African Theological Journal for Church and Society

ISSN 2708-7565

Issue 5:2, November 2024

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It is a peer reviewed, open access journal. The print version (ISSN 2708-7557) is printed on demand. It is published at least twice a year. Special editions containing monographs or contributions focussing on specific themes are published in a concurrent series of ATJCS Supplementa.

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ATJCS is published by the Network for African Congregational Theology in conjunction with the Christian Literature Fund and Hugenote College.

Vongdip, SH, KN Kinya & JM Agai 2024, 'Rethinking the Debates on the Theological Implications of the Biological Theory of Human Evolution on the Creation of Adam', *African Theological Journal for Church and Society*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 1-24

Rethinking the Debates on the Theological Implications of the Biological Theory of Human Evolution on the Creation of Adam

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Abstract

The subject of the creation of Adam raises a seeming contention between Christian evolutionists and Christian antievolutionists, and this is evident in many ways including in the Scopes Trial of 1925 in Tennessee, USA. This discussion is important because it contributes to bringing all Christians together to a meeting point despite their diverse views on the subject. It also dismisses the notion that science is in conflict with the Christian faith. Using literary research methods to explore this subject, the researcher took into cognisance both scientific and theological approaches to the evolutionary origin of humans and to the creation account of Adam. The research finding shows that many researchers who have interest in the subject have not reached a conclusion on whether the Bible is in fierce or mild contestation with the views that Adam was created or evolved. The writer of this paper proposes that the author of Genesis had an

intention when writing the creation story. He recommends that the original intention of the author should be taken into cognisance when reading about the creation of Adam.

Introduction

The historical debates between some scientists like Galilei Galileo and Nicolaus Copernicus and some Christians like Samuel Wilberforce, Charles Spurgeon, the Catholic Church, Christian fundamentalists, and others created and even reinforced an impression that science is in conflict with the Christian faith (Leveillee 2011; see also Hodgson 2005:2). Christian evolutionists or theistic evolutionists are those who believe that God created humans through biologically based evolutionary processes that started over millions or thousands of years ago and culminated in the creation of human beings (Agai 2017:24-26). At the Council of Cologne in 1860, just a year after the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, the Roman Catholic Church refuted Darwin's views on evolution, which suggested that humans originated from brutes. The council noted that

> It is contrary to Sacred Scripture and to the faith the opinion of those who do not fear to affirm the spontaneous evolution of an imperfect nature towards another more perfect; a continuous evolution producing finally man, at least as to his body. (Segey 1943)

However, about ninety years later, and specifically from the 1950s, they accepted ideas regarding evolutionary origins. Roman Catholic authors 'have put forward ideas accepting man's evolutionary origins without any interference on the part of the ecclesiastical authority' (Nemesszeghy and Russell 1972:43, 48). During a meeting at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in the Vatican City in 2014, Pope Francis dismissed the view of some Christians who regard God as a magician that created instantaneously. He argued that the Bible did not contradict the scientific account of the earth's evolutionary formation and of human origins. He said:

> The big bang, which is today posited as the origin of the world, does not contradict the divine act of creation; rather,

> it requires it. […] Evolution of nature is not inconsistent with the notion of creation because evolution presupposes the creation of beings, which evolve. (Davies 2014:1-3)

By the year1960, few Roman Catholic Church members varied slightly on their views regarding the origin of Adam (Mixter 1960:188-189). Special creationists on the other hand believe that God might have created within the literal, twenty-four-hour days of creation; thus, humans were created instantaneously or through a short period of time within one of the seven days of creation (Schwarz 2002:164).

Matters Considered in Evolution Debates

The biblical view that nature and animals were created before human beings is comparable to the biological theory that humans evolved from animals. More so, because animals were created before human beings, and because God breathed into human beings his breath through which they became living souls (Genesis 2:7KJV), there is a need to inquire who and what was man (with reference to Adam) before he became a living soul (Rust and Held 1999:236). It is on the subject that Nemesszeghy and Russell (1972:66) argue 'The theory of evolution calls for a new interpretation of the creation of the soul'. The conceptualisation of the original sin is a theological tradition according to which the first sin committed by Adam and Eve affected or stained all humanity (Romans 5:14-19). The view that sin evolved is inconsistent but what is clear is that the sin of Adam affected all humanity (John 3:1-21) (Beecroft 2017:16-17; Enns 2012:192). The Belgic Confession, a Reformed confession of faith, believes that Adam's sin impaired all humanity even before birth:

> We believe that, through the disobedience of Adam, original sin is extended to all mankind; which is a corruption of the whole nature, and a hereditary disease, wherewith infants themselves are infected even in their mother's womb, and which produceth in man all sorts of sin, being in him as a root thereof; and therefore, is so vile and abominable in the sight of God, that it is sufficient to condemn all mankind. Nor is it by any means abolished or done away by baptism; since sin

> always issues forth from this woeful source, as water from a fountain; notwithstanding it is not imputed to the children of God unto condemnation, but by his grace and mercy is forgiven them. Not that they should rest securely in sin, but that a sense of this corruption should make believers often to sigh, desiring to be delivered from this body of death. Wherefore we reject the error of the Pelagians, who assert that sin proceeds only from imitation. ([de Brès] 2014)

More so, sin is regarded as the source of human suffering and disasters. Harlow pointed out that original sin is what brought about the fall of man, sicknesses, death, and natural disasters which affected all human beings (Harlow 2010:180). This conception further makes the subject of the study of Adam relevant for Christians including the Reformed Christian churches.

On the evolution of the Earth and on the age of the Earth, both science and religious scholars have over the years attempted to give an estimate. The various approaches to determining the age of the world have been used to create an estimate for the age of human beings. Aryeh Kaplan, an American Orthodox rabbi, said that Adam might have been created in 3761 BC and that he might have lived for 930 years (1993:17-22). The rationale for his source of estimate is not clear. Also, using the methods of radioactive dating of rocks (geochronology), geologists have estimated that the earth is about five billion years old (Green, Stout, and Taylor 1990:861-862, 955).

Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656) said that the earth was created in 4004 BC. His argument was founded on the chronology of the genealogies found in Genesis (Chan 1997:43). Ussher thought that humans were created about six thousand years ago:

> A superficial reading of the first few chapters of Genesis may give the impression that man came into existence only about six thousand years ago and that the world was created at about the same time. (Chan 1997:43)[1]

[1]Though some scientists did not have a specific estimate for the date human beings were first created, they refused to accept Ussher's date regarding the age of the earth and of

However, Paul Little said that Christians need to exercise caution when estimating the age of the earth in relation to the age of humans: '[t]he Christian geologist[s] need not assume that all geological features were created with an appearance of age' (quoted in Agai 2017:44; see Little 1988:122).

Chan (1997:43) pointed at some limitations of Ussher's arguments. Firstly, he mentioned that in the Bible the use of the term 'father' may not necessarily refer to an individual's direct parent. For example, Jesus is called 'the son of David' yet Jesus is not the direct son of David. More so, there are times in the Bible when expressions such as 'he became the father of' and 'he was the son of' are used, and these expressions do not refer to a direct father/son relationship. In addition, Chan said that some names have been excluded in the chronology of the Bible and that this might have affected Ussher's dating. He said that Luke gave fifty-six names from Abraham to Jesus but Matthew gives forty names from Abraham to Jesus. These chronological differences might have been because Matthew emphasises the line of Joseph (Jesus' legal father) while Luke wrote based on the line of Mary (Jesus' blood relative) (Chan 1997:43). While there are many theological implications for the biological theory of human evolution, this researcher concentrated on its implication for the creation of Adam.

The Biological Theory of Human Origins

On the Origin of Life

The biological theory of human evolution is a view according to which humans originated through a process that took millions of years. The theory, from the perspective Aristotle, posits that the first life on earth might have begun spontaneously over millions of years ago (Zwier 2018:355-356). Contrary to Aristotle's view and in Welch's opinion, Louis Pasteur believed that the first lives on earth were not spontaneously generated (Welch 1963:90). Pasteur conducted an experiment using a swan-necked flask, in which he did not destroy any 'active principle' (a naturally formed energy that catalyses non-living matter into living things) in the air. Yet no life was seen in his controlled

humans because they thought that sin marred the human intellectual status of accuracy (Wright 1985:127).

experiment (Agai 2014:1). Similarly, Francesco Redi in the mid-seventeenth century opined that organisms are not spontaneously generated; rather they come as a result of the metamorphosis of larvae. Around the same period, Antonie van Leeuwenhoek conducted an experiment using a simple microscope. He concluded that there are minute organisms swarming in the atmosphere through which macro-organisms are formed (Agai 2005:61-71).

There is another school of thought according to which the first life on earth emerged from ancient waters (Kimball 2023:1). Proponents of this theory have argued that protein molecules naturally surrounded reserved or preserved bodies of water. After a process of time, the protein molecules produced amino acids, and together with a thin soup made by the accumulation of carbon compounds in the ancient water, formed polypeptides and proteins. Other minute organic molecules in water also sedimented and formed larger and more complex molecules, which in the end became a cluster forming the first pre-cell. Over a period of time, the pre-cell began to absorb all the materials necessary for growth and reproduction from the thin soup, thus leading to a gradual complexity in the cell which is said to resemble the ancient heterotroph cell (Agai 2005:71-80).

Stanley Miller supported the view that the first life might have started from ancient waters forming blocks of amino acids. In an experiment, Miller attempted to create the earth's atmosphere by building an apparatus filled with water in addition to methane, ammonia, and hydrogen, and without oxygen (Tietz 2017). The contents went through continuous boiling and condensation for a week. The gases that evaporated from the apparatus passed through a chamber that contained two electrodes with an electric spark passing between them. Using paper chromatography, Miller demonstrated that the apparatus with the contents in addition to the experimental exercises formed amino acids and other organic molecules. Although scientists have recently concluded that the atmosphere of the early earth was not rich in ammonia and methane, Miller's experiment contributed to the view that the first life might have emerged from ancient waters through the formation of protein contents (Kimball 2023:1-2).

There is another hypothesis that life might have emerged from outer space (via meteorites). The falling meteorites, on meeting conditions sufficient for

the growth of living organisms on earth like water, carbon dioxide, sunlight, etcetera, began to develop, forming the first life on earth (Maxson and Daugherty 1987:131-135). But this hypothesis lacked credibility because there remains no convincing evidence that any life can survive in outer space and the hypothesis does not give an explanation as to the origin of life in outer space. In fact, the heat or cold experienced by these meteorites while falling to earth should have prohibited the survival of living organisms (Agai 2005:23). More so, the most popular arguments on the origins of life pertained to the ideas of spontaneous generation and the view that life might have started from ancient waters. If these views are to be considered as true, this implies that human beings might have originated from the first life on earth which might have started from ancient waters or spontaneously from other micro or macro matter on land.

On the Origin of Human Beings

The biological theory of human evolution postulates that human beings are products that emerged through a progressive development. The development or changes started from minute organisms that lived in waters and developed into visible organisms that left the aquatic life and entered the terrestrial world. It was from the terrestrial world that they became arboreal beings and finally culminated and permanented themselves with a return to terrestrial life (Agai 2005:61-67). Agai explained this chain of human development in this order: microorganisms, minute aquatic life, fish-like creatures, ape-like beings, early humans, and finally modern humans (Agai 2017:1-2). Modern humans are said to have shared a common ancestor with other primates like tarsiers, Esomias, New World monkeys, etcetera (Gore 2003:37). Myer Pearlman simplified this progressive development that took place in humans:

> all forms of life developed from one form and that higher species developed from a lower, so that, for example, what was once a snail became a fish; what was once a fish became a reptile; what was once a reptile became a bird, and (passing on quickly), what was once an ape became [a] human being. (1937:97)

Although Charles Darwin is celebrated as one of the most significant figures in the development and the spread of the theory of human evolution, it is

important to note that the theory was debated before the emergence of Darwin. Aristotle in the fourth century BC taught that there is a progressive development of lower animals to higher animals that culminates in the emergence of humans. It is not surprising that Erik Nordenskiold said about Aristotle's theory of human origin: 'here we enunciated for the first time a really complete theory of evolution' (quoted in Davidheiser 1969:41).

Other scientists and philosophers who contributed to the development of the theory of human origins included Empedocles (circa 494-444 BC), Comte de Buffon (1707-1788), Charles Bonnet (1720-1790), Jean Baptiste Lamark (1744-1829), and many more. After publishing *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* in 1859 and *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* in 1871, Darwin became very popular on the subject of evolutionary theory, pertaining to both the origins of animals and those of humans (Cunningham and Saigo 1990:563; Darwin 1952:594; Jones 1985:198, 210; Sheldrake 1984:20).

More so, Darwin taught that the environment, which provided for adaptation, played a major role in the shaping and possible formation of new species of animals. In general, Darwin believed that humans originated from some four or five ancestors:

> I believe that animals are descended from at most only four or five progenitors, and plants from an equal or lesser number. (Darwin 1952:241)

In *Descent of Man*, Darwin added that human beings actually emerged from a hairy and a monkey-like type of ancestor:

> We thus learn that man is descended from a hairy, tailed quadruped, probably arboreal in its habits, and an inhabitant of the Old World [...] and all the higher mammals are probably derived from an ancient marsupial animal, and this through a long series of diversified forms, from some amphibian-like creature, and this again from some fish-like animal. (1952:591)

He further noted that the Genesis account of creation literally failed to address the adaptation and variation natural principles that led to the formation of higher animals (cf. 1952:238). After Darwin came the concept of Neo-Darwinism, which emphasises genetic mutation as key to the formation of new species (cf. Agai 2017:34-43). Molecular biology, which emphasises the genetic study of human origins, also indicates that human ancestors (*Homo sapiens*) were about 10,000 interbreeding individuals that were sparsely distributed around some parts of the world over 150,000 years ago (Harlow 2010:180).

More so, Daniel C. Harlow said that there is increasing evidence of hominid fossils. The distribution of the fossils suggest that humans did not find themselves as instantaneous beings or as creation, as championed by religious beliefs; instead, fossils and other anthropological evidence support the view that humans evolved through a progressive process over the course of about six million years (Harlow 2010:179; see also Fox 2010. Some Christians from various parts of the world dispute this scientific view of human origin.

Theological Implications

The Singularity of Adam as an Individual

Significance to the 'Days' of Creation as Literal Twenty-Four-Hour Days

Christians have different views regarding the interpretation of the Genesis account of creation in connection with evolutionism. For example, the idea of the historic creation *ex nihilo* posited that God is behind the creation of all things through his power, irrespective of time, while the young Earth theory posited that God created within twenty-four-hour, literal days of creation about 6,000 to 10,000 years ago (Huskinson 2020:108-136; Millam 2008).

This researcher will explain the implications of these views on the interpretation of the 'days' of creation. Paul Little (1988:121) for example said that the conceptualisation of the 'days' of creation is vital in the study of the evolution/creation debate. Rupert Sheldrake said that the 'days' of creation are vital in determining whether creation was instantaneous or progressive. He noted that the reference to the *day* of creation might not have meant a literal twenty-four-hour day but many years (1984:22) which is contrary to the young Earth theory. It is also important to note that the meaning of the days

of creation is significant in explaining the various views Christians have of the meaning of Adam (Madueme and Reeves 2014: vii-ix). Many people who regard Adam as a single person are evangelicals who prefer to interpret the Genesis account of creation as strictly a literal and a historical text (Jones 1985:210). The fundamentalist Christian movement, with particular reference to the World Christian Fundamentalist Association (WCFA), was a typical example of a Christian group that valued the referral of Adam as a single person who was created in a specific day not in millions or thousands of years. This group contributed to the banning of the teaching of evolution in government tax-supported schools in Tennessee, Oklahoma, and Florida leading to the famous 'Monkey Trial' or 'Scopes Trial' of 1925 (Hopkins 2002).

The special creationists emphasise two theories of creation: the universal flood and the gap (re-creation) theories. The universal flood theory is a view according to which the earth was created within a literal twenty-four-hour, six-day period and that the age of the earth can be determined after the flood described in Genesis 7 and 8 (Flattery 1992:19). This view is connected to the young Earth creationists' belief according to which God created Adam and Eve as the first human ancestors about 6,000 or about 10,000 years ago. In other words, Adam and Eve are regarded as recent humans, not as beings created millions of years ago (Harlow 2010:181).

The gap theory on the other hand is a view according to which Satan destroyed the earth before it was re-created (Isaiah 24:1; Jeremiah 4:23; Ezekiel 28:12-25). Those who hold unto this view also argue that Genesis 1:2 ought to be translated as '[t]he Earth became formless and empty', and not 'was formless and empty'. They emphasise that the re-creation act took God six twenty-four-hour days and that the Genesis account of creation ought to be interpreted literally (Paul 1994:28). Hoff Paul said that the gap theory created an impression of a pre-Adamic human (1994:28), a view that would not be easily accepted by many special creationists.

Significance to the Meaning of Adam

Grace Beecroft (2017:3-7), Paul Little (1988:121-122), and Kemp (2020:144) who argue that the literal reading of the biblical account about Adam in Genesis 1 and 2 presents him as a specific individual (Genesis 2:7). Williams' *New Concise Bible Dictionary* said that, in the Old Testament, the word *Adam*

is used about 500 times to portray mankind and, in the New Testament, Paul uses the term *Adam* for a collective representation of mankind (1977:6-7).

The reference to Adam as a single person suggests that Adam was created alone as a person not a group of people. This view is generally referred to as monogenism, which is a concept according to which all human beings are descended from a single human couple (Adam and Eve) by the process of procreation (Agai 2005:98-99). Grace Beecroft, in an uncritically reviewed and an unpublished paper argued that Genesis 1–3 should be read as a historical book and not an ahistorical book. She noted that Adam and Eve were two literal persons that were specifically the first humans to have ever lived. She added that even Jesus himself is said to have alluded to Adam and Eve as the first married couple. Beecroft (2017:12) said that the Bible made it explicitly clear that 'he who created them from the beginning made them male and female' (see Matthew 19:4, Luke 11:51).

The author further disputed any view that connects creation to billions of years, noting that

> Adam and Abel existed very close to the beginning of creation, not billions of years after as an evolutionary or old earth framework suggest. (Beecroft 2017:12)

Other arguments are that the first use of *Adam* in the Bible contains no definite article but suggests a person and that the Jewish use of *Bereshit* (Jewish reference to the creation narrative) referred to Adam as a single person (Beecroft 2017:14-16). The *Abarim Bible Dictionary* concurred, advancing a similar idea that the origin of the name Adam meant a person, not necessarily referring to a particularly known person but any person (Abarim Publications 2014). This interpretation regarding the Hebrew origin of the name Adam referring to not a specific person seemed contrary to Beecroft's view according to which God breathed life into one man and not many people.

A school of thought that was popular in the twenty-first century promoted the view according to which Adam and Eve were two specific people and through them came other human beings. Mark Pretorius, a systematic theologian at the University of Pretoria, said that combined recent research, conducted by

geochemists, anthropologists, and experts in genetics, about the Y-chromosomal and mitochondrial DNA showed evidence that all human beings originated from a particular man referred to as *Adam* and a particular woman referred to as *Eve* from a particular geographical area (2011). Pretorius cited Dr Francis Collins, a renowned expert in the study of the human genome who conducted several pieces of research on the subject and came to the conclusion that human beings 'descended from a common set of founders', implying Adam and Eve. Pretorius said that there is evidence that the human DNA might have originated from a single set of parents, namely Adam and Eve (2011:166-167). Another point of interest in this subject is the study that attributes human origins to Africa due to DNA analysis and the fossils of the ancestors of early humans, which have been found in many parts of Africa (Caldwell and Gyles 1966:5; Clark 1970:18; Stringer and McKie 1996:174-175).

Contrary to the above view propagated by Pretorius, Daniel Harlow, a professor of biblical and early Jewish studies at Calvin College, Michigan, said that the media and other writers have misled many into thinking that the molecular evidence that pertained to 'Mitochondrial Eve' meant the biblical Eve (2010:180, 192). Harlow noted that the geneticists who nicknamed Mitochondrial Eve did not mean the literal biblical Eve or the mother of all humans but a matrilineal carrier of an ancestral mitochondrial DNA molecule that gave rise to mitochondrial DNA in women today. Further research conducted on variation in chromosomal DNA suggests that Mitochondrial Eve was just one of the members of a larger breeding group among many other early humans that included both males and females alike, and has nothing to do with the literal biblical Eve (Harlow 2010:180).

On the Y-chromosomal DNA associated with Adam, Harlow said that the findings are not in any way evidence that Adam was a single person or that Adam lived; instead, the findings are links that associated men with the Y-chromosome to a patrilineal ancestor who lived about 60,000 years ago, some 100,000 years after Mitochondrial Eve (Harlow 2010:180). A view that dispels the regard for Adam as a single person who gave rise to the entire human race on the globe had in the twentieth century been propagated by Nemesszeghy and Russell, who said a single person might not have the genetic capabilities to fill the whole world with his descendants:

> One pair would be too narrow a base genetically for mankind and would imply a genetic weakness of an inbreeding type. The emergence of new species normally takes place in numerous individuals about the same time […] Homo sapiens appeared essentially the same way as any other species. (1972:52)

The arguments above suggest that Adam should not be interpreted as meaning one person but a representative of a group of people whom God selected to represent other human beings. The idea that Adam meant a group of people is in tandem with the biological theory of human origins, which suggests many early humans as the ancestors of modern humans. It is pertinent to look into theories that promote the view that Adam meant a group of people, thus the plurality of Adam.

The Plurality of Adam as a Group/Representative of a Group

Significance to the 'Days' of Creation

Special creationists thought that God created all things including humans from pre-existing matter through a process of time (Agai 2005:93-94). Wright said that anyone who has no understanding of the theory of evolution will interpret the Genesis 1 'days' of creation as literal twenty-four-hour periods (1985:127). This view is shared by some, but not all, evangelicals (Little 1988:122). Paul Little (1988:12) mentions that David Young, a theologian, believed that

> the language of Genesis 1 for example [the development of vegetation on day three], strongly implies the process of natural growth and development, initiated by the fiat of God's word.

According to Hoff Paul, one of the theories developed by theistic evolutionists is the age-long day theory, according to which God's creative acts were completed in one long day and not necessarily twenty-four-hour days. Their argument is that the whole creation period is summed up in a period called a *day*, meaning 'the day the Lord made the earth and the heaven' (Paul 1994:30; see Job 8:56; Isaiah 2:12, 13:6; Joel 1:5; Zephaniah 1:7; Zechariah 14:1; 2 Corinthians 6:2). Theistic evolutionists argue that God took a long period of

time to create and that a thousand years is like a day and a day like a thousand years for him (Wright 1985:127; see Psalm 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8). The age-long day theory regards Adam and Eve as *ancient* representatives of many humans who evolved from hominids. Believers of this theory think that God made himself known to a large group of early humans around 150,000 years ago and that 'the biblical Adam and Eve are symbolic of this group' (Harlow 2010:181).

Other theories propagated by the theistic evolutionists are the pictorial day theory according to which God created through a long period but revealed his creative acts to the writer of Genesis in six consecutive days (Paul 1994:29-30). Proponents are like the old-creationists who think that God created humans about 150,000 years ago but selected a pair of them, Adam and Eve, about 10,000 years ago to represent all humanity, thus making the interpretation of the plurality of Adam as somewhat *recent* humans (Harlow 2010:181). The alternating day and age theory is a view according to which long periods of time lay between the days of creation (Paul 1994:29-30). It thus suggests that the 'days' of creation meant thousands or millions of years which backed the evolutionary view of the creation of Adam as the representative of a group of people.

Significance to the Meaning of Adam

The idea of the plurality of Adam suggests that the name *Adam* implies a symbolic representation with a narrative and not a historical message. Harlow noted that *Adam* meant humans and *Eve* meant living one, which are both symbolic representations that indicate the role of a couple. He said the initial appearance of Adam in Genesis is meant to represent a group and not an individual: 'The first man is called *ha-'adam*, the generic Hebrew term for human being' (2010:186). Harlow's argument is based on a view according to which some aspects of Genesis 1 and the entirety of Genesis 2-3 be read as symbolic and not historical. He cited as examples that the mention of trees, rivers, gold, cherubim, etcetera in Genesis (2:10-14) are symbolic representations of the tabernacle and sanctuaries in Jerusalem. Therefore, to him, Adam is a symbolic representation of a group of people (Harlow 2010:186). The view presented in the *Abarim Bible Dictionary* that *Adam* does not refer to a specific person but 'a person' or any person (Abarim Publications 2014) supports Harlow's argument.

Furthermore, Nemesszeghy and Russell said that in the whole of the New Testament it is only Luke 3:27 and Jude 1:4 that strictly speak of Adam as an individual. They thought that most other New Testament references describe Adam as the representative of a group of people (1972:56). They noted that an exegetical study revealed that the Hebrew word for man, *Adam*, has both individual and collective significance. They said that *Adam* can be translated as some men, all men, any man whatever, human race, descendent of, ancestor of, and son of (Nemesszeghy and Russell 1972:56).

Other authors had supported the view that Adam signifies a group. Karl Rahner said that the group that was represented by Adam had one mind in making their decisions to the point that they decided to sin at the same time, each with his independent freedom of decision but in a dialogic relation to the others: 'one influences the other in his individual decision without forcing him' (Rahner 1967:68-72).

With regard to sin and the singularity or the plurality of Adam, some New Testament passages indicate that just as sin came into the world through Adam, so did the salvation of God through Christ (Acts 17:26; Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49). Harlow said that, although Paul and Luke regarded Adam as a historical person, the aim of these passages is not to attest that through one person sin came to the world but to emphasise that one person represented the sin of many, just as Christ took away the sins of the world. He further noted that the regard for Adam as a single person was negligible by Paul in the sense that Adam was not the first sinner but a symbol that pertained to the origin of sin; 'For Paul, then, Adam's act *affected* the human race but did not *infect* it' (Harlow 2010:190). Harlow (2010) noted that a similar view is insinuated in 2 Baruch: 'Adam is therefore not the cause, except only for himself, but each of us has become our own Adam' (cf. 54:19; see also 2 Baruch 54:15; 4 Ezra 7:118; Harlow 2010:190).

The view propagated by Harlow is that Paul had little interest in the categorisation of Adam as the source of sin and death but in a representative imagery whose emphasis on Adam as the cause of sin and death was rather symbolic and spiritual (Harlow 2010:190; see Romans 5:12).

Those who regard Adam as the representative of a group of people do not deny that there are other biblical passages that present Adam as a single person. Instead, they view the idea of the plurality of Adam in the Bible as having more emphasis, that is, as being more implied, than the regard for Adam as a single person. Harlow for example said that there are two accounts regarding creation found in Genesis. He stated that Genesis 1 illustrates that, after the creation of lands and animals, God created an unspecified number of male and female humans while Genesis 2 portrays God as creating a single person followed by the creation of animals and, next, the creation of a single woman (Harlow 2010:185).

Theological Evaluation

The word *genesis* means origin and it suggests that Genesis is a book that conveys ideas about the beginning of many subjects of biblical interest. The subjects may include the creation of the universe and of the human race in the persons of Adam and Eve, likewise the origin of sin, suffering, and the ancestors of the Israelites, and many more. As shown, there is bountiful modern evidence that suggests that the concept of the biological theory of human origins might date from before or during the time of Aristotle, as he suggested that the first life on earth might have originated spontaneously through a progressive development that culminated in the emergence of modern humans (Agai 2017:24-25).

Darwin contributed immensely to the development of the concepts of human origins from lower animals. The many fossils found distributed in many parts of the world also attest and support that a single person like Adam might not have been the *only* ancestor of all humans. Also, studies in modern genetic research all suggest that attributing human origin to just one couple in the persons of Adam and Eve who were thought to have lived in the Garden of Eden or somewhere in Mesopotamia can be contested. In other words, the biological theory of human evolution provides evidence that modern humans originated from many other early humans.

The notion explained above seemed to generate a form of contestation between science and faith. As a result, the ideas of interpretation and translation, likewise contextualisation, below are vital.

- The book of Genesis, chapters 1 and 2, might not have been written to explain the scientific technicalities that led to the creation or evolution of humans. Perhaps the interest of the author was to direct the minds of the readers to *whom* the creator is, and to the *purpose* of creation and *how* humans should *relate* to the things created and the creator so that he (the creator) would be reverenced accordingly (Genesis 1:1; Romans 1:21).

- On the other hand, the direct transliteration of *Adam* as 'all men' or 'humans' or 'some men' or 'human race' can also be accepted with an alternative explanation. The author of Genesis might not have meant that *Adam* means a group of people who lived alongside Adam or the entire human race. Instead, the author meant that the circumstances surrounding Adam's life, such as sin and suffering, forgiveness and grace, will affect other humans that he will give rise to. In other words, the transliteration or the plurality of Adam as a people caries the weight of purpose not the weight of person. It might also be recalled that the transliteration does not negate the fact that *Adam* can also mean 'any man' or 'a human being', which suggests the singularity of Adam as a person (see Harlow 2010:186; Nemesszeghy and Russell 1972:56).

- With regard to research done on the many found fossils distributed in Eurasia, the Middle East, and Africa, in addition to mitochondrion genetic research which suggests that humans might have evolved over a long period of time, at this stage there is no need to doubt the visible reality of this evidence. The Bible has little or no clear explanation for the origins and the reasons for the distribution of the fossils. Since these scientific developments have been proven as facts, it can be proposed that other humans might have lived alongside Adam but the Bible did not make it explicit, or that Adam might have been created through an evolutionary process alongside other humans. Therefore, the view that *Adam* meant many people could be logically debated since it does not negate the fact that *Adam* also meant 'a person' or 'a man' or 'any man'.

Conclusion

The pseudo or seeming conflict that exists between Christian evolutionists and Christian antievolutionists has been regarded by many scholars as a conflict of worldview or perspective and not the conflict of science and faith (Paul 1994:29-30). Chittick said that the conflict

> is not a matter of science versus religion; one may be 'religious' and hold either world view. It is a matter of one belief system in conflict with another because they come from different starting assumptions. (1984:267-268)

Whenever issues on creation and evolution are raised, Christians should learn how to approach such matters in love and should teach them in relation to the salvation plan of God towards humankind (see Chittick 1984:260-263). It is also relevant for Christians to direct their hearts towards the purpose of creation, which is to recognise, serve, and worship God as the creator (Romans 1:18-25).

The story of Adam and Eve has been equated with some ancient Near Eastern myths that pertained to the Gilgamesh epic, the *Enuma Elish*, and the myth of Adapa (Irons 2015:8-18). The myth of Adapa for example corresponds in many ways with the Adam story. *Adapa* means man/human, likewise *Adam*. Adam and Eve were instructed about eating and not eating, likewise Adapa, and both Adapa and Adam were denied immortality. While Adapa was clothed by Anu, Adam and Eve were clothed by Yahweh, and while Adapa was returned to Eridu to die, Adam and Eve were chased out of the Garden of Eden as a form of consequence for disobedience (Harlow 2010:183). Irons said that Genesis 1-11 ought to be regarded as myth because of its connection to other Mesopotamian myths (2015:8-18). It is difficult to trace precisely how the author of Genesis received the revelation pertaining to the creation of Adam; whether he was influenced by ancient Near Eastern myths or not may not be ascertained at this stage. It is due to this contention that the writer of this paper suggests that the intention of the author of Genesis towards directing the hearts of the readers to the creator ought to be emphasised. Whether Adam meant a person or a group of people might have been of little or no interest to the author of Genesis; instead, his intention is to introduce Yahweh as an all-powerful God.

What is vital in connection with this research is that, whenever the Adam story is brought forward, it should be read within the context of the intention of the writer, which is firstly to introduce God as the creator so that he can be reverenced. Secondly, the intention of the writer has never been to explain the step-by-step processes of creation or evolution but to reveal the intention of God to create, love, and save humans through 'Adam', which can either be a cooperate being or a person.

This research discusses the contestation between Christian evolutionists and Christian antievolutionists. While both views are clearly articulated in this research, the researcher upheld the view that the days of creation probably suggest literal, twenty-four-hour days of creation. This is because, in the Genesis 1 account of creation, it is clearly stated that 'there was evening, and there was morning' (Genesis 1:5, 7, 13, 19, 23). A literal modern understanding of evening and morning suggests a twenty-four-hour activity within a day and, by implication, Adam might have been created within a day. Modern studies regarding the implications of biological evolution for creation pose serious questions for regarding Adam as a single, known person who was created in a literal, twenty-four-hour day. This is why this researcher is open to the view that *Adam* might also mean a group of people and that Adam might have been created through evolution. One of the objectives of this research is to motivate interest for further research among scholars into whether biological evolutionism challenges the view that 'Adam' meant a single, known person who was the first human being to have ever existed.

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Eramatare: A Missional and Theological Approach to Environmental Stewardship

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Abstract

While climate change is not a 'settled science' (it is not the nature of scientific inquiry to be 'settled'), the fact of climate change is incontrovertibly obvious and its real effects on real communities (perhaps especially in the majority world) are devastating, including in East Africa. For Christians, environmental stewardship (also known as 'Creation Care' or 'Earth Keeping') should be an automatic part of Christian ethos and praxis. Failure to steward the earth or to 'care for creation' represents both a failure to keep the second 'greatest commandment' and also theological irresponsibility. Examining local evidence in East Africa in the contexts of biblical theology, Christian witness, and Maasai indigenous knowledge, this paper proposes approaches for Creation Care for world Christianity. In keeping with the author's positionality amidst African orality, the article attempts to maintain the styles of oral communication.

Introduction

> *Traditionally, Africans have placed a high value on the environment and their place in it. It was understood that human well-being depended on respecting and caring for the physical environment.*
> (Shenk 2001:102)

Andrew Walls recognised that 'theology […] arises from Christian life and activity, from the need to make Christian choices, to think in a Christian way'

(2017:74). It is clear that 'too often followers of Christ have neglected the environment as not being important in God's eyes' (Sorley 2011:137), with devastating effect. It is increasingly obvious, in the light of so many ecological crises around the world, that 'the degradation of the earth is a threat to all life' (Oyugi 2019:108). Indeed,

> only a wilful blindness worse than any proverbial ostrich's head in the sand can ignore the facts of environmental destruction and its accelerating pace. (Wright 2006:413)

This sharp increase in 'environmentally related disasters' around the world has resulted, at least in part, from 'human departure from God's purposes in Creation' – and the effects in Africa have been particularly devastating (Kaoma 2015:280-281).

In this context, how do we 'think in a Christian way' and 'make Christian choices' that will result in the practice of a theology of environmental stewardship? How can we put 'in place a specifically African Christian morality' which draws people towards a holistically 'evangelical spirit of life and hope' (Mushipu-Mbombo 2022:91; my translation)? My wife and I have worked within and alongside Maasai communities since 2007. What we have learned from Maasai culture has enhanced our understanding of biblical stewardship. When we have shared those lessons with Christians in North American contexts, they have agreed that this intercultural hermeneutics has also opened their eyes to a deeper understanding of Christian stewardship. African (and specifically Maasai) concepts of stewardship can point the way forward not only for the church in Africa but for world Christianity as a whole. These issues form the focus of this paper. Methodologically, I have approached the topic by combining original research on East African contextual realities and Maasai indigenous knowledge with an extensive literature review. Through sustainable and wildlife-friendly grazing, such as traditionally practised by the Maasai and the closely related Samburu, sustainable agricultural methods such as 'Farming God's Way' as practised by the Turkana, and assertive tree-planting efforts, such as exemplified by Wangarĩ Muta Maathai (1940–2011) in Kenya and the Association of African Earth-Keeping Churches (AAEC) in Zimbabwe, Christians in Africa and elsewhere can practise a 'theology of the

environment' which 'is not written in books but symbolised' by the ecological restoration of 'ravished countryside[s]' (Daneel 2015:18).

Siri, Will It Rain This Year?

Isampurumpur
etiu osinkolio:
kelotu enchan?

(the white butterflies
which are like unto a song:
are the rains coming?)

In Maasai culture, northward migrations of white butterflies are evocative of hope; whenever this ecological sign is observed, according to traditional Maasai wisdom, good rains are soon to follow. Such migrations are never seen before a rainy season that fails to be rainy. In May of 2012, we had seen clouds of those butterflies, some travelling south and others flying east. Adequate rains were not forthcoming that year. In March of 2016, we observed clouds of white butterflies (*isampurumpur*), all flying north, and I journaled the Maa haiku above (*Maasai* refers to the people while *Maa* refers to their language). *Osinkolio* means equally 'song' and 'dance' and depicts the fluttering movements of the butterflies and is evocative of times of joy. So I originally wrote *kelotu enchan!* ('the rains are coming!') in my haiku because that northward dance has always been a sure and hopeful sign. Sure enough, the long rains began shortly thereafter and were very good that year. As I repeated my haiku in 2023, I asked *kelotu enchan?* ('are the rains coming?'), because in Maasai land we are no longer sure of the answer.

My family moved to Maasai Land in southern Kenya in January 2007 and we have been resident in Kenya ever since. From 2007 to 2019, the majority of our work was in partnership with Maasai communities. When we arrived in 2007, East Africa was experiencing record rainfall associated with an El Niño event. It was truly an *olari seur* – an exceptional, and exceptionally long, rainy season. The rains began in September 2006 and continued into June 2007. The grass was tall and lush, wildlife and livestock were fat, and driving (or walking) anywhere was a muddy adventure. We were assigned to a bush house that

was beside a marsh and wondered about the choice of the building site. A Maasai proverb says *Mamoda amu mamany meleeno* ('I am not foolish because I investigated the land before building [my homestead]'). Had the missionaries who built it failed to study the land? We later learned that the area was only a marsh during El Niño years. While much of the land was lush, we also witnessed the effects of overgrazing and deforestation, which when combined with the heavy rains yielded startling patterns of erosion and degradation.

Equatorial East Africa has a bimodal pattern of seasons: the 'short rains' are usually between October and December and the 'long rains' between March and May, with some regional variation. These are interspersed with two dry seasons. Variability to these weather patterns has generally been associated with El Niño or La Niña events (periods of unusually warmer water or unusually cooler water, respectively, in the equatorial Pacific Ocean). El Niños typically result in wetter weather for East Africa while La Niñas result in drier conditions (Palmer *et al*. 2023:254-256). The Indian Ocean Dipole, as the similar dynamic in the Indian Ocean is called, can cause similar effects. When an El Niño and the 'positive phase' of the Dipole overlap, severe flooding can result across East Africa; the 'flooding in Southern Kenya' in April and May 2024, widely covered in international media, is an example. In Maasai Land, south of the equator, December-January compose, when it is not rainy, the hot season and June-August are the cooler months. Kenyans from a variety of ethnocultural groups and regions (including but not limited to Kamba from south-east-central Kenya, Kikuyu from central Kenya, Luhya from western Kenya, Maasai from southern Kenya, and Samburu from northern Kenya) have attested to me that, historically, predicting the weather with a fair degree of accuracy only required knowing the date: the beginning and duration of the rainy seasons were reliably the same from year to year. Occasionally there would be a particularly wet El Niño or Dipole year or a drought associated with a La Niña event. But the weather was otherwise predictable, which made life easier for the majority of Kenyans who were either agriculturists or pastoralists. Today the average Kenyan will affirm that this predictability has been lost. In parts of the world, people will ask their iPhone, 'Siri, will it rain today?' so they know what to wear. In parts of the world more affected by climate change, people might rather ask simply 'Will it rain this year?'

The *olari seur* of 2006-2007 resulted in devastating flooding in eastern Uganda that was immediately followed by a severe regional drought. By July 2009, over two million people in the region were deemed at risk of starvation from famine. Zac Niringiye reflects:

> Famine of this magnitude in a well-watered country with abundant rainfall and tillable land is a contradiction in terms. We ask: What went wrong? The answer is short and simple: distortions in climate patterns. In short: Two million people in Uganda face starvation as a result of climate change! (2010a:19).

This was followed by a particularly strong La Niña in July-August 2011 (as part of a longer 2010-2012 La Niña event). This resulted in the worst East African drought in sixty years, as the short rains failed in 2011 and the long and short rains in 2012 were inadequate. Another La Niña followed beginning in 2020 (Kabukuru 2023). The short rains in 2020, the long and short rains in 2021, and the long rains in 2022 were all in deficit. The long 'rainy' season of March-May 2022 was anything but rainy; it was the 'driest one in over 70 years for Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia' (Mahapatra 2022). While periods of El Niño and La Niña are part of a natural weather pattern – technically known as the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) – of the earth's ecological system, in recent decades their effect is growing in intensity, resulting in a greater frequency of extreme weather patterns such as droughts and floods (Johnson 2022). It is increasingly clear that 'unrestrained human exploitation of nature has led' to these ecological crises (Bauckham 1986:236).

Jesse Mugambi notes that

> comparatively, the continent of Africa as an ecological region is most adversely affected although its inhabitants are least responsible for the industrial pollution of which they are the most affected victims. (2017:109)

In West Africa, the past fifty years have seen 'a notable decline in rainfall' (Okyere-Manu and Morgan 2022:93). In East Africa, simultaneously water bodies such as Lake Naivasha and Lake Nakuru in Kenya are at historically

record high levels, flooding shore communities, while in other areas the rains frequently fail, resulting in widespread drought with accompanying crop failure and devastating loss of livestock. This is more than a natural cycle alternating between natural resource wealth and dearth. A striking example is that much of Turkana Land in northwest Kenya was once classified as grasslands but today is generally experienced as desert. I have stood on barren ground in places where the grass grew shoulder high within living memory. Musa Dube notes that across Africa and around the globe,

> we have all witnessed significant climatic changes and deadly natural disasters. In some places, it is growing frequency of droughts and floods while some places are characterised by deforestation and desertification. (2021:93-94)

Indeed, 'environmental challenges are emerging almost everywhere' (Sorley 2011:138) – but climate change disproportionately affects the world's most vulnerable people (Cherrington 2008). A 2021 study by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN (FAO) determined that '22 million of Kenya's total population of 56 million are chronically hungry' (Sorley 2023:20). In light of these changing contextual realities, 'African nations are struggling to find answers to ecological issues' (Aidoo 2019:41).

