Africa Theological Journal

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS IN THIS ISSUE

Kabiro wa Gatumu (Ph.D. in New Testament, University of Durham, UK) is an Associate Professor of New Testament Studies, biblical Greek, and biblical hermeneutics in the Faculty of Theology at St. Paul's University in Kenya.

Irene Elioth Msalilwa is a graduate of Tumaini University Makumira, 2023, in Master of Theology in Missiology. She is currently working as a Chaplain at the University of Iringa.

Faustin Leonard Mahali works with Tumaini University Makumira as Associate Professor in Theology, majoring in New Testament and in Systematic Theology and Church History disciplines. He holds a Doctorate from Augustana Hochschule, Bavaria, Germany.

Nehemia Godwin Moshi is a Lutheran pastor in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) and holds a Doctorate in Church History from Åbo Akademi University (Finland). He currently works as a senior lecturer in the systematic and historical department, Faculty of Theology of Tumaini University Makumira.

Jörg Zehelein works as lecturer at the Faculty of Theology, Tumaini University Makumira and is pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bavaria, Germany. He holds a Doctorate in Theology (Practical

Theology/Missiology) from the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt University of Greifswald, Germany.

Ruth Kilango serves as pastor in the ELCT – Pare Diocese. She ministers at Ntenga Parish and pursues the Master degree in Missiology at the Faculty of Theology of the Tumaini University Makumira (TUMA).

Nestar Kyobya serves as pastor in the ELCT – Morogoro Diocese. Currently, she pursues the Master degree in Missiology at the Faculty of Theology of the Tumaini University Makumira (TUMA).

Awumsuri Joram Masuki is a pastor and musician in ELCT – Northern Diocese. He teaches at Lutheran Bible and Theological College Mwika. Besides pursuing the Master degree in Missiology at the Faculty of Theology of the Tumaini University Makumira (TUMA) he holds a bachelor of Arts in Music degree.

Baraka Zakayo Mungure is a pastor in the ELCT – Meru Diocese (Arusha) and currently serves as General Secretary at ELCT – West Central Diocese (Tabora). He pursues the Master degree in Missiology at the Faculty of Theology of the Tumaini University Makumira (TUMA).

Authors take responsibility for content, language and grammar.

EDITORIAL

The editorial committee is pleased to present to you Vol. 40,1 (2024) of Africa Theological Journal. This is the first issue that is published online and marks the beginning of Africa Theological Journal available online with free access for readers and publication free of charge for contributors. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the editorial team, authors and peer reviewers for sharing in the work of creating this remarkable issue. Its theme addresses questions of African Lutheran identity in local, global and ecumenical contexts.

The first article entitled "**On This Rock, I Will Build My Church: Reshaping African Evangelical Ecclesiology through a Philological Rereading of Matthew 16:16–19**" by Kabiro wa Gatumu analyses and establishes the original form of this text and its meaning. His point of departure is, that the church is a borderless community, which God Himself initiates, thus christology should seek to reshape African churches in their calling to implement the missiological task of transforming the society.

The second article, "**A Speck in the Brother's (Sister's) Eye? An Ethical Analysis of Church Discipline as Practiced in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT)**," by Nehemia Moshi analyses and examines previous research as documented in the library of Tumaini University of Makumira and official documents of the ELCT concerning the understanding and practice of

church discipline. Moshi argues that the church should revisit, contextualize, and address the ethical implications of church discipline. Furthermore, he criticises practical flaws like gender imbalances and other contradictory moral practices as he reminds of the authentic mission of the church in its given context.

Iren Msalilwa and Faustin Mahali in the third article with the title "**The Response of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) to Girls' Migration from Iringa Rural Areas to Big Cities in Tanzania**" address the issue of girls' migration from rural areas to urban centres due to social-economic and pastoral challenges from a missiological perspective. They argue that the ELCT should tackle gender-based injustices within the community by implementing gender justice and incorporating the Lutheran theological perspective of grace into its diaconal work.

Jörg Zehelein, Ruth M. Kilango, Nestar J. Kyobya, Aumsuri J. Masuki, and Baraka M. Zakayo in the fourth article, "**Speaking in Tongues in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania: A Mixed-methods Study of Interpretations of and Attitudes Towards Glossolalia among Theology Students of Tumaini University Makumira**" explore interpretations of and attitudes to glossolalia as unintelligible, non-semantic language among the students of theology at Tumaini University Makumira as part of the broader phenomenon of the Pentecostalisation of mainline churches in Africa. This

mixed-methods study reveals most valuable insights, e.g., that half of the students have spoken in tongues themselves (especially women) and that most of the respondents appreciate glossolalia as a spiritual gift. The authors disclose problematic aspects like the discrimination of non-glossolalists as inferior to tongue-speakers and together with biblical and socio-scientific perspectives suggest ways of beneficially integrating practices of speaking in tongues in the worship of the ELCT.

We wish you a pleasant reading of this issue and hope that you may gain valuable insights.

Angela Olotu, Editor of Africa Theological Journal

On This Rock I Will Build My Church: Reshaping African Evangelical Ecclesiology through a Philological Rereading of Matthew 16:16–19

Kabiro wa Gatumu

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to offer a philological rereading of Matt 16:16–19 to reshape African Evangelical Ecclesiology through Christology. Largely, African ecclesiology emphasizes tasks that disconnect denominations rather than creating a borderless community which shares mutual faith. Moreover, it highlights church structure, economic and human resources as well as nature, universality, content, and the mandate of mission. It should, therefore, be reshaped to appreciate *ekklēsia* as a borderless community which God initiated, called and designated to belong to, and gives loyalty to Christ. Remarkably, the link between Christology and ecclesiology in the text discloses that Christology nurtures and shapes ecclesiology. Yet missiology has perpetually nurtured and shaped ecclesiology, but the conversation between Jesus and Peter insinuates that ecclesiology grows from Christology. While Peter's confession is Christological, Jesus's riposte is not only ecclesiological, but it also demonstrates that God initiates missiological tasks of the *ekklēsia*. Besides,

the interpretations and translation of the text's key terms are contentious, and the misreading of their referents may have engendered weak ecclesiology. Philological criticism, which analyses the original languages with which a text was written, was used to analyse its key terms. Their translation and reinterpretation establish that God through Christ initiates the *ekklēsia's* missiological tasks, while the Holy Spirit empowers her to execute them. So, if African *ekklēsia* shall revive her missiological tasks, Christology must nurture and shape African evangelical ecclesiology.

Key Words

Peter's confession, philological criticism, *Petra*, *Ekklēsia*, bind/loose, Christology, African evangelical ecclesiology

Introduction

Peter's confession appears in all the Synoptic Gospels, though some scholars see a probable parallel in John 6:67–71. However, its Matthean version has stimulated an exegetical and theological debate,[1] which ranges from its authenticity to the meaning of its key terms. Besides, some scholars regard Matt 16:17–19 as an

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[1] Ian S. Kemp, "The Blessing, Power and Authority of the Church: A Study in Matthew 16:17-19," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 40, no. 2 (2016): 128-139; Patrick Schreiner, "Peter, the Rock: Matthew 16 in Light of Daniel 2," *Criswell Theological Review* 13, no. 2 (2016): 99–117.

interpolation,[2] yet due to the limited space and focus, this article does not offer a detailed analysis of the debate. However, it first seeks to explain the methodology it used and to recap the text's varied patristic readings. Thereafter, it summarizes the views of Roman Catholic church (RCC) and Protestant church (PC). Besides, it provides a philological rereading of the text's key nouns and verbs. Finally, it delineates and evaluates African evangelical ecclesiology, which according to some scholars, is not well armed to confront the multifaceted challenges and has terribly failed to influence African societies, which is credited to her unproductive ecclesiology. Since the text connects Christology and ecclesiology and it reveals that Christology nurtures and shapes ecclesiology, then Christology should nurture and shape African evangelical ecclesiology.

Methodology

Several scholars maintain that Matt 16:13–20 refers to the post-Easter church, which functioned institutionally.[3] Yet, its words are the authentic voice of Jesus, which his original hearers comprehended. [4] To

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[2] James A. Brookes and Beverly C. Brooks, "Images of the Church in the Synoptic Gospels," in *The People of God: Essays on the Believers' Church*, ed. Paul Basden, David S. Dockery, and James L. Garrett (Eugene, Or: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 109.

[3] M. Eugene Boring, *The Continuing Voice of Jesus: Christian Prophecy and the Gospel Tradition* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 252.

[4] John Lightfoot, *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae: Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations upon the Gospels, the Acts, Some Chapters of St. Paul's Epistle to*

reread its key terms, philological criticism — which is the study of original biblical languages in respect to grammar, vocabulary, and style — was used. It seeks to ensure that original terms are translated as faithfully as possible. Besides, it seeks to establish the authenticity and original form of texts and to determine their meaning.

As Friedrich Nietzsche avers, philology teaches how to read well, slowly, deeply, intuitively, wisely, with inner thoughts, delicate fingers and eyes, and with mental doors ajar.[5] Yet, its legality has not only been interrogated but also criticized for failing the so-called modern test of disciplinarity and for being a practice without theory. However, it has stood firm, it has frequently been used, and perhaps shall always be used to authenticate if a translated text accords appropriately with its version in original language. Precisely, it cannot and shall not be disengaged from biblical studies due to its effort to retell the history of the text's lost world, which it recreates and restores, so as to illuminate the text's meaning to the present world. It inspires self-understanding and gives purpose to human existence, hence useful to biblical studies.[6]

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the Romans, and the First Epistle to the Corinthians, New edition by Robert Gandell. (Oxford: University Press, 1859), 240.

[5] Friedrich Nietzsche, The Dawn of Day, Dover Philosophical Classics (Dover: Dover Publications, 2012), 1.

[6] Elizabeth Robar, "Linguistics, Philology and the Biblical Text," Journal for Semitics 29, no. 2 (2020): 3–4, 7, 13–14, 17; Sheldon Pollock, "Philology and Freedom," Philological Encounters 1, no. 1–4 (2016): 4–30.

Patristic readings

The patristic readings of this text were varied. Origen maintained that *petra* (rock) referred to every disciple of Christ, and it signified the source from which *ekklēsia* got her strength. Eusebius held it referred to Peter, but the disciples' obedience to the Great Commission shaped an invisible and dignified *ekklēsia* which is settled and rooted on the power of Jesus. She is thus unshaken, and death cannot conquer her. Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, Asterius, Ambrosiaster, Epiphanius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Basil the Great concurred it referred to Peter. Yet, Basil of Seleucia maintained that it referred to Peter's confession, while John Cassian and Hilary of Poitiers asserted that it meant Peter's faith. Theodoret, Cassiodorus, Jerome, and John of Damascus held that to link *petra* with Peter's confession is to relate it to Jesus. Cyril of Jerusalem and Augustine maintained that it corresponded to Jesus, the unmoved rock on which Peter and the church were built.[7]

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[7] St. Augustine, *Lectures or Tractates on the Gospel According to St. John – Tractate CXXIII.5, Homilies on the Gospel of John; Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Soliloquies*, ed. Anthony Uyl (Woodstock, Ontario: Devoted, 2017), 405; *The Sacred Writings of Cyril of Jerusalem*, Extended Annotated Edition (Altenmünster: Jazzybee Verlag, 2012); Eusebius, "Ecclesiastical History," in *Fathers of the Church*, ed. Roy J. Deferrari, vol. 19 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1965), 142–143.

The Roman Catholic church and Protestant church's readings

Matt 16:16–19 is an exegetical and theological battlefield for the RCC and PC which arises from their contradictory views as to what *petra* refers. The RCC hold that it refers to Peter as his Greek and Aramaic names mean rock.[8] Perhaps the RCC's understanding follows a 14th century CE (1380–1385) Hebrew text of Matthew which personalizes *petra* to mean Peter. Its version of Matt 16:17–19 depicts Jesus as speaking directly to Peter.

Jesus said to him: Blessed are you Simon bar Jonah because flesh and blood has not revealed [this] to you but my Father who is in heaven. I say to you: you are a stone and I will build upon you my house of prayer. The gates of Gehenna will not prevail against you because I will give to you the keys of the Kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.[9]

Yet, the manuscript's dating, its resolve to modify and fuse itself to current Greek morphology and syntax, undercuts its dependability. It is a hypothetical document, which appeared long after first century CE, because of its

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[8] Kenneth B. Steinhauser, "Leo I," in *The New Westminster Dictionary of Church History: Volume One; The Early, Medieval and Reformation Eras*, ed. Robert Benedetto (Louisville, Ky. & London: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2008), 385.

[9] George Howard, *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*, (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1995), xi, 80–81.

use of the term *Christos* (Christ). Moreover, it is a Middle Age Jewish anti-Christian missionary treatise and a textual base for their dispute with Christians.[10]

The PC indict the RCC of altering the teaching that Jesus Christ is the authentic foundation on which the church is built (1 Cor 3:11), that he is over all things, and is the head of the church (Col 1:15–20). They hold that the dispute, on who was greatest among the disciples and Jesus's response that the greatest was their servant (Luke 22:24–26), shows that the other disciples did not regard Peter as the greatest among them, hence he was not the rock. Although he was the first to preach and convert Jews and Gentiles, he never laid the church's foundation. Jesus was the first to call, convert, and to transform the disciples' lives. Therefore, if the *ekklēsia* began by conversion, Jesus is the foundation upon which the apostles built (Eph 2:19–22; cf. Rev 21:14). Besides, he is the cornerstone which gives stability to the whole structure wherein God dwells (Eph 2:20–22).[11]

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[10] John K. McKee, "Is the Hebrew Matthew an Authentic Document?," in *Messianic Torah Helper*, ed. Margaret McKee and John K. McKee (Scotts Valley, CA: Createspace Independent, 2013), 261, 278; George Howard, "The Textual Nature of Shem-Tob's Hebrew Matthew," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108, no. 2 (1989): 239–57.

[11] Ernest Renan, *History of the Origins of Christianity: Book II, the Apostles.* (Woodstock, Ontario: Devoted, 2017), 4; Gary Gromacki, "The Foundational Gifts of Apostle and Prophet in Ephesians," *The Journal of Ministry and Theology* 17, no. 2 (n.d.): 1–18; M. M. Ninan, *The Apostles* (San Jose, CA: Global, 2013), 55–58; S. T. Bloomfield, *Hē kainē diathekē: The Greek Testament with English Notes, Critical, Philological, and Explanatory Volume* (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longman, 1965), 95.

Philological analysis of key terminologies

Ekklēsia

The meaning of *ekklēsia* in Matthew's Gospel has been given deficient analysis, perhaps due to its imprecise English translation as "church" which may refer to worshippers. Besides, it may refer to official and legalized buildings designed for public worship or hierarchically led religious institution that show social, political, and/or economic power.[12] Nevertheless, from the 6th century BCE to the Roman imperial era (27 BCE–284 CE), it referred to civic assembly which set policies and defined how a Greek city-state was ruled.[13] In the New Testament, it indicates the universal body, to which local *ekklēsia* belong. It is overwhelmingly probable that Jesus never used it to refer to worshippers, place of worship, status of people, and/or a social, political, and/or economic force. He used it to typify a borderless, undying, and multi-ethnic group, without partisan political subtext that underlies and suffocates the English word church.[14]

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[12] Jan M. de Beer,"Implications of Ecclesiology's Understanding of Church and Ekklēsia for the Current Missiology," *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Missiology* 46, no. 1 (2018): 72–84; Ralph J. Korner, "Ekklēsia as a Jewish Synagogue Term: Some Implications for Paul's Socio-Religious Location," *Journal of the Jesus Movement in Its Jewish Setting* n.v., no. 2 (2015): 54; eligious Location, No. 2, 2015, 54.

[13] See Andrew Lintott, "Aristotle and Democracy," *The Classical Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (1992): 114–28.

[14] Gabriele Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism: Jewish Thought, 300 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 17; Alan F. Segal, *Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 181.

Did Jesus expected the *ekklēsia* to be apolitical or detached from politics? Jesus's message was inevitably political, since he criticized real and self-appointed rulers and preached good news for the poor. His ministry was misinterpreted as political and seen as a seditious effort to overthrow the Roman Empire, substituting it with God's Kingdom. Jewish religious leaders accused him of blasphemy, because he criticised their hypocritical character, saw the temple — which they held signified the presence of God — as temporal, and predicted its ruin. Political and religious leaders, therefore, networked to crucify him as a rebellious criminal, although he was a Jew and a member of Jewish community. He, basically, participated in Jewish social and religious activities. Moreover, he was a rabbi, who not only linked his people with the Torah, but he also taught, with his own life, how they should faithfully live according to its teachings. However, as the gospel accounts reveal, he never belonged to any of the Jewish religious groups which were largely political. [15] While his call for repentance was articulated in a religious and political context, it was not derived from any Jewish religious group. He was not involved in partisan political disputes, yet he highlighted that absolute authority belongs to God and not to any political or religious organisation or leader.[16]

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[15] Catholic Church Pontificia Commission, *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*, Vatican Documents (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002), 152.

[16] Kabiro wa Gatumu, "The Gospel and the Public Sphere: Mimicking the Teachings of Jesus and His Disciples in the Roman Empire as Stimuli for Resisting Postmodern Pluralistic World's Challenges to Christian Witness"

Perhaps *ekklēsia* exactly meant what early believers understood themselves to be. They were the holy ones (Acts 9:13; 1 Cor 6:2) who were sanctified and called to belong to Christ (Rom 1:6–7; 1 Cor 1:2). Since *ekklēsia* is a combination of *ek* (from) and *kalew* (called), it refers to the community of saints, which God has called from varied ethnic groups, gender, class, and status (Gal 3:28). They share one faith and belong to one body and destiny. This insight is decisive for African ecclesiology, because as Susan Rakoczy notes:

> *An ecclesiology which is shaped by the image of the 'communion of saints' offers distinct advantages to any hierarchical notions of sanctity and authority in the church. This ecclesiology focuses on the unity of community.[17]*

Besides, it implies that the *ekklēsia* Jesus promised to build on *petra* is different from what "church" means. It refers to a community bestowed with the authority to

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(University of Arad, Romania; International Fellowship of Mission Theologian Stott-Bediako Forum, 2022); Kabiro wa Gatumu, "The Interface between Gospel and Culture in the New Testament Era and Its Import to African Christianity," in *Seeing New Facets of the Diamond*; *Christianity as a Universal Faith: Essays in Honour of Kwame Bediako*, ed. Akropong-Akuapem et al., Regnum Studies in Global Christianity (Oxford: Regnum Studies in Mission, 2014), 249–60; Nicholas T. Wright, "The New Testament and the State," *Themelios* 165, no. 1 (1990): 12.

[17] Susan Rakoczy, "The Theological Vision of Elizabeth A Johnson," *Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion and Theology in Southern Africa* 98, no. 1 (2008): 148.

extend God's kingdom and to transform the world.[18] So, translating *ekklēsia* as "church" is anachronistic and confusing, since it confers upon her a wrong identity. Furthermore, "church" is awash with partisan political shades that circumvent transformation. For instance, the 18th century Church of England was distinctly a state church and a pillar of political establishment that rejuvenated old corrupt practices. [19] Besides, African denominations' involvement with partisan politics greatly contributed to the loss of African *ekklēsia*'s identity and missional focus which leads to defective ecclesiology.[20]

Petra

The debate among scholars is on *whether petra* refers to Peter, his confession, or to Christ.[21] That it refers to Peter is based on the view that Jesus was speaking to

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[18] Wilhelmus J. C. Weren, *Studies in Matthew's Gospel: Literary Design, Intertextuality, and Social Setting*, Biblical Interpretation Series 130 (Boston: Brill, 2014), 223; William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 240.

