Dissertation

Titel der Dissertation

The Gospel of Prosperity in African Pentecostalism: A Theological and Pastoral Challenge to the Catholic Church – With Reference to the Archdiocese of Songea, Tanzania

Verfasser

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“So when you come to the house of God and you put money, you are demonstrating how big or small your faith is... When we were here on the other day, God spoke to me that he has come to bless this land. Economically, financially, in every area he has come to bless you. You must respond to him. Now before I came, God said to me, ‘make sure that they give in dollars!’ You can give a hundred dollars, come forward. Ok. you can give fifty dollars, come out quickly! I command, I command doors of financial breakthrough to be opened to you. And I rebuke every devourer, every devourer... I rebuke it in the name of Jesus... Thank you mighty God; I bless you forever and ever in Jesus’ mighty name. Amen. God bless you.”

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Apostolicam Actuositatem</td>
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<tr>
<td>AAS</td>
<td>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFER</td>
<td>African Ecclesial Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>African Initiated Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMECEA</td>
<td>Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can</td>
<td>Canon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cann</td>
<td>Canons</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Catechism of the Catholic Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCR</td>
<td>Catholic Charismatic Renewal</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.C.T</td>
<td>Christian Churches of Tanzania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIC</td>
<td>The Code of Canon Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.M.S</td>
<td>Christian Mission Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-eds</td>
<td>Co-editors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPT</td>
<td>Catholic Professionals of Tanzania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSSC</td>
<td>Christian Social Services Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CST</td>
<td>Catholic Social Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUEA</td>
<td>Catholic University of Eastern Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMI</td>
<td>Daughters of Mary Immaculate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAGT</td>
<td>Evangelistic Assemblies of God Tanzania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed (s)</td>
<td>Editor (s), edited by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIA</td>
<td>Ecclesia in Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>EN</td>
<td>Evangelium Nuntiandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESAP</td>
<td>Economic Structural Adjustment Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et al.</td>
<td>Et alii, et aliae, et alia, and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGBFC</td>
<td>Full Gospel Bible Fellowship Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibid.</td>
<td>Ibidem, in the work that has already been mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LG</td>
<td>Lumen Gentium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LN</td>
<td>Libertatis Nuntius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM</td>
<td>Mater et Magistra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSGRP</td>
<td>National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Op.cit</td>
<td>opere citato, in the work cited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OT</td>
<td>Optatam Totius</td>
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<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>Presbyterorum Ordinis</td>
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<tr>
<td>SACCO</td>
<td>Savings and Credit Cooperatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCC</td>
<td>Small Christian Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRS</td>
<td>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.A.G</td>
<td>Tanzania Assemblies of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.E.C.</td>
<td>Tanzania Episcopal Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans.</td>
<td>Translation, translator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.M.C.A</td>
<td>The Universities’ Mission to Central Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>UMSO</td>
<td>Umoja wa Makatekista Songea (Association of Catechists of the Archdiocese of Songea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMWASO</td>
<td>Umoja wa Mapadre Wazalendo Songea (Association of Diocesan Priests of the Archdiocese of Songea)</td>
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UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
UVIKASO  *Umoja wa Vijana Songea* (Association of Youth of the Archdiocese of Songea)
YCS  Young Christian Students
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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

0.1 Clearing the Field

The prevalence of mass poverty in Africa has led some to describe the continent as “the veritable empire of hunger and disease.”1 Africa’s poverty is something rather enigmatic. An enigma is something that is puzzling, ambiguous, or inexplicable. The poverty situation of Africa is enigmatic because generally, the continent is endowed with rich resources: land, natural and cultivated vegetation, animals, rich mineral resources, and abundant energy resources. When one considers all these resources and above all the people and their spirituality, “one is stunned to learn about Africa’s poverty.”2 Inevitably the question arises: how can the African poor ultimately get out of their poverty trap?

Churches in Africa are among the most significant development partners and hence they often come into the scene in the discourses about poverty. This work seeks to demonstrate how the Neo-Pentecostal doctrine known as The Prosperity Gospel poses a theological and pastoral challenge to the Catholic Church with regard to the Church’s response to the problem of poverty in Africa.

The Catholic Church, one of the oldest churches in Africa, has played and continues to play a vital role in tackling the problem of poverty. Evangelization for the Catholic Church necessarily involves the promotion of integral development. Accordingly, the Church has adopted a social doctrine, referred to as Catholic Social Teaching (CST), which embodies theological principles that favour the promotion of social justice, peace, reconciliation, and integral development.3 These principles are critical to the solution of structurally-induced material poverty. The themes that underline the principles of CST can be articulated as follows: the Church calls for an analysis of the social reality, points to the gratuity of God, endeavours to promote the common good, urges for the upholding of the dignity of the human person, promotes freedom as rights and responsibilities, values life as sacred gift, values family of blood and family of humankind and fosters environmental and ecological stewardship.4 The social mission of the Catholic Church thus expresses itself in terms of liberating the oppressed, calling to conversion the oppressors as well as addressing the unjust

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structures that perpetuate oppression and poverty. From this perspective, evangelization necessarily includes the proclamation of the Word of God along with the promotion of development work aimed at eliminating poverty, hunger, disease, ignorance and raising the living standard of the people. Peace is also subsequently understood as the result of development, rather than merely the absence of war. As Pope Paul VI has pointed out, “development is the new name for peace.” The Catholic Church underlines that peace and justice are inseparably bound together. Thus it does not subscribe to the ancient Roman adage: “Si vis pacem, para bellum” (if you want peace, prepare for war). Rather, it stresses that peace is an enterprise of justice. The slogan corresponding to Catholic Social Teaching might therefore be: Si vis pacem, para iustitiam (if you want peace, work for justice). Besides, the Catholic Church urges that in order for peace to prevail, reconciliation must be promoted. Moreover, since the development of Liberation Theology, the Catholic Church has adopted the teaching of “the preferential option for the poor” which will be elaborated in subsequent sections.

The Catholic Church propagates its social teaching in the world because it regards as its own “the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted.” In imitation of Christ, it has as its central task always to “seek and save what was lost.” Catholic Social Teaching is therefore a key to Catholic identity.

It is notable that, despite having such a developmental vision, the Catholic Church in its mission has not taught that the followers of Christ have to strive for wealth, material prosperity, and success in life as their right by virtue of their baptism. On the contrary, the Church has always warned of the danger of conspicuous consumption to the spiritual wellbeing of a Christian. As Pope John Paul II avers: “It is not wrong to want to live better; what is wrong is a style of life which is presumed to be better when it is directed toward having rather than being, and which wants to have more, not in order to be more but in order to spend life in enjoyment as an end in itself.” The Catholic Church is also wary of the pernicious effect of affluence with regard to human dignity: “Our faith calls us to measure this

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5 *Populorum Progressio*, No. 76, 87.
6 See: *Vatican Council II, GS*, No. 78.
7 Ibid., No. 1.
8 Lk.19:10.
economy not only by what it produces, but also by how it touches human life and whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person.”

In recent decades, the African Christian landscape has witnessed the emergence of Pentecostal and Charismatic religious movements which have indeed taken the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa by storm. A section of this brand of Christianity advocates the Gospel of Prosperity. This form of Pentecostal Christianity is said to be a variant of conservative Protestantism. It proposes that “faith is the key that opens the door to prosperity.” Significantly, the Prosperity Gospel churches espouse a contrary paradigm of poverty alleviation to that maintained by the Catholic Church and other historic missionary churches. These emergent religious movements regard the social teaching of the Catholic Church as somewhat demonising wealth as well as glorifying poverty. Their own version of social doctrine proposes prosperity and abundance as God’s design and favour to every faithful and tithing Christian believer. A Christian is entitled to prosperity and material abundance. He or she must necessarily become rich and successful, otherwise something is very wrong. The Prosperity Gospel preachers validate their creed by flaunting prosperity of all kinds, including wealth, health, success, and ever-soaring profits in business. Poverty is portrayed by them as the work of Satan; hence it has to be absolutely demonised. In their view, to be poor is a sign of one’s personal sin and a consequence of insufficient faith. According to one famous American Prosperity Gospel preacher, it is the lack of money, not the love of it, which is the root of all evils. For him “the best thing you can do for the poor is not to be one of them.”

Given the current proliferation of Neo-Pentecostal Christianity, the Prosperity Gospel is increasingly becoming a salient feature of African Christianity. Its popularity is premised mostly on the following factors: firstly, this doctrine presents itself as holding the key to the material prosperity of its members and as being an embodiment of modernity. Secondly, it promises to provide its members with the arsenal for overcoming witchcraft, demonic forces and other malignant spirits through the power of the Holy Spirit. For that matter, Africans consider this form of Christianity as offering them an existential hope in the insecurities they encounter here and now, rather than merely the hope for the heavenly life. Allan H.

Anderson\textsuperscript{15} and Ogbu Kalu\textsuperscript{16} for example, maintain that the Prosperity Gospel, unlike the historic churches, furthers both the preferential option for the Spirit and the preferential option for the poor. In other words, they suggest that this teaching fosters both pneumatological activities and socio-economic transformation in current Africa. Within such rhetoric the Prosperity Gospel is highly acclaimed as a new religious movement that holds the key for a hopeful future for Africa even in socio-economic terms.\textsuperscript{17} In fact, it is notable generally, that some scholars of Christian missions and world Christianity tend to celebrate the current growth of Christianity in Africa as a bright spot in the continent’s prolonged malaise.\textsuperscript{18} They suggest that, at least in Christian missions and World Christianity Africa is becoming an important player.

Undeniably, nevertheless, the proliferation of the Prosperity Gospel Christianity is occurring in the context of austere poverty. African theologian Jean-Marc Ela has described Africa’s mass poverty as the “shock of the gospel” in Africa. It is shocking to realize that Africa, which is a deeply and massively Christian continent, at the same time tends to be a veritable empire of hunger, disease, poverty, and glaring injustice.\textsuperscript{19} Additionally, many commentators of African affairs see poverty as the major factor that makes the African continent conspicuously absent from important world affairs. A former World Bank official, Robert Calderisi, has somberly described Africa’s marginalisation status:

> Except for South Africa, the continent is generally absent from economic and financial news and hardly appears even in brief digests of world events... Africa still attracts adventurers, anthropologists, zoologists, missionaries, idealists, and some romantics rather than the down-to-earth people who make the rest of the world run... Serious investors have shunned the place for decades...\textsuperscript{20}

This situation leads us to question the plausibility of the assertions about the extraordinary role of the Prosperity Gospel in Africa’s socio-economic transformation. Is the Prosperity Gospel really prospering the African people? This issue will be our main preoccupation in this study. To diagnose it, the work will first examine the pneumatological soteriology touted by

\textsuperscript{17} See, for example, the arguments of Peter Berger and Amos Yong in response to J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, URL: \url{http://www.christiantoday.com/article/did.jesus.wear.designer.robes/24968.htm} (accessed 12\textsuperscript{th} November, 2012).
\textsuperscript{19} See: Jean-Marc Ela, op.cit., xvi-xvii.
\textsuperscript{20} Robert Calderisi, \textit{The Trouble With Africa: Why Foreign aid Isn’t working} (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 4-5.
the Prosperity Gospel. Secondly, it will seek to establish whether that pneumatological soteriology really engenders a significant socio-economic transformation in Africa.

0.2 Rationale of the Study

A combination of factors constitutes the rationale of this work. The first factor is the proliferation of the brand of Neo-Pentecostal Christianity popularly known as the *Gospel of Prosperity* and its concomitant switching of Catholics to this new religious movement. The proponents of this doctrine tend to present it as an unprecedented option for the poor in the context of Africa. They maintain that this teaching offers compelling reasons for its being adopted in Africa. Their assertion is predicated on the perceived prosperity that this movement promises to its members. The prosperity is said to be in terms of wealth, health, the provision of protection against malevolent spirits, success in education, employment opportunities, business profits, and opportunities for a better life in rich countries abroad.\(^{21}\) This implies that the Prosperity Gospel embodies a better approach to the option for the poor as compared to the historic churches. Such claims have prompted this study; there was a felt need to verify whether the Prosperity Gospel really plays such a unique role in Songea as study case.

The second aspect of the rationale has to do with the pastoral implications of the Prosperity Gospel. Experiences and research reports from Africa and other continents have indicated that some Prosperity Gospel members eventually become disillusioned by it. They are disappointed by its unfulfilled promises and as a result some decide to completely stop practising any religion in their lives. Latino Catholics who convert to Pentecostalism in the USA are cited as an example.\(^{22}\) In Austria, it is said that about 10 percent of the people who seek psychological counselling from the Federal Office for Sectarian and Cultural Issues\(^{23}\) are Pentecostal dropouts.\(^{24}\) In Latin America, the pastoral care of Pentecostal dropouts is said to be one of the biggest challenges confronting the Catholic Church today.\(^{25}\) Being disillusioned by a religious tenet is nothing unique to the Prosperity Gospel. Yet because the Prosperity Gospel is a new phenomenon, scholars may tend to extol its successes while obscuring its

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\(^{23}\) See: Bundesstelle für Sektenfragen und der privaten Gesellschaft gegen Sekten- und Kultgefährden


shortcomings. We need point out therefore that African Christianity has also to reckon with the possible pastoral repercussions associated with this doctrine. This then is a challenge to the other churches in Africa as well: rather than merely celebrating their phenomenal numerical expansion they need to evaluate the implications of the beliefs and practices they propagate. The churches need also to garner their ecumenical efforts in order to address post-conversion problems facing many African Christians today.

