

“The Office and Ministry of Prophet: Its Resurgence  
and Practice in Zambian Churches.”

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Prophets have played a prominent role in ministering to people in all generations from the Old Testament times to the contemporary societies. The existence of the office and ministry of prophet can be traced in the Bible as far back as the Old Testament. A study of the office and ministry of prophet reveals that almost every culture had prophets though not in the same form.<sup>236)</sup> However, after a closer look at the prophetic ministry in Zambia, it seems like there is a major shift in understanding the definition and functions of the office and ministry of prophet. In the last few years, we have seen an increase in the number of prophetic ministries in Zambian churches and the society in general, such that it is difficult to tell the difference between pastors and prophets, miracle workers and faith-healers, fortune-tellers and evangelists. Believers and unbelievers alike, flock to the prophetic and deliverance services, which are recorded<sup>237)</sup> on electronic media and broadcast to the nation. There is an unnecessary level of excitement, which raises doubts concerning the miracles and healing,<sup>238)</sup> which should be corrected in line with the teaching of the Bible.

The levels at which people are establishing prophetic ministries in Zambia, especially in Lusaka and other urban areas, is troubling and calls

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236) Bernhard Udelhoven. *Prophecy in Zambia*. (Lusaka: FENZA, 2010), 1.

237) Sometimes prophets/prophetesses appear on live television shows conducting their deliverance services.

238) Some testimonies leave questions in the minds of the viewers as to whether they are real or fake.

for a clear understanding on the office and ministry of prophet by all people who seek the services of such ministers. The influence of Nigerian Prophet Temitope Balogun Joshua—popularly known as ‘T.B. Joshua’—founder and pastor of Synagogue Church Of All Nations (SCOAN), and his Emmanuel Television deliverance shows,<sup>239)</sup> has resulted in a sudden resurgence and increase in the number of exorcists, fortune-tellers, faith-healers, and miracle workers, almost all of them claiming to be prophets. There has been a greater increase in the number of prophetic ministries established in Zambia within the last five years, after Zambians have access to Emmanuel TV shows on ‘free-to-air’ services of Multi-choice television channels, than at any other time in the history of the church in Zambia. Some Zambian prophets imitate T.B. Joshua’s style of dress and his Nigerian English accent, and act like him during the prophetic and deliverance services. There are prophets in Zambia who claim to be T.B. Joshua’s disciples, and tell people that they receive the anointing oil and holy water from Nigeria, which they use during their deliverance services.<sup>240)</sup>

The function of the prophets in Zambian churches, as well as social centres, is confusing and has a potential to mislead believers. It is difficult to differentiate between witch-finders, whose functions include divination and exposing of suspected witches / wizards, and prophets, whose duty is to reveal the will of God for his people. Unlike the biblical prophets who spoke the word of God to people, prophets in Zambian churches and social centres focus on fore-telling the fortunes or misfortunes of their clients’ future and conducting deliverance or exorcism of people from the possible cause of the problem(s). The prophets, who are accurate in revealing people’s problems, earn the trust of the clients to provide solutions and protection from future occurrence. The events of prophetic ministries in Zambia are mostly centred on the ability of the prophet than on God’s power, which results in idolatry on the part of the clients, and deceit on the part of the prophet.

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239) Live and recorded shows of deliverance, healing and social services of the Synagogue Church Of All Nations are broadcast to Zambia on Multi-choice free-to-air channel on Sundays, and some week days.

240) Prophets use anointing oil and holy water to sprinkle on their clients’ clothes, building walls, beddings, food, vehicles, etc, like a magic charm for healing and protection from demons, witchcraft, and attacks from evil forces.

Prophets in Zambian churches and social centres compete by advertising their activities in print and electronic media, showing their miraculous acts, spiritual deliverance, and physical healing, through testimonies by the beneficiaries of such acts.<sup>241)</sup> Clients register their names and pay a fee before the prophet can attend to them. Unlike biblical Prophets who never ministered for money (Num.22:18; Eze.13:1–23; Mic.3:5, 11; Mt.10:8), prophecy in Zambia has become a business venture, which has attracted false prophets whose interest is to get money from people. The amounts of registration fees differ from one prophet to another, which are even as high as five hundred thousand Zambian kwacha (approximately, One hundred US Dollars). The Zambian media report stories of people who become victims of false prophets and lose their possessions, while others have been physically or sexually abused.<sup>242)</sup> The most troubling scenario is that, even with the numerous media reports of prophets being found guilty of unethical practices such as physical and sexual abuse, some people still believe that they can find answers for their problems from the same ministers, most of whom, can only be said to be false prophets.

This research is a study of the office and ministry of prophet. The purpose is to present the characteristics and functions of the biblical prophets, as compared to contemporary prophets in Zambia. I will explore the nature of the office and ministry of Prophets from its establishment in the Old Testament, its continued function in the New Testament, and compare it to prophets in Zambia. Understanding the office and ministry of prophet by comparing biblical prophets with the prophets serving in Zambia will enable us to make a balanced conclusion on the matter. I will not look at all the biblical prophets because of the vast nature and composition of biblical prophets. I will highlight the ministry of several prophets, whether they are Major or Minor Prophets, writing or none-writing prophets. The goal is to help believers and unbelievers, to understand the office and ministry of prophet established by God, compared to the prophets in Zambia. The aim is

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241) Spontaneous testimonies are broadcast immediately after people are delivered or healed, in order to encourage others to come. However, it is difficult to ascertain whether the people who testify are really delivered or healed.

242) MUVI TV, ed. *Lusaka Prophet Fined for Impregnating Church Member*. (Lusaka: Accessed on Nov.16, 2012)

to properly interpret biblical teaching about the office and ministry of prophet and to reduce the effects of misleading concepts caused by the resurgence of many prophets in Zambian churches and society in general. I believe that the church must have a better understanding of the biblical teaching on the office and ministry of prophet, in light of the increased number of prophetic ministries in Zambia.

We need proper biblical interpretation of prophecy in order to help people make informed decisions and avoid the dangers of seeking for help from false prophets. For us to have a better understanding of the office and ministry of prophet, we must consider the reasons that lead to establishment of prophetic ministries, and the reasons why people seek for their services.

The reasons for emergence and proliferation of indigenous [prophetic] churches vary from one region of the continent to the other. In West Africa, where racial segregation and land problems with European settlers have been non-existent, the reason for their emergence has been chiefly on 'religious' grounds, that is, the quest for religious and spiritual independence. But in Southern Africa, where racial segregation and domination exist, the independent churches have emerged mainly on politico-religious grounds. In East Africa, these churches began as protest to colonization and formed the mass basis for African nationalism.<sup>243)</sup>

Before we explore the nature and functions of biblical prophets, and compare them with the prophets in Zambia, we must define the office and ministry of prophet. "When one undertakes to make a comprehensive study of the men in the O.T. who bore the name 'prophet,' and of the activities of those who are said to prophesy, he is confronted with a bewildering and perplexing variety."<sup>244)</sup> The implication is that in order for

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243) Emmanuel Martey, "Prophetic Movements in the Congo: The Life and Work of Simon Kimbangu and How His Followers Saw Him," *Journal of African Instituted Church Theology* 2, no.1 (2006): 1.

244) Herbert S. Bess, "The Office of the Prophet in Old Testament Times," *Grace Journal* 1, no.1 (1960): 7.

the church to guide the activities of prophets in Zambia, we need to know the biblical teaching on the functions of the office and ministry of prophet. God established the office and ministry of prophet to give spiritual guidance to people, just as he guides the church through various spiritual gifts, including the gift of prophecy (Num.11:16-29; 12:6-8; Deut.18:18-20; 1 Sam.3:1-21; 10:5-12; 19:20-24; 1 Kings 18:1-4, 13; 19:1-21; 2:1-15; Isa.6:1-9; Jer.1:4-10; Eze.1:1-3; Amos 7:10-17; Rom.12:3-8; 1Cor.12:1-30; 14:1-13; Eph.4:11-16). God spoke to people through prophets during biblical times and has spoken to us through his Son, Jesus Christ, the ultimate revelation (Heb.1:1-4). Our churches need a prophetic voice, which speaks to us on contemporary issues, to bring people back to God through preaching the message of repentance, just like biblical prophets. However, God has given the spiritual gift of prophecy to believers in order to edify the church, so that we can continue to be the salt and light of the world (Eph.4:11-14; Matt.5:13-16).

In view of the above confirmation that the office and ministry of prophet was established by God, we need to evaluate the prophetic ministries in Zambia in light of the biblical teaching in order to know the motive behind their sudden increase. God called biblical prophets to speak on his behalf in order to maintain or restore the relationship between him and his people. Therefore, a better understanding of the office and ministry of prophet through proper interpretation of Scripture will help us to guide the functions of prophetic ministries in Zambia, to bring glory and honor to God.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **Need for a Clear Definition of the Office and Ministry of a Prophet**

The increase in prophetic ministries in Zambia calls for a clear definition of the office and ministry of prophet. However, we must be careful as we define the office and ministry of prophet due to the differences in times and circumstances between biblical prophets and us.

[One] need not be very astute [clever] to observe that there is a marked difference between Saul, who stripped off his clothes and prophesied, lying naked all day and all night (1 Sam.19:24), and Isaiah or Amos, whose thunderous 'thus saith

the lord' exposed the moral corruption of the nation. Modern students of the O. T. seek to categorize the various kinds of prophets by coining such terms as frenzied or ecstatic prophets, canonical or writing prophets, cultic prophets, false or professional prophet, the prophetic guild, and the like. But the Bible itself uses the term prophet to refer to all of these, and others.<sup>245)</sup>

A careful definition of prophecy will help correct the fraudulent activities in the prophetic ministry in Zambia.