[19] Philip Harling, *The Waning of "Old Corruption": The Politics of Economical Reform in Britain, 1779-1846* (Oxford [England], New York: Clarendon Press & Oxford University Press, 1996), 143–162, 195–212, 221–237.

[20] Christopher Magezi and Tagwirei, Kimion, "A Critical Assessment of Church and Political Engagement in Zimbabwe under the New Dispensation," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 43, no. 1 (2022): 1–12; Innocent Gwizo, Elisha Kwabena Marfo, and Tabua Kotobalavu, "Party Politics Involvement: A Case for Church Identity and Mission in Africa, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2017, 1–20," *Journal of AIIAS African Theological Association* 7, no. 1 (2017): 1–20.

[21] Craig D. Saunders, *A Mediator in Matthew: An Analysis of the Son of Man's Function in the First Gospel* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2021), 97–98, fn. 4.

him directly and that his Aramaic and Greek names mean rock.[22] Nevertheless, the *Petros/Petra* wordplay (v. 18) is divisive. While some hold that it refers to Peter, others maintain that such wordplays during the first century CE differentiated the two names.[23] Most scholars agree that no first century Jew would have acquiesced if it referred to Peter due to the Hebrew Bible's rock motif which referred to God or Jesus. Besides, *Petros* and *Petra* do not refer to the same thing due to the gender contrast and the shift from second to the third person.[24] While the former refers to unmoveable rock, the latter refers to a moveable or throwable stone (2 Macc 1:16; 4:41; 1 Pet 2:8). Occasionally, Peter showed reliable and rock-like integrity, yet he exhibited indecisive and unpredictable character (Matt 26:30–35, 76; Mark 14:26–31; Luke 22:31–34; John 13:1–10; Acts 1–5, 9–10). Perhaps, his unreliable character was similar to *tēn ammon* (the sand), which could not resist rain and winds (Matt 7:26), hence he is most likely not the unmoveable rock.[25]

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[22] Susanna Asikainen, *Jesus and Other Men: Ideal Masculinities in the Synoptic Gospels*, Biblical Interpretation Series 159 (Boston: Brill, 2018), 80–81.

[23] Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament Library (Victoria, B.C.: Trafford, 2005), 311.

[24] Milton Spenser Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics A Treatise on the Interpretation of the Old and New Testaments* (Cambridge, Ohio: Christian Publishing House, 2021), 120–122; Robert H. Gundry, *Peter: False Disciple and Apostate According to Saint Matthew*, Second edition with responses to reviews (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018), 20, 25–26.

[25] Chrys C. Caragounis, *Peter and the Rock*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche 58 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990), 90.

According to Greek grammar rules, the definite article always agrees with the noun or adjective it describes in case, gender, and number. So, *tē* (the) plays a vital role in determining the noun to which an adjective is linked. Besides, demonstratives agree with their antecedent in gender and number, and the clause on which they stand governs their case. So, the indirect object of the feminine *tautē* (this) is not the masculine *Petros* but the feminine *petra* with which it agrees in gender, case, and number. The transition from the nominative masculine singular *Petros* to dative feminine singular *petra* implies that they do not refer to the same thing. [26] Further, the conversation between Peter and Jesus (vv. 15–17) suggests that *Petros* is not the antecedent of *tautē* (this). Jesus's promise to build the *ekklēsia* is a response to Peter's faith that Jesus is the Son of the Living God (Matt 16:16). Yet again, the aorist passive participle, *apokritheis* (he answered) (Matt 16:16–17), shows that God was the source of Peter's confession. Therefore, while it excludes Peter as *petra*, it reinforces his confession as a revelation from God.

The central point of the dialogue and the subject of Peter's confession is on who is Christ, hence *petra* may relate to the explicit faith rooted in the confession.[27] It is

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[26] Donald Fairbairn, *Understanding Language*: A *Guide for Beginning Students of Greek and Latin* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 95.

[27] John Cassian, "On the Incarnation of the Lord against Nestorians, 3.1–16 and 5: 1–4," in *Christ: Through the Nestorian Controversy*, ed. Mark DelCogliano, The Cambridge Edition of Early Christian Writings 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 610; D. Jeffrey Bingham,

comparable to the faith in the foundation stone of Isa 28:16–18 which gives victory on death and salvation for those who trust Yahweh.[28] Peter and Paul read Isaiah's foundation as Christ, the only source of faith and guarantee of salvation (Rom 9:32–10:1–13; 1 Pet 2:4–7). So, *ekklēsia*, which is built on a solid rock-like foundation, stands on the faith Isaiah prophesied and is rooted in Peter's confession. Such faith revokes the accord with Sheol (Isaiah) and hinders the powers of death from reigning against her (16:18). Besides, since *autēs* (her) is used for emphasis and contrast, it probably contrasts *ekklēsia* with *petra*, the latter being the source from which the former gets strength to annul the powers of death.[29] Peter's erratic character could not have given the *ekklēsia* the ability to withstand them.

However, this article does not claim to end the debate on the *Petros/Petra* wordplay. For instance, D. A. Carson opines that while the two Greek words epitomize a small stone and a large stone respectively, their discrepancy is essentially confined to poetry. He assumes that the underlying Aramaic most likely used *Kephas* in the two clauses to refer to "rock." He makes this assumption because as he notes that the Peshitta — which is written in Syriac, a language cognate with Aramaic — uses the

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Irenaeus' Use of Matthew's Gospel in Adversus Haereses, Traditio Exegetica Graeca (Lovanii [Louvain, Belgium]: In aedibus Peters, 1998), 129.

[28] John F. A. Sawyer, *Isaiah through the Centuries*, Wiley Blackwell Bible Commentaries (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2018), 168.

[29] See *The Pillars and the Cornerstone Jesus Tradition Parallels in the Catholic Epistles* (Delft: Uitgeverij Eburon, 2018).

same terminology in the two clauses. He, therefore, suggests,

> *"The Greek makes the distinction between petros and petra simply because it is trying to preserve the pun, and in Greek the feminine petra could not very well serve as a masculine name."[30]*

This, however, opens debate on the initial language with which Matthew's Gospel was written, but which is beyond the scope of this study, though important. Yet, despite the view that an earlier version in Aramaic existed, it is overwhelmingly probable that Matthew's Gospel was initially written in Greek. [31] As Stanley E. Porter persuasively asserts, Jesus spoke with Pilate in Greek during his trial, and that Matt 16:17–19 could have been originally delivered in Greek.[32]

Verbs and verbal participles

Turning to the future indicative active *dōsō* (will give), aorist active subjunctive *dēsēs* (bind) and *lusēs* (loose), and the perfect passive participles *dedemenon* (having been bound) and *lelumenon* (having been loosed), it is critical to ask whether they refer to a privilege given to Peter. S. T. Bloomfield maintains that a key is used for

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[30] D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, Revised edition, The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1995), 368.

[31] Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, Texas: Waco Books, 1993), ixxv.

[32] Stanley E. Porter, "Did Jesus Ever Teach in Greek?," *Tyndale Bulletin* 44, no. 2 (1993): 225, 229–235.

locking or unlocking, hence, to have it is to possess the authority to lock or unlock. So, *tas kleidas* (the key) figuratively refers to the power and authority given to Peter and explains what it means to build the *ekklēsia* on *petra*. Moreover, since Peter first opened the gospel to Jews and Gentiles, it refers to him, while vv. 18–19 discloses the privileges given to him.[33] However, since the subjunctive is an indefinite mood of doubtful assertion, it relates to the future.[34]

The above stimulates doubt if Peter was to be given the keys in future, which was conceivably after the resurrection, especially during Pentecost. Furthermore, as a sign of opening and locking, *the keys* metaphorically refer to ushering people into the knowledge of God's kingdom (cf. Luke 11:52) rather than barring them. Peter never barred or allowed people to enter the kingdom of heaven; he only preached repentance and forgiveness of sin. The people who believed were added to the *ekklēsia* (Acts 2:38–41) and, by extension, to God's kingdom.[35] So, it is extremely probable that *the keys* refer to preaching repentance and forgiveness of sin, which elicit faith in

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[33] Bloomfield, *Hē kainē diathekē*, 96.

[34] William W. Goodwin, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verb*, Cambridge Library Collection - Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2–12; C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge [Eng]: University Press, 1953), 121–123.

[35] Maximilian Zerwick and Mary Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, Subsidia Biblica (Roma: Gregorian University Press, 2016), 52–53; D. A. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited*, First edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012), 55.

Christ, the Son of the living God, and the means by which the *ekklēsia* exists.[36]

The inexact translation of the aorist subjunctives, *dēsēs* (bind) and *lusēs* (loose), and the perfect passive participles, *dedemenon* (having been bound) and *lelumenon* (having been loosed), may have caused ecclesiology to get its direction and purpose from missiology.[37] So, little attention has been given to the view that Christology nurtures and shapes ecclesiology, as implied by the affinity between the body and the head (Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18). [38] The New American Standard Bible's translation of verse 19 reads, "Whatever you shall bind (*ean dēsēs*) on earth shall have been bound (*estai dedemenon*) in heaven, and whatever you shall loose (*ean lusēs*) on earth shall have been loosed (*estai lelumenon*) in heaven."

Fittingly, when *ean* (if, any time or whenever) is linked to both *dēsēs* (bind) and *lusēs* (loose) and is used with the Greek relative pronoun *ó* (whoever or whatever), it depicts a conditional indefinite future. So, binding and loosing on earth occurs since they were first decided in

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[36] See Donald Werner, *Repentance is the Key That Unlocks the Kingdom of Heaven* (Morrisville, NC: Lulu Com, 2021).

[37] Jan M. de Beer, *The Implications of Ecclesiology's Understanding*, 70–72.

[38] J. David Moser, "Totus Christus: A Proposal for Protestant Christology and Ecclesiology," *Pro Ecclesia: A Journal of Catholic and Evangelical Theology* 29, no. 1 (2020): 3–30; Nicholas M. Healey, "Ordinary Theology, Theological Method and Constructive Ecclesiology," in *Exploring Ordinary Theology: Everyday Christian Believing and the Church*, ed. Jeff Astley and Leslie J. Francis, Explorations in Practical, Pastoral, and Empirical Theology (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 17–20.

heaven. Furthermore, given that *dedemenon* and *lelumenon* are aorist subjunctives, they refer to a present state resulting from a past action.[39] Though God is not directly cited, they are divine passives, showing that he is the agent, hence they reveal his specific action on earth. Believers only validate what God has done already, because no person can forgive sin, bind, and loose. Besides, the use of the future before the perfect shows that events in heaven precede events on earth. God, thus, originates and executes binding and loosening and then reveals what must be bound and loosed to the *ekklēsia.* Furthermore, God bequeaths to her the authority to convey God's acts and will to the world.[40]

Reshaping African evangelical ecclesiology

The definition of evangelical ecclesiology is problematic, owing to divisions and differences which often incites the rise of new denominations. Yet, while doctrinal or personal views on church government lead to countless images of evangelical ecclesiology, some shared traits among diverse evangelical groups may illumine it. These include the notion of *ekklēsia* as a borderless community, which God initiated, called, and to give loyalty

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[39] Colin G. Kruse, *The Gospel According to John: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2004), 383; Paul A. Beals, *A People for His Name: A Church Based Missions Strategy*, Revised edition (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1995), 64–65.

[40] Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2018), 474.

to Christ. Besides, she is the body and bride of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and her members are God's people regardless of their ethnicity, gender, or status. She exists to worship God, to build the body of believers, and to participate in God's mission by sharing the gospel of Christ to the world by word and deed. So, despite the absence of a fixed definition, the nature of evangelical ecclesiology and its contribution to the global dialogue on ecclesiology are obvious.[41] However, some scholars aver that African evangelical ecclesiology emphasises church structure, economic and human resources, and issues related to universality, as well as the nature, content, and mandate of mission. As a result, it is profoundly missiological, since mission is mainly seen as the church's ingenuity.[42] Yet, as Desmond Henry accentuates, "mission is not 'ecclesiocentric' (centred on the church) as has been historically promulgated, but, rather, mission is 'Theocentric' (centred on God)."[43]

Several scholars have lamented that African *ekklēsia* is not well armed to confront the multifaceted challenges due to her leaders' poor theological training. [44] Others insist that despite having been defined as evangelical and

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[41] Brad Harper and Paul Louis Metzger, *Exploring Ecclesiology: An Evangelical and Ecumenical Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2009), 12–17.

[42] Solomon Andria and Willem Saayman, "Missiology and Ecclesiology: A Perspective from Africa," *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Mission Studies* 31, no. 3 (2003): 503, 506, 509.

[43] Desmond Henry, "A Vision for the Sending of the Church in Botswana," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 32, no. 1 (March 4, 2011): 2.

[44] Detlef Kapteina, "The Formation of African Evangelical Theology," *Journal of Evangelical Theology* 25, no. 1 (2006): 61.

socially involved, she has failed to influence African societies due to her fruitless ecclesiology. Besides, she lacks relevant theological reflections, objective ideas, values, and practices. Her hierarchical and denominational structure oblige Christians to give loyalty to denominations and their prejudiced doctrines, which impede them from working together.[45] Yet the people of God form a community of believers and sharing one faith, despite belonging to varied denominations and coming from different ethnic groups. Besides, African evangelical ecclesiology frequently focuses on tasks that make denominations different rather than what unites them. So, a clear gap exists, perhaps due to paying insignificant attention to the link between ecclesiology and Christology. Yet as Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch declare, "Christology is the singularly most important factor in shaping our mission in the world and the forms of *ecclesia* and ministry that result from that engagement."[46]

Whereas the aim is not to refute the undeniable relationship between missiology and ecclesiology, Christology should nurture and shape ecclesiology. As it were, God not only reveals Godself in and through Christ but also imparts mission to the *ekklēsia* via Christ and the

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[45] Andria and Saayman, *Missiology and Ecclesiology*, 503–517; Willem Saayman, "'Missionary by Its Very Nature ...' A Time to Take Stock," *Missionalia* 28, no. 1 (2000): 15–16; Tite Tienou, "The Theological Task of the Church in Africa: Where Are We Now and Where Should We Be Going?," *East Africa Journal for Evangelical Theology* 6, no. 1 (1987): 3.

[46] Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *ReJesus: A Wild Messiah for a Missional Church* (Peabody, Mass., Sydney: Hendrickson Publishers and Strand Publishers, 2009), 41–43.

Holy Spirit. The authority of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit enables her to participate in the *Missio Dei*.[47] Besides, God initiates binding and loosing and then discloses what must be bound or loosed. Relatedly, the visible actions of *ekklēsia* verify God's presence and activity in the world. [48] Moreover, since evangelical ecclesiology accepts the Bible as the normative and authoritative source of life and functions of the church,[49] its faithful translation and interpretation should nurture and shape African evangelical ecclesiology. As it were, it is widely accepted that translation, interpretation, and doctrinal formation are inseparable. Yet, inaccurate translations and interpretations lead to inconsistent doctrines.[50]

It scarcely requires elaboration that Matt 16:16–19 is a decisive ecclesiological text which creates concrete and

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[47] Timothy A. Van Aarde, "The Relation of God's Mission and the Mission of the Church in Ephesians," *Missionalia* 44, no. 3 (2017): 296; Gailyn van Rheenan, *Missions: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2014), 70.

[48] Theodore J. Hopkins, "How Christology Shapes Ecclesiology and Missiology," *Concordia Theological Journal* 4, no. 1 (2016): 34–45; John Webster, *Confessing God: Essays in Christian Dogmatics II* (London: T & T Clark, 2016), 153.

[49] Peter Lee Ochieng Oduor, "Christological Reflections: A Biblical Perspective," *East African Journal of Traditions, Culture and Religion* 5, no. 1 (2022): 16; Paul Adomako-Mensah, "Christology, Pneumatology and Ecclesiology – 'Theology Proper,'" *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies* 4, no. 1 (2018): 228.

[50] Origen, *Origen on First Principles: Being Koetschau's Text of the De Principiis*, ed. Paul Koetschau, trans. G. W. Butterworth (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012), 6; Julius R. Mantey, "Evidence That the Perfect Tense in John 20: 23 and Matthew 16: 19 is Mistranslated," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 16, no. 3 (1973): 133–134.

deep relationship between Jesus and *ekklēsia*. As such, several interpreters have given insightful hints that Christology is the base of ecclesiology. [51] Noticeably, Peter's confession is Christological (v. 16) and Jesus's rejoinder is not only ecclesiological, but also it discloses that God initiates the missiological tasks of the *ekklēsia* (vv. 17–19). There is, thus, a clear link between Christology and ecclesiology, since Jesus added ecclesiological hints and signs to Peter's confession.[52] Yet, as Michael J. Berry avers, a mistranslation or deliberate politically propelled translation of *ekklēsia* has stimulated an ecclesiology which impedes denominations from working together. Rather than emphasising what it means to be a gathering of the people of God, it places more emphasis on buildings. This disconnects the church from the people she is called to serve.

Besides, the Emmanuel motif in Matthew's Gospel discloses that God lives in and reveals Godself to the community that Christ has gathered. The same community conveys the divine presence in the world. Christology must, thus, nurture and reshape African evangelical ecclesiology. This would facilitate and empower the African *ekklēsia* to reshape itself into a borderless community. It would rekindle her to include all the people that God has called and chosen to belong to Christ regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, class, or

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[51] Ulrich Luz, *Matthew in History: Interpretation, Influence, and Effects* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 60.

[52] John Yueh-Han Yieh, *One Teacher: Jesus' Teaching Role in Matthew's Gospel Report* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2004), 240–241.

status. An enduring alertness that the African *ekklēsia* should always exist for Christ and witness of Christ would be created.[53] The aim of African evangelical ecclesiology should, thus, focus on reviving faith in the Messiah and to expedite the implementation of missiological tasks given to the Messianic community (Matt 28:16–20).

In reading the Acts of the Apostles, it is clear that the missiological activities of *tēn ekklēsia* were expedited through the authority of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.[54] If Christology is to nurture and reshape African evangelical ecclesiology, it must be underlined that God, through Christ and the Holy Spirit, empowers *tēn ekklēsia* to transmit divine truth, which speeds deconstruction and reconstruction of current world orders. Besides, this christology empowers her to confront African realities so as to rebuild and renew the structures of human existence. It also generates the ability of the Church to embrace biblical values that enable transformation and purposely facilitate the development of ethical and transformative servant-leaders. African ecclesiology must be empowered in order to revive missiological tasks of effectively ushering and keeping people in God's kingdom and rebuilding African societies.

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[53] Jon S. Birch, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ: A Disciple's Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2022), 65.

[54] A. Boyd Luter and Nicholas Dodson, "Matthean Theological Priority: Making Sense of Matthew's Proto-Ecclesiology in Acts 1–14," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 61, no. 1 (2018): 63–74.