The third area that constitutes our rationale is the concern about the future prospect of African Christianity subsequent to the predominance of the Prosperity Gospel. Notably, many Prosperity Gospel preachers in Africa tend to restrict pneumatological soteriology to the realms of overcoming evil spirits and achieving material prosperity. This selective approach obscures other pastoral needs in Africa which are vast, urgent and require the formation of diverse pastoral ministries in order to attend to them. The diversification of pastoral ministries then demands that various charisms of the Spirit be fostered in the Church rather than narrowed down. Some of the areas that the Church in Africa urgently needs to promote the gifts of the Spirit pertain to justice, peace, reconciliation and creativity in various sciences. The infringement of pneumatological salvation may eventually hamper the efforts of the churches in Africa to respond sufficiently to the contemporary pastoral needs and situations.

The fourth aspect of this work’s rationale gravitates around the inherent relationship between poverty, the Prosperity Gospel and international migration as an aspect of globalisation. As will be noted in the course of this work, globalisation trends have catalyzed the adoption of the American Gospel of Prosperity in Africa. But in a reverse order many African Christians today strive to realize their quest for prosperity by migrating to the West. These trends are somewhat encouraged by Prosperity Gospel preachers in Africa who construe such migrations as viable opportunities for upward socio-economic mobility.26 Migration, however, presents not only chances but risks as well. One of its serious consequences in Africa is the problem of brain-drain. It is well documented that the obsession with the idea of economic opportunities “out there” makes many young Africans want to leave their countries.27 However, for many of the migrants reaching the West does not guarantee a happy end. In fact, many end up confronting worse socio-economic difficulties including lack of housing, lack of money, and unemployment.28 The Prosperity Gospel preachers in Africa tend to encourage international migration but seem to forget these


27 See for example Robert Calderisi, op.cit., 5.

negative concomitants of migration. The greater motive for encouraging such migrations, however, is evangelism. Like many other Pentecostal denominations, the African Prosperity Gospel denominations are intent to carry out an aggressive evangelism in the West. Consequently, African migrants today are largely responsible for the Pentecostalisation of the West. For example, a significant number of Catholic African immigrants in Austria convert to Pentecostalism. The denominations that seem to attract them most are those that preach the Prosperity Gospel. Thus all these socio-economic and pastoral ramifications of the Prosperity Gospel have coalesced to make the study of this movement a significant quest.

0.3 Central Questions of Investigation

The study focuses on two central questions of investigation. First, does the pneumatological soteriology preached by the Prosperity Gospel contribute to a significant socio-economic transformation of the people of Songea? Secondly, what can the Catholic Church learn from the Prosperity Gospel in relation to the option for the poor?

0.4 Key Argument

The argument of this work is that the Prosperity Gospel is admittedly becoming popular in Songea and in much of Tanzania and Africa. It is indeed largely responsible for the numerical growth and vibrancy of the new religious movements that advocate it. The doctrine also constitutes the main factor for the switching of Catholics to these new Christian movements. I contend, nevertheless, that the practice of the Prosperity Gospel as witnessed today is fraught with ambivalence in relation to the poor. On the one hand, the teaching is imbedded with some aspects that have the potential to foster the option for the poor. These include its teaching about the work ethic and entrepreneurship. But on the other hand, the doctrine embodies some dimensions that are clearly counterproductive to the option for the poor. Such dimensions are, for example, its failure to address the prevailing unjust social structures that relegate the masses into a perpetual straight jacket of poverty. The other is its emphasis on witchcraft and demons as the causes of poverty, a fact that obscures the real causes of poverty. Moreover, the prosperity doctrine places a great deal of emphasis on miraculous expedients as an antidote to poverty. There are also perceptions that the Prosperity Gospel is imbedded with deceit. Many of its preachers are said to employ it as a means of feathering.

30 This observation was made by some participants at a Study Day for priests from Africa, Asia, and Latin America in December 2012 in Vienna. The theme of the study was “Pfingstlerisch-Charismatische Gemeinschaften und ihre Herausforderungen an die kath. Kirche”. 
their own nests at the expense of the poor. Complaints about this attitude of pastors increasingly surface from Tanzania as well as from various parts of other African countries.

My overarching conclusion, therefore, is that in its current *modus operandi*, the Prosperity Gospel, far and large, does not hold the key for any significant socio-economic transformation of the Christians who embrace its ethos. In Tanzania, churches paradoxically flourish amid austere mass poverty, widespread disease, rampant corruption, killings of old people on witchcraft suspicion, killings of people with albinism for occult economic purposes and many other life-denying aspects. How could such social ills flourish if the Prosperity Gospel were really prospering the people in any unprecedented scale as it is often asserted? But the prevailing situation leaves us with some enduring and perplexing questions about the public role of the myriad Prosperity Gospel churches that proliferate in Tanzania: do these churches infuse the society with the spirit of the gospel? What is it that makes them so appealing that many Catholics opt to join them? Thus, arguably, even if the Prosperity Gospel churches do not alleviate poverty, their proliferation poses a challenge to the Catholic Church with regard to its response to the scourge of poverty in Africa.

0.5 Scope and Limitation of the Work

The work concentrates on the Catholic Archdiocese of Songea as a study case, since it would not be easy for the purpose of this dissertation to investigate the trajectory of the Prosperity Gospel in the whole of Africa. The merit of the Archdiocese of Songea as our study locale is twofold. First, the vast majority of the Christians in the area are Catholics. As such, the interplay between Catholics and the members of the Prosperity Gospel can be significantly displayed. Secondly, the work of evangelization in the Archdiocese of Songea has been, by and large, extensive and has always involved the provision of social services. This raises the question why Catholics from such a context would still seek to embrace the Prosperity Gospel. It is hoped therefore that this research will serve to illustrate the trajectory of the Prosperity Gospel in similar contexts in Africa.

With regard to the scope of the subject matter, the work does not claim to explore the Prosperity Gospel in all its dimensions. Rather, it focuses on the promises of the Prosperity Gospel to engender poverty alleviation and the socio-economic upward mobility of its members. In other words, the work centres on the assertion that the Prosperity Gospel presents a development alternative that makes a difference in Africa. Accordingly, the key areas surveyed in the work include “poverty”, “empowerment” and “preferential option for the poor”. It will be noted also that the work sets the Prosperity Gospel in dialogue with the
Catholic Church, pointing out the challenges the former poses to the latter. As such, the Prosperity Gospel is largely discussed from the perspective of Catholic Social Teaching (CST).\(^\text{31}\)

0.5.1 Poverty: A Comprehensive Vocabulary

According to the world-renowned American economist Jeffrey Sachs, the concept of poverty is contestable in terms of its definition, the exact numbers of the poor, where they live, and how their numbers and economic conditions continue to change over time.\(^\text{32}\) As poverty is an ever-changing reality, its definition has also undergone a considerable shift over the past few decades.\(^\text{33}\) Hence, although we often say that the poor have always been with us, yet they have not always been the same. As Iliffe notes, from one era to another, poverty in Africa has been changing in its meaning, structure, and experience.\(^\text{34}\) This fluidity of the phenomenon of poverty seems to have been the concern of the World Bank as well. In its 1990 report it viewed poverty primarily in monetary terms. But in its 2001 report, it defined poverty as a multi-dimensional deprivation.\(^\text{35}\) In this latter sense poverty is not limited to the aspect of income; rather it includes the capabilities to achieve full human potential. Moreover, whereas poverty was previously understood and measured merely in terms of outcomes such as hunger or under-nutrition,\(^\text{36}\) today it extends beyond mere parameters of income or consumption. Its vocabulary now includes a state of relative powerlessness and exclusion from decision-making processes.\(^\text{37}\)

In his encyclical Caritas in veritate, Pope Benedict XVI speaks of the “new poor” and “new forms of poverty” emerging in the world.\(^\text{38}\) It can be said that this category of “new poor”, as far as Africa is concerned, includes those infected and affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It also encompasses the ordinary consumers of the mobile phone and other modern technologies who become victims of the digital divide. Due to prohibitive maintenance costs,

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\(^{31}\) This expression refers to a body of doctrine developed by the Catholic Church pertaining to matters of poverty and wealth, economics, social organization as well as the role of the state. See: Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, ibid.


\(^{36}\) See: Stephen Bass, Hannah Reid, David Satterthwaite and Paul Steele (eds.), op.cit., 11f.

\(^{37}\) See: Maia Green, op.cit.,5f.

\(^{38}\) See: Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter, Caritas in Veritate, No. 22.
they are forced to forsake other essential needs such as decent meals and clothing in order to afford the use of the technologies.\textsuperscript{39}

In summary, the comprehensive definition of poverty encompasses the following areas: first, it means the prevalence of inadequate and often unstable income. Income poverty makes the people unable to purchase necessities for their consumption such as food, safe and sufficient drinking water, and medicines. The inability of the people to pay for transport, to pay their rent, school fees, to have access to toilets are likewise an expression of poverty under this category.

Second, poverty is the lack of material assets and non-material assets. Material assets include, for instance, the right of ownership of land or the right to use it for production or procurement of resources from it. In terms of non-material assets, people are considered poor if they lack or have low literacy rate, or live in an environment without adequate provision of basic services such as schools, vocational training, healthcare, emergency services, public transport, communications and law enforcement. Non-material asset base includes also mutual human relationships. A person is considered poor if he or she does not enjoy relationships within and outside family. Human relationships may form an asset base of material and financial support mechanism for a person in times of difficulty.

Third, a society is also considered poor if it lacks laws and regulations that protect the rights of its poorer groups, namely, their civil and political rights and occupational health.

Fourth, poverty is also prevalent where the society does not emphasize on pollution control, environmental health, protection of its members from violence and from discrimination and exploitation.\textsuperscript{40}

Fifth, it is also helpful to mention the concept of “individual poverty” and “mass poverty”. According to the economist J.K. Galbraith, “individual” or “family poverty” afflicts only a few or a minority segment of people in a generally well-off society. But “mass poverty” afflicts the majority of the people in a generally poor society.\textsuperscript{41} It is this kind of poverty that afflicts Songea (and Tanzania in general). For Galbraith, mass poverty results from injustice, oppression, and exploitation, and, it is indeed emblematic of failures of human civilizations.\textsuperscript{42}

Defining poverty, Sachs proposes three degrees in which it occurs:\textsuperscript{43} extreme (or absolute) poverty, moderate poverty, and relative poverty. Extreme poverty refers to conditions of life


\textsuperscript{40} See: Stephen Bass, Hannah Reid, David Satterthwaite and Paul Steele (eds.), \textit{op.cit.}, 12.


\textsuperscript{42} See: Ibid.

\textsuperscript{43} See: Jeffrey D. Sachs, \textit{op.cit.} 20-24.
in which households cannot meet basic needs for their survival. Typically, the households are chronically hungry, unable to access health care, lack safe drinking water and sanitation. Moreover, households cannot afford education for their children; they lack even rudimentary shelter and basic articles of clothing. Adopting the World Bank statistical standard, Sachs defines extreme poverty as living on an income of $1 per day per person. For Sachs, such extreme forms of poverty are concentrated in the developing countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia, and South Asia. Nevertheless, he observes that, while extreme poverty is falling in the Asian regions in both absolute numbers and as a proportion of the population, it is rising in Sub-Saharan Africa, both in absolute numbers and as a share of the population. Sachs points out that almost half of the population in this part of Africa is living in extreme poverty. Characteristically, the people live mainly in rural environment, they face challenges of malaria, massive droughts, lack of roads and motor vehicles, they have to cover great distances to reach regional and world markets, they lack electricity, and modern cooking fuels, and so on. Sachs is perhaps right when he observes that these challenges are almost unknown to the rich world today.44

The second degree of poverty is moderate poverty. The people experiencing this level of poverty can meet their basic needs, but just barely. Measured at purchasing power parity according to the World Bank standards, moderate poverty affects a category of people with an income ranging between $1 per day and $2 per day. The third degree of poverty according to Sachs is relative poverty. The poor residing in this category have a household income level below the average national income. In high-income countries the relatively poor residents lack access to cultural goods, entertainment, recreation, and quality health care, education, and whatever they might require for an upward social mobility.45 Scholars also speak of “anthropological poverty” which they hold continues to inflict Africa. This designation was proposed by the African theologian Engelbert Mveng from Cameroon, a great advocate of human promotion in Africa. According to him, anthropological poverty signifies the “despoiling of human beings not only of what they have, but of everything that constitutes their being and essence—their identity, history, pride ambitions, right to speak.”46 It is a phenomenon that is inclusive of political, racial economic and religio-cultural pauperization of Africans.47 Its cause is the legacy of centuries of slavery and colonisation which ravaged the cultures, dignity, self-respect and economic resources of

44 See: Ibid.
45 See: Ibid., 20.
Africans. There is also “spiritual poverty”. It means an attitude of total reliance upon God as well as humility and contrition in spirit. It is the “attitude of opening up to God”.