Theological Anthropology

> *Human dominion over the rest of creation is to be an exercise of kingship that reflects God's own kingship. The image of God is not a license for abuse based on arrogant supremacy but a pattern that commits us to humble reflection of the character of God.*
> (Wright 2006:427)

Christian teaching has typically recognised a specialness of humans by virtue of their being created in the image and according to likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27), although '*as* the image' and '*according to* the likeness of God' may be a more accurate translation, as Imes explains:

> [to] talk about *being* God's image (rather than being *made in* God's image) reinforces the concept that the *imago Dei* is essential to human identity rather than a capacity that can be lost. (Imes 2023:4-6)

> the image of God is not so much something we *possess*, as *what we are. To be human is to be the image of God*. (Wright 2006:421)

Thus

> if we take Scripture seriously, we cannot conclude that humans are merely a product of time and chance. Genesis 1 insists that humans are the climax of God's creative work and the crown of creation. (Imes 2023:19)

Insofar as nonhuman animals are not created as God's image and likeness, humans can be said to be superior to animals. But to what end? We must ask

> how human beings as the image of God are related to the rest of creation and how we understand the command to have 'dominion' over the creation given the destruction of our planet. (Peppiatt 2022:5)

According to Genesis 1:26 and 28, we are 'to *rule over* creation and to *subdue* the earth', meaning that 'the first way in which all of us can glorify and serve God is by caring for his creation' (Assohoto and Ngewa 2006:11), thereby fulfilling 'a unique purpose in God's created order' (Blasu 2020:68). This means that

> we need to imagine new models for the relationship between ourselves and our earth. We can no longer see ourselves as namers of and rulers over nature but must think of ourselves as gardeners, caretakers, mothers and fathers, stewards, trustees, lovers, priests, co-creators and friends of a world that, while giving us life and sustenance, also depends increasingly on us (McFague 1987:13)

Importantly, the mandate in Genesis 1:28 for humans to *rule* and *subdue* does not use language that implies 'violence and abuse' but rather 'benevolent care for the rest of creation as entrusted into human custodianship' (Wright 2006:425). Similarly the language of Genesis 2:15 conveys a message 'of environmental care' (Ottuh 2022:8-9). We are not merely '*masters* of nature' but are also '*curators* of nature' (Bauckham 1986:235). Thus as we consider the environment, 'the language of stewardship and responsibility, of care and nurture', is more helpful than the language of 'rule and reign' (Peppiatt 2022:81). Jesus teaches that we should not 'lord it over' others as do those outside of a covenant relationship with God (Matt. 20:25; Mark 10:42); similarly humans are not called to 'lord it over' creation but rather to care for creation.

Certainly, those who reject environmental stewardship – often referred to theologically as 'Creation Care' or 'Earth Keeping' – embody a startling degree of disregard for creation. Golo notes that the neglect of care for creation by some Christians, including in Africa, on the grounds of a 'belief that the earth and earthly existence is temporal' represents 'an unbiblical and faulty theology' and perhaps even heresy (2012:355). At least in part, 'the current ecological crisis in Africa' may be a result 'of the church's poor eschatology that fails to promote an environmental biblical theology' (Falconer 2019:119). Recognising that this is simply wrong, others have thrown out the baby with the bathwater, rejecting all notions of humans having any superiority, as divine image-bearers, over other creatures. But the root of anti-environmentalism is not found in an overblown sense of anthropocentricity, though that can be a contributing factor, but rather in a failure to truly embrace the theological anthropology found equally in biblical texts and in classic Christian tradition. That is, precisely because such people fail to truly and fully appropriate 'image and likeness of God' anthropology, they also fail to appropriate the creation mandate given to humans to care for the earth and its nonhuman occupants. In the Genesis creation accounts, 'the well-being of humanity is closely linked to the well-being of the land' (Aidoo 2019:52). A truly Christian anthropology recognises the way in which humans are superior to animals (and plants) but applies that to our having a greater responsibility to protect (and restore) the environment. The creation accounts of Genesis show us that

> ecological order, life, harmony, growth, and reproductivity in the created order would be maintained through humanity's exercise of responsible stewardship in the context of 'being in union' (communion) with God. (Niringiye 2010a:29)

Such relational harmony resonates with the African concept of *ubuntu* (Mvula 2015:245). Since we are created as God's image and likeness, we also must act as God's governing agents (Blasu 2020:90, 95-112; see also Bauckham 1986:233).

Christian theology recognises that, because of sin, 'the relationship of human beings and the creation to God [has] changed' (Rutledge 2015:163), and the relationship between humans and the rest of creation on the earth has been imperilled. As missiologist Ruth Padilla DeBorst noted in a plenary address at a conference in Limuru, Kenya, as a result 'the relationship between God's earth and God's people was damaged' (2010:7-8). Not only was the harmony between God and God's images (humanity) replaced with discord, but 'the harmony between humanity and the rest of creation, and within creation itself, was also dismembered' (Niringiye 2010b:38) because 'the fall disturbed humanity's harmonious relationship with nature' (Bauckham 1986:240). Some embrace an eschatology that results in a 'throw-away' consumeristic ecology; because the earth will be 'destroyed by fire', they say (misunderstanding 2 Peter 3:10, NIV-1984), and there will be 'a new heaven and a new earth' (2 Pet. 3:13 and Rev. 21:1, NIV-1984), humans are absolved of environmental responsibility and environmental crises are welcomed as signs of the 'end times'. This view fails to recognise the natures of both the old creation and the new creation, for there is a 'necessary continuity between the old and new creations' arising from the fact that the new creation will be 'the redeemed transformation' of the old creation: 'an other-worldly negation of a duty of environmental care for this present world is thereby made impossible' (Polkinghorne 2002:116). Sadly, this flawed otherworldly and futurist eschatology was brought to Africa by some missionaries to the detriment of African Christianity (see Lowery 2019:19-21). Alternatively, then,

> eschatological hope which is hinged upon the consummation of the cosmos may call Africans to action in how they relate to their environment. (Muriithi 2019:94)

In Ephesians 1:10, Paul asserts that God's purpose is 'to bring unity to all things in heaven and earth under Christ' which means that 'we are not going to be saved *out of* the earth, but saved *along with* the earth' (Wright 2015:186). Unfortunately, mere intellectual 'assent to the belief that God made humans stewards over the earth and its natural resources' and that Christians consequently have 'a duty of caring for the environment' does not always translate into the church having a positive 'impact on climate change, adaptation, and mitigation' (Okyere-Manu and Morgan 2022:91). It is therefore necessary to insist upon the 'theological character' of 'creation's integrity' (Jenkins 2008:121) and environmental health.

Models of stewardship

> *If we care for our environment it will care for us.*
> *If we mess up our environment it will mess us up in return.*
> (Mugambi 2016:1120)

In many North American churches across various denominations, teaching on stewardship can often be summarised like this: 'That stuff you think you own? It's not really yours; it's God's. So treat "your" resources accordingly.' (I have heard hundreds of sermons and meditations on this theme across denominational lines.) This approach can be effective because from childhood we are taught to take better care of something borrowed than of something owned – borrowed items should always be returned in the same condition as received or, when possible, in better condition. But this approach only captures one part of biblical teaching on stewardship. In Genesis 2:15, we see that *Ha-Adam* is placed in the garden to work it and keep it. In this narrative, humans are stewards, not owners – 'the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it' (Ps. 24:1 and 1 Cor. 10:26, NIV-1984). Thus in Job 41:11 God emphasises, 'Everything under heaven belongs to me' (NIV-1984). Because 'all resources are God's resources', this approach to stewardship teaches, 'their use should follow divine principles and values' (Oyugi 2019:116). This approach is legitimate, but it is not complete.

Genesis 1:26-29 paints a different picture. In that narrative, humans are fashioned as God's image and likeness. It is thus only natural that they are

given dominion. In effect, they are owners. Old Testament texts about land tenure affirm a 'meaningful sense of personal or family ownership' (Wright 2006:297). What bearing does this have on how stewardship should be taught? Here cross-cultural life and work gives insights which may otherwise be missed. Asking what it means, practically speaking, to live in allegiance to Jesus from the viewpoint of a different language and culture can open one's eyes to the teachings of Scripture in new and profound ways. This is also true for those who strive to find and maintain culturally relevant and biblically faithful ways to teach stewardship, including environmental stewardship.

Stewards or Owners? Enaishooki enkAi iyiook, enaang

'You're not owners; you're stewards.' In East African cultural contexts, this approach to resource management typically slams into a brick wall. As soon as a preacher insists, 'it's not really yours', the audience is lost. The Maasai (who speak the Maa language), semi-nomadic pastoralists of Kenya and Tanzania, have a proverb that explains this: *Etejo enkiteng, 'Mikintaaya! nchooyioki!'* ('The cow said, "don't lend me! Just give me away!"'). This is because the cow knows that within Maasai culture if it is lent, there is a likelihood that it will not be well cared for (cp. similar Samburu proverbs, with explanations, in Lesarge 2018:83-84, 94; the Samburu are closely related to the Maasai). Strikingly, the Maa word *enkoito* refers to a cow that is skinny *because its owner is dead*: left ownerless, it is uncared for. Only when there is ownership is there also proper stewardship:

> The hired hand, who is not a shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and abandons the sheep and flees. So the wolf attacks the sheep and scatters them. He runs away because he is only a hired hand and has no concern for the sheep. (John 10:12-13, my translation of NA27)

I have learned from informants in many African cultures – e.g., in Cameroon (Yamba), Kenya (Kalenjin, Maasai, Samburu, Turkana), and Nigeria (Etulo, Ibirom, Idoma, Ibirom, Igala, Igede, Jukun, Nupe, Tiv, Yoruba) – that only when one can say *enaai* ('it is mine') or *enaang* ('it is ours') can effective stewardship be faithfully practised. There is a place to teach that stewardship is the management of someone else's resources in trust (e.g., see Matt. 25:14-30). But it is also necessary to recognise that we are the recipients of God's gifts.

Enaishooki enkAi iyiook, enaang (‘what God has given us, is ours’). Because *ekebikoo intokinin pooki naaramat iloopeny* (‘all things which their owners care for last long’), as the Maasai say, we must care for the earth which we have been given.

Your Father is Alive

A pair of Maasai cultural proverbs suggest an alternative approach to the traditional Western interpretation, one that is built on Genesis 1:26-29 as well as 2:15. *Memurata olayioni oota menye* (lit., ‘a son who has a father is not circumcised’). ‘Now if you have a living father,’ it observes, ‘you’re not really circumcised.’ Alternatively, *emurata olayioni otua menye* (‘the son whose father is dead is circumcised’) – this person is free to make decisions on his own. For many ethnocultural groups in East Africa, including the Maasai, boys are ritually circumcised during adolescence. This event marks a major transition. No longer a boy, the circumcised male is now a warrior and a man. So the proverb is saying that if your father is still alive, it is as if you are still a boy. Culturally, if your father is alive, it is as though you are still a youth. Why is this? Because you show natural respect for your father. You honour him by consulting with him before you so much as sell a goat in order to obtain school fees for your children. Are you sixty and a grandfather? If your father is still alive, you will consult with him before you sell a goat to obtain school fees for your grandchildren. Traditionally (or at least according to cultural ideals) this is not abusive patriarchalism. It is not just that the old man remains the nominal head of the extended family. Rather, he is recognised to have wisdom. He can guide the younger generations in the best way forward. Being past the point of self-seeking desire, he has a broader perspective about what is best for the whole family. The primary interest of the old man is in the well-being of his whole family. So he will advise them accordingly. He receives *enkanyit* (‘proper respect’ and ‘honour’; *enkanyit* inherently involves reciprocal mutuality) and gives in return counsel and blessing (Barron 2019:17-18). Those of us who follow Jesus know that our Father, *Papa enkAi* (‘Father God’; though *enkAi*, the word for ‘God’, is grammatically feminine; see Barron 2023:21-22), is alive. This does not mean we are not responsible adults. It does mean we should invite God into the process as we consider the management of our resources – including environmental resources such as land, water, and air.

Eramatare: Maasai Stewardship

The primary Maa verb for taking care of something or someone is *aramat* (used in the proverb above, *ekebikoo intokitin pooki naaramat iloopeny* – 'all things which their owners care for last long'); the noun is *eramatare* ('the caring for/tending of/management of [something]' or 'stewardship'). The most common word that approximates the idea of 'steward' is *olaramatani* (cp. *muramati* in Gĩkũyũ/Kikuyu). Two popular female names are *Naramat* and *Kiramatisho*, both of which signify a woman who is a good household manager who is dedicated to and skilled at taking care of home, home-based businesses, and children – that is, a woman who is proficient and effective in her exercise of *eramatare*. My wife's Maasai name is *Naramati*, 'she-who-is-well-cared-for'; this name connotes the opposite of *Lo-Ruhamah*, 'not-loved', in Hosea 1:6. As Christians, we know that we are called *Naramati* (or *Leramati* for males) by God. Thus we should strive to have the character of a *Naramat* or *Kiramatisho* (or *Leramat* and *Olaramatisho* for males) in how we exercise stewardship of our resources, including environmental resources. We have seen above that in Maasai culture *eramatare* is most effective when there is a sense of ownership or investment.

The Maasai are traditionally seminomadic pastoralists. Within most African worldviews, 'the life of the community [is] intertwined with the land' (W'Ehusha 2015:267); this is certainly true for the Maasai. Where government policy has taken ownership of the land away from the Maasai community, the practice of environmental *eramatare* has suffered. Overgrazing often becomes a problem, as they still own the livestock but now have only limited grazing rights. Where government policy has implemented individual ownership of the land, not returning the land to the Maasai community as a whole but returning it to Maasai individuals, the sense of ownership has been restored and the land is no longer overgrazed. (Though when private ownership of land has been instituted without an understanding of what private ownership is, this has generally led to dispossession of the land from the Maasai.) Prior to interference by colonial governments and then by the governments of Tanzania and Kenya, the Maasai practised stewardship of the land in ways that allowed their grasslands and forests to thrive. Demonstrating that 'caring for the environment and the climate is not something foreign to the peoples of Africa' (Tarusarira 2017:406), they were so successful in sharing the land with wildlife that, where other areas suffered deforestation and overgrazing,

Maasai Land offered pristine examples of thriving ecosystems. As their reward, governments confiscated some 16,665 km^2 from the Maasai to set apart the Serengeti, Maasai Mara, and Amboseli reserves for conservation. Thus

> Maasai communities are now facing the destruction of their livelihoods under the guise of conservation, despite centuries of sustainable Maasai stewardship of these lands. (Minority Rights Group 2023)

Such dispossession of land is a grievance to all who suffer it, for, as a Maasai proverb says, *egiroo enkulukuoni oshola* (lit., 'soil goes beyond that-which-melts') – 'land is superior to money'.

We lived in the Maasai Mara region before the transition from group ranches to the current regime of demarcation and private property. When land was assigned to group ranches, the Maasai were still able to maintain select plots as *olokeri* (a dedicated pasture upon which only the livestock of the owner may graze, together with wildlife, usually reserved for sick animals as a place to recover). Because a sense of ownership remained, each *olokeri* had lush grass, even when the surrounding land was subjected to severe overgrazing. After demarcation and the establishment of privately held property, every family's plot has been treated like an *olokeri*, carefully protected from overgrazing or other misuse and often improved though the planting of trees. When we visited the region in January 2023, we were amazed at the transformation from degradation to restored ecological health in the Maasai homesteads, in spite of the challenges of the recent drought. It is not only the cow but the very land that says, 'don't lend me; give me'.

Roads to Restoration: Sustainable Agriculture and Reforestation

Deforestation leads to degradation of soil and water resources and sometimes to desertification. From 1973 to 2003, the government of Kenya estimates that Kenya lost 55% of its forests and woodlands (Sorley 2011:137). The results of this have been as catastrophic as they are obvious to those of us who live here, but some are taking positive action. Wangarĩ Muta Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement (GBM) in 1977 to combine indigenous ecological knowledge with bold action. According to GBM's website, the movement has planted 51 million trees. Maathai received a Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 for the

environmental progress engendered by GBM. A Rocha Kenya has successfully rehabilitated large tracts of the mangrove forests on Kenya's coast (Mugambi 2017:118). These environmental issues are common across sub-Saharan Africa. Revivalist Christian communities in Uganda include reforestation efforts as part of ordinary Christian practice (Jenkins 2008:5). Extensive environmental research in the 1980s in Zimbabwe led to the establishment of Association of African Earth-Keeping Churches (AAEC) and a 'war of the trees' to counter the 'obviously deteriorating environment, never-ending droughts, and the growing pressures on the land' (Daneel 2000:4-6). While reforestation, 'the protection of water resources, and wildlife conservation' is the focus of this movement, it has also been theologically fruitful as the Holy Spirit has come to be not only understood as 'healer of humankind' but also as 'healer of the land' and Christ is understood not only as king, elder brother, guardian, and saviour but also as 'healer of all creation' (Daneel 2000:5, 40).

Concurrent with the deforestation mentioned above, agricultural yields in Kenya plummeted (Sorley 2011:137). Brian Oldreive noticed the same conditions in Zimbabwe and pioneered, in 1984, the 'Farming God's Way' (FGW) method of sustainable agriculture; today FGW methods are practised in some twenty countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Spaling and Kooy 2019:412-413) with significant improvements in both harvest yields and soil quality (Sorley 2011:142-143; Spaling and Kooy 2019:412, 415-417). In 2005, Craig and Tracy Sorley founded Care of Creation Kenya (renamed Creation Stewards International in 2022), which bills itself as equally evangelical and environmental. Since then, the organisation has offered practical training in FGW methods, tree-planting, theo-agricultural teaching, and a wealth of locally published resources (e.g., Sorley 2009 and Sorley 2016). In Turkana Land in northwest Kenya, FGW is being used successfully to transform patches of desert into lush garden spots. When I first taught my Missions and Evangelism course for Community Christian Bible Training Institute in Lodwar in 2011, I took my students (a cohort of Turkana church leaders) to see FGW plots. Those who had not seen them before were amazed at the difference that God- and creation-honouring agricultural methods make. I also used the careful *eramatare* that is needed to care for the land and its crops as a parable to model how we should make disciples. The Parable of the Sower (Matt. 13:1-9, 18-23), or perhaps the Parable of the Soils, has an additional lesson to teach us: just as a farmer can use FGW methods to uproot thorns, remove rocks,

loosen up hard-packed soil, and provide mulch to protect the soil and seedlings from the scorching sun, so a disciple-maker can work to remove obstacles to the successful growing of the seed of the gospel. One obstacle to Christian witness today is the refusal of some Christians to engage in loving their neighbours through the practice of environmental stewardship.

Creation Care As Witness

> *Mission that ignores creation will always present too small a vision of God and his purposes. Mission that encompasses caring for creation – as long as it always keeps Christ central and makes him known – provides a message of hope and of life in all its fullness*.
> (Bookless 2008:104)

Around the world, Christians are connecting Creation Care with missional witness with increasing boldness:

> If Jesus is Lord of all the earth, we cannot separate our relationship to Christ from how we act in relation to the earth. For to proclaim the gospel that says 'Jesus is Lord' is to proclaim the gospel that includes the earth, since Christ's Lordship is over all creation. Creation care is thus a gospel issue within the Lordship of Christ. (*The Cape Town Commitment* 2010:32-33)

Just

> as Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity, we are called to *metanoia* and a renewed and just relationship with Creation that expresses itself in our practical life. (World Council of Churches 2022:1)

Missiologist and biblical scholar Christopher J. H. Wright reminds us that

> it is creation that is broken by human sin, so it is creation and humanity together that God intends to mend. (Wright 2006:212)

As a result,

> Anything less than an integral approach to mission – seeking God's kingdom rule in every dimension of society and creation – is ultimately a denial of the lordship of Christ. (Bookless 2023:16)

We must recognise that 'practical environmental action [is] a legitimate part of Christian mission' (Wright 2006:413).

The second greatest commandment is to love our neighbours as our ourselves (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:39; Mark 12:31; Jas 2:8). But loving one's neighbour as oneself is more than a commandment – 'it is an essential implication of our common createdness' as God's image 'and is as relevant in mission as in any other walk of life' (Wright 2006:424). Our neighbours, according to the parable of Jesus about the 'good Samaritan' (Matt. 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 10:25-28), are those who are vulnerable whom we have the power to help.

> God's restoration is never dependent on us, but part of the good news of the gospel is that God invites us to partner in the work of restoration. When we chose to leverage privilege for the furtherance of the kingdom and the good of our neighbours we become instruments of peace that God uniquely uses to introduce freedom and justice for our fractured world. (Gilliard 2021:59)

When we fail to love our 'neighbour' we fail to witness to the Lordship of Christ. Truly loving our neighbours means caring for their environment. Because humans are created as the image of God, we can recognise humans 'as creators with a specifically God-given role in relation to the care of creation' (Peppiatt 2022:120).

As Christians, 'Jesus models for us how to appropriately exercise God's rule over creation' (Imes 2023:3). Allen Yeh (2020:118) notes that

> to love one's neighbour, and to love the earth, are both part of the world that God created, and are part and parcel of each other.

Niringiye argues compellingly that 'humankind is faced with an environmental crisis unparalleled in human history' (2010a:20). This has largely been caused by 'environmental mismanagement', which represents 'a violation of God's sacred stewardship of the earth and its resources' and which 'adversely affects the quality of life for all of God's creatures' on the earth (Oyugi 2019:97). In light of this, 'there is an overwhelming need to combine creation stewardship with a clear connection to the gospel' (Sorley 2023:21). Only in this way can we demonstrate love of neighbour.

There is a 'necessary continuity between the old and new creations' arising from the fact that the new creation will be 'the redeemed transformation' of the old creation: 'an other-worldly negation of a duty of environmental care for this present world is thereby made impossible' (Polkinghorne 2002:116). Craig Sorley, a proponent and practitioner of Farming God's Way sustainable agricultural methodologies, argues that we must simultaneously 'work to heal creation and relieve the sufferings of the poor, so that people have a full and abundant life', by 'help[ing] them restore their small piece of creation' and 'work just as hard to bring these people into his kingdom' (2023:22). A Samburu proverb states, '*Nkiteng' sas ake nayiolo neiko koon*' ('It is only the emaciated cow that knows how to handle itself'); in other words, solutions to problems are best sought by those most affected by the problem (Lesarge 2018:70).

> Unless the vision to address climate change is articulated by those for whom it is intended, it cannot inspire and sustain a people. Any climate change enterprise must begin by considering how people's full range of resources, including their spiritual or religious resources, can be used for their general well being. (Tarusarira 2017:410)

Kä Mana agrees, noting that 'people should become the driving force behind their own quality of life' (1997:44; my translation).

It is clear that 'ecological concerns cannot be side-lined as they are central to all aspects of society' (Berman *et al*. 2021:35). Environmental *eramatare* is necessarily tied to our Christian witness, as 'how we treat the earth reflects how we treat its Creator and ours' – 'because the earth is part of the creation that bears the mark of God's own goodness', the exercise of godly *eramatare* of the earth honours the Creator but degradation of the earth dishonours God by spoiling the earth's 'reflection of its Maker' (Wright 2015:185, 398). Oyugi concurs and draws the logical conclusion: 'to abuse the environment is to tarnish God's reflection in nature. Environmental abuse is sin' (2019:116). From a missiological perspective, the current 'ecological crisis is sinful' because it is a result of our disregard for 'our sacred duty to care for God's creation' (Kaoma 2022:707). Moreover, because the opposite of faithful witness is blasphemy, Wendell Berry has referred to 'the abuse of land and creatures as a kind of blasphemy' (2009:x).

African Christian theologising and praxis

> must promote an integrated ecotheological agenda in its missional outlook that equips [believers and] students of the Bible to be partners in caring for land, waterbodies, and the environment. (Aidoo 2019:42)

As Christians, we need to both ask 'what is God's will for our community in these situations?' (Sorley 2011:139) and act on the answers we discern. Recognising that 'creation care is a prophetic opportunity for the church', the church must awaken 'to the urgent need to address the ecological crisis' and do so from within a 'biblical framework'; this will necessarily involve witnessing for Christ both against 'forces of greed and economic power', with their associated political frameworks, and also against 'pantheistic, neo-pagan and New Age spiritualities' (Wright 2006:416-417).

Conclusion

The spiritual wholeness that the gospel brings
is neither disembodied nor dematerialised but
reflects the love of a God who expresses the divine
identity in total solidarity with creation.
(Bevans and Schroeder 2004:377-378)

Human ontological status – our being made as God's image and according to God's likeness – means that we are to be 'responsible stewards, gardeners and servants of God's creation' (Mvula 2015:244). Similarly, it is increasingly clear that 'concern for God's creation is intrinsic to Christian mission' (Robert 2015:81) – a failure for Christians to demonstrate care for creation is thus a failure of Christian public witness. Thus current environmental crises should be seen as a call to a more complete Christian conversion and a more faithful public witness. Andrew Walls notes that

> Moral renewal follows inner transformation: people will adhere to God from their hearts (Jer. 31:31-34). And this change will herald universal renewal, in which the flora and fauna and the whole environment are enriched and violence is unknown, and the Gentiles will acknowledge Yahweh as their own God (Isa. 11:6-9). (Walls 2004:3)

Thus more robust forms of stewardship, including an *eramatare* of creation care informed by indigenous cultures such as that of the Maasai, are a necessary part of Christian witness and mission.

It follows that when such theological environmentalism or creation care is placed at 'the heart of Christian mission', Christianity – perhaps especially in Africa – will be able to 'make meaningful contributions to the resolution of life-threatening environmental problems confronting us' (W'Ehusha 2015:278). When we treat the earth as a Maasai whose father is still alive cares for a treasured *olokeri* ('special protected pasture'), we demonstrate love for our neighbour, participate in God's mission for the whole of creation, and declare the Lordship of Christ until he returns. 'Elijah was a human person just like us,' we read in the book of James. 'He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it didn't rain for three and half years. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain' (Jas 5:17-18; my translation of NA27). Perhaps if we earnestly pray and earnestly do the work of *eramatare* of creation, then when the migrating butterflies dance in Maasai Land, we can again be certain that the rains, in due time and right measure, are following. *Kelotu enchan!*

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Reading Luke 22:14–23 in an Ethiopian Context: A Tri-polar Contextual Approach

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Abstract

A contextual reading of biblical texts is crucial because it makes the theological message of the Bible relevant to its readers/hearers. This article is written on the basis that an Ethiopian meal context illuminates a better understanding of the Lucan Lord's Supper text. The meaning of the fellowship that Jesus maintains in instituting the Lord's Supper becomes better understood when seen in the context of dining together. It was in the context of the Passover Festival and his impending crucifixion that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. The unity of the Twelve with each other and with Triune God (i.e., both a horizontal and vertical fellowship) is established by sharing from the same bread and cup. Jesus gave his body and blood, represented by the bread and cup, and enacted a close affinity. The article employs a tri-polar theory to discuss this text in an Ethiopian meal context.

NOTE: Because it is an uncommon tradition to use family names in Ethiopia, all names of the Ethiopians referred in this article are stated by their first names, followed by their middle or fathers' names.

Introduction

Reading and/or interpreting biblical texts in an Ethiopian context is not a recent enterprise for the Ethiopian church, particularly the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church (see, for example, Cowley 1989; Ethiopian Orthodox Theological College 2015; Yimenu 2022). Unlike the sub-Saharan countries, an indigenised approach to reading the Bible was introduced in Ethiopia from the

time that the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church was introduced in the 4th century. [1] Ethiopian contextual interpreters give special focus and consideration to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church's interpretive traditions that are heavily rooted in the teaching from the 14th century national epic *Kĕbra Nagast*. [2] Thus, a contextual reading of the text based on the interpretive traditions of this church does not embrace some helpful socio-cultural traditions of the people with their unique cultural symbolic nature which constitute the identity of Ethiopian society. For instance, *gurəša* (eating a meal by giving a mouthful to each other) is one of the important cultures that all ethnic groups of people in Ethiopia experience.[3]

As a departure point from usual Ethiopian contextual interpretations that frame reading biblical texts in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church's interpretive traditions, this article pays attention to the traditional meal culture of Ethiopians (eating a meal together with others at one table) to read the Last Supper text in Luke 22:14–23.[4] The aim of the article is to demonstrate

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[1] The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church is the oldest church of the country, introduced in the 4th century AD. See Smithsonian Magazine 2019; or Archaeology Magazine 2022. See also Fekadu 2009:26–28.

[2] The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church's interpretive traditions are heavily rooted in the teachings of the *Kĕbra Nagast*. It

> is a storehouse of legends and traditions, some historical and some of a purely folk-lore character, derived from the Old Testament and the later Rabbinic writings, and from Egyptian (both pagan and Christian), Arabian, and Ethiopian sources. (Budge 2000:iii).

Kêbra Nagast is assumed to have been written in Coptic, and believed to have undergone transformations and revisions in the course of translating it into Arabic and Ethiopic languages.

[3] እድር (*ʾədər* – a traditional way of helping each other during difficult times, like in loss of close relatives) and ሽምግልና (*šəməgələna* – a traditional dispute-solving mechanism) also are among such important cultures that all nations and ethnic groups of people in Ethiopia experience.

[4] Although the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church has traditions that are related to eating a meal together, the way these are performed is different from common, traditional meal-dining practices of the society. The reason for its difference is that most food/meal traditions of this church are inherited from the Old Testament teachings and hold a specific religious flavour that is mixed with elements of the local traditions. For example, *sänəbäte* is one of the meal traditions of the church. *Sänəbäte*

how an Ethiopian traditional dining culture helps readers understand the text in question, especially the communal aspect of the Lord's Supper. Maintaining a sustainable relationship among Ethiopians is expressed in dining on a meal, which is performed involving *gurəša*: giving a mouthful to each other. This parallels the communion aspect described in the Lord's Supper text.[5] I chose a meal-dining tradition to read the text in consideration because the parallelism between the text and the culture discloses the similarity and dissimilarity between the two contexts. I assert that eating a meal in an Ethiopian culture helps to understand the communion aspect of the Lord's Supper, because it is performed in a unique and distinctive way of *gurəša* and offering a morsel of food to the Supreme Being, which are described below.

Engaging a tri-polar approach applied through the hermeneutical lens of inculturation and a narrative criticism methodology, I use the meal in the dining culture of Ethiopia to read the text in question. Inculturation hermeneutics is used to mediate an interaction between the cultural and textual contexts. Thus, I discuss the communal aspect of the Lord's Supper by letting an Ethiopian dining tradition and the Lucan Last Supper text interact with and interpret each other. With the help of inculturation hermeneutics as a mediating element, I consider a reciprocal way of interpretation: allowing a culture to interpret a text and vice versa. Knut Holter (2008) makes a distinction between the two categories of 'Letting the Old Testament interpret Africa' and 'Letting Africa interpret the Old Testament'. In the first category, 'Letting the Old Testament interpret Africa', Africa is the object of investigation. Therefore, the Bible is an interpretive tool. Holter (2008:18) writes:

> What underlies this approach is the assumption that the existence of certain religio- and socio-cultural parallels between ancient Israel and traditional or even modern Africa

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are different types of food that are brought by members of this church on every Sunday and eaten together with the poor at ደጇ ሰላም (i.e., a hall inside the church compound). Thus, such meal traditions of the church do not represent the dining practices of the Ethiopians.

[5] Of course, there are other theological themes in the text, like the abandonment and suffering of Jesus, which are not included in this article, simply for the reason of limiting the theme that relates to issues in the chosen local context.

> may enable African biblical scholars to let their scholarship contribute to the interpretation of society, culture, and religion in contemporary Africa.

This approach asks: how can the Bible help me better understand this people group? Thus, in this first category of research, the object of study is an African people group or practice with the Bible as the tool for better understanding. Holter's second category, 'Letting Africa interpret the Old Testament', asks: how can African perspectives and practices help us to better understand the text? Here the object of study is the Hebrew Bible. In this approach, African comparative material is used to illuminate meanings within the biblical text (Holter 2008:38). Such reading requires placing the given text in its appropriate position in order to discern and discuss its main theme(s) in the text's literary context. This is attained here by employing a narrative critical method. Based on the discussion of the context of the culture and the text, the chosen theme is analysed through the hermeneutical lens of inculturation.

After describing the hermeneutical lens of the third pole and the methodology applied, I identify the structure of the text and discuss the theme of fellowship in the Lucan Last Supper, based on the chosen method of narrative criticism. Following this, I will deal with a critical analysis of the chosen cultural context, which is used to read the text under consideration. In this way, the theological meaning of the chosen theme will be discerned and discussed. Thus, this article is arranged: (1) introduction, (2) definition of tri-polar approach, (3) description of narrative criticism that is used to structure and discuss the Lucan Lord's Supper text, (4) contextual analysis of the text that consists of two issues: discussions of literary context and the main theme of the text, (5) analysis of the meal sharing tradition of Ethiopians, and (6) implementation of the theological significance derived from the discussion, which is followed by (7) my conclusion.

A Tri-polar Theoretical Approach Defined

A tri-polar approach is used to interpret biblical texts in a context of a people's culture. It contains three elements or poles: a cultural context that parallels the context of the chosen or given text, the biblical text itself, and a mediating pole between the text and the culture. The cultural practice and the given text

are analysed to identify similarities and/or dissimilarities between the two. Similarities and dissimilarities between the two contexts are mediated by the third pole to appropriate the meaning of the text in a manner that escapes syncretism. Thus, the third pole is an intersecting or negotiating element between the cultural and textual contexts. It is explained in different ways. The explanation offered by Grenholm and Patte (2000:1–15) is different from the way it is described by West (2018:240–273) or Draper (2015:3–22). An important thing to notice here is not the way it is described, but its role. Scholars use it as a pole that mediates between the context of the text and culture. In this article, I follow the explanation offered by West. West (2018:247–248) expresses the third pole as 'implicit'. He writes,

> Implicit in bi-polar-like formulations are aspects of a third pole mediating between the African context and the biblical text: namely, the pole of appropriation.

He continues:

> What connects or entangles text and context, then, is a form of dialogical appropriation that has a theological and praxiological dimension. […] The ideo-theological third pole can take various forms, resulting in at least six intersecting yet different emphases in African biblical interpretation: inculturation, liberation, feminist, psychological, post-colonial, and queer biblical hermeneutics.

I find it appropriate here to use inculturation as the hermeneutic lens of the mediating third pole between the culture and the text. The term *inculturation* involves complex descriptions. It has been used in different contexts with various nuances of meanings.[6] However, I use it as a theory that sees the culture and the text in a balanced and reciprocal way. The two may inform and reform each other, guiding to a proper application of the text's meaning. An emphatic aspect here is reading a text with the eyes of culture and vice versa, letting the contexts of biblical text and culture converse with each other and learn from each other. Utilising it in this sense enables me to make a

[6] For its use in various contexts with nuances of meanings and its development in history, see Bass 2020:92-108.

communicational bridge between the culture and the text. Its meaning in this term is offered by Ukpong. He (1995:5) writes:

> [Inculturation hermeneutics] designates an approach to biblical interpretation which seeks to make the African, and for that matter any socio-cultural context, the subject of interpretation. This is different from making another context the subject of interpretation and then applying the result in the African context. It is also different from reading the context into the biblical text.

Thus, using inculturation as a third pole for a hermeneutic lens helps me to carefully deal with the text and culture in a balanced way, avoiding careless compromise of Lord's Supper theology and yet not ignoring a particular value of the culture that helps understand the text. In this way, an appropriation of the theological meaning of the text is materialised.

Narrative Criticism Defined

Narrative criticism is part of literary criticism. The literary critic assumes that the author worked with sources, but also that the author composed a new account from these sources – an account that has literary integrity (cf. Luke 1:1–4). As opposed to historical criticism that deals with the origins and original historical backgrounds of the text, narrative criticism is used to examine the final form of the biblical text, the text as it is before the reader. It focuses on the literary shape of the text. The narrative critic examines the text to discern its aspect, genre, structure (including plot, theme, irony, foreshadowing, etc.), characterisation, and narrative perspective (Rhoads 1982:412–434; Resseguie 2005:15–19). In order to structure the Lucan Lord's Supper text and to discuss the theme of fellowship that is the main objective of Jesus in instituting the Last Supper, I use the method of narrative criticism, particularly the aspects foregrounded by Wenham and Walton (2011), which are: setting, plot, point of view, and characterisation which are common elements of narrative criticism.

The setting of the story is provided in the narratives. Settings could be the geographical, religious, physical, temporal, and socio-cultural environment in

which the story is narrated (Resseguie 2005:87). Because setting provides the background of the story, it helps to analyse the story in its own right context.

A plot orbits around characters, functioning for the development of the story. It is a device that develops the progress of the story from one position to the next leading to a conclusion (Mburu 2019:109). It involves: (1) the beginning, the end, and the climax of the text, climax being identified by clues found in the text; (2) any suggestive gaps in the story – questions that come to the reader's mind, that the author does not resolve; and (3) any ambiguous expression, or irregularity, or peculiarity (e.g., digression/interruption, thematic inconsistency, apparent repetition) in the text. Characterisation focuses on how the narrator portrays characters found in the story, the way in which characters behave as the story unfolds (Resseguie 2005:197–198). Point of view is about the perspective from which the implied narrator wants readers to see the narrative.[7] Identification of these elements of the narrative is very important because they offer helpful data concerning the content, context, and nature of the text.

The Literary Context of Luke 22:14–23

Before dealing with the text in its narrative context, it is necessary to see if the textual unit of the text could be extended rather than ending at verse 23. For two basic reasons, Luke 22:14–23 cannot be read in isolation from the succeeding verses, verses 24–38. First, Luke emphasises the aspect of communion in the Last Supper much more strongly than the Markan and Matthean accounts by including a discourse that Jesus had with the Twelve. In Luke, the author brings forth the aspect of communion not only in the narrative of the Last Supper, but also in the extended discourse. Some of the discourse in Luke's report is uniquely Lucan while some of it has synoptic parallels in Mark and Matthew, but it is located outside the Last Supper scene in Mark and Matthew. The pericopes of the Last Supper – from the arrival of Jesus and the Twelve (Mark 14:17; Matt. 26:20; Luke 22:14) until they leave the room and go to the Mount of Olives (Mark 14:26; Matt. 26:30; Luke 22:39)

[7] Scholars provided a detailed discussion on the setting, plot, point of view, and characterisation. (See, for instance, Wenham and Walton 2011:95–96 and Resseguie 2005:87).

– are rather shorter in Mark (ten verses) and Matthew (eleven verses) than they are in Luke (twenty-six verses).

Second, the key words in the given passage (i.e., Luke 22:14–23) are repeated in the succeeding section (vv. 24–38). Particularly, the eating and drinking theme, the key word 'table' (vv. 14–15, 17–18, 21 *vs* vv. 27, 30), the idea of the weakness of Jesus' disciples, and Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial (vv. 21–22 *vs* v. 34) are repeated in the extended section. Notably, in the Lucan version, Jesus relates the Last Supper setting to the disciples' dispute over which one of them would be the greatest. Jesus uses their dispute as an opportunity to explain who is the greatest in the kingdom of God. As opposed to the kings of the Gentiles (v. 25), Jesus, though being their Lord, still served them at the table (v. 27). Verse 27 looks back to the institution of the Lord's Supper (vv. 17–20). Thus, being the greatest is rooted in serving at the table – not being served (vv. 27, 30). The failure of Peter to give his life for the sake of Jesus (i.e., that he would go to prison and death with Jesus [vv. 33–34]) conversely points to Jesus' giving of his life for Peter and others (vv. 19–20).

Outline and Discussion of the Context of the Text

1 The Last Supper and the betrayal (vv. 14-23),

2 Disputes among the disciples over the issue of being the greatest (vv. 24-30),

3 Foretold impending denial with additional teaching and advice (vv. 31-38).

The narrative of the Lucan Last Supper begins with the clause: 'When the hour came, he took his place at the table' (v. 14), which functions as a connecting clause, connecting the pericope with the previous verses (vv. 1–13) by repeating the same idea in verses 1 and 7 where the nearness of Passover Festival and the arrival of the actual 'Day of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover' are mentioned, respectively. Moreover, the Last Supper pericope and the rest of the verses of the chapter are interrelated with each other in different ways. This is especially seen in the relationship of the passage to preceding and succeeding sections that disclosed the theme of the Passover Festival with elements related to the Passover and key words related to eating

and drinking (see vv. 1, 7–9, 11, 14–15, 17–21, 27, 30). Therefore, the Passover meal becomes the main context of the passage.

The plot of the narrative and portrayals of the characters are expressed in the framework of the eating and drinking at the table. Jesus is the protagonist who gives his body and blood represented in the bread and cup to be shared (eaten and drunk) by his disciples. He also predicts what Judas is thinking by putting it in the context of dipping a hand in the food. Furthermore, Jesus controls the forum by leading and responding to disciples' questions in the dialogue as well as giving them teachings and advice. The focus of his answers is on fellowship: he desires to share a fellowship meal with them before his suffering. Thus, he gives the bread and cup that represent his body and blood to maintain their fellowship, and he responds to the disciples' dispute over greatness, relating it to table service – serving others just like a servant at a table. His answer to their dispute annuls their divisiveness by focusing on the theme of fellowship. Furthermore, he wants them to understand fellowship in its transcendent nature rather than in terms of simple table service: Jesus' suffering, foreshadowed in the Lord's Supper, must be fulfilled. Thus, his suffering also becomes the context for understanding the fellowship aspect of the Lord's Supper (see vv. 15–16, 18, 21–22, 30, 32–33, 37).

The Theme of Fellowship Discussed

One of the significant moments in Jesus' earthly life and ministry was the fellowship he had with his disciples on different occasions. More than any other occasion, the theme of fellowship is especially seen when it is disclosed at the celebration of the Passover Festival, in which he instituted the Last Supper. There is no other true fellowship that is expressed in any other way than Jesus' giving of his body and blood for others (vv. 19–20). As it has been already demonstrated in the introduction, there are other aspects in this text, such as abandonment and suffering. However, here I limit myself to the aspect of communion within the Lord's Supper because the theme of fellowship not only prevails in the text, but also it correlates with an Ethiopian cultural context.

In Luke 22:14-23, two interwoven themes conspicuously appear in front of readers: abandonment and fellowship. Looking at the narrative as it unfolds in

these verses, it seems that the theme of abandonment dominates, and the theme of fellowship is less obvious in the story. However, beneath the theme of Jesus' being abandoned by one of his intimates, the story presents the fellowship aspect of the Lord's Supper. It speaks of the reality of community. The intimate fellowship between Jesus and his disciples is discerned when one closely reads the text. By saying 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer' (v. 15), Jesus expresses that this is the last occasion for him to be in fellowship with them here on earth.

Luke's emphasis on the fellowship theme also is unfolded in the way he presents a traitor (Judas, called Iscariot [vv. 3–6; 'who is the son of James' [Luke 6:16]) amongst the Twelve. Mark and Matthew present the account of the disclosure of a traitor by Jesus prior to the distribution of the bread and wine, whereas Luke keeps the account until the distribution of the bread and wine is over. The reason for Luke's bracketing this and bringing the account of the distribution of the bread and wine first is to give emphasis to the fellowship theme. Explaining how Luke restructured the text by revising its corresponding Markan story, Nash (1992:398) writes:

> Luke revises the Markan order of the event by presenting the ritual meal prior to the announcement of the presence of a traitor in the circle of the disciples. This restructures the narrative to place more emphasis on the fellowship of the Supper and to heighten the sense of abandonment and betrayal which occurs at the end of the meal.