Conclusion

The interpretation of key terms in Matt 16:18–19 has been controversial, yet philological criticism has shown that *ekklēsia* refers to a borderless community of believers. In African contexts ecclesiology must stimulate all denominations to work together for the common good. It should motivate the African *ekklēsia* to give her loyalty to Christ and not to denominational leaders and/or doctrines. As noted, *petra* refers to Peter's confession and the faith ingrained in it, as the terms in v. 19 refer to privileges given to the followers of Christ, not just Peter. African evangelical ecclesiology must, therefore, be built on the faith entrenched in Peter's confession. If Christology is prioritized to nurture and shape African evangelical ecclesiology, this shall empower the African *ekklēsia* to execute her missiological task of transforming society. However, she can only do this through the authority Jesus gave her to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:18–20) by preaching repentance and forgiveness of sin, which are *the keys* of the kingdom.

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A Speck in the Brother's (Sister's) Eye? An Ethical Analysis of Church Discipline as Practiced in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT)

Nehemia Godwin Moshi

Abstract

Being motivated by the enduring practice of church discipline in the ELCT, albeit critique, this article analyses some aspects of church discipline from an ethical stand point. The article is informed by a descriptive analysis of previous research on church discipline in the ELCT. Scrutiny of parts related to church discipline in the ELCT hymnal - *Tumwabudu Mungu Wetu*, the church constitutions, and some interviews were carried out. The analysis shows that church discipline as practiced in the ELCT is imbued with flaws among which are failure to address issues contextually, gender bias and contradiction with the ELCT liturgy, especially concerning absolution and benediction. Such flaws mask and even contradict with the Lutheran identity as reflected in tenets of justification by grace, priesthood of believers and freedom. The study reveals that the enduring practice of church discipline in the ELCT is attributed to the need of differentiating and correcting wrong doings in various contexts. From this perspective, church discipline is considered ethical as to its intention. However, the bias

and contradictions manifest in the practice of church discipline, render church discipline as practiced in the ELCT unethical. It is recommended that the ELCT could review the practice in efforts to align it with the mission of the church and the fast-changing context.

Key Words

Church Discipline, Grace, Ethics, ELCT, ELCT Constitution, ELCT liturgy, African theology, gender bias

Introduction

Church discipline, which constitutes manifold and ramified ways of correcting and even castigating backslidden Christians, is still practiced in some Lutheran churches[1] not least in the ELCT. The fact that church discipline is ingrained in the tradition of the ELCT is attested to in a number of the church's documents – the chief ones being the ELCT constitution,[2] the constitutions of the constituent dioceses[3] and the ELCT hymnal

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[1] See Peter M. Mnene, *Use of Sacraments in Church Discipline as a Challenge to Missional Transformation in Kenya's Mainstream Churches*: *A Case Study of Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Master Thesis (St. Paul, Minn.: Luther Seminary, 2013); Thomas M. Winger, "Ruminations on Church Discipline," *Lutheran Theological Review* 19 (2007): 107–23.

[2] Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania (ELCT), "Katiba ya KKKT (Constitution of the ELCT)" (Arusha: ELCT, 2015), 3.

[3] E.g., Dayosisi ya Kaskazini (ELCT – Northern Diocese), "Kanisa La Kiinjili La Kilutheri Tanzania – Dayosisi Ya Kaskazini (ELCT – Northern Diocese), Katiba (Constitution)," 2006.

Tumwabudu Mungu Wetu. [4] The enduring presence of church discipline as a constituting element in the constitutions and hymnal of the ELCT points to the fact that the practice was and is aimed at serving important functions in the ministry and life of this church. Among these functions are correcting the backsliders, and maintaining Christian morals.

Interest on the functioning, and impact of church discipline in the ELCT is reflected in many previous researches. The Tumaini University Makumira (TUMA) main campus library – alone has more than twenty research reports, documenting matters directly or closely related to church discipline in the ELCT. These works constitute researches done and presented in partial or full fulfilment of the requirements for graduation. In addition to researches culminating to academic awards, TUMA library also contains a number of articles related to the topic.[5]

As we shall note in the respective section below, the analysis of researches on church discipline in the ELCT provides a rich source of valuable information on the practice. Among the aspects of church discipline addressed in these researches are its relationship with

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[4] Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania (ELCT), *Tumwabudu Mungu Wetu (Let Us Worship Our God)* (Arusha: ELCT, 2017), 429.

[5] E.g., Andrew Kyomo, "Disciplinary Teamwork for Evangelism in the Parish," *Africa Theological Journal* 27, no. 2 (2004): 70–87; Mika Vähäkangas, "Ecclesial Self Discipline Based on Christian Growth in Conformity with Christ," *Africa Theological Journal* 27, no. 2 (2004): 3–33.

Lutheran ecclesiology[6], biblical basis[7], and influence on mission.[8] Findings from these researches point to some weaknesses in the practice church discipline in the ELCT among which are its deviation from the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith.[9]

Despite the considerable number of researches done on church discipline in the ELCT in the past, a number of factors tend to dictate a fresh look into the practice. Apart from the fact that many of the reports from previous researches on church discipline have not been published, most of these researches have addressed issues at the level of individual constituent dioceses of the ELCT. Considering that the different dioceses of the ELCT emanate from different backgrounds[10], one feels a need to paint a unified picture of the practice for the whole of the ELCT. Although attempts have been made in some

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[6]Alex Mkumbo, "The Practice of Church Discipline in the ELCT-CD in Light of the Ecclesiology of Martin Luther" (Ph.D. thesis, Usa River, Tanzania, Makumira University College, 2008).

[7] George Fihavango, "Church Discipline in the First Century: A Study of 1 Cor. 5: 1-13 and Mt. 18 15-20 with Its Relevance to the Southern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania" (Bachelor of Divinity thesis, Usa River, Tanzania, Lutheran Theological College Makumira, 1994).

[8] Jackson J. Lugayana, "The Practice of Church Discipline and Its Challenges to Mission in the ELCT – North Western Diocese". (MTh Thesis Makumira, 2006)" (Master of Theology thesis, Usa River, Tanzania, Tumaini University Makumira, 2006); Joyce Mhache, "The Understanding of Missio Dei in Church Discipline Practices in the Eastern District of the ELCT-ND" (Master of Theology thesis, Usa River, Tanzania, Tumaini University Makumira, 2019).

[9] Mkumbo, *The practice of Church discipline*.

[10] Mkumbo, e.g., notes the differences of tone in the application of church discipline between the Leipzig Mission society and the Augustana Mission (Mkumbo, *The Practice of Church Discipline*).

previous researches to reflect generally on the whole of the ELCT[11] such reflection remain limited in scope in addressing the ethical implications. Worth noting in this connection is the observation that some of the elements in the practice of church discipline decried in the past e.g., outright denial of Christian burial to those who die under church discipline, have been revisited. [12] Beforehand families of people who died in situations prone to church discipline, for example those who committed suicide, were denied of any official consolation service by the church. Beginning 2012, the church introduced a special order of service to such families.[13] Researches in the past had decried the absence of officially documented church involvement in such burials. The introduction of this special order in ELCT hymnal following critique, therefore, points to the responsiveness of the ELCT and need for continued reflection on church discipline. While the ELCT should be hailed for the introducing this special order, it is clear that some elements in the practice of church discipline still need to be revisited.

Apart from the above reasons, challenges emanating from globalization, with its accompanying shifts in the understanding of what is ethical, and the swift communication that renders what was previously 'private' public, calls for an analysis of the relevancy of church

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[11] See Ronilick Mchami, "The Practice of Church Discipline in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania in the Light of Pauline Theology," *Africa Theological Journal* 27, no. 2 (2004): 34–52.

[12] ELCT, *Tumwabudu Mungu Wetu*, 644.

[13] ELCT, *Tumwabudu Mungu Wetu*, 644.

discipline in addressing what it was and is still meant to effect. In other words, the changing context of ministry calls for an accompanying theological reflection, and in turn revisiting church discipline as a ministerial tool. In his article Mika Vähäkangas challenged the church – the practitioner of discipline – to exercise self-discipline.[14] Reflection on this challenge, which has ethical implications, has so far not been carried out. As such the ethics of the practice of church discipline in the ELCT remain un explored.

This article analyses church discipline as practiced in the ELCT with the aim of assessing the ethics of this phenomenon. The article is based on analysis of findings, and conclusions drawn from previous researches on church discipline, examination of statements and phrases from the ELCT hymnal and constitutions as well as interviews. In the course of doing so, the article documents parts of previous research on church discipline in the ELCT.

The research reports analyzed are catalogued under 'church discipline' in the library at TUMA. The analysis of the documents was therefore based on the potentiality of the documents to yield relevant data on the topic. The analysis was descriptive in nature. In this line, the researches were scrutinized and summarized in the light of four thematic areas, namely; the foundation and history of the practice, cases leading to placement under church discipline, the practice itself and critique.

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[14] Mika Vähäkangas, "Ecclesial Self Discipline Based on Christian Growth in Conformity with Christ," *Africa Theological Journal* 27, no. 2 (2004): 3–33.

The article begins by an analysis of findings and conclusions from previous researches on church discipline. It then proceeds to examining the documentation of church discipline in the ELCT, followed by a general discussion of the analyses. The article then embarks on an analysis of the ethics of church discipline as practiced in the ELCT and culminates in a conclusion.

Analysis of Previous Researches on Church Discipline in the ELCT from TUMA Library

Research reports on church discipline as documented in TUMA Library span a period of about fifty years. [15] These works constitute researches done and presented for graduation at certificate, diploma, bachelor, master and PhD levels. The researches are supervised by at least one member of staff, and examined internally, and especially for master and PhD externally also. Sources for these researches include interviews, questionnaire, observation, archival material, and published works. Therefore, although the certificate, diploma and bachelor degree researches are of relatively lower level of analysis, they are significant in terms of content. Some of those interviewed for these researches in this period were of the age that allowed for considerable interaction with the missionary practice. Evidence given by some of these

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[15] A search in the library of Tumaini University Makumira shows that the earliest research entries in the library catalogue are in the mid-1970s. See Sylvester Kafunzile, "Church Discipline in Karambi Parish in Kamera District North Western Diocese" (Diploma Paper, Kampala, Uganda, Makerere University College, 1976).

interviewees is therefore significant. The author of this article knows three pastors in the ELCT, one a centenarian and two above ninety-five, who contribute valuable information today (2024). One need to think of these people and their peers three or four decades ago, i.e., in the time during which some of these researches were conducted.

The number of research reports reviewed in the TUMA library was twenty-five (25), including 5 researches at certificate level. The rest were; 3 diploma, 12 bachelor, 3 master and 2 at PhD level. The research reports used in this article are of varied nature. While many of them addressed church discipline directly, some did it indirectly. The level of analysis pertaining to the reports that addressed discipline indirectly was just on their having sided with the concept, and the need of some kind of discipline (strictures) in the society.

As already mentioned, this analysis on previous researches is guided by four thematic areas, namely; 1. the foundation and history of the practice, 2. cases leading to placement under church discipline, 3. the practice itself and 4. critique. Despite the fact that the author attempted to separate the treatment of these issues, a significant overlap is evident.

Concerning the first theme (1), the author found that the practice of church discipline in the ELCT is often traced back to the missionaries and African cultures. [16]

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[16] See Aneth Munga, "The Understanding and Practice of Church Discipline in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania North Eastern Diocese" (Bachelor of Divinity Research Paper, Usa River, Tanzania, Lutheran

With the missionaries, Church discipline is traced even far more back, i.e., to Christ[17] and his apostles. The practice, therefore, is considered resonating with the Bible by many researches. The texts in Matthew 16:18-15; 18:15-17 and John 20:23 are regularly referred to in support of the practice. [18] Jesus, according to Matthew 18:15–17, prescribes a three-stage procedure before the 'excommunication' of an erring brother. The use of this text is even criticized among the research reports. Fihavango, in his Bachelor of Divinity research paper, considers the use of this text in support of church discipline to be a misinterpretation. According to him, rather than taking this text as a ground for disciplining, one should put the search of the erring brother into the centre of attention. [19] Regarding the African basis of Church discipline, previous research points to the existence of pre-missionary era norms from African

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Theological College Makumira, 1989); Martha Massawe, "Church Discipline, Pastoral Care and Counselling of Girls with Premarital Pregnancies in the ELCT – Mbulu Diocese" (Master of Theology thesis, Usa River, Tanzania, Makumira University College, 2004).

[17] Ezekieli Mwangosi, "The Understanding of the Holiness of the Church and the Question of Excommunication: A Case of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania Konde Diocese" (Master of Theology thesis, Usa River, Tanzania, Makumira University College, 2002).

[18] David Munisi, "Marudi Ya Kanisa Katika Kanisa La Kiinjili La Kilutheri Tanzania – Sinodi Ya Mashariki Na Pwani" (Certificate Research Paper, Usa River, Tanzania, Lutheran Theological College Makumira, 1979); Jackson M. Karoti, "Marudi Ya Kanisa Na Athari Zake Katika Usharika Wa Kashumbiliro. Dayosisi Ya Kaskazini Mashariki – Jimbo La Kati" (Certificate in Theology Research Paper, Usa River, Tanzania, Lutheran Theological College Makumira, 1993).

[19] Fihavango, *Church Discipline in the First Century*.

Religion that are to govern society. [20] These would, expectedly, find way in the practices of the indigenous Church. Providential as the pre-missionary practice of morality may have been, as Massawe points out, it also had significant elements of cruelty and sadism. [21] Nevertheless, despite profound criticism, the legitimacy of the practice of church discipline as such was never questioned.

Concerning the second theme, cases leading to placement under church discipline. Issues that lead one to be under church discipline as shown in previous research are many, and varied. These include – but are not limited to – drunkenness, selling alcohol, theft, adultery, and premarital pregnancy. [22] Suggesting the missionary misunderstanding or disregard of African cultures, incidences of disciplining those participating in dancing and drumming are also reported. Of interest among issues precipitating church discipline is the 'disciplining' of polygamists. During the beginning of mission work, and even later in the established local church polygamists were expected to conform to the dictates of Christianity as understood by that time.[23] One should note that the

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[20] Mkumbo, *The Practice of Church Discipline.*

[21] Massawe, *Church Discipline*; Munga, *The Understanding of Church Discipline.*

[22] Munisi, *Marudi ya Kanisa*; Faith Lugazia, "The Practice of Church Discipline: Its Effects on Haya Women of ELCT – North Western Diocese" (Bachelor of Divinity Research Paper, Usa River, Tanzania, Makumira University College, 1998).

[23] See Isakwisa Mwakalambo, "Church Discipline and the Nyakyusa Culture in Konde Diocese" (Diploma Paper, Usa River, Tanzania, Lutheran Theological College Makumira, 1978).

handling of polygamists has been more or less the same, the exception being that today people are more aware of the norms of Christianity than during the early missionary era. Other issues precipitating placement under church discipline include quarrelling, superstition, and not attending church services.[24]

When it comes to the practice of church discipline as the third thematic area, the actual disciplining in these matters include exclusion from church services like God parenting, Holy Communion, guarantor of marriage, and even Christian burial. This practice shows a continuation of earlier practices of an even stricter stance. In her research Overa Matta reports that beforehand in the Northern Diocese, those under church discipline sat on special seats behind the congregation, and in some congregations the benches were painted black.[25] A similar situation is reflected by Munga who reports that those under church discipline stood at the back of the church.[26] Matta also reports that in the past those under church discipline did not begin the service with the rest of the congregation.[27] In this case, they did not receive the absolution. They also had to leave before the benediction.

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[24] Adams Mwanjokolo, "Excommunication as Understood by Students at Lutheran Theological College Makumira" (Bachelor of Divinity Research Paper, Usa River, Tanzania, Lutheran Theological College Makumira, 1995).

[25] Overa Matta, "Church Discipline: Its Bases and Practice in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania Northern Diocese" (Bachelor of Divinity Research Paper, Usa River, Tanzania, Lutheran Theological College Makumira, 1989).

[26] Munga, *The Understanding and Practice of Church Discipline*.

[27] Munga, *The Understanding and Practice of Church Discipline*.

The contradiction born in the practice of church discipline today where neither of the above is done is addressed in the discussion below. Those under church discipline were sometimes even likened to the dead. There is usually a characteristic ringing of the bell for the burial of the dead among some ELCT dioceses. This was rung for those under church discipline to signify their spiritual death. [28] Interestingly, if they happened to die under church discipline the bells meant for a Christian burial were not rung. Suggesting the continuation of disciplining even close to absolution, in some cases, pastors demanded that the one under church discipline narrated the actual deed that led to his/her placement under church discipline.[29]

Finally, the critique of the practice of church discipline as analysed from the research report range from audible support of properly mediated discipline[30] to an almost utter attack.[31] Support for church discipline as recorded in the reports has been due to its envisaged ability to maintain order.[32] The attack has been on among other things its lack of uniformity, and bias against gender

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[28] Munga, *The Understanding and Practice of Church Discipline*.

[29] Munisi, *Marudi ya Kanisa*.

[30] See Nnko Sarikiaeli, "Eucharist and Church Discipline Within the Meru District of the Evangelical Church in Tanzania, Northern Diocese" (Bachelor of Divinity Research Paper, Usa River, Tanzania, Lutheran Theological College Makumira, 1990).

[31] See Mwakalambo, *Church Discipline and the Nyakyusa Culture*.

[32] See Mpembela Adimini, "The Theological Topics of Martin Luther's Invocavit Sermons and Their Importance to the Church Today" (Bachelor of Divinity Research Paper, Usa River, Tanzania, Lutheran Theological College Makumira, 1994).

and status.[33] The practice of church discipline has, for instance, been found to depend on the background of the parish and the opinion of the pastor. Regarding bias along gender and status, Martha Massawe in her research noted that women impregnated out of wedlock have more easily been put under church discipline than the men who impregnated them. In what appears to be the effect of a combination of fame, economic status, and friendship, leaders who execute church discipline have tended to shy off from identifying men who have impregnated the women who have been put under church discipline.[34] In her research area, Faith Lugazia observed that divorce, which has been associated with cases of church discipline, has been by and large triggered by men living outside their families for jobs. Surprisingly, Lugazia notes three issues in her analysis of the records of committee meetings dealing with the cases. In the first place, all cases were reported by men. In addition, the committees deliberating on the cases were skewed – having a clear majority of men, and all decisions favoured men.[35] As it shall be noted below, the general appraisal of the practice of church discipline has leaned more on its negative attributes. Even those who have supported the practice have given critical remarks to its practice on the soil.

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[33] Mwanjokolo, *Excommunication as Understood by Students*; Massawe, *Church Discipline, Pastoral Care and Counselling of Girls*.

[34] Massawe, *Church Discipline, Pastoral Care and Counselling of Girls*. One should note in addition that the physical manifestation of the pregnancy tends to 'discipline' the woman even before the search for the impregnator starts.

[35] Lugazia, *The Practice of Church Discipline*, 1998.

The ELCT's Official Documentation

As noted in the introduction, the existence of church discipline in the ELCT is evidenced in its mention and explication in a number of ELCT documents i.e., the ELCT Constitution, the constitutions of the constituent dioceses of the ELCT, and the hymnal of the ELCT *Tumwabudu Mungu Wetu.*

The Constitution of the ELCT alludes to church discipline in giving two scenarios through which a Christian can lose his/her membership namely 1. either if he/she refuses to follow the teachings of the church or joins a religion that is contrary to the Christian faith or 2. leads a rebellious life, and or refuses to heed to warning.[36] This clarification may be deemed to lean more on excommunication i.e., indifferent exclusion from the church. However, the phrasing of the second part of the second scenario of losing membership i.e., 'refusal to heed to warning', strongly suggests 'discipline' in the sense of some kind of castigation. It can be argued that the warning referred to here, i.e., in the ELCT Constitution, is meant to correct the wayward Christian. This is in line with some of descriptions which Church discipline affords among which is 'correcting sin in the church'.[37] According to Leeman 'a Christian life is a churched life'.[38] Those who fall short of church life standards must, therefore, not only be

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[36] ELCT, Katiba ya KKKT, 3.