This broad analysis of poverty implies that poverty eradication policies and strategies should accordingly be broad; so too the Church’s social ministry in Africa. It should foster the common good; it should promote social justice, peace, and human solidarity; it should enhance environmental stewardship. It should speak for the poor against the exploitation of the natural resources of the land. It should provide forums for the advocacy of the poor amid their exploitation by the modern media technologies.

0.5.2 Empowerment

The foregoing analysis has demonstrated that poverty is both an outcome and a cause of powerlessness. This fact calls for a clear understanding of the notion of “empowerment”. It is a phenomenon related to the understanding, definition and redistribution of power in the society. Reportedly current global capitalism is concentrating almost unlimited power in the hands of small groups of people, while paralyzing the majority of them without capital. Under such circumstances empowerment can be understood as the language of the poor to claim the rights they have been denied. A genuine empowerment process has thus to address the injustice caused by the inequality in power distribution which benefits some and harms others.

Since the beginning of the third millennium the term empowerment has been widely used in development geography. Gaby Jacobs and Annemie Halsema have given a broad definition of empowerment by categorising it into three dimensions. First, there is a personal dimension of empowerment. This dimension is premised on the existence of inequality of power in society, oppression of some groups of people (such as women), and the struggle for equality. The empowerment process in relation to this dimension means raising an individual’s autonomy, assertiveness as well as strengthening his or her self-evaluation and self-competency. Second, empowerment has a social cultural dimension whereby its process entails the interaction between individuals. It involves the engagement of people in mutual relationship in respect to issues such as gender, age, ethnicity, health. It means that social

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50 See: Ibid., 36.

51 See: Ibid., 37.

52 Quoted by Mery Kolimon, op.cit., 38.

53 See: Ibid.
economic status comes to the fore. What counts here is relationship, which is a proponent of empowerment. The people are enabled to think, to feel, and to act while taking into consideration the feelings, needs and interests of others. Third, empowerment has a political dimension. This is seen in the efforts that individual groups, social organizations or social movements garner in their search for changes in society which aim at making more room for individual and collective life. Empowerment in this sense includes struggle for changing life-afflicting rules, norms and values.\textsuperscript{54}

\textbf{0.5.3 Preferential Option for the Poor}

This study will mostly employ the theological expression “preferential option for the poor” to denote the empowerment of the poor. What does “preferential option for the poor” mean? The expression goes back to the conferences of Latin American bishops which took place at Medellín (1968) and Puebla (1979). At Medellín the bishops decried material poverty as an evil, caused mainly by structural injustice. They then outlined what they considered to be the role of “a poor Church”. A Church that is poor must denounce material poverty caused by injustice and sin; it must preach and live spiritual poverty “in order to bear witness to the evil which it represents and to spiritual liberty.\textsuperscript{55} For the bishops, the obligation to evangelise the poor, therefore, should involve the giving of an effective preference to the poorest and most needy sectors within the Church itself in terms of resources and personnel. Hence, they coined the expression “preferential option for the poor” to underline this obligation. The bishops accepted that they had the duty of being in solidarity with the poor, but for that duty to be made concrete, it should include the criticism of injustice and oppression.\textsuperscript{56} At Puebla, the Latin American bishops reaffirmed the position of Medellín, calling the whole Church to convert to a preferential option for the poor and to promote an integral liberation of the poor.\textsuperscript{57} The documents produced from these conferences have profound influence on Catholic Social Teaching and have given inspiration to committed Christians all over the world.

To understand clearly the concept of “the preferential option for the poor”, it is important to view it in the light of God’s universal care for all people. In this sense the adjective “preferential” does not mean exclusive, since that would imply that God loves only the poor.\textsuperscript{58} On the contrary, God loves all human beings and extends his offer of salvation to all people.

\textsuperscript{54} See: Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} See: Donal Dorr, op.cit., 206.
\textsuperscript{56} See: Ibid., 207.
\textsuperscript{57} See: Ibid., 263.
The word “option” also needs some clarification. As used in this context, “option” does not mean “optional”, rather, it means “a way of choosing to prefer first the needs of the poor, even as other needs pull at us individually and collectively.”

God’s preferential option for the poor thus means that God chooses to go where love necessarily is drawn, namely, “to those who are most vulnerable.”

Again, the notion of preference for the poor does not connote that the poor themselves are “necessarily more virtuous, more deserving or more holy than those who are not poor.” Rather, it depicts the goodness of God who reaches out in love to those who are the margins of society, to those who are most afflicted with poverty and suffering. Ironically, sometimes even the poor themselves may not be open to the message of salvation. Nonetheless, God opts to reach out to them.

The above exposition leads us to the clear understanding of the notion of “option for the poor” in the Church’s mission. First, option for the poor is not the same as the choice or preference for preaching and ministering to the poor while neglecting the rich. Secondly, option for the poor “is not primarily the choice of a less affluent life-style.” Since an imitation of the deprivation of the poor and oppressed does not necessarily help them get out of it. Thirdly, option for the poor does not mean a judgment concerning the personal guilt of the rich. Rather, option for the poor “is a matter of what gospel we preach to anyone at all. It is concerned with the content of the gospel message itself. The gospel may be good news for the poor and bad news for the rich, but the message is for the poor and the rich.”

The major cause of poverty in many societies is oppression, social sin of injustice. Thus, to make an option for the poor denotes one’s commitment to justice. It means taking up “the cause of the poor in their struggle for justice.” It is an assertion that as far as Christian faith is concerned, the taking of sides in the structural conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed is required of everyone and it is part of the essence of Christianity.

### 0.6 Objectives of the Research

This study undertakes first of all to raise the awareness about the growing preferential option for the Holy Spirit in the Church of Africa. Christians increasingly seek the power of

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59 Ibid., 195.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
63 Donal Dorr, op. cit., 3.
64 Albert Nolan, op. cit., 49.
65 Ibid., 48.
66 Donal Dorr, op. cit. 2.
the Holy Spirit to enable them witness Christ better in the current contingencies of life. In the Archdiocese of Songea, experience in Small Christian Communities has shown that the preferential option for the poor receives even a greater impetus where Christians have a preferential option for the Spirit. This is particularly elicited by the members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement. This awareness then constitutes a call to the Church to interpret the signs of the time and listen more and more to the Spirit who speaks through the people of God.

Secondly, this work sets out to demonstrate that the proliferation of the Prosperity Gospel is a kairos moment for the Catholic Church with regard to the option for the poor. It is a moment that should help the Church reappraise its pastoral approaches vis-à-vis the poor. Paul Zulehner’s observation with regard to the current crisis in the Church of Europe is helpful to illustrate this point. He notes that the current crisis should challenge the Church to raise questions: what is our mission today in the changing global and national environment? How do we manage our life together within the Church and how do we get involved in the modern world in an incarnational way through our service to the people? Such reflections can allow for a kairological sensibility.\footnote{68 See: Paul M. Zulehner, “Seht her, nun mache ich etwas Neues”: Wohin sich die Kirchen wandeln müssen(Ostfildern: Schwabenverlag AG, 2011), 11.} It is such sensibility that this work attempts to foster. The question that should mobilize the Church in Africa is how to speak about God in the living conditions of the poor. “Called to confess Jesus Christ in a continent which tends to become a veritable empire of hunger, perhaps we should rethink the whole question of understanding and experiencing faith.”\footnote{69 Jean-Marc Ela, op.cit., xvii.} The Church has to deepen the ability of the gospel to respond to situations of poverty. It has to identify the structures and strategies of impoverishment in the Church itself and in the society at large. It has to play an advocacy role for the sake of the poor. Kenya’s former president Jomo Kenyatta once said to church leaders: “The Church is the conscience of society, and today a society needs a conscience. Do not be afraid to speak. If we are wrong and you keep quiet, one day you may have to answer for our mistakes.”\footnote{70 Joseph G. Healey, “Small Christian Communities: Promoters of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in Eastern Africa,” in: Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator (ed.), Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace: The Second African Synod (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2011), 69, footnote 7.} The failure to intervene in favour of the poor will risk undermining the credibility of the Church in Africa.

In order to highlight this commitment of the Church in favour of the poor, this study sounds the alarm about the encroachment of some attitudes of greed in current African Church. These attitudes pose a real danger both to the poor and the Church itself. This study
calls for dialogical relationships between diverse faith communities and other stakeholders in Africa with a view to charting out a common social action in tackling the problem of poverty. An interdisciplinary collaboration rather than unilateral and exclusive strategies of churches is what is required.

### 0.7 Methodological Approach

The work has employed quantitative and qualitative research methods involving a wide range of material resources and categories of collaborators. It has combined data collected through questionnaires distributed to various respondents, open questions, discussions with experts on the field and with ordinary people, my participant observation as a researcher at various church services and meetings, and a long research in libraries and archives. An additional resource has been my personal pastoral experience in diverse areas.

#### 0.7.1 Field Research

The process of data collection involved a field research which was conducted in the Archdiocese of Songea between 2010 and 2012. The selection of the respondents in that field work was determined by several criteria. The first criterion was religious affiliation. I selected respondents from among Catholic Christians, non-Catholic Christians as well as non-Christians. The majority of the Catholic respondents were lay people, but a good number of religious women and men, and the clergy were also involved. Among the non-Catholic respondents, a longer list of the participants comprised members of diverse Pentecostal denominations. Members of the Prosperity Gospel denominations were given a particular preference. But a significant numbers of Christians from the historic churches, namely, the Anglican Church, the Moravian Church and the Lutheran Church was involved as well. A number of former Catholics who have converted to Pentecostalism were specifically singled out in order to hear them speak for themselves about their decision to leave the Catholic Church. Some members of Muslim faith communities and practitioners of African Religions also participated. The Muslim believers who took part however preferred to express their opinion orally, rather than filling the questionnaire or being recorded on a tape-recorder. Some leaders of religious institutions as competent authorities were also requested to fill the questionnaire. They included bishops, parish priests, seminary rectors, diocesan youth director, the diocesan director of catechists, leaders of women and men religious communities, leaders of parish councils of the laity, priests engaged in the Charismatic
Renewal movement, evangelical church ministers and church elders, and some African traditional healers.

The second criterion for the selection of the respondents was the socio-economic and political backgrounds. The respondents were selected from among professionals in the education and health sectors, civil servants in various offices, business people, politicians, women who sell cooked food (or *mama ntilie*), peasants, and stone-breakers. Others were brick-makers, brick-layers, artisanal miners, petty vendors (*wamachinga*), motorcycle-taxi drivers (or *bodabodas*), photographers, and wood and charcoal sellers. Among the most important respondents have been young students from secondary schools, colleges, and universities because they are more prone to shift to Pentecostalism than other young people. Other respondents were from the category of young people who claim to have no employment at all, not even in the informal sector. These embody what is known in Tanzania as “*kijiwe* culture.” They while away their time, expecting that sometime someone will give them a job. They replicate the labourers hired at the eleventh hour in Jesus’ parable of the workers. Significantly, the socio-economic and political life in Tanzania is often associated with the use the occult in order to maintain security and obtain success in the respective profession or trade. Consequently, one is prone to visit diviners or Prosperity Gospel to achieve these goals. In fact, stiff competition dominates both the trade markets and the job markets. This prompts fears of evil people who are believed to employ malignant forces against their competitors. A banner at one small cosmetics kiosk at Songea’s central market seemed to confirm that scenario of fear. It stated: *Wachawi, msituue ukimwi unatutosha* (meaning: “witches, please don’t kill us, the AIDS pandemic is enough”).

We noticed that traditional healing practices in Songea were associated with border-crossing tendencies. Popular traditional healers were migrant healers who had come from geographically distant districts and regions of the country such as Mbamba Bay in Mbinga District, Sumbawanga in Rukwa Region, Dar es Salaam, Arusha, and so on. Other healers had crossed international borders, coming from neighbouring countries such as Malawi and

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71 The word *kijiwe* is a Swahili youth slang for jobless corners where the youth usually spend their free time, either after work or because of their unemployment. The word *jiwe* means a stone, and hence *kijiwe* (a small stone) is a fitting symbolisation of the state of the unemployed young people as it denotes a situation of dryness, lack of something to consume, lifelessness and dormancy. The youth meet at such venues to socialize, to plan their activities and exchange ideas including issues on job opportunities. However, it is now becoming a culture among many young people to loathe hard work and instead spend their time *kijiweni*, while waiting for someone to give them something to eat. See: Juliana C. Mziray, “Boys’ Views on Sexuality, Girls, and Pregnancies,” in: Magdalena K. Rwebangira and Rita Liljestrom (eds.), *Haraka Haraka...Look Before you Leap: Youth at the Crossroad of Custom and Modernity* (Stockholm: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1998), 146.