The fellowship theme is also clearly demonstrated in verse 17. After taking the cup and blessing it, Jesus says, 'Take this and divide it among yourself'. This conspicuously shows the unity at the table, all sharing from one cup. The theme is also expressed in different ways from different angles in the narrative. It is observed and identified from the unity shown in the group that dined together at the Last Supper: the Twelve and Jesus. Jesus, with his close team, ate and made a dialogue that exhibited their relationship. The composition of the group and the extended discourse between Jesus and the disciples exhibits that the Supper was eaten in the spirit of fellowship.

Nevertheless, the team was not perfect as can be understood from Jesus' words that one of them would betray him. Judas Iscariot committed his heart to money and to Jesus' opponents. However, although the character of Judas – with his bad inner thought – stands in contrast to the group's unity, the theme of communion unfolds in the narrative, with raising of the question of who would betray their Lord. Their unity is still maintained. When the disciples heard Jesus saying that his betrayer was one of them, they asked each other, 'Which one of them it could be who would do this' (Luke 22:23). It surprised them because it was unthinkable to them that one of them would do such an evil thing, violating the intimate relationship they all had together.

In addition to these, the fellowship aspect of the Last Supper in Luke is seen in Peter's words about Jesus' prediction. Following Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper in which he gives himself to others, Peter assumed that he could also give his life for Jesus' sake. Peter's statement emerged not without context, but from his commitment to Jesus and the fellowship he experienced as part of the team. However, Peter's fallen nature undermined his promise to Jesus.

An Ethiopian Meal-Dining Culture

Food plays an important cultural role in every community in the world, operating as a way for people to connect within their community and to celebrate important events. This idea is expressed in various ways in the materials written on topics related to food and culture. For instance, Eleni Michopoulou and Pijus Jauniškis (2020:9) state of the communal aspect of food: 'Acquiring food in various ways was evidently reported to help connect with the community, society and one's cultural identity' (see also Pufall et al. 2011:242). 'In fact, the simple act of eating together is a universal symbol of hospitality and acceptance which transcends cultures' (Nash 1992:397). This general expression, of course, is true in many aspects of Ethiopian food traditions. However, an Ethiopian culture of dining employs a deeper meaning of fellowship than the aforementioned general statements. In the Ethiopian context, eating together signifies the idea of relationships in a stronger way than the dining traditions in many other countries in the world. This is because dining is carried out in a distinctive and unique way in Ethiopian culture. This distinctive nature of eating a meal is related to the manner of eating a meal

that is expressed in the Amharic word *gurəša* and to the belief of diners about divine intervention in their life.

In many parts of Ethiopia, meals are eaten communally, with diners using their hands to scoop up እንጀራ (*ʾənəǧera*) (a fermented flatbread made of ጤፍ [*tʼef*] flour) and other dishes. Such dining together takes place not only when food is served in homes, but also when friends eat at hotels or in restaurants. Like in most countries of the world, Ethiopians dine in restaurants if it is impossible for them to be at home or if they are away from home for special reasons or occasions. A special feature of the connectedness of diners in Ethiopian eating culture is attached to food eaten in a restaurant. When friends, colleagues, or family members or a group of people go to eat in a restaurant, each orders what she/he wants to eat. However, the interesting thing is that after a choice is made by each, the waiter will bring all orders on one plate. For example, they make a food order to the waiter saying: 'ሦሥት በአንድ' (i.e., three in one, if three different kinds of food are chosen) or 'አራት በአንድ' (i.e., four in one, if four different kinds of food are chosen) etc. The choice of the number of food types depends on the number of individuals in the group. After the food types are put on one *mäsob* (plate), it is brought from the kitchen, and all eat from the composition without paying attention to the food type each chose. It is offensive if one eats all the type of food that she/he chose, because doing so destroys the communal connection that one has with the others. Thus, dining together from the compilation of food types is a conventional practice that symbolically bonds the diners.

Another special nature in Ethiopian communal dining that strongly plays its role in connecting people in a dining tradition is called *gurəša*, meaning 'giving a mouthful'. *Gurəša* is carried out in a distinctive and unique way when eating a meal together. The Amharic term *gurəša* refers to giving a mouthful to one another during eating a meal together. Diners give a *gurəša* to each other – turn by turn – until the meal is completely consumed. *Gurəša* has its own procedure. Usually, the host begins giving a *gurəša* to the diners as friends or family members eat together in an individual home. However, if dining takes place outside of home, e.g., in a restaurant, one of the diners can begin giving a *gurəša*. In the course of dining on a meal, the host or one of the diners

> will divert his food-filled hand away from its natural destination and place the morsel directly into the mouth of someone else, from among those sitting at the table or standing nearby [… T]he holding hand moves to fill someone else's mouth. (Salamon 2019:3)

The fundamental aim in *gurəša* is maintaining and fostering relationships. The national UAE magazine states the response of an Ethiopian interviewee, named Getahun, about *gurəša* as follows:

> *Gurəša* is the principle that all relationships – ranging from the familial to friendships to a business deal – are ratified over a shared meal. (Saeed 2017:2; see also a companion site by Kloman 2024)

It is further stated,

> *Gurəša* is not an act of showing an apathy or sympathy to a hungry person. It is rather an act of showing love, intimacy, togetherness and forgiveness. (Leulseged 2019)

Because *gurəša* is 'considered [as] a benevolent gesture, expressing love, affection, and care' (Salamon 2019:4), its communal aspect is very strong.

It is offensive to refuse *gurəša*. A person can only refuse to accept a *gursha* if she/he has a negative feeling or hatred to the other(s) in the group that eats a meal together. Just a simple rumour running about her/him causes a person to refuse a *gurəša*. A person might be told a rumour by someone external to the dining group as if the rumour originated from a group member. I will not go in-deep on this issue, because it is not my main concern, and it needs its own independent study.

Another aspect in connection with eating a meal is people's beliefs concerning divine intervention in their daily life. The traditional belief of Ethiopians highly regards the reality and importance of divine intervention. The tradition focuses on the belief that an intimate relationship between god(s) and diners is maintained by offering a morsel from the meal to god(s) before the group (be it family members or friends and colleagues) eats the food served to the diners.

Offering a morsel of food to god(s) is made through special agents (special in the sense of society's traditional understanding). Such agents are considered as special because the society believes that they possess a unique gift or spirit. Agents could be human beings or objects that traditional Ethiopians believe to be mediators. The objects could be big trees or known rivers. In this cultural context, witchdoctors are believed to be mediators between individuals and god(s). Objects that are believed to be mediators are consecrated by traditionalists and kept for the purpose they are assigned. Cutting such trees or polluting the river is a serious offence because doing so is believed to bring divine wrath. It is also believed that the god(s) will bless the meal to be eaten and a relationship with the divine is promoted and sustained if a morsel of food is offered to the god(s).

Towards an Appropriation of the Meaning of the Text

An appropriation of a theological meaning of the text is done by letting cultural practices and the text interact with each other through the negotiating pole of inculturation. However, before proceeding to discuss this issue, I will summarise my aforementioned discussion on the text and cultural context. Then after, I will move to identifying the similarities and dissimilarities between the contexts of the text and of an Ethiopian meal culture, followed by the issue of appropriation.

Ethiopian dining culture bears a strong symbolic meaning of relationships – the relationship among the diners and the relationship between diners and the Supreme God. These two relationships are expressed in two ways that are embraced when dining a meal is performed: *gurəša* and a belief on divine intervention, the former in relation to the diners and the latter in connection with the divine and the diners. *Gurəša* carries a strong symbolic meaning of fellowship by maintaining, nourishing, and strengthening relationships among the diners. The relationship between the Supreme Being and the diners is maintained by offering a morsel of food to god(s) through mediating diviners. The latter is done before eating a meal. It is given prior to eating a meal because it is believed that securing a vertical relationship is a foundation for a horizontal one, which helps diners to sustainably maintain their horizontal connectedness.

The communion aspect, both the horizontal and vertical relationships, also is the main theme of the Last Supper text in Luke. This is expressed in the text in different ways. Eating from the same bread and drinking from the same cup carrying with them the importance of the horizontal relationship. This is clear in Luke's narration of Jesus' words: 'Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, "take this and *divide it among* yourselves"' (v. 17, emphasis added). The vertical aspect of the communion is shown in Jesus' giving of bread and cup that represents his body and blood for his disciples and, of course, for all humanity. The words, 'this is my body, which is given for you' followed by 'this cup that is poured out for you' (vv. 19, 20), bear the strong tie Jesus has with his disciples and all humanity.

The analyses made above on the Lucan Lord's Supper text and Ethiopian dining culture demonstrate that there are similarities and dissimilarities between the two. The question is now: how are these similarities and dissimilarities addressed in applying the text for today? This question is solved by applying a mediating third pole, i.e., inculturation hermeneutics. An application of inculturation hermeneutics becomes a mediating bridge between the pole of text and the pole of the culture. It brings similarities and dissimilarities in to the sight of each other that each may inform and reform, and be informed and reformed by the other. In this way, it helps to apply similarities in a harmonious way and settle dissimilarities in a productive system, because it helps to figure out ways of appropriation.

Thus, similarities and dissimilarities of the fellowship theme observed in an Ethiopian dining culture of *guraša* and intervention of the divine and the Lucan Lord's Supper text are discussed as follows. The similarities of the vertical and horizontal themes of fellowship become the prevailing theme both in the Ethiopian dining practice and in the Lucan Lord's Supper text, though the means by which the fellowship is maintain is different. As an act of *guraša* signifies a relationship of diners, sharing a loaf of bread and cup together also signify the relationship of the believers. The essential meaning in an Ethiopian culture of *guraša* is generous giving that reveals and maintains love and relationship among the diners. Thus, it lets readers understand how affectionate and benevolent giving is an important device for maintaining horizontal relationships. This informs readers of the Last Supper text that the

meaning of the fellowship in sharing the Lord's Supper lies in Jesus' giving of the loaf of bread and cup from the meal.

Yet, a transcendent nature of the communion still to be understood: the essence of the fellowship is not found in giving visible elements, but in what the elements signify or represent. Meaning sharing the body and blood of Jesus given in his impending crucifixion bonds all believers. Jesus gave himself in love for others. It is this meaning that is desired in the Lord's Supper text.

When it comes to the meaning of the vertical relationship expressed in Ethiopian culture and offered in the text, a vast dissimilarity is discovered. Ethiopian dining culture regards created things (like big trees, rivers, human beings) as mediators that help people to maintain a relationship with the Supreme Being. However, according to the text, it is Jesus by giving himself to others, in the form of visible elements that point to his death on the cross, who mediated between God and human beings. Hence, when the dissimilarities in the two contexts are brought to the sight of each other through the mediating inculturation hermeneutics, they challenge each other, leading each to inform and reform and be informed and reformed by the other. As shown in the discussion of the context of the text and in an Ethiopian culture, the vertical fellowship aspect in Ethiopian dining culture not only contradicts the communal aspect intended in the text, but it hinders one from understanding the true meaning of the relationship. Hence, the meaning of vertical fellowship expressed in the culture is informed and reformed by the meaning of fellowship offered in the context of the text, leading to an appropriation of the theological meaning of the fellowship offered in the text.

Conclusion

Dining in an Ethiopian culture of *gurəša* and the belief that the dining culture embraces about divine intervention carries both similarity and dissimilarity to the Lucan story of the Last Supper text in terms of maintaining fellowship. When similarity and dissimilarity in both contexts are brought into the sight of each other through the mediation of inculturation hermeneutics, the understanding of the communal aspect of the Lord's Supper becomes clear. By bringing the two into dialogue with each other, inculturation contributes by letting the two contexts challenge, inform and reform, and be informed and

reformed by each other. Thus, the horizontal fellowship discerned in *gurəša* of the Ethiopian cultural context helps readers understand the communal aspect expressed in the text because it expresses love, intimacy, togetherness, and forgiveness in a unique and distinctive way.

However, the vertical relationship maintained in the cultural context needs to be informed by the intended meaning of the text. Thus, the limited understanding the culture embraces that created things could mediate between divine and human beings is to be challenged by the meaning offered in the text, leading to the appropriation of true fellowship described in the text.

Finally, it would be possible to deal with other themes of the Lucan Last Supper text beside its communion aspect. For instance, the theme of abandonment of Jesus by one of his disciples can be approached from the dining culture of Ethiopians. In Ethiopian culture a person with negative thought against other(s) can share a meal together with friends. However, when she/he is given a *gurəša* (a mouthful), she/he refuses to accept because of her/his inner negative thought against one of the diners.[8] Carefully analysing this in detail may help one to understand the character of Judas and the alienation of Jesus by his follower. Other themes, like suffering and the sacrificial aspect of the Last Supper can also be discussed, but time and space do not allow me to deal with every theme of the Last Supper in this article. Thus, this article invites and encourages further examination of other aspects of the text from an Ethiopian context for broader and complete understanding of the text.

[8] In regard to refusing *gurəša*, Salamon (2019:3) states,

> The size of the *gurəša* is understood to reflect the generosity of the feeding person, and one is obliged to accept the morsel in its totality, as a refusal to open one's mouth and receive *gurəša* is considered to be insulting.

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A Template for a Soul-Winner and Soul-Winning Sermon from Apostle Peter's Life and Preaching in Acts 2:14-41

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Abstract

One of the primary purposes of preaching is soul-winning. This paper examines Apostle Peter's life and preaching on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, where at least three thousand souls were won and added to the Church. Consequently, a template is developed from Peter for a soul-winner and soul-winning sermon. This template involves the preacher's personal life and the preacher's sermon. Beyond the initial crowd's bewilderment at hearing the disciples speaking in their various languages was the response of three thousand men to Peter's preaching. When the people heard his sermon, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' To win souls, every preacher needs the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to elicit the audience's response to the invitation to salvation. Response to the invitation is evidence of a soul-winning sermon.

Introduction

The experience of Christ's disciples in Acts 2 took place on the Day of Pentecost while they gathered in Jerusalem. According to Jewish tradition, Pentecost is celebrated on the fiftieth day after Passover (Lev. 23:15-16, Deut. 16:9-12). Originally it was the Festival of the Firstfruits of the grain harvest (Exod. 23:16, Lev. 23:17-22, Numb. 28:26-31); it was also known as the Feast of Weeks because it is observed a day after the seven weeks of harvest that began with the offering of the first barley sheaf during the Passover celebration. By the

time of the first century A.D., however, it was considered the anniversary of the giving of the law at Mount Sinai and was a time for the annual renewal of the Mosaic covenant; it is therefore considered one of the three great pilgrim festivals of Judaism along with Passover and Tabernacles (Longenecker 2017:719-720). The Holy Spirit came so dramatically upon the early believers in Jerusalem during the Pentecost. Meanwhile, Pentecost was for Judaism the day of the giving of the Law, and, for Christianity, it is the day of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

During the apostles' era, Pentecost was a grand harvest celebration. The streets of Jerusalem were usually filled with thousands of pilgrims who came from the diaspora to celebrate the goodness of God and the bringing in of the wheat harvest (Pritchard 2021). However, Pentecost has a dual dimension to the Church. It is the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit, the advocate and comforter promised by Jesus to be given by the Father to his disciples for their empowerment, and it also marks the beginning of the Church's post-resurrection existence and mission to all nations (Straine 2022). The acclaimed author of Acts is Luke. His character is to locate events in history; therefore, Luke located the disciples' experience in Acts 2 in history, and that is why he specified the exact day when the Day of Pentecost came (Kisau 2006:2855).

The immediate effects of the Pentecostal experience can be seen in both the disciples and the audience. Among the effects of Pentecost on the disciples were what seemed to be the tongue of fire that fell upon each of them in the upper room, being filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking in other tongues as enabled by the Spirit, and Peter's courage to stand up with other apostles, raise his voice, and address the crowd. That day happened to be the disciples' first public address to the crowd after Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Peter's public address on the Day of Pentecost marked the beginning of the apostles' preaching. Pentecost brought to the disciples the heavenly illumination. They became filled with an intense longing to continue the work Jesus began. The disciples became strengthened by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit received, and they went forth with zeal to extend the triumphs of the cross (White 2015:30).

More so, the effects of Pentecost on Christ's disciples brought remarkable impacts on the audience and spectators.

> When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? …We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our tongues!' Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean? (Acts 2:6-12 NIV)

Beyond the initial crowd's bewilderment at hearing the disciples speaking in their various languages was the response of three thousand men to Peter's preaching. When the people listened to his sermon, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' Those who repented of their sin were saved and added to the Church. Undoubtedly, the population of the new converts added to the believers at the Pentecost outnumbered the earlier gathered believers on the day.

The gospel was new to Jews and Gentiles alike, so the obvious goal of preaching was the salvation of the lost. This is undoubtedly why the New Testament examples of preaching emphasise the winning of the lost. However, later, when the Church was more mature and some New Testament literature was available, Paul exhorted Timothy, as a pastor:

> Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. (2 Timothy 4:2 NIV)

This is the New Testament order from which present-day preaching has developed. Thus, today's preaching includes not only the gospel proclamation for the lost to be saved but also the preaching of the Word for believers to be encouraged and strengthened in the faith (Pettry 2009:91).

The above notwithstanding, the church should intensify efforts towards the primary purpose of preaching as soul-winning as in the days of the apostles beginning from the Day of Pentecost to save the unbelievers, non-Christians, professing-to-be-but-not-Christians, unsaved-church-goers, and other categories of sinners. There is a primacy of soul-winning in preaching.

Taking a cue from Acts 2, this writer attempts to develop a template for a soul-winner and soul-winning sermon from Apostle Peter's life and preaching. How paramount is the preacher's empowerment by the Holy Spirit, knowledge of the audience, and communication skills to a soul-winning? What about the salient aspects of the sermon can appeal to a sinner, cut their heart to repentance, and cause them to be saved? And what is the importance of invitation to soul-winning in preaching? This paper addresses these questions.

Clarification of terms

An attempt is made in this paper to identify the distinction between sermons and preaching as well as expound the meaning of soul-winning in Christian terminology.

Sermon:

As identified in the work of D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones' *Preaching and Preachers* (2011:95), the sermon is simply the message. The synonym for the sermon is the message, the content of what is being delivered. Hence, according to Lloyd-Jones (2011:95), there are two elements in preaching which are sermon and delivery, what is commonly called *preaching*. There is the *sermon*, a content or message the preacher has prepared; then there is the *act* of delivering this sermon. A sermon is what the preacher has received from God and is put in a logical structure based on a given or chosen text from the scripture. Preaching is 'standing in the place of God and speaking out the sermons that He wrote and spoke Himself in Scripture' (Emslie 2013:2). The content prepared and delivered is the sermon.

Every sermon has a purpose to achieve and the purpose is determined by different factors such as the type of audience, occasions, place, time, and text, among others. One effective means of incorporating the purpose into the sermon lies in writing out a conclusion with the purpose in mind (Robinson 2014:112). A soul-winning preacher should tactically include the invitations in their sermon outline.

Preaching:

What is preaching? While D. M. Lloyd-Jones (2011:90) was trying to answer *what is preaching?*, he painted a picture of a church setting where 'a man is

standing in a pulpit and speaking, and people are sitting in pews or seats and listening'. He inquired further,

> What is happening? Why does that man stand in that pulpit? What is his object? Why do these other people come to listen? What is this man meant to be doing? What is he trying to do? What ought he to be doing?

From the foregone, Lloyd-Jones (2011:90) believes that any true definition of preaching must be 'that man is there to deliver the message of God, a message from God to those people'.

As a means of divine communication, 'God uses preaching to communicate with men and women' (Janvier 2002:7). Meanwhile, a question can be raised concerning George Janvier's (2002:7) definition of preaching where he states that 'preaching is not a speech but an encounter with God': what is a speech?

A speech is the act of delivering a formal spoken communication to an audience or communication by word of mouth. (Advanced English Dictionary)

Preachers often communicate by word of mouth while speaking God's word to their audience, and God's word spoken by the preacher brings the hearers an encounter with God that transforms their lives. Hence, George Janvier's definition can be revised to 'Preaching is a divinely inspired speech that brings an encounter with God'. For Alan of Lille (2010:16-17), 'Preaching is an open and public instruction in faith and behaviour, whose purpose is the forming of men'. Alan's definition gives us the nature of preaching as open and public, and the purpose of preaching as the spiritual formation of men. Therefore, preaching is primarily to save and to form a man in Christliness.

The disciples gathered in one place, probably a place other than the upper room where the apostles were staying (Kisau 2006:2855-2856). The most likely place is the temple courts, where the disciples would have gone to pray and join other people in the celebration of Pentecost (Kisau 2006:2855-2856). That gives us insight into why a large crowd of Jews and men from all nations could hear Peter preach. David Pawson (2012:855) affirms the temple was the place where the disciples met on the Day of Pentecost; the Holy Spirit came on 120 disciples in the temple as they gathered for morning prayers at nine o'clock on

Solomon's porch. From Peter's actions in Acts 2:14 NIV, 'Then Peter *stood up* with the Eleven, *raised his voice and addressed the crowd*' (emphasis added), a definition of preaching can be derived: preaching as standing up, raising one's voice, and addressing the crowd by narrating, expounding, interpreting, and applying God's actions in the past and present for the salvation of the listeners.

From the Acts 2:14 definition above some salient matters emanate which have to do with posture, emotion, audience, and goal of preaching. The posture seen in the text was 'stood up'. Although in contemporary times we see preachers sitting to preach on television and other electronic media, the conventional posture in preaching is standing up and Apostle Peter exhibited this. It is also natural in preaching for a preacher's voice to be raised and well projected to reach the audience but if not there will be a disconnection and loss of concentration by the crowd. One-on-one discourse is different from preaching because the tone required in preaching is usually louder depending on the size of the audience and available electronic sound system. For Peter, there was no electronic sound system but a natural voice aided by the direction of waves and the audience heard his raised voice. Having stood up, raised his voice, and addressed the audience, there was something germane for Peter to still achieve through his preaching, which was a response that leads to salvation. Salvation here refers to each listener's understanding of man's fallen state or inherent sinful nature, conviction of sin, repentance from sin, confession of sin, and confession of faith in Christ Jesus as the Saviour and Lord of their life. Preaching consists of a message delivered by one person to a group or congregation to win the lost and develop spiritual life in believers (Pettry 2009:97).

In his classification of preaching, Jay Adams (1982:6) classifies preaching into two: evangelistic preaching (heralding, announcing the good news) and pastoral or edification preaching (teaching). A soul-winning sermon well delivered is evangelistic preaching. It is the proclamation of Jesus's redemptive work for the salvation of the hearers.

Soul-winning:

Soul-winning is the result of witnessing Christ to the unsaved soul as portrayed by these scriptures, 'the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which

was lost' (Luke 19:10), and 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners' (1 Tim. 1:15). Soul-winning is reconciling lost souls into the right relationship with God through Christ. When Jesus taught men and women, he intended to bring them into the right relationship with God. When he healed the sick, it was to prepare their hearts for the experience of his forgiveness and pardon. So it was when he fed the crowds. The motive behind it all was to win them to himself, as saviour and shepherd (Olford 2007:22). 'He that wins souls is wise' (Prov. 11:30). The worth of a soul is seen in Jesus's statement in the gospels,

> For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matt. 16:26, Mark 8:36-37 KJV)

Mahood (2012:22) emphasises that gaining the whole world is nothing compared in value to a man's soul. The soul is precious; it is of infinite worth.

One of the main obstacles to witnessing is fear. Stephen Olford (2007:17) testified to this as a young Christian:

> There was a time in my life when the thought of talking to people, publicly or privately, paralysed me with fear.

A soul-winner must overcome personal fear by holding on to Christ's promised power, programme, and presence as assured in Matthew 28:18-20. Soul-winning is a priority and perennial work for every Christian (Olford 2007:42-43). As the master soul-winner, the Lord Jesus could declare 'the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost' (Luke 19:10 KJV). A soul-winner must not be mechanical in their approach to soul winning but must allow the Holy Spirit to lead (VanBuskirk 2005:4).

> Preaching does something for the soul of man, for the whole of the person; it deals with him vitally and radically. (Lloyd-Jones 2011:91)

Preaching is a means to soul-winning, preaching transforms lives, and preachers must recognise it as their chief business. Soul-winning is described by Spurgeon (2016:4) as 'the chief business of the Christian minister'.

Overview of Apostle Peter's call and encounters with Jesus Christ

Apostle Peter was a fisherman before he became a preacher but was called by Jesus Christ to be a disciple. In his life and walk with Christ, Peter had critical encounters with Christ. Among those encounters, six are identified to be transformative experiences that shaped him for preaching. Peter's first critical encounter was Christ's call to him at the Sea of Galilee, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men' (Matt. 4:19 KJV), and from that day he became Christ's disciple with his brother Andrew. The second critical encounter was Christ's foot-washing of his disciples in John 13, where Peter initially refused to be washed and was categorically told, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with me' (13:8 NIV). The third critical encounter happened on a mountain where Jesus took Peter, James and John.

> There Jesus was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus (Matt. 17:2-3 NIV)

and a voice came from heaven to them 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!' The fourth critical encounter was Christ's prediction of Peter's denial and his repentance which led to him weeping after the cockcrow (Luke 22:61-62). The fifth critical encounter occurred after Peter's return to fishing at the Sea of Galilee, where he was first called. He returned alongside other disciples, abandoning his call to be a fisher of men. However, after Christ's resurrection, he appeared to him and re-commissioned him to feed his sheep (John 21). We might understand this episode of the resurrected Jesus appearing to the disciples when they were fishing as a new call to discipleship (Lewis 2014:254). The sixth critical encounter was the Acts 2 experience that brought about the infilling of the Holy Spirit and divine empowerment for soul-winning preaching.

A gospel preacher needs to have critical encounters with Christ that will involve accepting the salvation offered by Jesus Christ, answering a call to be a disciple and a call to win souls, becoming a fisher of men, prompting

repentance of sin, being washed daily by Christ, reaffirming commitment to follow, and ensuring constant empowerment to preach the gospel.

Features of a template for a soul-winner and soul-winning sermon from Apostle Peter's life and preaching in Acts 2

Apostle Peter as a pioneer preacher on the Day of Pentecost provided us with a template to guide Christian preachers in every generation. The template contains three main features which concern the preacher, the sermon content, and the audience's response to the invitation.

The Preacher's Life Template

Under the preacher's life template, three things are paramount. They are the preacher's empowerment by the Holy Spirit, the preacher's knowledge of his audience, and the preacher's communication skills.

The preacher's empowerment by the Holy Spirit

The empowerment of the Holy Spirit was very critical in the ministry of Apostle Peter and the other early apostles; they needed to wait in Jerusalem as instructed by Jesus to receive the power of the Holy Spirit before they could commence witnessing Jesus Christ. Greg Heisler's (2018:32) conviction about the relationship between a preacher and the Holy Spirit explains the importance of a preacher's empowerment by the Holy Spirit:

> My conviction is that the Spirit of God and the Word of God come together in the heart and mind of the preacher to produce substantive and compelling sermons that transform the lives of listeners. A preacher's head, heart, and affections must unite together in the Holy Spirit to produce powerful preaching that informs the mind, inflames the heart, moves the will, and transforms the life. The Word of God is the substance of our message. The Spirit of God is the fire of our message. He ignites us as we prepare and deliver it, and he ignites our listeners as they hear it.

The preacher's knowledge of the audience

Apostle Peter was aware that the audience was mainly Jewish and therefore alluded to the Hebrew Prophet Joel and King David. In that context, devout Jews carefully listened to what he had to say about these personalities. Peter quoted from the Hebrew scriptures and insisted that the Pentecost event was the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy.

Peter presents evidence that Jesus is the promised Messiah. He made references to the Hebrew Prophet Joel and King David. Speaking of the prophetic language, Bruce Watley (2012:72) suggests, and one can agree with him, that the audience Apostle Peter preached to on the Day of Pentecost would have been familiar with the prophetic words of Joel and David because those texts he cited would have been read in temple worship. In this context, devout Jews would have carefully listened to what Peter had to say about them. Peter appeals to the Hebrew scriptures as the word of God. He insists that this Pentecost event is a fulfilment of prophecy. Peter also asserts that Jesus is referred to in the Hebrew scriptures as the coming Messiah (Kroll 2012).

What language did Peter speak in preaching on the Day of Pentecost? There are arguments for Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, or tongue. But it was humanly impossible for any human being to preach in all the languages mentioned in Acts 2:5-12. There must have been a miracle of hearing for everyone to hear Peter in their language (Webb 2021). So, any language is possible, but if the goal of Peter's preaching was for the audience to understand the sermon and respond appropriately, no human language would have been more effective than Greek (Hold To The Rod 2021). Barrett (1994:131) asserts that 'The use of the LXX text of the Old Testament points to a Greek rather than a Semitic environment'.

The preacher's communication skills

Peter started by addressing the crowd as 'Fellow Jews'. He gave them a pleasant identity as brothers. Peter's speech in verses 14-36 was a proactive response to a mocker's speech in verse 13 that gave an incorrect interpretation of the disciples' experience (Talbert 2005:27). The mockers accused them of being drunk as early as the morning. Still, Peter explained 'These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!' (Acts 2:15).

Correcting the wrong notion of being drunk early in the day, he gave a correct explanation of the event in line with Joel's prophecy. He went further to affirm that David's prophetic utterances are fulfilled in Christ Jesus.

The Sermon Template

Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost was no doubt effective. The evidence is in the audience's response that led to the conversion of three thousand souls won and added to the Church. The Holy Spirit used Apostle Peter as an instrument to win many souls through his preaching, and that was 'an adaptation of means to the end' (Spurgeon 2016:87). The sermon is a medium for the conversion of souls as demonstrated in Acts 2:14-50. It is pertinent to examine the content of Peter's sermon that won souls. Peter's sermon content contains explanations and applications of past events and prophecies.

Explanation of God's plan, prophecies and fulfilment (Acts 2:14-21, 33)

Prophet Joel made a significant contribution to the New Testament regarding the concept of the Day of the Lord and provided several eschatological statements (Joel 2:1), words (Joel 1:15), and imagery (Joel 2:30-31) (Savelle 2006:3). In the context of Acts 2, Peter refers to the Book of Joel as proof that the Day of the Lord has come in his sermon at Pentecost (Watley 2012:68). The outpouring of the Spirit evidenced by the disciples' speaking in tongues was the fulfilment of God's plan as foretold by Joel to pour his Spirit on all people in the last days. This outpouring would be on sons and daughters, young men and old men, and male and female servants.

Explanation of the event from Jewish Scripture and connection to their history (Acts 2:16-22, 29-30)

Peter identified the event with the prophecies of a Jewish patriarch and king, David, and a prophet, Joel. He gave recitations from Psalm 16:8-11, Joel 2:28-32, and Psalm 110:1. Peter recited Psalm 16:8-11 to explain Christ's resurrection, Joel 2:28 to explain the outpouring of the Spirit, and Psalm 110:1 to explain Christ's ascension (Watley 2012:69-73). In Acts 2:30, Peter traced a historical connection between David and Jesus. He pointed out that Jesus is David's descendant whom God promised to place on his throne. 'This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham' (Matt. 1:1).

Explanation of Christ's finished work (Acts 2:29-36)

When the apostles were preaching and witnessing, they frequently quoted from the Book of Psalms as undeniable proof that Jesus was the Messiah written about in the Old Testament (Watley 2012:67-80). For example, in the book of Acts 2, Peter refers to Psalm 16:8-11 as proof that Jesus had to die and be raised from the dead. Although Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried, he did not remain in the tomb. Jesus rose and he was exalted, seated on the right hand of God as he had brought all powers under subjection to God. The preacher testified that the same Jesus is made both Lord and Christ. The title 'Lord' came to have particular relevance to the Church's witness to Gentiles, while 'Messiah' was more relevant to the Jewish world (Longenecker 2017:730). Therefore, for both the Jews and the Gentiles, Jesus had completed the work of human redemption and salvation from sin and death.

Explanation of people's sin (Acts 2:23, 36-38)

The preacher, in his sermon, pointed out to his audience their sin,

> This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; *and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross*. (Acts 2:23 NIV emphasis added)

It was a sin for them to connive with wicked men to demand a notorious criminal, Barabbas, be released while they shouted against the innocent, Jesus, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' (Luke 23:13-25). Through his sermon, the audience felt guilty for their sin, and they humbled themselves and asked, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'

Explanation of the audience's need for repentance, forgiveness, and salvation (Acts 2:38, 40)

In response to the audience's curiosity, 'Brothers, what shall we do?', Peter called them to repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. Of the eight characteristics of sermons likely to convert people, Charles Spurgeon (2016:88) mentioned first and foremost, 'they are sermons which are distinctly aimed at the conversions of the hearers'. Peter's aim of preaching on the Day of Pentecost is seen in his call to repentance of the audience's sins. He was really after their conversion, and it

happened that many were converted. In many other words, Peter warned them and pleaded with them to be saved from a corrupt generation.

The sermon conclusion, the invitation, and the audience's response (Acts 2:39-41)

For a sermon to win souls, the preacher must end the preaching with persuasion and an invitation to salvation. Peter appealed to his hearers by letting them know that if they repented from their sins they would be forgiven, they would be baptised, and they would receive the Holy Spirit.

Sermon conclusion and the invitation

Every soul-winning preacher should preach to persuade the unbelievers, to make them Christian converts; the preacher should make the altar call while preaching and allow the audience to respond to the invitation to salvation. Greg Heisler explains that Peter's preaching laid a Biblical foundation for the audience's response. Before the Day of Pentecost, there had never been a massive response to the invitation to salvation.

> I believe a biblical foundation for the call to commitment or public invitation is found in Acts 2:37-38, where at the end of the message people were coming to the apostles and asking, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' They heard the gospel, and they were ready to respond. We must preach with conviction, believing the Spirit is actively working in the hearts and minds of our listeners and moving them to respond appropriately to the Spirit's truth. (Heisler 2018:174-175)

A soul-winning sermon is incomplete without the invitation. The invitation is also known as the *altar call* for the audience to respond to a sermon. Whenever the gospel is preached, the audience is to be allowed to make a response whether to give their life to Jesus Christ as the Saviour and the Lord of their lives or to rededicate their lives. Ramesh Richard narrated how he preached at a Fiji Telecom breakfast where he failed to give an invitation to his audience to embrace the Lord Jesus. However, when another pastor was to say the benediction, the pastor did not hesitate, 'he decided to turn the moment into a time of response' (Richard 2015:205). At that time, some

people responded to the invitation and gave their lives to Christ. Ramesh Richard (2015:205) gave his testimony below:

> The pastor taught me a deep lesson in evangelistic preaching: 'Cast the net if you are doing evangelistic fishing. You never know when you'll catch some. It's better to cast the net and not catch any than not to cast the net and not catch any!' With permission and preparation, I include at least an implicit invitation with explicit response options to trust the Lord Christ at the end of every evangelistic sermon I give.

Importance of the invitation to soul-winning

The invitation to salvation during preaching gives opportunities to the listeners to respond to the sermon preached. The invitation is very germane for many reasons. The invitation allows a sinner to publicly denounce a sinful lifestyle. It offers the privilege of confessing faith in Christ Jesus. For example, Zacchaeus, the tax collector in Luke 19:8, openly confessed his sin and decided to make restitution with those he had defrauded; in Acts 2:38 the audience responded to the call made by Peter to 'repent, be baptised and receive the Holy Spirit'.

Making the invitation helps to identify the new converts for proper discipleship and follow-up. Zacchaeus's open response helped to identify him among the crowd and allowed Jesus to follow him to his house. Those whose identities are not known because they refused to respond openly cannot be discipled or monitored, and they may end up returning to their old life.

It helps to integrate the new converts into the church family as in Acts 2:41, and it helps to keep a proper record of the success of preaching regarding soul-winning. In Acts 2, the number of those converts was known and recorded because they could be counted. The record of souls won can help the church in research, analysis, budgeting, and preparation for further soul-winning activities. The record will also help to have reliable data, not speculations.

Meanwhile, it is possible that sometimes someone may listen to a soul-winning sermon and be converted in the audience but may not respond openly to the invitation due to many reasons such as physical inability to come out, distance barrier if the sermon is transmitted live on a radio or television, or fear of being

noticed if the convert is from another religion. Such converts can act Nicodemusly by finding a Christian to share their conversion experience with and for spiritual nurturing unto maturity in the faith.

Response to the invitation: Evidence of Apostle Peter's soul-winning sermon (Acts 2:41 NIV)

The evidence of Apostle Peter's soul-winning sermon is the response of his audience to the sermon preached as recorded in Acts 2:41. The evidence is the acceptance of his message that led to the conviction and conversion of his hearers, baptism of the new converts, and addition of about three thousand to the church.

i. Their conviction and conversion, v. 41a: ' accepted his message'

ii. Their baptism, v. 41a: 'were baptised'

iii. Their addition to church membership, v. 41b: 'about three thousand were added to their number that day'

D. M. Lloyd-Jones (2011:88) asserted that 'when there is true preaching people will come and listen to it'. The crowd listened to Apostle Peter's preaching, and their response was proof that Apostle Peter's sermon was a sermon that won souls. The number of those converts was unprecedented.

Conclusion

Preaching was a key means of populating the church during the early apostles' days. Souls were won by preaching (Acts 2:41) and preserved by teaching (Acts 2:42). If preaching is to please God and save men, it must be identical in content and spirit with the apostolic days' preaching (Edward 2017:12). There are many approaches the church is adopting today for soul-winning; such are free medical service, free food items distribution, free orphanage home, vocational empowerment programmes, educational seminars or workshops, community hymn singing during Christmas, and other Christian-oriented programmes. For effective soul-winning, none of these approaches should be

devoid of preaching a sermon that wins the soul in line with the apostle's template.

Until Christ's second coming, preachers are to zealously continue preaching a sermon that wins souls (Buttrick 1987:496). Preaching the sermon that wins souls requires the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, every preacher willing to win souls for God must have a Pentecost experience: 'receiving cloven tongues like as of fire […] filled with the Holy Ghost' (Acts 2:3-4). The preachers are the messengers of God. Since the preachers are just the messengers not the originators of the message or the focus of the message, they should take time to receive the sermon and preach with boldness as led by the Holy Spirit for the harvest of souls.

A sermon that will win souls must explain to listeners God's plan of salvation that the Old Testament prophets foretold and that was fulfilled in Jesus, who is both Lord and Messiah. It must also identify and call the listeners to their sins. Adamic inherited sin must be explained alongside personal sins against God and humanity. While the listeners are convinced of their sins, the preacher must endeavour to lead them to repentance and confession and give an invitation to the audience to respond to a call to salvation by faith in Christ Jesus's finished work, by believing in his crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, and the Second Coming. The new converts should also be encouraged to be baptised by immersion in water and receive the Holy Spirit.

The effect of the sermon that wins souls must begin with the audience experiencing the metaphor of being cut to the heart as in Acts 2:37 NIV,

> When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, Brothers, what shall we do?

The sermon that wins souls must, first of all, penetrate an individual's heart and cause a spiritual circumcision that will bring about Christ's new life in the converts. Any sermon that cannot touch, cut, or penetrate the heart of the audience cannot win a soul nor produce any response to the invitation.

The template for a soul-winner and soul-winning sermon from Apostle Peter's life and preaching in Acts 2:14-41 consists of three main aspects: the preacher, the sermon, and the invitation. If the preacher does not have the requisite

encounters, knowledge, and skills, he cannot win a soul. If the sermon lacks the basic elements which can capture a sinner, the sermon will not convert a soul. And if the invitation to salvation is not offered to the audience while preaching, there may not be a response and the right decision will not be made to accept Jesus's finished work of salvation. When a preacher is rightly equipped, preached a soul-winning sermon, and gave an invitation to salvation, souls will be won and sinners will be converted to Christ's disciples.

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We are commanded to love: How?

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Abstract

There are many issues that we are dealing with as a society today which are the same across the globe. Many such as poverty, lack of education, poor behaviour, and violence are a direct result of generational trauma that is passed on. As a society and governments, we often assess our social problems in monetary terms or through addressing physical needs. We address these problems with short-term solutions that do not address the root cause underlying why people find themselves in these situations. The pillars that society is founded on are trust, cooperation, and working together. These qualities stem directly from caring for one another as a society or – putting it another way – love for each other. For many years generational and inherited trauma has been passed down and, as a society, we have developed coping mechanisms to deal with our issues without actually working through our trauma, perpetuating the cycle. As a society, we opt to throw money at problems instead of putting in the hard work to fix our broken societal contracts. This article will examine case studies of systemic policies re-entrenching the same behaviours and how policies based around providing people with the tools to communicate and learn to love one another will go a long way to healing the structural deficiencies found in the current social structure.

Introduction

As Christians, we are commanded to love, but there is little substantive teaching on practical steps on how to constructively love our neighbour. A true understanding of the power of love can only be obtained when love is absent. Examples exist in most countries, but perhaps more so in Africa. Trauma is a major cause of dysfunctional parenting. Educating parents on how their

behaviour influences children is the first solid step the church can take in helping to ease the suffering felt by much of society. Behaviour needs to change, and this is only possible with human contact and love, from people with skills who are willing to give time to the less fortunate. The second step is to set in place a healing (restorative) programme. Mentalising, as in thinking about thinking, is an ancient proven technique that can be used by laypeople.

To grasp the significance of the command to love our neighbour we must answer three questions about the command - why, how, and whom? To answer these questions, it is necessary to combine the instructions from two areas of the Bible. Jesus quoted two verses from different books of the Bible. The first is from Deuteronomy 6:5 which states, 'You must love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength.' (The New Jerusalem Bible, 1985)' . These are the words of Moses before the people of Israel entered the promised land. It was his primary command, and he talked of both our ancestors and generations to come. The focus is on loving God first and from that state all else will come. The gifts they were to receive are gifts from God and they must always remember and behave accordingly. Gratitude positively influences behaviour.

The second verse we need to consider is Leviticus 19:18 which states, 'Love your neighbour as yourself '(The New Jerusalem Bible, 1985). These are the words of God given to Moses for the slaves that had escaped Egypt. They were a group of people living in a legal and social vacuum. The norms of their lives had been removed and God was providing structure for their lives, like a good parent provides children. They would have been impulsive, been risk-takers, had minimal social skills, had limited intellectual ability, and suffered from disease. The command to love your neighbour neatly addresses the lack of social skills; the intention is to change behaviour. Both passages were equipping/preparing people for a new life, one contrastingly different from their previous or present life.

The third passage to consider when understanding the command to love our neighbour is the parable of the good Samaritan. The message is very clear and precise: help those in need in a practical way. Christianity, over the centuries, has repeatedly deviated from the path that I imagine Jesus would have desired, isolating from the ordinary men and women of the world for a variety of

reasons. Falling attendance in most Western countries is perhaps an indication of another deviation. We can follow and worship Christ as much as we like, but if we fail to obey his commands to love we are lost. To delve deeper into the complexity of this command to love, it is necessary to investigate human behaviour. Let us consider a survey of young adults in the Cape Metro.