Who is a prophet? The word prophet comes from a Greek word prophetess which means one who announces or proclaims something on behalf of a deity before an assembly, a group or a person. This definition shows that prophecy is not a secret ministry but a public one. Prophecy is not special to Israel only, but it is part of a wider human culture, including Zambia. When people talk of prophecy, what usually comes out is limiting it to forecasting the future. Prophecy is concerned with the past and the present. The here and now is very cardinal in prophecy.<sup>246)</sup>

Christians do not consult diviners and traditional healers because they associate them with evil spirits and demonic powers. Prophets in Zambia are associated with diviners and traditional healers because of similar emphases.<sup>247)</sup> Diviners are considered to have spiritual powers to reveal the cause of problems, and provide protection against future occurrence of the same or other problems, and so are the prophets. However, prophetic ministries in Zambia have potential to cause harm to innocent people who are perceived to be the cause of problems, than healing of people who seek

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245) Bess, 7.

246) Gabriel Mwanamwalye, "Zambia Needs True Prophets," *The Post Online*, (December 18, 2011).

247) Udelhoven 1-2.

for prophetic help.

Few people would deny the giftedness of individuals upon whom the prophetic movements rest. The sheer number of people who come to seek (and find) answers to their problems shows that the ministry of Christian prophets developed in response to a felt need. Physical healing takes place in prophetic charismatic movements. The movements contain elements of lay-preaching, team-work and Bible readings of a different form, which links people's own symbolic world to the Christian faith in very original ways. They take seriously the world of dreams, but also the world of demons and witchcraft and Satanism with which people struggle, and insert them into a Christian worldview in which Jesus' powers are supreme. At the same time prophetic movements through their successes are easily taken over by a dynamic of their own. Zambian prophets call upon the Holy Spirit and feel guided by Him. Yet one cannot fail to see the similarities with the prophetic role of the traditional healer (*Ing'anga*) in its combination of divining, revealing and healing.<sup>248)</sup>

The above evaluation demonstrates that some people in Zambia do not fully understand the office and ministry of prophet and need a clear definition. The church must guide its members to understand the biblical teaching before they seek for prophetic help. The concepts of associating prophets to diviners and traditional healers is not unique to Zambia alone, but can be traced back to the ancient Semitic world times. "Because of superficial similarities between inspirational divination (widely practiced in the ancient Semitic world) and Old Testament prophecy, modern scholarship shows a tendency to reduce Israelite prophets to a common stature with those of surrounding nations."<sup>249)</sup>

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248) Udelhoven, 17.

249) Unger, 167-168.

The theory as generally proposed contends that the ‘pre-literary’ prophets (those before ca. 750 B.C) were akin to the soothsaying dervish-type ecstasies who made up such a large part of the Canaanites and Near Eastern cults, particularly in the Amarna age and later. These diviners were gradually supplanted by the ‘true’ prophets such as Amos and Hosea, who brought the Theocracy concepts which were more morally and religiously oriented and which lifted Israel to the higher spiritual plane than that known to her contemporaries. These religious geniuses, according to the critical understanding, looked with disdain upon their prophetic predecessors, castigated and tried to reform the remnants of the primitive priesthood and liturgy, and were in constant conflict with the monarchy *ipso facto*. Their most important contribution, obviously, lay in their success in elevating Yahweh from his position as a mere tribal deity to that of the universal, ethical monotheistic God of all the world.<sup>250)</sup>

The similarities between diviners and prophets seem to be as prominent in ancient times as it is today. The prophetic sessions in Zambia are very similar to traditional healers, even though diviners show more signs of demon possession. Some prophets begin their sessions with prayer, reading the Bible, and singing to invoke the Holy Spirit to come and guide the prophecy. The practice of invoking the Holy Spirit to come is similar to that of the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:17–40).<sup>251)</sup>

“A unique definition of prophecy came from a prophet of a *Mutumwa* [spiritist] church. Here the basis of prophecy is seen to rest in the prophet’s personal relationship with a God-given *mzimu* spirit, who afflicts the prophet, but who also makes him

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250) Eugene H. Merrill, “Name Terms of the Old Testament Prophet of God.” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, no.14 (1971), 239.

251) Van E. W. F. Oostrom, *The Message of the Prophet I*. (Kampala: St. Paul, 1986), 14.

uniquely sensitive to other forms of reality that remain hidden for ordinary people. The prophet (*kalola*) basically has two functions: to ‘point out’ and to ‘measure out’. Prophets of the *Mutumwa* churches often practice also as traditional healers (*ng’anga*).<sup>252)</sup>

However, “The primary meaning of the word prophet still needs to be considered. Some have tried to connect it with the verb *naba*, which means to bubble forth. This view is technically unsound, and has nothing to commend it except that it tries to establish a basis for the idea that ecstasy is fundamental to all prophecy.”<sup>253)</sup> True prophets are different from false ones.

According to 1 Samuel 9:9 the prophet was in earlier Israel commonly called a *ro’eh*, that is, one who perceives that which does not lie in the realm of the natural sight or hearing. Another early designation of similar etymology was a *hozeh*, ‘one who sees supernaturally’ (2 Sam.24:11). Later, the Hebrew seer was more commonly called a *nabhi* (1 Sam.9:9). This popular name is to be related to Accadian *nabu*, ‘to call’ or ‘to announce’ (either passively)—one who is called, or (actively)—an announcer for God, or (preferably)—one who is in the state of announcing a message which has been given to him by God. Accordingly, “Thus saith Jehovah” was the authoritative formula which stamped his inspired utterances with the finality and infallibility of a message directly from God. As God’s mouthpiece he thus claimed special knowledge. The pagan diviner, on the other hand, also claimed special knowledge as one in communication with superhuman spiritual beings (so-called gods), who are revealed in Scripture to be demons (1 Cor.10:20–21). The source of Biblical prophecy therefore, is divine, in contrast to the source of divination which is demoniacal.<sup>254)</sup>

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252) Udelhoven, 2.

253) Bess, 7–8.

We can safely conclude that with the passing of time, the etymological challenges arise due to the changes in language and its applications. “[*nabhi*], though by far the most common of the three, has occasioned more etymological difficulty than any other because of the problems which attend its derivation. The verbal root of the noun has disappeared in antiquity, and it is by conjecture only that a verbal antecedent can be postulated.”<sup>255)</sup>

Consequently, I believe that the word prophet is mostly connected to the Hebrew words *Nabhi*, *Ro’eh*, and *Hozeh [chozeh]*. “*Nabhi* [means] prophet, whether true or false prophet, male or female (Deut.13:1–3; 18:14–22; Isa.8:3; 1 Sam.10:5, 10; 19:20; 1 Kings 18:19). True prophets were mouthpieces of the true God (Exo.7:1; 1 Chro.29:29).”<sup>256)</sup> Equally, “*Nabhi* [means] spokesman, speaker, prophet (Gen.20:7; Exo.7:1; Num.11:29; 1 Kings 22:22; 2 Kings 17:13). *Ro’eh* (seer), [the] old name for *nabhi* (1 Sam.8:9; 1 Chro.26:28; 29:29; 2 Chro.16:7, 10), [is connected to the] prophetic vision. *Hozeh [chozeh]* (seer), comes from the root *hazah*, ‘to see’ or ‘behold’ (1 Chro.21:9; 2 Chro.35:15; Amos 7:12)”<sup>257)</sup>

The following are the most common terms used in the Old Testament to describe the prophet of God: *nabhi* (prophet)—306 times; *roeh* (seer)—12 times; *chozeh* (seer)—17 times; *ish(h)elohim* (man of God)—many times; *ishharuach* (man of the Spirit)—a few times; *ebedh Yahweh* (servant of Yahweh)—a few times; *malakh Yahweh* (messenger of Yahweh)—a few times; *malitz* (interpreter)—once or twice; *tsafah* (sentinel)—a

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254) Unger, 167–168.

255) Eugene H. Merrill, “Name Terms of the Old Testament Prophet of God,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, no.14 (1971): 240.

256) James, Strong, and William, E. Vine, eds., *The New Strong’s Concise Concordance Vine’s Concise Dictionary of the Bible*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 291.

257) Brown, Driver, et al., eds., *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2010), 611.

few times; and *shamar* (watchman)—a few times. The most important of these are the first three, the first being by far the most common designation.<sup>258)</sup>

The Bible describes prophets in many other ways as can be seen in the paragraphs below.

There are many descriptions of a prophet in the Bible. He is called a *man of God* (1 Kings 12:22) since he was chosen by God, a *servant of the Lord* (1 Kings 14:18) because of his faithfulness to the Lord, a *messenger of the Lord* (Isa.42:19) as he was sent by God, a *seer* (1 Sam.9:9) because of the insight from God, a *watchman* (Eze.3:17) because of his alertness for God. But the most common description is the word *prophet* itself because he was a speaker for God.

There were true prophets and false ones. The Bible gives several ways to test for false prophets: 1) Do they ever predict things that do not come to pass? If so they are false prophets (Deut.18:21, 22). 2) Do they turn people away from the true God to other gods? If so they are not God’s prophets (Deut.13:1–3). 3) Do they use instruments of divination (crystal balls, tea leaves, etc.)?