72 See: Mt. 10: 6-7.
Mozambique. At the same time, the people of Songea have frequently portrayed the tendency to travel long distances to seek out specific healers in specific locations both within Tanzania and in neighbouring countries. We observed that even Radio Tanzania Songea advertised the trade of traditional healers. The local people revealed to us that such border-crossing therapeutic practices were perceived to be more credible than local ones. The significance of these observations for our research was that the context of Songea provided a fertile ground for churches that promise faith healing, protection against evil spirits, and material prosperity.

From this broad context of potential respondents, we selected two hundred Catholics and two hundred non-Catholics and asked them to provide answers to questionnaires distributed to them. The Catholic respondents had to answer 32 questions, while non-Catholics had to answer 50 questions. This is because the Gospel of Prosperity is practised more in the non-Catholic churches. The quantitative data collected through the questionnaires were analysed by using the computer Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Chapter Four provides some of the frequency tables obtained through this analytical process. Some of the facts these tables serve to illustrate are the following: that the Prosperity Gospel is a common practice in the non-Catholic churches (Table 1), that it is mostly faith healing and exorcism that attract Catholics to the Pentecostal churches (Table 2), that the practice of faith healing, exorcism and the Prosperity Gospel constitute the most attractive elements of the Pentecostal churches (Table 3), and that in the Prosperity Gospel churches the sharing of material resources with the less fortunate people is not emphasized (Table 4).

The process of data collection in Songea employed as well the method of social analysis. In social anthropological science this method is described as an effort to “obtain a more complete picture of a social situation by exploring its historical and structural relationships.” It is a tool that permits the researcher to grasp the reality dealt with. If offers parameters within which the researcher can suggest specific tactics and strategies. This method is borrowed in pastoral researches. A genuinely pastoral social analysis can be illustrated in what is referred to as “pastoral circle”. This is a four-moment process of tackling a problem. It involves the moment of coming into contact with the real situation; the moment


74 See: Ibid.


76 See: Ibid.
of analysis for a deeper understanding of the situation; the moment of reflection on the situation in the light of the teaching of the Scripture, Christian Social Teaching, and some social values; and the moment of response in the sense of planning concrete action or steps to address the problem and evaluate the results for further plan of action.\textsuperscript{77} The pastoral circle is better elucidated by the trilogy “see, judge, and act” method. This is a social hermeneutical methodology that involves a participant observation of the researcher. Initially it was publicly articulated by the Belgian Cardinal Joseph Cardijn who was founder of the Young Christian Workers (YCW) movement.\textsuperscript{78} Its use has been widely recommended in the Catholic Church. Pope John XXIII, for example, recommends it in his encyclical \textit{Mater et magistra} as an effective method to be used in the implementation of Christian Social Teaching:

\begin{quote}
The teachings in regard to social matters for the most part are put into effect in the following three stages: first, the actual situation is examined; then, the situation is evaluated carefully in relation to these teachings; then only is it decided what can and should be done in order that the traditional norms may be adapted to circumstances of time and place.\textsuperscript{79}
\end{quote}

The Vatican Council II also successfully used this method in its analysis of the role of the Church in the modern world.\textsuperscript{80} The Latin American bishops at their CELAM conferences of Medellin (1968) and Puebla (1979) adopted this method most systematically in their deliberations and documents. They considered it to conform to the principle of incarnation, i.e. by applying it, the Church will remain in the service of the word of God and hence assume flesh and blood in the human reality under changing circumstances.\textsuperscript{81}

My participant observation or social insertion in this research has been both physical and virtual. It involved joining Pentecostal congregations at their Sunday services in Songea and Dar es Salaam city. Again, on several occasions I attended some crusades and deliverance ministries in Dar es Salaam. I have also regularly watched televised crusades and deliverance ministries conducted by both Tanzanian preachers and American televangelists. Likewise, I have often watched video-recorded and televised services of the famous Ghanaian Prosperity Gospel preacher Pastor Mensa Otabil. In several occasions I joined the members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement in their services and participated in the meetings of ten different Small Christian Communities. My social insertion was also intended to investigate how microcredit helps women in Songea alleviate their poverty. Thus I

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\textsuperscript{79} Encyclical Letter \textit{Mater et Magistra}, No.236.
\textsuperscript{81} See: Joseph Elsener, “Pitfalls in the Use of the Pastoral Circle,” in: Frans Wijsen, Peter Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejia (eds.), \textit{op.cit.}, 63.
\end{flushleft}
participated in the meeting of 100 leaders of microcredit Women Groups under the Religious Sisters of the Daughter of Mary Immaculate (DMI) and held a lively discussion with them. Organized individual and group discussions with priests, catechists, religious brothers and sisters, secondary school and college teachers and students have also contributed a rich resource for this study. Additionally, I held random meetings and unstructured interviews with various categories of respondents I met on the streets. And in order to test the hypothesis that the mining sector contributed to the spread of Pentecostalism in Songea, I visited Chengena Village where precious stones, mostly sapphires, were being mined. I held enriching interviews with some local and migrant artisanal miners I found there.

0.7.1.1 Tape-recording

A tape-recorder was also used in the process of qualitative data collection. This was the case in interviews that involved large meetings such as that with the DMI Microcredit women groups, meetings with students and teachers, and with interview partners whom I met randomly on the streets. Some potential interview partners, however, did not want to be recorded on a tape. In such cases notes were taken instead.

0.7.1.2 “Snowball” Method

My social insertion and unstructured interviews warranted the application of the “snowball” method of moving from contact to contact and from interview to interview. This method helped me build up my knowledge and experience about the Gospel of Prosperity. I collected the points that most frequently appeared from the contacts and interviews and synthesized them together. This approach has enabled the gathering of data from the maximum number of informants.

0.7.2 Library Research

The work has employed materials from previous works on the Prosperity Gospel. The materials illustrate the practice of the Prosperity Gospel in Africa and other continents, particularly America. The works are found in encyclopaedias, dictionaries, books, journals, magazines, and newspapers. These literature sources are available in the libraries of the University of Vienna. Published studies dealing specifically with the practice of the Prosperity Gospel in Tanzania are scanty. Among the available works, some are merely a few lines in a book chapter. But most of them are non-theological works, particularly research articles

published in journals of social anthropological and economic studies. To my knowledge, there is so far no published work that focuses on the practice of the Prosperity Gospel in Songea. The research has also used various official documents of the Church. In addition, important statistics and pastoral reports have been obtained from the diocesan archives and the Benedictine archives at Peramiho and Münsterschwarzach.

0.8 Contribution of the Study

The concern of this study has been to find out how African Christianity today can best contribute to bring about a socio-economic transformation of the lives of the people. Accordingly, the first contribution of this work has been to draw attention to the fact that the approaches to the option for the poor employed by the Catholic Church hitherto are insufficient. The current phenomenal switching of Catholics to the Prosperity Gospel denominations suggests that the believers seek church denominations that promise to alleviate their poverty. The Catholic Church should thereby be mobilized to rethink its social ministry approaches. The second contribution of the work is its insistence that the popular appeal of the Prosperity Gospel is not necessarily a proof of its efficiency in effecting a socio-economic transformation of the society. The proliferation of the Prosperity Gospel has been premised on its tendency to take seriously the beliefs of most Africans with regard to witchcraft and demonology. But should African theologians endorse such beliefs simply because they are the views of most ordinary people? In fact, despite its popularity, the prosperity movement has been found to embody beliefs and practices that display a great deal of ambivalence vis-à-vis the poor. It promises to empower them while simultaneously endorsing a church polity that does not ameliorate their plight. This ambivalence ultimately constitutes an encumbrance to the option for the poor. The third contribution of the study is its emphasis that the Prosperity Gospel in Songea fosters a restrictive pneumatological salvation which centres on overcoming evil spirits and enhancing material prosperity. The socio-economic situation of Songea, nevertheless, requires as well the fostering of other gifts of the Spirit.

0.9 Difficulties Encountered in the Research

Financial constraint was the main difficulty encountered in the course of this research, since there was no provision of any research funds. There was need for sufficient funds to meet the costs of traveling to the earmarked research sites in villages and towns and for purchasing the necessary materials for the research. My interview partners also demanded payment or some token for their participation. In one Prosperity Gospel church my potential
interview partners argued that a doctorate opens one to the prospects of socio-economic mobility; hence, it must be paid for! In another church community I had to participate in a fundraising event and contribute generously in order to have a successful interview. Some interview partners requested me to facilitate financial sponsorship for their projects. At any rate, the financial aspects of the research were the major challenge.

0.10 Structure of the Work

The dissertation is divided into three parts comprising eight chapters with a General Introduction and a General Conclusion. Each chapter begins with an introduction and ends with a conclusion. Chapter One will present background information about the Archdiocese of Songea as the context of the research. It will underline the social-economic situation and demonstrate how a development ecclesiology adopted by the Catholic Church has been an option for the poor. Chapter Two will demonstrate the trajectory of Pentecostalism in Tanzania, examining its history, typology, popularity, and influence on the historic missionary churches and the society at large. Chapter Three will centre on the Prosperity Gospel and its adoption in Tanzania. It will examine the history of this theological teaching from its origins in the USA to its subsequent adoption in the African context, specifically in Tanzania. Chapter Four will examine the expressions of the Prosperity Gospel in the Archdiocese of Songea. It will identify the main factors that contribute to its popularity and the areas of its strength and weakness. Chapter Five will interpret the Prosperity Gospel from the perspective of the “Protestant Ethic” and “Maji Cult” millenarianism. It will accentuate the fact that the Prosperity Gospel in Songea is embedded with the work ethic, on the one hand, and with the “magical interpretation” and anticipation of miracles, on the other hand. It will be noted that the Tanzanian version of the Prosperity Gospel emphasizes more the latter aspect than the former. This fact, ultimately, makes this doctrine unable to engender a significant socio-economic change among its members and the society. Chapter Six will engage the proposals of the world famous economists Jeffery Sachs and Mohammad Yunus and the Tanzanian politician Julius Nyerere. This chapter will underscore the fact that the task of tackling the problem of poverty in Africa requires an interdisciplinary approach. Accordingly, in order to effectively address the problem of poverty, churches in Africa are challenged to be open to secular approaches and to collaboration with the state and other stakeholders, rather than stick to spiritual solutions alone. Chapter Seven will concentrate on biblical and theological insights into the question of the option for the poor. It will explore the issue of poverty and wealth with the lens of the Word of God and the Social Teaching of the Church (STC). It will
also include some insights from the African Synods and African theologians. Chapter Eight will present a general evaluation of the Prosperity Gospel in Songea and put forward some Pastoral Recommendations as the way forward for the Church in its commitment to the option for the poor.
PART ONE
ARCHDIOCESE OF SONGEA, PENTECOSTALISM AND THE GOSPEL OF PROSPERITY: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES
CHAPTER ONE

ARCHDIOCESE OF SONDEA: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter sets out to present a broad situational analysis of the Catholic Archdiocese of Songea and its commitment on the option for the poor. It will focus on the geographical, demographic, political, religious and socio-economic spheres of the region under review. It will pinpoint the contribution of religious freedom in Tanzania to the rapid growth of churches. Moreover, the chapter will make an in-depth analysis of the problem of poverty in the region, accentuating its gravity and fluidity. Then it will underscore how the work of evangelization carried out by the Catholic Church in Songea has promoted the option for the poor. This broad background paves the way for a proper assessment of the trajectory of Pentecostalism, specifically the Prosperity Gospel movement in the context of Songea.

1.1 Geographical Information

The Archdiocese of Songea is situated in the political Region of Ruvuma in southern Tanzania. According to its website, the archdiocese lies between longitudes 34.40 E and 36.45E degrees and between latitudes 9.15 S and 11.30 S. It has a surface area of about 38,000 square kilometres, concurrent with the borders of the two political districts of Songea and Namtumbo. The area receives an average annual rainfall of 1000-2000mm. Its temperatures range between 15°C and 25°C, the coldest months being June, July and August, and the hottest months September, October and November. The seat of the archdiocese is in Songea Town and lies at ca. 1158 above sea level.

1.2 Demographic Statistics

The inhabitants of Songea are largely Bantu people belonging to the large tribal groups of Wangoni, Wandendeule, Wamatengo and Wabena. Others are Wanyasa, Wanindi and Wayao. There are also a few Asian and European missionaries and business people. According to the 2002 Population and Housing Census, the total population in the districts that are coextensive with the Archdiocese of Songea was 462,841. The population of Songea Urban District was 130,860; and that of Songea Rural District was 156,930, while that of

84 See: Ibid.
Namtumbo District was 175,051. Notably, the division of rural and urban districts demonstrates more an administrative structure rather than a difference in the lifestyles of the people. Statistics show that over 90 percent of Songea’s population lives in rural surroundings. In Tanzania, 76 percent of the population is rural. The population density of Songea is generally low, varying from under 15 persons per km² to 49 persons per km².