Paradox of civilisation

Measuring problems

Imagine a middle-class suburb, with wide meandering roads, green lawns, substantial, well-maintained houses, clean shiny cars parked outside, and few people visible. Then if you walked across the road or railway line you would observe the camp-type setup. There are very few roads and no lawns. Every space is filled with a dwelling of some sort. There are formally constructed buildings, but each is surrounded by shacks: corrugated structures that have been erected to keep most of the weather out. There are cars but many are permanently parked, rusting mementos of the past. In addition, there are people: people everywhere busy doing something or going somewhere.

The above scenario juxtaposing rich and poor makes society uncomfortable, so academics are sent in to measure income. Society is obsessed with money, and it is an easy and concise way to measure things, so these academics produce an income per household, family, or individual depending on their preference. Then the statisticians sift, juggle, and sort these figures to produce a poverty line. Below the line, people have inadequate resources for living and, above the line, they are deemed as okay. From this information, it is obvious to everybody that the problem, for the people living across the road or railway line, is a lack of resources. Hence, the women of the church collect blankets in winter so the people in need are warm. Others organise a soup kitchen so the people in need are not hungry. This generous giving generates a sense of worth in the givers; they are solving a problem. People are no longer cold or hungry. This altruistic behaviour permeates the government and they provide grants, subsidies, free education, health, and, for a lucky few, houses. The list grows every year as people think up new needs. This all flows from defining, understanding, and measuring poverty in monetary terms.

Alas, the practice and policy of handouts appear to make no difference to poverty. Poverty comes and goes with economic prosperity. The history books talk about poverty; in South Africa poverty is worse now than it was pre-democracy; it appears to be a perennial problem. Even economically rich countries like the United States of America have a poverty problem. New Zealand and Singapore are also no strangers to this issue. The yardstick by which poverty is measured is different in each country but it is still a reality when different populations or communities are compared. Certainly, the gifts and handouts make life more comfortable for the recipients, and at times and in places the soup kitchens are needed so people don't die of malnutrition. These gifts are not inherently bad or wrong but it is necessary to accept that while they solve an immediate problem the deep-seated issues remain. The conclusion must be that gifts and handouts do not solve the poverty or inequality problem. It is time to go back to these contrasting communities and look again. The pillars of social order need to be examined.

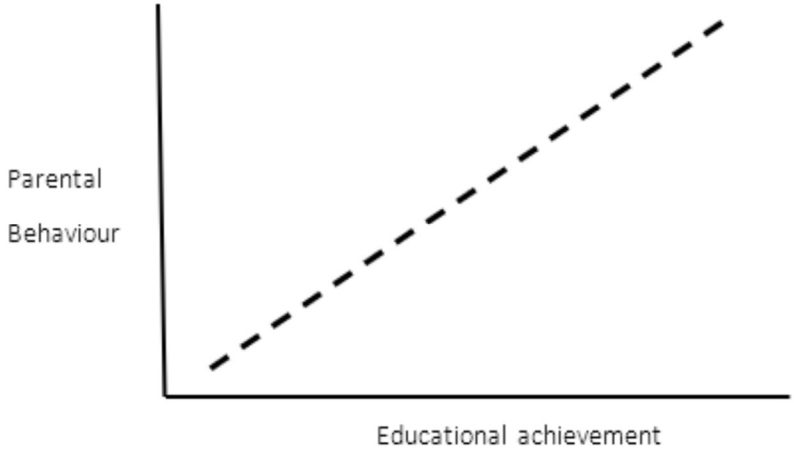
Everybody has problems or challenges to face in life and I suspect the two communities described above also have different challenges. I also surmise that both communities have similar aspirations; they both may want their children to succeed in life. Despite the challenges of the disadvantaged community, their children are as clean and sparkling when they head off to school in the morning as the children in the privileged community. I suspect there are more similarities between these two communities than the media or casual observer might suggest. Both communities are made up of people; there is a common ancestry; there are common needs; and we are all born, live, and die. To move beyond a simplistic economic evaluation or one of 'I suspect', a comprehensive survey is a useful tool.

Longitudinal survey of young adults

One such survey was done in the Cape Metropolitan area between 2002 and 2009 (Lam et al. 2012). The comprehensive survey was done with young adults starting between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one. There were five waves of questions put to the participants and, initially, there were five thousand participants. In total, there were around five thousand questions about parents, education, substance use, sex life, attitude to school, home stability, homework, race, religion, and many more. It was aimed at the interface between one generation and the next, so important for the transfer or

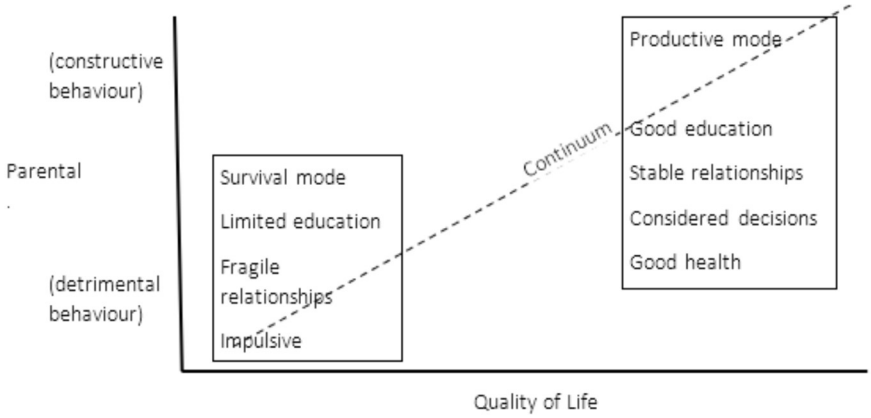
perpetuation of culture, skills, and knowledge. In the first wave of questions, there were many directed at parents. The analysis presented below is a multivariate regression using least squares (a statistical method of finding the line of best fit) and the importance of each factor was estimated by running the model repeatedly excluding one significant factor at a time (Smaill 2017). The analysis was done to determine what factors are important in predicting educational achievement. The two thousand young adults who completed all the relevant questions were used to produce the model.

Figure 1: Multivariate regression analysis



One of the rules of statistics is that correlations don't prove causality, but other research provides corroborating evidence. A good education is generally accepted as something that results in a good job and a reasonable income or a pleasing quality of life. Behaviour is on the other axis and could be interpreted as love expressed either positively or negatively.

Figure 2: Interpreted multivariant regression analysis



Significance of analysis

Despite expectations, wealth was a minor factor in the model; it contributed little to the variation explained. Various types of behaviour dominated the model. This is contra to popular thinking and practice. It is parental behaviour that determines the future of their children and therefore the destiny of society. This confirms the previous concept that gifts do not change behaviour. One of the realities of life is that you need to invest in yourself, build skills, and so eventually reap the rewards. You need to work for rewards. Handouts erode this truth of life. Why work when someone else will give you what you need? There are good arguments for handouts like education but, even with education, parents should pay something. They then place value on education and want to get value for their money; they become actively involved with their child's education and that is beneficial. Even R10 a month will do it. Healthcare is another example. Everybody benefits when people can work.

Another unexpected result of the research was that race was a non-significant factor. Being black or white was neither an advantage nor a disadvantage when it came to education. This dismisses all the propaganda of the apartheid era that polluted so many minds. White people are not superior nor are black

people inferior. We are all the same under the skin. It also makes the current racial legislation in South Africa that advances one race over another irrational. Experience in South Africa has shown that when one race is given precedence it is only a minority of that race who are advantaged, while the majority of that race are disadvantaged. Unemployment is at an all-time high; the individuals who create jobs are discouraged for many reasons. When people are rewarded or selected for their race or other reasons and not their ability, it puts the economy into a wobble and therefore also job creation. Rewarding ability is good for the individual and the economy. When people work together for a shared dream either at home, at work, or at a a national level magic happens, and objectives are achieved. A divided society is usually corrupt and its social objectives elusive.

One unpublished result of the analysis was that religion was a non-significant variable. Being raised by Christian parents gives no advantage to children; the principles of love have not permeated to parenting. This indicates a need for Christian leaders to consider remedial action.

The research demonstrates that effort and love bring rewards. Love is not some soft feminine thing. It is hard-core; it produces results and, without love, society and prosperity decline.

Slaves of Egypt

The Jewish slaves that escaped from Egypt can be compared with people in the Cape Metro living in survival mode. Both groups had parents who were traumatised and had no understanding of how their behaviour/example influenced their children's lives. The slaves had crossed the Red Sea but they were living their lives in a legal and social vacuum. The norms of their lives had been removed and God was providing structure for their lives, like a good parent provides children. The chapters around Leviticus 19 are instructions from God that parents would normally teach their children indicating that normal parenting had not occurred. This is expected behaviour in a community of deprived people. They would have been impulsive, been risk-takers, had minimal social skills, had limited intellectual ability, and suffered from disease. Christ's command to love your neighbour neatly addresses the lack of social skills but it also references all the other practical laws found around that chapter in Leviticus. His audience would have known those passages.

The implication for those of us living in Cape Town, or any Christian around the world living in proximity to a deprived community, is that we should be imparting practical knowledge to these people just as God did for the slaves. We can help them process their trauma and explain how constructive parental behaviour improves life for their children. Many Christians would argue that we must just save them and everything else will just happen miraculously from within. This was not the methodology that God used. When we find a man with a broken arm it is obvious that we must take him to hospital. Why is a man with limited parenting knowledge any different; why is a traumatised man any different; and why is a couple with marriage problems any different? They all need practical help and Jesus commanded us to give it. A broken arm is a minor short-term problem whereas the others all have implications for the next generation. The greatest tool we have to address these problems is love. This is because love is a powerful tool that should infuse every relationship. So whom should we love? It is our selves and families and friends, but most especially the disadvantaged communities of our city or town and perhaps every individual whom we interact with or with whom we have a relationship. So how do we develop this capacity for love? What tools do we have as individuals and communities to love and through love start to heal the issues that we collectively suffer from? We need to start with ourselves, our relationship with God, and those closest to us.

How to love on a personal level?

Personal interactive love can be defined in very practical terms. It is behaviour that enhances relationships and needs to be applied appropriately depending on the particular relationship. A car salesman is different from your life partner, a baby, or a teenager. Nevertheless, you have a relationship with each and the success or productivity of that relationship depends on your behaviour. Love behaviours include:

Eye contact

Eye contact conveys honesty and interest. If the car salesman does not make eye contact you walk away. When a woman turns to face a man and makes eye contact, she is expressing her interest in him. When you talk to a baby, they turn towards you and make eye contact; this is the first and vital step in communication. The physical characteristics of the human eye make it easy to

determine the focus of attention of the other. A courting couple will gaze into each other's eyes; it's part of the bonding process and integral in bond maintenance. In some cultures, children making eye contact with adults is considered disrespectful, a practice that erodes attachment. Eye contact is important.

Interactive talking

This does not include instructions or condemnation but rather a free exchange of ideas without judgment or criticism. Ideas and experiences are shared willingly and openly with one another because they enhance our lives and others. We need to share what is happening in our minds and the more intimate the relationship the more we need to share to maintain that verbal intimacy. It is the little things that matter. Your child comes home from school with his first project and he is so excited to share the details with you. You make a silly mistake and you share the details with your partner - you both laugh. A little spice was added to the meat dish; the compliments around the table were complimentary and encouraging. Many people talk to their pets as if they were human; such is our need to communicate. Often people living alone can't stop talking when they are in company to the point that they forget that other people also need to express themselves. Talking is a universal need and a common denominator like food. Sitting around a table to share food and ideas is an important behaviour, particularly so for families. Children need to learn to express their ideas and opinions with adults but also to take their turn and listen respectfully to others. Parents that are dominant or authoritarian inhibit this learning opportunity. We all need to chat.

Active listening

This is an attribute that many neglect or forget. This is actively listening to the other without interruption or suggestions. A partner needs to let off steam or their frustrations from work but does not need advice on how to solve their work problems; they are dealing with them in their way. People need to tell their stories; it helps them to process the associated emotions. Bottled-up emotions are toxic and talking about them allows them to be processed and filed. Allowing people to talk freely is essential for their mental health. Listening is mostly more important than talking.

Messages of affirmation

Messages of affirmation are conveyed using words, deeds, or gifts. These are messages of love and people have preferences for how the message is conveyed. For some, words are the ultimate, for others it might be doing a chore not normally expected of them, and, lastly, for some it is a gift. For children, a gift is usually a winner. Food is a universally accepted gift especially if someone is affronted. The food preparation is an act of love, a behaviour, and it fills a real need for the recipient and the giver. We need to be told continually that we are loved and, no matter how it is done, it needs to be done. Pets show their unconditional love, dogs more consistently than cats.

Touch appropriate to the relationship

A baby needs lots of touch and affection for normal development. For a couple, sex is the ultimate touching but the hugs and kisses during the day are equally important. With the car salesman, a handshake is appropriate. For friends and relatives, hugs are normal but doing it excessively would be inappropriate. Social norms are the guidelines for touch and stepping outside those is risky. With strangers of the opposite sex, standing too close is inappropriate unless there is no alternative. A sexless marriage will fail and a baby without affection is doomed. Touch is essential but it needs to be in the correct circumstances.

Emotional interdependence

Emotional interdependence means spending time with a significant other. If a man spends an hour or two in the pub every night after work, his emotional interdependence is with his pub mates. Alternatively, if a woman needs to spend an hour every day chatting with her mother, her emotional interdependence will be with her mother. Partners need to make time and spend it with each other. We need to supply the emotional needs of the other, listen to their concerns, and respond accordingly. If being with your dating partner does not fulfil your emotional needs then it's time to break up. If your life partner does not fulfil your emotional needs, it's time to talk. Parents need to spend quality time with their children. Your time with them tells them that they are important. An emotional connection is important but it needs to be with the right people.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a necessary part of relationships. Mistakes are a normal part of life so others need to be forgiven. Boundaries are an important part of life and we need to define our own and convey that to our partner. Setting boundaries is a part of growing up and life without boundaries will cause problems in the relationships of young adults. Often the offender is not even aware of their error. When a person holds a grudge, it tends to poison all their relationships. They become bitter and resentful, pulling away from other relationships. They are more critical and judgemental of all people. My wife was killed in an accident and I forgave the other driver because I knew pent-up anger and hate would undermine my ability to provide the care and love my children would need from me.

Love summary

All the above behaviours stimulate the release of hormones so that you feel good about yourself and the other. These hormones are the oil of relationships; they reduce friction and fill the potholes. People can be difficult at times especially when you live with them twenty-four hours a day, so evolution has provided a helping hand. Understanding the link between behaviour and hormones makes life more enjoyable and productive. For example, when children watch their parents being affectionate that stimulates the release of their hormones. That reduces the inevitable friction in the home. Take that daily affection away and tension will permeate the home. When a couple behave lovingly when they meet after a hard day's work it dissolves any tension that is inevitable after a stressful day. When children are impossible, a signal or word from your partner gives you the fortitude to be calm and deal with the child. When the boss compliments you, it invigorates.

Love is circular

Much is written about love. The following is a personal perspective:

1. Love is behaviour.

2. Love is doing something for somebody and expecting nothing in return.

3. Love flows from inner peace.

4. Every human has the capacity to love.

5. Some people need help to release the flow of love.

6. The rewards of love are peace and prosperity.

The important point of this perspective is that love is circular. Love creates more love. When arms are wrapped around a loved one, both are enclosed in a circle of love. When you add children, the circle gets bigger. There is nothing better than a family hug. Love is circular because it endures, is never broken into bits, and enriches everyone it touches. Love is contagious and is productive for everyone.

The feelings associated with positive love are a direct result of the behaviour of somebody who loves us. Our nature as humans is that we expect to be loved and that we need to be loved. That is why things go horribly wrong when we are not loved or we perceive that we are not loved. Many require constant reminders that they are loved, a touch on the shoulder, a word of appreciation, a hug, or making a date to chat over a meal or coffee – alternatively, playing a game of any dimension. Rough and tumble with children can provide the touch they need. Even just a short chat at an event, while waiting outside school, at the shop, or even over the fence can mean a lot to people. This is a generalised perspective on love but more focus is required.

Mentalising

Mentalising is having 'mind in mind 'or 'thinking about thinking': firstly your mind and then secondly the mind of the other. The principle is to first heal your mind, gain inner peace, and then guess or speculate what is happening in the mind of the other by listening to their words and observing body language. This is not some involved theory but a human tradition of the wise helping the inexperienced (Allen and Fonagy 2006). Inner peace can be described as self-love. Inner peace is important because when we gain that stability we can truly love others in a way that sets them on the path to their inner peace. Some gain their inner peace through faith, but the ingredients of inner peace are similar no matter how they are obtained.

Inner peace

One pathway to inner peace is finding a place in the wilderness, a beach, the top of a mountain, or sitting beside a river or some natural place where you can be alone. We are a part of the natural environment and this resonates with our being. We form attachments to people, homes, neighbourhoods, and natural places. Attachment makes us feel secure, less stressed, and more self-assured. If we understand wilderness or a natural place as our origin this strengthens the attachment. This does not apply to your bedroom. Then we must ask ourselves the basic questions of life. Who am I? What is my purpose in life? What do I want to achieve with my life? How do other people see me? Only you can answer these questions. It is like training for a race or swotting for an exam; only you can do it. Your mother, father, or God cannot answer these questions for you; you must decide; it is your life.

The inevitable answer is almost always in some way helping others, or enriching them in some way. If you have dependent children, it might be to raise them. If you are a doctor or nurse, the answer is easy. If you work in a shop, you are providing a service. If you work in a factory then you are providing people with goods they need. Whatever your occupation, when we grasp the fact that we are there to serve others, it changes our attitude from just doing a job to one of service. Our lives then take on meaning and purpose and inner peace seeps into our lives. This understanding of how connected we all are switches our focus away from ourselves and provides a much healthier perspective on life. This journey to inner peace may take some time as we walk up and down the hills of life. It may be necessary to go back to the basic questions of life repeatedly. It may be necessary to climb that mountain more than once. It may mean repairing that broken marriage, or spending more time with your children; it may mean seeking the ability to forgive. Do whatever it takes on that journey to inner peace. It may take fifty years or maybe you are just born with it. Helping others is an effective tool for curing anxiety and depression.

Supporting another

Having gained inner peace or being on the road to inner peace enables you to help others. You can love, to do something for others expecting no benefit. The key to helping others is to speculate, guess, or wait on the Holy Spirit to know what is happening in their minds. This is not an exact science and

sometimes you will be wrong but the alternative is to do nothing. Helping them can be done by observing their behaviour and listening to their words. Why are they behaving as they are or saying what they are saying? What is causing this behaviour? This should be second nature for a woman with a baby. When it is crying she has a list in her head of what might be causing her baby to cry. She speculates about the cause of crying and tries to solve the problem/the cause of the distress. This is an act of love by the mother that we think of as natural and is considered normal behaviour. When this love is not supplied things go wrong for the child; it influences brain development.

Certain adults need help to release the flow of love; this is generally caused by trauma of some sort. It could have been some event in their past or a set of circumstances that overwhelms their ability to cope with life, or it may be generational. For these people, the basic questions of life are beyond their ability or emotional capacity to ask or answer. The priority is to assist them in processing their trauma. The first step is to make friends, to gain their trust, and to talk the same language, as adapted from Suchman (2016). This is best done by somebody from the same community. Trust is needed so they can open up. This can be difficult but refining your ability to listen rather than talk is useful. Traumatised people are used to receiving advice or instructions. People who are willing to listen are rare and therefore appreciated. Open the tap and the water will flow. Once you are friends, move onto the next stage.

Prompting them to tell their stories often initiates the healing process; in the telling, they get relief from bottled-up emotions, and organising a mess of thoughts enough to tell the story also helps. Letting off steam and organising ideas helps them to file the event in their minds; it is never forgotten. This type of processing may need to happen many times but the emotional intensity will diminish each time and the traumatic event or circumstance will eventually have less influence over their lives and their behaviour. Asking specific questions is another tool to heal trauma. People seldom talk about their emotions or how they are feeling. If the trauma is generational, questions about how they felt during childhood and their experiences of childhood can be beneficial. Traumatised parents produce traumatised children. Questions about the stress in their lives are another option. Presenting them an opportunity to talk about their stress is always therapeutic. You are lancing the wound; a huge error is to tell them to get over it. Encouragement to process

the pain and hurt will ensure light at the end of the tunnel. The human mind has a tremendous ability to heal itself and all that is required is an interaction with another mind, a mind that is willing to listen and support. People so frequently isolate themselves either physically or by their behaviour. They hide in a house or office with behavioural barriers that are obnoxious to those around them to the extent that there is an unwillingness to offer help. These barriers need to be stepped over or set aside.

When the emotional storm in their minds has abated, the next step is getting them to help others using the same path that was used on them. This shifts the intense focus from themselves to a focus on somebody else. This brings perspective back into their lives; their problems are no longer mountainous but rather something they can cope with. For a young woman with a baby, it will be speculating on what is happening in her baby's mind and then acting accordingly. Helping others is a beneficial way of helping oneself as previously discussed. Be guided in whom you help. Alternatively, picking up rubbish from a beach or your park benefits others. Visiting the elderly or the sick earns brownie points.

Helping others with complex psychological problems is best left to the health professionals but for many these services are not available for financial or other reasons. So, for most, the only alternative is to help each other, something that has been happening for thousands of years. For most of human history, we lived in small groups and we did help each other because that enhanced the group's survival. In the modern world, we tend to live segregated and fragmented lives thinking that the problems of other people are not our concern or that there are skilled people equipped to help them. The stark realities of life are that we need to help each other and that we are more equipped to do so than we often think. The ideas described above are something any individual can follow and it will help. Genuine human contact is the secret that helps us all.

These are some ideas to answer the question of how. There are many ways to help the disadvantaged but the above are productive and effective. Mostly it is generational, similar to God's impact on the slaves of Egypt. Their path through life recorded in the Old Testament appears to be smoother when they

remember the instructions of God and the words of Moses. Will it be similar in our civilisation?

How to love on a community level

First thousand days

Children are unable to walk away from abusive behaviour as an adult might; they live in an environment created by their parents. The first thousand days of life, starting from conception, are critical for a child because this is a period of rapid brain development (Moore et al. 2017). Genetics change slowly so any adaptation to an environment needs to come from physiological changes. These changes are a response to the behaviour of parents and either help the child succeed in life or are a handicap. The mother is the child's environment during gestation and generally the primary caregiver and this makes the mother's mental and physical health important for the future of her child, and their potential for productivity. Stress, nutrition, substance use, physical/sexual abuse, and neglect can impact the foetus or baby and alter its future. This is a cyclic process from one generation to the next. A mother's health and behaviour influence her child and that child influences the next generation and so forth. This is important in creating perpetual poverty or prosperity. Traumatised parents tend to produce traumatised children, but it is a cycle that can be broken. Conversely, middle-class parents can be traumatised and behave as if they were living in adverse circumstances.

Children who experience adverse parenting in the first thousand days are likely to continue to experience adverse parenting as they grow up, thus reinforcing earlier developments. While it is possible to change the negative effect of adverse parenting, it becomes increasingly difficult for interventions as the child grows. The best return on an investment and the most successful is an intervention in the first thousand days, an intervention aimed at parents.

Pregnancy

There are six important factors influencing pregnant women: alcohol, smoking, drugs, stress, nutrition, and supplements. The use of alcohol and especially binging are red-letter behaviours. High levels of alcohol intake can cause foetal alcohol spectrum disorders that include growth restriction, decreased cognitive functioning, attention deficits, and emotional and behavioural

problems, among others (Desmond et al. 2012). Moderate consumption of alcohol increases the risk of low birth weight, being small for gestational age, and preterm birth (Patra et al. 2011). South Africa has the highest incidence of foetal alcohol syndrome in the world (Roozen et al. 2016). This is not because workers are paid with alcohol, but because binging over the weekend is a social custom for some communities.

Smoking has no safe lower limit and the risks generally increase with increasing rates (Smedberg et al. 2014). The risks associated with smoking are spontaneous pregnancy loss, preterm delivery, low birth weight, being small for gestational age, and stillbirth. The use of illegal drugs during pregnancy increases the risks of adverse outcomes above smoking alone (Black et al. 2013). Excessive use of alcohol, smoking, and illegal drugs can end the life of the foetus or increase the risks of adverse long-term effects on the child.

Maternal stress, anxiety, and depression can have long-term effects on some children and this is dependent on their genetic susceptibility (Glover, Ahmed-Salim, and Capron 2016). Stress is best avoided. Good nutrition is important; eat a variety of foods such as green and orange vegetables, milk, meat, poultry, fish, beans, nuts, whole grains, and fruit. Take supplements, like folic acid and iron, and make sure food is safe and clean (World Health Organisation, 2023).

Baby

For babies, the important factors are stress, nutrition, hygiene, and shelter. The last two appear to be universally practised by parents. For nutrition, breastfeeding should be initiated within the first hour of birth and infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life – meaning no other foods or liquids are provided, including water. Infants should be breastfed on demand – that is as often as the child wants, day and night (World Health Organisation, Infant and young child feeding, 2023). Stress for babies is potentially harmful. They need affection; they need responsive communication; they need attention when they cry; and they need food when they are hungry. Stress for a baby is so harmful to their potential that it has been termed toxic stress. Stress stimulates the release of cortisol and that influences the physiological functioning of the body. It alters the expression of genes altering the baby's behaviour for life.

Detailed research has shown why and how these changes occur. It is not a genetic change; those changes take thousands of years. It is termed epigenetics, without genetics. In our DNA, between the genes are proteins that influence the expression of genes acting like switches. Parents are the environment for a baby; even before birth, (Okae, et al., 2014) (Belsky, 2012) that environment produces a variable amount of stress for the baby with associated hormones and those hormones determine which switches are activated. It is a mechanism designed to make sure the child is adapted to the world in which it must survive. In one world, taking risks improves survival. In another world, making carefully considered decisions improves survival. Normally children are adapted to their parent's world and this information is conveyed to their baby by their behaviour. This produces generational poverty or prosperity. Thus, it is understandable why parental behaviour is critical for the child's future. Early interventions can change the prospects of a child: an intervention aimed at parents, not children.

Some parents behave detrimentally towards their children. The question is, why? Why would parents behave in such an abnormal way, or do what many would consider abnormal? The reality is that it happens and two explanations seem probable. Ignorance: parents are ignorant of the fact that their behaviour can detrimentally influence their children. For example, take a couple in the process of a divorce. They are so self-centred and self-absorbed that their children are forgotten. Children can be hard work, requiring a lot of parental time and attention and this is especially so in the early stages of life. Understandably, parents sometimes fail to attend to their children's needs or cries for help because of ignorance. They are ignorant of the damage this behaviour can cause. The second possibility is trauma; people can be traumatised by an event, or circumstances, or it could be generational trauma where traumatised parents tend to produce traumatised children. Whatever the cause, traumatised people can behave irrationally, make poor choices, and disrupt the stability of a home at a time when stability is critical for children. The irrational behaviour includes the adverse behaviours listed previously. If these two assumptions, ignorance and trauma, are correct, it means that any intervention to alleviate inequality must address these two factors. Parents must be educated about how their behaviour influences children and healing parental trauma is essential for children's wellbeing and healthy development.

The consequence of negative love and destructive parental behaviour is deprivation. Poverty and inequality are normally measured and reported as a lack of income. When these communities are examined in detail there is a lot more happening than just a scarcity of resources. With relationship functioning impinged they struggle to be a productive team member at work, their relationships are fragile, sexual dissatisfaction is common, substance abuse is frequent, and they have often experienced gender violence. When cognitive ability is limited, complex problems become impossible, skills are limited, and, therefore, job opportunities are limited. This generally results in poverty. Common adult health problems in this group of people include many non-contagious diseases like heart issues, hypertension, cancer, and obesity. Two contagious diseases are worth mentioning: tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. People who don't have adverse experiences as children can contract these diseases but at a reduced probability and with lower mortality rates. Impetuous behaviour is common, characterised by short-term goals, being impulsive, and being a risk taker. These last two behaviours are implicated in road accidents and crime. They mature early, have limited education, and die early violently or from disease.

All this suffering means tremendous personal pain but it also reflects an economic cost to families and society. The diseases strain the health system; crime means more police, security personnel, and prison beds; road accidents mean vehicle write-offs or repairs; and school dropouts mean fewer skills for the economy. These are big costs and result in fewer resources for future growth. The above are all indicators of a nation in a self-destructive mode: a nation that struggles to grow the economy faster than the population growth. Deprivation changes everything and the irrational behaviour that results from it will escalate, adding fuel to the destruction. The toxic stress alters the body's physiology, making the level of these diseases more prevalent. It is expensive to be poor. In a country where resources are limited, the health system must manage the extra disease burden and the loss of productivity that follows. Similar arguments apply to road accidents and crime.

Why the command to love?

When most are loved and feel loved it will bring the kingdom closer. Love is not an instant fix. Parents who change their parenting to a more love-

orientated behaviour will see benefits in their children almost immediately; however, there are limited benefits for the parents. This behaviour change won't lift their skill levels and so increase their income. Society will see the benefits when the children become adults. There is a generational delay. This is similar to the slaves who escaped from Egypt; they did not reach the promised land but their children did. When the disadvantaged are loved it may take more than one generation; benefits will be incremental.

Human history is littered with conflict and when conflict is on a level that disrupts family processes all members are likely to be traumatised. Consequently, both couples and parenting are impaired with consequences for the individuals and society. The future of society is intricately linked with the health of marriage and parenting. Marriage now needs to be defined by the relationship rather than in legal terms, a beneficial step because it brings the reality and purpose of marriage into focus. Marriage serves the biological function of producing and raising children. The success of both functions is linked to love. In Leviticus God described love in legal terms and Jesus reinforced that in softer terms by commanding us to love. In 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8 Paul described love as behaviour, behaviour that enhanced relationships or eroded relationships. Today we can be much more specific and practical on how to love. If we want a future for our children we must teach them how to love and that is mostly done by example and our parenting. The link between children and the marriage that created them is so profound that a marriage can be evaluated by observing the children.

The other reason that we must love is our mental health. Love, doing something for another and expecting nothing in return, is an antidote to depression, fear, and anxiety. Modern living tends to erode our mental health and love provides a path to mental stability. Human nature at its worst tends to focus on the self; hence, there will always be a need for love. Jesus commanded us to love for sound reasons.

Conclusions

So often we are surrounded by the disadvantaged: people who need help and people who need love. We are commanded by Jesus to love our neighbour yet we Christians have mainly neglected this command. The levels of

malnourishment and unemployment are the evidence. There is a bias towards saving people rather than loving people and this has not lifted people out of their deprivation. People are set on their pathway for life by parental behaviour and, when it is detrimental, they struggle with relationships, education, impulsive behaviour, and a cluster of diseases. This has implications for the individual and their nation as a whole. This paper sets out ways you can help them. Jesus provides an example of love and it is a powerful tool.

Relevance and participation are important aspects of Christianity and helping the less privileged is good for them, you, and me. Find a group of emotionally mature women, train them as enumerated, and then support them while they mentor the young women of their community. Education, wealth, and social skills tend to divide society but together we are forming tomorrow's society. Less division is better than more division so the imperative is to break down the barriers. We are all equal in the eyes of God, hence the command to love our neighbour. Jesus provided a blueprint of practical help in the parable of the good Samaritan, something each of us can do but more focus and some understanding of human behaviour will be productive. Perhaps we need to spend less time on our knees and become the hands and feet of Jesus.

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Kilengi M 2024, 'Unwed Mothers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania: A Biblical and Pastoral Dialogue in Light of John 8:1-11', *African Theological Journal for Church and Society*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 115-138

Unwed Mothers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania: A Biblical and Pastoral Dialogue in Light of John 8:1-11

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Abstract

This article examines the intersection of societal realities, religious convictions, and pastoral care within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), focusing on unwed mothers. The article, rooted in John 8:1-11 which depicts Jesus' encounter with the adulterous woman, aims to address the unique challenges faced by unwed mothers within the ELCT. It employs a multidisciplinary approach, including biblical exegesis, pastoral theology, and sociocultural analysis, to explore these complexities and highlight the compassionate aspects of Jesus' response. The objectives are to examine societal and cultural influences impacting unwed mothers, analyse current pastoral practices within the ELCT, and propose a pastoral care framework that integrates biblical principles with cultural sensitivity. Ultimately, the article seeks to promote an inclusive and compassionate pastoral framework within the ELCT, enhancing the well-being of unwed mothers in the church community.

Introduction

The issue of unwed mothers within religious communities, such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), has sparked increasing concern and discussion. This dialogue aims to address the challenges faced by unwed mothers in the church while seeking alignment with biblical principles.

Mbilinyi, M. (1985) shed light on the social dynamics influencing unwed mothers in Tanzania, emphasising the intersection of cultural norms and religious beliefs, crucial for shaping the church's response to this demographic.

The ELCT, like many Christian denominations, grapples with the tension between societal expectations and adherence to biblical teachings. As highlighted by Louw (2008), continuous reflection is essential to ensure that church practices align with Christian faith tenets. Within the ELCT, unwed mothers often encounter stigmatisation and exclusion, facing barriers to participation in church activities and sacraments. Strict marriage policies and judgmental attitudes in pastoral counselling exacerbate their marginalisation. Despite this, there is a lack of structured support systems tailored for unwed mothers within the church.

By examining these practices, the article advocates for a more inclusive and compassionate approach within the ELCT, drawing inspiration from Jesus' response to the adulterous woman in John 8:1-11. This biblical narrative underscores the importance of grace and redemption, calling for a pastoral care model that supports unwed mothers. The article aims to foster reflection within the ELCT, encouraging alignment of pastoral care and church policies with biblical teachings.

In examining the societal realities and cultural influences impacting unwed mothers within the ELCT, the article aims to understand how societal norms and cultural attitudes in Tanzanian society affect their experiences. Additionally, exploring the implications of John 8:1-11 for pastoral care and support of unwed mothers, the article seeks to inform pastoral practices within the ELCT. Importantly, the study proposes a pastoral care framework integrating biblical principles and sociocultural awareness to develop pastoral approaches supporting unwed mothers, considering both biblical principles and sociocultural factors.

Addressing potential counterarguments, some may argue for maintaining traditional church policies to uphold moral standards, while others may fear compromising biblical teachings. However, this article contends that

embracing compassion, as exemplified by Jesus, fulfils biblical principles, fostering a community reflecting Christ's teachings of grace and redemption.

Literature Review: Unwed Mothers in Religious Communities, with a Focus on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT)

The literature review provides a comprehensive exploration of theological perspectives on grace, redemption, and pastoral care within Christian traditions, with a specific focus on Lutheran theology. Gaddy's work *Adultery and Grace* (1996) delves into Lutheran doctrines, emphasising the centrality of grace and the redemptive nature of Christian teachings. This foundational insight forms the backdrop for understanding how the ELCT, as a Lutheran denomination, may approach the challenges faced by unwed mothers.

In tandem with theological exploration, an analysis of existing studies on the experiences of unwed mothers in religious communities, particularly within the Tanzanian context, sheds light on the intersecting sociological dynamics. Mbilinyi's (1985) study provides invaluable insights into the social nuances influencing the experiences of unwed mothers in Tanzania, emphasising the intricate interplay between cultural norms and religious beliefs. Additionally, Okpaku's (2013) work contributes to a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by unwed mothers, offering sociological perspectives that complement theological considerations.

Gaddy's work highlights the theological underpinnings of grace and redemption within Lutheran theology, providing a solid framework for understanding the ELCT's approach to unwed mothers. However, it primarily focuses on doctrinal aspects and may benefit from further exploration of practical implications for pastoral care.

Mbilinyi's study offers rich sociocultural insights into the experiences of unwed mothers in Tanzania, shedding light on the complex interplay between societal expectations and religious beliefs. While it provides valuable context, it primarily focuses on broader societal dynamics and could

delve deeper into the specific challenges faced within religious communities like the ELCT.

Richey and Okpaku's work complements theological perspectives with sociological analysis, offering a holistic understanding of the challenges faced by unwed mothers. However, it could benefit from more explicit connections to theological doctrines, particularly within the context of the ELCT's response.

The literature review underscores the tension between theological principles and sociocultural realities, highlighting potential points of alignment and divergence within the ELCT's response to unwed mothers. This synthesis of theological and sociological insights lays the groundwork for a comprehensive exploration of the ELCT's position, guiding subsequent stages of biblical exegesis, analysis of church documents, and interviews.

Identifying gaps in existing literature, the review indicates a need for further exploration of the practical implications of Lutheran theology for pastoral care within the ELCT, as well as a deeper understanding of the specific challenges faced by unwed mothers within religious communities in Tanzania. This literature review not only serves as a critical lens, through which the research aims to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing dialogue within the ELCT and the broader Christian community, but also informs the research methodology by shaping the approach to biblical exegesis, document analysis, and interviews.

Methodology

Integrating insights from biblical exegesis, pastoral theology analysis, and sociocultural analysis enriched the article by providing a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding unwed mothers within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). Biblical exegesis delved into the theological themes and principles embedded in passages like John 8:1-11, offering timeless insights into mercy, forgiveness, and compassion. This theological foundation informed pastoral theology analysis, where qualitative interviews with pastors, theologians, and church leaders revealed nuanced

interpretations of biblical teachings and current pastoral practices. These interviews explored how theological perspectives translated into pastoral care strategies and shed light on existing support systems or gaps within the church's response to unwed mothers.

Sociocultural analysis further contextualised these findings by examining the societal norms, expectations, and perceptions that shaped the experiences of unwed mothers within the ELCT community. By engaging with ELCT members through qualitative interviews, this methodology captured first-hand experiences and voices, enhancing cultural sensitivity and informing pastoral care practices that were inclusive and tailored to the specific needs of unwed mothers in this cultural context.

In the pastoral theology analysis, the criteria for selecting participants for qualitative interviews were carefully considered to ensure a diverse representation of perspectives within the ELCT community. Pastors, theologians, and church leaders play pivotal roles as spiritual guides, interpreters of doctrine, and decision-makers within the ELCT community. Their perspectives provided invaluable insights into theological interpretations, pastoral practices, and the implementation of church policies related to unwed mothers. By engaging with these stakeholders, the article gained a deeper understanding of the theological frameworks and pastoral approaches present within the ELCT, informing recommendations for a more inclusive and supportive environment for unwed mothers.

Ethical considerations were paramount in conducting qualitative interviews within the ELCT community. Participant confidentiality was ensured by anonymising responses and protecting the identities of interviewees. Voluntary participation was emphasised, with participants provided with informed consent forms detailing the purpose and scope of the research. Additionally, potential impacts of the research on participants were carefully considered, with measures in place to minimise any potential harm or discomfort. Ethical guidelines, such as those outlined by institutional review boards or ethical review committees, were adhered to throughout the research process to uphold ethical standards and ensure the well-being of participants.

The Current Situation in the ELCT: Challenges Faced by Unwed Mothers in the Church

Unwed mothers within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) navigate a complex set of challenges that affect their spiritual, emotional, and social well-being. These challenges arise from deeply embedded societal and cultural stigmas, compounded by specific attitudes and practices within the church community that often exacerbate their marginalisation. Below is a more detailed examination of these challenges.

Social Stigma and Isolation

Social stigma is a pervasive issue for unwed mothers in the ELCT. Unwed mothers are frequently subjected to judgment and moral condemnation, within both the church and the wider community. Being labelled as morally compromised or irresponsible, they face significant emotional and psychological strain. The stigma not only isolates these women from their faith community but also affects their sense of belonging and self-worth.

This social isolation manifests in various ways. Many unwed mothers report being excluded from church activities, such as choir membership, leadership roles, or even participation in Holy Communion. They may also be the subject of gossip, which adds to their feelings of shame and unworthiness. This exclusion deepens their sense of alienation, as they feel they are no longer full members of the church community. As a result, many unwed mothers withdraw from active participation in church life, fearing further judgment and rejection.

The impact of social stigma extends beyond the church. In many Tanzanian communities, being an unwed mother is often viewed as a moral failing that brings shame not only to the individual but also to her family. This cultural belief can lead to family rejection or a significant decrease in family support. The loss of familial and community support leaves unwed mothers vulnerable, both emotionally and economically. Without a strong support network, they struggle to access resources such as childcare, employment opportunities, and educational advancement, which could help them and their children lead stable and productive lives.

Mary, a member of the ELCT, shared her experience of being shunned by her congregation after her pregnancy. Despite seeking forgiveness and reconciliation, she was met with continued judgment and exclusion, which eventually led her to leave the church. The stigma also followed her in the wider community, making it difficult for her to find a job or even someone willing to marry her. This experience highlights the long-term impact of social stigma on unwed mothers within the ELCT (Lumwe 1998).

Economic Hardship

Economic hardship is a significant and ongoing challenge for many unwed mothers in the ELCT. Without the financial support of a partner and, in some cases, without the backing of their families, these women are often left to bear the full financial burden of raising a child on their own. This situation frequently leads to severe financial instability, as many unwed mothers struggle to meet the basic needs of their children and themselves.

The economic challenges faced by unwed mothers are multifaceted. Many are unable to afford childcare, which limits their ability to work full-time or pursue further education that could improve their employment prospects. In cases where unwed mothers do have jobs, these are often low-paying, informal positions with little job security or benefits. The lack of stable employment contributes to ongoing financial stress, as these women are constantly balancing the costs of housing, food, healthcare, and education for their children.

Furthermore, the economic marginalisation of unwed mothers can hinder their participation in church life. Many church activities, such as events, retreats, or even Sunday offerings, require financial contributions that these women may not be able to afford. As a result, their economic hardship deepens their sense of exclusion from the church community, as they are unable to participate fully in its social and spiritual life.

The economic difficulties of unwed mothers are compounded by the absence of specialised church programmes aimed at providing financial support or vocational training. Although the ELCT offers various charitable initiatives, these programmes often do not take into account the unique financial

pressures faced by unwed mothers, leaving them with limited access to the assistance they need to improve their economic situation.

Psychological and Emotional Stress

Unwed mothers in the ELCT also face significant psychological and emotional stress, which is often exacerbated by the judgment and lack of support they receive from their church community. The stigma attached to their situation leads to pervasive feelings of guilt, shame, and unworthiness. These emotional burdens can have a profound impact on their mental health, leading to conditions such as anxiety, depression, and chronic stress.

The emotional strain experienced by unwed mothers often stems from the judgmental attitudes of church members and leaders. Instead of receiving support and compassion, many unwed mothers report being subjected to harsh criticism and moral condemnation. This can create a sense of internalised guilt, as these women may begin to believe that they are inherently flawed or undeserving of God's love and forgiveness. The resulting emotional isolation makes it difficult for them to maintain healthy relationships, engage in daily activities, or participate in church services.

Elizabeth, another member of the ELCT, shared her experience of struggling with overwhelming feelings of guilt after becoming pregnant outside of marriage. The judgmental attitudes of her fellow church members deepened her sense of shame, leading her to feel unworthy of God's love and forgiveness. This emotional burden created a barrier between her and her faith, making it difficult for her to pray or attend church services regularly. Instead of finding solace in her faith community, Elizabeth found herself further isolated from the spiritual support she desperately needed (Smith 2020).