No true prophet of God would use occult methods for contacting God (Deut.18:10, 11). 4) Is Jesus Christ the center of their predictions? If not, then they are not of God, for ‘the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of God’ (Rev.19:10). It is noteworthy that all fortunetellers, astrologers, and so-called prophets are rendered ‘false prophets’ on these grounds. The fact that some of the prophet’s predictions come to pass does not mean he is a true prophet. Occasional fulfillments do not constitute irrefutable proof that he is a true prophet (Deut.13:1, 2). Guesses, intuition, the power of suggestion, mind-reading or

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258) Merrill, 240.

contact with demons can easily account for occasional fulfillments of prediction apart from God.<sup>259)</sup>

“The basic definition of a prophet is one who speaks for God. Prophecy consists largely in speaking God’s word, calling people to repentance, warning of future judgements, and praising the Lord. The Bible makes no distinction between the prophetic ministry of men and women. A prophet is God’s servant.”<sup>260)</sup> Furthermore, “The Greek word ‘Prophetess’, from which the word ‘prophet’ comes, means ‘to speak in the name of’ This obviously means that the prophet speaks to us in the name of God. The prophet is God’s messenger and word-bearer. When we listen to a true prophet, we listen to God Himself.”<sup>261)</sup> Similarly, there is additional information that the word prophet involves proclamation of news.

The word prophet comes from the word meaning ‘to announce.’ A prophet was God’s mouthpiece or the human instrument through which God declared His message to men. The broad meaning of *prophecy* is to forth-tell; the narrow meaning is to fore-tell. The latter is more popular today but the former is by far the more common usage in the Bible. In forth-telling God’s message to his day the prophet would often foretell what God was going to do in the future. These supernatural predictions form one of the strongest evidences that the Bible is the Word of God. Forth-telling involved *insight* into the will of God; fore-telling entailed *foresight* into the plan of God. The first was *exhortive*; the latter was *predictive*.<sup>262)</sup>

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259) Norman L. Geisler, *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 228.

260) Kathryn J. Riss, *Women in Church History: Women prophets*. God’s Word to Women, (Accessed in December 2012), 1.

261) Van E. W. F. Oostrom, *The Message of the Prophet I*, (Kampala: St. Paul, 1986), 7.

262) Geisler, 228.

The office and ministry of prophet seem to mainly appear in two forms. We can narrow down the office and ministry of prophet to two streams—the prophet and the seer. “A prophet is primarily an inspired hearer and then speaker while a seer is primarily visual. As far as prophetic gifting is concerned, prophets and seers are equally valid. All seers are prophets, but not all prophets are seers. The prophetic word is often spontaneous and activated by faith, that of a seer is more dependent upon the manifested presence of God.”<sup>263)</sup> It is important for us to understand the prophetic ministry in light of the functions.

The majority of the prophets of God are men. Let us consider some of the men who are called prophets. Abram is said to be a prophet of God, who was called to a mission that would result in the blessing of all nations (Gen.12:1–3; 20:7; 18:19). Moses is a prophet whose ministry resembles that of Abram in that he led Israel out of slavery in Egypt, through whom God would accomplish his plan of salvation of men (Exo.3–4; Deut.34:10; John 4:22). “King David had great influence on prophetic development. He made Jerusalem the political and religious capital of Israel. Under David there are prophets Gad (II Sam.24:10–25) and Nathan (II Sam.7 and 11). Under Solomon there are clear signs of conflict between the prophet and the king (1 Kings 11:29–40; 1 Kings 14:1–18).”<sup>264)</sup>

The prophetic ministries of Elijah (1 Kings 17:1; 18:36) and Elisha (2 Kings 2:15) are very prominent. Elijah’s prediction of the drought (1 Kings 17:1–7), his encounters with the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8–24), the show-down with Ahab and slaughter of the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:1–40), and the sending of rain by the LORD after Elijah prayed (1 Kings 18:41–46). As the ministry of Elijah was nearly the end, God sent him to anoint Elisha as his successor (1 Kings 19:16–21). After Elijah was taken to heaven (2 Kings 2:1–14), Elisha succeeded him as prophet (2 Kings 2:15). As Elisha was passing through Bethel, some small boys mocked his bald-

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263) Jim W. Goll, *The Seer: The prophetic power of visions, dreams, and open heavens*, (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2004), 22–23.

264) Oostrom, 14–15.

head, he turned around and cursed them, two she-bears came and killed the boys (2 Kings 2:23–24). Elisha is also famous for the miraculous signs of the widow's oil (2 Kings 4:1–7), his encounter with the Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:8–37), purifying of the poisonous stew (2 Kings 4:38–44), and the healing of Naaman from leprosy (2 Kings 5:1–14). Old Testament prophets are divided into three different period of ministry.

**Pre-exilic prophets:** Obadiah ('Worshiper of Jehovah'), the earliest pre-exilic prophet, served under Kings Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah, and Joash from 840–830 BC (2 Kings 8–12). The theme of his message was 'Retribution'. Joel ('Jehovah is God'), served under King Joash from 830–820 BC (2 Kings 12). The theme of his message was 'Visitation'. Jonah ('Dove'), served under King Jeroboam II from 780–760 BC (2 Kings 14:16, 23–25). The theme of his message was 'Commission'. Amos ('Burden bearer'), served under King Jeroboam II from 755–750 BC (2 Kings 14:23–29). The theme of his message was 'Threatened'. Hosea ('Salvation'), served under Kings Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea from 760–710 BC (2 Kings 14–17). The theme of his message was 'Estrangement'. Isaiah, ('Jehovah is salvation'), served under Kings Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh from 740–690 BC (2 Kings 15–21). The theme of his message was 'Salvation'. Micah ('Who is like Jehovah'), served under Kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah from 735–700 BC (2 Kings 15–20). The theme of his message was 'Arraignment'. Nahum ('Compassionate, Counselor, Comforter'), served under Kings Manasseh, Amon, and Josiah from 650–620 BC (2 Kings 21–23). The theme of his message was 'Doom'. Zephaniah ('Hidden by Jehovah, Protected), served under King Josiah from 630–620 BC (2 Kings 22–23). The theme of his message was 'Vindication'. Habakkuk ('Embraced'), served under Kings Josiah, Jehoahaz, and Jehoiakim from 620–605 BC (2 Kings 22–24). The theme of his message was 'Justice'. The last pre-exilic prophet is Jeremiah ('Established by Jehovah'), who served under Kings Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah, and Nebuchadnezzar from 625–585 BC (2 Kings 22–25). The theme of his message was 'Warning'.<sup>265)</sup>

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265) Geisler, 231.

**Exilic prophets:** Lamentation, which means 'Grieving', is the first exilic prophetic book estimated to be from 585–580 BC (2 Kings 25), under King Nebuchadnezzar. The theme of the message is 'Disconsolate'. Ezekiel, whose name means 'Strength of God', served under King Zedekiah from 593–570 BC (2 Kings 24–25). The theme of his message was 'Glory'. Daniel, whose name means 'God is my Judge', served under Kings Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus from 606–530 BC (2 Kings 23–25; Ezra 1–4). The theme of his message was 'Dominion'.<sup>266)</sup>

**Post-exilic prophets:** Haggai ('Festal'), the earliest post-exilic prophet, served under Kings Zerubbabel, and Darius I (Persian) in 520 BC (Ezra 5–6). The theme of his message was 'Consider'. Zechariah ('Remembered by Jehovah'), served under Kings Zerubbabel, Darius I, and Xerxes from 520–480 BC (Ezra 5–6). The theme of his message was 'Consummation'. Malachi ('My Messenger'), the last post-exilic prophet, served under Kings Artaxerxes, and Darius II from 430–420 BC (Neh.13). The theme of his message was 'Apostasy'.<sup>267)</sup>

In the New Testament, only John the Baptist (Matt.1:13–17; 3:3; 11:9, 13–14), and Agabus (Acts 11:27–28; 13:1; 21:10–13), are mentioned by name as prophets. Zachariah (father of John the Baptist) prophesied (Lk.1:67–79), and Simeon also prophesied (Lk.2:25–35), but are not called prophets. Similarly, Elizabeth (mother of John the Baptist) prophesied (Lk.1:39–45), and Mary (mother of Jesus) prophesied (Lk.1:46–55), but they are not called prophetesses.

Although there are more men in the prophetic ministry, there is a considerable number of women. "Six women in Scripture are expressly stated as possessing the title of prophetess: five under the old covenant and one, Anna, is mentioned in the gospels. In addition, Phillip is mentioned in Acts as having four daughters who prophesied which brings the number of prophetesses to ten."<sup>268)</sup> "[Miriam] is remembered as a prophetess in

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266) Geisler, 231.

267) Ibid., 231.

268) [Strong In Faith](#). *Women Prophets in the Bible*, (Accessed on Nov.25, 2012), 1.

connection with her song of victory upon crossing the Sea of Reeds (Exo.15:20–21). [Deborah is] one of the charismatic leaders of Israel. ‘Prophetess’ (Judg.4:4) probably refers to this quality of inspiration by the Spirit of God (Judg.6:34; 11:29; 14:6). She was outstanding, able to arouse the scattered tribes of Israel to a sense of unity and loyalty to Yahweh in their early struggles against the Canaanites.”<sup>269)</sup> Huldah, Noadiah, and Isaiah’s wife are also called prophetess.<sup>270)</sup>

Prophets ministered as individuals as well as groups. “[During] the times of Samuel (1 Sam.10:5–10; 19:20), and Elijah (1 Kings 20:35; 2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7, 15), prophets were organized in groups of prophetic guilds .”<sup>271)</sup> While there were true prophets and prophetesses, there were also false ones (1 Sam.28:3–15; 18:20–40; 22:6–28; Ezekiel 13:17–22; Micah 3:5–11; Rev.2:20). In contemporary times, there are true prophets and prophetesses, as well as false ones. “False [prophets and] prophetesses told deliberate lies. Even more, they consequently profaned the name of God by pretending to have received the lies they told from him. [They] encouraged the wicked and profane, and discouraged honest and good people. These [men] and women practiced divination and were not true prophets [and prophetesses] of God .”<sup>272)</sup>

After looking at the various definitions of the term prophet, we can now compare the men and women serving as prophets and prophetesses in Zambia, to see whether their characters meet the qualities prescribed for biblical prophets. A prophet represents God before people and only speaks under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Some biblical prophets served as professional or life-long ministers, while others served for short periods. It is clear that there were true prophets and false prophet in biblical times, just as there are true prophets as well as false prophets in Zambia.