1.3 Political and Religious Situation

Data on the religious situation in the Archdiocese of Songea will follow in subsequent sections. Nevertheless, it is helpful for the purpose of this study to accentuate the aspect of religious freedom in Tanzania because the growth of various religious confessions in Songea owes partly to this freedom. The Constitution of Tanzania provides for freedom of religion and does not establish any official state religion. Hence Tanzania is a secular state. On this basis, government policy forbids as criminal offence any discrimination against individuals on the basis of religious beliefs or practices. Thus citizens are free to embrace any religion they choose, provided they don’t violate the law. They are permitted to leave the country for pilgrimages and other religious practices. The government does not designate religion on passports or records of vital statistics. However, on police reports, school registration forms, and applications for medical care an individual’s religion is required to be stated. Teaching religion in public schools is also permitted for all religions. It is normally done in the form of a class on religion, but so far it is not part of the national curriculum. Missionaries are permitted to enter the country freely. But proselytizing activities that infringe the rights of the members of other religions are prohibited. To maintain a peaceful coexistence among all religions, the law prohibits preaching or distribution of materials that are considered inflammatory and represent a threat to the public order. Furthermore, the government requires that religious organizations register with the Registrar of Societies at the Home Affairs Ministry.

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86 See: “District Investment Profile” by Prime Minister’s Office, Regional Administration and Local Government, Songea District Council (September 2006), 4.
88 See: Prime Minister’s Office, Regional Administration and Local Government, Songea District Council Investment Profile (September, 2006), 2f.
89 See: Article 19 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania.
90 See: Section 129 of the Tanzania Penal Code.
Demographically, Muslims constitute approximately 40 percent of the population. Adherents of African Traditional Religions account for approximately 10 percent of the population. And those who practise other faiths, including Hinduism and Buddhism are a minority, estimated at 5 percent of the population. According to the Tanzanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in 2011 there were about 650 registered churches and ministries in the country. Christians, including Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, Baptists, members of Africa Inland, and Moravians churches, Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses and others together constitute approximately 45 percent of a population of about 40 million. The Catholic Church is the oldest and largest church and according to conservative figures, it has about 10 million followers, or 27 percent of the population. Other large churches are the Anglican, Lutheran, Baptist, Africa Inland, and Moravian Church. The Orthodox Church in Tanzania belongs to the Patriarchate of Alexandria. Pentecostals number about 20 percent of the Protestant and independent churches. Other large Church groups include the Seventh-day Adventist, and the New Apostolic Church.

The Eastern Orthodox churches, the Roman Catholic Church and those churches which are the direct descendants of the Protestant Reformation such as the Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Moravians and African Inland Church and many others, are usually referred to as mainline, mainstream, historic or orthodox churches. Some commentators also term them, ex-missionary churches. Still others refer to them as the older churches or established churches. These labels are historically in accord with European expansion phenomenon, whereby the prevailing Western views of African Christianity ascribe a dominant role to the work of European missions in the continent. The annual growth rate of Christianity in Tanzania is about 10 percent. The fastest growing churches in numerical terms are said to be the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches and ministries.

The current religious freedom in the country is indeed to be appreciated. And, notably it is precisely this freedom that contributes to the flourishing of a plethora of churches and other belief systems in the country.

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92 See: The Citizen (Dar es Salaam) of 17th July 2009 which refers to figures from November 2005.
95 See: Ibid.
97 See: Ibid.
1.4 Socio-economic Situation

The largest part of the dry land in Songea is fertile and suitable for agriculture. Ruvuma Region is mainly agrarian and ranks among the main four “grain baskets” of the country. Being the leading productive sector, agriculture accounts for a larger part of the residents’ economic mainstay; it makes the region a potentially rich area. Unfortunately, the hand-hoe is still the farm implement most used in Ruvuma Region and this hinders the maximization of production. Food crops produced in Songea include maize, rice, sweet potatoes, cassava, beans, peas, vegetables, and fruits. Maize provides the bulk of the people’s staple food requirements. Even households in Songea Urban District produce 60 percent or more of their staple food requirements.\(^98\) However, a comparative study involving several cities in Tanzania established that Songea households had the most simple staple food diet of the surveyed cities. This is because the households of Songea were overwhelmingly dependent on maize as a mainstay and rice secondarily.

The main cash crops produced in Songea and Namtumbo districts include tobacco, coffee, sunflowers, soya-beans, sesame and ground-nuts. However, tobacco prices have been falling due to a growing global ban of its products. The smallholder farmers are thus left without any alternative cash crop. This endangers their food security, since there is an increasing dependency on food crops to earn cash. Livestock keeping is also practised. Cattle, goats, chicken and pigs are reared and they constitute the diet and source of income of many households. Unfortunately, this sector is hampered by widespread pests.

The people of Songea remain largely poor, despite their rich agricultural production, partly because returns from their agriculture production are very low due to the fact that the produce are not processed. While prices for unprocessed agricultural produce are normally low, the access to processing technology and a wider market are also difficult for small farmers and agro-based entrepreneurs.\(^100\)

Ruvuma Region is also blessed with mineral resources such as tourmaline and sapphires. However, mining is mostly artisanal and it is of little profit to the local people. Recently, uranium has been discovered in Namtumbo District and large-scale mining was due to start in 2012. Nevertheless, Tanzania’s mining policy has so far benefitted more the global mining

companies than the citizens. Whether the story will be different with the uranium mineral resource is hard to tell.

Other economic activities include lumbering, fishing, bee-keeping, and trading. The region shares a vast section of Selous Game Reserve and resorts suitable for eco-tourism. But this rich potential has not been sufficiently exploited for the benefit of the local people. Industrial sector is also little developed in the region. There are few industries under Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO), but their economic contribution to the region is minimal.

The fact of being largely rural greatly impinges on the economic development of the Songea. In Tanzania rural life is associated with the presence of few assets, weak social networks, marginality, exclusion and vulnerability, and hence abject poverty. The World Bank rightly maintains that the poor predominantly live in remote rural areas and urban shanties. Accordingly, promoters of justice in rural areas contend:

we must engage in conversation with those whose homes are among the trees, fields, and wilderness. Their transportation is their feet; their road is not paved. Their work is the land and their tools are their hands. They live in and with the land, not just on it. These are the rural poor.

Another negative impact on the economic development of Songea arises from the factor of the remoteness of the region. Songea is located about 960 km from that Dar es Salaam, the country’s largest and richest city, and the centre of the permanent central government bureaucracy. Thereby it suffers thereby from marginalisation in the distribution of resources for developmental projects, high costs of fuel and industrial goods, and minimal investment.

The general economic situation of Songea is thus quite enigmatic. On the one hand, the region is blessed with favourable weather, arable land, rich natural resources and hardworking men and women. But on the other hand, its people, especially those of the rural areas, are very poor. In terms of property ownership, a person’s wealth normally consists of a house (some live in mud-and-grass-thatched huts), land, field crops, livestock, a bicycle and a radio. A few people own cars, milling-machines, and tractors.

To articulate the economic situation of Songea we can describe it as being largely a subsistence economy. The world-renowned economist Jeffrey Sachs describes a subsistence economy...
economy as an economic development stage which concentrates in a narrow range of primary agricultural commodities. It is characterized by low agricultural productivity, poor coverage of public services and infrastructure. The living standards of the people are near subsistence. Their income per capita is so meagre that it leaves little margin for saving. Hence, there is little or no private investment. The population is too poor to contribute in any substantial way to government revenue through taxation. Consequently, there is little public investment. Infrastructure is limited: roads are few, power grid is inadequate, and there is limited access to safe drinking water and sanitation. The average income per person is on the order of $300 per year. At the same time the population keeps soaring. It is the only thing which seems to grow.105

1.4.1 Illustrative Data on Poverty in Tanzania

An examination of some statistical data on the poverty index of Tanzania as a whole is helpful for the understanding of the poverty situation in Songea. According to the *Africa Yearbook*, Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in Africa, with 33.3 percent of its population living below the national poverty line.106 In 2005 its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita was $316, making it the fourth country from the bottom in world income ranking. In its 2007-2008 Human Development Index, UNDP107 ranked Tanzania 159 out of 177 in the category of countries near the top of low human development. In 2007 the country’s external debt stood at $5.4 billion, while inflation has been accelerating markedly reaching an average of about 13.5 percent at the end of 2007. And by January 2012 the inflation was 19.7 percent.108 It is the ordinary people who bear the brunt of the poverty situation. In Tanzanian standards Songea is ranked among the poorest regions of the country.

The root causes of poverty in Songea can be categorised into two: those that affect Tanzania as a whole and those that are unique to Songea and linked particularly to its history.

1.4.1.1 Root Causes of Poverty Common to Tanzania

The root causes of poverty common to Tanzania as a whole are widely perceived to be the following: the aftermath of the *Ujamaa* political ideology, neo-liberal policies and Structural

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Adjustment Programmes, the spread of HIV/AIDS pandemic, corruption, exploitation of the land’s resources by global companies, and environmental degradation.

1.4.1.1.1 The "Ujamaa" Political Ideology

The implementation of Ujamaa policy\textsuperscript{109} is perceived to be one of the causes of poverty in Tanzania, although in the 1970s it contributed to a great improvement in the health and education sectors.\textsuperscript{110} Further in this project it will be argued that Nyerere’s Ujamaa experiment was a viable and specifically African approach towards the option for the poor. Yet the implementation of the Ujamaa theory was accompanied by serious problems whose adverse economic impact continues to haunt the country. Firstly, the policy was not wholly accepted. Many, probably most, peasants did not want to move to the solidarity villages (vijiji vya Ujamaa). The government was able to force them into the villages, but it could not make them active participants in “self-reliance.”\textsuperscript{111} Even the Catholic Church and other established churches were for a long time reluctant to support Ujamaa,\textsuperscript{112} since they construed it as communism. Secondly, the nationalised crucial economic sectors such as industries and banks were performing poorly and making losses. Subsequently, the pattern of the economy was characterised by less production, less trade, and less integration into a truly national economy. Thirdly, there was a high unemployment rate among the young educated elite.\textsuperscript{113} Fourthly, the massive Villagisation Campaign resulted into loss of property and social insecurity. Consequently, in 1983 Tanzania’s economy was at its lowest ebb, leading to a fall of the standard of living by fifty percent.\textsuperscript{114} The negative legacy of Ujamaa endures till today, being embodied in low work morale, lack of entrepreneurial climate and thrift, and ultimately widespread poverty.

\textsuperscript{109} *Ujamaa* (Kiswahili for *familyhood*), loosely translated as ‘African Socialism’, was propagated by President Julius Nyerere as political ideology of Tanzania. Its implementation, initiated through the Arusha Declaration in 1967, involved, *inter alia*, forced habitation of people in collective settlements known as *Ujamaa* Villages from mid 1970s, and nationalization of some banks, companies, farms, health and education institutions owned by individuals or institutions such as Churches.


\textsuperscript{113} See: Hansjörg Dilger, *Leben mit Aids, Krankheit, Tod und soziale Beziehungen in Afrika* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2005), 58.

1.4.1.2 Structural Adjustment Programmes

Between the 1980s and early the 1990s the International Monetary Fund and World Bank imposed Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in the country. Both programmes were aimed at dismantling the regulation that was seen to constrain market forces in many post-colonial African economies. The neo-liberal structural adjustment called on the state to reduce its role in the social and economic life of the nation as one condition for its implementation. But the whole structural adjustment took place in a context of extreme poverty.

The Tanzanian leadership, nevertheless, eagerly adopted the capitalistic and the free market doctrines, since their advocates, the world financial institutions, presented them as “a gospel of salvation” to the impoverished ex-socialist Tanzanian state. But the implementation of the ESAP has meant a substantial reduction of government spending for the vulnerable. Consequently, the provision of social services has been seriously hampered. For example, many schools in Tanzania lack important facilities such as desks, books and laboratory equipment for scientific experiments. And the morale of teachers has gone down as their working conditions, including salaries, are far from being motivating. Nationwide strikes of teachers are increasingly a common experience in the country. The health sector has been similarly affected as shortages of health facilities and trained personnel have continued to pose a challenge. In 2012, for instance, doctors in major hospitals in the country staged a nationwide strike, demanding for better working conditions. Moreover, the country has experienced increased unemployment.

Hence, the imposition of the neo-liberal structures has aggravated the economic difficulties of the local people. Subsequently, life in Tanzania has no longer been at ease as socio-economic conditions have become increasingly distressing and average citizens can hardly make a decent living through formal employment. Many have resorted to opening private economic projects (miradi) in order to eke out a living. These trends have ultimately offset the previous modernization campaign in the country. Worse still, the state’s ability to meet its economic obligations has been rapidly eroded.