The psychological stress faced by unwed mothers is compounded by the limited availability of counselling and mental health services within the church. While pastoral counselling is available in some congregations, these services are often not tailored to the specific needs of unwed mothers, leaving them without the professional guidance necessary to cope with their emotional and psychological challenges. Without access to specialised

support, many unwed mothers are left to navigate their mental health struggles on their own, often with limited success.

Existing Attitudes and Practices within the ELCT

Moral Policing

Moral policing is a prevalent issue within the ELCT that significantly impacts unwed mothers. This form of policing manifests through constant scrutiny and judgment from fellow church members, gossip, exclusion, and even public reprimands during church services. These practices create an environment where unwed mothers feel continuously judged and shamed, which further isolates them from their faith community.

Gossip is one of the primary tools of moral policing within the ELCT. Church members may whisper about the unwed mother's situation, speculating on her choices and questioning her moral character. This gossip reinforces the stigma surrounding unwed motherhood and creates an atmosphere of distrust and fear. Many unwed mothers withdraw from church activities to avoid further scrutiny, which deepens their isolation and makes it more difficult for them to access the spiritual and emotional support they need.

Public reprimands during church services or community gatherings further exacerbate this issue. Leaders or influential members may call out unwed mothers directly or indirectly, using them as examples of moral failure. These public shaming actions place unwed mothers in a spotlight of judgment and ostracism, driving them further away from the support they need. For example, a church leader might pointedly remark about 'maintaining moral integrity' in front of the congregation, making unwed mothers feel humiliated and unworthy.

Limited Support Structures

The ELCT's support structures for unwed mothers are limited, leaving many without access to the necessary resources for counselling, financial aid, or childcare support. While the church has various programmes aimed at helping the needy, these initiatives often do not address the unique challenges faced by unwed mothers. This lack of specialised support

mechanisms leaves unwed mothers feeling overlooked and unsupported, as they must navigate their difficulties largely on their own.

The absence of tailored support structures within the church community is particularly evident in areas such as counselling and financial aid. Many unwed mothers struggle with feelings of guilt, shame, and isolation but have no access to formal counselling services that could help them process these emotions. Similarly, financial aid programmes that are not specifically designed for single mothers may not account for the high costs of childcare, education, and healthcare that these women face. This lack of adequate support forces unwed mothers to make difficult choices between essential needs, further deepening their economic and emotional struggles.

Theological Rigour over Compassion

Within the ELCT, there is often a strong emphasis on theological rigour and maintaining doctrinal purity, which can overshadow the need for pastoral care and compassion. This focus on upholding moral standards can create an environment where unwed mothers feel judged rather than supported. The church's commitment to theological principles can sometimes leave little room for understanding the complex and nuanced situations that unwed mothers face.

Discussions within the church frequently prioritise maintaining moral standards over finding ways to support those who may have fallen short of these ideals. This approach can make unwed mothers feel as though they are under constant scrutiny, reinforcing their sense of shame and unworthiness. Instead of encountering pathways to redemption and support, they may be met with rigid interpretations of doctrine that leave little room for understanding or compassion.

This atmosphere can make unwed mothers like Lydia, who already struggles with guilt and societal stigma, feel even more isolated and reluctant to seek help from their faith community. The church's emphasis on theological rigour often leaves unwed mothers feeling alienated, as they perceive the institution as prioritising doctrine over the practical and emotional needs of its members.

Suffice to say, unwed mothers within the ELCT face a range of challenges, from social stigma and economic hardship to psychological stress and limited support structures. The existing attitudes and practices within the church often exacerbate these difficulties, creating an environment where unwed mothers feel judged, isolated, and unsupported. These challenges highlight the need for a more compassionate and inclusive approach within the ELCT, one that acknowledges the complex realities of unwed motherhood and seeks to provide meaningful support to those who need it most.

Socio-Religious Parallels: The Woman in John 8 and Unwed Mothers in Tanzania

The socio-religious situation of the woman caught in adultery in John 8 provides a profound lens through which to explore the challenges faced by unwed mothers in Tanzania, particularly within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). This biblical text offers both a critique of judgmental religious practices and an example of a compassionate response to moral failure, making it a fitting foundation for guiding the church's response to unwed mothers.

Social Stigma and Isolation

In John 8:3-11, the woman caught in adultery is brought before Jesus by religious leaders who seek to enforce the Mosaic Law, which prescribes stoning for such an offence. The woman's public humiliation mirrors the social stigma and isolation faced by unwed mothers in Tanzania. Just as the woman is singled out as a moral failure and placed on public display for judgment, unwed mothers in Tanzania are often subjected to harsh scrutiny and condemnation by their communities and church members. In both cases, the emphasis is on moral policing rather than understanding or supporting the individual.

The woman's isolation is further amplified by the fact that she is brought alone before Jesus – her male counterpart is conspicuously absent. Similarly, unwed mothers in Tanzania often face judgment and exclusion, while the men involved in their situations are less frequently held accountable. This

double standard reflects the broader cultural and religious dynamics that place a disproportionate burden on women for perceived moral failings.

In both scenarios, the focus on public shaming serves to isolate the individual from their community, deepening their sense of guilt and unworthiness. The woman's experience of being judged by religious leaders parallels the experiences of unwed mothers who are often judged by church members and leaders, which only adds to their emotional and psychological distress.

Religious Judgment and Moral Policing

The religious leaders in John 8 are primarily concerned with upholding the law and maintaining theological rigour, much like the moral policing that unwed mothers encounter within the ELCT. The woman caught in adultery is not seen as a person in need of compassion or redemption; rather, she is treated as a tool for proving a theological point. Similarly, unwed mothers in Tanzania often find themselves judged not for who they are as individuals, but as symbols of moral failure.

The religious leaders' approach to the woman exemplifies how theological rigour can sometimes overshadow compassion, leading to practices that are more punitive than supportive. This is akin to the ELCT's focus on maintaining moral standards, which can result in unwed mothers being ostracised and excluded from the very community that should be offering them support and guidance. The emphasis on judgment in both situations overlooks the need for pastoral care and understanding, perpetuating a cycle of guilt, shame, and exclusion.

Limited Support Structures and Emotional Distress

The woman in John 8 is alone in facing the consequences of her actions, much like unwed mothers in Tanzania who often face limited support structures within the church. The religious leaders are quick to point out her sin but offer no pathway to redemption or support, leaving her vulnerable and isolated. In a similar vein, unwed mothers in the ELCT frequently encounter a lack of tailored support programmes, whether in the form of counselling, financial assistance, or community support. This lack of support

exacerbates their emotional and psychological distress, leaving them to navigate their challenges largely on their own.

The emotional burden of the woman in John 8, who must have felt immense fear, shame, and guilt as she stood before her accusers, parallels the psychological stress faced by unwed mothers in Tanzania. Both are left to grapple with the consequences of their actions without the support of a compassionate community that could help them find healing and restoration.

Exploring John 8 as a Lens for the Church's Response

The story of the woman caught in adultery offers a powerful theological model for how the ELCT can respond to unwed mothers. Jesus' response in John 8 is marked by compassion, forgiveness, and a refusal to engage in the judgmental practices of the religious leaders. Instead of condemning the woman, Jesus invites those without sin to cast the first stone, highlighting the shared human condition of sinfulness and the need for mercy over judgment. His response shifts the focus from punitive legalism to restorative grace.

For the ELCT, this narrative invites a reconsideration of how the church responds to unwed mothers. Rather than focusing on moral policing and theological rigour, the church can draw inspiration from Jesus' example by prioritising compassion, support, and inclusion. The story challenges the church to move away from practices that isolate and shame unwed mothers and toward creating a community that offers them the love, care, and guidance they need to rebuild their lives.

Moreover, Jesus' final words to the woman – 'Neither do I condemn you; go and do not sin again' (John 8:11 RSV) – illustrate a balance between grace and accountability. This balance can guide the ELCT in addressing the challenges of unwed mothers. The church can offer forgiveness and support while also encouraging personal growth and responsibility, creating a space where unwed mothers can experience both spiritual restoration and practical assistance.

The story of the woman caught in adultery offers a compelling theological framework for addressing the challenges faced by unwed mothers in the

ELCT. By exploring this text, the church can find a model for moving beyond judgment and exclusion and toward a response that reflects the compassion and grace of Christ. This approach not only aligns with the core teachings of Christianity but also provides a practical path for addressing the socio-religious realities of unwed mothers in Tanzania. Through the lens of John 8, the ELCT can reimagine its role as a community of support and restoration, helping unwed mothers finds dignity, healing, and a renewed sense of belonging within the church.

Theological and Pastoral Principles from John 8: Compassion, Grace, and Accountability

The theological and pastoral principles derived from the story of the woman caught in adultery in John 8 provide a model for how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) can respond to the challenges faced by unwed mothers. This biblical narrative emphasises three key principles: the primacy of compassion over judgment, the necessity of grace in pastoral care, and the balance between mercy and accountability.

Primacy of Compassion over Judgment

In John 8, Jesus demonstrates the primacy of compassion over judgment by refusing to condemn the woman caught in adultery. While the religious leaders seek to enforce the strict letter of the law, Jesus redirects their attention from legalism to the humanity of the woman standing before them. He does not deny her sin but prioritises her dignity and potential for renewal over her moral failing.

This principle calls on the church to approach individuals in vulnerable situations, such as unwed mothers, with empathy and love rather than condemnation. By following Jesus' example, the church should seek to provide understanding and support instead of judgment and exclusion. Compassion becomes the guiding force that allows individuals to experience God's love and acceptance even in moments of moral failure.

In interviews with unwed mothers from the *Nyaturu* ethnic group in the ELCT Central Diocese, many shared experiences of feeling judged and marginalised

by their faith community. One woman recalled how a compassionate pastor took the time to listen to her story without judgment, offering her emotional support and helping her reconnect with the church. This act of compassion had a profound impact on her, restoring her sense of belonging and faith.

Necessity of Grace in Pastoral Care

The interaction between Jesus and the woman highlights the importance of grace. Jesus models divine grace by refusing to pass judgment, instead offering the woman an opportunity for a new beginning. This act of grace points to a God who is more interested in redemption than in punishment, encouraging transformation rather than reinforcing shame.

This principle invites the church to adopt a pastoral approach that extends grace to those who have fallen short, recognising that everyone is in need of God's mercy. Pastoral care should be grounded in the understanding that the church is a place of healing and restoration, not condemnation. Grace should be the foundation of all interactions with unwed mothers, providing them with the opportunity to rebuild their lives in the context of God's love.

During a focus group, several unwed mothers discussed the impact of receiving pastoral care that emphasised grace. One mother, Sarah, shared how her pastor's unconditional acceptance helped her overcome feelings of guilt and shame. His constant reassurance that God's grace was available to her, despite her circumstances, allowed her to find hope and begin rebuilding her life with renewed faith.

Balance between Mercy and Accountability

In his interaction with the woman, Jesus strikes a balance between mercy and accountability when he says, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more' (John 8:11). This statement reflects a dual commitment: Jesus shows mercy by not condemning the woman, yet he also holds her accountable by encouraging her to change her behaviour.

This principle suggests that the church should offer unwed mothers both forgiveness and guidance, supporting them in making positive changes in their lives. Mercy should be extended without conditions, but the church should also encourage personal growth, helping individuals to find paths

toward spiritual and moral renewal. This balance allows the church to uphold its values while also embodying Christ's love and compassion.

In one parish, a church leader described how the congregation developed a programme for unwed mothers that combined spiritual support with practical guidance. The programme included Bible study groups focused on God's mercy, as well as workshops on parenting, financial literacy, and personal development. This approach helped unwed mothers feel both supported and empowered to make positive changes in their lives.

Together, these theological and pastoral principles from John 8 advocate for a church that embraces vulnerable individuals with open arms, offering a community of grace, support, and guidance. Rather than perpetuating stigma and exclusion, the church is called to embody Christ's example, providing unwed mothers with the love, dignity, and opportunities they need to experience healing and transformation.

In practical terms, this means that the ELCT can create programmes and initiatives that reflect these principles, such as compassionate counselling services, grace-filled community support, and balanced interventions that encourage personal growth while offering mercy. By doing so, the church can play a vital role in addressing the challenges faced by unwed mothers, helping them to restore their faith, self-worth, and sense of belonging within the church community.

Enacting the Principles of Compassion and Grace: A Path Forward for Addressing the Challenges of Unwed Mothers in the ELCT

Addressing the challenges faced by unwed mothers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) requires a shift in church culture, pastoral practices, and community engagement. Drawing from the theological and pastoral principles of compassion, grace, and accountability, as demonstrated in John 8, the church can implement holistic strategies that foster inclusion, support, and transformation. These recommendations aim to build a church that is not only a spiritual refuge but also a practical resource for unwed mothers, guiding them toward healing and empowerment.

Fostering a Culture of Compassionate Dialogue

Educational Sermons and Workshops

One of the most effective ways to shift the mindset of the church community is through education. Sermons, Bible studies, and workshops should be intentionally designed to emphasise the compassionate response of Jesus in John 8, where he prioritises humanity and grace over judgment. These teachings can serve as a foundation for changing the narrative around unwed motherhood within the church. Workshops can include interactive discussions that allow members to explore the implications of compassion in their daily lives, addressing the biases and assumptions that may underlie judgmental attitudes.

Training for Church Leaders

Training for pastors, elders, and lay leaders is crucial in ensuring that the church's response to unwed mothers is consistent with its theological values. This training can cover areas such as trauma-informed pastoral care, non-judgmental listening, and how to create a welcoming atmosphere for all congregants. Leaders should also be educated on the social and cultural factors that contribute to unwed motherhood, helping them understand the broader context and avoid simplistic moral judgments. By equipping leaders with these tools, the church can become a place where unwed mothers feel seen, heard, and valued.

A successful model might include a multi-session pastoral care training programme where leaders undergo practical exercises in counselling, conflict resolution, and compassionate communication. Such a programme could be adapted to the specific needs of the ELCT, ensuring that all church leaders are prepared to handle sensitive situations with empathy and grace. The church has a responsibility to invest in designing and implementing training programmes that focus on pastoral counselling and encouraging pastors to engage in prayer, education, reading, and reflection to provide effective guidance to their congregations.

Creating Safe Spaces for Support and Healing

Support Groups

Support groups are an essential part of building a community where unwed mothers can find solidarity and understanding. These groups should be safe, non-judgmental spaces where participants can openly share their struggles, joys, and spiritual journeys. In addition to providing emotional support, these groups can serve as a platform for spiritual growth, helping unwed mothers see themselves as beloved members of the body of Christ. The groups can also be a place for practical assistance, such as sharing resources, child-rearing advice, and job opportunities.

Counselling Services

The church can enhance its pastoral care by offering professional counselling services that address the specific needs of unwed mothers. These services can provide both individual and group counselling, focusing on issues such as dealing with social stigma, managing the emotional impact of single parenthood, and navigating relationships with family and community members. Counselling services should also include spiritual guidance, helping unwed mothers reconnect with their faith and find strength in their relationship with God. By addressing both the emotional and spiritual dimensions of their experiences, counselling can be a powerful tool for healing and transformation.

In addition to counselling, the church could collaborate with local health services or NGOs to provide holistic support that includes healthcare, legal advice, and social services, ensuring that unwed mothers have access to the resources they need to thrive.

Extending Grace through Practical Assistance

Financial Aid Programmes

Practical support is a tangible expression of the church's commitment to grace. Financial aid programmes can play a crucial role in helping unwed mothers achieve stability and independence. These programmes could include scholarships for higher education, grants for vocational training, and

stipends to cover childcare costs. By investing in the future of unwed mothers, the church not only alleviates immediate financial pressures but also empowers these women to pursue their goals and contribute to their communities. Such programmes can be funded through church donations, partnerships with Christian charities, or government grants.

Childcare Support

Childcare is often one of the biggest challenges for single mothers. Churches can step in to provide support by organising volunteer-based childcare programmes, where members of the congregation offer their time to care for children during worship services, church events, or even during the week to give mothers time for work or study. These programmes not only provide practical help but also create opportunities for building relationships within the church community. Additionally, the church could explore partnerships with local day-care centres or early childhood education programmes to offer discounted or subsidised services for unwed mothers.

A similar initiative in neighbouring parishes involved creating a cooperative childcare centre staffed by volunteers and funded by donations. The programme not only provided free childcare for unwed mothers but also became a space for early childhood education, giving children a head start in their development.

Encouraging Personal Growth and Responsibility with Compassion

Mentorship Programmes

Mentorship programmes can be an invaluable resource for unwed mothers, providing guidance and support as they navigate the challenges of single parenthood. Mentors from within the church can offer practical advice, spiritual encouragement, and a listening ear. These relationships should be built on mutual respect and trust, with mentors offering support without judgment. The church can facilitate these connections by creating structured mentorship programmes, pairing experienced members of the congregation with unwed mothers who are seeking guidance.

Balanced Teachings

Church teachings on sin, grace, and redemption should emphasise personal growth and transformation rather than guilt and shame. The message of 'Go and sin no more' should be presented in a way that encourages unwed mothers to embrace their potential for change while assuring them of God's unconditional love. The church can offer workshops or Bible studies that focus on themes of redemption, renewal, and second chances, helping unwed mothers to see themselves not as defined by their past but as empowered by God's grace to create a new future.

One church in another region found success by holding monthly 'Renewal Nights', where congregants, including unwed mothers, participated in worship, testimonies, and teachings focused on spiritual renewal and personal growth. These events provided a supportive environment where individuals felt encouraged to pursue positive changes in their lives.

Reform Church Practices to Align with Grace and Mercy

Review Disciplinary Practices

The ELCT should conduct a thorough review of its disciplinary practices to ensure that they are aligned with the principles of grace and mercy. Public reprimands, exclusion from church activities, or other punitive measures can deepen the stigma and isolation felt by unwed mothers. Instead, the church should prioritise restorative approaches that focus on healing, reconciliation, and inclusion. For example, rather than public discipline, unwed mothers could be invited to private counselling sessions where they can work through their challenges with the support of a pastor or counsellor.

Shift in Moral Policing

Moral policing within the church community can be a significant barrier to creating an inclusive and compassionate environment. Church leaders should actively discourage gossip, judgmental attitudes, and exclusionary behaviour, instead promoting a culture of forgiveness and understanding. This can be achieved through sermons, Bible studies, and pastoral guidance that emphasise the importance of seeing every individual as worthy of God's love and grace. By shifting the focus from policing morality to fostering

relationships, the church can become a place where unwed mothers feel welcomed and valued.

The church leadership could implement policies that formalise this shift, such as guidelines for how to handle situations involving unwed mothers and protocols for pastoral care that prioritise grace over judgment.

Integrate Theological and Pastoral Care

Holistic Pastoral Care

The integration of theological teachings with practical pastoral care is essential for creating a church environment that fully embodies the principles of grace and compassion. Pastors should be encouraged to weave theological reflections on forgiveness, grace, and accountability into their counselling and pastoral visits. This holistic approach ensures that unwed mothers receive both spiritual nourishment and practical support, helping them to grow in their faith while also addressing the everyday challenges they face.

Church leaders can also create opportunities for unwed mothers to engage in theological discussions, Bible studies, or retreats that focus on topics such as grace, healing, and new beginnings. These spiritual resources can be an important part of their journey toward wholeness and renewal.

Churches can also collaborate with external organisations, including Christian counselling centres, social services, and local NGOs, to provide comprehensive support that addresses the spiritual, emotional, and practical needs of unwed mothers. This collaborative approach can ensure that individuals receive the care they need from multiple angles, reinforcing the church's commitment to holistic care.

By enacting these recommendations, the ELCT can move from a culture of stigma, isolation, and limited support for unwed mothers to one that fully embodies the compassionate, grace-filled response modelled by Jesus in John 8. These steps will transform the church into a place of healing, restoration, and inclusion, where unwed mothers are not only welcomed but actively supported in their journeys of faith and personal growth. The church's

commitment to grace and accountability will create an environment where all individuals can experience the transformative power of God's love, regardless of their circumstances. This vision of a compassionate and inclusive church is one that aligns with the core teachings of the Gospel and reflects the heart of Christ's ministry to the vulnerable and marginalised.

Conclusion

The narrative of John 8:1-11 offers profound theological and pastoral insights that can guide the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) in addressing the challenges faced by unwed mothers. By embodying the principles of compassion, grace, and accountability exemplified by Jesus, the church can transform its approach to this vulnerable group. The story of Jesus and the woman caught in adultery highlights the importance of prioritising humanity over judgment, offering grace instead of condemnation, and balancing mercy with personal responsibility. These lessons call for a shift in the church's culture and practices, from stigmatisation and exclusion to a more inclusive, supportive, and redemptive community.

The ELCT has the opportunity to become a beacon of hope and healing for unwed mothers by fostering compassionate dialogue, providing safe spaces for support and healing, extending grace through practical assistance, and encouraging personal growth with compassion. The integration of theological teaching with practical pastoral care ensures that the church responds holistically, addressing both the spiritual and everyday needs of unwed mothers. By reforming disciplinary practices and promoting a culture of grace and inclusion, the church can move from moral policing to embodying the love and forgiveness central to the Christian faith.

Ultimately, the ELCT's mission in this area must align with the heart of Christ's ministry, which reaches out to the marginalised and offers them dignity, restoration, and a new beginning. By following Jesus' example in John 8, the church can create an environment where unwed mothers are not only accepted but also empowered to thrive, experiencing the fullness of God's love and grace. This transformation will strengthen the church's witness and

make it a true reflection of the gospel's message of hope, healing, and redemption for all.

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van Slageren, J 2024, 'Christian Mission and Slavery in the Cameroons', *African Theological Journal for Church and Society*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 139-159

Christian Mission and Slavery in the Cameroons

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Abstract

While considerable research is available on the transatlantic slave trade and the cruelty suffered by African slaves in the Americas, less attention is given to the practices of slavery and forced labour in Africa. This article tells the story of slavery and forced labour in Cameroon. Douala kings kept slaves in slave villages and used their blood to sprinkle the grave of a deceased Douala prince. The German colonial government used Africans as forced labour to cultivate private plantations. The French government also coerced local Africans to produce food for the the troops fighting Nazism. The Christian missionaries and missions played a mixed role in countering and sustaining these power relations.

Introduction

The discussions surrounding Christian mission and slavery continue to give rise to lively and important debates. Significant studies have been done on the transatlantic trade in slaves to the Caribbean, America South, and even Suriname, highlighting the use of many forms and nuances of slavery, including forced labour. The abolition of slavery by England in 1833 and France in 1848, for example, was meant to lead to the emancipation and safety of slaves and improvement in the socio-economic situation of Africans. But such a goal was at best an illusion; the reality was different as forced labour and extreme forms of cruelty continued in all Africa including in Cameroon.

On the coast of Cameroon

Similar to many African countries bordering the Atlantic Ocean, Cameroon was also affected by the slave trade. The Portuguese were the first to organise slave

ships to buy and transport slaves from the region to the plantations of the New World. They were followed, from around 1590, by the Dutch, and later the French and the English. These processes resulted in the intensification of slave trade on the rivers of Cameroon. Many slaves came from interior countries such as the Bamileke and the Bamoun, nicknamed *Bayon* (people of slaves). Most of them were transported to southern Cameroon by slave routes passing through Yabassi country. They were forced to travel barefoot to the coastal area where they were shipped across the ocean. The captured slaves were of great monetary value. As noted by Franz Hutter (1902:92):

> The value of a slave put into chains was much more important than the tooth of an elephant that he had to bear on his back all along the way to the coast.

While no precise figures of the slave trade from the Cameroon are available, the following comments by Meredith Terretta (2014:31) suggest that significant numbers were involved:

> Because of its inland location, historians have little statistical data on the precise number of slaves originating from the Grassfields region; however, recent scholarship suggests that the combined figures for slaves exported per year at the peak of the trade, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, may have reached as high as sixteen to eighteen thousand.

At the same time, not all these slaves were shipped to work on plantations across the Atlantic Ocean. Many were retained in the slave villages upstream of the Wouri River where they had to cultivate food products for the Douala population, which was largely a fishing community. These slaves were also often victims of exploitation and abuse by the Douala princes. For example, the death of a king led to the Doualas organising raids to capture persons whose blood could be, as per the prevailing custom, sprinkled on the grave of the deceased.

Jamaican and English missionaries in Cameroon

The Jamaican and English Baptist missions were the earliest missions to be set up in the Cameroon. From 1843 onwards and for some forty years they proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God within the Douala society and its surroundings. The first Baptist mission station as established on the island of Fernando Po (now called Bioko), a region where slavery prevailed, and where the slaves were exposed to extreme violence and exploitation by their masters. As noted by Lonerrick and Clarke (1840-1843:220-222):

> Fernando Po is a land of slavery and oppression, there is too much suppression on this island to be relieved by human power. To characterise the chiefs of the mainland, they are all alike: with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters (1 Corinthians 5:9-10). These kings are notorious for trading of slaves. Their hearts are entirely set upon trade but are nevertheless willing to receive instructions and they are sympathetic to the idea of Christian settlements. This means that we need here men with a spirit of Christian martyrdom, who can act devoutly, suffer patiently and labour diligently, and to undertake the all important and difficult duty of making Jesus known to the perishing ignorant person around him.

Joseph Merrick was the first Negro Jamaican missionary to reach the coast of the Cameroons. After a short stay at the newly created missionary station Clarence at Fernando Po, he settled in the African continent where he explored the coastline of Cameroon and established a missionary site at Bimbia among the Isubu people of Bimbia, in order to make it 'the principal seat of the extension of Christ's Kingdom in Africa' (Merrick 1844:348). Merrick had a flair for languages. During his training at the Calabar Theological Institution in Jamaica he studied Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and French. He was also a professional printer, took interest in the local African language, and translated some Bible chapters and books into the Isubu language. In these ways he broke with the prevailing missionary traditions that focused on translating only the New Testament or parts of it, leaving out the Old Testament. On the contrary,

his biblical message was inspired by themes of the Old Testament, such as found in Genesis and Exodus, emphasising a pattern for progressive faith of justice and peace for the Jamaican church. It is likely that he was influenced by the Torah which he could have learnt from Jewish plantation owners in Jamaica (van Slageren 1972:32).

He hired a house where slaves were traded and there he learned how to cope with criminals and live together with those who suffered. Worn out by all his activities and experiences he became seriously ill and went on leave. He died on October 21, 1849, during his return voyage by sea to England. In his short lifetime he laid the foundation for the future mission work. Joseph Merrick was not only the first but also one of the most capable, devoted, and inspiring missionaries in that era. The Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) honoured his memory in a resolution of gratitude:

> He was one of African descent, educated in the Society's schools, who died in vulnerable health while on active service.

The impact of his work and personality was so deep that echoes of his hopes can be found in following generations of Cameroonians serving the ministry (Kamta 2003).

However, while the missionary efforts in Fernando Po and Bimbia only led to ephemeral results, it was in Douala that the church would take a more definitive form as a result of the work of Alfred Saker. Saker, then thirty years old and of English origin, arrived on February 16, 1844, in Fernando Po. He was responsible, as a mechanic, for the technical installations and vessels of the mission. After a year, Saker crossed the border in order to make contact with the people in Douala. He was well received by the chief of Deido who offered him a house and a small piece of land. From then on he began to prepare to settle himself with his family there permanently. He learnt the Douala language and followed Merrick's example and translated the Bible into the local language. He used exegetical books to better prepare himself for this task. After a lot of demanding work, he published the Gospel of Matthew in 1848, the New Testament in 1862, and the Old Testament in 1872. Then Saker had the idea to create an industrial school to benefit young Christians. This

venture contributed in the later years to undermine the foundations of slavery in the Douala society.

In the meantime he created the Bethel Church in Douala in 1855, which he called the 'Native Baptist Church'. Then he went to Fernando Po, which had been taken over by the Catholic Spanish authorities, to transport the Baptist Jamaican colony in the island to the neighbouring continent. It was in the Bay d'Ambas that he was able to find a piece of land to which he gave the name Victoria, and where a small number of Jamaican Baptist people settled and developed a Christian missionary community for the Bakwiri people.

Another influential missionary was Joseph Jackson Fuller, whose influence was perhaps greater than that of any other comparable person who had been working on the coast of Cameroon. Fuller spent forty years there and on his return to England he wrote his autobiography. He had begun his work-life as a a trained carpenter. When, in 1850, no missionary at all was left in the field, he was appointed to become a missionary of the BMS. Fuller proved to be a man full of energy and he was always on the move. He roamed the forest to meet people, including slaves, who had fled the townships for fear of being slaughtered by the Douala during the customary killing for the dead kings. Indeed, during a tour in one of these villages he witnessed a hunt for men who were to be sacrificed on the tombs of the Douala nobles and he was confronted by some of the worst aspects of human misery: people poisoned with drugs for witchcraft and ritual killing. Nevertheless he was able to put an end to these cruel rites through spreading the message of the gospel and exclaiming: 'God's book has come now to the country'.

To sum up: the Jamaican Baptists exercised a decisive influence on the course of the missionary and church history of Cameroon. Their years of Christian endeavour preceded all other missionary efforts and took place from 1841 to 1852. Their engagement ended with the sudden retreat of the Jamaican Baptist Mission from the field. Despite this, a handful of Jamaican missionaries continued to serve the mission. They were employed by the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) of London and were meant to co-operate with British preachers. Their importance, however, is usually not recognised and their presence in Cameroon is not even mentioned in important books about the history of Christian missions including Latourette and Neill. Nevertheless, some forms of

Jamaican experience, especially with regard to their spirit of freedom and emancipation, remained a basic dimension of the identity of the Cameroon Christians and churches.

The Presence of the Basel Mission in Cameroon

Christianity in the Cameroon was spread through different denominational and national filters. When the Germans occupied Cameroon in 1884, the Baptist Mission transferred its missionary responsibilities to the Basel Mission (BM). The BM was, in essence, a transnational and ecumenical form of mission, but depended on German religious and financial support for its work in Cameroon.

In order to become familiar with the missionary situation in Cameroon, the BM tried to organise a school programme, in line with the ideas acquired at the Côte d'Ivoire, where the BM had previously worked, which was basically associated with strict supervision. For this purpose the Basel missionaries drew on linguistic data developed by Alfred Saker. And it was through their own contributions to the study of the Douala language that it grew to such an extent that this language gradually evolved to become a means of evangelical communicating and civilising thoughts throughout the world of southern Cameroon: Bakwiri, Sanaga Maritime, Bassa, the Grassfields (Bafut and Bamiléke), and Bamoun.

The BM was able to employ some good Baptist members as a teaching staff. But there continued to be a lack of qualified teachers and the BM decided in 1890 to organise special courses in Douala for those who were already working with the mission movement. One of the teachers was Theodor Christaller, who was the son of a BM missionary to the Côte d'Ivoire. In agreement with the German government and the BM, Christaller was sent to set up an official teaching programme in Douala. In addition to preparing numerous school books and a Douala language grammar, he also strived to provide higher education in German to those who were already engaged in government service or commerce. Such activities helped the BM to consolidate its position in the city in a relatively short time, while also laying a basis for progressing the work towards the interior of the continent. And while the Douala was traditionally a trading tribe, which jealously guarded its trading monopoly with

the tribes living in the interior of the country, it did not place obstacles to missionaries who wanted to journey to the interior. As a result many missionary stations were established, first a few hundred kilometres from Douala, and subsequently further into the Bamileke and Bamoun countries. The Douala, however, did resist the German colonial government, which disrupted the trade relations of the Douala king in its intent to extend its power over the land and people, but they ultimately could not stop the German conquest.

In addition it is important to note the role of the BM in the expansion of German plantations in the vicinity of Victoria and Buea.

Victoria's Plantation Challenge

The Germans initially consolidated their position in the coastal region, and then proceeded to gradually penetrate the hinterland. In 1885 they began to explore the slopes of Mount Cameroon in the Bakwiri region and to raise the German flag there. This region proved very attractive to the establishment of plantations, and shortly after Victoria came under German colonialism, some German firms undertook the cultivation of plantations in the region. In the process, German trading companies increasingly increased their contacts with the tribes in the hinterlands. During this period the famous botanical garden of Victoria was also created to improve food products and to discover new methods of exploiting the vast Cameroonian lands. German support for commercial enterprises disadvantaged the Cameroonian people. Not only were the populations deprived of their land, but men, women, and even children were recruited in hundreds of thousands as porters, employed to carry baggage or for forced labour in interest of the plantations, with no laws regulating their working schedules.

In order to acquire land in the area the German colonial administration forced the chiefs to cede land as it had done at the beginning of the German occupation of Douala in 1884, when the Germans owned no land in Cameroon. After agreeing upon the sale of the properties of the chief of Douala and the Chief Akwa the Germans declared all 'unoccupied' land to be 'Crown land'. As has been marked by Jonas N. Dah (1983:53-56):

> On July 12th, 1884, the Kings of Duala signed the following famous document with representatives of the German Reich:
>
> We the undersigned, Kings and Chiefs of the territory named Cameroon, situated along the River between the Rivers Bimbia in the north and Kwaka in the south, and as far as longitude 4.10 degree north, have voluntarily decided, during the course of an assembly held at the German factory on the banks of King Akwa's territory, that we are today abandoning totally all our rights relating to sovereignty, legislation and administration of our territory.
>
> The hoisting of the German flag in Dido, Akwa and Bell quarters of Duala finalised the act of Cameroon coming under German protection. The Chiefs were certainly not aware of the implications of what they were signing. Anyhow the chief of Bonaberi or Hichory town – Green Joss – refused to sign the treaty because of conflicts with King of Bell. Green Joss preferred English to German rule of this area but now it was too late, for the king of Bell had claimed that area to be under his rule.

As a result, wherever the colonising German power advanced and appropriated new areas, every uninhabited region was declared crown property. The local African could only own the land that was used directly for the cultivation of consumption goods, which did not take into account grazing and hunting lands, as well as land left to fallow for future cultivation (Mbuagbaw, Brain, and Palmer 1987:70).

At the same time, the exploitation of land for plantation production of crops such as coffee, tobacco, sugar, cotton, and rubber for the German and European markets required adequate supplies of workers that were not available in the immediate region. The expansion of the BM until 1902 was also associated with the plantations that had been established in Victoria. Let us limit ourselves to the most important points. The Mount Cameroon region was transformed into a vast area of German plantations. The commercial companies were granted land concessions of colossal dimensions, initially

10,000 hectares and then even 100,000 hectares and employed some 16,000 to 20,000 workers. It was in 1899 that the first contracts were signed with the Bamileke chiefs to provide the necessary workers for the plantations. At the same time the German colonial government allied with these chiefs to recruit labourers *en masse* to build roads and railways (Terretta 2014:46). Through this agreement, cheap labour had been procured for the commercial companies with wages likely to be less than 200 marks annually for each worker. While the importation of Chinese labour had also been considered by the colonial firms, this proposal was rejected by the German government.

To deal with the problem of recruiting workers, the indigenous population, which was concentrated in indigenous reserves whose size was always decreasing, was first forced to be hired by a commercial company. The local population however was too small to meet the needs of plantation production, and they rioted and revolted against such work. This meant that the necessary workers had to be recruited from other regions such as the Bamileke country. To achieve this goal, the German administration suggested that the BM undertake work among the Bali, where the BM had established a missionary station, and facilitate, under the cover of spreading the Christian religion, control over these people and persuade them to undertake plantation work. The BM's response was that lack of funds prevented it from expanding its work, but it was willing to take an interest in the indigenous people working on the plantations (Rudin 1938:365).

But these workers were not easily hired for such a work in an unhealthy climate. They came down from the high healthy lands to labour in the muddy malarial lands near the coast of Cameroon, where even the diet was unfamiliar. So it came to pass that the Germans began by police and military force to reduce entire communities to slavery. In other words, it was a system of forced labour, caused also by the appalling working conditions that were clearly explained by the high mortality among these unfortunate workers. The German plantation owners could only be successful in their enterprise by making contracts with the chiefs of the interior, most Bamileke tribes, who in exchange for liquor, arms, and gunpowder agreed to recruit their own people. Nevertheless these chiefs were possibly not all the time aware of the full implications of such contracts (Mbuagbaw, Brain, and Palmer 1987:72).

Mainly the representatives of commercial companies feared the ruin of the reservoir of Cameroonian labour. The growing need for workers on the plantations risked undermining the foundations of the proletarian market, the majority of which had to be reserved for porterage service. Traders also wanted to see Cameroonians evolve to become suppliers of German imported products. It was impossible for them to trade with plantation workers. These were often paid in kind or forced to obtain supplies from plantation stalls (van Slageren 1972:73).

While the Christian missions were aware of the bad working conditions and hardships endured by the workers they remained silent for a long time instead of opposing such measures. For example, the Catholic Mission appointed catechists who worked for the management of the plantations. These catechists worked as labour supervisors during the day and taught catechism during their free hours. To support this collaboration, the Catholic Church was given a permanent church in Victoria. Subsequently the Catholic influence spread in the former Protestant field of the BMS, where schools were founded. We are even tempted to suppose that the Roman Catholic Church at that time was nourished by the idea that there was no other way to evangelise the people than to identify with the German colonial system and to adapt to the excesses of the colonial regime.

In this context it is interesting to note also that this mission had a very special seal. On this seal appeared a cross as well as a pickaxe, a hoe, and a scoop and it bore the words: '*Cruce et Labore*'. This was to demonstrate that man is saved by faith and work, in other words, that the Black is saved by his work and that he has to be educated in field work. What it implies even more is that the African has to be first educated to become a human person before he could become a Christian. The missionaries regarded the people of the Cameroons as poor children and they had a hard task to mould them to maturity (Berger 1978:217). This coincided more or less with the BM which had reversed these verbs to say: '*Labora et ora*', that is to say that the Black had first to work before learning to pray. However in 1889, the year that marked the turnover of the view of the BM on the issue of forced labour, this formula was changed to '*Ora et Labor*a' with emphasis on '*Labora*'. As Rudin (1938:315) notes: 'The evidence is overwhelming that missionaries believed it was their duty to teach natives how to work'. Another reason for not engaging in a struggle against this exploitative colonial system was probably the pietistic thinking that reigned in Protestant circles in Württemberg, which made it

difficult for the BM to condemn the principle of colonialism (Messina and van Slageren 2005:40). This point has also been stressed by the Swedish researcher Erik Halldén (1968:5):

> In Württemberg pietism the foremost and internationally known figure is Johannes Tobias Beck. According to Beck the foundation of all missionary calling is an intensive study of the Bible. The mission was to devote itself to an exclusively religious activity excluding every other cultural element. From this point of departure Beck came to criticise the missionary activities of that time in general and the Basel Mission in particular.
>
> Moreover Beck's biblicistically coloured criticism of the Basel Mission is not unique. He was preceded here by, inter alia, Rudolf Stier, who was in 1824-1828 a teacher at the mission-seminary in Basel. During this period Stier was involved in a conflict between the Basel Mission and the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in London. From his Biblicistic standpoint he preached the eternal damnation of those who had not heard the Christian Gospel and stressed the necessity of basing one's actions only on the truths to be found in the Bible. In this conflict, as in his writings, Stier showed himself sceptical of confessional and church dogmas. The essential element in the training of missionaries is and must be a thorough schooling in God's word. Accordingly, the work of the missionary becomes a purely religious function, whereby, putting aside every cultural function, he meditates this Bible word to another people and language. For Stier the reformed way of thinking the truth, wherever it might be revealed, must be in conformity with God's will. God's word, i.e. the Bible, was the only mediator of the truth.

In the meantime, all these social ills alerted more advanced German Christians, to the point of provoking discussions in the Reichstag. In this context it is important to mention also the missionary Bitzer, who was really the soul of the resistance.

> Bitzer was aware of what had happened in the first part of the 1890's in connection with the war against the Bakwiri, and he was of the opinion that the Basel Mission must now with all the more forcefulness and firmness represent the interests of the population. Bizer observed at the same time that the land was not be bought from the Bakwiri but taken unwillingly from the original African owners The African owners felt, and according to Bitzer rightly, that when they were surrounded on all sides by plantations, their present and future possibilities of survival were seriously curtailed (Halldén 1968:107).

This protest was the prelude to the BM's campaign in favour of the indigenous population. A campaign that would last until 1907 and during which the abuses relating to the question of the plantations were brought to light. All the facts concerning the colonial identification with speculators and farmers were then systematically published in German circles and in public newspapers.

We are then entitled to assume that the BM did not initially take a position in this matter to do justice to the natives, the so-called fourth social rank, which was being formed in Cameroon. On the contrary, it seems certain that the BM acted to realise the ideal of a society of autonomous African planters. In other words, the BM did not take a position primarily in favour of the mistreated workers but for the autonomous African planters whose land had been used for colonial exploitations. This ideal undoubtedly corresponded to the traditions of the German social environment, where the Mission found its members. But this ideal, however lofty it may be, had no chance of being realised in the dislocated situation of Cameroon at that time (van Slageren 1972:73). In this connection it is important to quote again Halldén (1968:14-15):

> A German missionary is also the bearer of his German missionary character, and may conceivably make use of the spreading of German culture and German Christianity. But at the same time he must in conformity with the ideas of romanticism, defend the individual character of every people, and see that the noblest creation of an African folk-spirit, viz the African property, should have its rightful place. Therefore,

> although the missionaries could not adduce any argument whereby the African right of ownership could be motivated by a European colonial law and guaranteed, it was asserted that the tribe is the owner of the land. In this case however the blacks found it difficult to resist the temptation of selling their property. The result would be a propertyless proletariat.

Nevertheless this ideal, however well-intentioned it appeared, did not correspond to the needs of Cameroonian workers who continued to suffer from the often very rigid German colonial regime in an unhealthy climate. It should be noticed that the missionary activities of the BM were at the beginning carried out under a government which was at first tolerant and granted the Mission freedom and scope of operation. Finally the BM refused to be an easy instrument of colonisation even if individual missionaries worked to support their home government. The vivid way with which the Basel Mission finally opposed the government's expropriation of native land shows to what extent it was conscious of its motivation for work among pagans (Dah 1983:261).

France in Cameroon

From 1914 to 1916 the Germans were attacked by Allied military troops and in 1916 they were driven back by the British and French forces who then occupied the country. In fact, the League of Nations had left it to these two nations to administer Cameroon through the form of a mandate. The greater part was entrusted to France which formed an autonomous territory, dependent on French Equatorial Africa; with the Director-General was placed a Governor or High Commissioner of colonies. He was to ensure order and social security and to provide for the economy and development, to coordinate health work, education, and agriculture. The mandatory powers were yet also required to abolish slavery and forced labour, to respect native rights, and allow members of the League access to the territory. They were even forbidden to establish economic monopolies or to develop the territory as a military or naval base. Despite such good intentions, the mandate system had little real effect. This was largely due to the fact that the League of Nations itself became an increasingly impotent body, relying on moral pressures alone.