[37] Jonathan Leeman, *Understanding Church Discipline*, Church Basics (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2016), 4.

[38] Jonathan Leeman, *Understanding Church Discipline*, Church Basics (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2016), 4.

differentiated but corrected. Church discipline then constitutes procedure, actions, and practices aimed at effecting this differentiation, and correction.

While church discipline is called for in the ELCT Constitution there is no liturgy or order for ousting one from the flock. The question is how does one find him/herself under church discipline. According to some of the diocesan constitutions, "The church (diocese) does not suspend anyone (put one under church discipline). One places him/herself under church discipline through his/her deeds." [39] Although the fact of one placing himself/herself under church discipline has been criticized, this wording helps to differentiate the practice from excommunication – *kutengwa* which is the jurisdiction of the executive council of the Church (diocese). [40] We now turn to the readmission of those under church discipline.

Although a liturgy for ousting or suspending the backsliders is lacking, an elaborate order for reinstatement of those under church discipline is there. This order is in the hymnal of the ELCT. As we noted earlier, the hymnal of the ELCT is among the documents that bear witness to the practice of church discipline in the church. The order of readmission makes the hymnal a key document attesting to the unified theological stand of the church on the exercise of church discipline. This is so considering that the constitution of the ELCT gives only a

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[39] ELCT - Northern Diocese, *Katiba*, 130 (my translation; N.M.)

[40] See Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania – Dayosisi ya Kaskazini Magharibi (ELCT – North-Eastern Diocese), "Katiba (Constitution)," n.d.

general statement on church discipline or excommunication while the constitutions of the constituent dioceses give statements that, although of somewhat general acceptance by other dioceses, are specific to the diocese in question. The hymnal remains the only common document attesting to the dynamics of church discipline accessible to the grassroots. The widespread use of the hymnal in matters of church discipline is suggested in the observation that while many are placed under church discipline, in most cases only statistics of those readmitted (using this liturgy) are available.[41]

The position of the ELCT in the order of readmission is clear; those who for a reason or another find themselves under church discipline have a clear way back to the flock. Remorse and confession paves way to being right with God and the church. The order is meant for public confession. This should however, not mask the private confession provided for in the constitutions of the individual dioceses.[42]

The order of service for the readmission of those under church discipline consists of an introduction made by the leader[43] of the service, questions and response between the leader and the readmitted, interjections by the congregation, reading of extracts from the Bible and prayer. For example, the introduction to the order reads;

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[41] See Matta, *Church Discipline*, 2.

[42] ELCT - Northern Diocese, *Katiba*, 75.

[43] In most cases, this is an ordained pastor.

"Before you is your fellow Christian who rebelled against God's commandments. S/he has realized his/her wrong doing and has regretted and want to be received back to the flock. Let us hear how s/he expresses by himself/herself this intention."[44]

Part of the congregation's response to the readmission of one under church discipline reads; "we together also receive him/her back in order to serve You together."[45]

The liturgy for readmission involves the congregation, scriptures and God, through prayer, in a way that is meant to assure the readmitted of his/her acceptance. However, one wonders whether the placement under church discipline prepares one to cherish all that he/she is expected to receive from the liturgy.

Summary of Findings from the Analysis of Previous Research and the ELCT Constitution and Documents

In general, the necessity of practising church discipline is never questioned by previous researches from TUMA library. There were historical links identified, like African cultures and Western missionaries. However, there were questionable references to its foundations, for example, Mt 18:15–17 that is often interpreted as supporting strict church disciplinary measures, rather than the search for the one who has fallen astray. As

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[44] ELCT, *Tumwabudu Mungu Wetu*, 429 (my translation; N.M.).

[45] ELCT, *Tumwabudu Mungu Wetu*, 430 (my translation; N.M.).

typical cases of church discipline various moral misbehaviours were mentioned, but also African cultural practices like polygamy, dancing, and drumming were often condemned, and sanctioned. The practice of church discipline itself involves a variety of measures, for example., exclusion from certain parts of the worship service, e.g., blessing, and the denial of certain rights of Christians, e.g., being a God parent. Criticism of church discipline does not reject the practice entirely; it rather identifies shortcomings like bias influenced by gender and status. Especially male and wealthy people are hardly put under church discipline, for instance, in the case of pregnancy outside the wedlock, in many cases only the female part of the illegitimate relation is sanctioned.

In the ELCT official documentation church discipline is a way of sanctioning members who do not conform to the expectations of a Christian life in a less radical way than excommunication. However, there is no liturgy for putting somebody under church discipline. Just the unclear statement that a person displaying immoral behaviour puts her/himself in the position of needing correction, and sanctioning by the church. For readmitting somebody, there is a well elaborated order with wrongdoers and the remaining church community being both involved in reinstalling the relationship between those under church discipline, and the rest of the church.

General Appraisal of the Research Reports and Documentation on Church Discipline

This discussion on the research findings and documentation of church discipline in the ELCT concentrates on the logic of the practice. The discussion employs ideas from interviews, and literature related to the topic. The foregoing presentation tends to take church discipline for granted. The analysis of the findings and conclusions from these researches suggest that some kind of discipline, whether self or mediated by outside authority, has existed in the history of the church, and has become part and parcel of Christian ministry. Therefore, the official documents on church discipline can be conceived as channels or tools in managing something of assumed existence. Thus, even where critical voices are raised against the practice in the researches, the critique tends to have sprung from an assessment of a practice that is ingrained in this church. The existence of moral strictures is justified by Scriptural evidence among which are Matthew 18. Reference is also made to Jesus. The gist of church discipline then is that of differentiation, and correction.

The differentiation referred to here echoes an experience shared in an interview by Gabriel Kimirei.[46] In this interview Kimirei narrated the story of his own

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[46] Interview with Gabriel Kimirei, 13.08.2024. Kimirei, aged 84, is the former Assistant to the Bishop of the North-Central Diocese of the ELCT. He has also worked as a part time lecturer at Makumira and chaplain of Arusha Lutheran Medical Centre.

baptism which also included the baptism of his entire family. Those to be baptized were seated at the rear seats of the church. The baptizer would then call out loudly the name of the one to be baptized and ask 'do you want to be baptized'? The catechumen would respond, while running toward the altar; 'yes, otherwise what brought me here'. The catechumen would then give a declaration of denouncing Satan, and all his works. In this story the physical movement from behind the church to the alter reflects a deeper spiritual reality. It is more of an enactment of 2 Corinthians 6 'come out from them . . .' – a situation of being called from darkness to light (1Pet 2:9). Historically then, those who confessed Christ were set at a stark difference from those who had not. A return to 'darkness' would thus invoke placement under church discipline. The logic is clear; one who was called from darkness to light but returned to darkness again, has chosen his/her own fate. Placement under church discipline in this case is more or less automatic. The question is whether the Christians are equipped with the understanding of what church discipline at its core entails, and whether it has been practiced the way it should.

Even though church discipline has been taken for granted, the researches have generally raised critical voices against its practice. The researches identify flaws in the practice in a number of places. Among the faulty areas in the practice of church discipline is its gender

bias.[47] Since church discipline has tended to deal more with the 'outer man/woman' than the 'inner'; any outside manifestations of what is considered immoral has attracted disciplining. In this case the 'baby bump' – outside wedlock – which of course marks women only, has resulted in women being under church discipline much more than men. This trend connects with the observation that church discipline is an almost wholesale adoption of a foreign missionary practice. The missionaries tended to be, by and large, revivalist.[48] Andrew Walls contends that "the modern missionary movement is an autumnal child of the Evangelical Revival."[49] Revivalism rebuked laxity in Christian Europe and America and called for renewed life. When missionaries having this inclination came to Africa, they tended to handle the missionized the same way they handled Europe and America. As such their practice of discipline lacked the necessary contextual handling of the lives of Christians or would be Christians in Africa as manifested in the handling of polygamy.[50]

In an interview, Gabriel Kimirei narrates his step mother's rating of Christianity. To her Christianity was a 'Satanic' religion. This was so since Kimirei's polygamous father was required to choose one wife if he was to be baptized. He chose Kimirei's mother, and left his first

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[47] Mhache, *The Understanding of Missio Dei in Church Discipline Practices*; Lugazia, *The Practice of Church Discipline*.

[48] Matta, *Church Discipline*; Lugayana, *The Practice of Church Discipline*; Mkumbo, *The Practice of Church Discipline*.

[49] Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 79.

[50] Mwakalambo, *Church Discipline and the Nyakyusa Culture*.

wife.[51] The missionary insistence on monogamy and their revivalist tendency of rating adultery as the greater sin have affected girls and women more than men. Theresa Hinga addressing the general handling of polygamy in Africa writes,

> "*Often, the polygamist would be asked to abandon all but one of his wives as a condition for baptism. The policy of 'disciplining' polygamists in this way undoubtedly brought untold pain to women, and children thus discarded.*"[52]

As noted above in the analysis of the official documents on church discipline, there is no liturgy for suspending or placing a backslidden Christian under church discipline. The absence of such a liturgy raises questions regarding the manner through which one is officially pronounced to be under church discipline. The absence finds some support in the expectation that the respective Christians know the criteria for being under church discipline. Mchami holds that,

> "*church discipline is as old as the church itself and has always been either self-imposed by the failing Christian or imposed by the Church on the fallen Christian.*"[53]

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[51] Interview with retired pastor Kimirei 13.08.2024.

[52] Theresa Hinga, "Jesus and the Liberation of Women in Africa," in *The Will to Arise Women, Tradition, and the Church in Africa,* ed. Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Rachel Angogo Kanyoro (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), 188.

[53] Mchami, *The Practice of Church Discipline*.

As such, finding oneself under church discipline can be automatic, as suggested in one of the diocesan constitutions above. The lack of a special liturgy can also, in a way, be justified in the expectation that, in case one does not impose discipline by his/herself an executing official, among whom could be a church elder, pastor or bishop[54], will declare that church discipline must be in place. One could also add, as alluded to above, that the lack of a suspending liturgy makes the practice less conspicuous and temporary, thus differentiating church discipline from excommunication which is more remarkable. Notwithstanding the foregoing arguments, this lack may create the feeling that the practice lacks clear boundaries or definition.

The Ethics of Church Discipline: A Speck in the Brother's Eye

With the foregoing discussion on church discipline as regards issues, practices and flaws one is prone to ask is not church discipline against Christian ethics? And considering the fallen state of man as manifest in Luther's discussion of the seventh commandment, should the practice of church discipline not be likened to a man with a log in his eye finding fault with a speck in a brother's eye?

Ethics is part of Christian theology.[55] As such ethics calls for reflection on Christian conduct. According to

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[54] See Mchami, *The Practice of Church Discipline*.
[55] See Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Chichester, West Sussex: Blackwell, 2017), 435-436.

Nessan, the heart of Lutheran ethics involves serving neighbours. [56] Such an ethic is thus one of love, and *imitation Christi*.

The discussion on the ethics of church discipline in the ELCT focuses on – two positions namely; 1. the nature or essence of church discipline *per se* and 2. the practice of church discipline. Beginning with the first position it is clear that a life lived in a community needs strictures. Although Christians and Lutherans in particular are called unto freedom, this freedom is not absolute. The Lutheran understanding of freedom is freedom *from* to freedom *to*. In order to make a difference Christians need some kind of differentiation, and this is what is noticeable in the essence of church discipline *per se*. As such church discipline in itself is inherently good and ethical. It can, therefore, be argued that the problem, as noted in the discussion of the researches above, lies in the second position i.e., is the practice of church discipline, to which we now turn.

It can be argued that church discipline is practiced in order to enhance ethical living among church members. In turn, how church discipline is carried out determines the ethics of the practice itself. Expectations as to how people should orient their lives, and thus be considered ethical varies. A brief discussion of ethical theories or systems is thus pertinent here. According to Norlen, Christian ethics being not an exclusive system, stands in a

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[56] *Free in Deed: The Heart of Lutheran Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2022), 1.

broader context of other systems.[57] Ethical theories are classically grouped into three systems, namely *deontological* – which is duty oriented, *teleological* – which is goal oriented[58] and *areteological* – which is oriented toward development of character.[59] While adopting the *deontological* stance as evidenced in attending to duty or following the rule (exemplified in keeping the Ten Commandments), or employing the *teleolocical* position in calculating the benefits and losses of a course of action are important; the *areteological* position has been considered more in line with Lutheranism.[60] In other words, while it is important to keep the commandments and avoid doing harm to the neighbour and environment, character development is even more important. This informs the inner person, and equips a Christian with readiness important in handling challenges born of fast changing contexts.

Church discipline as practiced in the ELCT has tended to dwell more on the outer person i.e., being more *deontological.* This radical ethical approach is often combined with a deep sense of authoritarianism. The Lutheran tenets of freedom, justification by faith, and priesthood of all believers are thus undermined, resulting in the masking of and contradicting with Lutheran identity. Church discipline has also tended to be more

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[57] Gunnar Norlén, *The Christian and the Ethical Life: On Being a Christian in Multicultural World*, Makumira Text Book Series (Usa River, Tanzania: Research Institute of Makumira University College, 2003), 39.

[58] Norlén, *The Christian and the Ethical Life*, 45.

[59] Nessan, *Free in Deed*, 5.

[60] See Nessan, *Free in Deed*, 5.

individualistic in casting the blame more on the 'offender' rather than the community. As such the practice misses the communitarian spirit characteristic of traditional Africa. The communitarian spirit enabled an 'offender' to be reconciled with the 'offended' through mediatory efforts of relatives, friends or neighbours. In addition, some objects such as plants[61] could be used in traditional Africa as signs of remorse by the 'offender' when presented to the 'offended'. As such efforts were made to inculcate a penitent spirit in the 'offender'. The manner in which church discipline is practiced among African Lutherans can and has thus, understandably, made people come up with negative conclusions against it. The question as to whether church discipline is about a man with a log in the eye finding fault with a brother with a speck in the eye, therefore, finds answers on the basis of which position one is considering. In the advent of fast and wide communication as evidenced in the world today, a 'lay' Christian, pastor or bishop who forcibly, unlovingly, and indiscreetly enforces church discipline, while s/he is, unlike in the old times, 'screened' by multiple eyes, is looking for a speck in the brother's eye.

Conclusion

The paradoxical practice of church discipline in todays enlightened church calls for concern. The history of church discipline paints a picture of a community

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[61] E.g., i*sale* (*dracaena species*) were used among the Chagga people in Northern Tanzania for this purpose.

attempting to make stark differentiation in behaviour between members of the faith community, and the rest of the society. Those who deviated from the norm were reverting to darkness. They were treated in a manner that made them feel the chills of being under discipline. They were black sheep in a flock of white sheep. The practice then was a teaching device. It may also be argued that the practice of sharp differentiation works better in a context of the 'new born' who need pressure from outside i.e., those who can afford only milk not solid food. Church discipline that is strictly enforced signifies immaturity.

Questions linger regarding the validity of church discipline in view of the transparency brought by the communication media today. For example, who should be under church discipline a young woman impregnated out of wedlock or a pastor or government who has embezzled public money meant for a dispensary. What precipitates the young woman's problem is the visible baby bump. But that belongs to the past! Today people can tell with fair accuracy that what the pastor owns was gotten through illegal means. And more so, the probability that there are thieves in our congregations who are swindling public money that was meant for social services including health and precipitating deaths of innocent people is high.

In view of the weaknesses observed in the practice of church discipline questions as to whether it should continue being practiced or not, and if practiced what should be the issues and extent of the practice, linger? Contrary to those who consider it obsolete, church

discipline should be upheld. Much like we would shy off from letting go of the law in the Bible, lets uphold the essence of church discipline.

But this should go together with teaching and empowerment of those who have been the most vulnerable to the practice of church discipline. The wording of the different constitutions of the dioceses is clear regarding the avenues for confessing. The Bible and the Lutheran doctrine are clear on how we are justified. Self-discipline as suggested in some of the previous researched, should be emphasized. Church discipline in the understanding of suspension should never be equated to excommunication which can be only be justified in matters of informed denial of one's faith. Even with this, the seeking of the erring brother should not cease.

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The Response of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania to Girls' Migration from Iringa Rural Areas to Big Cities in Tanzania

Irene Msalilwa and Faustin Mahali

Abstract

This case study represents how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania deals with the problem of girls migrating from rural areas to cities in Tanzania. The Iringa region is commonly known as a place where girls are recruited or sometimes trafficked to big cities for jobs like household domestics and barmaids. Some studies previously were made from social and economic perspectives, but there have been no direct studies dealing with the problem of migration from the church or done from a religious perspective. For this article the authors drew from a Master thesis written by I. Lunyamaso and supervised by F. Mahali that engaged perspectives from parents and guardians on the ease of allowing their children to migrate into cities for jobs that risked their lives. The study applied in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis from local government and church institutions. This study found that people within the church are aware of the problem of girls migrating from rural areas in Iringa, Tanzania, to big cities, but they did not have direct diaconal or pastoral responses against the negative effects

of girls' migration to big cities. This article suggests that for the church to respond to this problem, it needs to enrich its diaconal engagement with the Lutheran theological perspective of grace that guarantees the empowerment and wellness of all people regardless of their gender differences. Such a perspective will help the church to address the problem of gender parity in their communities and congregations, as well as engage in confronting injustice based on gender differences.

Key Words

Introduction

The Iringa region has been in the spotlight for the migration of people before and after independence.[1] This background provides a clue that families in the rural areas of the Iringa District have experienced movements of people between and from different parts of the region. This trend has caught up with adolescent girls between ages 13 and 19, migrating to cities to look for jobs that will give them wages to sustain themselves and their families back home. These movements raise missiological

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[1] Daniel Chongolo, "MARUFUKU KUTOA MA-HOUSE GIRL IRINGA". Instagram, post by Nipashetz, 30th May 2023, https://www.instagram.com/p/Cs3jpafsRwC/. In this post it is reported that the secretary of the ruling party Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) forbids parents and guardians to allow girls to go for house girl jobs.

challenges for the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Iringa Diocese, and social, economic, and pastoral concerns for the whole community. This article about the church's response to girls' migration from Iringa rural to big cities in Tanzania was designed against this background.[2] In the course of girls migrating to big cities if they decide not to stay with their parents, girls face particular socio-economic and pastoral challenges to themselves and their families back home.[3] Some studies have been conducted to analyse the negative impact of girl's migration to big cities in Tanzania and how the church responded to this challenge.[4] These studies revealed the general social and economic effects of people migrating into cities without

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[2] The article is based on the first author's original research: Irene E. Msalilwa, "The Response of the Church to Girls' Migration from Iringa Rural to Big Cities in Tanzania: The Case of ELCT Iringa Diocese" (Master of Theology thesis, Usa River, Tanzania, Tumaini University Makumira, 2023). The second author was main supervisor for this work.

[3] Esther W. Dungumaro, "Consequences of Female Migration for Families in Tanzania," *African Review of Economics and Finance* 5, no. 1 (2013): 55–56.

