiwa, they offer business lectures to encourage people to do own businesses and miracle money is just restoration of money that was stolen. “For instance, if you lose US\$20 in Mutoko, when God restores that money you will get it all back with serial numbers and everything.” (Angels 2013)

More so, in an article of December 30, 2012 titled “2011: Makandiwa comes tops” The Daily News highlighted that Makandiwa tops as top news makers. “He (Makandiwa) pulled the largest crowds at churches and is credited with turning hundreds of thousands of people around the country into Christians to witness the miracles which were happening at peak.

The presence of God and the manifestation of His power are often described in the Bible as the glory of God. Demonstrably, a man with the glory of God knows no lack, knows no sickness, and knows no defeat! When God trusts an individual with His glory, He causes mysterious and supernatural happenings to take place around such people. Israel did not understand Moses the servant of God because of the glorious presence of God in his life and ministry. From the burning bush experience, Moses staff changed into a snake and even swallowed the Egyptian magicians’ snakes. From Mt Sinai, Moses’

face was radiant with the glory of God. (The Herald 28/04/2011)

This serves to prove that Makandiwa can be likened to the biblical Moses who caused mysterious and supernatural happenings and Israelites did not understand Moses just like how Daily News criticized Makandiwa's prophecy.

3.5.0 Media's presentation of religious stories

In contemporary societies, electronic media such as the mobile phones, televisions, radios, and computers have become ubiquitous in the same way that the old media like print can do. Some historians point out that world religions have always been mediated by culture, however, in some way; people have incorporated electronic media into everyday's life practices. Today's media can connect people and ideas with one another, but they also foster misunderstandings and reinforce societal divisions. They may provide the means for the centralization of religious authority, or the means to undermine it. Scholars of religion, as well as scholars of media, must consider how these various societal institutions of the media interact with one another and with systems of religion, governance, and cultural practices, as our societies demand better means by which to understand emergent concerns in an increasingly interconnected, globalized context.

The general assumption is that sometimes the newspapers, radio, television, among others are biased in their presentation of religious stories. McQuail (2005) argues that the mass media have power in constructing and shaping reality. They promote certain religious ideologies while shunning others to the sidelines. With this, we can conclude therefore that the media are not a fertile ground to depend solely on when making a study like this. They can set an agenda through the creation of heroes in their articles. Thus, about UFIC, they can accommodate and shape some miracles and denying others as unreal or satanic in nature.

The media are institutionalized and professionalized organizations which rely on two theories of reporting, namely, gate keeping and agenda setting when publishing religious stories. The media first set the agenda before dishing out information. Firstly, in agenda setting, information is published with the intention either to uplift the figure, demonize and create satire or to attack. As a result of this, information is given a shape or form that strikes an intended feeling in the hearers. For example, in most cases The Herald legitimizes

Makandiwa as a true prophet whilst The Daily News depicts him in a negative stereotypical manner. This does not mean that Makandiwa only does what is good or does not do anything good. But the media that want to demonize him will only pick out the negative or evil part of the story and leave anything that can credit him. This then contributes to the second theory, that is, gate keeping. In this theory, only some information is allowed out but some is kept as a secret or privacy of an individual. In other words the media decides what to release and what not to.

McQuail (2005) states that newspapers are socializing agents which have the power of facturing or sustaining personalities through coverage of issues. A pastor thus, can be given so much prominence through language, diction and images used in the print media and thus creating him as a real man of God. Hence Prophet Makandiwa was quoted by Takunda Maodza (2013) of The Herald appreciating the job done by the media of spreading their gospel and hence fulfilling their vision as a church. Therefore, when Makandiwa is being demonized by the media he sees it as a blessing in disguise to his ministry.

According to McQuail (2005) media can be explained in seven metaphors which seek to show how the media connect society with reality. These metaphors can be applied in analyzing how our various sources of information can affect our understanding of Makandiwa and his miracles. My concern is directed to them because I use them more than anything else. They are a source of fresh information which is suitable for this kind of research. These metaphors are as follows, firstly, media is a window which enables us to see what is going on without interference. Secondly it is a mirror reflecting reality whose angle and direction are decided by others. Thirdly, they are filters or gatekeepers as they select parts of experience for special attention while closing off other views and voices. The fourth is that the media is a signpost, guide or interpreter, pointing the way and making sense of what is otherwise puzzling or fragmentary. The fifth is that the media as a platform for the representation of information and ideas to an audience. The sixth is the disseminator of information not available to all. Lastly, in the seventh metaphor the media is an interlocutor in a conversation who responds to questions in a quasi interactive way. These metaphors are relevant to this study because they alert us about the potential danger of stereotyping, sidelining, or even studying UFIC with some biases. This will also affect the outcomes negatively, thus producing unreliable information.

Over the above, one can safely conclude that the media cannot be solely a fertile ground to make judgments upon or to use their information as the only basis for a comparative analysis of Schleiermacher's ideas and those of UFIC members about miracles and miracle working. With the media alone one can do pre-mature judgments. Therefore, there is need to consult UFIC individuals and the church's primary sources for information although they might also be biased and or difficult to access.