It was even dissolved in 1942 and later replaced by the United Nations Organisation (UNO), which took over the mandates for the two parts of Cameroon administrated by France and Britain (Mbuagbaw, Brain, and Palmer 1987:82).

Nevertheless the administrators took the liberty to treat the 'natives' with the following harsh penalties: the whip, the fine, the prison. They also had the right to choose people to carry out work for the common interest of the regions where these people lived or elsewhere, to make roads and new works for the extension of the railway.

Maurice Benoit (no date) has in this connection noted that:

> In 1930 the French administration had absolutely prohibited compulsory labour for public purposes. However, the built-up march of labour legislation, was rather a law making a 'stain of oil' because too many people tended to think that the colonial is more or less 'a slave driver'.

The punishment of the people was possible also because these people were persecuted by local chiefs who no longer accepted, as in German times, their devotion to the Christian faith and to the Church. The Society of Evangelical Missions of Paris (SMEP), which succeeded the BM in 1919, often intervened for the cause of these persecuted Christians. This resounds in some Christian songs, which date from this painful time, such as the following verses:

> Jesus takes me
> Jesus takes me
> Put me in heaven
>
> If I die
> Let me sing like this
> Jesus take me
>
> [...]

Walk well
Walk well
Rest in JAHWEH

Death is a good man
He loves the poor as well as the rich
He unites them
He does not distinguish
He calls them all to the same place
(van Slageren 1972:175-176)

However, it is likely the SMEP and the Catholic Mission of Cameroon preferred pursuing a policy of non-interference in the political affairs and social problems of the Cameroonian people. All missionary efforts were invested in religious education and making the young Bamileke and Bamoun churches fruitful. These missions therefore had the task of promoting the spirit and the social, the moral, and the spiritual mind of the people. Therefore certainly a few young men did use new opportunities, provided through mission or French schooling and becoming part of a Christian community, and managed to resist the chiefs' appropriation of their labour. These mission-educated evolved often as a generation of youth who gained literacy and European-language training from colonial administrations, and used their newly acquired skills to profit from economic opportunities (Terretta 2014:57,80). The Catholic mission experienced the same development in the Bamileke region and in the north of Cameroon.

In the Noun area forced labour during the Second World War (1940-1945)

The Governor General of Dakar, Pierre Boisson, wanting to remain faithful to the Vichy Government, fiercely opposed anything that resembled 'Gaullism' and anything that was Anglo-Saxon. His men did not even hesitate to open fire on French persons during General de Gaulle's famous landing attempt in Dakar in September 1940, nor to shoot Gaullists from the colonies, while whites were also sentenced to death, but they not being present were only sentenced by default. But General De Gaulle soon took control of the situation.

On August 27, 1940, Cameroon deliberately sided with the United Nations. But the government of Free France wanted to mark its respect for previous commitments and, on August 29, General de Gaulle wrote to the British prime minister, announcing the eventual joining of Cameroon: 'I have ensured the administration of this territory with all the powers and obligations that this mandate entails'. Cameroon from 1940 to 1945 continued to be administered as an autonomous territory: economic equality had to be reserved for the Allies. The territory nevertheless remained in the war with all the forces at its disposal and wanted to deserve the beautiful name it had given itself of 'Free French Cameroon' (Lembezat 1954:80-81).

On June 18, 1940, General De Gaulle had however already launched an appeal on the London radio: 'France has lost a battle; it has not lost the war'. By this appeal he called the French residing outside the metropolis to the fight and to resist also those who lived outside their home country. Then, Equatorial Africa decided to adhere to this idea of Free France and the French inhabitants of Cameroon also decided to start the fight until the liberation of the native country. Then, in response to a call sent to him from Douala, General de Gaulle sent his representative to Cameroon: Colonel Leclerc. He arrived in Douala in August 1940 and he managed to set foot on the quays of the port of Douala and in three days he managed to rally all the lands of Equatorial Africa for the struggle for the liberation of France. Aside from the French, more than twenty-thousand Cameroonians, from north to south, from west to east, were enlisted under the orders of Colonel Leclerc into this army of Free France to wage war against the German troops as far as Europe. These Cameroonian soldiers were engaged in the battle of Koufra, Mourzouk, Fezzan, the war campaign of Tripolitaine, Tunisia, France, and Germany. The military section of Leclerc freed also Paris on 25 August 1944 and Straasburg (Ekiabi 1960:182).

Already around 1935 the French administration tried to use the surplus of Bamilkéaux labour for the Foumbot plantations in the plain of the Noun River. There, the Compagnie West Cameroon (CWC) and many other European planters got access to large-scale land management. Such a process corresponded to the objective of the French government to develop Cameroon by promoting the collaboration of private initiatives with administrative organisations. Several thousand men were sent in six-monthly then quarterly shifts to this so-called compulsory work. As the chiefs

functioned as agents of recruitment of the forced labour, we understand that this was preferably sought among the common people. On a moral level, forced labour even had profound consequences at this time. Given that both men and women were requisitioned, the latter especially for sorting coffee, a large proportion of the forced labourers agreed to live in an irregular marital situation. Family institutions - adultery was once considered in traditional environments as a stain affecting the entire village - were then threatened by the development of free unions in both traditional and Christian environments. Men and women lived in promiscuity. Women could earn much more than men by indulging in excessive sexual indulgence. Divorces had become incredibly frequent and marriage had very little value (van Slageren 1972:246-247).

In the background, Governor Carras came to organise the supply of the troops in the field by the forced recruitment of workers from all the Bamileke and Bamoun villages for the production of the necessary food. In the very fertile plain of the River Noun, many plantations were created for this purpose.

On this point J. Despois (1945:640) remarked:

> Traditionally the Bamileke were willing to cultivate there and permitted their wives to work there, but they were reluctant to live in this Bamoun land. For, they are convinced that one cannot live there without becoming ill and their wives imagine that they will become sterile. If they definitively cross the Noun, several are in fact stricken with virulent malaria.

However, as a large part of these workers were Christians, the leaders of these plantations allowed the churches to install catechists there, which gave birth to some churches, some of which exist to this day. But not all these workers were ready to accept the working conditions to which they were subjected and they very quickly joined the men who fought for the end of forced labour and for better remuneration for the work on the plantations. It is also important to underline that the work for the less strong was sometimes too hard. But a refusal carried the possibility of being placed in detention without trial for up to fifteen days in prison and being forced to return to the work. Such practices caused many hysterical illnesses and even suicides. Absconding from work and

fleeing from these plantations was almost impossible as the barriers were guarded by ferocious dogs.

When the post-war social reforms led in 1946 to the abolition of the forced labour and native system, there were massive returns of deported persons from the region of the Noun. They took shelter in urban centres like Bafoussam. These significant returns of young, freed elements allowed, it is true, the economic and social growth visible in the considerable efforts which were made in terms of the development of plantations in the fertile lands of the right bank of the Noun and in terms of home improvement. But at the same time the city became a refuge for those whose marital status was irregular. Even for women the city offered a chance of escape. Several Bamileke women as well as Bamoun women, who also came to settle in Bafoussam for example, engaged in regular prostitution (van Slageren 1972:247).

With the support of the Cameroonian soldiers and the exhausting work of the workers in the plantations of Noun, Colonel Leclerc succeeded in obtaining with the United States, Canada, England, Russia, and other countries still a great victory against Germany. But this was to the detriment of Cameroonian soldiers, many of whom returned to Cameroon after the war with incurable injuries and mutilations. Indeed, the ancient Cameroon soldiers, who returned from the European battlefields, were hopeful of having special privileges from the Cameroon government and society. But the prevailing civil war that later ruined different parts of the country resulted in their endeavours in the Second World War not being recognised (Ketchoua 1962:176). *L'armed hostility pour un national liberation* was in 1955 launched by Um Nyobé, born among the Bassa in the middle of Presbyterian intellectuals, according to the liberal tradition of black Americans. And from the Bassa country the revolt spread to other parts of Cameroon, especially to the Bamileke country. And it is certain that a number of veterans for Free France were also part of the social political movement in order to organise a Cameroonian regime outside France which until then had the mandate to administer Cameroon. This movement evolved into an internecine war which resulted in many casualties and also cancelled the supposed remunerations of the veterans, the former Cameroonian soldiers.

The workers of the forced labour of the Noun area suffered, in their turn, as many evils as those to which they had been exposed during the work required on the plantations. And more than that, when they returned from their villages, they often found their homes demolished and the ties of blood with their families, women, and children broken. It was also the case that a number of people on their return committed suicide by hanging themselves on the doors of their destroyed houses out of anger and frustration.

Conclusion

In this article we have tried to consider slavery and forced labour in the Cameroons in the past centuries as a cruel method to oppress the local vulnerable people. But was it only a historical phenomenon? And what about the persons who continue to do evil? As far as it concerns the Cameroon, there remains also the problem of the former chiefs of the Bamileke people who favoured the raids of their fellow citizens and enriched themselves by this trade, and still many others, such as for example the chiefs of Douala, who had retained slaves in their towns, and made them work for their profit or exploited them for their own honour. These issues are manifested in various forms that eventually should be treated in a subsequent article.

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Dogara GG 2024, 'Appropriating John Stott's Holy-Worldliness Concept to Deficiencies in the Political Curriculum of Christianity in Africa: Viewpoints from Nigeria', *African Theological Journal for Church and Society*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 160-187

Appropriating John Stott's Holy-Worldliness Concept to Deficiencies in the Political Curriculum of Christianity in Africa: Viewpoints from Nigeria

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Abstract

This study applies John Stott's concept of 'holy-worldliness' to God's call upon Christians from the world, and his sending them out to be immersed in the affairs of the world as Christ's ambassadors, by localising Christ's political curriculum to Africa. Accordingly, the study engages examples generated from Nigeria. Two research questions guided this study. Question 1: what are the basic elements of John Stott's concept of holy-worldliness, in the context of the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa? Question 2: how can deliberating on the deficiencies in the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa, as currently formulated, be facilitated by an understanding of John's Stott's concept of holy-worldliness, towards reformulating the curriculum in question, using examples from Nigeria? The study concludes by calling on Christians in Africa to start thinking of crafting a 'Christian Political Agenda for Africa', as the Christian political version of the African Union's *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* (2013).

Introduction

This study appropriates John Stott's concept of 'holy-worldliness', expressed by God calling Christians from the world to be holy and distinct and also sending them out to be immersed in the affairs of the world as Christ's

ambassadors, which for this study means localising Christ's political curriculum to Africa. The term 'holy-worldliness', as presented in Stott's book *The Contemporary Christian* (1992), expresses this concept. The concept represents Stott's way of looking at the theological imperative for the church. It is an imperative for the church, particularly at the local church evangelism level, to understand itself just as it is necessary for it to organise itself (structurally), express itself (by articulating the gospel message with scriptural fidelity and human sensitivity), and be itself (as the living embodiment of God's kingdom and new society). Stott captures the concept of holy-worldliness in the four component parts of the book concerned: secular challenges to the church, evangelism through the local church, dimensions of church renewal, and the church's pastors. Accordingly, this study draws extracts from these components using an approach relevant to facilitating a working comprehension of the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa.

An immediate question to address as it concerns intermixing Stott's concept of holy-worldliness with the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa is whether, indeed, Christ has a political curriculum or any political agendum at all. A quick look into the New Testament is enough to say he does! Moreover, he even reveals this curriculum and/or agendum in a way that has become popular: the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13, NIV). In reciting the Lord's Prayer, Christians everywhere say 'your kingdom come', and 'your will be done on earth as it is in heaven', for example. The Lord's Prayer is discussed further elsewhere in this study; however, simply stated, the political curriculum of Christ is to bring about the reality of God's kingdom, even on earth, as it is already in heaven.

The need for relating Christ's political curriculum to Africa hinges itself on the general reason for having a political curriculum of Christianity, irrespective of on which continent of the earth Christians find themselves. There are at least five ways to consider this reason; these are: the contemporaneity of Christianity, consciousness of the contemporary world, setting the agenda for the world, responding to real questions of life, and the exordium for reformulating the political curriculum of Christianity.

Contemporaneity of Christianity

The political curriculum of Christianity necessitates itself, in Christian history, by the fact that followers of Jesus Christ cannot avoid viewing themselves as contemporary Christians, if they really desire to serve God's purpose in the generation they find themselves in. However, what does it mean to be a contemporary Christian? Simply put, it is to live in the present, to move with the times, and at the same time ensuring that the present is enriched to the fullest extent possible by knowledge of the past and an expectation of the future (Stott 1992:11). Surely, 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever' (Hebrews 13:8; NIV). Although Christianity is an ancient faith, it is at the same time contemporary, original, orthodox, biblical, and 'sensitively related to the modern world' (Stott 1992:15). A consequence of Christianity being contemporary, putting into perspective the need to relate the political curriculum of Christianity to Africa, is the fact that African Christians cannot afford to continue to be politically passive or irrelevant. Otherwise, it would be that Christians have implicated themselves in the futile attempts by the questioner on transcendence, which seek to either eliminate God from his own world (Stott 1992:223), or Christians have agreed that their God has been dribbled out of the political game in Africa.

Christian Consciousness of the Contemporary World

One of the greatest prerequisites for implementing the political curriculum of Christianity is for the church to have a sensitive awareness of the groaning world around it. For, indeed, 'the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time' (Romans 8:22). Relating this to Christians as true servants of Jesus Christ, Christians, just like Jesus, must not only keep their eyes open to human needs, and their ears tuned to the cries of anguish; they must respond passionately and constructively to people's pain (Stott 1992:222). The political curriculum of Christianity must be seen as a response that more effectually addresses this pain.

Setting the Agenda for the World

The political curriculum of Christianity necessitates itself via the position of the church as God's agenda, as it were, for the world. The world cannot keep on setting the agenda for the church, as it appears to be doing; allowing this to happen in reality is considerable as amounting to a dereliction of duty by the church. In a situation like this, Apostle Paul would sound this call to order:

> Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 8:2)

Accordingly, we must declare and do what God obligates us to declare and do; 'we are not to pay obsequious homage to the world' (Stott 1992:222). In line with God's directive to the church, Christians are to implement the political curriculum of Christianity from the driver's seat and with full grasp of the steering, until they actively facilitate transformational human development.

Responding to Real Questions of Life

The political curriculum of Christianity necessitates itself by the need for the church to understand and respond to the real existential questions that are emerging continuously. Everywhere in Africa, and globally, the frustration, rage, disorientation, and despondency among the people is so massive that the church, if it possesses the authenticity of a body constituted of Christ's disciples, can only weep with those who weep irrespective of their religious affiliation or non-affiliation. These are also questions of legitimacy. If it is legitimate, the church must develop and implement a political curriculum of Christianity which seeks to address, holistically, these existential questions. Otherwise, as a church,

> we would run the risk (as has often been said) of answering questions nobody is asking, scratching where nobody is itching, supplying goods for which there is no demand – in other words, of being totally irrelevant, which in its long history the church has often been. (Stott 1992:222)

Exordium for the Political Curriculum of Christianity

As a further preparation towards discussing the deficiencies, components, and delimiting matters for reformulating the political curriculum of Christianity, a preliminary statement on two sequential steps is necessary. Two research papers represent the steps, with this paper featuring the first step. The paragraph below gives a preview of the steps.

First step, this represents the first paper. It concerns planning to reformulate the political curriculum of Christianity by understanding the deficiencies in the curriculum as it is, although not necessarily articulated. A relevant paper in the study discusses this step using the topic 'Appropriating John Stott's Holy-Worldliness Concept to *Deficiencies* in the Political Curriculum of Christianity in Africa: Viewpoints from Nigeria'. Second step, this represents the second paper. It concerns identifying components that are necessary to reformulate the political curriculum of Christianity. A relevant paper in the study discusses this step using the topic 'Appropriating John Stott's Concept of Holy-Worldliness towards *Reformulating* the Political Curriculum of Christianity in Africa: Components from Nigeria'.

Propositional Statement

In consistence with Stott's concept of holy-worldliness as appropriated to politics, this study proposes that, consequent upon God's call upon Christians from the world to be God's holy people distinctively identified as the church, the church in Africa is the primary political structure from which Christians are also sent out to be immersed in the political affairs of Africa, to deliver the political curriculum of Christianity specified to Africa, as Christ's ambassadors, towards moving Africa from the Africa Africans want to the Africa God wants. Encompassed in this proposition is that understanding how the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa is currently formulated is necessary to appropriating Stott's concept of holy-worldliness for reformulating, and establishing caveats for, the curriculum in question, using examples from Nigeria.

Purpose of Study

This study has a purpose with two components. Firstly, the study considers the basic elements of John Stott's concept of holy-worldliness in the context of the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa. Secondly, the study considers how deliberating on deficiencies in the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa, as currently formulated in null curricular terms, can be facilitated by an understanding of John's Stott's concept of holy-worldliness, towards reformulating the curriculum in question, using examples from Nigeria. The

preceding two components of the purpose of the study form the basis for the research questions below.

Research Questions

Two research questions guide this study:

1. What are the basic elements of John Stott's concept of holy-worldliness in the context of the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa?

2. How can deliberating on the deficiencies in the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa as currently formulated be facilitated by an understanding of John Stott's concept of holy-worldliness, with the aim of reformulating the curriculum in question, using examples from Nigeria?

Significance of the Study

This study will benefit politicians, churches, theological schools, and curriculum specialists in Africa. The study will also be profitable to the generality of participants in the democratic processes of Africa. The recommendations emanating from this study present these benefits. Accordingly, beneficiaries of this study, particularly in Africa, will find themselves able to relate with various examples from Nigeria, engaged to drive home fundamental points of the study.

Delimitation of Study

Firstly, the study limits itself to Stott's ideas in the book *The Contemporary Christian*, but with focus on Part Four of the book, within which he discusses the concept of 'holy-worldliness'. This means the study does not necessarily concern itself with other works of Stott. Secondly, the study primarily engages examples from Nigeria, although supplementary examples from other African countries are engaged at random; generating most of the illustrations from Nigeria is simply because it is sometimes presupposed that Nigeria is not only the giant and problem of Africa, but is also the potential solution to the

problems of Africa. Thirdly, while the study advocates for the active engrossment of all Christians in Africa in politics, this advocacy is tied strongly to 'official politics', that is, politics targeted at occupying political positions; more details on this term are given in the operational definition of terms. Fourthly, party politics largely dominates political affairs in Africa; accordingly, this study concentrates almost exclusively on politics that are directly or indirectly connected with party politics. Fifthly, the study locates the term 'political curriculum' in the general perspectives of curriculum, null curriculum, societal curriculum, and rhetorical curriculum, as necessary components in its definition; therefore, these interconnected terms are also defined operationally.

Operational Definition of Terms

Main terms in this study are politics, official politics, curriculum, societal curriculum, rhetorical curriculum, and political curriculum of Christianity. By definition:

Politics: After having analysed the many faces of politics and the difficulties attached to defining it, Stephen D. Tansey and Nigel Jackson have made a summary, which this study adopts to represent its usage of the term *politics*. Accordingly, the term is considered this way:

> Thus 'politics' encompasses a broad range of situations in which people's objectives vary, but in which they work together to achieve those aims they have in common as well as competing where aims conflict. Both co-operation and competition may involve bargaining, argument and coercion. Politics may often be more an art than a science, and the art of politics may often be to see the potential for alliances rather than antagonisms amongst differing groups. (Tansey and Jackson 2008:7)

Official Politics: The term *official politics* is engaged at this point to refer to political activities targeted at occupying elective political office. Some examples of elective political offices are president, governor, local government

chairperson, senator, councillor, or party chairman. Some examples of appointive political offices are minister or commissioner.

Curriculum: *Curriculum* refers to the encapsulation of everything considerable as a purposeful learning experience (Onwuka 1996:3). However the learning experience should be justifiable in educational terms based on particular educational criteria set for such justification (Kelly 2010:3).

Null Curriculum: At some points, this study compares the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa with the null curriculum. So, what is the null curriculum? In simple terms, not to teach or emphasise something is the same as teaching or emphasising that it is not significant. This is the null curriculum (Dogara 2018:64-65).

Societal Curriculum: This is generally defined as the massive, ongoing, informal curriculum of family, peer groups, neighbourhoods, church organisations, occupations, mass media, and other agencies of socialisation. These agencies of socialisation play a noteworthy role in educating all of us all through our lives (Dogara 2018:64).

Rhetorical Curriculum: This covers ideas, speeches by public officials, and reports from policy-makers, school officials, administrators, or politicians. It also covers studies of publicised works offering updates in pedagogical knowledge (Dogara 2018:65-66).

Political Curriculum of Christianity: This study constructs a definition of the political curriculum of Christianity from the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13. It is a set of all the political activities that God has authorised, empowered, and equipped those who answered Christ's call to heavenly citizenship to perform as ambassadors of his kingdom on earth, while continuously deriving knowledge and guidance primarily from his word, in order to make life on earth superlative in all ramifications until a sublime taste of heaven is experienced on earth, as it is in heaven. Knowledge and guidance to effectively perform these activities are also derived, at a secondary level, from the societal curriculum, the rhetorical curriculum, and in the contemporaneity of Christianity in its interaction with the world.

Methodology of Study

The study engages a qualitative research methodology via an approach that allows mixing documentary analysis with systematic theology when addressing research questions. Foundationally, the researcher studied Stott's *The Contemporary Christian* as a primary document, in synergy with relevant scriptural passages, systematically, to facilitate a theological grasp of the concept of holy-worldliness. The legal material engaged to support this foundation is the *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* (1999).

Procedure of Study

This study occurred in four steps. These are, firstly, general introduction, secondly, explanation of methodology and procedure of the study, thirdly, discussion of research questions, fourthly, conclusion with recommendations attached.

Discussion of Research Questions

Basic Elements of John Stott's Concept of Holy-Worldliness in the Context of the Political Curriculum of Christianity in Africa

Research question one: what are the basic elements of John Stott's concept of holy-worldliness, in the context of the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa?

The study responds to this research question by analysing three component parts of the concept of 'holy-worldliness' as used by John Stott. A fuller understanding of the concept necessitates responding to at least three questions. What does it mean to be holy? What does it mean to be worldly? What is holy-worldliness?

Meaning of Being Holy

Stott discusses the term 'holy' in connection to God calling out the church from the world and setting it apart to belong to him, and to worship him. The church is distinct in all dimensions of truth, holiness, mission, and unity (Stott 1992:257-269); Jesus outlined these elements in John 17 when he prayed for himself, his apostles, and the whole church. The Nicene Creed also recognised

these elements as markers of the church: one, holy, catholic, and apostolic; '"catholic" includes the concept of embracing all truth, and "apostolic" includes the vision of being committed to the apostolic mission' (Stott 1992:269). This concept of 'holy' differs from what Stott calls 'a false understanding of holiness' (1992:262) or 'a form of Christian pharisaism or separatism' (1992:263) in the church which, like the Pharisees, holds that mere contact with sinful and immoral people would bring contamination; therefore, to be holy, withdrawal from the world becomes imperative (Stott 1992:263).

Meaning of Being Worldly

Stott discusses the term 'worldly' from an apostolic view of the church. In other words, Christ sends out the church into the world to bear him witness, and it goes out boldly in this mission of witness and service (Stott 1992:269). In accordance with this mission, the church immerses itself in the life of the world, but is not tainted or possessed by the world in the process. This concept of 'worldly' contrasts with the way of the Sadducees, which is conformity; for the Pharisees it is total withdrawal. The Sadducees collaborated with the Roman government and sought to maintain the political status quo (Stott 1992:263). While the motive for collaborating with the political system could be good, for example in building bridges of friendship with 'publicans and sinners, as Jesus' did (Stott 1992:263), it was clear that Jesus' values and standards also set him apart from them. Therefore, Stott's concept of 'worldly' considers the church as immersed in the life of the world, without participating in, or facilitating, its agenda.

Meaning of Holy-Worldliness

The question at this point is what does it mean to be holy-worldly. Stott responds to this question, taking into consideration the church, as a body composed of people redeemed in Christ. It is noticeable that in abridging a few points from Stott's response below the points intersect with each other.

Firstly, to be holy-worldly is to have a double identity. Stott (1992:243-244) rightly notes that the term 'holy-worldliness' was captured by Alec Vidler to express the double identity of the church (Vidler 1957:95-112). Stott uses a legal term, 'summon', to say that God has subpoenaed the church to be 'holy' (distinct from the world) and 'worldly' (in the sense of relinquishing other-

worldliness and becoming immersed in the life of the world, instead of assimilating the values of the world) simultaneously (1992:243-244).

Secondly, to be holy-worldly is to make a double refusal. One of the questions Stott raises to give a background to this aspect of holy-worldliness is this:

> How can we relate the Word to the world, understanding the world in the light of the Word, and even understanding the Word in the light of the world? (1992:27).

Stott notes that relating the word to the world or vice versa is possible via what he calls a 'double refusal'. On the one hand, Christians cannot become so absorbed in the word to the extent of escaping into it, and preventing it from confronting the world. On the other hand, Christians must also refuse to become so engrossed in the world that they conform to it instead of subjecting it to judgment under the word. Stott calls for 'double listening', listening both to the word and to the world, as the right response to double refusal (1992:27).

Thirdly, to be holy-worldly is to be a double listener. Although Stott discusses listening to God, listening to each other, and listening to the world, his emphasis is on listening to God and listening to the world. This is what he calls double listening. For 'it is only through the discipline of double listening that it is possible to become a "contemporary Christian"' (Stott 1992:27). Accordingly, double listening is the ability to listen to the voice of God through scripture and the voice of the world (all kinds of people around us) at the same time in order to understand their relationship to each other, although the two voices are often contradictory (Stott 1992:29).

The political curriculum of Christianity cannot be implemented if the double listening skills of Christians, as disciples of Christ, are not effectively engaged. Just as 'bad listeners do not make good disciples' (Stott 1992:101), they also cannot make noble Christian politicians. Sequel to this, Stott asks the question: 'To whom then shall we listen?' (1992:103). As already noted, there are two ways of responding to this question (Stott 1992:103-113). Firstly, Christians listen to God, principally through the scripture. By application, Christian politicians need to actively listen to God's word as living, active, sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating to the soul and spirit, and as judging the

thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Hebrews 4:12), in recognition that 'through his ancient Word God addresses the modern world' (Stott 1992:105) and that herein lies the ultimate guide to implementing the political curriculum of Christianity. Secondly, Christian disciples listen to the reverberating cries of the contemporary world. There are cries of hunger, anger, frustration, poverty, oppression, social injustice, sickness, insecurity, and all kinds of pains. Christian disciples involved in implementing the political curriculum of Christianity cannot turn a deaf ear to these cries, because their social conscience will keep reminding them of the day of reckoning:

> If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered. (Proverbs 21:13)

Therefore, the capacity to commit to genuine listening, and on a sustainable basis, is a quality of democratic governance and statesmanship deficient in most politicians in Africa, whether Christian or non-Christian. However,

> If democracy is government with the consent of the governed, then the governed have to be listened to. Otherwise, they cannot be deemed to have given their consent. (Stott 1992:108)

Christians in active politics cannot be said to be implementing the political curriculum of Christianity if this capacity is lacking in them.

Fourthly, to be holy-worldly is to make a double avoidance. The reality of the church as it lives in a world it does not belong to, and as it is sent to a place in which it is hated, best expresses the multi-faceted relationship of the church to the world. This relationship contrasts with the two wrong attitudes of 'withdrawal' and 'conformity', which the church must avoid. Unquestionably, for the church's mission in the world to be possible, it must avoid these two wrong attitudes. Clearly,

> If we withdraw from the world, mission is obviously impossible, since we have lost contact. Equally, if we conform to the world, mission is impossible, since we have lost our cutting edge. (Stott 1992:264)

Fifthly, to be holy-worldly is to have a balanced ecclesiology. On the one hand, if the church is compromised and becomes something other than the 'the church', the holy and distinct people of God, then it has nothing to tell the world. On the other hand, if the church is not deeply 'in the world' (in its life and suffering), it has insulated itself and has nobody to serve. The church is called to be concurrently 'holy' and 'worldly'; 'Without this balanced biblical ecclesiology we will never recover or fulfill our mission' (Stott 1992:245).

Sixthly, to be holy-worldly is to be de-caged from Christian religiosity. Stott uses an example relatable to Africa for how religious activities every single day of the week have imprisoned Christians, as it were, in churches, instead of freeing them for witness in the world. He notes: 'Some zealous churches organize an over-full programme of Church-based activities. Something is arranged for every night of the week' (1992:246). Elsewhere, Stott refers to this form of zeal or piety as 'ghetto-like fellowship' which only amounts to a betrayal of Christ, because it effectively cuts Christians from non-Christians (1992:263). The church must exercise Christ's freedom from 'Christian' religiosity; Jesus prayed for his disciples to be protected from the evil one (John 17:15), but at the same time to remain in the world.

Seventhly, to be holy-worldly is to follow the example of Christ. Jesus himself left the sanctimony of his place with the Father, penetrated our world, assumed the full reality of being human, and fraternised with the common people. He did all these things without in any way or at any time compromising his own unique identity. Like Jesus Christ, Christians must penetrate other people's worlds (Stott 1992:244), the world of their thinking (by struggling to understand their misunderstandings of the gospel), the world of their feeling (by trying to empathise with their pain), and the world of their living (by sensing the humiliation of their social situation, whether poverty, homelessness, unemployment, or discrimination).

Understanding John Stott's Concept of Holy-Worldliness to Facilitate Deliberating on the Deficiencies in the Current Political Curriculum of Christianity in Africa

Research question two: how can deliberating on the deficiencies in the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa as currently formulated be facilitated by an

understanding of John Stott's concept of holy-worldliness, to reformulate the curriculum in question, using examples from Nigeria?

In juxtaposing Stott's concept of holy-worldliness with the current political curriculum of Christianity in Africa, various deficiencies are noticeable. Specifically, the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa is deficient in the areas below, at a minimum.

Deficient in Definition

A way to define the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa is to define it as a term with no definition. Politics just beats its drums and Christians simply participate in the dance, not necessarily as good dancers. But it is generally not possible for Christians, with their various affiliations, to say this is what Christian politics is in Africa. A few church bodies at random may have an articulated, although not necessarily comprehensive, description of politics-related matters for their membership, but even that is not prevalent enough to amount to a common designation of politics in African Christianity.

Deficient in Ownership

The political curriculum of Christianity in Africa is not people-oriented. It lacks the general participation of the people at every stage. For example, even when Christian politicians in Nigeria decide to meet with the people, for the few times of meeting they usually concentrate on what politicians in Nigeria call the 'stakeholders' of a community, or they hold a 'town hall' meeting, or meet with elders and 'key stakeholders' in a church.

Generally, African politicians have also so encircled themselves with sycophants, powermongers, bootlickers, and people who will feed these politicians with what their ears are itching to hear that they do not go out of the standard protocol and bureaucracy to meet with the people who actually own them: artisans, market-women, teachers, drivers, mechanics, tailors, labourers, farmers, students, villagers, etcetera. Many times during general or state-level elections, leaders of the Christian Association of Nigeria meet with politicians and decide the Christians' position, without grass-roots consultation or the definite consent of the Christians being governed. In summary, ordinary Christians in Africa do not own the political curriculum; it cannot be said to be implemented for them. Even in democratic terms, the

political curriculum of Christians in Africa is lacking; comparatively, Jesus fraternised with the common people.

Deficient in Distinctiveness

Another way of defining the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa is to designate it as an indifferent curriculum. It is indifferent in the sense that Christians in politics have generally not acted in ways different from the average African or non-Christian politician. For example, in Nigeria, the way non-Christian politicians put their family members in strategic government positions in contravention of legal provisions and due process is the same way Christian politicians promote nepotism. Many Christian governors, government ministers, commissioners, heads of agencies, and members of federal and state lawmaking bodies in Nigeria are found together with non-Christians corruptly enriching themselves. While Christians need to be worldly (immersed in the world without participating in its agenda), Christian politicians in Nigeria are generally seen even in Christian circles as being worldly in the sense of belonging to the world.

Identifying with the pains of the poor is not their priority. Accordingly, Stott notes that:

> the constant tendency of God's people was, and still is, to behave 'like the heathen', until nothing much seems to distinguish the church from the world, the Christian from the non-Christian, in convictions, values or standards. (1992:27)

Deficient in Purpose

It is almost impossible, even if somewhat possible, to clearly identify any specific vision, mission, mandate, or criterion attached to the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa. Here are exemplary questions related to this: What are the Christian criteria for measuring political success in Nigeria? What are the criteria for measuring the success of Christian politicians in Nigeria? So even when some Christians in Nigeria complain in 2015, for example, that President Goodluck Jonathan was ineffective, there was no written or unwritten common text basis to support the complaint.

Deficient in Proactivity

Christians in Nigeria largely prefer to react to political events as such events unfold. For example, in 1986, Christians in Nigeria reacted during the regime of Ibrahim Babangida in claiming that Nigeria was being 'smuggled' into the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, although certainly that decision by Babangida further divided Nigeria along religious lines (Faluyi, Khan, and Akinola 2019:37). Again Christians in Nigeria reacted during the processes leading to the 2023 general elections in Nigeria (in the Muslim-Muslim presidential ticket, with Bola Tinubu as presidential candidate and Kashim Ibrahim as vice presidential candidate; both are Muslims) that Nigeria was about to be Islamised. In the extremes of these reactions, there were even a few instances of what could be called the 'demonization of Islam' (Meer 2010:81), purposed to condemn the Muslim-Muslim ticket. However, even if the supposed Islamising of Nigeria was in the agenda of Muslims in Nigeria, how should that be a problem to someone who does not have an agenda at all? If controlling the economy and key offices in the civil service and possessing political power, constitutional presence, inducement power, and instruments of propaganda are criteria for evaluating which religion possesses Nigeria, then it can be said without doubt that Nigeria has already (and has always) been Islamised. Reacting to Nigeria being an Islamic country (whereas it is already), reactivity, instead of proactivity, is a principal mark of Christian politics in Africa. However, what really matters is not whether Islam, capitalism, communism, democracy, monarchism, or any other ideologies possess the system, but whether the church as an embodiment of God's kingdom and new society is presenting itself as an alternative political agenda for Africa.

Deficient in Unity

The political curriculum of Christianity in Africa is also marked by tribalism, ethnicity, sectionalism, denominationalism, and other divisive elements. Even Christians do not necessarily seek elective offices or cast votes on the basis of the politician's competence, although the politician may be a Christian; in the case of Nigeria, any of these divisive elements forms the basis. Again, it is not a difficult thing in Nigeria to, on a regular basis, come across Christian politicians who prioritise some of the divisive elements in their political actions.

Deficient in Strategic Planning

Does the church in Africa have any political plan at all for strategically infiltrating the continent with the kingdom political agenda? What the church has now is a version of the null curriculum; in other words, the inability of the church in Africa to have a strategic political plan is equivalent to strategically planning to fail or communicating that making such a plan is not important.

The church in Africa has so far succeeded in erecting visible structures, establishing units across the nooks and crannies of Africa, and generally competing with the world on the latest trends, fashions, extravagance, opulence, and concentration of resources on a few. On the one hand, the membership of the church in Africa is suffering from all kinds of challenges (lack of food, lack of clean water, lack of good medical facilities or capacities to access such facilities, out-of-school children, insecurity, violations of fundamental rights, and general poverty). On the other hand, many churches in Africa do not care about the suffering of their members; many of these churches are occupied with building projects, physical upgrades, or acquisition of the latest technology. It is time churches in Africa started to concentrate, generally, on establishing businesses everywhere to empower people to live better lives, instead of concentrating finance on church buildings that only help in caging Christians from the outside world. Pending this kind of concentration, the church in Africa is yet to establish a reputation for itself as an alternative model (the kingdom-styled model) of politics.

Deficient in Superiority

It appears as if the church in Africa has destined itself to always remain in an inferior position, in the political scheme of things. A quick example is southern Kaduna State in Nigeria, which is a zone with an overwhelming Christian majority. In every round of politics it seems to be looking to occupy the position of deputy governor, or lacks the unity to strategically influence having a governor from the zone or its kind of governor from another zone, all the time using ‘next time’ or ‘we have been shortchanged’ or something similar for its political woes. Sequel to the British colonial legacy in Nigeria, southern Kaduna also seems to be a zone of inducements (for example, in the form of campuses of schools or lower-level schools) so as to create a sense of belonging in the political system for the zone, whereas the ‘real deal’ is usually in other zones where Christians are in the minority. The political curriculum of

Christianity in Africa is yet to have any definite Christian ideology, even where Christians are in the driver's seat (like in states or local governments where Christians are in the majority).

Deficient in Influence

The importance of influence in the political curriculum of Christianity particularly in Africa cannot be overemphasised. But, by observing the political affairs of some African countries, it is possible to say with confidence that Christians are not influential in politics. Using Nigeria as an exemplar, a question like this must be addressed: do Christians matter in politics in Nigeria? A former governor of Kaduna State, Nasir Elrufai, once declared that he did not need Christians of southern Kaduna to win an election, and he won. A situation like this also prompts the question: if Christians are important in the politics of Nigeria, why is Christianity not represented in the constitution whereas Islam and the Shari'a law are there? Why are there still laws and actions restricting Christian religious freedom, or the freedom of citizens to change religion, particularly in northern Nigeria? Why do schools in northern Nigeria exclude Christian religious studies in schools even when there are Christian students in such schools?

Deficient in Truth

Just like deception appears to be a trademark of politics globally, it has also been engaged, even sanctimoniously, by Christians in Africa, a continent with public displays of religion everywhere. The complaints of Muslims in Nigeria are everywhere on traditional news media as well as social media, specifically that the All Progressives Congress used the idea of a Muslim-Muslim presidential ticket (with Bola Tinubu as presidential candidate and Kashim Ibrahim as vice presidential candidate; both are Muslims) to deceive Muslims, particularly in northern Nigeria, to vote them into power in 2023. Similarly, Christian politicians in Nigeria are seen in churches, are even allowed access to the pulpits by the leadership of the church, to make all kinds of deceptive political campaign promises, including monetary pledges for various church projects, in order to attract votes from Christians. The lack of truth in the current political curriculum of Christianity in Africa is appalling.

Deficient in Critical Thinking

The study concerns itself with collective critical thinking by the church in Africa as an assembly of Christians on the continent. These Christians have been empowered by God to think critically, because they have the 'mind of Christ' (1 Corinthians 2:16). Nigeria still comes to mind as having quick examples of deficient critical thinking politically. Mr Peter Obi, a Christian, the presidential candidate of the Labour Party during the 2023 general election in Nigeria, must be given credit for rolling out facts, figures, convincing analysis, critical reviews, and a well-articulated grasp of Nigeria's challenges to support his manifesto *Our Pact with Nigerians* (Obi and Baba-Ahmed 2023) and campaign. However, while Obi visited many influential churches during the campaign season, as it were (some analyst said he did so for campaign reasons, just as Bola Tinubu also used the Muslim-Muslim strategy), generally available evidence shows that the church on its part did not actively engage him or the Labour Party (if it did at all) in serious interrogation of his track record, manifesto, and all that he stood for as a politician. This would have generated more critical thinking, to help him more in upgrading his political manifesto. Atiku Abubakar's manifesto for the 2019 general election in Nigeria (Abubakar 2019:1-186) and All Progressives Congress party's manifesto for Nigeria's 2023 general election, *Renewed Hope* (All Progressives Congress 2023), could also have been better developed through more extensive critical engagements. On the other hand, Christian politicians, like others, are usually not seen consulting with people at the grassroots, except for a few dotted 'stakeholders' or in 'town hall' meetings.

It is rare to find a church in Nigeria studying the official budget of a government, political manifestos of politicians, constitutions of political parties, or the electoral laws (at least in the Sunday school or other specialised meetings). Critical thinking by the church should also mean deliberately checking the veracity of claims and promises by politicians in Africa. Drawing from the example of the church in Berea which 'examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true' (Acts 17:11), the church as 'pillar and foundation of the truth' (1 Timothy 3:15) also needs to keep examining the word and the world to keep politicians in check.

Deficient in Holy-Worldly Interconnections

While Muslim politicians in Africa must be commended for acting based on their belief of politics as an integral part of the Islamic faith, Christians are still stressed with too much debate as to the relationship between the two. In this stress, Christians need to know that putting a demarcating (which has historically become a debating) line between church and state does not mean extending that line to separate Christianity and politics. However, it means, among other things, that the church should never be identified with the state or be so remote from it that she cannot speak to it (Kore 2013:151).

Meanwhile, the attempt to separate Christianity and politics may not be unconnected to other attempts to demarcate between the sacred and the secular. In certainty,

> There has been an essentializing of religion and religious practice as un- or anti-democratic, while secularity is characterized as politically and socially neutral and absolutely compatible with democracy. (Arthur, Gearon, and Sears 2010:4)

However, the principle of holy-worldliness holds that the church, although sacred, is sent out to be strategically immersed in all corners of the secular world, with politics in Africa being one of the most important corners. Stott would say 'It is important that we do not separate what God has joined' (Stott 1992:269).

Deficient in Ideology

At this point Christians in Nigeria do not have an articulated, comprehensible, publicly-accessible, documented or non-documented but describable, close-ended or open-ended, and theologically-supported common political agenda that can be referred to as the Christian political ideology. Likewise, political parties in Nigeria do not have ideologies that clearly distinguish them from each other, if they have ideologies at all, as in the example of American politics where the ideologies of the Republican Party and Democratic Party are openly different, although the 'typical citizen rarely thinks about politics in the systematic, philosophical manner characteristic of ideology' (Ethridge and Handelman 2010:58). Christ's prayer in John 17 for the unity of the church also

implies the necessity of a common political ideology. Although Christianity as a general name representing the practices of Christians is not necessarily an ideology, it has ideological components applicable to politics, as evident in expressing the mind of Christ to confront selfish, corrupt, shortsighted, narrow-minded reasoning and deceptive political eloquence (1 Corinthians 2:16).

Deficient in Structural Understanding

The term *structure* is popular in Nigerian party politics. It generally means having political party offices and leadership/leadership systems nationally and in states, local governments, and wards. It also means ability to hold conferences, conventions, elections, and campaigns, as approved in law, at all levels of a party and supported by the party. However, it is a misunderstanding to consider all these as constituting the primary political structure for the Christian politician.

The church, as God's kingdom on earth, is, consequently, the primary political structure for the Christian. The church is the place where the political curriculum of Christianity is theorised (ideologically), designed, constructed, developed, and delivered by engaging ancillary political structures. These ancillary structures of politics include political parties, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, community-based organisations, traditional leadership institutions, and other corporate bodies. While the church should not allow its primary call to tilt towards political affairs and campaigns, in structuring itself for holy-worldliness it must also structure itself for politics. For example, this means training, equipping, and supporting its members, without partiality but strategically for participation in politics with all its intricacies. Structuring the church for politics also concerns making it active in educating its members on political matters: the constitution, voter education, party politics, civic education, and so on; actually, nothing stops an organised church at any level from exploring the possibility of constituting a standing, non-partisan political affairs committee.