[4] Dungumaro, *Consequences of Female Migration*; Milline J. Mbonile, "Migration and Structural Change in Tanzania: The Case of Makete District" (Ph.D. thesis, Liverpool, Great Britain, University of Liverpool, 1993); Cuthbert K. Omari, *Rural Women, Informal Sector, and Household Economy in Tanzania*, WIDER Working Papers (Helsinki: World Institute for Development Economics Research, 1989), 1–75; E. A. Massawe, "Rural Urban Migration: Problems and Challenges to the ELCT-Northern Diocese Karatu District" (Bachelor of Divinity thesis, Usa River, Tanzania, Makumira University College, 2003); B. Sevetu, "Youth Unemployment in ELCT-Iringa Diocese" (Master of Theology thesis, Usa River, Tanzania, Makumira University College, 2005); N. Mwakapusya, "A Hagar in Tanzania: A Study of the Situation of House Girls in Coastal Deanery: A Study from NED-ELCT" (Master of Theology thesis, Usa River, Tanzania, Tumaini University Makumira, 2019).

clearly pointing out that girls were more vulnerable than boys.

This article presents the significance of Msaliwa's research findings on the church's response to girls' migration from rural Iringa to big cities in Tanzania.[5] This investigation assumed that based on a missiological and diaconal agendas, the church has a role to play in the task of equipping girls with life skills that enable them to confront and become resilient against the negative effects of migrating to cities.

The Problem of Girls Migrating from Rural Areas to Big Cities in Tanzania

Several factors have been identified as causes for girls migrating to big cities.[6] Girls migrated due to a lack of economic chances, denial of property ownership, and discrimination based on social and cultural constructs.[7] The study conducted in Iringa's rural areas considered push factors that lead people to migrate to other areas, such as unemployment, poverty, dense population

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[5] World Health Organization, *WHO Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women: Initial Results on Prevalence, Health Outcomes and Women's Responses* (Geneva, 2005) defines adolescence age to range between the ages of 10 and 19 years, to which many countries agree, including Tanzania (WHO, Geneva). This paper, also, considers the range of adolescence between ten and 19.

[6] Big cities refer to urban areas with administrative and business activities. In this paper, they include but are not limited to: Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, Mwanza, Mbeya, Arusha, and Dodoma.

[7] Milline J. Mbonile and Hellen A. Lihawa, "Rural-Urban Female Migration in Tanzania: A Case of Dar Es Salaam City," *Utafiti* 3, no. 2 (1996): 169.

compared to available resources, poor living conditions, and other economic, political, and social upheavals that lead to the displacement of people.[8] On the other hand, improved living conditions that foster social justice and economic well-being attract people to stay in a place and, hence, are considered pull factors.[9]

African cities have been viewed as places for employment opportunities and attract many skilled and unskilled young boys and girls as a place to live.[10] It has been reported that many primary school leavers or those who drop out of school migrate into cities for non-farming jobs.[11] The given studies largely uphold economic factors as a push for many young people to go to cities, especially those with primary-level education or below.

Nevertheless, beyond economics there are other relevant aspects as well. Unemployment is one among these. Furthermore, the patriarchal system privileges men more than women on their way of migrating into cities, in general. Nevertheless, in Tanzania the majority of migrants is female. This is supported by "The United Republic of Tanzania Migration and Urbanization Report 2015: 2012 Population and Housing Census." This report indicates that,

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[8] Msalilwa, *The Response of the Church to Girls' Migration*, 16–19.

[9] Msalilwa, *The Response of the Church to Girls' Migration*, 17.

[10] Hugh Wenban-Smith, "Population Growth, Internal Migration and Urbanisation in Tanzania, 1967- 2012: Phase 2," Final Report (London: International Growth Centre, September 2015), 19.

[11] Mbonile and Lihawa, *Rural-Urban Female Migration*, 173.

"[m]igration is age and sex selective... historically, there have been more male than female migrants... This is not the case in Tanzania, because the results of 2012 PHC indicate that there were more females than males in internal migration which shows change in migration patterns by sex... The feminization of migration in Tanzania is, as has been documented also in other countries on the African continent, driven by young, unmarried women with low [level] of formal education who are recruited as maids and nannies in urban areas, as well as educated young women who come to urban areas to study and to look for a job which matches their education."[12]

Despite not having male privilege, women withdraw into migration because of systematic patriarchal abuses, e.g. forced marriages. Others fled after being stigmatised as promiscuous when they have sought support through relationships outside of wedlock.[13] This gendered perspective of migration is important for building a context in which the Iringa Diocese of the Evangelical

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[12] Director General, National Bureau of Statistics and Chief Government Statistician, "The United Republic of Tanzania Migration and Urbanization Report 2015: 2012 Population and Housing Census: Volume IV," Migration and Urbanization Monograph (Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar, January 2015).

[13] George F. Masanja gives reasons of girls' migration to cities that include "... harshness of rural life, residence in patrilocal (socio-cultural) [regions], witchcraft accusations, existence of unwanted marriage, and loss of a husband." George F. Masanja, "Gendered Migration and the Urban Informal Sector: A Case Study of Mwanza City, Tanzania," *Huria: Journal of the Open University of Tanzania* 12, no. 1 (2012): 179:

Lutheran Church in Tanzania responds to the challenge of girls migrating to big cities in Tanzania.

The Response of the Church to Girls' Migration from Iringa Rural Areas to Big Cities

The above context presents the complexity of how the issue of girls migrating to big cities has been overshadowed by superficially comparing the economic statuses of males and females migrating into cities.[14] Few research studies have demonstrated girls' vulnerability is more prevalent than boys when they migrate into big cities.[15] This is probably the place to begin with when dealing with how the church responds to girls' migration into big cities. A brief analysis of the position of the church in dealing with this problem is presented in this part. This section also sees the church's theological and pastoral potential in addressing the problem. The crucial question is how the church has engaged in changing the recruitment and trafficking of girls for jobs in cities.

The study on the church's role in responding to the challenge of girls' migration into big cities builds its theological framework on the hope for life in abundance on earth and eschatological eternal life for all people, female and male.[16] It was shown in the study that the ELCT, Iringa Diocese, had introduced many documents that verify its commitment to realise this missiological and

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[14] Masanja, *Gendered Migration and the Urban Informal Sector*, 189–190.

[15] Dungumaro, *Consequences of Female Migration*, 51–56.

[16] Msalilwa, *The Response of the Church to Girls' Migration*, 9.

diaconal vision. [17] The diocese had shown its zeal to address the social and economic challenges that youth in general face without considering the gendered plight of girls' experiences.[18]

It has been observed that churches in Africa have some services related to mitigating the plights of migration. Still, those services are poorly coordinated and lack a sustainable plan for responding to the problem.[19] It means that dealing with migrating people has not been taken seriously other than having a general view of *diakonia* to the stranger. Westerby's field study showed that many people knew what the church was supposed to do to mitigate the problem. However, as it will be reported below, the study showed that the church lacked a concrete programme for preventing the migration of at risk girls from Iringa's rural areas to big cities.

This study found that the ELCT — Iringa Diocese had documents addressing these concerns, such as: the constitution, a strategic plan, and a general mission statement for serving all humankind, leading them to achieve a prosperous life and protecting them from all

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[17] Msalilwa, *The Response of the Church to Girls' Migration*, 47–48.

[18] Msalilwa, *The Response of the Church to Girls' Migration*, 48.

[19] Rachel Westerby, "Southern African Bishops' Conference Coordinates Church Response to the Needs of Migrants and Refugees," The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), May 6, 2023, https://www.icmc.net/2023/05/06/southern-african-bishops-conference-coordinates-church-response-to-the-needs-of-migrants-and-refugees/. The statement of the conference says, "While we found some existing services and assistance, there was a real lack of a coordinated, sustainable Church response to the situation of refugees and migrants in South Africa."

sorts of injustices. [20] Within this context, other youth programmes made church leaders be aware of the problem of girls migrating from Iringa rural areas to big cities.[21] It was also found that families wanted their girls to migrate to big cities to look for job opportunities to earn money for themselves and their extended families. However, when seeking to mitigate the problem, church leaders identified the disadvantage of girls migrating into cities without any orientation regarding the adverse side of life in the cities, which was problematic.[22]

A Lutheran Missiological and Diaconal Approach in Addressing the Negative Impact of Girls' Migration to Big Cities

The plausible findings of this study show that leaders of the ELCT Iringa Diocese were aware of the problem of girls migrating to cities. [23] However, respondents suggested only ways to mitigate the problem without indicating the gender-related injustices that were leading to the negative impact of girls' migration into cities.[24] Some studies mentioned above had found out that injustice experienced by girls is based on a social construct of their gender. Right from birth, girls are put in

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[20] Msalilwa, *The Response of the Church to Girls' Migration*, 47–48

[21] Msalilwa, *The Response of the Church to Girls' Migration*, 49

[22] Msalilwa, *The Response of the Church to Girls' Migration*, 50.

[23] Msalilwa, *The Response of the Church to Girls' Migration*, 66.

[24] Msalilwa, *The Response of the Church to Girls' Migration*, 66–70. There is a mention of advocacy from respondents, it but does not include how advocacy has to be conducted to prevent recruiting or trafficking girls for risky jobs in cities.

a subordinate position compared to boys and, therefore, denied equal social position, inheritance of property, and stigmatised spiritually and psychologically as subjects of men.[25] This situation reveals that the ELCT, in general, and the Iringa Diocese, in particular, have not implemented the gender justice policy developed by the global communion of the Lutheran World Federation.[26] Such lack of implementation is problematic according to the worldwide discussion on mission and diakonia. This calls for the need to think holistically when doing mission and providing services in our context without discriminating people based on their race, gender, and economic status, and without destroying God's creation in which people live for generations.[27]

Lutheran traditions cherish its theological lens, which acknowledges the "priesthood of all believers" as a

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[25] Msalilwa, *The Response of the Church to Girls' Migration*, 63.

[26] Elaine Neuenfeldt, ed., *Gender Justice Policy* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation - A Communion of Churches, 2013), 7–9.

[27] A breakthrough in the discussion about active engagement of the church in mission and diakonia has been to act from below (the context) and take seriously the agony of people suffering from injustices as a means to deal with the root causes of the problem rather than treating the symptoms or diseases, see Jack Messenger, ed., *Mission in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, Department for Mission and Development, 2004), 32–42. See also Kjell Nordstokke, ed., *Diakonia in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment: An LWF Contribution to the Understanding and Practice of Diakonia* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, Department for Mission and Development, 2004), 40–92.

basis of human equality before God.[28] According to Martin Luther, "… a Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all."[29] This thesis justifies the notion that all Christians are equal.[30] Luther's traditions did not wrestle with whether men were superior and women inferior.[31] However, Luther's logical thinking was that justification does not depend on the human construct of social customs, laws, and virtues, which makes it clear that Lutheran Christians are open to reflecting upon their attitudes towards women and marginalised people. This undertaking may contribute to strengthening Lutheran engagement in the discussion of gender inequality in global and local, public spaces.

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[28] Faustin Mahali, "The Relationship between Ecclesiology, Ministry, Vocation and Good Governance: A Case of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania," *Africa Theological Journal* 38, no. 1 (2021): 43.

[29] Martin Luther, *Three Treatises*, trans. Charles M. Jacobs, A. T. W. Steinhäuser, and W. A. Lambert, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 277.

[30] This conclusion does not mean that Luther treated men and women equally.

[31] Probably a blame today that Luther justified the subordination of women comes from his commentary on Galatians 3:28; Martin Luther, *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1939), 79–80. Commenting this text Luther states, "… [w]hether a servant performs his duties well; whether those who are in authority govern wisely; whether a man marries, provides for his family, and is an honest citizen; whether a woman is chaste, obedient to her husband, and a good mother: all these advantages do not qualify a person for salvation. These virtues are commendable, of course; but they do not count points for justification. All the best laws, ceremonies, religions, and deeds of the world cannot take away sin guilt, cannot dispatch death, cannot purchase life." He seems to commend the status quo of women as being socially bound to taking care of children and being obedient to their husbands.

Today, many African theologians agree men and women are equal before God and before each other. However, a paradox is that the empowerment of women is still hindered by social obligations like family care.[32] A common belief is that when you empower women, then you empower the whole family. Often, however, even well-intentioned statements may hinder gender justice. Sayings like, "behind a successful man, there is a woman," serves the purpose of degrading women instead of uplifting them. Generally, this labelling does not differ from the Lutheran theological tradition above and biblical interpretations that justify the subordination of women. Nevertheless, the Bible is also clear about the equality of humanity before God. Theological discourses shall, thus, achieve equal involvement of boys and girls, men and women, in the affairs of individual and social well-being.[33]

From the perspective of women theologians, the African context provides an opportunity of thinking about God, who has created gender, while God has no gender.[34] It is not true that African cultures and worldviews are simply and entirely patriarchal. Instead, there is the

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[32] Mercy A. Oduyoye, *African Women's Theologies, Spirituality, and Healing: Theological Perspectives from the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians*, 2018 Madeleva Lecture in Spirituality (New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2019), 79.

[33] Oduyoye, *African Women's Theologies*, 84.

[34] Oduyoye, *African Women's Theologies*, 140. Oduyoye, while aware of the repressive constructs of patriarchy against women, she still thinks that theological perception of God among Africans is holistic and God is not thought to be neither male nor female or in between when she says, "… [t]he gendered pronoun does not exist in many African language…God is not a sexual being and is without gender."

chance for African feminism and/or womanism to argue for the idea that God's encounter with human beings is holistic and impartial. The systematic error of a masculine-dominated understanding of God has been culturally and semantically affirmed by an uncritical reception of Western cultures that embraced the masculine as a way of expansion of Western empires (or kingdoms). The Lutheran church, being the product of this context, has not escaped from dichotomising God into masculine-feminine categories and, hence, inculcated male-dominant Christianity, whereby the interests of women are always perceived from the perspective of male domination. It is no wonder that the respondents about the role of the church in liberating girls who are trapped in city life still favour male domination and did not consider gender disparity a pushing factor for the girls to attempt new life in cities.

It is obvious from this study that an effective approach should be developed to prevent negative movements of girls to cities. There should be a sound theology based on the Lutheran traditions that foster God's emancipation of both men and women as equally created in the image of God. To achieve this, the church, especially the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and its leadership which is still predominantly male, has to contextualize the LWF gender justice policy and interpret and contextualise the two LWF documents on mission and diakonia, and come out with workable solutions to address the problem of recruiting and trafficking of girls for sexual and economic exploitation.

The urgency of the church to respond to the challenges faced by girls who migrate to cities has to begin with empowering them with faith that fosters behaviours that nurture wellness in life.[35] God's empowerment of all humanity is crucial to liberating men and women from evil. This is reflected more in the *Diakonia in Context* document, where "it emphasises that women and men are made in the image of God, with equal stewardship goals, and are baptized into equal communion and energized by the Holy Spirit to be equally responsible for the whole of God's creation."[36] Empowerment based on human rights is not as powerful as the spiritual empowerment based on what God has provided through bestowed gifts and sacrificial action for all humans. This resonates with the predominant African religious worldview of the holistic view of God's encounter with men and women through the framework of love. Despite patriarchal elements in African primal religion, the implication can be seen that a holistic understanding of a loving God breaks through all human constructs against women.

A relevant theological perspective from Lutheran tradition is the interpretation of the third article of the Apostles' Creed, where Luther speaks of God's inclusive sanctification and providence of spiritual gifts to all Christians (implicitly all men and women). [37] The

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[35] God empowers all individual Christian men and women to carry out the mission activities of the church; Messenger, *Mission in Context*, 35.

[36] Nordstokke, *Diakonia in Context*, 67.

[37] Henry E. Jacobs, ed., *The Large Catechism of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publication Society, 1911), 68–72.

understanding is that the Holy Spirit endows or imparts spiritual gifts to anyone without partiality, which results in making women feel accommodated and accepted.[38] So, for the Iringa Diocese to have a breakthrough in improving gender justice at the grassroots level, it may foster the understanding and work for the practical implementation of such pneumatological affirmation. All humans, including women, are provided with the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the same way as men are provided.

Having discussed the Lutheran possible contextualisation of African thinking about God and its advantage against Western Christianity enthroned with patriarchal constructs, it is obvious that this Lutheran theological lens has to be embraced today. Christian education will mainstream gender equality in its teaching to reflect God, who is impartial and empowers all men and women.

Conclusion

First, other non-religious studies in Tanzania have provided clear results when they discovered socio-cultural aspects to be part of the problem of girls migrating to big cities. In our view, it has to be made clear that girls who migrate to cities face different challenges of gender-based discrimination than boys, therefore

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[38] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "Transformed, Freed, Empowered: The Spirit's Work in the Gifting and Vocation of All Believers," in *"We Believe in the Holy Spirit"*: *Global Perspectives on Lutheran Identities*, ed. Chad M. Rimmer and Cheryl M. Peterson, LWF Documentation (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2021), 201–203.

reducing the chances of their wellbeing. In this respect, well-coordinated campaigns within Lutheran congregations are needed in order to be able to meet the challenge of girls' migration into cities. In order to achieve this goal, rural and urban Lutheran dioceses and other churches must cooperate.

Second, it is a crucial discovery of this article that the Evangelical Lutheran Church— Iringa Diocese has not yet implemented the Gender justice policy and has failed to respond sufficiently to the problem of girls' migration from Iringa rural areas to big cities in Tanzania. The Lutheran idea of the justification of all human beings by grace and not by the works of customs and laws, and, furthermore, the pneumatological affirmation of the giftedness of both, males and females, must inform a way of overcoming gender-based disadvantaging of girls. Furthermore, in many ways, the Holy Spirit seems to be perceived by many African women as resonating with the genderless naming of God in some of traditional African religions. If the Lutheran Church, locally and globally, realises the contextualisation of such gender-inclusive perception in its practice, it will overcome the practice of favouring patriarchal over matriarchal social systems and accept without stereotyping that all people are equal before God.

Lastly, this study reveals that more efforts are needed to develop theological instruction that responds to the problems and vulnerability of women in society. This theology has to consider a holistic view provided by a concept of salvation in the Trinity that is impartial and

without prejudice. The action taken by Christians against discrimination of girls who may migrate to cities or elsewhere could be extended to other public spaces where women are often degraded and thought of as second-class people.

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Speaking in Tongues in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania: A Mixed-methods Study of Interpretations of and Attitudes to *Glossolalia* among the Theology Students of Tumaini University Makumira

Jörg Zehelein, Ruth M. Kilango, Nestar J. Kyobya, Aumsuri J. Masuki, Baraka M. Zakayo

Abstract

This co-authored article explores interpretations of and attitudes to *glossolalia* as unintelligible, non-semantic language among the students of theology at Tumaini University Makumira as part of the broader phenomenon of the Pentecostalisation of mainline churches in Africa. We conceptualised *glossolalia* as connected with the New Testament idea of spiritual gifts and African cultural practices but also as learned social behaviour. A mixed-methods approach combines a quantitative survey with a qualitative study providing further in-depth interpretations. The combined findings reveal that half of the students have spoken in tongues themselves (especially women) and that most of the respondents appreciate *glossolalia* as a spiritual gift and, more or less, want it to be practiced in the church and not only privately. Furthermore, respondents employed a questionable distinction between genuine *glossolalia* and

fake *glossolalia* with only the latter causing negative effects. One of these is the discrimination of non-glossolalists as inferior to tongue-speakers which causes serious conflicts in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). As remedies of malpractices, respondents emphasised translation of *glossolalia* and intensified teachings. The researchers could also show that African cultural resources may provide a positive view of speaking in tongues and its translation. The authors discussed these findings with reference to research from New Testament studies, African cultural perspectives, and contemporary socio-scientific research. This article concluded that awareness of educational but also political aspects, integration of glossolalic practices and the curtailing of malpractices through teaching and socio-political awareness are needed and should be considered by the ELCT.