A closer look at the prophets serving in Zambia reveals that most of them resemble pagan diviners and traditional healers rather than

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269) Davie, B. Napier, *Prophets, Prophetism: The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 402, 808–809.

270) [Strong In Faith](#), 1–7.

271) Napier, 611.

272) Strong In Faith, 7.

biblical prophets. Most of the so-called prophets think that their sole purpose is to fore-tell the fortunes and misfortunes of their clients, prescribe remedies for the problems, and offer protection against future occurrence of the problems. The focus on fore-telling exposes these prophets to guesses, mind-reading, and manipulations. If left without guidance, the prophetic ministries in Zambian churches and society in general, have the potential to mislead people and cause more harm to the society than good. Some prophets divide families and friends by falsely accusing people of being the cause of problems. The church must teach the biblical truth about prophecy.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### Need for Clarification on Prophetic Ministry in Zambian Churches

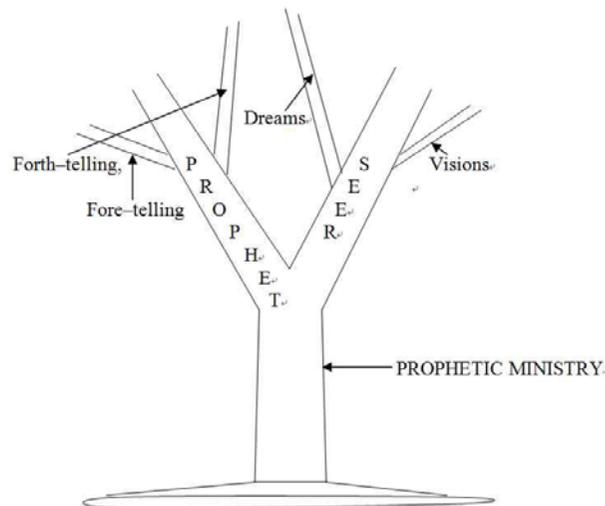
“Just as the White Nile and the Blue Nile join to create the greater river called Egyptian Nile, two streams of prophetic anointing come together to feed the greater concourse of the mighty prophetic river of God on earth—the prophet and the seer—which then give different degrees or dimensions or facets of prophetic impartation.”<sup>273)</sup> I consider the office and ministry of prophet to be like a tree with two branches—Prophet (*nabhi*) and Seer (*roeh & chozeh*)—which manifest into other branches—forth-telling, fore-telling, visions, and dreams (diagram below).

(Illustration of the Tree of Prophecy)

However, the prophetic ministry in Zambia should be understood from the perspective of African Indigenous Churches (AIC). The functions of African Indigenous Churches in African societies cannot be understood without understanding the practices of Traditional Practitioners (TP). Traditional Practitioners include diviners (whose functions include communication with ancestral spirits to reveal the cause of sickness or misfortune); tribal priests (whose functions include mediation between the living and the ancestral spirits, and to appease ancestral spirits through rituals of sacrifice); fortune-tellers (whose functions include to bring hope by revealing future events); witch-finders (whose functions include to expose the people who practice of witchcraft); and witchdoctors (whose functions include healing the afflicted people, deterrence of future practices by grabbing articles of witchcraft from witches and wizards, and protection of society from the powers of witchcraft). These Traditional Practitioners are believed to serve the

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273) Goll, 17.



communities in similar ways as prophets. “In Indigenous African Religions nothing happens by accident. Consequently, the average African seeks to know the cause of sickness, death, failure in life, especially in business, and indeed on whatever prevents one from attaining the fullness of life.”<sup>274</sup> The desire to know the cause of all events in life is a common phenomenon in African communities. The ability to expose hidden events, whether of past, present, or future, is only thought to be vested into individuals who are uniquely gifted and have divine powers, either passed on to them through initiation rites, inheritance, or personal encounter with the deities. The voice of the Traditional Practitioners is sought after by societies, just like the voice of a prophet was sought after by the Jewish society, and is still sought after by contemporary African societies, including Zambia.

Therefore, there is nothing new in seeing people’s desires and willingness to consult the prophets, fortune-tellers, diviners, and tribal priests, as the practice can be traced back to ancient times. Due to excessive desires to know the cause of everything that happens in life, the ministry of the

274) Cephas N. Omenyo, *Man of God Prophecy Unto Me: The prophetic phenomenon in African Christianity*. Studies in World Christianity, no.17 (2011), 31–32.

prophet has become the most attractive function in Zambian churches and society in general. It is amazing to see how people attribute everything negative that happens in life, to human or spiritual causes, which explains the resurgence of false prophets. People feel vulnerable during times of child-birth, puberty, marriage, death of relatives, and unexpected events in life. In times of child-birth, people believe that the mother and the child need special protection, which begins from the time of conception, delivery, to naming of the child. Traditional rituals are performed in disposing of the placenta and umbilical cord of the child. Ceremonies of formal introduction are performed with care to avoid exposing the mother and child to danger. There is a common belief that a child must be given a suitable name in order to provide an opportunity for a better future. The name given to a child will either be from one of a dead ancestor, of a historical nature (depending on the events of a particular time), or of a biblical figure (for Christians), while others do not care about all the troubles that come with naming of children. Unsuitable names are believed to be a source of misfortune, while suitable names are thought to possess luck and well being for the children. Consequently, many people, including believers are careful and would rather give their child a name that is believed to give luck and will contribute to the well being of the child and family. After a name has been given to a child, parents look for signs of acceptance of the name (peace and health), or its rejection (sickness, or uncontrolled crying by the infant, even when such crying is due to sickness, it is believed to be a sign of rejection of the name). In all the activities described above, the services of prophets are involved as a reliable source for guidance. Some people even ask the prophet to choose a name for their child.

In Zambia, people are very careful as to how they conduct themselves during the time of puberty for girls and boys, marriage ceremonies, and the death of relatives. Different tribes have different traditional ceremonies to mark puberty, and marriages rites. Girls, go through special ceremonies to mark their coming of age, while a few tribes have ceremonies to mark the coming of age for boys. However, believers celebrate the coming of age of their children in a different way. Believers celebrate the coming of age for a child with prayer and thanksgiving to God, while unbelievers conduct traditional rituals. Most of the tribes will directly or indirectly involve a diviner, priest, or prophet in the rituals for the ceremony.

In the same way, marriage ceremony, which is a time of joy and celebration for all tribes, is sometimes turned into ceremony of traditional rituals for protection and wishes of well being. The bride and bride groom are subjected to traditional rituals which are believed to provide luck and protection for their future family. However, some of the rituals end up binding the couple in perpetual slavery to the wishes and demands of the traditional practitioners for the rest of their marriage time. These practitioners, whose roles are similar to those of a prophet, demand that they be consulted on all matters, such as pregnancies and care of the expecting mother, child-birth, naming of the child, and other issues of family life. In all these, the couple will spend money or property.

Finally, during the funeral of a relative, which is the last stage and most dreaded event in life by all tribes, more complicated ceremonies are conducted. The ceremonies begin when death occurs, during the funeral process (before burial), at the time of burial, and after the burial. The surviving family members (especially spouse and children) are subjected to traditional rituals that sometimes can go on for many months or even years. In all these activities, the services of a prophet are sought for, to carefully fulfill all requirements, and avoid offending the spirits.

I am convinced that there is need for a clear guidance to help people understand the office and ministry of prophet, so that those who seek for prophetic help will make informed decisions at all times, as they experience different events in life. With all issues surrounding the events in life, the resurgence of prophetic ministries in Zambia is not a new phenomenon. The excitement is influenced by the increased number of prophets, which has caused a unique curiosity in the Zambian churches and the society in general. The desire is to help the family to carefully obey the demands of the spirits and avoid future occurrence of problems. Some people visit prophets, with pre-conceived ideas or conclusions about the causes of their misfortunes, and only seek for authentication of their thoughts, by a prophetic voice.

People in Zambia tend to understand by prophecy the ability to predict future events or to know the secret past of a person or to have knowledge about the underlying spiritual causes of the present situations or event. Such gifts are not essentially Christian in nature. Pre-Christian Zambia was well acquainted

with such gifts, and all over the world—Christian or non-Christian—one finds manifestations of some forms of revealing, foretelling and divination. In the past, they were practiced by the *ng'anga*, the traditional healer.<sup>275)</sup>

Most of the prophets ministering in Zambia today have many things in common with the Traditional Practitioners. The main focus of their services is on revealing the past lifestyle of a person, fore-telling future misfortunes, deliverance from the suspected cause, and protection from future occurrence of the problem, which is also the focus of traditional practitioners. "Religious specialists [Traditional Practitioners] are believed to be in touch with sources and channels of power in the universe. They have the ability to discern the wishes of ancestors and deities. Thus, through offering of sacrifices and rituals they seek the assistance of the ancestors and deities who are believed to possess spiritual powers to protect devotees and society and enhance their fortunes."<sup>276)</sup> Although the prophets in Zambia may not admit that they are in touch with demonic or ancestral spirits, all of them claim to have connections to the spiritual world, and that they are the channel of communication between people and the deity. The character and conduct of some of the people calling themselves prophets, cannot be said to be of God, but demonic. The media reports the acts of prophets who physically and sexually abuse members, especially ladies, who seek for prophetic help, and this is a confirmation that such prophets are not of God, but demonic.<sup>277)</sup>

During the monthly meeting of the pastors for Lusaka Baptist Fellowship of Churches Association (LBFCA), Pastor Henry Gwese (Chipata Baptist Church) narrated how a prophet claimed that the demon was located on the woman's private parts, and he stepped on the private parts in order to cast the demon out. This is one example of physical abuse to which people who seek for prophetic help from false prophets are subjected. There are

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275) Udelhoven, 6.