CHAPTER FOUR

PARTICIPANT'S VIEWS VIS-À-VIS SCHLEIERMACHER'S THEOLOGY **A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

4.0 Introduction

The previous two chapters gave the background of miracles as they are perceived by Schleiermacher and also by the UFIC members (UFIC members' ideas presented in the media). Chapter two is a review of Schleiermacher's understanding of miracles and its application to Bible miracles. Chapter three is a general look on the understanding of miracles in UFIC and an investigation into the ongoing miracles as they are reported by the media. So in that chapter, information is collected through the radio, television, newspapers etcetera. It is therefore in this chapter that the researcher wants to make a comparative analysis of these ideas. In the chapter, information obtained in the process of data collection, that is' through questionnaires, interviews and observation will be used effectively.

4.1 Questionnaire responses

The outcome of the questionnaire responses was awesome. The questionnaires were distributed to the first three cities of Zimbabwe, namely, Harare, Gweru and Bulawayo. This is because UFIC is most dominant in towns rather than in rural areas. The church was founded in Harare and therefore it became a focal area for this research. The church took its roots through surrounding towns like Chitungwiza, Gweru and later Bulawayo and other towns. However the researcher could not contact members of UFIC who are based in other towns because of some distant barriers and financial constraints. The assumption however is that the responses from Harare, Gweru and Bulawayo can represent the whole nation of Zimbabwe since UFIC members almost share a common conception of miracles.

The researcher distributed thirty questionnaires and twenty-seven were returned and all were responded to. Ten questionnaires were distributed to each town. However, there was a hundred percent return of them from Bulawayo and Gweru, while from Harare I managed to get seven out of

ten. The illustration of distribution and return of questionnaires is presented bellow in the figure to follow:

Figure 1

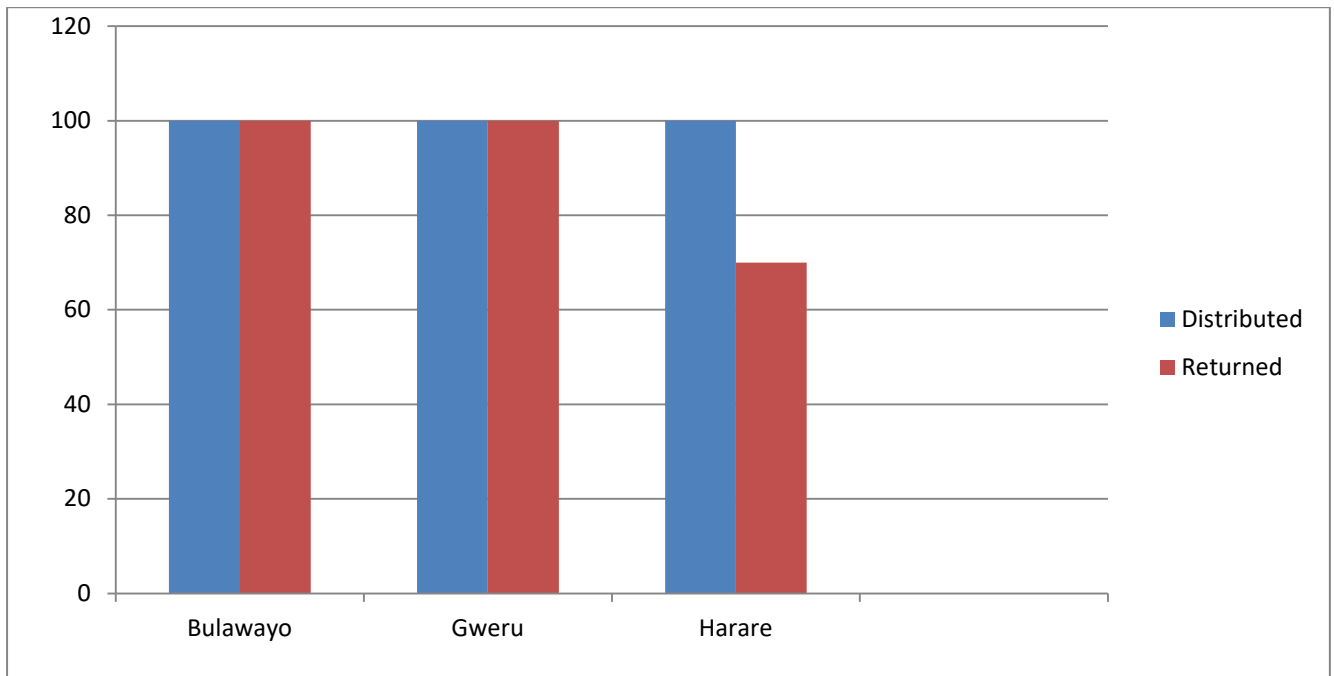


Fig.1: The bar graph showing the percentages of questionnaires distributed and returned per town or city.

