

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Christian Weitnauer, *Witness and Effort. Lutheran Mission at the Foot of the Uluguru Mountains in Tanzania*, Makumira Publications 25, Makumira and Erlangen: Erlanger Verlag für Mission und Ökumene, 2023**

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This book is based on the author's doctorate thesis from the 1990s. It explores the history of mission activities at some mission stations of the former Berlin Mission Society (BMS) in the area of Morogoro Tanzania in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Weitnauer's work describes the first Lutheran missionaries' ministry of evangelism, community service and teaching at the foot of the Uluguru Mountains in Tanzania. In this enterprise, the missionaries were confronted, but also entangled with the German colonial power which caused confusion about their role and impeded relations with the local population. Nevertheless, after some time and especially through the increasing activity of local Christians, local churches emerged and grew. The churches that are addressed by this publication are the Schlesien, the Morogoro congregation, and the German-language Morogoro congregation.

In chapter one the author introduces the geographical, historical, religious, colonial, and economical contexts of the Lutheran mission in the Uluguru Mountains. This is marked by the population of the Luguru and their traditional religion. The chapter also reflects the colonization by German forces and missionary efforts by Roman-Catholics, Anglicans, Moravians, and Lutherans, as well as economic assets like cotton, coconut, coffee, and mining products (pp. 27–30).

Chapter two explains the effect of building railway tracks from Dar es Salaam to Morogoro and the precarious condition of those involved in its construction. Daniel Kasuku, a former slave and convert who was trained and educated by missionaries, became the first protestant missionary in Morogoro by nurturing these railway workers. People that became Christians from these efforts were the beginning of the Schlesien/Morogoro Congregation (Pg. 27-30).

Chapter three (pp. 30–57) elaborates on the area known as Uzaramo which was challenging in the eyes of Europeans due to its hot and humid climate and the prevalence of malaria. This condition prompted Europeans to reside in an area of higher altitude. The BMS decided to establish a “Rest Home and the Kiswahili Central Seminary” on the Uluguru Mountains close to Morogoro (pp. 30–31). This served the purpose of providing recreation for European missionaries and training of “African teachers and preachers” for church service and mission / evangelism. Carl Nauhaus was the first head of the Schlesien Seminary in Morogoro that was

opened on 02 October 1913 with 32 students. The mission efforts around the Uluguru mountains were not very successful. This was partly because of competition with Muslims in reaching people following the Luguru traditional religion. As Christian mission was favoured by the colonial government, there was even more enmity since anti-colonial resistance was led particularly by Muslim leaders (e.g., the Maji-Maji revolt).

The author explores the impact of World War I on the BMS's mission efforts from the Uluguru mountains in chapter four. Because of South African troops advancing against German forces, financial restraints, and recruitments of staff for military services, the Seminary was not run as desired. Finally, German missionaries had to leave Morogoro. The African Andrea Ndekeja, a former student from Schlesien Seminary, who was educated and baptized by BMS' missionaries was transferred from Dar es Salaam to the mission station on the Uluguru mountain. Ndekeja's work led to many conversions among the Luguru. From 1925 onwards, German missionaries were gradually returning to Tanganyika. From BMS, Hermann Krelle and Roehl were sent to the Uzaramo mission area. Roehl and Ndekeja joined in the task of translating the New Testament into Kiswahili. Later, they translated the Old Testament at the coast (Dar es Salaam) after Ndekeja resigned from his work at the Seminary. (pp. 58-74). After a detailed description of Krelle's work that was consolidating Ndekeja's and Nauhaus initiatives and Krelle's theology with an emphasis on healing (pp. 73-79), the author addresses the challenge of competition with

Islam. Whereas Christianity opposed indigenous beliefs and practices like rain making, Islam was more inclusive of such local religious practices. Hence, Islam was favoured by the indigenous population to a greater extent. Nevertheless, with time there were some achievements of Christian mission's goals. For instance, some people were baptized, indigenous Christians became catechists, teachers, and church elders. Furthermore, Krelle raised considerable funds through a church contribution system (pp. 90-93), village schools and a pastor's vocational training were established (pp. 111-113).

In chapter five (pp. 113-132) the author explores the consequences of World War II and its consequences. Due to the war, the British colonial government interned and expelled German missionaries. The bush schools were closed because financial support from Germany was declining and impeded by British colonial rule. The U.S. American Augustana mission and the Swedish Mission Church Union filled the gap that was left at Schlesien Seminary and the entire Uzaramo mission area. Only as late as 1953, the first German missionary could return (Sister Elfriede Haase). However, as the author points out, African influence and initiative was significant around WW II which furthered the cause of the selfhood of the local church. In this respect, the author presents the contribution of people like Friedrich Mwinyimkuu who was a teacher in several schools including Schlesien School, and served as preacher in the Schlesien congregation.

Chapter six zooms in on the life of Morogoro Lutheran Congregation throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The author delineates how the church developed under European and later African leadership, and how it was finally integrated into the Anglican Church (pp. 132–143). In chapter seven, the author focuses on the development of the German Lutheran Congregation since some first German services in 1909. They were entangled with German National Socialist ideologies to quite some extent as the author points out. The life of the congregation ended with Germans leaving the region because of World War II (pp. 144–148).

With the development towards Tanganyika's independence as reflected in chapter eight, religious communities did not openly participate in the independence movement to avoid crossing the line of political engagement. However, there were some elements of confidential contacts between church officials and politicians. This chapter also shows how the number of Lutheran congregants increased day by day due to migration of Christians from areas like Kilimanjaro and Unyakyusa to Morogoro soon after the CMS has taken over the Lutheran Congregation (pp. 149–152).

The conclusion draws the threads of the foregoing chapters together and reflects their missiological and sociological aspects. The author considers the disappearance of German influence as an aspect of the international as well as local (African) nature of God's mission (*missio dei*) (pp. 153–155). Sociologically, the conclusion points to the influence of social factors, e.g.,

the differences between rural or urban location of congregations (pp. 162-165).

In the perspective of a critical appraisal, we hold that the author succeeded to demonstrate the “witness and effort” of foreign and local missionaries at the foots of Uluguru Mountains. Furthermore, we praise the ecumenical spirit of the book. The publication, however, could have employed the paradigm of “entanglement history” that has recently gained prominence in mission history studies. With this approach the author could have reached beyond mere chronological and topical perspectives. With it, he could have explored more deeply how mission and colonialism, global and local agency, ecumenical and interreligious relations interplayed.