276) Omenyo, 32.

277) The media reported a case in which a pastor / prophet of Lusaka has been accused of impregnating eighteen members of his church, but he has only accepted impregnating three of the said members, and denied being responsible of the other fifteen pregnancies. (Accessed in November, 2012)

reports of prophets who physically beat demon-possessed people as a way to cast the demons out. The physical stamping or beating of a demon-possessed affects the human being rather than the demons who are spiritual in nature.

Almost all the prophets in Zambia have substituted the Old Testament requirements of animal sacrifices by charging money as a channel or point of contact between the oppressed and divine powers. There is a belief that an oppressed person cannot be healed unless he or she gives an offering to the prophet, who will in turn dedicate the offering as a sign of contact between the oppressed and the spirits.<sup>278)</sup> The charges are outrageous as they are sometimes unbearable on the part of the oppressed people, who in most cases are vulnerable and in dire need of money.<sup>279)</sup> The biblical prophets never charged money for their services of delivering the message from God. When God had a message for people, a prophet delivered it without requiring anyone to register their names and pay a fee, like the Zambian prophets do. Due to the desire to know the causes of misfortune, oppressed people are forced to spend the little money or resources for their daily up-keep in order to pay for the costs of prophetic services. In most cases, people who seek for divine guidance from prophets end up bearing the pain and despair of repaying borrowed money after paying prophetic fees. In extreme cases, oppressed people are forced to sell their possessions in order to raise the money to pay prophets or repay borrowed money; a situation which becomes a burden upon the family. The activities of some prophets in Zambia have created more problems than solutions in the lives of the oppressed people, which calls for the intervention of the church to clarify the functions of the office and ministry of prophet. Some of the problems that people experience can be avoided if the churches guide their members.<sup>280)</sup>

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278) The conduct of connecting the fees charged by the prophet to the spirits is cheating on the part of prophets because money is used by the prophet and not the spirits.

279) Father Rosner Gotthard of FENZA told me that of the many prophets he has met; only one prophet is known for free services. A prophet at Winners Chapel in Lusaka charges up to US \$ 50; while the Prophet at Assembly of God, has no fixed amount, but demands for a good amount of money as contribution. (Interview on February 6, 2013).

280) Rev. Mwila Peter (Pastor, Libala Baptist Church), narrated how a

I firmly believe that a careful evaluation of the character and conduct of many prophets in Zambia, will reveal that their source of power is demonic (unknown spirits), not God the Creator. Many clients know that these prophets consult demonic powers, though most of them claim to be prophets of God,<sup>281)</sup> while others even claim to be Christians, and that their abilities are from God. Interesting enough, some believers who frequent prophetic deliverance services support the prophets' claims of their Christianity. Claims by all "prophets" to be Christians, even when their character and activities portray their evil nature, has negatively affected the ministry of true or genuine prophets. When one prophet commits an offense, people consider all prophets to have the same character. The fact that biblical prophets received the message from God and delivered it to intended recipients without conditions, as opposed to prophets in Zambia, who are suspected to consult unknown spirits and charge money, is a serious call for clarification on the office and ministry of prophet. Biblical prophets never consulted ancestral spirits and unknown deities like diviners (Isa.8:19), but they received a message from God and delivered it, whether people paid attention or not. The biblical prophets proclaimed the message from God, whether it was accepted or rejected by people. However, due to the fact that many people in Zambia know that prophets consult evil spirits, those who seek for prophetic help visit prophets secretly.<sup>282)</sup> The attitude of visiting prophets in secret is typical of people's hypocrisy.

My view is that there is confusion in the prophetic ministry in Zambia, which is a serious call for clarification, to help reduce the challenges

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church member left the church because she wanted to belong to a church in which a prophet can speak into her life. Within one year, she suffered from a mental disease, after which, the prophet excommunicated her from the prophetic ministry, and she died a few months later.

281) During research, I distributed a 'Questionnaire' (attached to this research) to pastors, bishops, evangelists, priests, elders, deacons, worship leaders, and ordinary members of different churches in Lusaka, Kabwe, and Kafue towns. The majority of the thirty-five respondents to my 'questionnaire and personal interviews' believe that many of the prophets serving in Zambia are using demonic powers. This conclusion is based on a number of factors ranging from unclear calling upon prophets' lives, sexual immorality, charging of fees, and receiving of properties, which things God warned his prophets against (Deuteronomy 18:9-14, 18-22; Jeremiah 23:9-32).

282) Udelhoven, 16.

that people face in recognizing the differences between true prophets and false ones. The church must play its role by properly defining the prophetic ministry, in order to demonstrate the difference between true prophets and false prophets. “Christian prophets use a Christian theological framework to understand and to interpret such gifts. Most people in Zambia recognize that such prophetic gifts exist in the church. Today the Christian prophet prophesies no longer in the name of some *mashabe* spirits, but in the name of God himself.”<sup>283</sup>) The fact that people have to pay money before they can be attended to by a prophet, is a call for the body of Christ—the church, to evaluate the ministry of prophecy in Zambia. Some prophetic ministries in Zambia leave people suffering loss as they return to their homes without the answer they were seeking to receive. The clients, who seek to know the causes of their misfortunes, end up having inner pain or live in isolation after the prophet tells them that their neighbour is jealous of them, or that a close family member, or even a friend is the cause of their problems. I agree with Rosner’s views, that the resurgence of prophetic ministries in Zambia, has not contributed to the well being of the society, but has brought division of families, friendships, and the loss of money.<sup>284</sup>) Victims are at pains to believe that a neighbour, relative, or close friend is the cause of misfortunes; a situation which results in quarrels, divisions in families, and separation of friends. Believers should realize that God has given the prophetic ministry to build the church, not to divide families, friends, and cause breakdown to the society.

Most of the prophets in the Zambian churches want to prove that they are able to tell the past lifestyle of their clients and predict the future of people’s fortunes, as an indication that their source of knowledge is God. This is a concept similar to the Traditional Practitioners’ beliefs. “Religious specialists have the power to diagnose the cause and source of trouble, prescribe rituals to avert further danger or provide some protective medicine to forestall further danger. Traditional priests, among other things, function as doctors, counsellors, pastors, prophets, and intermediaries between the seen and the unseen world.”<sup>285</sup>) However, it is not true to assume that

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283) Ibid, 16.

284) Rosner, Interview on February 6, 2013.

the biblical prophets only focused on revealing past lifestyle of people, and foretelling the future to prescribe remedy. Biblical prophets ministered to people in the present (forth-telling). Many prophetic ministries are influenced by the ministry of T.B Joshua and his predictions.<sup>286</sup>) “The success of TB Joshua shows what people expect from prophecy: significant details of life are important and need to be named. By naming them and by putting them in connection to the spiritual world, people gain hope that they can be addressed and redressed.”<sup>287</sup>) However, it is important for believers who seek for prophetic help to ask their pastor or priest for guidance, before they end up in the hands of abusive, false prophets. I think pastors, priests, bishops, and other leaders are better positioned to guide church members because of the great desire by people to seek for answers for both spiritual and physical needs, which are not attended to in most of the churches due to doctrinal beliefs, but are provided by prophets. During the Lusaka Baptist Pastors’ Monthly Fellowship on February 25, 2013, Rev. Mwila Peter gave an example that demonstrates how churches only focus on spiritual healing (salvation) and neglect physical healing in the conduct of worship.<sup>288</sup>) During the same Pastors’ Fellowship in Lusaka, Rev. Chibuye Lawrence gave an

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285) Omenyo, 32.

286) On many occasions, Emmanuel TV has reported that TB Joshua predicted almost all successful events such as the winner of the World Cup, Africa Cup winners (including Zambia’s victory in 2012), death of outstanding figures and presidents, fatal accidents, etc. However, the problem is not in the predictions themselves, but the perpetual claim by his followers that he predicted all events after they occur raises questions, because they do not contribute to the edification of the body of Christ (1 Cor.14:3; Eph.4:11 –12), instead, they cause tension and fear amongst people.

287) Udelhoven, 16.

288) Rev. Mwila Pater (Pastor, Libala Baptist Church), stated that church members seek for help from prophets because some churches do not include elements like praying for the sick people as part of the worship service. He gave an example of his experience when he preached at a ‘Revival Meeting’ in one of the churches. After preaching a couple of sermons in the evenings, one of the deacons approached him and asked if he could consider praying for the sick in the next session. The following evening, after preaching, he gave an invitation to the sick and those who had prayer concerns to come forward to be prayed for.

example of a demonic attack on a teenager.<sup>289)</sup> Many pastors narrated different stories, which demonstrated how the prophetic ministry in Zambia is neither contributing to the building of the church nor the spiritual growth of believers, but causing confusion and divisions. The problems reported by the media and the ones narrated by pastors, demand immediate attention and correction. The church in Zambia should evaluate prophetic ministries, and if necessary, act in the interest of the church by ministering to both spiritual and physical needs of believers. The prophets, who are not serving the interests of people, should be disciplined.<sup>290)</sup> Although we should not judge (Matt.7:1), the church should discern the difference between a true and a false prophet to protect believers.