Conclusion: Summary

Listening is a pillar of the political curriculum of Christianity. For the Christian politician listening has an intricate connection with speaking (political

campaigns, declarations, and issuing various messages in texts), emotional intelligence, and political ethics. This connection is established in this appeal:

> My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. (James 1:19-22)

Just as 'bad listeners do not make good disciples' (Stott 1992:101), they also cannot make noble Christian politicians. Therefore, active listening is advantageous to debating, presenting superior arguments, capturing the mind of citizens, and propagating of the Christian political ideology, which are biblically supported elements for capturing the minds of citizens in a manner obedient to Christ. For certainly:

> The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

Recommendations and Lessons for Africa

The following recommendations resulted from appropriating John Stott's concept of holy-worldliness. The study targets the recommendations at those early identified as immediate beneficiaries of this study on the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa.

Recommendations to Politicians

1. In Nigeria: While discussing the deficiencies in the Nigerian version of the political curriculum of Christianity, religion was also noted as one of the divisive factors hindering the unity of Nigeria. To ensure

Nigeria's unity, the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa should be applied, among other things, to expunge religion from all kinds of application forms, administrative papers, and other forms of government documents, thereby ensuring impartiality in allocation of opportunities. Only the National Bureau of Statistics and other research centres should be allowed to reflect religion in their activities.

2. In Africa: To address the deficiency in truth, Christian politicians in Africa are called to live transparent lives. A Christian politician who can *should* employ the services of a 'Special Assistant on Political Auditing' (SAPA). The job of this assistant should be to support the politician concerned to stay within the boundaries of the political curriculum of Christianity, and to issue regular reports to the public on the activities of the politician for the public to crosscheck.

3. Political mentorship to Christians, right from the early stages of life, is a Christian way of addressing deficiencies in the political curriculum of Christianity. This is in line with Paul's final charge to Timothy:

> You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings – what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:10-15)

Political mentorship is a way through which the church could keep on producing a continuous stream of credible people as politicians, for

posterity, and who would participate in transforming Africa. For greater effect, let each local church appoint a credible person as the political mentor of the church. The person should be able to relate with people from all political and social backgrounds.

Recommendations to the Church

4. To assist Christian politicians to be people of truth, the church needs to establish a 'Christian Fact-Checker on Politics and Governance' to be monitoring the pronouncements and performance of politicians, particularly those who hold or seek to hold public office. This mechanism can be established by each national church body (for example, the Christian Association of Nigeria), Christian denominations, and other levels of the church.

5. To assist Christian politicians to be honourable, national church bodies (for example, the Christian Association of Nigeria) and their affiliates at all levels need to maintain two updatable books: *Christian Book of Political Fame* and *Christian Book of Political Shame*. Of course, developing the books involves clearly defining criteria for honouring and shaming politicians concerned from a Christian perspective.

Recommendations to Theological Schools

6. The democratic element of governance needs to be fully entrenched in theological schools in Africa, especially in students' governance systems. Some theological schools have student unions that are administered by the schools in a dictatorial manner. There are theological schools that are known to justify dictatorship and dislike for criticisms using the Bible, theology, threats, and written and unwritten laws. A way of addressing this is to allow student unions to exist as fully democratised bodies, allowed to experience politics within the limits of the campus: defining manifestos, campaigning, holding town hall meetings, adopting voting processes as in national elections, and being allowed operating executive and legislative branches (for theological schools with larger numbers of students).

7. Like universities around the world, theological schools in Africa need to understand the interconnection between democracy and education

(Dewey 1966). Critical thinking, which also implies freely thinking and holding opinions outside traditional denominational and interpretive lines, needs to be encouraged. Otherwise, what is there in terms of research and writing will continue to be within the regular instead of the exceptional. Accordingly, it is recommended that theological schools consider establishing a 'Colloquium on Controversial Subjects of Christianity', where well-researched, publishable papers shall be regularly presented for discussion in the academic world.

Recommendation to Curriculum Specialists

8. To encourage effective political understanding at the level of local churches in Nigeria, there is a need to engage relevant curriculum specialists to design, construct, and develop a 'Church-Based Political Education Curriculum'. This is needed primarily for all levels of the Sunday school and other church educational ministries channels of the church.

General Lessons for Africa

9. To encourage critical thinking among Christian politicians in Africa, more research and publishing opportunities need to be created or sponsored. More channels similar to the *African Theological Journal for Church and Society* are needed. As examples, a *West African Theological Journal for Church and Society* or *Nigerian Theological Journal for Church and Society* would serve to equip politicians in Africa with ideas based on research.

10. As part of their contribution to developing the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa, churches need to be more involved in building people of the kingdom than in building gigantic or fancy church worship structures. Let there be lesser involvement of the Church in erecting physical structures for meetings or in programmes that unnecessarily cage Christians from practical presence in the world. Instead, let the churches be seen establishing small-scale or large-scale businesses, hospitals, food stores, mass transport services, and other initiatives; when members have means of livelihood and can generate their own money, they are less likely to be manipulated by selfish politicians.

11. It is time for Christians in Africa to start thinking of crafting a 'Christian Political Agenda for Africa', as the Christian political version of the *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* (African Union 2013). Prominent African Christians in the church, academia, politics and governance, and the public square could spearhead processes capable of leading to the development of this agenda, in line with the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa. The coming together of national Christian bodies across Africa to create an 'African Christian Political Action Communion' is recommended as a step in this process.

12. While the political curriculum of Christianity is observed to be deficient in influence in Nigeria, questions of its influence at the African continent are also raised. For example, why are there still laws and actions restricting Christian religious freedom, or the freedom of other citizens to change religion, particularly in northern Nigeria, Somalia, and other places in Africa where Christians face extreme persecution? Leading Christian politicians at the national and continental level should be heard raising their voices on issues like this, in line with the global politics, diplomacy, and leadership components of the political curriculum of Christianity.

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Juma DC 2024, 'Law, Religion, Culture and Slay Queens: A critique of the Kenyan Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019', *African Theological Journal for Church and Society*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 188-216

Law, Religion, Culture and Slay Queens: A critique of the Kenyan Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019

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Abstract

Some Old Testament texts suggest that a man's principal heirs are the sons from 'legitimate' wife/wives (Gen. 15:4, Deut. 25:5-10, Jud. 11:2, 1 Kings 21:3, Ruth). Yet in Numbers 27:1-11 and Ruth one encounters the voices and actions of daughters and women who challenged the status quo on inheritance matters. Just like the Jewish religion in the Old Testament, in patriarchal societies like Kenya religious beliefs and negative cultural ideologies inform legal and inheritance matters in ways that are disadvantaging to women and girls. In African traditional society, polygamy and mistresses – here referred to as 'slay-queens' in the Kenyan contemporary street language – netted together the family institution. The wives and 'slay-queens' indirectly benefit from property inheritance through the children. The Kenyan Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019, which is the primary law on inheritance, was reviewed for three years to lock out 'illegitimate' children and slay-queens from inheriting the property of a deceased person. In a Kenyan context, where women have no say over matters related to property inheritance and are seen as a man's property, the bill fails to deliver an equitable approach. From a post-colonial and an afro-feminist approach, it is proposed that there is a need to critique the Kenyan Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019, to challenge legal experts to steer conversations toward a complete overhaul of all the discriminatory sections, and interrogate the religious and cultural foundations on which patriarchy finds ways of legalising discrimination against women and girls.

Introduction

The voices of Zelophehad's daughters in Numbers 27:1-11 are located within the Old Testament's legal, religious, cultural, and patriarchal context where women's voices were silent when it came to inheritance laws. It is only in the Book of Ruth that the indirect actions of Naomi seem to be linked to the issues of land and inheritance. The voices of Zelophehad's daughters in Numbers 27:1-11 arguably address the issues of law, religion, culture, gender, power, and the right to land ownership (Claassens 2013). According to Giddens and Sutton (2010:30), 'patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices, in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women'. This article uses the concepts of law, religion, culture, and slay-queens (mistresses) to critique the Kenyan Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019. This paper argues that patriarchy characterises the legalisation of the discrimination of women, particularly slay-queens, in the Kenyan Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019.

According to Okoh (Ekundayo and Okoh 2020:256), 'slay-queen' is a trendy coinage for girls who sleep with men to make money in order to survive. In other contexts, *slay-queen* is a term used for women who focus on outward beauty and especially express this on social media platforms. Slay-queens project an image of perfection and accomplishment, and may not necessarily have the negative connotation of sexual manipulation as used within the Kenyan context (Keyhole 2024). But from the Kenyan perspective and in the Kenyan Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019, a slay-queen – sometimes referred to as slay-mama – is said to do anything to get a rich man to have sex with them for money. Slay-queens will dress sexily to arouse the sexual desire of rich men (Ekundayo and Okoh 2020). In contemporary Kenyan society, the term *slay-queen* used in reference to mistresses is a household term. It is street language, a public theology analogy, and is highly mentioned by a number of televangelists in their sermons. In Kenya, the term *slay-queen* stems from slang language where it is used to refer to a person who stands out among a crowd either by their outfits or by their looks. In general and public usage, the term is specifically used for women who are mistresses (Wangare 2018; Okech 2021). Implicit in this categorisation is the fact that religion and culture empower men to categorise women and socialise women to submit to the

categorisation in ways that make women vulnerable to gender discrimination in the name of religion and culture.

In Kenya, patriarchy uses religion and culture to control the lives of women, rendering women very submissive to men (Wangila 2015). In the name of culture, religion continues to elevate the status of men over women. In secular society, patriarchy uses the legal system to legalise the oppression of women, as will be shown from the Kenyan Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019. Since patriarchy uses religion to portray gender within religious doctrines and belief systems, Moyo (2004:74) argues: 'any efforts for gender justice have to target religio-cultural socialisation for both women and men'. For Moyo (2004:72),

> efforts for equal participation of women and men at all levels of influence tend to be frustrated, with much resistance by both men and women.

Kenya subscribes to the international treaties that abide by gender equity and equality principles as indicated in the National Gender and Equality Commission (2016). However, women and girls remain the most vulnerable group in Kenya as shown in the report by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2022:1). In order to address the inequality and integrate gender equity in the developmental agenda, the international principles of gender equity and affirmative action should be taken in ways that foster gender mainstreaming in all aspects of life. According to Walsh, Jefferson, and Saunders (2003:32),

> there is a complex mix of cultural, legal, and social factors underlying women's property rights in Kenya based on patriarchal traditions in which men inherited and legally controlled land and other properties.

Kenya is home to African Traditional Religions (ATRs), Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism (Timothy 2023). In Kenya, like in many other African countries, religion and politics are two facets of power that are in constant interaction (Ellis and Haar 2007:390). Notably, in postcolonial Kenya, ATRs have had a high influence on other religions like Christianity and Islam, necessitating the

urgency for interreligious dialogue (Oseje 2018). According to Kevin P. Lines (2018:22),

> recent introductions to both interreligious dialogue and the study of World Religions have emphasised the need to evaluate our inherited biases against [African] traditional religions and begin reappraising them as legitimate contemporary belief systems.

Although people have appraised ATRs, there is a need to carry on the work. In secular society also, patriarchy has found a way of using political structures to legalise the discrimination of women through the law of succession and property rights. In patriarchal societies like Kenya, people's interpretation of religion teaches women to be submissive to men, making it difficult for women to challenge the legalising of gender discrimination enshrined in the Law of Succession. In a detailed study on women within religions, Maseno and Mligo (2019) show ways in which religion uses patriarchy to systemically and structurally determine the position, place, and status of women.

African Christianity and Hinduism only allow monogamous marriage (Ignatius 2002:29; Patel and Chaturvedi 2021:81). ATRs allow polygamy and do not restrict the number of women a man can marry. Islamic marriage allows polygamous marriage up to four wives. In pre-colonial Africa, the institution of marriage was well nested through the concept of human sexuality. According to Okechi (2018:1),

> before the Eurasian contact with Africa […] The elderly members of the society initiated the individual members of the society into the concepts and the act of human sexuality through a well-organized and consistent socialization process.

Okechi (2018:1) further notes: 'human sexuality was well recognized as individual [*sic*] right' but 'subject to group norms and values'. In fact, in the traditional African society, sex outside of marriage was so well guarded that there were no labels such as *slay-queens* or *mistresses*. In polygamous marriage, sexual acts among different polygamous marriages would take place but would be done with a notion of sacredness. It is believed that among the

Sabaot people group it is important for a woman to have a child or two with a man other than her husband as disguise in case the angel of death visits the family. This way, it becomes difficult for the angel of death to know which child exactly should be taken. When it came to inheritance matters, no child was discriminated against even when the physical appearance of some children made it obvious that they were not fathered by their mother's husband. In the traditional Sabaot society, the ears, fingernails, and the nose in particular were used as a test to know if a child was an outsider. What was forbidden was that 'people could not marry from closely related people i.e. kinship' (Okoth-Okombo and Masinjila 1998:144).

The issues of gender-based violence, land, and property inheritance among the Sabaot are a community matter and are still part of the education package taught in regard to sexual matters and marriage during circumcision ceremonies. Notably the issue of land inheritance among the Sabaot people is a territorial matter (Médard 2010:24). In the event that a husband or a father died, the community protected women and children by ensuring that there was enough for all the women in a polygamous setting through the children. Among the Sabaot people, property inheritance was done based on the seniority of the wives where the first wife to be married was considered the most senior. Her opinion in regard to property inheritance was highly regarded by the elders. The teachings about the dignity of children were highly emphasised during the circumcision ceremonies. The first wife was entrusted with the wisdom of ensuring that all the children, including those born outside of marriage, were catered for. Unfortunately, 'The interruption of the African traditional system by the Eurasian contact' redefined the 'concept' of the institution of marriage, 'sexuality', and the 'sacredness' of sexuality 'shifting the emphasis from group to individual erroneous perception of sex' (Okechi 2018:1).

In the individualistic approach to sex and marriage, patriarchy has continued to thrive because Eurocentric views often emphasise individual rights and autonomy (Bawa 2012). This can sometimes overlook the importance of collective or communal values prevalent in many African societies. In patriarchal systems, men have power and authority over women. The individualistic approach reinforces power imbalance by prioritising the desires and needs of the individual (often male) over those of the family or

community. That is how patriarchy has found itself legalised in the Kenyan Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019. Additionally, in Kenyan, like in some other African, Christian settings, selective readings of scripture create a fertile ground for polygamy and extra-marital relationships to thrive by empowering men over women through teachings that socialise women to confuse submission and vulnerability with unjust religious and cultural teachings (Falen 2008; Muhumed 2014).

Post-Colonial and an Afro-Feminist Approach to the Law of Succession

According to Kameri-Mbote (2002), in a patriarchal country like Kenya, the laws of succession are in most cases gendered in their application. Kameri-Mbote (2002:380), points out that

> any investigation into the issue of the rights of women has to take the woman as the focal point of attention in seeking to unearth the biases that are to be found within the law.

Kameri-Mbote gives an account of the application of inheritance laws in Kenya from colonialism, and its persistence, to the contemporary society underscoring the conflict between introduced English norms and customary norms and the effects of that conflict on the rights of women to inherit. It is from this point of departure that this article uses a post-colonial and an afro-feminist approach to analyse the Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019. Dube (2012:48) defines the term

> postcolonial, as an overall analysis of the methods and effects of imperialism and as a continuing reality in global relations.

Imperialism is the process of building an empire through the imposition of political, economic, and social institutions of one nation over a foreign one (Dube 2012:17). Afro-feminism is a liberation discourse, which affirms that to exist is to resist (Glover 2012:181-185; Emejulu and Sobande 2019).

An afro-feminist approach is a tool of liberation within feminism that asserts the specific experiences of black women, historically overshadowed by

complex oppressive systems and structures (Volpp 2001:1182). Thus, patriarchy is oppressive, as is colonialism. Seen this way, it is possible to define post-colonial and afro-feminist approaches as perspectives that are grounded in the understanding of how the power of the colonial times still appears in the production and reproduction of marginalised, racialised, sexed, and gendered others in contemporary times (Davies 2015:1). As used in the context of the Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019, post-colonial and afro-feminist lenses are approaches that investigate the issue of the rights of women, taking Kenyan women as the focal point of attention. The approaches seek to unearth the biases found within the law in order to point out how religion and culture legalise the oppression of women through their sexuality. Post-colonial and afro-feminist approaches to the Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019 recognise that patriarchy is a common thread of both colonial and post-colonial Africa (Wekesa 2013:6). While the post-colonial approach gives the lens through which one can interpret the Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019, an afro-feminist approach focuses on Biblical texts that unmute women's voices in patriarchal settings such as Numbers 27:1-11 and the Book of Ruth. Thus, the approach gives one an opportunity to propose ways of destabilising all the powers that use religion and culture to legalise the marginalisation and oppression of Kenyan women.

The Voices of Women in Numbers 27:1-11 and Ruth through an Afro-Feminist Lens

In Numbers 27:1-11 the voices of the daughters of Zelophehad challenge the laws of land inheritance. Ndekha (2013:49) points out

> instead of openly challenging the patriarchal legal system, the daughters cast their request in the language of patriarchy and stuck to issues that mattered in society.

It is important to note that the daughters assert their right to inherit land from their deceased father in a patriarchal society that privileges male descendants. An afro-feminist approach to this text therefore gives one the opportunity to examine the text through the lens of both feminism and the unique socio-cultural context of Africa to centre women's agency by emphasising women's

voices and empowerment within their communities. According to Claassens (2013:332),

> the daughters of Zelophehad find themselves in an exceedingly vulnerable situation because they are orphaned and the death of their male relative in the socio-cultural context of their time jeopardises their chances of survival; without land, without a means to make a living.

Yet, the daughters of Zelophehad exemplify the agency for women's voices and empowerment by boldly challenging the existing laws that had disadvantaged them. This they do by refusing to accept their marginalisation and by instead demanding justice and equality within their society. Afro-feminism recognises the interconnected nature of various forms of oppression, including those based on gender, race, class, law, religion, culture, and ethnicity. In the case of the daughters of Zelophehad, their struggle for inheritance rights intersects with broader issues of gender inequality and the marginalisation of women within patriarchal societies (Darko 2020). Their story highlights the importance of addressing multiple layers of oppression simultaneously because all oppression is connected. Additionally, while the daughters of Zelophehad assert their individual rights, their actions also demonstrate a commitment to community solidarity.

While Kenya is a patriarchal society, the *Ubuntu* aspect of community solidarity still exists (Shamala 2006). Thus, the voice of advocacy from the daughters of Zelophehad in Numbers 27:1-11 is a collective action embedded in mutual support that aligns with afro-feminist principles of communal empowerment and resistance against systemic oppression. Afro-feminism encourages the reinterpretation of cultural and religious texts in ways that challenge oppressive norms and promote gender equality. A re-reading of Numbers 27:1-11 through an afro-feminist lens underscores the courage and resilience of the daughters of Zelophehad. This is an embodiment of the strength and agency of African women throughout history. An afro-feminist lens to re-interpret Numbers 27:1-11 within the context of the Kenyan Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019 seeks to dismantle systems of oppression and achieve justice and liberation for all marginalised groups, including women. The story of the daughters of Zelophehad serves as a reminder of the ongoing struggle

for gender equality and the importance of challenging patriarchal norms and structures in pursuit of a more just and equitable society.

Examining the Book of Ruth through an afro-feminist lens in the context of the Kenyan Law of Succession Amendment Bill 2019 provides an opportunity to explore themes of gender justice, inheritance rights, and empowerment within both the Biblical narrative and a contemporary legal framework. Read together with Numbers 27:1-11, one gets the opportunity to challenge traditional notions of inheritance. The decision of Ruth to glean in the fields of Boaz symbolises her agency in securing her and Naomi's economic livelihood. Additionally, throughout the story of Ruth, community support and solidarity play a crucial role in her journey towards empowerment and inclusion. The solidarity shown by Boaz and the wider community in recognising Ruth's worth and contributions highlight the importance of collective action in challenging patriarchal norms and advocating for women's rights (Yap 2024). The story of Ruth, understood within the context of the voices of Zelophehad's daughters in Numbers 27:1-11, subverts traditional gender roles and challenges patriarchal norms by highlighting the agency and resilience of women. Applying an afro-feminist lens to Numbers 27:1-11 and the Book of Ruth through the Kenyan Law of Succession Amendment Bill 2019 shows the intersections between Biblical narratives and contemporary legal frameworks. This paves the way for promoting gender justice, economic empowerment, community solidarity, and the need to continue challenging patriarchal norms. Via an afro-feminist lens, one can say that both narratives emphasise the agency and resilience of women in advocating for their rights and reshaping societal norms to create more inclusive and equitable communities.

The Role of Women in Naming, Exposing, and Criticising Contexts of Oppression

It is important to note that Kenyan women played a key role in the fight against colonialism, as co-liberators alongside their male counterparts (Gathogo 2017:6-13). In the same spirit, the Federation of Women Lawyers in Kenya continues to undertake comprehensive work in the community to address gender discrimination against women on issues of land and property inheritance (Kirui 2019; Ayodo 2023). Following the same path, African women theologians have courageously challenged cultural, religious, political, and

patriarchal forms of oppression that are harmful to women. Nomatter Sande and Sophia Chirongoma (2021:8) point out how African women theologians employ a gender-sensitive hermeneutics to analyse culture in ways that are pro women's life and dignity. This shows that women play a key role in naming, exposing, and criticising contexts of oppression that are conducive to institutional and structural inequality, where women are the first casualties. In order to see the importance of using a post-colonial and an afro-feminist approach to the Law of Succession, it is important to analyse the Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019.

A Gendered Synthesis of the Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019

Article 27, Clauses 3, 4, 5, and 6 of Kenya's 'progressive' 2010 constitution indicate that every person is equal before the law and should not be discriminated against on any grounds (Kenya Law Reform Commission 2023). However, according to Ngugi – a judge on the High Court of Kenya – there still exists discrimination against women in matters of land and property inheritance because of religious and cultural norms that govern marital relationships (2021:xi). It seems that retrogressive religious and customary norms that discriminate against women have found a way of being legalised through the Kenyan Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019. For a period of approximately three years, the Law of Succession, which is the primary law on inheritance, went through review. The main aim was to realign rights clearly espoused in the constitution of Kenya and other relevant laws (Kigata, Kithinji, and Muia 2021). The bill was sponsored by Hon. George Peter Kaluma, Member of Parliament for the Homa Bay Town constituency, and on 17 November 2021 President Uhuru Kenyatta assented to the Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019 – now referred to as the Law of Succession (Amendment) Act 2021 (Okoth 2023b). The guiding question is: what is new in the bill? Notably, the bill introduced in Section 2 (1) the term 'spouse'. According to the bill, *spouse* means a husband, a wife, or wives recognised under the Marriage Act (Mujuzi 2023).

Sections 2, 3, and 6 of the Marriage Act No. 4 of 2014 allow a man to have more than one wife. In Section 2 polygamy is interpreted to mean 'the state or practice of a man having more than one wife simultaneously' (Kigata., Kithinji,

and Muia 2021). The Kenyan Marriage Act recognises five kinds of marriage: Christian, civil, customary, Hindu, and Muslim (Ngugi 2021:xiii). All these marriages require registration. A certificate is subsequently issued as proof of marriage. Without registration and a certificate, the relationship falls under the slay-queen (or mistress) category (Nyambane 2014:36). Section 29 of the Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019 categorises dependents as:

1. Primary Dependents (Section 29,1,a): These are the spouse and children of the deceased, whether they were maintained by the deceased at the time of his death or not. This category of persons does not need to prove that the deceased maintained them. Without the necessary documents of proof, the above provision as an amendment locks out former spouses from being recognised as dependents. Even with proof as primary dependents, widows in Kenya are still disadvantaged. They quite often are 'disinherited, including being evicted from family homes and land, with serious consequences for them and their children' (Mkongo 2019). Yet many women in the rural areas of Kenya live with dependent children and the women depend on land to earn a living and to better standards of the lives of their children (Selin 2022:75).

2. Secondary dependents (Section 29,1,b) include parents, step-parents, grandparents, grandchildren, step-children, children whom the deceased had taken into his family as his own, brothers and sisters, and half-brothers and half-sisters who were being maintained by the deceased prior to his death. The Kenyan Law of Succession has evolved over the years. In postcolonial Kenya, many families have been going to court seeking determination on the persons who are rightfully entitled to inherit the deceased person's property. It is important to note that the Kenyan postcolonial review of the Law of Succession was based on the English system and statutory provisions of the Law of Succession. In exceptional cases, the African customary law was adopted (Kigata, Kithinji, and Muia 2021).

3. Other dependents (Section 29,2) are those who must prove that they were being maintained by the deceased for a period of two years prior to the deceased's death. Unfortunately, because of gender inequality, it has continuously been very difficult for women to prove that they were being maintained together with the children of the deceased. According to Kameri-Mbote (2002), the Kenyan Law of Succession is gender neutral in its provisions

but gender biased in its application since it does not reflect the current values and needs of the modern society where many married men have normalised the culture of having extramarital affairs, justifying it with the African culture of polygamy. The Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019 disenfranchises legitimate beneficiaries of a deceased person, thus giving the impetus for law reform to respond to these concerns (Kigata., Kithinji, and Muia 2021). It is important to note that the sub-section is a complete overhaul of the previous position that provided for the third group of dependents to include a husband, as long as the deceased was maintaining him prior to her death. The purpose of the amendment is that husbands now fall under Section 29,1,a and need not prove maintenance (Kigata, Kithinji, and Muia 2021). The implication of the amendments is that

> only a spouse i.e., a husband or a wife or wives recognised under the Marriage Act is recognised as dependents for purposes of succession under section 29 of the Act. (Kigata, Kithinji, and Muia 2021)

In light of the Marriage Act, this then means that a spouse is one who has registered their marriage.

In Kenya, like many other African countries, many husbands are afraid to write a will, fearing that when you write a will you invite death (Bett-Kinyati 2022). In the absence of a will, the description of a spouse as one that has registered marriage discriminates against women. In a post-colonial and afro-feminist approach to the Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019, it is possible to argue that the law is gender biased. The Kenyan Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019 contains provisions that disproportionately benefit men over women in matters of inheritance and succession as discussed above. It is therefore possible to argue that the bill perpetuates existing inequalities and reinforces traditional gender roles and stereotypes. The bill also undermines efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in society. The bill unfairly advantages men, fails to adequately address the rights and interests of women in matters of succession, and requires that experts in law raise concerns and advocate for amendments to rectify these biases. Addressing gender bias in legislation requires careful consideration of the specific provisions and their potential impacts on both genders. It is

essential for policymakers to engage in dialogue with relevant stakeholders, including women's rights organisations, to ensure that the law promotes fairness and equality for all so that all can enjoy life in its fullness (see John 10:10).

Religion and Culture in the Kenyan Context

The concept of polygamy and slay-queens in Kenya today is highly informed by a combination of African traditional culture, ATR, the Old Testament tradition, Islam, Asian religions, Western Christianity, and a complex element of contemporary Pentecostalism (Robbins 2004:122). Before the coming of Western Christianity to Kenya, Islam – a religion in which polygamy is practised – had already found its way to the Kenyan coast (Mombo and Mwaluda 2000:36-37). The Islamic legal tradition allows a man to marry up to four wives (Shah 2006:890). For Lukito (2013:83),

> there is no legal requirement for a Muslim man to seek the permission of the court or his existing wife or wives to enter into a polygamous marriage.

Islam finds fertile ground in ATRs and in a culture where women are totally under the control of the headship of a man through the marriage institution. As part of the larger African society, ATRs unite Kenya with other African countries through patriarchal ideologies that use religion, culture, and sacred texts to empower men over women (Juma 2022:206). In African societies, a woman cannot marry more than one husband. In the Old Testament, the Jewish religion and culture did not allow women to marry more than one husband either. According to Toh (2014:705),

> the Hebrew Bible prohibits polyandry a case where one woman would have more than one husband because such an arrangement would constitute adultery.

Unfortunately, the Hebrew Bible finds a fertile ground in the Kenyan context where there is constant reference to the Hebrew religion and culture. Because of a biased interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, women and children continue

to be vulnerable to patriarchal ideologies that use socio-economic stratification to control and dominate women.

Government legal rules concerning marriage stem from religious traditions and cultural values (Ghai 2013:292). In the Old Testament legal tradition polygamy was not condemned. It was, however, associated with strife among wives, the fight for inheritance among sons, and the prevention of women from inheriting land and property unless it were done through wife inheritance as in the case of Naomi through the marriage of Ruth to Boaz. Some African Christians use Genesis 2:24:

> that is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh (NIV)

to argue that God is against polygamy. However, after the Fall in Genesis 3, the son of Cain, Lamech, married two wives, Adah and Zillah (Gen. 4:23). Moses himself had two wives. The Mosaic law also accommodated the practice of marrying more than one wife, including captured female prisoners from foreign conquests (Deut. 21:1-17). Exodus 21:10 emphasises the importance of a man being socio-economically able to cater for all his wives if he must marry more than one wife. In Kenya, ATR and culture blend with Islam and Old Testament religion and culture through Christianity to empower men in ways that have enabled some men to be legal absentee fathers who impregnate women and run away from the responsibilities of providing basic needs for them (Nduati et al. 2020:47).

Polygamy Vis-à-vis African Women and the Slay-Queens

While the term *slay-queen* is a new concept in a Kenyan societal setting, religion, culture, and polygamy have long been the way of life. As a concept,

> polygamy is defined as religio-culturally determined, socially acceptable and a legally recognized form of permanent marriage where a man has more than one wife at a time. (Lamanna, Riedmann, and Stewart 2016:168)

In the Book of Ruth, the initiation of women and girls into polygamous and wife inheritance cultural practices is done in such a way that the socio-economic needs of women are well catered for. According to Anderson (2009:60), 'the story of Ruth can be a positive one for women'. In the Book of Ruth,

> Naomi and Ruth both inherited the same right, each from her own deceased husband and in respect of the same piece of land. (De Vaal-Stanton 2015:686)

As indicated by the voices of Zelophehad's daughters in Numbers 27:1-11 and the inquiry of Moses from the Lord, women and girls have the right to inherit land and property generally. Even though the story of inheritance in the Book of Ruth seems to show that women did not inherit property, Naomi initiated the process of inheritance that saw both Naomi and Ruth inherit land indirectly. Additionally, even though Zelophehad's daughters in Numbers 27:1-11 are not children from a mistress, their voice and the actions of Naomi in the Book of Ruth show that women have a great role to play in criticising and challenging discriminating laws in patriarchal societies.

In traditional African society, polygamy and wife inheritance was structured in ways so that women and children would not lack (Egboh 1972). However, in contemporary Kenyan society, extra-marital sexual relationships with slay-queens are creating safe havens for men to escape financial responsibilities towards the women they impregnate. A number of well-respected men, some politicians, clergy, and senior citizens, are having extra-marital affairs with slay-queens (Pala 2018). It seems that the most affected category of Kenyan men on matters of slay-queens and childcare support are Kenyan politicians. Some have fathered children with slay-queens, yet they have tried many ways to escape the financial responsibilities that come with it. Former Kenyan senate speaker Mr Ken Lusaka was sued by a lady who was labelled *Mpango-wa-kando* (slay-queen or side chick). She wanted the court to compel the former senate speaker to take responsibility for their unborn child. Notably, they had been in a sexual relationship for three years (Wambulwa 2021). In the recent past, there have been increased incidences of men, some of them being politicians, losing their lives in hotels while indulging in clandestine affairs (Greenblatt 2011). The death of the late Homa Bay senator Otieno Kajwang in 2014 was attributed to a 'heart attack'. However, it has been pointed out, that

> Due to Kajwang's political stature, It was decided that the death be couched as 'heart attack' to avoid anything shameful. (Standard Digital 2018)

Yet, medical reports revealed that Viagra killed Otieno Kajwang (Owinda 2015). Viagra is a brand-name prescription drug approved to treat erectile dysfunction (Muhammod 2017).

These deaths associated with the deceased being sexually engaged with a slay-queen are a possible indicator that extra-marital affairs are thriving in Kenya. This is happening in the context of Kenyan politicians trying to use their legislative powers to silence women on matters of sex in the name of the Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019. There has also been an increase in the number of cases of women showing up with children after a prominent politician or societal leader dies to fight for a share of the property of the deceased (Kameri-Mbote 2002:388). It is said that this issue in particular provoked the Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019. In fact, when the president assented to the Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019, it was celebrated with the words 'slay-queens and woman-eaters have fallen, MP Kaluma [who sponsored the bill] says after Uhuru signs Bill' (Okoth 2023a). In the discussion of polygamy *vis-à-vis* African women and the slay-queens, it is possible to see how religion and culture have found ways of legalising the oppression of women. According to Njiiri (2011:24),

> the socialisation of girls and women often curtails their autonomy and undermines their ability to negotiate [on matters of sex] with men.

Thus, while men continue to view women as objects of sexual desire using religion and culture, women continue to be the custodians of the very oppressive patriarchal systems (Kanyoro 2001:159).

Problematising the Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019

The Transparency International (2010) report shows that Kenya is one of the most corrupt countries in East Africa. Unfortunately, corruption has infiltrated

issues of human sexuality. Legislators want to have sex with slay-queens and are not ready to take the responsibilities that come with sexual relationships. The main argument for proposing the bill claims that the bill aims at avoiding situations where 'opportunistic schemers successfully claim a stake in a deceased person's estate hence disenfranchising the legitimate heirs of the deceased' (Otieno 2019). The question is why a person in his right mind would not stay within the so-called legitimate relationship but opt for a relationship with the 'opportunistic schemers'. The bill is arguably gender biased and patriarchal in nature. While the bill is said to seek to provide clarity on whom dependents are, the application is biased since it targets women directly. Kenyan legislators have constantly reviewed the Law of Succession in the name of protecting the rightful beneficiaries. Yet, the customary law has continued to weigh heavily on the application of the laws. According to Okello (2007:4-7), 'Kenya has about 40 indigenous ethnic groups with variation of customary laws'. 'Although the systems are different,' she observes,

> customary law is enforced by traditional leaders such as elders in ways that the principle decision making power is allocated to men so that men inherit and control land and property. (Okello 2007:4-7)

In the Law of Succession Act, the inheritance rights of a widow – but not a widower! – are terminated upon remarrying.

Patriarchal systems will continue to remind women that they should know that they are women. What's more, a father's rights are prioritised before a mother's in estate succession so that women's right to own property, inherit, and manage or dispose of property remain under attack (Mbugua 2018). Former wives are no longer recognised as dependents. They have to prove that the deceased was maintaining them for a period of two years prior to the deceased's death (Section 29,2). Widowers are now recognised as primary dependents and need not prove that the deceased were maintaining them immediately prior to their death. Notably, the bill was a one-man show and was based on just one amendment. Women parliamentarians are very few in number (Musila 2019). Thus it is very difficult to challenge such a bill since men are the majority in parliament and are the beneficiaries of the bill. The bill takes a moral position yet men continue to be free to indulge in extra-marital

affairs. In contemporary Kenyan society, women in a patriarchal context in which men are supposed to be the heads of the family are heading many households. In fact, women are financially responsible for children born out of marriage. Because patriarchal societies give power to men, men are not automatically responsible for children they sire in extramarital sexual affairs unless a man acknowledges that he is the father.

It is therefore proposed that:

First, Numbers 27:1-11 and the Book of Ruth can offer a redemptive religious and cultural interpretation to land and inheritance matters for the law of succession in Kenya. In Numbers 27:1-11, the voices of women show the power of women's voices to confront the status quo and overturn the norm on matters of inheritance. Some Old Testament texts (Gen. 15:4, Deut. 25:5-10, Judg. 11:2, 1 Kings 21:3, Ruth 4) suggest that a man's principal heirs were the sons born to him by his 'legitimate' wife or wives. However, the decision of Zelophehad's daughters signifies that the voices of women in biased legal systems on succession matters are very important. Additionally, the phrase 'Tent of Meeting' is used in the Old Testament to refer to the place where God would meet with God's people, Israel. Thus, it is possible to argue that Zelophehad's daughters summoned the courage not just to appear before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders, and the whole assembly, but also to stand in the presence of God. When Moses inquired from God, the Lord instructed Moses to give them the inheritance of their father and to say to the Israelites that if a man dies and leaves no son, his inheritance is to be given to his daughter.

The Book of Ruth is set within the context of a polygamous marriage, widowhood, and wife inheritance. The words of Boaz to the guardian-redeemer are significant:

> On the day you buy the land *from Naomi and from Ruth the Moabite*, you acquire the dead man's widow. (Ruth 4:5, emphasis added)

In the words of Boaz, both Naomi and Ruth are given significance in the process of inheritance. The property being inherited is not negotiated independently

the way it is usually in Kenyan patriarchal contexts. Implicit in this is the fact that the indirect role played by Naomi in the inheritance of land cannot be ignored. Thus, women's voices and role in challenging legalised structures that discriminate women and girls on matters of succession are very important.

Second, there is a need for organised discussion about the Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019. Notably,

> when Kenya passed the Matrimonial Property Act five years ago, it joined a series of laws protecting women's access to their property. (Mbugua 2018)

However, the main concern remains that

> patriarchal traditions and lack of awareness about their rights that continue to leave many women fighting to keep land that is legally theirs. (Mbugua 2018)

Organised talks can pave the way for an overhaul of all the discriminatory sections. Some of the observations include:

1. Amplifying public education and awareness efforts on the provisions of the Marriage Act and especially on the need to formalise marriages

2. Amplifying public education and awareness efforts on the provisions of the Matrimonial Property Act and especially on the acquisition and ownership of property within marriage and the division of property upon dissolution of marriage

3. Researching on the aspect of 'other dependents', especially regarding proving dependence (Kemei 2020).

Organised talks on the Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019 should focus on grassroots activism. This is an important and effective social force in Kenya, especially for women. Not many women especially at the grassroots level know how to seek legal action against the men who evict them from their husband's property after the husband dies. A number of Kenyan women have received several prizes for their activism, which target gendered poverty

alleviation (see Wangari Maathai in Sen et al. 2007:86). Thus, the Federation of Women Lawyers – Kenya should guide the way on talks on the Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019. All women regardless of class should be enlightened, educated, and armed with correct information on property rights and inheritance matters.

Conclusion

It is difficult to speak about gender equity and sustainable development in contemporary Kenyan society without addressing ways in which religion and culture continue to deprive women of their right to land and property inheritance using the legal system. Unfortunately, not many women know that the Kenyan Constitution 2010 places great emphasis on the equality of both genders and on their participation in the country's development agenda. Religion and culture has continued to maintain the status quo through patriarchal ideologies that empower men and disempower women through women's sexuality. Even with the categorisation of women as slay-queens, it is important for Kenyan women to be sensitised to know that women's property rights and inheritance rights are supposed to be enjoyed by women as a category within a society. Thus the Law of Succession (Amendment) Bill 2019 should be scrutinised in ways that allow legal experts and friends of women to name, expose, criticise, and overhaul all the discriminatory sections. For example, the amendment bill discriminates against those married under polygamous systems who do not automatically get marriage certificates (Standing Committee on Justice, Legal Affairs and Human Rights 2021:9). At the centre of women's ability to contribute to sustainable development is the issue of land, property acquisition, and ownership. While religion and culture have found a way of legalising the discrimination of women, talks and liberating Biblical interpretations can transform oppressive gendered structures in patriarchal societies like Kenya.

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Silencing the Guns, Illusion or Reality? Why a Biblical Theology of Violence Matters

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Abstract

It is almost as if violence and the African continent are synonymous terms. Furthermore, many researchers have studied the issue of violence in the African continent. Recent studies propose that the causes of violence in Africa are multifaceted, and most of their focus is on the external causes. Such views present people only as victims of circumstances, and that which leads them towards violence is always external. This paper, however, through employing a qualitative research methodology based primarily on literature review, shows that having a proper biblical theology of violence in Africa does not place humans primarily as victims but inherently as the chief perpetrators of violence because of their fundamentally flawed human nature; further, that the issue of violence is primarily a moral issue. Thus, the question whether the African Union's quest of 'silencing the guns' remains an illusion or reality shows that it remains an illusion when the real problem is not addressed.

Introduction

The paper's purpose is not to provide a comprehensive survey of wars and their nexus with the youth in the African continent and all its complexities. Furthermore, the paper does not intend to oversimplify a complex issue that has ravaged Africa for centuries. Instead, the focus is to scrutinise the African Union's (AU) call for the silencing of guns. Further, this paper does not claim to dismiss that many of the things researchers have pointed out have led to and fuelled the continued crisis brought about by violence in the African

continent. Instead, it points out that the AU, from the very beginning, has failed to get to the real issue at the heart of the problem and also ignored an important voice whose contributions are essential to finding a solution to the problem at hand. Violence is perhaps the greatest challenge facing the African continent. This is not to say that only Africans are prone to violence as we have seen other continents also ravaged by wars.

Many African leaders, led by the African Union, have put forth efforts to try and reverse this trend. However, it is notable that violence continues, and new forms of conflict continue to spring up. Even though the international organisations have all contributed significantly to ending youth involvement in violence and war in general, nothing much has changed. This paper seeks to show that though much research has associated youth with involvement in violence in Africa, none of them point to the real problem. The many intervening measures that the AU and African governments have put forth have done little or nothing to reverse the trends of escalating violence. Finally, many researchers have ignored a proper view of violence that can only be derived from the scriptures, which puts the problem of violence as an internal problem stemming from the human heart. Therefore, because the AU has not addressed the root cause of the problem of violence, the call to end violence will continue to be an illusion.

The Problems Associated with Conflict

The nature of conflicts in Africa, whether fuelled by the youth or not, is a multifaceted issue, as with other wars in other parts of the world (World Food Programme 1999). The conflicts take the form of either intra-state or inter-state wars. Most inter-state conflicts were prevalent after the Cold War period and mainly revolved around border disputes but have recently been about fighting for resources.[1] However, the more recent reality of conflicts revolves around many intra-state conflicts that have seen civil wars that have plagued

[1] According to The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), Nigeria, Sudan, Southern Sudan, DR-Congo, and Somalia are engaged in resource-related battles.

many countries in the African continent (Nsaibia and Duhamel, 2021).[2] Furthermore, while it is evident that many conflicts exist on the continent, it would be false to presume that the causes of many conflicts are similar or arise from similar issues. What can be agreed, however, is that the origins of many of these conflicts are multifaceted and complex.

Every African country has its own history and has a distinct geographical location. Internally, each country runs independently as a sovereign nation with its laws and policies that govern the land. Each country is at a different stage of economic development and has established religious affiliations, with its populations affiliated with different religious organisations. All these factors make the issue of conflict much more complex. Researchers have focused on economic, political, or social issues, including religion, as leading causes of conflict. That is why there is plenty of research regarding the causes of conflicts in Africa. A quick search of journals on major sites gives thousands of results,[3] which is a reflection of how much research has gone into the topic.