Key Words

Introduction

Speaking in tongues is a controversial issue in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). Practices of and conversations about this religious exercise are linked with the growth of African Neo-Pentecostalism and charismatic movements that take

place even within the ELCT. According to this trend rituals like healings, prophecy, sacred use of salt, oil, water, dancing, but also speaking in tongues are appealing for many believers. The latter, as we define it, represents the phenomenon of believers vocalising utterances like, "hack shukuna ash tuu kononai; mee upsukuna shill Adonai," that do not symbolise linguistic or semantic meaning.[1] Rather, they transcend the boundaries of ordinary language.

Within the ELCT, speaking in tongues enjoys growing influence on the one hand, but also leads to tensions and conflicts one the other hand. Believers who speak in tongues often regard themselves as "spiritual" and with it maintain a divisive line between speakers and non-speakers of tongues. The latter may regard glossolalists as imposters and often show little acceptance of their practices.

Even the ELCT's academic learning institutions are intertwined with discourses about speaking in tongues. They register students whose views are of particular interest to us as they soon will be (or already are) leaders of the ELCT. In our study we selected the Faculty of Theology at Tumaini University Makumira (TUMA), a

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[1] James K. A. Smith, 'Tongues as "Resistance Discourse": A Philosophical Perspective', in *Speaking in Tongues: Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge, Studies in Pentecostal and Charismatic Issues (Bletchley, Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster Press, 2006), 103. We differentiate speaking in tongues (=glossolalia) from xenolalia or xenoglossy. The latter two terms signify a miraculous emergence of the ability to speak a foreign language (like, e.g. Portuguese) without having learnt or acquired it over time (see Philip E. Blosser et al., *Speaking in Tongues: A Critical Historical Examination: Volume 1: The Modern Redefinition of Tongues* [Pickwick Publications, an imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2022], 52).

prominent academic theological faculty in Tanzania, from where the authors of this study are.[2] In that context we asked ourselves the central question: What are current interpretations of and attitudes towards glossolalia among TUMA theology students?

Methodologically, we opted for a mixed methods study consisting of a survey with some basic quantitative insights and a qualitative investigation through interviews.[3] This empirical research was embedded in a review of some relevant literature and published research on speaking in tongues and the discussion of its results from this background. We regard this research as doing contextual theology within the discipline of practical theology as we bring biblical, African cultural, socio-scientific research, and our own empirical study insights into a conversation.[4]

Our thesis is that glossolalia may be an important aspect of the liturgical practices of the ELCT in regard to our respondents' high appreciation of speaking in tongues as spiritual gift and by taking biblical and cultural perspectives into account. With regard to our findings gained from research among the theology students at TUMA, we argue that, despite the prevalence of malpractices, by sound teachings and awareness of socio-

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[2] The study was conducted as a practical research project of a course in research design and reports, taught at TUMA by J. Zehelein, the other authors were registered for this course.

[3] See Mario L. Small, "How to Conduct a Mixed Methods Study: Recent Trends in a Rapidly Growing Literature," *Annual Review of Sociology* 37 (2011): 57–86.

[4] See Stephen B. Bevans, *Essays in Contextual Theology*, Theology and Mission in World Christianity 12 (Leiden Boston: Brill, 2018), 30-46.

political factors glossolalia should be considered a beneficial aspect in the ELCT's worship.

Glossolalia as a Biblical Practice

The crucial passages from the New Testament are Acts 2:1-13 (Day of Pentecost) and 1 Corinthians 12–14 (Pauline instructions on Speaking in tongues). [5] We hold that the phenomenon of Pentecost is basically xenolalia, the outstanding and/or miraculous event of a person being able to speak a foreign language formerly unknown to her/him. [6] In the context of 1 Corinthians there is a controversy about whether *glossais lalein* in 1 Corinthians 12–14 refers to unintelligible speech.[7] With scholars, like Philip Esler and Lee A. Johnson, there are good reasons to argue that the Corinthian experiences and Pauline instructions, on the one hand, and contemporary, religious glossolalia, on the other hand, stand in continuity.[8] Paul suggests that speaking in tongues is a divine gift, however, it is part of a broader variety of

[5] Max Turner, "Early Christian Experience and Theology of 'Tongues': A New Testament Perspective," in *Speaking in Tongues: Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge, Studies in Pentecostal and Charismatic Issues (Bletchley, Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster Press, 2006), 1.

[6] Fergus J. King and Selwyn Selvendran, "Rhubarb, Rhubarb, Alleluia, Amen: Xenolalia, Glossolalia, and Neurophysiology," *Biblical Theology Bulletin: Journal of Bible and Culture* 49, no. 2 (2019): 89; Turner, Early Christian Experience, 4.

[7] See John-Christian Eurell, "The Nature of Pauline Glossolalia and Its Early Reception," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 72, no. 2 (2019): 182–90.

[8] Lee A. Johnson, "Women and Glossolalia in Pauline Communities: The Relationship between Pneumatic Gifts and Authority," *Biblical Interpretation* 21, no. 2 (2013): 200–202.

equally important *charismata* (spiritual gifts given to believers) according to 1 Cor 12:7–10. Thus, there is no reason to hold the ability of speaking in tongues in higher regard than other gifts. Furthermore, Paul instructs believers to practice glossolalia publicly in the church only if it is translated into ordinary language (1 Cor 14:27–28). In Corinth, there might be ecstatic glossolalia, however, Paul's instructions imply that the practice of glossolalia can be controlled (1 Cor 14:32). With Sarah Hinlicky Wilson holding that even today "charismata are real" we consider Pauline teachings relevant for addressing current use and misuse of speaking in tongues today.[9]

Glossolalia in African Perspective

Scholars, like Ogbu Kalu and Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, stress that speaking in tongues does not just originate from the early Pentecostal movement in the USA, i.e., the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles.[10] The latter had tremendous impact on the spread of the global Pentecostal movement and the promotion of glossolalia, indeed. Nevertheless, in Africa cultural features were

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[9] Blosser et al., *Speaking in Tongues*, 44–45.

[10] Nathan Iddrisu Samwini, "Missionary Tradition, African Worldviews and the Growth of the Pentecostal Movement: Implications for the Fellowship with German Churches in Mission and Development," in *Encounter beyond Routine: Cultural Roots, Cultural Transition, Understanding of Faith and Cooperation in Development; International Consultation, Academy of Mission, Hamburg, 17th - 23rd January 2011*, ed. Owe Boersma and Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland e. V., Dokumentation / EMW (Hamburg: EMW, 2011), 42; Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 97–98.

influential as well. Anderson M. Chebanne points to APR (African Primal Religions) in which traditional healers used to make unintelligible utterances in order to symbolise their communication with the spirits. [11] AIC (African Independent Churches), as Solomon O. Ademiluka states, merged such glossolalic practices from African cultures and religions into their version of Africanised Christianity. [12] A more recent phenomenon, "Charismatisation," "Pentecostalisation" or "Lutheran Pentecostalism," [13] is also relevant. Mainline churches in Africa, like the ELCT, are increasingly entangled with African Neo-Pentecostalism that favours practices like glossolalia which were previously considered mainly relevant for Charismatics, Pentecostals, or AIC.[14] Against this background, Nyembo B. Ilunga requests mainline churches, such as the Roman Catholic Church of

[11] Anderson M. Chebanne, "The Language of the Spirit of the Spirit in the Language: A Preliminary Discussion of Glossolalia Practices in Some Botswana Churches," *Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion and Theology in Southern Africa* 92, no. 1 (2006): 170–171.

[12] Solomon O. Ademiluka, "The Nature of Glossolalia in the Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 45, no. 1 (2024): 4; Chebanne, Language of the Spirit, 170–171.

[13] Leita Ngoy, *Prosperity Gospel Redefined: The Impact of Charismatisation of the Mainline Churches in Tanzania* (Brill, Schöningh, 2025 [publication in progress]); Mookgo Solomon Kgatle and Mulalo Thilivhali Fiona Malema, "Pentecostalisation in the Devhula Lebowa Circuit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa: Towards Church Growth and Ecumenism," *Pharos Journal of Theology* 104, no. 1 (2023): 2–3; Johannes Zeiler, *Crafting Lutheran Pastors in Tanzania: Perceptions of Theological Education and Formation in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania*, Studia Missionalia Svecana (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2018), 149.

[14] Chebanne, *Language of the Spirit*, 167-177; Blosser et al., *Speaking in Tongues*, 139-147.

Lubumbashi, to embrace speaking in tongues as a viable expression of Christian faith in Africa.[15] However, there are also malpractices of spiritual gifts, such as glossolalia, in current African (Pentecostalised) Christianity that are addressed, e.g., by the All Africa Conference of Churches.[16]

Glossolalia in Socio-scientific Research

From an empirical perspective, glossolalia appears to be not just a unique feature of Christianity but rather a phenomenon that is possibly encountered in many religions or social settings.[17] Research on it can be categorised into three major approaches that were all developed around the beginning of the 1970s in Europe and North America.[18] The first was embodied by John Kildahl and perceives speaking in tongues as pathological phenomenon. Conversely, Felicitas Goodman, an anthropologist, classifies glossolalia as extraordinary

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[15] Nyembo Boya Ilunga, *Pentecostalisation as an Adaptation Strategy of the Catholic Church of Lubumbashi: A Missiological Perspective*, PhD Dissertation (Potchefstroom Campus: North-West University, 2022), 230.

[16] Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "On Captivity through Hollow and Deceptive Philosophy: Misleading Theologies and Christianity in 21st Century Africa," in *Addressing Contextual Misleading Theologies in Africa Today*, ed. Bosela E. Eale and Njoroge J. Ngige, Kindle, Studies in Mission (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2020), 39–41.

[17] See Heather Kavan, "Glossolalia and Altered States of Consciousness in Two New Zealand Religious Movements," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 19, no. 2 (2004): 171–84.

[18] See for the following elaborations Margaret M. Poloma, "Glossolalia, Liminality and Empowered Kingdom Building," in *Speaking in Tongues: Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge, Studies in Pentecostal and Charismatic Issues (Bletchley, Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster Press, 2006), 152.

behaviour. Her focus is on unusual practices in ecstatic, possession- or trance-like states of consciousness. A third approach, brought forth by linguist and Africanist William Samarin, perceives speaking in tongues as a language, though not an ordinary language with semantic intelligibility. [19] He holds that like any other language, glossolalia can be learned through a socialisation process.

For the empirical point of view, we consider Samarin's concept convincing. For studies have revealed that tongue-speakers suffer from psychological disorders to quite the same degree as non-glossolalists do, hence glossolalia is not essentially pathological.[20] Furthermore, though speaking in tongues may involve ecstasy and altered states of consciousness, it is not totally extraordinary, as a lot of glossolalists are regularly in control of what they do.[21] Even if believers claim that the ability of speaking in tongues is just a matter of individual giftedness, a socialisation process is most likely there. In support of that, Nicholas Harkness in a study from South Korea found:

> *"Christians in South Korea by and large learn to speak in tongues through group prayer [...], even if*

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[19] Evandro Bonfim, "Glossolalia and Linguistic Alterity: The Ontology of Ineffable Speech," *Religion and Society* 6, no. 1 (2015): 76–77.

[20] For a recent study that confutes the pathological approach see Szabolcs Kéri, Imre Kállai, and Katalin Csigó, "Attribution of Mental States in Glossolalia: A direct Comparison with Schizophrenia," *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2020): 1–9.

[21] Kavan, Glossolalia and Altered States, 181; B. Grady and K. M. Loewenthal, "Features Associated with Speaking in Tongues (Glossolalia)," *The British Journal of Medical Psychology* 70 (1997): 190.

they first produce glossolalia, or continue to practice it, alone."[22]

Speaking in tongues is, therefore, both a *private and a communal practice*. Glossolalia stands for a "... relationship of overwhelming intimacy, privacy, and secrecy."[23] It is a particular way of private prayer.[24] At the same time, it is a social issue. Speaking in tongues can be deliberately used to communally participate in public prayer while at the same time hiding the actual contents of the prayer from other worshippers.[25] Moreover, glossolalia can be a mark of social identity. It helps to distinguish the tongue-speaking community from non-glossolalists, whether within a congregation or between congregations.[26]

However, tongue-speaking does not only increase social bonding, but it can also lead to *divisions and*

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[22] Nicholas Harkness, "Glossolalia and Cacophony in South Korea: Cultural Semiosis at the Limits of Language," *American Ethnologist* 44, no. 3 (2017): 480. Harkness even referred to a pastor of Yoido Full Gospel church who presented a practical guide of how to introduce somebody to speaking in tongues by continuous and very quick repetition of the word "hallelujah" (Harkness, Glossolalia and Cacophony, 482).

[23] Harkness, *Glossolalia and Cacophony*, 484–485.

[24] Blosser et al., *Speaking in Tongues*, 43.

[25] Harkness, *Glossolalia and Cacophony*, 483. Harkness, furthermore, perceives glossolalia as a way of communicating with other tongue-speakers during public worship "... in terms of music-like, rhythmic joint engagement in this non-propositional speech." (Harkness, *Glossolalia and Cacophony*, 487)

[26] Zoro Dube, "Speaking in Tongues as Emigration: A Social-Psychological Understanding of Tongue Speaking Using Migration Theory," *Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion and Theology in Southern Africa* 110, no. 1 (2012): 249.

conflicts within communities.[27] Speaking in tongues can split an existing group into those who speak and those who do not speak. In African mainline churches, such divisive potential is linked with the understanding of tongue-speaking as part of the development of "Pentecostalisation" as a spiritual renewal movement. Leaders and church members who are not part of it may apply pressure to Pentecostalised groups. However, members of the latter may display feelings of pride and elitism.[28]

Beyond such divisions emerging because of speaking in tongues, glossolalia can also trade on already existing divisions, e.g. *gender*. Tongue-speaking women subject to society's patriarchy may escape this oppressive pressure within the church. Lee A. Johnson in her research about glossolalia among women in the Appalachian regions (USA) supports this thesis as she concludes that women find themselves

"*in that unique environment of the Pentecostal worship service where they can display otherwise unacceptable female behavior and, contrary to their tradition, acquire honor outside the home.*"[29]

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[27] Blosser et al., *Speaking in Tongues*, 61.

[28] Mookgo S. Kgatle and Thabang R. Mofokeng, "Towards a Decolonial Hermeneutic of Experience in African Pentecostal Christianity: A South African Perspective," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 75, no. 4 (2019): 4.

[29] Johnson, *Women and Glossolalia*, 206.

Thus, glossolalia as an honourable, but ab-normal practice is a chance for women to overcome patriarchal restrictions.

This subversive potential may also be relevant for *political existence*, in general. Zorodzai Dube in his article entitled "Speaking in Tongues as Emigration" observes:

> "*Through speaking in tongues, people believe that heaven is a place of refuge and that by speaking in tongues they escape the problems associated with the present world.*"[30]

This attitude can lead to escapism and apolitical existence as Kamenicky holds.[31] However, Dube detects subversive potential within emigration and, thus, considers glossolalia "... a form of protest and resistance against unjust structures."[32] Dube contextualises this idea from an African perspective and exemplarily refers to Zimbabwe under Mugabe's dictatorship. In such a constellation glossolalia may be a cryptic voice of protest.[33]

By summarising the outcome of this section about socio-scientific research on glossolalia, we can say that glossolalia can be considered a language (Samarin) that somebody is socialised into, ecstatic circumstances may, however, also play a role. Speaking in tongues is an

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[30] Dube, *Speaking in Tongues*, 252.

[31] Michael Austin Kamenicky, "The Dangers of Pentecostal Practice: On the Formative and Deformative Potential of Speaking in Tongues," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 32, no. 1 (2023): 60-63.

[32] Dube, *Speaking in Tongues*, 256.

[33] See also Smith, *Tongues as Resistance*, 81–110.

individual way of praying by unintelligible sounds, but it has also a communal dimension. It is a mark of social identity and can cause divisions and conflicts. Glossolalia may be politically relevant, not only as apolitical escapism, but also in terms of helping women to transcend patriarchal gender roles or subversive political protest.

Speaking in Tongues among students of theology at TUMA: A Simple Quantitative Survey

Methodological Remarks

The survey conducted for this essay follows the quantitative paradigm and intends to provide general insights and allows for checking correlations between variables and certain answers given.[34] Since our research population is quite small and comprises students of theology at Tumaini University Makumira with a total of just 169 students enrolled, we cannot claim that our survey is quantitative in terms of a large sample size. Nevertheless, the kind of data is quantitative; and our analysis, despite not using complex statistical procedures, follows the quantitative paradigm. TUMA theology students are from the ELCT in most cases, are enrolled for Bachelor, Master, and Ph.D. programmes and are required to take part in the religious life on campus, i.e., morning devotions and Sunday services with traditional Lutheran liturgy. There are also fellowship groups and choirs, some

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[34] Our design of a survey is informed by John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (New Delhi: SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific, 2014).

of them embracing Pentecostalised practices, including glossolalia.

In the questionnaire, we decided to control independent variables like age, gender, and status of being ordained or not. [35] Gender was a factor that literature review identified, age might be a further dimension that we hypothetically control, status of ordination often represents experiences with parish leadership and thus is also relevant.

As speaking in tongues is a hotly debated issue and safety about disclosing authentic views is an issue, we assured confidentiality, we facilitated an anonymous way of answering our questions, and we followed a data securing protocol.[36] By a variety of multiple-choice and check-box questions we asked for whether students have spoken in tongues already, and, given they did, what the impact of it on the individual believer was. We were also interested in views on what the meaning, function, and impact of glossolalia in/on the church is and to what extent it should be promoted in the church. A final open-ended question offered the chance to briefly state further perspectives and opinions on glossolalia.

The overall response rate is sufficient (40%) as we collected 67 responses out 169.[37] Almost all respondents

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[35] See a similar choice of independent variables in Felicity M. Gazowsky, "The Impact of the Spiritual Practice of Glossolalia on Affect" (Doctorate Thesis, Sacramento, California School of Professional Psychology: Alliant International University Sacramento, 2018), vii.

[36] For facilitating the survey, we used surveymonkey.com.

[37] Susan M.B. Morton et al., "In the 21st Century, What Is an Acceptable Response Rate?," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* 36, no.

answered all applicable questions. We hold, therefore, that our data is significant for drawing quantifiable conclusions about our research population. We collected information from students of the age groups 20-30 (38%), 31-40 (48%), and beyond 40 (14%). Especially the age group of 31-40 was represented to a significantly higher degree as compared to its prevalence in the total (35%). The rate of female respondents (22%) was almost the same as the percentage among the total population (24%). 85% of the respondents were not ordained, this rate is slightly higher than the distribution within the total (76%). However, all in all, the differences in the distribution of independent variables as represented in our sample are still acceptable and/or could be interpreted respectively.