The prophetic ministry in Zambia is attracting many people (believers and unbelievers). Believers cannot ignore the fact that the prophetic ministry has a potential to mislead people and cause harm to the testimony and ministry of the church. Therefore, I call upon the church to clearly define the role of the office and ministry of prophet so that it can be useful to the people. What matters now, is not whether the church agrees or disagrees with the activities of prophets in Zambia, but to acknowledge that there are believers who visit prophets to try and find answers to their physical and spiritual problems. Church leaders in the hierarchy of both laity and the clergy should be concerned about the negative character exhibited by the prophets in Zambia, which has a potential to destroy the spiritual foundation in the lives of believers. We must be mindful that it is not easy for believers to grow spiritually, while they visit prophets secretly, because such people have demonstrated that they do not trust that the church can provide an answer to their problems (James 4:8). It is quite troubling to see that people still believe that prophets will provide answers to their problems regardless of the conduct of such prophets. Some people do not care about the conduct of a prophet as long as he can tell them the cause of

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289) Rev. Chibuye Lawrence (Pastor, Chawama Baptist Church, Lusaka), narrated how a teenage boy was sent to the market by parents, but returned home unable to speak and only crying. The parents and neighbours took the boy to the clinic, but the doctor discovered that the boy did not require medical treatment because he was in good health. The parents were advised to take the boy to Chibuye, who prayed for him. After the demon was cast out of the teenager, he began to speak.

290) Udelhoven, 3–4.

misfortune, offer remedy (no matter how high the fees cost), and promise protection from future occurrence of the problem. There is need for the church in Zambia (regardless of denomination) to clearly state the role and functions of office and ministry of prophet, and to offer the answers that people today are looking for so they are not forced to go to false prophets.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

##### **Similarities and Differences of the Prophets in Bible Times and Prophets in Zambia**

The church must have a better understanding of the office and ministry of prophet by comparing the character, scope of ministry, and calling of the prophets. An evaluation of the variety of prophets serving in Zambia will reveal the authenticity and nature of ministry when they are compared to biblical prophets. Prophets in the New Testament are not as outstanding as those of the Old Testament. I believe that the Old Testament prophetic office ends with Malachi (Mal.3:1; 4:5–6). A similar prophetic office resumes through John the Baptist (Matt.11:10–14).<sup>291)</sup>

The questions that arise in the minds of those who study the functions of the office and ministry of the prophet include: What has influenced the resurgence of the office and ministry of the prophet in Zambia? Why has there been an increase in the number of prophets in Zambia? How are the prophets in Zambia conducting themselves (morally and ethically)? Do the prophets in Zambian churches demonstrate a character of a continuation of the biblical prophets or are they new breeds of ministers with unknown roots? How have prophets contributed to the well being of the church and the Zambian society? How has the church received the resurgence of prophets in Zambia? What should the church in Zambia do, to help prophets to serve God faithfully?

Because of the difference in periods of time between biblical prophets and prophets in Zambia, we need to carefully examine the factors that indicate a connection and similarities or differences. The challenge of this evaluation is how to harmonize the difference in understanding the use of the term ‘prophet’ in Zambia. I interviewed more than thirty men and women through a questionnaire (attached below) and discussions. Respondents include students and graduates from Theological Seminaries, Bible Schools, church leaders, including bishops, pastors, priests, elders, deacons, worship

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291) Napier, 896.

leaders, administrators, and ordinary church members. In responses to: ‘Who is a prophet?’ I chose ten respondents to represent the other respondents.

A prophet is a man of God, who speaks in the name of God. He is one who has a divine calling, and receives instructions to communicate the divine revelation to the people. This person hears the word from God and speaks to people. He utters divinely inspired revelations. He has ability to predict future events (foretell), and proclaims the Gospel (forth telling). This person can be a man or woman who serves as a mouthpiece of God. He/she guides and directs people through warning and encouragement. He/she is an announcer, designated by God to speak to men on behalf of God. Prophets communicate directly to God almighty.<sup>292)</sup>

Therefore, the sudden resurgence and prominence of the office and ministry of the prophet in Zambia is influenced by the concept that it is established by God, and that prophets are superior to other ministers because they represent God.<sup>293)</sup> While it is true that prophets are called by God, to be his mouthpiece, the following questions must be answered: Is it true that all these men and women calling themselves prophet(ess) are called by God and represent him? If we compare prophets in Zambia to the biblical prophets, do they have similar characteristics in their lives and ministry? There is a legitimate cause for people in Zambia to worry due to reports of abuse and moral decay by the prophets, who are highly respected as representatives of God.

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292) I chose Benson Chizu, Joy Jere, Pearson Khondowe, Kalen Lisomona, Jack Makabakano, Stephen Mubanga, Desderious Musuka, Gabriel Nsofwa, Gotthard Rosner, and Theresa Zulu, because of their clarity in response to the question ‘Who is a Prophet?’ The other respondents had similar answers to the ten, while others left the question unanswered. However, these ten respondents gave precise explanations, which I have summarized here to help the readers have a better comparison, in order for us to understand their views.

293) While I believe that a prophet is called to represent God before people, I do not agree with the concept that the office and ministry of prophet is superior to that of pastor and other ministers. The pastor serves God in all areas of ministry ascribed to a prophet (can also be seen in the views of respondents to my questionnaire).

However, none of the above responses stated the reason why God was concerned about people such that he sent prophets to represent him before them from time to time. My view is that God was preparing to reconcile people to himself through Jesus Christ. Therefore, some of the Old Testament prophets were called to reconcile Israel to God, while others prepared people for the coming of the Messiah. John the Baptist served as the last prophet, who was sent to prepare the way for the Messiah. Jesus Christ—Messiah, is the ultimate fulfilment of all prophecy. I am inclined to believe that God established the office and ministry of prophet in the church, in light of being foundation upon which God continues to build the church, and not a continued office (Eph.2:20–22; 4:11–16). Therefore, the office and ministry of the prophet in the New Testament do not receive revelations which cannot agree with the revealed will of God in Scripture. The prophetic voice is heard through the gift of prophecy (Rom.12:6, 1 Cor.12:4–11), to accomplish God’s plan of redemption through the ‘Great Commission’ (Matt.28:16–20). This means that when a prophet claims to receive a revelation, such revelation must be assessed in light of biblical teaching according to the revealed will of God—Scripture (1 Cor.14:29–33). We need to know whether the office and ministry of prophet is being used in same form as that of biblical prophets (bring people back to God and receive redemption through the Messiah—Jesus Christ), or other forms. Even though the New Testament mentions the establishment of the office and ministry of prophet in the church (Acts 13:1; 1 Cor.12:28; Eph.4:11), we must understand the context in which they are written in order to properly interpret the passages. The above texts are a guide to the church with regard to the use of the gift of prophecy which had the potential divide the flock.<sup>294)</sup> Believers, who think the Gift of Prophecy is superior to the others, cause disorder in the church, to which Paul wrote saying that “God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.”<sup>295)</sup> The church in Zambia is experiencing a similar confusion of exalting the ministry of prophet, which needs to be corrected.<sup>296)</sup> We need to correctly

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294) Jamieson, and Brown, *Commentary on Ephesians 4*, Blue Letter Bible, (Accessed on 8, 2013).

295) 1 Corinthians 14:33.

interpret the Bible and establish the sense in which contemporary prophets will minister, in order to avoid creating more confusion in the church.<sup>297)</sup> Therefore, it is better to understand that the New Testament brings to us a fulfilled office and ministry of prophet in Jesus (Heb.1:1–4), whose major function is to point the spiritual Israel to the revealed will of God. The implication is that it is not possible to have a continued office and ministry of prophet, in the same form as that of the Old Testament times.<sup>298)</sup>

The New Testament associates the office and ministry of prophet with specific functions. The Gospels, records that John the Baptist was a prophet (Matt.11:7–9; 14:5; 21:26; Lk.1:17, 76; 7:26; 20:6), and so was Jesus Christ (Matt.21:11, 46; Mk 6:14–15; Lk.7:16; 9:19; 24:19; Jn.4:19; 6:14; 9:17). John the Baptist was called a prophet because he prepared the way for the Messiah. Jesus is called a prophet because he is the deliverer and redeemer of people, while Moses was a type of deliverer of Israel from Egypt, Jesus is the ultimate deliverer of Israel and the people of all nations (Deut.18:15; Acts 3:22–26; 7:35). Jesus was casting out the demons, performed miracles, revealed hidden things in people's lives, which demonstrates that he was not only a prophet, but God (Jn.20:28). Jesus fulfilled all prophecy.

What has influenced the resurgence of the office and ministry of prophet in Zambia? I interviewed Mr. Silungwe,<sup>299)</sup> concerning the increase in prophetic ministries in Zambia. The motivation of some (if not all) Zambians and foreigners serving as prophets, is not service to the people in need, but business to make money from unsuspecting clients. When the

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296) Matthew, Henry, *Commentary on Ephesians 4*, Blue Letter Bible, (Accessed on March 8, 2013).

297) Robert Jamieson Fausset and David Brown, "*Commentary on Ephesians 4*," Blue Letter Bible, (Accessed on Mar.8, 2013).

298) Napier, 919.

299) Mr. Silungwe, an eighty one (81) year old resident of Matero township and founder member of the *Mutumwa* church in Zambia (he actually told me that he is the one who changed the name of the church from that of *Nchimya* or 'One who Reveals' to '*Mutumwa Wakwe Leza*' or 'One Sent by God'). He is a well known traditional practitioner and member of the *Mutumwa* church in Zambia. The term is an indirect claim of the office and ministry of prophet.