From the 70% questionnaires that were returned from Harare, all respondents indicated that they witnessed miracle money, miracle baby, miracle anointing oil, miracle gold and miracle weight loss. 43% of the respondents claimed to have experienced miracle weight loss happening to them and all of them were women. Attention therefore, was put on how they feel when the power of healing is operating. Responding to the question, the responses were almost similar among them all. However, a most striking similarity is noticed among the three who experienced the miracles in their lives. They said that one feels; electrified, ecstatically charged and feels good or cooled in the flesh. Many respondents from Bulawayo did not experience or even witness miracle baby, miracle weight loss and miracle anointing oil but they witnessed and experienced miracle money, miracle gold and other miracles like healing. Not even a single member of UFIC in Bulawayo claimed to have witnessed miracle baby. Maybe it is because the miracle only happened once and also happened only in Harare. However, these members experienced or witnessed miracle money and miracle gold

respectively. The table bellow shows the percentages of people who witnessed the specified miracles from all the returned questionnaires;

Figure. 2

| TOWN ► | HARARE | GWERU | BULAWAYO | TOTAL AVERAGE % |
|-----------------------|--------|-------|----------|-----------------|
| MIRACLE ▼ | | | | |
| Miracle money | 100% | 70% | 50% | 73% |
| Miracle weight loss | 100% | 40% | 10% | 50% |
| Miracle gold | 100% | 80% | 40% | 73% |
| Miracle baby | 100% | 20% | 00% | 40% |
| Miracle anointing oil | 86% | 30% | 10% | 42% |

Fig. 2: shows the miracles in the first column against the percentage of people per town, who witnessed them in the following three columns and an average total percentage in the last column.

Each questionnaire contained eleven (11) questions and the number of questions in twenty-seven (27) questionnaires returned adds up to two hundred and ninety-seven (297). Out of the two hundred and ninety-seven (297) questions written on the questionnaires, only two hundred and seventy (270) were responded to as shown in the chart below:

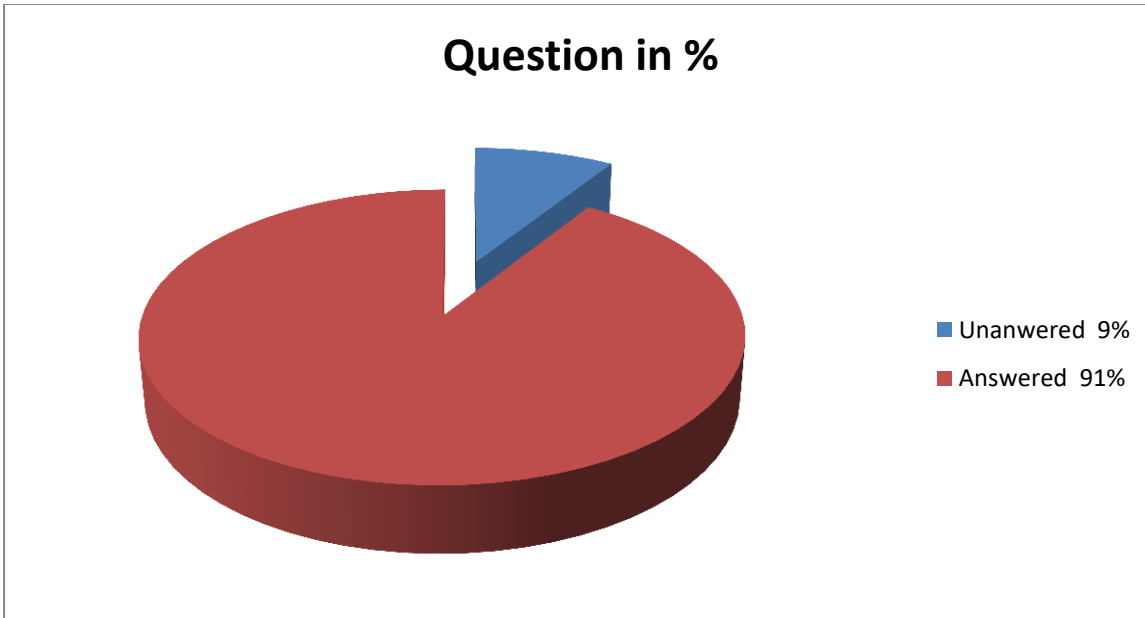


Figure.3: A chart of questions answered and unanswered in the questionnaires.

As illustrated in the chart above, out of eleven questions per questionnaire, nine or ten of them were nicely responded to and almost believable information was provided. It is clear that the last two questions were not well responded to, maybe they were difficult to answer.

The other question which did not concern the division of cities and towns is whether the miracles happened instantly or gradually. This question received a hundred percent positive response in all towns. All respondents ticked on the “instant” box. This means to say that all respondents who witnessed these miracles saw them happening instantly. Above that, those who experienced the miracles also saw them instantly. This served to confirm the responses to the question that followed, the question which asked about how a person feels when the power of God touches him. This is where respondents agreed that if the miracle is happening, one feels electrified, ecstatically recharged and cooled.