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116 See: Ibid.
1.4.1.1.3 The HIV/AIDS Pandemic

The first cases of the HIV and AIDS epidemic in Tanzania were reported in 1983. Since then the rate of HIV infection has assumed alarming proportions to become a pandemic. HIV and AIDS are catalytic to poverty in a number of ways. First, the pandemic claims many lives and above, all it disproportionately strikes young people who are the most productive members of the society. According to Tanzania Commission for AIDS (TACAIDS), about 5.7 percent of Tanzanians aged between 15 and 49 years were HIV-positive in the year 2008.119 Second, the pandemic causes poor work performance of the victims; wastes away valuable time for productive work, and drains household resources in the care of the patients and funeral arrangements. The number of orphans also grows in alarming proportions. Thus, with over one million of its people (just over five percent of adult population) living with HIV, Tanzania has declared the HIV pandemic a national disaster that poses a major threat to the national development. Although malaria is the leading killer disease in Tanzania, the socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS is normally more extensive and long-standing.

1.4.1.1.4 Corruption

Tanzania is a country where corruption is rife and permeates every level of the system. Hartrich once described the sombre situation of corruption in the country in the following way: “virtually nothing gets done without the initial lubrication of bribery.”120 It is widely perceived that the innocuous grand corruption (or ufisadi) that is perpetrated by national leaders and government officials is the most lethal root cause of poverty in the country. According to the public perception in Tanzania, the simple formulation of corruption is: corruption is equal to power plus money minus responsibility and accountability.

In recent years corruption has manifested itself in multifaceted forms, including the signing of dubious deals with foreign companies especially in the mining and energy sector. The resultant loss has amounted to millions of dollars. Some ministers were even forced to resign on account of corruption allegations.

A Human Rights Report for Tanzania released in 2008 by the US Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour noted that, since there was little accountability in most government entities in the country, about 20 percent of the government’s budget in each fiscal year was lost to corruption. This included theft, fraud, and fake purchase transactions.121 Moreover, in

2011, Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranked Tanzania the fifteenth most corrupt country in the world. This rating showed a remarkable downward trajectory as compared to previous years.

In brief, the problem of corruption has reached alarming proportions in both the public and private sectors. Tanzanians in their daily narratives describe corruption as having become so institutionalised that it is the surest way of accessing certain rights and services. Coupled with the deteriorating economic conditions, corruption clogs the wheel of national development and renders the lives of the average citizens poorer and poorer. Households and individuals are exposed to constant loss of their resources through this social malady.

1.4.1.1.5 Exploitation of National Resources by Foreigners

Foreign companies collude with some national leaders and business people to exploit the natural resources of the land. Most prominent practices are the depletion of forests for wood and timber and the exploitation of mineral resources. The deals usually involve corruption that benefits the two parties, while leaving the local people poor. The well-known “wealth paradox in Africa” holds true for Tanzania as well. According to the paradox “the richer in mineral resources an African country is, the more its local population is subjected to suffering and impoverishment.” Gold mines in the Lake Zone regions of Geita and Shinyanga in Tanzania are a case in point. After contracts were awarded to the giant mining companies from South Africa and Western countries, thousands of indigenous artisanal miners have gone jobless. Moreover, the local people have been brutally evicted from their homes and sometimes killed, while their environment has been seriously degraded due to mining dumps, polluted rivers and the destruction of vegetation. Above all, the gold revenues do not seem to profit the ordinary Tanzanians.

Widespread grabbing of the land owned by poor people is another cause of poverty that looms large in contemporary Tanzania. The practice is perpetrated by international organizations as well as local companies and individuals. The land is used for producing biofuel plants like jatropha, sugarcane, sunflower, and others. Land grabbing has acquired

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124 See: Ibid.
other labels such as “green colonisation,” “new land colonisation,” “climate colonisation,” and so on.\textsuperscript{128} It is reported that this phenomenon is triggered by at least four factors:\textsuperscript{129} first, the unprecedented economic growth in transition countries like India, China and Brazil has led to a rapid increase in the demand for energy. Secondly, biofuel production is being introduced in situations of food uncertainty for rural and urban areas with the assumption that “when the smallholders turn to biofuels they will be able to acquire food.”\textsuperscript{130} Thirdly, the current concern over global peak oil\textsuperscript{131} necessitates the search for alternative fuel energy sources. Fourth, due to climate and environmental concerns, with climate change issues being a prominent theme in world politics, biofuels are being sought as an alternative source of energy. It is hoped that biofuels can contribute to abating the climate crisis. However, since the investors usually acquire the best arable land, the poorest farmers are left with the worst land, that yields very little. Hence, the production of food and cash crops by the local small farmers decreases. And as experience in Tanzania shows, the local small farmers will eventually be forced to abandon their own farms and become day labourers at the investor’s farm where they are likely to be exploited. This ultimately, leads to food insecurity and the escalation of poverty. In Songea land-grabbing constitutes one of the conflict areas between local villagers and investors. The latter are often said to employ shrewd methods and corruption to obtain land from the local people.\textsuperscript{132} What is thus clear from these issues of biofuel and land-grabbing in Africa is that the strategies to abate the global climate change crisis ultimately impinge on the poorest of the poor in Africa.

\textbf{1.4.1.1.6 Environmental Degradation}

Poverty in Tanzania is also caused by environmental degradation. In Songea, the flora and fauna are destroyed through deforestation, bushfires, soil erosion, and wanton hunting. It is due to poverty that the local people turn to the environment to eke their living and ultimately degrading the environment in the process of exploiting it. The most prominent practice is the

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\textsuperscript{129} See: Prosper B. Matondi, Kjell Havnevik and Atakilte Beyene (eds.) op.cit., 9-11.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{131} The term “peak oil” was coined by the geologist Marion King Hubbert (1903-89). According to Hubbert, oil production increases quite rapidly up to the “peak”, and then declines more slowly, with the falling pressure in the wells. This causes a gradual slowing of production. See: Rune Skarstein, “Peak oil and Climate Change: Triggers of the Drive for Biofuel Production,” in: Prosper B. Matondi, Kjell Havnevik and Atakilte Beyene (eds.), op.cit., 60ff.
\textsuperscript{132} In 2012, for example, there was a big conflict over land acquisition by an investor at Lutukira Village in Songea Rural District. The villagers accused the investor of using crafty methods to acquire 50,000 acres of land against their will. See: “Posho ya Sh 2000 ya Mwekeza Yawatokea Puani Wanakijiji!,” URL: http://www.mwananchi.co.tz/makala/26-jungukuu/22845-posho-ya-sh2000-ya-mwekeza-yawatokea-puani- wanakijiji (accessed 11th May, 2012).
\end{flushleft}
depletion of the forests for the purpose of obtaining firewood and charcoal as income sources. Wild animals are similarly wantonly hunted to obtain food and cash. Consequently, a vicious cycle arises: poverty drives the people to deplete the forests, but the resultant deforestation leads to droughts and decreased yields in farm production. These acts redound on the poor who are ultimately plunged into further poverty. The victims of the vicious cycle of deforestation and poverty are therefore the poorest of the poor. It is maintained that one of the greatest causes of poverty around the world is deforestation.\(^{133}\)

In the case of Songea, the demand for firewood and charcoal is high because of the lack of electricity or other alternative sources of fuel, both in urban and rural areas. Moreover, no appropriate attention is paid to issues pertaining to environmental stewardship.\(^{134}\) Theologically, environmental manipulation is missing the mark of God’s original design, in which humans and nature are supposed to work mutually to provide for one another. But when humans assert a manipulative dominance over their land, suffering begins to occur.\(^{135}\)

1.4.1.2 Root Causes of Poverty Endemic to Songea

The root causes of poverty that are related to the specific history and situation of Songea include the aftermath of the Maji Maji Rebelltion (1905-1907), the aftermath of colonial migrant labour system, and the marginalisation of the region in terms of development during the post-independence period.

1.4.1.2.1 Aftermath of the Maji Maji War (1905-1907)\(^{136}\)

The Maji Maji War, also known simply as the Maji Maji, was a war fought by indigenous Africans who wanted to get rid of all foreign elements and restore the *status quo ante*.\(^{137}\) The foreign elements in question were described in the generic term *Litupi likere* (red clay). Politically, the jargon *Litupi likere* embodied the German colonial Government officials and their collaborators. These ruled the indigenous people with an iron fist and exploited them through forced taxation. Their harshness was particularly discernible in the exaggerated use of the *kiboko* (i.e. a whip made of hippopotamus hide) in corporal punishment. Religiously,

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\(^{133}\) See: Sarah Ferry, op.cit., 198.


\(^{135}\) See: Sarah Ferry, op.cit., 198.

\(^{136}\) At the beginning of the Maji Maji War a prophet called Kinjikitile Ngwale emerged and claimed to know some “magical water” (water is *maji* in Kiswahili Language) which could repel German bullets, hence the name “Maji Maji.”

Litupi likere denoted the Christian missionaries who were perceived to suppress indigenous religious beliefs. A dramatic case of African reaction to the suppression of their indigenous religion was witnessed at Peramiho Mission. In 1903 Fr. Francis Leuthner OSB, parish-priest of Peramiho, instructed Catechist Xaver to destroy an ancestral shrine belonging to the head-wife of the Ngoni Chief Mputa. In that shrine Chief Mputa revered his ancestral spirits, held rain rituals, and made sacrifices to ensure social harmony and the soil’s fertility. Offering sacrifices to the ancestral spirits displeased Fr. Francis who considered it an act of idolatry. The destruction of the ancestral shrine eventually made Fr. Francis and his catechist pay with their lives at the break of the Maji Maji in 1905.

Third, the term Litupi likere was also used to refer to all those who had accepted European innovations, including Christianity.

The process of suppressing the Maji Maji made Songea suffer more the brunt of the war than other regions. On account of its warlike Ngoni inhabitants who offered a considerable challenge to the German colonial army, the region was subjected to more protracted warfare. The German military (Schutztruppen) was assisted by African fighters (askaris), recruited mostly from Sudan. These deployed excessive force to suppress the rebellion. They implemented the so-called scorched-earth policy (Hungerstrategie) whereby villages, crops and food stocks were ruthlessly destroyed and all livestock confiscated in order to inflict famine on the people. War casualties amounted to 60,000 people out of a total population of 80,000 people of Songea (Ungoni) of that time. Reportedly more people died of starvation than by the German bullet. Apart from that, vast expanses of territory were depopulated as large numbers of the indigenous people were forced to emigrate. Many had to settle in areas that were unfit for human habitation. Adverse environmental degradation also resulted, making most of the land no longer suitable for livestock keeping due to large swarms of tsetse flies that now found their habitation in the area. The local people of Songea recall nostalgically how they used milk to quench their thirst during communal field-tilling work (mgovi). But subsequent to the Maji Maji, their drink was now togwa (a soft drink made from

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138 Local ancestral shrines to some extent still play a significant role in Songea. They are places where male elders make sacrifices and business people like small-scale gold miners visit them in order to ensure their success. See: Heike Schmidt, “‘Deadly Silence Predominates in this District’ The Maji Maji War and its Aftermath in Ungoni,” in: James Giblin and Jamie Monson (eds.) Maji Maji, Lifting the Fog of War (Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2010), 203.
140 See: Sebastian W. Napachihi, op. cit., 152f.
141 See: Heike Schmidt, op.cit., 217.
143 See: John Ndembwike, op.cit., 16.
cassava and finger millet—a poor substitute for milk).\textsuperscript{144} Scholars have rightly noted that the German suppression of the Maji Maji Rebellion “devastated the region for many years to come and had long-term socio-political ramifications.”\textsuperscript{145} Undoubtedly the long-standing poverty of Ruvuma Region can be partly attributed to that devastation.

1.4.1.2.2 The Aftermath of the Colonial Migrant Labour System

Both the German and British colonial governments in Tanzania maintained labour systems that benefitted some regions while impoverishing others. Ruvuma Region belonged to those regions that were impoverished on account of its labour reserve status. Within the system known as Sisal Labour Bureau (SILABU), the labour force of the Ruvuma Region was recruited to work in sisal plantations, particularly in Tanga Region. Being a labour reserve region, Ruvuma was left basically undeveloped. Statistics show that the labour system created great economic disparities among regions. For example, in 1967, six years into independence, the annual Gross Domestic Product per head for the sisal-growing Tanga Region was 1,186 shillings, while for the labour reserve Kasulu District it was 177 shillings.\textsuperscript{146}

1.4.1.2.3 Marginalisation of Ruvuma in Post-independence Times

The marginalisation status of Ruvuma Region has continued during the post-independence period.\textsuperscript{147} The various post-independence regimes have not done much to reverse the marginalisation of the region, particularly in terms of infrastructures such as roads, air communication systems, urban and rural electrification, and industrialization. Moreover, liberation wars in neighbouring Mozambique in the 1970s served to reinforce the marginalisation of Ruvuma Region. The influx of Mozambican refugees who were hosted in several camps in Songea and the general state of insecurity discouraged research and investment in the region. Notably, marginalised regions of Tanzania are the kind of places where churches mostly bridge the gap in the provision of social services.\textsuperscript{148}

1.4.2 Deficient Poverty Reduction Strategies

Strategies implemented by the Tanzanian government with a view to reducing poverty and promoting economic growth have largely proved unsuccessful. The strategies include the

\textsuperscript{144} Interview with Alcuin Nyirenda of Songea, June 2011.