Distribution of Answers

Responses to our first question, asking for personal experiences with glossolalia, revealed that only 45% never spoke in tongues, whereas 19% did in the past and 36% still practice it. Thus, more than half of the students of theology at TUMA that responded to our survey have personal experiences with speaking in tongues.

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2 (2012): 106–108. Furthermore, see Brooks Holtom et al., "Survey Response Rates: Trends and a Validity Assessment Framework," *Human Relations* 75, no. 8 (2022): 1560–84.

Have you ever spoken in tongues?
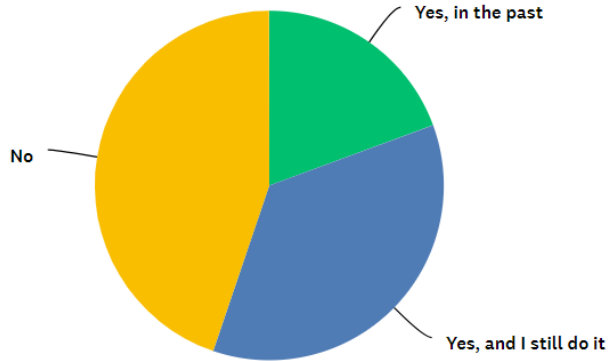
Answered: 67   Skipped: 0

Figure 1: Distribution of personal experiences with glossolalia

When these students were offered several answer options of what the impact of speaking in tongues on themselves was, the most frequent answer was "spiritual growth" (67%), followed by "having privacy with God" (39%), and "gaining spiritual visions and prophecies" (31%). Also, the experience of being engaged in spiritual battles is quite relevant (22%). These options that were ticked most often clearly display functions of glossolalia relevant to the believing individual. Answers that connect speaking in tongues with social or relational dimensions have significantly lower representation. Only 8% testify to having experienced a "sense of belonging to a spiritual community" by having spoken in tongues, and only 11% consider it relevant that a tongue-speaker may appear as

a "spiritual person" in the eyes of others. Just 6% regard glossolalia as crying out against problems in society, politics, or economics.

What is speaking in tongues in the church? (more than 1 answer possible!)
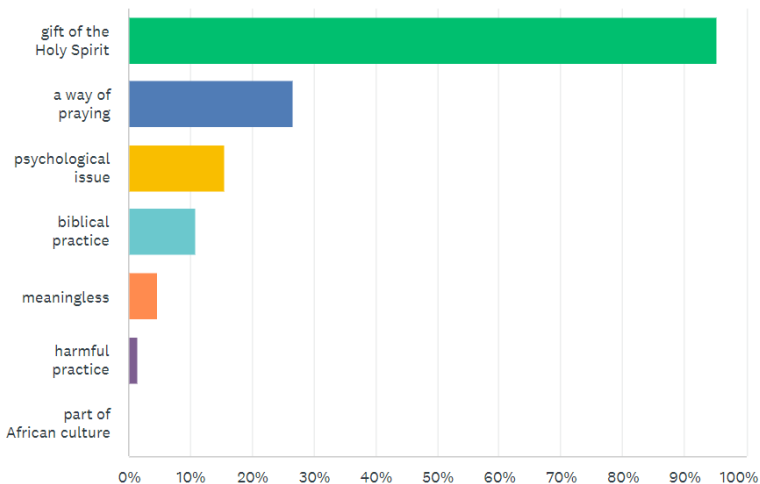
Answered: 64   Skipped: 3

Figure 2: The meaning of glossolalia in the church

When we asked "What is speaking in tongues in the church?" and offered multiple answer options almost all respondents (95%) appreciated glossolalia as a "gift of the Holy Spirit", 27% of all respondents understood it as a means of praying, and few respondents (11%) regarded it as a "biblical practice". A slightly bigger portion (16%) considered speaking in tongues a psychological phenomenon, however, most of them (8 out of 10) still embraced the idea of glossolalia being a gift of the Holy

Spirit. Of outstanding relevance is the fact that not a single respondent identified speaking in tongues as an *aspect of African culture.*

How does glossolalia affect the church? (more than 1 answer possible!)
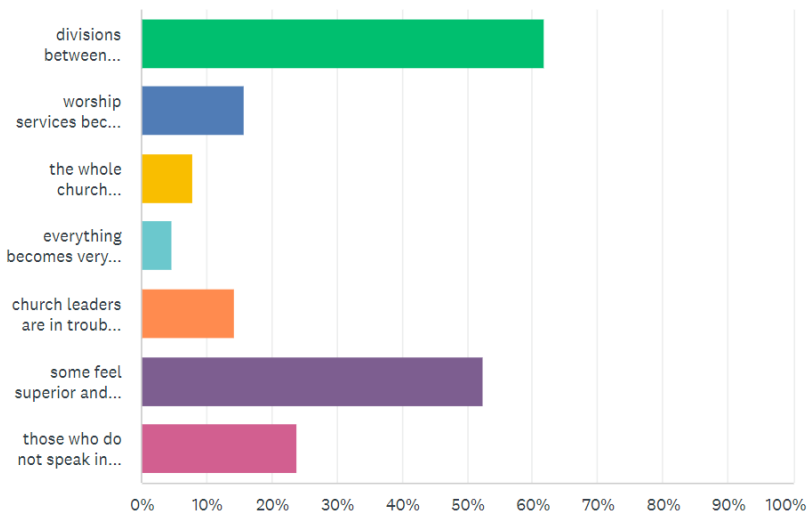
Answered: 63   Skipped: 4

Figure 3: Glossolalia and how it affects the church

When respondents were asked what the impact of the practice of speaking in tongues on the church is, the major finding is that glossolalia often has negative effects. Glossolalia leads to divisions between those who speak and those who do not speak in tongues as 62% of responses point out. More than half of the responses recognise that tongue-speakers have feelings of pride and

superiority (52%), whereas 24% identify envy on the side of those who do not practice glossolalia. The item "church leaders are in trouble to deal with conflicts" is almost as often represented (14%) as the only beneficial answer with a considerable rate: "worship service becomes more lively" (16%). All in all, respondents see the way how glossolalia affects the church in a predominantly negative light.

This finding stands in stark contrast with how respondents answered our last but one question about promoting glossolalia in church.
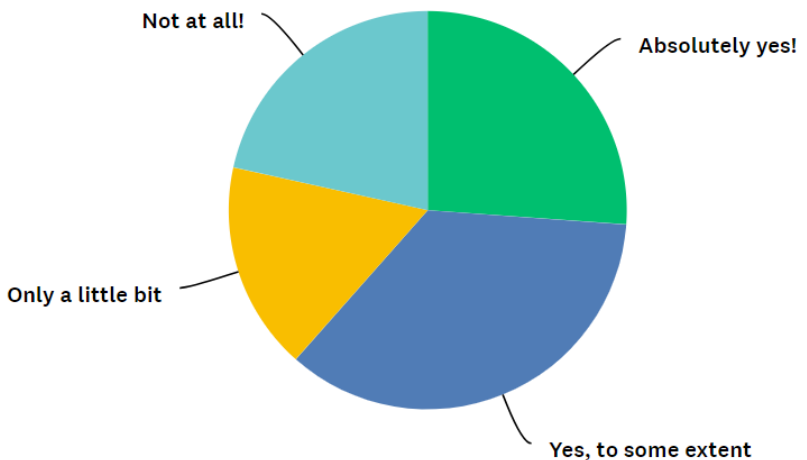

Figure 4: Promoting glossolalia in church (all responses)

Almost two thirds of all responses are positive (35%) or very positive (26%) about accepting and encouraging speaking in tongues in the church. Still 17% of answers have at least a slightly positive attitude when they tick "only a little bit." Only 22% of all respondents strictly reject any practice of glossolalia in church. Thus, only a minority maintains an attitude of unambiguous exclusion of glossolalia from the church. The majority has a (very) positive opinion of promoting speaking in tongues in the church.

The final textbox-question allowed for expression of any thoughts or perspectives that have not yet been addressed by the previous questions. Here, we identified common themes that were at least mentioned thrice, such as raising the issue of practicing glossolalia not as authentic gift of the Holy Spirit, but merely *faking* it. Also, the issue of to what extent there is *control of speaking in tongues* by glossolalists was addressed, as well as the idea that glossolalia is to be practiced *privately and individually*, rather than in church gatherings. *Growth of the entire church*, possible *translation of glossolalic utterances* were at least mentioned twice. We decided to inform our qualitative in-depth interviews by the issues raised in that last question, instead of a deeper interpretation on the basis of our online survey.

Correlations of Variables and/or Answers

Gender: We found that females had a higher rate of personal experiences with glossolalia than males. The total of respondents having spoken or still speaking in

tongues is 55%. Among females, the rate is significantly higher (80%). Not surprisingly, even the rate of having a positive or very positive attitude towards promoting glossolalia in the church is significantly lower among males (56%) as compared with that of females (80%). Figure 5 below shows all 15 females' responses.

Is glossolalia to be promoted in church?

Answered: 15   Skipped: 0

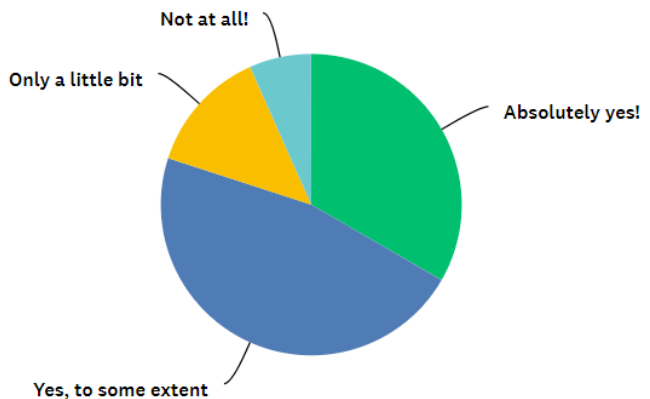*Figure 5: Promoting glossolalia in church (only females)*

Age: We saw no significant differences between younger or older generations concerning personal experiences with glossolalia and/or the attitude towards encouraging glossolalia in the church. Only when correlated with gender we could detect outstanding tendencies. Not a single woman of the age group 20–30 wanted glossolalia to be totally discouraged in church,

whereas 43% of males of the same age group said that glossolalia must not be promoted. Therefore, within the youngest age group there is a significant difference between males and females, the latter having a very positive attitude towards speaking in tongues in the church.

Ordination: Respondents that identified themselves as already ordained were 12 in total, of whom 11 were male. They were all part of the age groups above 30. Of particular interest are their answers to the question of whether glossolalia should be encouraged in church. A total of 64% wants to encourage speaking in tongues in the church very much (18%) or to some extent (46%). This percentage is even slightly higher than that of the total population (61%). However, a 91 % of all ordained respondents witnessed that speaking in tongues causes divisions between "spiritual" and "non-spiritual" Christians whereas the overall average of that answer was only 61%. It seems that divisions and possible conflicts are a very common issue in the eyes of ordained students of theology. Even the value for the answer "some feel superior and become proud" among the ordained ones (64%) is remarkably higher than the overall average (52%). The question emerges even more: How can these two findings be reconciled? On the one hand, almost all ordained respondents witnessed to divisions in the church, more than non-ordained students. On the other hand, still about two thirds of the ordained (64%) want to promote glossolalia in the church "to some extent" or "absolutely." This question cannot be answered on the

basis of our online survey; thus, we will try to interpret this gap in our final discussion.

Summary of Findings from the Survey

In summary, we discovered that our data collection tool (questionnaire) was functional, and the data has statistical significance for representing the total study population. We concluded that probably more than half of all currently registered students of theology at TUMA have spoken in tongues already. This rate does not change according to age, in general, but it is higher among females and highest among young females. Views of speaking in tongues are predominantly positive, almost all regard it as a gift of the Holy spirit, a downplaying of speaking in tongues as just a function of the human psyche is irrelevant. The understanding of glossolalia as being part of African culture is totally absent.

With regard to the church, students of theology at TUMA see that speaking in tongues affects the church mainly in a negative way (divisions, feelings of superiority and pride, envy, church leaders having to deal with conflicts). Nevertheless, only 22% of the study population wants to ban speaking in tongues from church completely, whereas the other part has a less negative (17%), positive (35%), or very positive (26%) attitude towards the promotion of glossolalia in church. Students that are already ordained emphasise the negative effects of glossolalia even stronger, but also slightly stronger want to promote it in church. We will discuss this ambivalence later.

Speaking in Tongues among students of theology at TUMA: A Qualitative Study

Methodological Remarks

As one variant of mixed methods approaches, we wanted the qualitative study to complement the quantitative survey. This should help gaining further in-depths insights from the same sample (nested approach). In order to be able to draw from findings of the survey we opted for sequential, rather than simultaneous design.[38] Because of the sensitivity of the topic, we wanted to approach respondents individually and confidentially, so the data collection tool was individual interviews. We will refer to respondents by "R" for "respondent", followed by numbers 1-8. We conducted interviews in Kiswahili, recorded the answers, transcribed them by a combination of summary and literal quotation, and translated them into English. In order to reduce complexity within a research group of five researchers we agreed on a standardised, structured interview guide with 15 questions. We constructed these by drawing from findings from our online survey (issues of translation, private use, fake, controllability, feelings of superiority) and insights from literature review (New Testament perspectives, African culture, and Lutheran Pentecostalism). [39] We analysed the data by a combination of content analysis

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[38] See Small, *How to Conduct a Mixed Methods Study*, 64-69.
[39] Three questions were asked in interviews that did not produce the expected outcome, e.g., concerning glossolalia as possible aspect of Lutheran identity.

and thematic coding. We summarised contents by following the order of questions and watched out for common themes running across all answers. In terms of intercoder reliability, all parts of the data were analysed by at least two researchers, the final analysis was approved by all authors. The sample of respondents (eight bachelor students)[40] represented a variety of variables like age (20 and above) and gender (3 females). Variables of being rural or urban on the one hand, and being glossolalic or not, on the other hand, were evenly distributed.

Speaking in Tongues as a Gift of the Holy Spirit vs. Pretence

It is remarkable that all interviewees perceive glossolalia as a genuine gift of the Holy Spirit. Some even stated this right at the beginning of the interview, but all respondents finally appreciated glossolalia as a divine talent. When we asked interviewees about relevant Biblical passages concerning glossolalia (our 6th question), they consequently referred to the appearance of speaking in tongues at Pentecost in Act 2, or to Paul's dealing with glossolalia as one of many spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians

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[40] The relatively small number of the sample was justifiable for pragmatic reasons and because we reached a basic level of saturation concerning our objectives. Unfortunately, Master or Ph.D. students were not accessible for interviews.

12–14.[41] R3 pointed to Mk 16:17 and the signs that will follow the believers: "They shall speak with new tongues."[42]

However, despite the affirmation of the reality of genuine glossolalia, many interviewees differentiated between speaking in tongues as a gift of the Holy Spirit and its imitation or faking before we explicitly asked for it in question six. R8 sees the ambiguity of glossolalia being both, a divine ability, but possibly also or just a "theatrical" show or "performance". R2 identifies a recent development according to which glossolalia has become a "fashion" or trend. R1 derogatively refers to certain glossolalists who developed the habit of "... repeating the same words every day and saying [them] where is not the right place to say."

Some respondents emphasised that a sign of inauthentic glossolalia is to regularly use the same vocalisations and syllables (R3, R4, R8). In this regard, R6 points to the influence of television and online media that display glossolalic performances that people may just copy. About such pretence R5, R6 and R7 assume that people imitate genuine glossolalia because appearing as a tongue speaker can uplift the social standing within the respective religious group.

R5 defends genuine glossolalia despite the prevalence of fake glossolalia.

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[41] Only one interviewee identified Paul's understanding of tongues as exclusively xenolalia (R8).

[42] From the Old Testament, also the examples of Hannah when she spoke silently in the tabernacle (R1, R5), or Saul when he joined prophets in their ecstatic practices (R4) were referred to. We could identify references to 1Sam 1:13 (Hannah) and 1Sam 10–12 (Saul).

 "*Having people who fake to speak in tongue doesn't mean that the real thing is not existing. Speaking in tongues is real and it has a positive impact within the church like other spiritual gifts.*"

R7 developed a remarkable, prescriptive definition of authentic glossolalia:

 "*Genuine speaking in tongues involves a personal connection with God and the Holy Spirit. This is particularly evident when an individual engages in prayer with sincerity and humility, without seeking attention and validation from others.*"

We may interpret such and other statement(s) as to say that authentic glossolalia will only impact individuals and the church positively whereas fake glossolalia only aims for uplifting one's own social standing above others and as such leads to conflicts.

Being in Control or Not while Speaking in Tongues

Interestingly, most of the glossolalists among the respondents witness that there is conscious control of glossolalia by the power of the Holy Spirit (R1, R2, R5). R5 and R6 (non-glossolalist) see the Holy Spirit at work when glossolalia is controlled. Similarly, but with more ambiguity R2 states:

 "*Yes, you can govern yourself but be guided by the Holy Spirit. My worry is where the one who*

leads prayers saying amen and all the people are silent."

With this statement R2 could criticise authoritarian styles of leadership, or, more probably, s/he questions the authenticity of each individual's glossolalia if it can be stopped easily and for everyone at the same time.

This concern relates with three voices who hold that authentic glossolalia is uncontrollable (R3, R4, R8); one among these is glossolalist (R4). R8 states:

 "Individuals who engage in speaking in tongues often organise themselves. This might be attributed to receiving prior instruction, as their words seem rehearsed, with repeated phrases indicating memorization. If the coordination was truly inspired by the Holy Spirit, individuals would lack control over the beginning and ending of their speech."

Speaking in Tongues in the Church

Public practice of glossolalia in the church comes with a certain amount of ambiguity. Glossolalia is not just celebrated and practiced as one of the spiritual gifts that benefits the entire community. Rather, it is also a source of conflict. We have identified two challenges that we address in the next two sections, namely unintelligibility and attributions of spiritual superiority. In a third section we have asked for possible ways of how to deal with the challenges posed by glossolalia in the church.

Unintelligibility   and   Translation   of Glossolalia

As glossolalia is not understood like any other ordinary language it raises the question what its significance within the entire believers' community is and whether it should not just be practiced privately. As some respondents point out, speaking in tongues has indeed a function for the individual. They see it as a special way of communicating with God, "… a deep prayer and a deep conversation with God." (R5) R6 knows of believers who assume that speaking in tongues will protect the prayers as it hides their contents from Satan and evil powers. R7 as a unique voice among all interviewees suggests that it is better to practice glossolalia only privately, as it has only significance for individuals. All other interviewees were indifferent or positive about allowing glossolalia in public gatherings.

One important topic in this context was the issue of translation. We not only addressed it by reference to instructions of Paul in 1 Corinthians 12–14 in our question No. 7, but it already emerged before reaching to this question in the interview. Six of the interviewees considered it a valuable approach to translate glossolalia practiced in public worship into an ordinary language so that everyone can understand (R1, R2, R3, R5, R6, R8). Three out of these even suggested to make it obligatory for any public presence of glossolalia.

Despite interviewees' generally positive view of translation R6, R7, and R8 are concerned about practical realities.