Again, the researcher asked about what the respondents think about people who deny the existence of these miracles. Here, the responses were different, maybe because the question called for individual perception about the other people understandings. Out of twenty-seven (27) respondents, eighteen (18) pointed to the issue of time saying that if a person does not believe in miracles happening in UFIC his time to believe has not yet come. The moment it comes, he or she will believe. Some responded that, the time they will believe God is the time they will believe these

miracles. The others did not point to the issue of time but solely to the issue of belief. Some said that one only needs to believe God first and then believe his miracles. Only one respondent said that they are not believers. Thus, there is no human effort that is needed to have belief in these miracles.

Furthermore, responding to the question about contributions of these miracles to UFIC as a church and its members. Almost all respondents showed that these miracles serve to give credit to the church, only as a true church of God. Some said that the miracles prove that God is among them, will never leave them, is powerful and can do all things. The others suggest that they are not just miracles but signs and wonders that point to the presence of God in UFIC. Few members however point that the miraculous experiences of the power of God strengthens their faith as they see God's power at work.

There was also a question about why these miracles are happening now and not before. Here, it seems as if the respondents agree in their perception of time. Some point that there is time for everything and each time, God raises a person to do what he has planned for that time. The person, according to one respondent, would have knowledge of unlocking the wonders of that season. The other respondents pointed to Makandiwa as a man of "this season" and say that a man like him has not been there. Thus God raises a particular person for a particular time and to do particular things.

Last but not least, the question about how UFIC members differentiate a miracle from God and a miracle from the devil received little attention. A few who responded to it pointed to different things. Some referred to the situation in which the supernatural replaces the physical or the normal way of doing things. The others point that if the miracle is done by the man of God then it is from God.

Conclusively, although the responses are satisfactory, failure by many respondents to answer the last three or two questions shows that maybe they have divided thoughts or else they did not expect such questions. It might also show that UFIC members are not willing to respond to such questions.

4.2 Interviews responses

The researcher managed to conduct some interviews with members of the church from Gweru, Bulawayo and Harare. UFIC is only established in towns, particularly big cities, therefore, the interviews were inclined to the three major cities. Efforts to interview Prophet Makandiwa and other senior pastors were fruitless since they were not reachable. However the researcher chose the interviewees randomly, both youths and elders.

Since unstructured interviews were used, the researcher first asked some questions which are not related to the study in order to establish a strong relationship with the participants. The interview guide questions used include; “Have you ever witnessed or experienced any of the miracles reported in UFIC?”, “ Who performed them?”, “ What causes these miracles to happen in your church and not in others?”. The most important question however that concerned this research was, “What is your take on Schleiermacher who denies the occurrences of the miracles ever and those who say they are an illusion?”

One ordinary member of the UFIC who claimed to have witnessed “miracle gold” and miracle anointing oil” being done by Prophet Emmanuel Makandiwa at Harare City Sports Centre said that these miracles were also performed by a Gweru based UFIC Pastor Denhere at Gym hall in Gweru town. She said that the types of miracles are not only performed by Makandiwa but also by his pastors.

Upon questioning her about the reality of “miracle baby”, she claimed that it’s true. The researcher also asked about why these miracles are happening now (from 2012) and not before and she said that, “as a man grows, and so do some developments in miracles. Miracles were happening and as a sign of spiritual growth, new forms of miracles are emerging. We should expect more miracles and even more amazing”. From this statement the researcher deduced a strong belief in miracles happening in UFIC. (Interview held on 23 august 2013).

Again from the interviews, the researcher learnt that members of UFIC have a shared conception of these miracles. From an estimated eighty members interviewed, the researcher almost got the same response on the power behind working of the miracles reportedly happening in UFIC. A Bulawayo based UFIC member (interviewed, 25 August 2013) said that people have power to create but they sometimes do not recognize that power. Almost similar to this, a student at Midlands State

University who is a member of UFIC claimed plainly that, “we cannot create a person but other things”. The interviewee gave a testimony as follows, “one day there was no coffee at the table when the Prophet wanted breakfast and miraculously it got there. The other day, ‘He’ (Prophet Makandiwa) did not have money to buy some grocery but upon putting his hand in the pocket, he found a \$50 which was equivalent to the grocery he had picked”

More so, a church elder based in Harare responded with a biblical quotation that, “With God all things are possible”. He underlined and emphasized on the word ‘all’ and he explained that the quotation is not exceptional and therefore God can do all miracles he wants. Referring voluntarily to “miracle baby”, he said that there is nowhere in the bible we can find a person being born in nine months. He adds that, -“Jesus was born in nine months to deliver us from a curse of Eve, because nine months pregnancy was done as a curse of Eve’s disobedience”. As the interview proceeded he claimed that when it is God doing miracles, it is so difficult for men to believe because he is God.

After being asked about their take on Schleiermacher’s position of denying the miracles, almost nine members responded that there is no room to believe in God if one does not believe in his doing of miracles. One ordinary member (Gweru based) responded that if Schleiermacher does not believe in God, then he cannot believe in miracles because miracles are from God. (23 August 2013). Also, responding to the same question, a Harare based member questioned that, “If you cannot believe in such miracles and believe in the creative power of God then what will make you believe He owns the heavens and earth?” To emphasize on this, he adds that with God anything is possible. A person only has to believe him and then see his miracles.