\textsuperscript{145} Heike Schmidt, op.cit., 217.

\textsuperscript{146} See: John Iliffe, op.cit., 150. The economic situation of Kasulu was somewhat comparable to that of Ruvuma because both were marginalized regions.


poverty reduction programmes dictated by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. As noted above, these international financial institutions prescribed Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and Poverty Reduction Strategies Programme (PRSP) as new development orthodoxy for developing countries. They were adopted in response to the quest for a development alternative following the poor economic performance of the developing countries. Yet they have failed to reduce mass poverty in the country. A report by the Tanzania Social and Economic Trust (TASOET) in 2001 for example, attested to the failure of the PRSP as follows:

the macroeconomic progress that Tanzania has registered between 1995 and 2000 is not reflected at the grassroots level where poverty is still widely and deeply felt. There are large gaps between urban and rural populations and Dar es Salaam is better off by almost all measures. The report establishes that over half of all Tanzanians live on less than $ 1 a day and over one-third of them live in abject poverty—below 50 cents a day…\textsuperscript{149}

Another development framework is the so-called the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP) or MKUKUTA in Swahili language.\textsuperscript{150} It was adopted from the year 2005 onwards. With an outcome-oriented focus, it was organized around the clusters of economic growth and reduction of income poverty, improved quality of life and social well-being, governance and accountability. However, MKUKUTA has also failed badly. Government sources have blamed its failure on volatile climate that affected agricultural productivity and the multiplicity of the areas of priority set in the plan of the programme.\textsuperscript{151}

Despite admitting the failure of MKUKUTA, the government has often reported that the economy performs relatively well. Its judgment seems to be based mainly on macroeconomic indicators. The much acclaimed economic growth however is not translated into improvement of the lives of the ordinary people, since their economic conditions continue to deteriorate.\textsuperscript{152}

The Tanzanian Government in collaboration with international financial institutions has pursued yet new ways of thinking beyond the development impasse. Consonant with the rhetoric of a development alternative, a wider room has been created for new players considered to be important in the field. They include new social movements (NSMs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and ‘civil society’.\textsuperscript{153} The new players were considered and expected to perform better than the government in the provision of social services geared towards poverty reduction and the empowerment of the poor. Take NGOs, for instance, from


\textsuperscript{150} See: Päivi Hasu, “Neo-Pentecostalism in Tanzania,” 225.

\textsuperscript{151} See: \textit{Tanzania Daily News}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} March 2010.

\textsuperscript{152} See: Andreas Mehler, Henning Melber, Klaas van Walraven (eds.), op.cit., 384.

\textsuperscript{153} See: Claire Mercer, “Reconceptualizing State-society Relations in Tanzania: Are NGOs ‘Making a Difference,’?” in: \textit{Area}, Vol. 31, No.3 (September 1999), 247.
the 1990s they have been increasingly heralded in Tanzania as the development panacea. In 1994, Ruvuma Region alone had 12 NGOs registered with the Ministry of Home Affairs. This number was about 1.6 percent of all the NGOs in the country.\textsuperscript{154} Notably, many of the NGOs are faith-based, with a staggering number of them belonging to diverse Christian denominations. Yet as Mercer notes, despite their rhetoric of participation and empowerment, of working with grassroots and ‘civil society’, and delivering high-quality services than government to the poorest sectors of society, NGOs generally, have not proved to be pro-poor. On the contrary, their major beneficiaries are the local elites, those who are in positions of power and directly involved in the NGO sector. It is these people who gain the most from the current ‘NGO boom’ in Tanzania.\textsuperscript{155} This suggests that the NGOs contribute towards the reproduction of inequality in the society rather than the empowerment of the poor.

The foregoing discussion is helpful in situating the Prosperity Gospel in the Tanzanian context. It can be said that the Prosperity Gospel presents itself as a faith-based poverty reduction alternative consequent to the failure registered by the various poverty reduction strategies. In this framework, the Prosperity Gospel finds its niche to flourish, since it is perceived to be a development alternative along with the NGOs and the other new players in the field.

1.5 From Mission Station to the Local Diocese of Songea

The pioneer missionaries in Songea\textsuperscript{156} were the monks of the Congregation of the Missionary Benedictines of St. Otilien and the nuns of the Congregation of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing.\textsuperscript{157} It was in November 1887 when the Prefecture Apostolic of South Zanzibar was erected and entrusted to the Congregation of the Missionary Benedictines of St. Otilien in Germany. At that time the congregation had been newly founded. Coincidentally, the German occupation of Tanzania took place at the same time.\textsuperscript{158} So the German Colonial Government accepted the Benedictine Congregation in order to have Catholic German missionaries in German East Africa.

In July 1897 the area which now forms the dioceses of Songea, Njombe and Mbinga was entrusted to the Benedictine Congregation of St. Otilien at the request of Fr. Maurus

\textsuperscript{154} See: Ibid.
\textsuperscript{155} See: Claire Mercer, op.cit., 250.
\textsuperscript{156} Songea was then referred to as Ungoni after the name of the Ngoni people was dominant in the area.
\textsuperscript{158} See: John Baur, op.cit., 250.
Hartmann OSB, the Prefect Apostolic of South Zanziban. He wanted to open mission centres in the interior of the territory because their mission stations in the Moslem-dominated coastal areas showed no prospect. At the time Arabs (Abushiri soldiers) who rebelled against the German occupation launched frequent attacks on the mission stations. Subsequently, in July 1898 a Benedictine priest, Cassian Spiss OSB accompanied by Brother Laurentius OSB arrived at Peramiho and founded Peramiho Mission.

The choice of Peramiho as the first mission station was partly influenced by the chief of the Ngoni tribal group, Nkosi Mputa Gama, who invited the missionaries to open the mission station within his residential area.\textsuperscript{159} We are told that the chief had envisaged educational and political benefits from the missionaries. Educational benefits were expected to come through the establishment of mission schools. Nkosi Mputa had seen mission schools in neighbouring Malawi which were established by the Scottish missionaries of Livingstonia Mission among the local Ngoni of Mbelwa.\textsuperscript{160} By welcoming the missionaries Mputa hoped for political benefits in that the whole Ungoni area would recognise him as the paramount chief.\textsuperscript{161}

The Ngoni themselves were, nevertheless, not indigenous to Peramiho; they were immigrants from South Africa. Notably the globalisation movement of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century that catalysed the arrival of missionaries, traders, and colonialists into Africa, coincided with African intra-continental ethnic migrations. In South Africa, upheavals in the Zulu Kingdom forced some Ngoni clans to migrate northwards to countries such as Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania, where they settled at Songea in the 1840s.

The missionary work at Peramiho was so prosperous that the area was ranked among the four areas in Africa with extraordinary growth of Catholic Christianity, the other areas being Masaka in Uganda, Dahomey (today Benin), and the eastern part of Nigeria (Igboland).\textsuperscript{162}

Peramiho became an Abbey Nullius under the leadership of Abbot-Bishop Gallus Steiger OSB, who was consecrated in 1934. Abbot-Bishop Eberhard Spiess succeeded him in 1953. In the course of the years 1968/69 Peramiho reverted to the status of a simple abbey, when its territory became two dioceses, namely, the Diocese of Njombe and the Diocese of

\textsuperscript{159} See: John Iliffe, \textit{A Modern History of Tanganyika} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 55.

\textsuperscript{160} See: Lambert Doerr (ed.), \textit{op.cit.}, 11.

\textsuperscript{161} See: Sebastian W. Napachihi, \textit{op.cit.}, 81.

\textsuperscript{162} See: John Baur, \textit{op.cit.}, 250.
Songea which were erected in 1968 and 1969 respectively. The Diocese of Songea was created on 6th February with the Apostolic Constitution *Quod Sancta*.163

A diocese is a portion of the people of God which is entrusted to a bishop to be shepherded by him with the cooperation of the presbytery. Thus by adhering to its pastor and gathered together by him through the Gospel and the Eucharist in the Holy Spirit, it constitutes a particular Church in which the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative.164

The first Ordinary of Songea was Bishop James J. Komba. Meanwhile the seat of the diocese was moved from Peramiho to Songea Town. In 1986 the Diocese of Songea was again divided with the erection of the Diocese of Mbinga. In 1987 the Diocese of Songea was raised to the status of an archdiocese with seven suffragan dioceses under it.165 Bishop James J. Komba became its first archbishop. Following his death on 1st February 1992, Archbishop Norbert W. Mtega became his successor since July 1992. The Archdiocese of Songea is bordered by the following Catholic dioceses: Mbinga in the west, Njombe in the north-west, Mahenge in the north, Lindi in the north-east, Tunduru-Masasi and Lichinga (in Mozambique) in the east.166

Statistics for the year 2011167 show that the Archdiocese of Songea has a total number of 273,360 Catholics. Members of other Christian denominations, Moslems and adherents of other religions together are 219,747. Pastorally, the archdiocese is divided into five deaneries with twenty-eight parishes. The deaneries include Mahanje, Namabengo, Namtumbo, Peramiho, and Songea. As for staff, the archdiocese has one Ordinary Archbishop and one emeritus bishop belonging to the African Benedictines of Hanga. There are also two Benedictine abbots, one at Peramiho Abbey belonging to the Congregation of Missionary Benedictines of St. Ottilien and the other at Hanga Abbey belonging to the Congregation of the Monastic African Benedictines of Hanga. The total number of priests in the archdiocese is 105, out of whom 64 are diocesan and 41 religious. For the training of the candidates for the priesthood, there is Stella Matutina Minor Seminary and Peramiho Major Seminary; the latter is inter-diocesan. There is also one religious seminary at Hanga Abbey. Catechists are trained at Mgazini Catechetical Centre. The total number of catechists engaged in the pastoral field is 236. Professed women religious number 432 and professed non-ordained men religious are 169.

164 *Christus Dominus*, No. 11.
165 The suffragan dioceses include Iringa, Lindi, Mbeya, Mbinga, Mtwara, Njombe and Tunduru-Masasi.
Generally, the work of evangelization in the archdiocese is carried out collaboratively by the laity, the clergy, and the members of the institutes of consecrated life. The laity carry out the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world. They penetrate and perfect the temporal sphere of things through the spirit of the Gospel; hence they are leaven and salt of the earth. For that matter, they are central rather than peripheral to the ministry of the Church. Canon Law underlines this centrality of the laity when it states that, for the most part, the apostolate of the pastors cannot be fully effective without lay apostolate. Most of the diocesan clergy in Songea work in the parishes. Their ministry involves the proclamation of the Word of God: giving catechetical instructions to catechumens and on-going catechesis to parishioners, teaching religion in schools, celebrating the sacraments. They also celebrate the liturgies, participate in the meetings of Small Christian Communities, and deal with the general administration of the parishes. Some of the priests work in the administration offices of the archdiocese; others are formators at minor and major seminaries, and the catechetical training centre. The vocations director, youth director, and the directors for religious instructions and catechists, and communications media are also priests. Other priests work as chaplains for hospital, the prisons and in the institutes of consecrated life. However, if we take into account the number of priests who are active in the ministry, the priest-to-parishioner ratio in the archdiocese remains at about 1:4550.

The growth of the institutes of consecrated life has been one of the most remarkable developments in the history of evangelization of Songea. Their growth pace has been rapid and with diversity of religious charisms. When the archdiocese acquired its local church status in 1969, five institutes were operating in the archdiocese: the Missionary Benedictines of the Congregation of St. Ottilien, the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing, the African Benedictine Sisters of St. Agnes of Chipole, the African Benedictine Fathers and Brothers of Hanga and the Auxiliaries of the Apostolate. But by 2011, a cohort of seventeen other institutes has joined the pastoral field in the archdiocese. The institutes for women include

168 According to the Vatican Council II, the term “laity” refers to all the faithful except those in holy orders and those in the state of religious life specially approved by the Church. “These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the People of God.” See: Lumen Gentium, No. 31, CIC, can. 207.
169 The term “clergy” refers to the members of the church who are ordained for divine services; they are deacons, priests, and bishops. About their obligations and rights see cann. 273-289.
170 The Code of Canon Law defines institutes of consecrated life as canonically erected institutes whose members profess the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience by vows or other sacred bonds. See: CIC, can. 573.
171 See: Vatican Council II, Lumen Gentium, No. 31
172 See: Vatican Council II, Apostolicam Actuositatem, Nos. 2 and 7.
the Augustinian Missionary Sisters, the Poor Clare Colettines, the Sisters of Mercy of St. Vincent de Paul, the Sisters of the Visitation Congregation of Alleppey, the Ursuline Sisters of Mary Immaculate, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chamberry, the Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Victories, the Daughters of Mary Immaculate and Collaborators, the Missionary Sisters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, and Franciscan Sisters of St. Mary of the Angels. And the institutes for men are: the Augustinian Missionary Fathers and Brothers, the Lighano Benedictine Brothers of St. Paul the Apostle, the Franciscan Capuchin Friars Minor, the Vincentian Congregation of the Mission, the Missionary Society of St. Thomas the Apostle, the Discalced Carmelite Friars, the Little Flower Congregation. Among them, only the Lighano Benedictine Brothers of St. Paul the Apostle are a home-grown institute, the rest have come from other dioceses of Tanzania, other African countries, and other continents, specifically India and Europe.