"Translation is a good idea; however, translators are nowhere to be found. I have never heard or seen a translator of glossolalia. Christians and church leaders are several times emphasising glossolalia but I never heard a pastor even in Pentecostals churches calling people in front to receive the power of the Holy Spirit so as to translate when people speak in tongues." (R6)

Attributions of Superiority to Glossolalists

R7 states that glossolalia in a social context can be practiced in order to show off, i.e., to display one's own superior ability and connection with God to other believers. We detected this view in one of the interviewee's statements. R1, a glossolalist, holds that "... getting this gift depends on the level of investment in prayer." In other words, tongue-speaking believers appear to be superior spiritual achievers. Even R5 and R7 affirm such discrimination of believers with respect to the ability of speaking in tongues.

"It's becoming increasingly apparent that those who engage in tongues seem to hold a special status, regarded as particularly close to God. Conversely, there's a tendency to view those who do not speak in tongues as lacking the presence of the Holy Spirit within them." (R7)

All respondents, however, object such discrimination. [43] They clearly state that the ability of speaking in tongues does not make somebody be more spiritual or unique in a special way. Thus, with R2, R3, and R4 glossolalists should not misunderstand their gift as social prestige, but use it for one's own relief, the benefit of the community, and in humility. Many were positive about what we brought up in question 8, namely that the biblical idea of glossolalia is just one gift among others (1 Cor 12–14).

However, almost all interviewees see a discrepancy between Paul's teaching and the current situation in many congregations. A statement of R6 represents this view:

> *"It is true that no one should feel superior as Paul says, unfortunately, some speakers are always considering themselves spiritually higher than non-speakers. Many of the speakers use to boast (Kiswahili: wanajimwambafai)."*

Teaching as a Response to Glossolalic Malpractices

When respondents were asked to imagine being pastors in charge themselves and how they would deal with glossolalia in the church many emphasised teachings.[44] R4 and R5 as pastors in charge would instruct

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[43] Even R1 affirms this view, however, s/he is ambivalent in this respect as we have shown already.

[44] In our question no. 10, we asked: "Imagine yourself being a pastor in the parish. How would you deal with speaking in tongues in the church?" Six out of eight respondents emphasised teaching congregants properly.

people to not imitate genuine glossolalia (*nitawafunzisha wasiigilize*) and tongue-speakers not to use glossolalia selfishly or under the influence of destructive spirits (R5). R2 would stress that every believer "… is given the Holy Spirit." On that basis R7 and R6 would educate about biblical insights, especially the diversity of many and equally important spiritual gifts. R3 affirms this view:

> "*The church should take time and teach seriously and carefully about spiritual gifts, especially speaking in tongues, so that if the spirit hasn't revealed, let the Christians feel okay even without that. If the spirit reveals, for sure it will be the blessing and not the source of conflict and division.*"

Speaking in Tongues and African Culture

Regarding the dimension of African culture, interviewees were split in two halves. The first affirmed a connection of African culture with speaking in tongues whereas the second half rejected this view (R2, R4, R5, R8). The latter consists of mostly tongue-speakers who point to the Christian religion as the sole origin of glossolalia. "It is not African culture, people learned after Pentecost." (R2) The former, however, witness to a positive connection of glossolalia and African culture, one of them (R7) even expressing that although s/he did not tick the "It is part of African culture" answer in our online survey s/he later changed her/his mind. All four respondents employ a traditional understanding of African culture(s), as they explore intersections between traditional healing and communication with spirits or ancestors on the one hand,

and incomprehensible languages or vocalisations on the other hand. Three out of those four respondents even point to the tradition of translating or interpreting the unintelligible vocalisations:

> *"There were times in African cultures when a person can be covered by a spirit of ancestors and starts to speak using a language that people don't understand, but it happens that one among many grasps the message and tells others what the speaker has said." (R6)*

Summary of Qualitative Findings

A first crucial finding of our qualitative study is that all interviewees appreciate genuine glossolalia as a gift of the Holy Spirit. However, speaking in tongues can also be an aspect of mere performance and imitation. People may pretend to have the authentic spiritual gift in order to uplift their social standing in their respective religious groups.

Some consider genuine glossolalia ecstatic and uncontrollable. However, others, most of them tongue-speakers, hold the opposite true. They regard the Holy Spirit as a divine power that is not ecstatic but maintains order.

In the church, speaking in tongues is a challenge due to its unintelligibility. Whereas all respondents encourage private usage of glossolalia, they address public speaking in tongues with more caution. While most of them are open for permitting it, some suggest making

translation a requirement of public glossolalia. Practically, however, such interpretation is uncommon.

Another challenge that glossolalia poses to the church is its discriminative potential. All respondents affirm the biblical view of glossolalia being one spiritual gift among many and thus reject any attributions of superiority. Nevertheless, interviewees point to the fact that in present-day Christianity such discrimination prevails extensively. As a response to that challenge most respondents emphasised teaching on how to avoid destructive usage of glossolalia.

Finally, half of the respondents, most of them non-glossolalists, see a continuity of Christian glossolalia and speaking in tongues (and its translation) that occurred in African traditional practices.

Triangulating Findings

One of the major agreements of the quantitative and qualitative part of our research is the acknowledgement and appreciation of *glossolalia as a spiritual gift* that is still attainable for present-day believers. Many of the students of theology at TUMA did or still do practice glossolalia themselves. The analysis of the survey provided insights into particular correlations of items and variables, e.g. concerning gender and ordination.

However, there is a possibility of *pretence or "fake" glossolalia* that was indicated by our survey and thoroughly affirmed by interviewees.

Another agreement between our survey and our interviews is that students of theology at TUMA observe a significant prevalence of *divisions and conflicts* in congregations revolving around glossolalia. These emerge due to glossolalia's unintelligibility and attributions of superiority to glossolalists as the interviews revealed. Concerning the issue of superiority, all theology students interviewed reject any *discrimination* of non-glossolalists. They are aware, however, that a great deal of believers maintains such bias.

Nevertheless, it is *no option to ban glossolalia from church* completely for the majority of respondents. It remained an open question why, e.g. ordained respondents from the survey all know of such conflicts but a clear majority of them promotes the use of glossolalia in the church. The interviewees did not reveal an answer to that question but provided particular suggestions to handle the conflictual issue of glossolalia, e.g. by making *translation* a requirement, by encouraging *private usage* of the gift, and by emphasising profound *teachings* on glossolalia.

Finally, we identified one crucial difference between the survey and the interviews concerning the question of whether the Christian practice of glossolalia stands in continuity with *African culture*. Our qualitative study, unlike the online survey, shows that half of the respondents affirm such continuity.

Discussion of Findings: Appreciation and Malpractices

In biblical perspective, we have seen that most of our study participants assume a *continuity of the Holy spirit's gift of glossolalia with present-day speaking in tongues*. This finding agrees with our own position (Esler, Johnson). Beyond Christian Scripture, a large number of interviewees (unlike participants of the survey) agrees with scholars in African studies that there are also roots of speaking in tongues in *African culture* as embodied by APR and AIC. From this, one could argue for a contextually sensitive acceptance of glossolalia within the ELCT and other African churches on both, biblical and cultural basis (Ilunga). Some interviewees dispute the link between African culture and glossolalia and claim that speaking in tongues has exclusively biblical or Christian roots. Nevertheless, still most theology students at TUMA appreciate glossolalia, at least on a biblical basis.

Unlike scholars addressing glossolalia from biblical, African or empirical perspectives our study provides a new view on glossolalia which is the assumption that there is the possibility of *imitating genuine glossolalia* as "fake" and that just this fake glossolalia, not genuine speaking in tongues, can have negative effects, e.g., social discrimination and inappropriate uplifting one's own social status. This is an outstanding finding of our study. The reason for employing such distinction is clearly the possibility to be loyal to the biblical idea of glossolalia being a spiritual gift on the one hand and to be critical of contemporary malpractices of glossolalia on the other

hand. From biblical and African perspectives, as we have shown above, this issue is addressed differently. Rather than differentiating real and fake, the more general category of misuse and malpractice is employed. Thus, instead of keeping the "real thing" unblemished as opposed to fake glossolalia, the idea is that even genuine glossolalia can be misused and appear as malpractice. Also from an empirical perspective, the criterion of genuineness is problematic. According to Samarin glossolalia is basically an aspect of socialisation. Any glossolalic practice that is not learnt, that does not imitate other glossolalists, and is, thus, not influenced by other tongues speakers' performances is actually unthinkable. Thus, the distinction between real glossolalia (that cannot be misused) and fake glossolalia (that is responsible for malpractices) is either untenable or needs to be backed by further theological and empirical research.

One may resort to the view brought forth by some of our participants that genuine glossolalia is simply *ecstatic and beyond any control.* If there is no choice of the human believer, it appears impossible to criticise glossolalists since one would argue against divine will. Of course, to some extent elements of trance may play a role in biblical contexts as well as nowadays in the ELCT and elsewhere. However, overall, understanding glossolalia simply in ecstatic terms stands in stark contrast with about half of theology students' views (most of them tongue-speakers themselves!). In similar vein, Paul assumes that liturgical control is possible. Even with

Samarin glossolalia is a language and can, of course, be spoken intentionally.

Concerning *attributions of superiority* there is a clear agreement of our study's results with Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians. With the apostle all respondents hold that speaking in tongues is just one of many spiritual gifts. Thus, it does not fit for privileging tongue-speakers as superior spiritual achievers. This is a finding in terms of prescriptive attitudes towards glossolalia. The descriptive perspective reveals that such attitude is often missing since there is a great deal of discrimination along the line dividing between glossolalists and non-glossolalists. From there *conflicts* within churches emerge as literature research and our empirical research have pointed out. To simply restrict glossolalia to private usage is, however, no option as our interview respondents and also biblical, African, and empirical perspectives demonstrated.

One question is still unanswered. How come that in the online survey participants were very much aware of conflicts and divisions in the church but still there was a majority of theology students, especially among the ordained ones, that is ready to promote glossolalia in the church? This could be explained in terms of the general appreciation of glossolalia as spiritual gift and its positive impact on believers. Another explanation could, however, be that many theology students try to navigate through the current high tides of Neo-Pentecostalism, Charismatisation, and Pentecostalisation of mainline churches by rather accepting an ambivalent religious

practice instead of losing members to other Pentecostal(ised) churches.

Paul's further teaching concerning *translation* is relevant both in terms of biblical *and* cultural perspectives. In 1 Corinthians Paul clearly emphasises the need to have translation of all public glossolalia. In African traditional cultural practices, as our study revealed, there were rituals and habits of translating unintelligible vocalisations as well. While in our limited research of literature concerning glossolalia in Africa, we did not come across any publications supporting this finding, we found evidence of such translations of unintelligible speech in Asian culture and religion.[45] It is highly probable that such practices prevailed in African traditions and cultures as well. Thus, there would be common ground, culturally and biblically, to support the idea of translating speaking in tongues into ordinary language. Only the practical-theological challenge remains that currently the non-interpreted use of glossolalia is default.

Finally, the emphasis on *teaching* as a way to deal with malpractices revolving around glossolalia is a biblically meaningful approach as, e.g. Pauline instructions can mainly be considered teachings. From an empirical point of view, the educational approach may have some impact. If glossolalia is an aspect of a socialisation process (Samarin) there can be further learning processes towards a beneficial usage of speaking in tongues. Especially in the Tanzanian context, where

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[45] L. Carlyle May, "A Survey of Glossolalia and Related Phenomena in Non-Christian Religions," *American Anthropologist* 58, no. 1 (1956): 87.

Nyerere's political emphasis on education has had long-lasting impact, a pedagogical approach may be fruitful.[46]

Politically, however, perspectives of escapism or resistance (Dube) have hardly played a role neither in the survey nor in interviews. Only on the level of *gender* our own analysis of the survey revealed a positive correlation of being female and a tongue-speaker. Johnson held that glossolalia offers a chance for women to resist patriarchal restrictions. From this perspective, we may say that female students of theology at TUMA through glossolalia uplift their social status that is often diminished by patriarchal structures within church and society. Such political implication of glossolalia calls for an education beyond catechesis. If speaking in tongues can be a way of rebellion or resistance, one cannot just deal with it through instructing believers. A framework that would broaden such a narrow view on teaching would be the Pedagogy of the Oppressed by P. Freire. This influential political educator of the 20th century clearly aimed at a liberated society that embraces values of emancipation and equality.[47] With such a pedagogy glossolalia may be a liberating gift as it upholds the spirit of freedom, love,

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[46] Anders D. F. Haugen, "Education for Development: The Tanzanian Experience," *Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review* 35 (2022): 34–55.

[47] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1971). An extension of this pedagogy to feminism and gender studies which Freire himself did not do is required, however (see Carlos A. Torres, "Paulo Freire: Voices and Silences," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 54, no. 13 [2022]: 2169–79).

equality, and humanity that benefits individuals and communities without discrimination.

Way Forward – Appreciating Glossolalia and Tackling Malpractices

As aspect of the Pentecostalisation of mainline churches in Africa, glossolalia is a topic that deserves proper attention. On the basis of cultural and biblical considerations it is possible to accept glossolalia as a potential spiritual gift and legitimate part of Christian religious practice in Africa. A distinction of real and fake glossolalia is problematic as it avoids to accept the ambiguities of this religious practices that already Paul and the Corinthians know about. A way forward will be to avoid malpractices and to find ways of negotiating for the acceptance of glossolalia among students of theology at TUMA, but probably within the entire ELCT. This will not only require further academic research on glossolalia beyond TUMA, but also the development of guidelines and practical frameworks on ELCT-wide and congregational levels. Theological education, private usage of glossolalia, liturgical spaces for translation, awareness of political or societal power relations (e.g. gender) must be taken into consideration when this controversial, but very relevant practice of glossolalia as a spiritual gift is or will be part of Lutheran worship, not only in the eyes of TUMA students, but perhaps within the entire ELCT.

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There was field research conducted in compiling this article. Access to survey data and interview transcripts can be granted on request (contact through atj@makumira.ac.tz). There are no restrictions on the secondary data presented in this article.

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

Ruth Kilango and Baraka Mungure

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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 19th and 20th 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 20th 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.

Lotta Gammelin, 'We are In-Between:' Health-Seeking, Gender and Authority in a Charismatic Church in Mbeya, Tanzania. Lund: Lund University 2023.

Faustin Mahali

The work of Lotta Gammelin is a result of research conducted at the International Church for Healing and Glory (ICHG) between 2012 and 2014. In the *First and Second Chapters*, the author assumed that women experienced multiple illnesses resulting from natural causes, colonial neoliberalism and cultural systems informed by patriarch and indecisive Christian Charismatic ideals (pp. 42-53). The failure of medical treatment and traditional medicine makes people, especially women, powerless, and they seek alternative faith-healing to preachers like Samson Mkondo (pp. 54-56).

The *Third* and *Fourth Chapters* unveil the theological thinking of Prophet Samson Mkondo, whose career is influenced by traditional beliefs and Roman Catholic and Pentecostal practices. Mkondo has edified his theology of "*the word of the prophet*", repeatedly confessing to having received it from God (pp. 70-71). With this authority, Mkondo prays and launches spiritual warfare to destroy spirit-possessed and poverty-ridden, the majority being women who come to his place [a hospital] (pp. 70-80). These people failed to find lasting

solutions from biomedicine, traditional medicine, pastoral care and services provided by mainstream churches. Therefore, those seeking healing services are found to be in between denial of biomedical and traditional cures and faith healing, and they are ambivalently appealing to both practices (p. 92).

Because of competition, as described in Chapter Five, the self-made prophet maintains his authority by sarcastically degrading the services of established churches, the Roman Catholic, Moravian, Lutheran, Anglican and Pentecostal Churches, despite being baptised Catholic and born-again Pentecostal. He becomes angry when his family members do not recognise his authority, when sick people object to his prayers and service or when people gossip about his immorality (pp. 96-98). He makes fun of the gossip and emphasises his given power through rings embodying his sonship to God, his word recognised by God, his rule over many disciples, his kingship, and priesthood authorities (pp. 107-121). In his mandate, Mkondo is a patron of everything; his actions are divinely installed, and his pastoral care for the afflicted is God's given for the service of all who come to his place [hospital] (p.121).

In *Chapter Six*, Gammelin tries to disclose the embodiment of gender in the becoming ill Mkondo's clients and their healing. Stories from participants about infertility and loss of life are considered to be caused by close kin-witches and evil spirits [from the underworld] that occupy their wombs, disturb marriages, and take away their power/energy to act (pp. 127-129). Mkondo

takes the role of a life-giver by praying for fertility like traditional religious priests/kings who did this in a pre-Christian context (pp. 129-136).

Lack of agency is caused by falling ill (failed motherhood – spirit-occupied wombs) and being possessed by the spirits of laziness, drunkards, exploitation of the underworld, and being used for the profit of someone else in economic production (pp. 136-142). The prayers and sermons at ICHG aim to deliver these yarning souls from the yokes of the evil spirits, creatures in the underworld, and the witches who exploit these souls (p. 143). In restoring moral agency, wrongdoing and misfortune (in a competitive neo-liberalized world) are first scapegoated to the embodiment of spirit possession and avoidance of personal confession of sins (pp. 143-145). Thus, ICHG becomes an attractive space against established churches, which emphasise repentance and introspective consciousness, and against other Pentecostal Churches, which emphasise good morality from born-again Christians.

In *Chapter Seven*, the author discovered how deliverance ministry through prayers and preaching at ICHG shaped "gendered values." In the ICHG, the prayers and sermons pointed out towards emancipating a woman from the (evil) spirit-possessed body to ideals of motherhood, an urban working woman who beautifies herself and cares for her husband and family (p. 155). However, unlike ideals propagated by traditional Pentecostal Churches on positive moral values of a born-again man, Mkondo seems to allow "men… to be pleased

by their wives, having extra-marital relationships with young and beautiful women, paying for sex, having the freedom to spend their income in bars instead of taking it to their wives to feed the family..." (p. 159). Women are looked upon as objects of men, who are allowed to have extramarital relations, while women are bound to submit and serve men's desires.

However, this study shows that despite the stigma of infertility and lack of motherhood-caring traits imposed on women by Mkondo, they still seek healing at ICHG (pp. 159-161). By being publicly unruly and fighting against the spirit posing them and against the suffering and agony by crying and falling into a trance, the prayers and the prophet's word make them find calmness, integrity, and purity (pp. 163-167).

In *Chapter Eight*, the author gives a summative conclusion of the book (pp. 168-173). The in-between situation of healing seekers, especially women at the ICHG, is that they find deliverance through prayers and sermons and regain their agency through unruly actions of trance, falling, and crying. However, the same context inculcates in them a sense of rejuvenating "gendered [negative] values" when the same woman is still expected to maintain submissive behaviour to a man.

This book has excellently exhibited another side of African Self-Initiated Charismatic Churches. The author has discovered that churches like ICHG create a space of hope to make women violently come to public space and fight against their claimed spirit-possessed bodies to attain their human dignity and well-being. This space is

not provided by established churches where a Christian is asked to repent of sins and hence continue in a pessimistic and depressing life. It is plausible in this study that members from mainstream churches, especially women would remain prey to the manipulation of these self-made churches if these churches do not address the needs of the majority of women living in oppression and depression because of the systems that leave them and men socially and economically disadvantaged. The ideals of Christianity in such a context have to be reviewed and checked to resonate with the decolonising projects of Christianity. However, this study alone cannot represent a broader picture of complicated experiences of life threating contexts by African Christians who live in hopelessness in the context of gendered economic and religious exploitation in the liberalized world. More studies like this need to be conducted to contribute to the solution of this problem.

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