Furthermore, responding to the question of how they differentiate a miracle from God and a miracle from the devil, some referred to the Bible and said that by differentiating false prophets from true prophets. This, they said, is done by looking on their ‘fruits’. Upon questioning what fruits are, one member said that some pastors work miracles but at the same time being prostitutes, thieves, etcetera. She said that “fruits” as she perceives them, are exemplary elements within a person, they are moral standards which are revealed to the society. Therefore, she said that a true prophet (miracle worker) is the one who lives a morally upright life which is admired by the people who know him or her. She gave an example that, “Prophet Makandiwa does not engage in promiscuity, he has his one wife and this is being exemplary. The other respondent asked a question in response to this question, “If Prophet Makandiwa is not a true Prophet of God, how can the devil cast himself and how can the devil’s son encourage good works?” He explained that the fact that Prophet Makandiwa encourages

good works and also cast out demons is a sign that he is of God.

4.3 Observations

The researcher attended several UFI Church services, however in Gweru. Some were held by Midlands State University students at Senga Training Centre (STC), whilst Sunday services were held at the Gym Hall in Gweru town centre. The outcomes of the observations conducted are presented below.

UFIC members identify themselves as the “children of miracles” as they normally greet each other using that phrase. This, I suppose, might mean that they were born miraculously, they live miraculously and or everything that happens in their lives to sustain them is a miracle. Thus they identify themselves not with mere miracles but with extra-ordinary miracles that are not happening in other churches. The phrase is often seen on their posters written in Shona as “Vana veminana” or “Tiri vana veminana”. This means that we “belong to the world of miracles”. Thus they identify themselves as people who live by means of miracles. They strongly believe in the miracles that happen in their church and also miracles that happen in other churches which they believe are true churches of God.

More so, on one service at Senga Training Centre, a Gweru based UFIC Pastor Denhere referred to God as the “God of our father Makandiwa who do miracles”. This shows their God’s identification with miracles as the order of his days. Therefore if one mentions his name (in the way that he is named by UFIC members), it is associated with the miracles that he does. On the other note, the members of the UFIC on campus commonly refer to God in Shona as “Nyakukonzeresa” which means, “the causer” or “the one who is able to cause some trouble” –I hope, trouble in the world of evil spirits or in nature. In simplest terms, this might mean, one who cause miracles to happen. In their case therefore, they refer to miracles reported in their church. (Observation done on 06 September 2013)

Again, during preaching, he referred to God as a “causer of confusion” when he said “Mwari wedu anoita zvemaskorongoda”. He explained and said that he (God) does things which are difficult to understand with the natural minds. Thus “zvemaskorongoda” refer to miraculous things which are beyond the rational understanding of human mind. Above that, as the pastor utters these words, the

church follows suit or else they utter the words together with some echoes of joyful noises, I hope, as a sign of strong belief in God doing the miracles and they feel pride to have ‘their’ God doing these miracles.

Similar to what can be observed from other churches, UFIC members believe that miracles happen if one has ‘faith’, anointing and or declare them to happen. On a church service attended at Gym Hall in Gweru town the whole preaching by Pastor Denhere was a ‘declaration’ of miracles to happen to the members who were present, that is, declaring that all members who are students will succeed in assignments, examinations and will have money in abundance and will help other students. The Pastor encouraged the believers to declare everything that they wanted. He mentioned the issues of love relationships, marriages, jobs, promotions etcetera. (Observation, 14 September 2013).

Furthermore, on another service, the researcher deduced that UFIC members believe that whatever happens in their lives is done by God and hence miraculously. They take a miracle in some cases as something that was not supposed to happen to them but God would do it. That service was well packed with fashionable testimonies about what God does to people and about miracles that happen in people’s lives. One man who refused to provide his name (a family father) testified of a miraculous car, (Isuzu, single cab) which he was just given as a free gift after ‘seeding to God’. After a week he was given a Mercedes Benz by a different person. From this testimony, one can deduce that he believes these cars are miracles from God. (28 September 2013)

Pastor Denhere testified of two car hijackers who were burnt in a car which they stole from a Harare based UFIC member whilst the car did not have even a sign of the scourging fire. This event, he said, followed after a prayer was made by Prophet Makandiwa for this stolen car to be restored and the thieves, lives to end there. The car was reportedly stolen from Harare but on the next morrow it was found in Beitbridge with its hijackers burnt inside. The other testimony given was of a stolen cell phone at the Harare hotel. It belonged to the Prophet Makandiwa and therefore he prayed for it to be restored to him miraculously and the thief brought the phone which was continuously vibrating. He said that the thief tried to cut out the vibration but it could not. He even removed the battery but the cell phone could not stop. Hence he brought it back to Makandiwa.