*Mutumwa* or spiritist church, was found in the early 1970s, there were very few churches and prophetic ministries in Zambia, unlike today, when the cities have seen a sudden increase of prophets, most of which are false. The view that some Prophets are business men is true to a certain extent; especially that there are convincing examples in regards to the misconduct of prophets, some of whom are even residents of Matero Township in Lusaka, where we live. According to Silungwe, the major work of a prophet is to help people with marital problems such as childlessness, physical sickness, etc, without charging a fee (though a prophet can receive appreciations, after the client has had their problems solved). To the contrary, prophets charge fees before they see or even attend to their clients.

However, the conduct of some prophets in Zambia is morally and ethically wrong. Zambia needs a prophetic voice like that of biblical times, not self-centred prophets. The major difference is that the biblical prophets depended upon God to provide for all their needs, while contemporary prophets are interested in enriching themselves, at the expense of the people who seek for their prophetic help. While biblical prophets were influenced by God, the character of some prophets in Zambia demonstrates that they are influenced by men, attracted to monetary gain, and driven by human desires. It is also true that many prophets in Zambia are influenced by the success of TB Joshua, and so, they establish their ministries after the same pattern and imitate his pattern of ministry. The other influential prophet is South African based Zambian prophet, Phillip Banda, whose prophetic ministry is as successful as his colleague TB Joshua. Prophet Banda also has many keen followers of his prophetic ministry in Zambia and some prophets serving in Zambia imitate him. Desire to fulfil personal interests is the reason why the prophetic ministry has not contributed to the building of the church, and well being of the society.

Prophets serving in Zambia do not demonstrate character of continuation of the ministry of biblical prophets. A closer look at characteristics, reveal that there is a new breed of ministers which in most cases is different from biblical prophets, but from unknown roots. "Most of the prophets in Zambia are not building the communities but destroying them. The prophets are operating like witchdoctors, or probably mediums. They falsely accuse people of wrong doings against the family or fellow members of the community, and so, cause division in the families and the society."<sup>300)</sup>

The dangers of accusing someone of having caused sickness or misfortune to another person range from broken relationships, compensation, expulsion from community, and even death of the suspects.

In Zambia, the church and society in general, have received the resurgence of various prophets with tolerance. Even though there are reports of misconduct by the prophets, there are no reports of persecution against prophets either by communities, the church, or the government. This is a sign that the church and society in general feel that there is a need for prophetic ministry in Zambia. The following are some of the responses to the question: 'Do Zambian churches need prophets like those of the Old Testament?' Seven respondents answered in affirmative (Yes!),<sup>301</sup> six respondents answered in the negative (No!),<sup>302</sup> while the remaining respondents left the question unanswered.

The thirteen responses above demonstrate how people receive the resurgence of the office and ministry prophet. My view is that we need a prophetic voice, but we do not need office and ministry of prophet in the same form as established in the Old Testament. The church in Zambia, should clearly teach the biblical guidance that will help prophets minister to the spiritual and physical needs of people, according to the revealed will of God in Scripture. Biblical prophets spoke against the moral degradation of society, and warned people of the wrath of God, but today, there are reports of moral and ethical degradation among prophets, which has attracted criticism from the church and society. Reacting to the resurgence of prophets in Zambia, an anonymous blogger said "Why has the number of prophets suddenly increased? Every Jim and Jack who owns a business church calls himself a prophet. Is it easier to make money when you are called a prophet than a pastor? This is why we never trust these people who call themselves

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300) Rosner, Interview on February 6, 2013.

301) Chizu, Jere, Khondowe, Lisomona, Makabakano, Musuka, and Rosner agreed that the church today and society in general needs a prophetic voice to bring people back to God, because God is still as concerned with people as he was in biblical times.

302) Chonyi, Mubanga, Musonda, Nsofwa, Sichula Teddy, and Zulu responded that the church and society today does not need prophets because there is no need for new revelations apart from the revealed will of God, because Scripture is sufficient for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

prophets and men of God, too much money oriented. Busy stealing from the poor day in and day out..."<sup>303</sup>) The language does not sound friendly or respectful to the office and ministry of prophets, but it sounds honest and demonstrates the levels of mistrust in the minds of Zambians (also seen in responses to my Questionnaire and interviews). The blogger raised questions in regard to the sudden increase in the number of prophets, which has occurred in the past few years. The reasons can be found in the answer to the blogger's third question 'whether it is easier to make money when one is called a prophet than a pastor'. Such views demonstrate that the office and ministry of prophet is being abused for personal financial gains, at the expense of meeting the spiritual and physical needs of people. Biblical prophets served God without expecting to be paid by the recipients of their ministry. Therefore, the difference between biblical prophets and prophets in Zambia lies in the motivation of the people occupying the office and ministry of prophet.

The fact that the increase in the number of prophets in Zambia is raising questions among citizens indicates that prophets are not conducting themselves in a morally and ethically upright manner. If a prophet, who is even referred to as 'man of God' can be said to be stealing from the poor people, that is a serious call to all believers to stand up and protect the moral and integrity of the office and ministry of prophet by correcting the wrongs reported among prophets.

In regard to the continuation of the office and ministry of the biblical prophets, it is clear that there cannot be such a continuation, especially in view of the fact that almost all prophecy pointed to the coming Messiah, and that Jesus fulfilled all prophecy (Matt.5:17). The implication is that the church cannot have prophets in the same form as those of the Old Testament and that of John the Baptist, which served to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus Christ—the Messiah, but prophets should bring people back to God. Consequently, there is need to carefully evaluate the increasing number of prophetic ministries in Zambia, to protect the testimony of the church. The office and ministry of prophet in the New Testament church functions through the Spiritual gift of prophecy given to believers, and also

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303) [Mwansa](#), *Vera Chiluba and her Nigerian 'prophet' briefly arrested in Malawi* *Zambian Watchdog*, (Accessed on Feb.25, 2012).

through the office and ministry of pastor.<sup>304</sup>)

God in his own wisdom has given the gift of prophecy to believers to edify the church (Rom.12:6; 1 Cor.12:10; 14:1-3, 5; Eph.4:11-16). The Spiritual gift of prophecy is a prompt manifestation of the Holy Spirit in believers, which has the function of building up the body of Christ. God speaks to his church through a word of caution or encouragement, which he sends to believers, through believers, who have been endowed with the gift of prophecy, at a particular time and for a particular purpose. However, this message does not entail a new revelation, but must lead believers to understand the already revealed will of God in Scripture. The functions of prophets are subject to biblical guidelines of order, by speaking one after the other, and only two or three prophets are allowed to speak in a particular worship service (1 Cor.14:29-32).

#### CHAPTER FIVE

##### **Similarities and Differences between the Prophets Serving in Zambian Churches**

After comparing the prophetic ministries in Zambian churches to the office and ministry of the prophet in the Old Testament and New Testament times, we are now ready to discover the similarities between prophets serving in Zambia. Knowing similarities and differences between prophets in Zambia is necessary because it will help us to avoid making wrong conclusions in regards to the functions of the office and ministry of prophet. However, this task is difficult due to the nature of the establishment of prophetic ministries in Zambia. This research discovered that the prophets in Zambian churches and social centres are considered to be the source of physical and spiritual healing, than bringing people back to God by casting demons out of people's lives. Although the nature of ministry for prophets requires that they be found in a suitable place, the common feature for prophetic ministries in Zambia is that most of them conduct their services in homes, school classrooms, and social welfare halls, while very few own structures.

The meetings for most prophetic ministries are similar to each other including prayer and reading the Bible.<sup>305</sup>) A prophet is expected to

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304) John Johnson, "Seeking Pastoral Identity," *The Spurgeon Fellowship Journal*, no.1, (2007), 6-7.

305) Udelhoven, 7.

strengthen, encourage, and comfort people through the declaration of the divine will and purpose of God. It is the responsibility of a prophet to speak about the social needs of the society, and to pronounce Judgment upon the unrepentant sinners. Therefore, the prophets and prophetesses in Zambia must be evaluated in light of the above standard as a measure for their similarities or differences. However, this research revealed that many prophets are focused on enriching themselves at the expense of the people in need, and are likely to find themselves in trouble.<sup>306</sup>) Similarities between prophets serving in Zambia include claims of a special calling to the ministry, while others have been mentored by senior prophets. "Prophets are mentored by senior prophets for a considerable period, before they are released to serve."<sup>307</sup>) One example is that of TB Joshua, who appoints 'wise men' to serve alongside him, as he mentors them. In my efforts to discover the similarities and differences between prophets in Zambia, the following summary gives precise responses from ten respondents to the question: 'How does one become a prophet?' The following is the summary of the ten responses I received, while the remaining respondents left the question unanswered: "A person becomes a prophet by the calling of God (Jer.1:5; Isa 49:1). The calling can be through dreams, visions, and a special or direct call from God. A person becomes a prophet after being born again, and living a righteous life. A prophet must be a person of integrity, faith, hope, and love for people."<sup>308</sup>)

However, the reports by the print and electronic media concerning the activities of the prophets serving in Zambian churches reveal that very few qualify to be genuine prophets. Many prophets in Zambia are self-proclaimed, operating without proper guidance for their activities. The

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306) Some prophets admire the success of TB Joshua, ignoring that not everyone trusts him. For example, on May 7, 2012 the government of Cameroun blacklisted TB Joshua calling him an agent of Satan.

307) Isaac Kachenga, (Interview on February 6, 2013).