While not undermining the reality of inter-state conflicts, the African continent has plagued itself with internal conflicts with the youth being in the epicentre. Notably, the nexus between the youth and conflict in Africa[4] is not because the youth primarily incline themselves to conflict but because of the demographic patterns that put them at the epicentre of conflict (Ismail and Olonisakin 2021:373). A researcher posits that countries with a high youth population, referred to as the 'youth bulge', are most likely to experience violence (Urdal 2006:607). Nonetheless, many researchers have undertaken a multi-angle analysis of the causes of internal conflicts. For the most part, some of the economic causes of conflict have been corruption (Joly et al. 2020:7), unfavourable terms of trade (Cali 2015:2), cruel taxation regimes, exploitation

[2] One of the regions that has seen persistent cycles of violence is the Sahel, which has been plagued by continued Jihadist insurgency, especially in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. The data is according to the 2021 report by The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).

[3] A response rate of 77,592 results was derived from JSTOR after searching 'Causes of Conflicts in Africa' (accessed 30 September 2023).

[4] Refer to Ismail and Olonisakin's paper 'Why do youth participate in violence in Africa? A review of evidence' (2021) for a detailed review of the nexus between youth and violence in Africa.

of natural resources (Funder, Cold-Ravnkilde, and Ginsborg 2012:17,18), food insecurity, poverty, mismanagement of land, and poor economic performance. Others have cited the colonial past as the primary cause of violence; colonisation and de-colonisation play a considerable role (Zeleza 2008:1). With most of the population being the youth, most of them feel the direct impact of the economic struggles as they suffer from unemployment and other factors, which may lead them to participate in conflicts (Azeng and Yogo 2013). On the socio-political front, due to the multi-ethnic nature of most African countries, many conflicts arise and have historical roots in the post-independence formation of the sovereign states. The generally applied label to the cause of socio-cultural conflicts is governance (Gilpin 2016:21). The political field has been the source of many conflicts in Africa, where there is either exclusion or perceived exclusion of some people groups from political processes.[5]

Furthermore, favouritism (nepotism), discrimination, human rights violations, ethnic marginalisation, and lack of quality leadership constitute most of the causes of conflict in Africa (Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000:1,3). Ethnicity also plays a significant role in conflicts within the borders of many African countries (Jenne and Popovic 2017). There is often a paradox regarding ethnicity because, by and large, a national identity amongst the many different ethnicities is often advocated. However, achieving a national identity is always challenging. Discrimination, elitism, favouritism, and a lack of inclusivity are often evident in many countries (Office of the Special Adviser on Africa 2020). It is challenging to develop loyalty and patriotism when different ethnic groups are always in conflict. Where researchers use the blanket term, that is, 'grievance-based' explanations,[6] there is no disagreement that any of these causes, which are assumed to lead to frustrations and aggressions resulting in violence, disproportionately affect the youth in the African continent (Gurr 2011).

[5] Kenya is one chief example where political differences have resulted in conflicts. The post-election violence of 2007-2008 is a case in point.

[6] These explanations have been used to explain violence in various regions and countries on the African continent such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Niger Delta region, northern Mali, and Kenya.

Additionally, some researchers argue that the root causes of all these issues are colonialism and the Cold War, which destabilised most African states socially, politically, and economically (Moe 2009). In the end, in all the complexities of the cause of violence on the African continent, whether by the youth or not, what is constant and evident is that people are at the centre of violence, whether as perpetrators or victims. However, many researchers, and indeed the AU itself, ignore the issue of morality as the root cause of conflicts and violence in Africa.

The Interventions, Solutions, and Failures

In light of the reality of many conflicts (PSC Report, 2021),[7] the push to find long-lasting solutions has always been an ongoing concern. There have been continuous efforts to address the conflicts and find solutions to ensure lasting peace in many of the war-torn areas of the African continent. Many international bodies have been keenly interested in conflicts in the African continent, whether or not it has been for varied interests. The interventions have taken different shapes, including calling for dialogue, facilitating conferences and symposiums, creating caucuses or special bodies, direct military interventions, or other interventions.

It is no secret that the United Nations and African Union have also had a keen interest in managing conflicts in the African continent. These bodies and organisations have not left the youth behind as agents of the African continent's peace efforts, especially with the primarily preconceived idea that they are violence's main instigators and perpetrators. In 2006, the African Union adopted the African Youth Charter, which, among many other things, captured the significant role of the youth in promoting peace on the continent, as recorded in Article 17 of the treaty (African Union 2006). In addition to these efforts, the African Union launched the 'Youth for Peace Africa Programme' to help in the implementation of Article 17 of the African Youth Charter and the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2250 and 2419, which recognise the central role of youth in peace-building (Kodjo 2022). For a broader

[7] The Institute for Security Studies, shared insights from its publication *Peace and Security Council Report* (2022), where it listed six African hotbeds people needed to watch in 2022, which remain unstable even in 2024.

approach to the issue of violence in Africa, some of the significant initiatives that the Organization of African Unity, whose primary objective was the anticipation and prevention of conflicts, had established include the 'Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution' established in 1993 (Muyangwa and Vogt 2000) and the African Union 'Silencing the Guns' initiative (African Union 2023). The overall push has been that there is a need for 'African solutions to African problems' towards the many conflicts that continue to plague the continent.

However, while the intentions of the AU and other stakeholders, such as the United Nations, have been commendable, there needs to be more optimism moving into the future that conflicts will end. While governments have commended several youth-led civil society organisations for their efforts in peace-building, there is an admission that not all contribute to peace-building efforts. There is also limited research on the efficacy of the prevention strategies employed by the civil society organisations (United Nations Development Programme 2023). Further, during an assessment of the 'Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution', the report highlighted some conflicts that the African Union was resolving. Some of the interventions employed included direct mediation, application of political pressure, employment of special envoys, and deployment of military missions. However, there was an admission that the Organization of African Unity, as formerly constituted, could not resolve conflicts by itself even after these interventions (Muyangwa and Vogt 2000).

Furthermore, more recently, there have already been some criticisms of the 'Silencing the Guns' initiative. During the 9,299th UN Security Council meeting, the council advocated for several solutions during the debate on 'Silencing the Guns'.[8] The council highlighted the necessity to address the internal and external root causes of conflicts on the African continent because partner organisations had spent much time offering traditional responses. Some of the solutions given included addressing colonial grievances, putting up effective development policies, embarking on people-centred recovery and

[8] The debate was held during the UN Security Council Meeting on March 30, 2023. Cristina Duarte, Special Adviser on Africa to the United Nations Secretary-General, and Mohamed Ibn Chambas, African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns, were among the speakers.

transformation with an emphasis on financial investment, developing sustainable industrialisation, echoing successes of the Maputo Accord, promoting social justice, and fighting extreme ideologies amongst other solutions (United Nations Meetings Coverage 2023). One of the beliefs following assessments of the initiative is that only development would create the capacities that help African countries and their youth overcome the peace and security challenges they face, which have deep historical roots.

Moreover, one of the other major blames cited as derailing the initiative to end violence on the African Continent has been a lack of political will and leadership (Human Rights Watch 2023b). In light of this, the humanitarian organisations advocated that the AU and its subregional mechanisms should, among other things, put rigorous human rights monitoring systems and reporting mechanisms in areas highly prone to violence. According to the African Director of Human Rights Watch, African leaders, through efficient deployment of robust instruments of power at their disposal, would provide practical solutions to Africa's problems (Human Rights Watch 2023a). Finally, in one of the statements by the United Nations in a report on the 'Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa', the report reiterated:

> African leaders have failed the peoples of Africa; the international community has failed them; the United Nations has failed them. We have failed them by not adequately addressing the causes of conflict, by not doing enough to ensure peace, and by our repeated inability to create the conditions for sustainable development (Office of the Special Adviser on Africa 2020).

Therefore, even though the significant call is that there is a need to find 'African solutions to African problems', that does not guarantee that it will sustain peace. Even when all parties have put these efforts into place, there is always a vicious cycle of violence cropping up. The same countries and even many others are still struggling to put an end to conflicts. There have been many highlighted causes of conflicts and interventions put in place to resolve them, but it seems highly likely that a far more significant issue still needs to be addressed. Many of those involved in the peace efforts have pointed to

identifying the root causes of the continuous cycles of conflicts, but they have missed the mark.

While many parties have addressed political, economic, and social issues, they intentionally avoid the issue of the ethical conduct of individuals in the role of conflicts on the continent. The parties have ignored the ethical underpinnings and moral aspects in all the significant assessments of African conflicts. If, over millennia, nothing has changed, then it goes to tell that there is a deeper issue. The Christian religion among the major religions in Africa posits that it knows this deeper issue. Through the Holy Bible, Christianity gives the most accurate view and diagnosis of people's tendency towards violence. According to the Holy Bible, violence is not a result of some external factors, although we cannot deny that they play a significant role. Violence is deeply rooted in human rebellious nature, as revealed through the Fall detailed in the Book of Genesis.

The Eruption of Conflicts after the AU's Initiative

After all the efforts it has put in place, a drop in violence would prove that the AU understands the true nature of conflicts in the continent. Therefore, the fundamental question to ask is whether conflicts and violence in Africa are declining or on the rise. How might this complicate the 'Silencing the Guns' initiative? In 2017, the AU adopted what would be known as the 'AU Master Roadmap', which provided practical steps towards 'Silencing the Guns' by the year 2020 (African Union 2023). The roadmap continues to be spearheaded by the AU Peace and Security Council and other partners, including the UN. In 2019, during the 8,473rd United Nations Security Council meeting, the 'Silence the Guns' initiative was formally adopted by the UN to help end violent conflicts on the African continent (African Union 2023). However, at the time of the AU landmark year in 2020 towards the 'Silencing the Guns' initiative, the continent was still reeling with violence that took many shapes and forms, and many of the continent's youth were still at the epicentre of violence. It was reported then by both the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs that there were still many conflicts that were cropping up on the continent (Allison 2020). The Sahel region, southern Sudan, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Nigeria, Guinea, and Côte

d'Ivoire were either experiencing conflicts or faced threats of violent uprisings (Allison 2020).

Further, during a virtual conference that aimed to redouble efforts towards the initiative, the AU's Peace and Security Ambassador stated that terrorists and armed groups had failed to heed their call for a global ceasefire (Directorate of Information and Communication 2020). Thus, it would be fitting to conclude that though the efforts of the AU are laudable, the reality is that the continent is heading in the opposite direction when it is supposed to be achieving significant steps in the right direction. Fast forward to the current state of affairs. According to the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights there are currently more than thirty-five armed conflicts in the African continent (Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights 2023). Most of the countries mentioned in 2020 are still active zones regarding armed conflict, even as the Human Rights Watch reported in their World Report 2023 (Human Rights Watch 2023b). The guns are getting louder; they are far from being silenced.

The Real Issue

Although there are many conflicting scholarly works on the real cause of conflicts in Africa, it seems everyone agrees that the reason that many African countries continue to suffer vicious cycles of sporadic and volatile security challenges is the fact that there has been generally a poor understanding of the fundamental causes of conflict. The clarion call to find the 'root cause' is well-intended but misguided. Even where research on the nexus between religion and violence has been addressed, many researchers have also missed the mark. Where the Church's pivotal efforts have been mentioned with regard to the eradication of violence, the moral issue has been largely overlooked. Nonetheless, religious institutions have played a very significant role in managing violence and conflicts on the African continent. It is widely recognised and accepted that Christianity has, in many cases on the African continent, played a significant role either as a catalyst for violence or an advocate for peace. The Church has often been vested with an enormous mandate in conflict resolution because it has the spiritual mandate to enhance justice and peace in society. Much of the research, however, has been focused on the Church's role in mediation and reconciliation, and its role in advocacy

against societal injustices. Even those who seem to undertake a religious inclination in addressing the issue of violence ignore the fundamental issue, which is morality. While addressing other causes is important and plays a significant role in the whole issue of violence, much research revolves around intervention measures of violence. Still, research does not address the real issue or the root cause of the problem it seeks to solve.

From the very beginning, as with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, humanity has always been apt to shift blame to others for their own mistakes. Human character is flawed, so we cannot continue to ignore people's moral conduct in assessing conflicts on the African continent. We cannot also understate that much of the conflict has continued primarily because of the questionable character of the leaders who rule many African countries and their poor governance (Moe 2009).

Further, many youths are apt to use violence to have the government listen to their pleas. In earlier research conducted by two researchers who revised their work on their theory of civil war outbreak, they re-examined the motivation behind conflicts. They classified the motivations under greed and grievance (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). Greed is fundamentally a moral issue. If these are moral issues, they need to have a solution that seeks to address human morality. There is no better objective moral standard than that contained in the supreme moral law given to us by the supreme moral lawgiver, the creator and sustainer of the entire universe who has chosen to reveal himself to us through the Holy Bible.

Most of the issues raised as a cause of conflict revolve around ethical issues, which means they have to do with morality. The AU has largely ignored this. The hostilities of the Cold War and colonialism, which researchers mention as the historical roots that pushed Africa into a continued cycle of violence, and the propensity of youth to resort to violence have to do with human morality. Thus, if all evidence points to the fact that the situation in Africa has not changed, that it might be getting worse, doesn't that show that there is a much deeper problem?

Suppose the genuine desire is to ensure lasting peace and there is a solution that would make that a reality. Should the AU not resolve to at least consider

what a group having millions of adherents across the continent has to say about the problem? The AU is indeed a secular institution, but if it has recognised and involved Christian religious institutions in conflict resolution, what Christianity has to say about the root cause of the issue is worth some consideration. The AU has done much to address the effects of violence, but considering solutions that stem from a biblical theology that addresses the root of the problem is essential. The Bible teaches that all the causes attached to violence, as with any other vice referred primarily to as 'sin', are fundamentally moral issues.

There have been attempts to address morality, especially in engagements of war. The chief outcome for those who have looked into the morality of violence is the Just War theory. The theory originates in traditional Christian thought, espoused by St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas (Miller 1990). The theory advocates that a sovereign nation must meet a particular set of criteria in the practice of military ethics when it goes to war. Although the theory, in many instances, has been thought to express Western ideologies, researchers have done a lot on the morality of war, especially in the context of an African perspective. Several researchers have contributed to the issue. One researcher aims to articulate an African worldview of just war (Ugwuanyi 2020); another highlights the African value system in the morality of war (Cordeiro-Rodrigues 2018); another applies the theory to the situation that was prevalent in South Africa (Miller 1990); another applies the theory in the case of Al Shabaab terrorist group in Somalia (Kasembeli 2022); another spells out an African ethic and derives principles to govern the use of force and violence (Metz 2020); another provides a contemporary African thought by presenting four different arguments with regards to the justification to initiate war (Cordeiro-Rodrigues 2021); another seeks to present moral thinking within African metaphysics and ethics with regards to the theory (Badru 2019). There is a rich body of research to draw from, but it is essential to state that, while the theory lays out an extensive look into the morality of war, it is principally concerned with the morality of war between states.

Additionally, in a closer assessment of the theory, as one researcher puts it, the theory, just like all other normative theories, provides the basis of decision-making when making moral judgments to be applied when going to war but does not provide any basis on how people make moral judgments (Frankfurt

and Coady 2021). We are primarily concerned with the reason why people are engaged in violence, not how people are supposed to handle themselves when engaging in violent activities. Thus, though rooted in classical Christian thought, the theory is inadequate in giving a proper biblical theology of violence. Therefore, the proper Christian thought provides that it is only the Holy Bible, which sets down the whole counsel of God and provides our rule for life and faith, that provides a proper theology of violence for the Christian faith (Westminster Assembly 1992).

The Solution: A Proper Biblical Theology on Violence

The Bible describes violence as taking two faces: the denigration of moral law and the desecration of personhood. Both stem from the fact that the human heart in its fallen state is wicked and that human beings are conceived in sin (Jer. 17:9; Ps. 51:5). The hardened heart is deliberately wicked, as Scripture posits, as can be traced in the lives of both Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar who were wicked kings (Exod. 7:3-4; Dan. 4:27). Jesus Christ also provided a profound description of man's heart (Mark 7:14-23), which shows that we can trace violence in human hearts in their fallen condition. The two faces of violence are rooted in sin and not in any external circumstance, as humanity tries to portray.

First, the denigration of an absolute moral law gives way to the degradation of any rule of law. There is no accountability in a place where people do what is right in their own eyes or for selfish gains. When we read through the Bible, it is clear that, when people take matters into their own hands and abandon the moral law given by the lawgiver, society spirals down an evil path. It started in the very beginning when Cain, following the pattern of his parents, abandoned the good prescribed by God and ended up killing his brother Abel in the first recorded act of violence. However, it is the book of Judges (21:25) that offers the foundation of an immoral society which has abandoned any form of moral code and pursued autonomy where everyone is a law unto themselves. The relationship between autonomy and morality is in the fact that, according to the Scriptures, human beings are not autonomous in defining morality. God is the chief source of ethical conduct that defines our moral behaviour, not human beings, who are the recipient of his moral law. Therefore, only God gives an objective moral law that can bind the conscience of all people, as Paul

explains in Romans (1:18-32). The moral law reflects God's holy character, and, primarily, the Ten Commandments serve as the foundation of God's law, teaching us who he is and what he expects from us.

In the sixth commandment (Exod. 20:13), we find the law 'You shall not murder'[9]. One of the standard confessions of the Protestant faith, the Westminster Confession of Faith, asserts some duties that Christians must observe due to this commandment. Part of the duty Christians are to undertake in order to preserve not only their lives but also that of others is careful studies and lawful endeavours of what the commandments contain (1 Kings 18:4; Eph. 5:28-29), avoidance of any occasion to take the life of any person unjustly (Prov. 1:10-11,15-16; Matt. 4:6-7), and the protection and defence of all innocent lives (Job 31:19-20; Prov. 31:8-9; Matt. 25:35-36; 1 Thess. 5:14). Not only are we told of the duties expected due to the commandment, but the forbidden sins are also listed. Those sins include the taking away of another's life (Gen. 9:6), neglect or withdrawal of a lawful and necessary means of preservation of life (Eccl. 6:1-2; Matt. 25:42-43; Jas 2:15-16), and anything else that might lead to the destruction of a life (Exod. 21:18-36) (Westminster Assembly 1992). Christian ethics are derived from God and are not optional ethical standards but commandments. God designed these ethical standards to protect humanity from their fallenness.

Second, we have the desecration of personhood. According to the Scriptures, God has provided a fundamental basis for ethical decisions about how humans are supposed to relate to one another. Violence has often arisen from abuse and misuse of power, especially when those in power practise exclusion and misuse certain groups of people. Further, fallen humanity has a great propensity to resort to violence rather than peace in the face of confrontation. According to the Bible, all human beings derive their dignity, rights, and personhood from God. These things are not the preserve of individuals who get to determine the value and worth of a life. They stem from the fact that all life is precious in God's eyes and, as such, he is the only one who has the right to life (Job 1:21; Ezek. 18:4). In the very beginning, the book of Genesis (1:26)

[9] Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the ESV.

lays out what is the foundation of human dignity and personhood. Humanity is unique amongst all God's creations, having been 'made in God's image'.

God set human beings above other creatures and the rest of creation by handing them dominion as his stewards on his behalf. Bearing God's image has eternal consequences because it secures the dignity and personhood of human beings not only for a time but for as long as this universe stands. Life is invaluable to God, and he jealously seeks to guard it, as is evident from the very beginnings of Scripture (Gen. 9:5-6). However, humanity took matters into their own hands through the action of the first created beings, Adam and Eve, who rebelled against God in 'the Fall' (Gen. 3). Their rebellion led to God cursing them with death.

Humanity was now enslaved to the hatred of God and one another, evidenced through the first act of violence recorded for us in the scriptures (Gen. 4:8). The hatred of God drove humanity toward hatred for one another, which, ever since, has led to the skewed views of humanity that humanity has witnessed over millennia. Today there is evidence of many unbiblical views of humanity. People have castigated African leaders as having the 'big-man syndrome', which is a perpetuation of self-centredness whereby many tyrannical leaders dehumanise others by claiming their right to rule (Dulani and Tengatenga 2019). The youth have also been castigated for resorting to violence when seeking justice (Ismail and Olonisakin 2021). That is why having a proper biblical theology on the issue of violence pushes us to focus on the real problem, which is the real cause of violence is sin, the fallen human heart. Understanding what the Bible says is the only way we can have a proper biblical theology on the issue of violence in the African continent.

Conclusion

The issue of violence in the African continent is pertinent, and we need to address it from all angles. However, the AU and many researchers who have had a keen interest in the issue have largely ignored the real issue. There is a myriad of research on the potential causes of violence in the African continent, but all those have largely avoided the issue of morality. Where researchers have addressed morality, they do not provide a proper assessment of the root causes of the human propensity to cause violence. Further, different

organisations have advocated for many interventions, and they see the youth as peace ambassadors. Many of those organisations have advocated that providing development opportunities, that is, meeting the external needs of the youth, can help bring violence to an end. However, according to the Scriptures, the problem is not external, and it is not a preserve of the youth but rather a vice carried by all of fallen humanity.

The Scriptures also tell us that when humanity fell the relationship between God and human beings was affected. War became commonplace such that not only did human beings get into war with God, but they also turned against one another. God had a falling out with all humanity, and the Scriptures reiterate that the effects of the Fall are not just some small matters that we should ignore. The Fall had far-reaching consequences. As a result, in the first passages of scripture, blame and murder became the fuel for human-instigated violence (Gen. 3-4). Paul, in his letter to the church in Rome, describes God as the 'God of peace' (Rom. 15:33), which we would interpret to mean that God is the one who justly gives peace. Humanity lost this peace in the Fall; consequently, people lost peace between themselves, and violence has been a constant reality in our world.

If this is the case, it means that the only way humanity will ever restore peace with one another is if they first secure their peace with God. The only one who can secure peace between humanity and God is the one whom Paul called the 'mediator' between humanity and God (1 Tim. 2:5), Jesus Christ. Christ secured peace by shedding his blood on the cross (Col. 1:20), which is the whole message of the gospel. Once people have put their faith in Christ, only at that point will they start to seek peace with one another. We lie to ourselves if we turn to humanity and human organisations, which are fallen by nature, to secure peace, while the same humanity is in constant opposition and rebellious against God. In no way would a call to end violence be a reality when people remain rebellious towards God. Therefore, in light of what the Bible says, it is right to conclude that the AU's initiative to 'Silence the Guns' will continue to be an illusion as long as it continues to avoid addressing the real issue, which is moral, and does not pursue a proper biblical theology on the issue of violence.

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Omondi F 2024, Review of *Spectacular Atonement: Envisioning the Cross of Christ in an African Perspective*, R Falconer, *African Theological Journal for Church and Society*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 236-238

Review

Falconer, Robert, *Spectacular Atonement: Envisioning the Cross of Christ in an African Perspective.* Langham Partnership, London, 2023. ISBN 9781839737367, 166pp.

Review by Francis Omondi, PhD[1].

In *Spectacular Atonement: Envisioning the Cross of Christ in an African Perspective*, Robert Falconer, a lecturer at South African Theological Seminary, wrote a fascinating account of an African perspective of the Christian atonement. The book is divided into two parts. In Part 1 (pp. 7-59), Falconer describes atonement in depth, drawing from scriptures and African theologians' discourse to lay the ground for his atonement in African Christianity. He discusses atonement in scriptures (pp. 7-27) demonstrating the harmony of penal substitution with *Christus Victor*, which he understands as a drama in the grand narrative of scripture. Falconer argues that in the scriptures God through his Son triumphed over Satan and the evil spirits, defeating them and liberating humanity from the bondage of sin and death (Heb. 2:14-15). Falconer anchors his discourse on the atonement in early church theology, where again he explains the harmony of penal substitution and *Christus Victor* through historical theology (pp. 29-53). Falconer explains the African cultural context's influence on African Christianity's atonement theology (pp. 53-59).

In Part 2, Falconer focuses on African concerns (pp. 63-140). He begins by exploring African spirituality and its worldview (pp. 63-64). For the Africans, the 'physical' and the 'spiritual' worlds are interwoven (p. 65). Having laid this foundation, Falconer discusses the core of his thesis:

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> African sacrificial ritual, [in which] an animal suffers and dies on behalf of the offender, [is] similar to what we saw in the sacrifices of the Old Testament. (p. 70)

He argues that the traditional African atoning sacrifices and rituals, in their wide array, fulfil Africans' spiritual and practical needs (p. 73). Central to Falconer's argument is the African idea of God, in which he discusses God's presence in all the lives of Africans (75-78). This God is greater than anything created. Falconer observes:

> While Africans believe in God, they also believe in other spiritual beings, some of which are closely associated with the Supreme Being. (76)

It is on the relationship of God and ancestral intermediaries that Falconer premises Christ and his atoning work. Yet he identifies the cross of Christ as the key distinction between the God of Scripture and the African idea of God (p. 79).

The atonement of Christ and the mediation role of the African ancestors are critical in Falconer's argument. Hence, 'the outcome and reconciliation in Christ were simply spectacular!' (p. 71), which gives him the title *Spectacular Atonement*. In the instances of African traditional sacrifice and ritual, penalties paid for a substitutionary atonement are the parallel that he draws between the atonement of Christ and the ancestors' mediatory function (pp. 81-86). Falconer emphasises Christ's superiority, who provides the spectacular atonement through his cross (p. 87). Falconer addresses actual fears he thinks many Africans experience. These include evil spirits, sin, witchcraft, and suffering (pp. 105-111). He suggests that understanding Christ's cross from an African perspective may offer Africans hope (pp. 113-120). Falconer closes with a discussion of cosmic harmony and African hope (pp. 131-137). He argues that the cross of Christ, though physical, is intrinsic, considering the new creation. It fulfils the yearnings of African peoples espoused in their myths and traditions (p. 140).

Although Falconer presents an African perspective of God and atonement from an outsider's perspective, he compensates for this by dialoguing with an array

of African indigenous theological thought. This validates the positions he takes on the African worldview and experience.

Falconer falls into the trap of numerous analysts discussing God. God in an African context is discussed in terms of abstract ideas, the 'concept of God'. Meanwhile, God in the Bible is discussed in concrete terms, such as the God of Abraham. Thus, the point of disagreement is in discussing the African God through the prism of the cross of Christ and the God of the Bible. Falconer affirms God's presence in the African pre-Christian life (p. 75), believed to be the Supreme Being, not dissimilar in some respects to the God revealed in the Old Testament.

Falconer maintains that the African understanding of God is both transcendent and immanent. He adopts the idea of God as the father of the ancestors: he is their Great Ancestor, the Ultimate Ancestor, they can turn to. So, Falconer claims (p. 77): 'I believe that God can be (or is) understood as both Creator and Ancestor by almost all African people'. For Falconer, 'The atonement is the factor that distinguishes the God of the Bible from the African idea of God' (p. 79). He then characterises God in terms such as 'mysteries of Trinity', 'incarnation', and 'redemption'. Would the same position be reached if these characterisations applied to Judaism?

This book will be useful to scholars interested in reconciling African traditions and worldview with Christian theological concepts. It will generate a robust dialogue for a clearer understanding of God from an African perspective. It is highly recommended.

Adesina JA 2024, Review of *Preaching Well: Avoiding Common Pulpit Errors*, EA Ajibade, *African Theological Journal for Church and Society*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 239-241

Review

Ajibade, Ezekiel A., *Preaching Well: Avoiding Common Pulpit Errors*. Kingdom Impact Publishing and Media Limited, Ogbomoso, 2024. ISBN: 9789787858967, 139pp.

Review by Joshua A. Adesina[1]

Preaching is not merely an act but also a profound art form and an essential practice in the Christian faith. With the advent of modern technology, the preaching of sermons has expanded exponentially. Today believers have the luxury of accessing a plethora of sermons across various media platforms. However, amidst this proliferation lies a growing concern: the quality of preaching. Ezekiel Ajibade's *Preaching Well: Avoiding Common Pulpit Errors* emerges as a timely and essential guide in this field of scholarship and practice, offering seasoned and novice preachers strategies to craft contextualised sermons while steering clear of common pitfalls.

Ajibade, a distinguished scholar of Christian preaching at the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, brings his wealth of experience and deep passion for preaching and for teaching the same to this work. His first-hand insights make this book a valuable resource for pastors, teachers, preaching students, and anyone involved in communicating God's word. Through this book, Ajibade demystifies the preaching process, making it accessible and understandable to a broad audience, including the current and future generations of preachers in Africa and beyond.

Preaching Well is an expanded edition of Ajibade's earlier work, *Common Pulpit Errors and Solutions*, published in 2016. This updated version retains the

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exact content of the previous book and incorporates additional new materials. The book is divided into two parts: the first focuses on the principles of effective preaching; the second addresses common errors in preaching and solutions for those errors.

The first part of the book, spread across seven chapters, provides a comprehensive framework for crafting and delivering effective sermons. Ajibade begins by defining biblical preaching, emphasising its incarnational nature and the need to respect the text's historical, grammatical, and literary contexts. He describes preaching as

> the incarnational communication of the text of God's word considering its historical, grammatical, and literary intention, in a form that is faithful to the genre of the text and that is meaningful to the hearer in their socio-cultural context, with the ultimate aim of enhancing total transformation that results in Christ-likeness. (p. 16)

Chapter two outlines the essential components of a good sermon, including text selection, title framing, outlining, and effective delivery techniques such as voice modulation, audience analysis, and appropriate mannerisms. Ajibade argues that the effectiveness of a sermon largely depends on the preacher's effort and skill in these areas. Chapters three to seven are dedicated to discussing the above-mentioned components of a good sermon, providing detailed guidance and practical tips.

The second part of the book focuses on common errors that Ajibade has observed in contemporary preaching, particularly in Africa. From chapters eight to twelve, he categorises these errors into issues related to the preacher's personality and character, sermon preparation, delivery, and the invitation to preach. Drawing from his observations and those of his students, colleagues, and church members, Ajibade offers a nuanced analysis of these errors and proposes solutions grounded in both biblical and African contexts.

A standout feature of *Preaching Well* is its practical approach. Ajibade enriches his theoretical discussions with real-world examples, case studies, and engaging activities at the end of each chapter. These elements provide readers

with tangible guidance, making the book not just an academic text but also a practical manual for improving preaching skills.

Ajibade's work is particularly notable for its African perspective. While much has been written on preaching, few scholars have addressed it from this standpoint. Ajibade's unique position as an African homiletician allows him to address the specific challenges and nuances of preaching within African contexts, making his contributions especially valuable.

Preaching Well is primarily intended for faculty members at theological colleges and universities, experienced preachers seeking to refine their skills, and novices looking for foundational advice. One notable shortcoming of this expanded edition is that, despite the evolving landscape of homiletics since 2016, Ajibade does not identify or address any new errors in preaching beyond those identified in the 2016 publication.

In conclusion, Ezekiel Ajibade's *Preaching Well: Avoiding Common Pulpit Errors* is a must-read for anyone involved in the ministry of preaching. It offers a thorough, practical, and contextually rich guide to effective sermon preparation and delivery, making it an indispensable resource for enhancing the quality of preaching in today's diverse and dynamic Christian community.

Zehelein J 2024, Review of *Investigations on the "Entangled History" of Colonialism and Mission in a New Perspective: 20. Ludwig-Harms-Symposium 28. – 29. 5. 2021 in Hermannsburg*, M Fischer & M Thiel (eds.), *African Theological Journal for Church and Society*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 242-244

Review

Fischer, Moritz & Thiel, Michael (eds), *Investigations on the "Entangled History" of Colonialism and Mission in a New Perspective: 20. Ludwig-Harms-Symposium 28. – 29. 5. 2021 in Hermannsburg*. Lit Verlag, Berlin, 2022. ISBN: 9783643914132 (pb), 9783643964137 (pdf)

Review by Dr Jörg Zehelein[1]

This edited volume contains contributions from the 20th Harms symposium that was organised from Germany by the University of Applied Sciences for Intercultural Theology Hermannsburg and the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Agency in Lower Saxony in May 2021. Among a majority of German voices there is one essay from Africa written by Harvey Kwiyani (Malawi/United Kingdom). Geographical relations addressed by this mainly historically interested book are European encounters with North America and Asia, but especially with Africa. Out of thirteen essays eight contributions explicitly analyse mission encounters with Africa(ns) and are of particular interest in this book review.

The theoretical framework for this collection of essays from disciplines such as secular history, religious studies, missiology, intercultural theology, and systematic theology is the hermeneutic of entanglement history. Editor Moritz Fischer develops this approach in conversation with Hartmut Kaelble, Sidney Mintz, and Rebecca Habermas as a postcolonial, hybrid, subalternity/contact-zone-aware paradigm. Its emphasis is on studying missionary encounters, discourses, negotiations for power and meaning, struggles for emancipation and reconciliation, and the spreading of Christianity from a perspective of

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(dis)entanglements, i.e. complicities and resistances against imperial powers (pp. 1-14).

Concerning historical entanglements of mission and colonialism Jobst Reller depicts Ludwig Harms, German revivalist and founder of Hermannsburg mission, as a paternalistic facilitator of cross-cultural mission to Africa (pp. 51-57). He points out that even though Harms distanced mission from colonialism, second and third generations of Hermannsburg missionaries developed strong ties with colonial structures, e.g. agricultural settlements. The contribution of Harvy Kwiyani comes as a criticism of such entanglements as he understands mission and colonialism as 'strange bedfellows' (p. 108). Seeing to the realities of mission and colonialism attached to each other, Kwiyani develops a vision of mission constantly detaching itself from colonial or imperial powers.

> As long as we keep attaching this beautiful and life-giving missio Dei to empires, it will always be used to marginalise, dominate, and colonise others. (p. 112)

With a focus on Leipzig mission in the Kilimanjaro region Karolin Wetjen examines the boundary between mission and colonialism as the attempt to demarcate the religious and the secular (pp. 115-130). On the one hand, as Wetjen delineates, missionaries negotiated for cooperation and stressed the benefits of mission for the colonial project, on the other hand, colonial authorities needed to be assured of the exclusively 'religious' aspirations of mission that should not transgress the boundaries of the 'secular'. With an outlook on Ethiopia as the only non-colonised African country, Stanislau Palau explores how that country was considered promised land by post-war Germany which had lost access to its former colonies. The questionable figure of Max Grühl is depicted by Palau as somebody who was deeply entrenched in adventurism, Nazi racial ideology, and colonial aspirations, but managed to convince Hermannsburg Mission to establish a mission venture to Ethiopia which they considered 'a clear and distinct call from God' (p. 215).

From the perspective of subalternity, Hanna Mellemsether employs the theory of the 'contact zone' and describes encounters of Norwegian missionaries with South Africans in the 1920s (pp. 59-76). She sketches the pursuit of political and religious independence (especially Petrus Lamula) and how the

missionaries stabilised the boundaries between oppressors and oppressed. The sending organisation in Norway, however, openly criticised its missionaries who were, as Mellemsether elaborates, often born in South Africa and in the eyes of the natives clearly standing on the side of White domination. Related to the idea of subalternity, Gunther Schendel employs the rhetoric of reverse mission in his narration of the visit of Ethiopian pastor Daffa Djammo to Germany/Hermannsburg in 1952 (pp. 77-94). The Ethiopian church leader is depicted as a role model for partnership and even a 'form of "Mission to the North"' (p. 93). However, as Schendel critically points out, Djammo also had to serve as poster figure in Hermannsburg mission's publicity work.

Beyond mere historiography, some of the contributions provide valuable perspectives for a postcolonial theology of mission. Moritz Fischer lists some remarkable tenets of a theology of mission: God's revelation in Jesus Christ urges people to embark on a mission that relates (entangles!) people across cultural, economic, social, and political conditions. It is, however, aware of violent or unjust entanglements and tries to overcome those by peaceful and reconciling disentanglements (p. 157). Wilhelm Richebächer addresses the complex issue of mission and power with particular reference to discourses on conversion and the theological distinction of law and gospel.

A critical appraisal of this volume reveals a relatively high number of typographical/formatting errors and, from a postcolonial perspective, inappropriate language. On pages 143-144 the term 'tribe' is still in use; on page 15 the *continent* 'Africa' is listed next to *countries* like Indonesia and India. The reconstruction of history from the perspective of subaltern subjects and agency is praiseworthy, but not sufficiently implemented. Despite the volume's vision of decentralising the West (p. 13), most contributors are Germans. Furthermore, many contributions still focus on global actors and mission agencies from the Global North. Besides the need of increasing the number of contributions from the Global South, insights into the 'impossibility of the history of the subaltern' (Gyan Prakash) could have helped to acknowledge unavoidable dilemmas, but also possibilities of reconstructing subaltern history from within and against discourses of hegemonic claims of power and knowledge.

Faber R 2024, Review of *Teaching and Learning Across Cultures: A Guide to Theory and Practice*, C Ott, *African Theological Journal for Church and Society*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 245-248

Review

Ott, Craig, *Teaching and Learning Across Cultures: A Guide to Theory and Practice.* Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2021. ISBN 9781493430895, 366pp.

Review by Dr Ryan Faber[1]

A lot has been written about living and serving cross-culturally. Much less has been written specifically about cross-cultural teaching. Craig Ott's *Teaching and Learning Across Cultures: A Guide to Theory and Practice* addresses that gap. Ott, professor of mission and intercultural studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in the United States, brings a wealth of cross-cultural teaching experience – twenty years of cross-cultural teaching in central Europe, along with shorter-term teaching assignments in over forty countries – to his task.

Written from a North American perspective, Ott's book focuses on the experience of Western teachers serving in the majority world, though it includes occasional stories of students from the majority world who are studying in Western institutions. Little is said about teachers from the majority world teaching in Western cultures.

Teaching and Learning Across Cultures attempts to examine 'culturally related differences in teaching and learning' – 'Different cultures […] approach teaching and learning in fundamentally different ways' (p. 12); they answer the questions 'What constitutes knowledge? What does it mean to teach and to learn?' differently (p. 27) – and 'offer guidance [… and] practical insight' to cross-cultural teachers (p. 12).

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Ott explores five dimensions of how culture influences teaching and learning: the cognitive dimension, which includes 'the way individuals perceive, organise, and process knowledge' (p. 80); the worldview dimension, which includes epistemology – acceptable sources of knowledge: science, tradition, and the supernatural (revelation) – and understandings of causality and time; the social dimension, especially expectations for the teacher-student relationship; the media dimension, particularly instructional methods and online learning; and the environmental dimension, including the physical, societal, and institutional environments.

Ott's treatment of these various dimensions is uneven. His discussion of the cognitive dimension is highly academic. It involves extensive literature reviews. Ott's interaction with often-dated research is overly nuanced. The section has the density of a doctoral dissertation. It is preceded by a lengthy interaction with learning style theories, the conclusion of which is that these theories are not relevant to teaching and learning cross-culturally.

More important are cognitive styles: abstract and concrete thinking, and holistic and analytical cognitive styles. Western cultures tend toward abstract thinking; non-Western cultures toward concrete thinking. Western cultures tend toward holistic thinking; non-Western cultures toward cognitive styles. Those who teach cross-culturally do well to understand these different cognitive styles. Adapting one's teaching to the style of one's learners – rediscovering the power of metaphor and the wisdom of indigenous proverbs – can be advantageous.

But Ott's preference is for 'adaptation with gradual introduction of alternative approaches' (p. 76), that is, introducing Western approaches when teaching in non-Western settings. Here a preference for Western cognitive style and worldview is evident: 'Mismatching teaching and learning styles […] can help concrete thinkers expand their cognitive skills and reasoning strategies' (p. 123). To move from analytical thinking to holistic thinking is 'developmental' (p. 134). Thus, teachers are advised to mismatch a holistic (Western) teaching style with analytic (non-Western) learners for the benefit (development) of those thinkers. Ott's discussion of the worldview includes a chapter on 'teaching for worldview change', presumably conforming the host culture's worldview to that of the cross-cultural (Western) teachers. But Ott

acknowledges that 'all worldviews have behaviours that can lead to harmful behaviours and injustice' (p. 177). The goal should not be to Westernise other cultures, but 'greater conformity of our worldview to a biblical worldview' (p. 185).

The cognitive and worldview dimensions are important, but perhaps the most important dimension for effective teaching cross-culturally is the social dimension: 'Navigating relationships between teacher and student is perhaps the most essential skill that cross-cultural teacher needs to be effective' (p. 195), because – and this seems to be a transcultural truth – 'the best teachers are ones who really care about the student […] Good teaching is not just about pedagogy in the narrow sense but also about caring and healthy relationships' (p. 211). Ott's discussion of the social dimension includes such important concepts as negotiated social hierarchy, power distance, honour-shame, and the differences between individualistic and communalistic cultures.

Ott's discussion of the media dimension is much less academic. It reflects his experience as a cross-cultural teacher. Though his evidence is primarily anecdotal, Ott offers a wealth of good advice for cross-cultural teachers teaching in a foreign language, reading and writing assignments – including addressing different cultural understandings of plagiarism – lecturing and student note-taking (or lack thereof), and the use of visual media, song, dance, and drama. He dedicates an entire chapter to online learning. Readers may be surprised to learn that 'web layouts [are] influenced by the designers' culturally conditioned cognitive styles'. One study found that Chinese students performed significantly better on websites laid out by Chinese designers; American students performed best on websites laid out by American designers (pp. 284-285). Also in online education, teachers do well to attend to the unique dynamics of teaching and learning across cultures.

The final dimension of how culture affects teaching and learning is the environmental dimension. Here too, Ott's presentation is more anecdotal than academic. Some of it is highly practical: the physical dimension includes weather, climate, and the physical infrastructure in which one lives and teaches. The societal dimension is larger than the social dimension discussed earlier. It includes the dynamics of wealth and poverty, politics, family expectations, social unrest, and the influence of religion(s). The institutional

dimension is similar to the social dimension, but here Ott focuses on the teacher's place within the educational institution as a whole, not only the relationship between teacher and student.

Teaching and Learning Across Cultures provides valuable information, insights, and orientation for Westerners teaching cross-culturally. The book provides a helpful framework within which to understand the cultural context in which one is teaching. Perhaps the book's best advice, inspired by the example of Anna from *The King and I*, is this:

> the ideal attitude of every cross-cultural teacher: willingness to be a learner, striving to like and understand the students, and working toward a relationship that is honest, open, and relaxed. (p. 14)

The most effective cross-cultural teachers are first and foremost students, students of their students and the impact of culture on teaching and learning.

A final note: *Teaching and Learning Across Cultures* is published by Baker *Academic*. The book is long and, especially in the first sections, often overly academic in tone. A shorter volume that is more anecdotal in nature, conversational in tone, and practical in focus would be a helpful complement to this work.

The African Theological Journal for Church and Society (ATJCS) is a scholarly journal publishing in any applicable theological discipline, focussing on the church and its role in societies within the African context.

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ATJCS is published by the Network for African Congregational Theology in conjunction with the Christian Literature Fund and Hugenote College

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