It is through observation also that the researcher learned the UFIC members’ beliefs about the causes of these miracles. They believe that before God does a miracle in one’s life, the person must give money to church which they call a “seed”. They believe that if one sows seed (gives money to

church) God will do a miracle for the “seeder” as they call him in reward for the money given. Thus in their church services they provide a bucket in every corner so that people will cast their ‘seeds’. Actually, as the preacher will be preaching, if he or she declares a marriage, for instant, a member who wants to be married will run and cast a ‘seed’ (money) into the bucket. One elder explained at Gym hall that the money will be taken to Makandiwa and be prayed for, for God to grant the givers their needs. The money, believe will germinate as a “miracle marriage” for the giver. A man who was given cars therefore was given because he gave a seed.

Therefore, UFIC members believe that a person has to give to church so that God will reward him or her with extra- ordinary miracles. However, with this little information, I wonder whether the miracles like “miracle money”, miracle gold” and others only happened to those who had given their “seeds”.

4.4 Schleiermacher’s understanding vis-à-vis United Family International Church’s perceptions

The differences between Schleiermacher’s understanding of miracles and the perceptions of UFIC members are apparent. The arguments put forward by each part are so striking though we find Schleiermacher occupying a position of the atheists whole he is a pastor. This section provides a detailed analysis of the differences and similarities between Schleiermacher’s understanding and that of UFIC members.

First and foremost, while Schleiermacher sees a miracle as a mental condition of the observer, UFIC believe strongly in miracles happening and being beyond a psychological default. Schleiermacher believes that the miracles are not happening as miracle believers think or allude to. It’s only that a person was expecting to happen and therefore, his mind will falsely tell him or her that something expected has happened. In actual sense, the miracle would not have happened. On a different note, UFIC members have indicated in interviews, questionnaires and were noticed through observations that they strong believe that their miracles are real. Many claimed to have seen and experienced the miracles with additional information of how a person feels if he or she is in the realm of miracles. Thus a striking different is noticed here.

Secondly, Schleiermacher refers to a miracle as only a religious name for event. An event is just a mere occasion that happens to people in day to day living and it does not have any special significance. By referring what people call a miracle to simply an event, Schleiermacher shows that what people call a miracle is not of any special uniqueness. On the other hand UFIC members believe that the gold they saw in their hands, the anointing oil, etcetera, are real. Their distinction between a miracle and a non-miracle is not on the basis of the natural and supernatural as one respondent indicated that when the supernatural replaces the natural or normal way of doing things, then it is God's miraculous intervention. Thus they believe that a miracle is seen through the violation of nature. If people were used to have nine months pregnancies the miracle baby of three days pregnancy is violation of the common law of nature and thus a miracle.

More so, Schleiermacher believes that every event, even the most natural and usual becomes a miracle as soon as the religious view of it can be the dominant. This view of Schleiermacher attests to a point that if an event happens in church, for instance, it will be regarded as a miracle only because it happened when people were in church, thus, was done by God. If that event happens outside of church, they will not regard it as a miracle. This means that there is no miracle in actual sense but people create a miracle in their minds. UFIC members are not in agreement with this view for they even differentiate a miracle from a non-miracle in the religious arena. In other words, there are things that happen in church which they do not call a miracle. They only call a miracle to events that they think are God's direct intervention into the physical world. Therefore Schleiermacher and UFIC's understandings are never in harmony.

Furthermore, Schleiermacher says, to him all is miracle whilst to the other people, the inexplicable and strange alone is a miracle. This means that Schleiermacher sees every part of his life and other people as a miracle, whether it is internal or external, whether it happens inside religion or outside, everything to him is done by God and therefore miraculously. In the face of UFIC however, this explanation is not applicable. They believe that there are certain events which are miracles and these events contain a distinctive or unique feature from events that they usually see or experience. Thus, the event to them must be strange and unusual and marvelous as miracle gold, miracle money and miracle baby were. Therefore, these reported miracles are believed to be miracles because they are strange and marvelous.

However, there is a general consensus between Schleiermacher and UFIC members that the finite

thing is the sign of the Infinite and also that what people can call a miracle is a sign. In this case, they agree that every event whether it's a miracle or not, has a causer and that causer is the Infinite and is God. UFIC believes that the miracles of their church are not only miracles but are also signs, to show that God is there and is at work. Thus to both, an event, whether we decide to call it a miracle or not to call it a miracle, is a sign of God's power.

Conclusively, though we can find some similarities in Schleiermacher's understanding and those of UFIC, it is easy to deduce the differences and thus we can conclude that these parties have totally different beliefs. However, miracles have a significant contribution to the church of UFIC of Prophet Makandiwa. The last chapter shall therefore slightly look into the contributions these miracles put to the church.

CHAPTER FIVE

IMPORTANCE OF MIRACLES, SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapters gave the background of miracles as they are perceived by UFIC members and also by Friedrich Schleiermacher. Chapter one is an overview of the topic, a review of literature about UFIC miracles and miracles in general, justification of the study and some challenges that are likely to be encountered in the course of the research among other issues. The second chapter is a detailed analysis of Friedrich Schleiermacher's understanding of miracles. The third chapter looks deeply into the understanding of UFIC members about miracles with information gathered from the media. The fourth chapter presents UFIC participants' views about miracles with information collected using research instruments and a comparative analysis of UFIC's perception and Schleiermacher's. This chapter (Chapter Five) sums up the research by looking at the significance of miracles they are happening in UFIC, to the church and its members. It also provides recommendations which are based on the data presented in the previous chapters.