308) I have summarized the views of Chizu, Chonyi, Jere, Khondowe, Mubanga, Musonda, Musuka, Nsofwa, Rosner, and Zulu according to their understanding of how a person becomes a prophet.

self-declaration of prophets in Zambian churches makes it difficult for churches to regulate their functions, because soon after a person declares him/herself as a prophet, they leave the church; a situation which causes more chaos than harmony in the prophetic ministry. Prophetic ministries in Zambia are dominated by men, with very few ladies. The age of prophets is approximately above twenty years; no academic qualification or status in society is considered. To make matters worse, there is no recognized body or association which is established to regulate prophets.

I received various responses to the question ‘When does a person cease to be as prophet?’ ‘Prophets, who come out of the community to do a certain social service, cease to be prophets after the completion of the project, while professional prophets last longer.’<sup>309)</sup> Some people believe that prophets serve until they die; others believe that prophets cease to serve when they fall into sin, begin to teach false doctrines, open themselves to occultism and familiar spirits, while others think that when a prophet is too old, he must stop serving God.

The major similarities between prophets serving in Zambia are that they are faith-healers (focused on deliverance of people from demonic oppression, which is considered to be the major cause of suffering), provide remedy, and offer protection from future recurrence of the problem.<sup>310)</sup> In Zambia, it is difficult to know the difference between prophets (faith-healers),

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309) Rosner. Interview, February 6, 2013.

310) Some prophets prescribe things considered to be charms or means of healing such salt mixed with water or other stuff, forbidding clients from eating or drinking certain types of food beverages, and wearing of certain types of attire (clothes, arm-bands, leg-bands, waist-bands, neck-chains, or carrying certain items in their pockets or wallets, etc), as a form of protection from demonic attack. The other common remedy is the use of anointing oil and so-called ‘holy water’. Some prophets claim that they receive the anointing oil and ‘holy water’ from TB Joshua. Other prophets sell or send their clients to go and buy the olive oil from some shopping malls, which the prophet prays for, and sanctifies for sprinkling upon everything including house walls, clothes, cooking pots, plates, cups, spoons, forks, chopsticks, chairs, tables, beds, blankets and other beddings, as a form of protective charm from further demonic attacks. Some prophets instruct the clients to change personal relationships with family, friends, and even with spouses. There are reports of extreme cases where some prophets instruct their clients not to have sexual intercourse with their spouses, which expose unsuspecting clients to sexual abuse by the same prophets and prophetesses.

and herbalists. Consequently, prophets in Zambia are associated with diviners, witch-finders, witch-doctors, and other traditional practitioners, who are also involved in similar practices.

However, while there are false prophets in Zambia, there are true prophets who preach and teach the truth according to the word of God. Such prophets are truthful and faithful in their attitude to the word of God. True prophets speak on behalf of the less privileged members of the society, promote social justice to up-lift the living standards of all the people, especially the poor and weak in society (women, orphans, widows & widowers), and preach repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation of people to God. These are the prophets that we need in Zambia.

Therefore, it is safe to say that prophets serving in Zambian churches and social centres share many things in common. A person’s status in society or level of education is not considered for entry into a prophetic ministry, as long as a person claims some form of special calling from God (whether proven or not), or when one receives recommendation from their mentor prophets. There are minimal differences in function between prophets in Zambia, whether they belong to organized churches, *Mutumwa* (spiritists), or personal ministries and most of them do not understand their roles. Prophetic ministries in Zambia are not properly coordinated, which gives room to the rise of false prophets, and exposes people to the abusive activities of these false prophets.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Conclusion

The number of prophetic ministries in Zambia is growing at a very fast rate.<sup>311)</sup> The fact that prophets are not regulated by church mother bodies creates room for more confusion.<sup>312)</sup> Prophets have become

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311) It is difficult to gather statistics because many prophetic ministries are not registered and not well coordinated.

312) There are four church umbrella bodies in Zambia—Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ), Episcopal Conference of Zambia (ECZ), Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), and Independent Churches of Zambia (ICOZ). It is difficult to regulate the existence and functions of prophets in Zambia. The Episcopal Conference of Zambia (ECZ) has some prophetic activities in their charismatic movement, but it is difficult for the other three mother bodies to regulate prophets because people declare themselves as prophets and choose to remain outside church mother bodies, or cannot meet the requirements for

syncretistic (copying everything from cults, diviners, and traditional practitioners), and involve themselves in unethical practices. The result of such uncontrolled or unregulated prophets reduces the credibility of the office and ministry of prophet, which has prominently served people of all generations. The activities of prophetic ministries in Zambia have a potential to destroy the existing testimony of the office and ministry of prophet, whose establishment can be traced as far back as Old Testament and New Testament times.

It is clear that there is a major shift in the understanding of the functions of prophet in Zambian churches, which requires the urgent attention of the church correct the misconceptions that have arisen due to the influence of sources from within and outside Zambia. The church in Zambia must rise to the occasion and redefine the motivation for the office and ministry of the prophet based on biblical teaching. We must realize that unethical practices, such as physical and sexual abuses to which some people who visit prophets are exposed, leave negative effects on the physical and spiritual being of victims, which takes a long time to heal.

In this regard, a clear definition will also help prophets to understand their roles, in order to minister to people in a biblically faithful manner, unlike the current situation where people cannot tell whether they are visiting a diviner, fortune-teller, a witch-finder or witch-doctor, while all of these men and women call themselves prophets. A prophet is “One of the ‘Five Word Equipping Ministries’ alongside the Apostles who are a foundation building ministry with direct authority from the Holy Spirit to speak with inerrant authority. Prophets proclaim God’s truth with direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit guaranteeing that the message spoken (or written) is without error and infallible.”<sup>313</sup> Zambian churches and society in general, need a prophetic voice that is not influenced by human practices centered on selfish motives, but men and women called to be God’s servants. In addition, there is need for believers and unbelievers alike, to properly understand the office and ministry of prophet in light of Scripture (interpreted

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membership, and operate without guidelines.

313) Mark R. Kreitzer, *Systematic Theology 4: Pneumatology*. (Kosin University, Busan: 2012).

in its context and application), in order to correct the chaotic and confusing situation in Zambia. God is still as concerned about the suffering of his people as he was in the Old Testament and New Testament times. The prophetic ministry should lead people to repent from sin, reconcile with God, and live in harmony with each other, as we prepare for the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

<b>School</b>	Kosin University, Busan, South Korea		
<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Musika Ebby	<b>Major</b>	Master of Divinity
<b>Name of Respondent</b>			
<b>Profile of Respondent</b>			
<b>Thesis Title</b>	<b>The Office and Ministry of Prophet: Its Resurgence and Practice in Zambian Churches.</b>		
<b>Date</b>			

1. Who is a Prophet?
2. What is the work of a prophet?
3. Do Zambian churches need prophets like those of the Old Testament?
  - a. If 'Yes', give reasons for your conviction.
  - b. If 'No', give reasons for your convictions.
4. How does a person become a prophet in Zambian churches?
  - a. Who can become a prophet (state the gender, age, or status if possible)?
  - b. What are the qualifications for becoming a prophet?
  - c. When does a person cease/ stop being a prophet?
5. What kind of prophets do Zambian churches have?
6. What is the difference between the Spiritual Gift of Prophecy and the Prophetic Office?
7. What are the similarities between the prophets in Bible times and prophets in Zambia?
8. What are the differences between the prophets in Bible times and prophets in Zambia?

9. What are the similarities between the prophets serving in Zambian churches?
10. What are the differences between the prophets serving in Zambian churches?
11. What are the purposes of prophets serving in Zambian churches?
12. Have these prophets helped the Zambian churches to grow?
  - a. If 'Yes', how has the church grown spiritually?
  - b. If 'Yes', how has the church increased in numbers of believers?
  - c. If 'No', what do you think is the reason for the lack of growth?
13. How would you evaluate the ministry of prophets in Zambian churches today?
14. Are there any other thought about prophets that you would like to share with me?

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## “Can Christians Engage in War?”

Russel George C. de Ocampo (고신대)

Alexander Moseley (2010) defined war as a “state of organized, open-ended collective conflict or hostility” (para.15). By this definition, war can be a state of hostility between small groups and not always necessarily between nations. War engagement means promoting, supporting, and being in war. It involves weapons and intentional killings. War is horrible. Consequently, Christians' participation in it brings controversy. Some Christians consider it inherently evil and there are others who view it as necessary for peace. Is it possible to engage in war and honor God at the same time?

### Significance of the Study

People have been at war toward one another since the fall of man. Since then the history of mankind was littered with countless stories of armed-conflicts. At the present time almost all parts of the world have war of all sorts—civil wars, invasions, tribal wars, revolutionary wars etc. Some conflicting countries are: Israel vs. Palestine; Iran vs. US; Pakistan vs. India; North Korea vs. South Korea and the number is many. We know throughout the history that war is real and its effects are gruesome. Colson and Pearcey (1999) asked, “How now shall we live?” (p. 477). Christians should not ignore this question for their calling as God's stewards of the good creation is at stake. They must ask and give an answer from a Christian worldview perspective. How now shall we live in relation to war?

Sam Childers, a missionary in Sudan, dealt with the same question. However because of rampant atrocities, he resorted to warfare. He fought against the rebel group led by Joseph Kony who was described in the New York Times as a terrorist: He was responsible for mass killing, kidnapping, sex slavery, and mutilating people (NYT, 2012). For Childers, killing one rebel meant saving many lives (Childers, 2009). Yet, the idea of Childers having a Bible in his left hand and AK-47 in his right hand has become controversial within the Christian community.

Engaging in war while honoring God is an issue that has to be dealt with by all Christians regardless of military status: those who hold offices in the government, army commanders, soldiers, and civilians. Hereby, I argue that Christians can engage in war and honor God at the same time. This paper seeks to provide a biblical understanding of Christians engaging in war.