5.1 An apologetic worthy of miracles in United Family International Church

Following the findings of the research, I came up with various recommendations to the church (UFIC). Prophet Makandiwa and his church are playing a major role to the nation as a whole in as far as their miracles are concerned. From a passive analysis, miracles as part of religion seem to have little or no significance to the nation of Zimbabwe. Some people tend to ignore the roles they play in shaping the country's religious base. This part of the research shall recommend the miracles basing of the roles they play to the church, the miracle worker and the nation as a whole.

Has anyone ever thought of how a church would be without miracles or belief in miracles? Without any belief in the omnipotent God who does miracles? Or how the world would have been without the so-called "men of God" who do miracles. The importance of miracles can be seen in the context of the church in which they are happening and the Bible.

The roles played by miracles in the Bible are the same they play in church. One may ask what defines a church if it does not have miracles. In the Bible, miracles are evidence that it is Godly inspired word and without its miraculous content, we would not accept it as a supernatural book. (Thompson in Lockyer 1961). Thus, no miracle, no striking proof of its divine authorship. This implies that if we remove all the records of miracles from the Bible, it will lose its weight to become a mere novel, not striking and not persuading at all.

By the same token, a church without miracles or belief in miracles is just a granary full of chum. It is of no help to the people. With this however, one may ask why some churches seem to stand unshakeable without reported miracles happening in them. The answer to this question can be employed from Schleiermacher that a miracle is a mental condition of the observer and an event becomes a miracle as soon as the religious view of it can be the dominant. Thus, miracles are believed to happen in every church by the church members who belong to it. In other words, an attempt to imagine that some churches do not experience the miracles is tantamount to saying that they do not worship God who can work miracles. However, if we talk of a Christian church, we are talking of a church that worships “God”, God who is able to work miracles. (The word church comes from the Greek word, ‘ecclesia’ meaning people who are called by God). Thus denying the occurrence of miracles in such churches is removing them from a Christian basket.

More so, what makes Makandiwa’s United Family International Church unique is the introduction of a new form of miracles that draw the attention of other church ministers, political leaders, media officials and the general public. The so-called “miracle money”, “miracle gold”, “miracle baby”, “miracle weight loss” and others have had no record of happening even with Jesus, the founder and Lord of Christianity. This effect even caused some people to join UFIC in an attempt to have their life problems solved. Thus, the miracles of UFIC have made a great impact on its membership. It now has many members across the country and even outside. People from around Zimbabwe and even outside are now visiting Prophet Makandiwa to seek spiritual as well as material help.

Without these miracles, I believe that UFIC would have been a church without any attraction, and many people who throng to it would have remained in their former churches. I think that the reason why some people leave their former churches to join UFIC is not that miracles are not happening in the former church but is that UFIC miracles are attractive to non-scientific believers. They are unique in their own way and belong to a class of their own. They are more strange than any other

miracle that was reported of the former pastors. Therefore, they attract the attention of many and render UFIC its uniqueness.

UFIC miracles might work as a sign that God is at work with Makandiwa as the members have said although some people might not agree. However, Makandiwa was quote in the NewsDay of 21 January 2013 saying that some people will criticize these miracles and he asked, “ but what good is a miracle when you are used to it?” he also said that the miracles he was performing were not miracles but were signs and wonders to prove a point. To this end, without the miracles around him, Makandiwa perceives people denying his prophethip. In addition to that, one, Tapiwa Rukwati(a pastor in UFIC) perceives miracles as the religious signature to the ministry of the one who believes in God. Therefore, Makandiwa earned a lot of respect, popularity, trust, authority and confidence because of the miracles he performed. Without these miracles, the benefits listed above were to remain illusory dreams to him.

Again, the miracles of UFIC serve to authenticate Makandiwa’s branching away from the AFM church. More like Jesus, without these miracles, Makandiwa was going to be just a mere religious figure, a mere church founder. The reason for his branching away from AFM would not have been recognized. Now with them, non-scientific believers are comfortable to forward a message that AFM church was suppressing a gift to work miracles which was in Makandiwa and God had to take him out of AFM in order to perform miracles without some limitations. But the question that can be forwarded here is how far true this view is? If we consider that Makandiwa introduced these miracles after his split out from AFM we might be convinced that the assertion is true. But if we consider that some pastors still work miracles whilst they are still in their old churches, the assertion will be prone to defeat. However, whether we agree or disagree with the view, it’s still convincing that UFIC miracles worked a major role in shaping Makandiwa’s status in the society and to prove that he is a prophet of God.

5.2 Recommendations

Since we have some people, even Christians denying the occurrence of the miracles as they are reported in UFIC, there is need for a detailed explanation of how the miracles happen. It is necessary that people should know in order to believe them. Therefore, Prophet Makandiwa should desist from just defending himself or attacking the non-believers and provide necessary explanation where it is needed in order to have people know. This will help people have an understanding of miracles as they are understood by the UFIC members.

The media, that is, radio, television, etcetera, can provide some platforms for UFIC ministers to teach people about their miracles. Rational beings cannot be blamed for not believing these miracles as the believer should not be blamed. Every church however seeks to have people understand and appreciate its beliefs, practices and miracles. Thus, the way UFIC explains the Bible, their beliefs and other elements of their church should be the same way they explain miracles and not hiding.

UFIC should also come up with a department of public relations which will be attending to media and public issues to avoid unofficial comments from members who can give their own views which might lead to unnecessary negative reporting. Makandiwa can also appoint a spokesperson who speaks on his behalf about miracle working,

Whilst Prophet Makandiwa and his members should explain their miracles, the public should also come closer to the miracle worker to seek clarity before making pre-mature judgments. The public has power to shape or to destroy a church and its leader. They can help spread the church or can cause the people to disqualify the church. Thus the general public has to be aware of the dangers that may be caused by their discussions about the church.

Last but not least, Makandiwa and his church ministers should write some books which present the history of their church and their miracles. UFIC has not written any books yet and thus people do not have anywhere to make references about the questions that might arise. That will cause them to make pre-mature judgments based on their understanding.

5.3 Areas of further study

The issue of UFIC miracles did not begin long back and Makandiwa gained prominence recently. His church is also new, it just started in 2008. Little therefore is written about UFIC miracles. Further research can be done about the impact of UFIC miracles to the societies in Zimbabwe and or the contributions of these miracles, similarities and differences to miracles of the Bible and of other churches.

5.4 Conclusion

This dissertation does not only bring awareness to its readers about miracles currently happening in the United Family International Church, but also provides a vivid comparison of UFIC and Schleiermacher who is a religious philosopher; in as far as their understanding of miracles is concerned. In it, much attention was directed to Schleiermacher because he denies the occurrence of miracles and to UFI Church because miracles are reportedly popping up there. It is therefore through reading this text, that the reader will not only be equipped with information concerning miracles, it can create an enjoyment that every reader of a well written text deserves.

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OBSERVATIONS

1. Gym Hall, Gweru, 14 September 2013.
2. Gym Hall, Gweru, 28 September 2013.
3. Senga Training Centre, Gweru, 06 September 2013

INTERVIEWS

1. Anon, (interviewed, 25 August 2013), Magwegwe, Bulawayo.
2. Egnés, S(Interviewed, 28 September 2013) Mkoba 6, Gweru
3. Michael, P.(Interviewed, 18 September 2013) Senga Training Centre, Gweru.
4. Sibanda, P (interviewed, 23 August 2013) Senga, Gweru

APPENDIX A

Midlands State University

P Bag 9055

Gweru

Dear Sir/ Madam

RE: AN EPIMERICAL STUDY OF THE UNITED FAMILY INTERNATIONAL CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE.

With reference to the above, I am kindly requesting you to assist me in this study by completing the enclosed questionnaires. I am a student at Midlands State University who is carrying out a research on the beliefs and perceptions of UFIC members about miracles and miracle working.

I shall be grateful if you could manage to spare your valuable time to enable me to complete this study. Please be free to participate in this research project. The outcomes of this study will be made available to you upon request.

Your sincerely

Zhou Isaac

AIM OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is specifically aimed at gathering information on the secret behind the power of God to do extra-ordinary miracles as witnessed in the United Family International Church. It is also aimed at drawing an appreciation of the ideas of UFIC members about miracle working

All information from this questionnaire will be regarded as confidential and will be used for research purposes only.

SECTION A: PERSONAL PARTICULARS

- 1) What is your gender? Tick in the box
Female Male
- 2) For how long have you been a member of UFIC? Give the number of years or months in the boxes provided
Months Years
- 3) Do you have any role or leadership position in church? Yes No

If any please specify. Eg Deacon.....

SECTION B: GENERIC SECTION

- 1) Have you ever experienced any miracles in your life in UFIC? Yes No

If any please specify.....

- 2) Have you ever seen a miracle happening to somebody? Yes No

If any please specify.....

- 3) Were the miracles happening instantly or gradually?

Instantly

Gradually

Some instant, some gradually

- 4) From your own experience or understanding, how do you feel when the power of God touches you?.....

- 5) Tick on the miracles which you witnessed among the following:

Miracle money

Miracle gold

Miracle baby

Miracle loss of weight

None of them all

- 6) Some people deny the existence of these miracles. What do you say about it?

.....

- 7) What do you think are the benefits of these miracles to your church and its members?

.....

- 8) What do you think has made them happen now and not before?.....
- 9) What in your opinion need to be done by other pastors to have these miracles happen in their churches?.....
- 10) What in your opinion is the mark of a miracle from God?.....
- 11) Give, if any, additional information about miracles as you perceive them in your church?.....