The members of these institutes give admirable help in all sorts of services undertaken by the Church, including catechetical, health and educational services, works of mercy, and so on. But their religious charism is essentially one of prophetism and witness: “to show visibly what salvation in Christ really means: Liberation from the slavery of sin, and full liberty to live a life of love, and invite all people to it.” It is precisely in this “witness” that the service of the religious in the Church consists. And when they render concrete services in diverse ways, those services become a means for them to render their services of witness.

1.6 Option for the Poor during Pioneer Missionary Work

In his proposals about the pattern of the Benedictine missions, Kilger had urged that a mission station should comprise “schools for useful trades, for catechesis, elementary education, agriculture and others... asylum for the sick and the hospices for the abandoned.” These aspects were highlighted in the Missionary Magna Charta of 1883 of Father Andreas Amrhein, their founder. The missionaries who worked in Songea strived to implement this principle meticulously. Thus, they proclaimed the World of God along with promoting non

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178 Their founder, Fr. Andreas Amrhein had prescribed in the Magna Charta the modalities of setting up mission schools. See: Sebastian Napachihi, op.cit., 84.
spiritual realms such as education, health services and the initiation of social and economic projects. Both aspects constituted the option for the poor.

1.6.1 Transformative Role of Christ’s Gospel

The word evangelization has two senses. In its narrow sense, it means the proclamation of the global Christian message to those who do not believe. It is bringing the gospel to those who do not yet know Christ the redeemer of humanity. Evangelization in this sense is also referred to as primary evangelization. But in its broad sense, evangelization means “everything that brings human life and the world under the sway of God’s Word.”\(^{179}\) The purpose of evangelization is thus to bring the gospel into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence to transform humanity from within and make it new.\(^{180}\) This involves giving Christian witness, announcing the gospel message, and gathering the people of God into Christian communities.

When the European missionaries first set foot in Songea, the prevalent problems that menaced the indigenous people included slavery, witchcraft beliefs, and social insecurity. These problems produced much tension, demoralisation and fear. The indigenous people who accepted Christianity were certainly optimistic about the prospect of Christianity to improve their social economic situations. They expected Christianity to offer them a new moral teaching that was necessary to bring about order, unity and peace. With regard to slavery, there was need to reclaim the human dignity of the slaves. In 1891, a missionary newspaper in Zanzibar expressed this hope:

‘Let us rejoice and give thanks... for men are not object, and all children of Adam are of the same origin, even the foolish and the weak have their dignity... Everyone has his rights, his property, his wife, his dignity and must not be maltreated without cause. Africa, too, will have its day.’\(^{181}\)

Subsequent sections will demonstrate how the Benedictine Missionaries in Tanzania were initially very much preoccupied with the task of redeeming slaves. In relation to witchcraft, some local chiefs were said to exploit the prevailing witchcraft beliefs and fears for the purpose of increasing their own authority and acquiring slaves for sale or for employment in their farms and military.\(^{182}\) Christianity was expected to provide answers to this problem. The Yao Chief Matola, for instance, greeted and strongly supported missionaries of the


\(^{180}\) See: Evangelii Nuntiandi, No.18.


\(^{182}\) See: Ibid.
Universities’ Mission to Central Africa (U.M.C.A). His belief and expectations were that the missionaries would quell witchcraft through their Christian teaching.

With respect to social insecurity, the tribes residing in Songea and neighbouring districts were subjected to frequent raids by the war-like Ngoni tribe. Under such circumstances Christianity was expected to foster peace and tranquillity through its teaching that stresses love of neighbour. There was certainly a felt need for formal education as well. This was evidenced by the Ngoni Chief Mputa who invited the Benedictine missionaries to open a mission station in his territory. His expectation was that the missionaries would establish schools in his territory.

Evangelization is a tool for the option for the poor because it transforms humanity. Pope Paul VI puts it this way:

Strata of humanity which are transformed: for the Church it is a question not only of preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to ever greater numbers of people, but also of affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, mankind’s criteria of judgments, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is a message of freedom and a force for transformation and liberation. But that transformation and liberation must be a movement that starts from within the human person.

Liberation is first and foremost liberation from the radical slavery of sin. Its end and goal is the freedom of the children of God, which is the gift of grace. As a logical consequence, it calls for freedom from many different kinds of slavery in the cultural, economic, social, and political spheres, all of which derive ultimately from sin, and so often prevent people from living in a manner befitting their dignity.

Accordingly the paradigm and primary task of any missionary activity is missio ad gentes. The mission stations founded by the society grew to be the bishoprics of Zanzibar and Malawi. Themission stations founded by the society grew to be the bishoprics of Zanzibar and Malawi. The mission stations founded by the society grew to be the bishoprics of Zanzibar and Malawi.


Redemptoris Missio, No. 31 and No. 34
prosperity as its real goal.\textsuperscript{189} It is often queried: “What did Jesus actually bring, if not world peace, universal prosperity, and a better world? What has he brought?”\textsuperscript{190} That is precisely the question the Prosperity Gospel grapples with. For the Prosperity Gospel preachers Jesus has brought material prosperity to those who believe in him. The “prosperity Jesus” is the centre of the gospel. He is “a heavenly ATM machine, doling out comfort and material blessings to faithful believers.”\textsuperscript{191} For Pope Benedict XVI, on the contrary, Jesus “has brought us God... and now we know the path that we human beings have to take in this world... it is only because of our hardness of hearts that we think this is too little.”\textsuperscript{192}

1.6.2 Towards An Effective Pastoral Outreach

The work of evangelization could be carried effectively because the missionaries adopted good pastoral methods. Some of the methods were collaborative ministry, the personal encounter of the missionaries with the evangelised people, the inculturation of the gospel through the use of the local vernacular, the involvement of the indigenous evangelists, the employment of modern media of social communications in the work of evangelization, and the building of the necessary structures for the continuation of the work of evangelization.

1.6.2.1 Collaborative Ministry

Critical to the fulfilment of the task of evangelization was collaborative ministry. Abbot-bishops, priests, religious brothers, nuns, catechists, teachers and the members of the Catholic Action groups worked together and with great commitment in the implementation of their pastoral mission.\textsuperscript{193} It was emphasized that all these agents of evangelization were important. All parishes were urged to form Catholic Action groups and give their members proper formation in religious, moral and social matters. The missionaries also formed church councils which started in the 1950s. A church council was a church body made up mostly by lay people at deanery level for the purpose of administering church funds. It also advised the parish priest on pastoral issues. It therefore served as a forum for exchange on pastoral matters between priests and the laity. Another pastoral forum was the “social guild”. This was a church body which was also formed in 1950s. Its members consisted mostly of lay

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid., 44.
\textsuperscript{192} Joseph Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI, op.cit., 44
\textsuperscript{193} See: Lambert Doerr (ed.), op.cit., 96.
\end{flushleft}
intellectuals such as teachers. Their major responsibility was to train people in social economic and political issues. This body marked the intensification of lay apostolate. Besides, there were pastoral councils. These were also forums for exchange on pastoral matters between priests and the laity. They were established in 1960s. At first, some missionaries were reluctant to accept them because it was not customary for the missionaries to collaborate with the laity in pastoral planning. Yet later the councils “often proved to be more valuable and fruitful for missionary work than what was done by priests independently of the co-operation of their faithful.”

### 1.6.2.2 Encounter with Indigenous People

The personal encounter of the missionaries with the evangelised people was a notable mark of most missionaries in Tanzania.

At the beginning when they set their foot in Tanzania, they would not preach the Gospel at once. They had first to settle down, study the language and make themselves known to the people. They conversed with the people, made friends with them and even played games with their children. In the ordinary course they impressed the inhabitants with real and sincere courtesy patience, kindness, helpfulness, and charity... Indeed, their presence among the pagans had some profound magnetic and salutary influence which touched the pagan souls.

For the Benedictines, their founder Fr. Andreas Amrhein had insisted that full monasteries should be founded in the midst of well populated areas and from these monasteries neighbouring surroundings should be evangelized. This pastoral system enabled priests and Religious Sisters and Brothers to come into a face-to-face interaction with the local people. For the Benedictines of Peramiho, their face-to-face pastoral outreach included regular visits in the outstations and in households. They treasured the Christian family as the main agent for transmitting the faith and as the source of Christian vocations. To safeguard the integrity of the Christian family the missionaries went so far as to impose penalties on migrant Christian men who left their families behind. At the time Lake Nyasa was considered to be the ‘land of economic opportunities’ for the people across Ruvuma Region. As such, many young men migrated there for a considerable period of time in order to carry out fish trade. The missionaries considered the temporary absence of the Christian men to be detrimental to their families both religiously and socially. At a deanery conference at Peramiho it was proposed that such migrant married men could be penalised by denying them the “Beichtcheti” i.e. the

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195 Ibid., 55.


197 See: Sebastian W. Napachihi, op.cit., 65.

identity card which was normally given to Catholics who received the Sacrament of Confession:

“Wenn junge Ehemänner schon kurz nach der Heirat an die Küste gehen wollen, vernachlässigen sie ihre Pflicht sehr und können wohl kein Beichtcheti erhalten.”

Some of the Benedictine missionaries could integrate themselves in the African context so well that they won the hearts of the indigenous people in Songea. Fr. Cassian Spiss, the foremost pioneer missionary in Peramiho, exemplifies this category. He is said to have attracted the attention of the Ngoni people because of his commitment, cheerfulness, kindness, generosity and knowledge of the vernacular. Following the atrocities of the Maji Maji, some people in Songea remarked that had Fr. Cassian been with them during the fermentation of the rebellion, they would probably not have believed in the medicinal water offered by the medicine-man (Kinjikitile) as protection against German bullets.

Significantly Christ himself maintained a face-to-face pastoral approach in his proclamation of the good news of God’s Kingdom. Scriptural texts abound which testify to this fact. Jesus encountered with four fishermen, with little children, with Mary and Martha, with Samaritan woman at the well, with Zacchaeus the tax-collector, with a woman caught in adultery, and so on. Following the footsteps of Jesus, the Apostle Paul, as his missionary journeys testify, also privileged this pastoral approach. His words to the Church at Ephesus allude to his practice of reaching out to the people with the gospel message: “how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house.” In Chapter Seven we shall maintain that the personal encounters with the people by Jesus and his apostles were motivated by pneumatological hospitality. This hospitality in turn made them beneficiaries of hospitality

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199 The temporary migration of family men to Lake Nyasa was therefore a serious pastoral issue that was discussed at deanery conferences in Peramiho Diocese. See: Minutes of Peramiho Deanery Conference of 11th June 1956 under the dean Father Bertram Müller OSB.


201 See: Ibid.

202 See: Mt. 4:18-12.

203 See: Mk.10: 13-16.

204 See: Lk. 10: 38-42.

205 See: Jn. 4: 5-42.

206 See: Lk.19:1-10.

207 See: Jn.8: 1-11.

208 See Acts 13-14.

from the individuals and the households they encountered. This reciprocity was certainly a boon to the missionary activity.

1.6.2.3 Proclamation of the Gospel in Vernacular

To ensure that the gospel was incarnated in the indigenous culture, the missionaries used local vernacular to proclaim it. The Scripture, liturgical texts and prayers were also translated into local vernacular. For example, Fr. Cassian Spiss and Fr. J. Häflinger preached the gospel in Ngoni language. Fr. Cassian also wrote the grammar of Kingoni and Kisutu languages, and translated the Lord’s Prayer into Kingoni. Moreover, the reverberations of the Vatican Council II, with its call for reforms in the Church, added new impetus to the prevailing missionary spirit. Accordingly, important documents of the council like the Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), the Decree on Religious Life (Perfectae Caritatis) and the Constitution on the Holy Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium) were translated into Swahili language. Today the main church language in the Archdiocese of Songea is Swahili and occasionally English. Bibles, liturgical texts and hymns, and the church catechism are mostly written in Swahili.

1.6.2.4 Ministry of Indigenous Catechists

In the evangelization of Songea, as elsewhere in Africa, the role of indigenous catechists, right from the era of pioneer missionary work, has been vital. As Ranger notes:

From the very beginning African catechists and teachers bore the main burden of conversion. European missionaries were few, the areas affected by the Christian impact were large. In many places the first news of Christianity was brought by African catechists; in nearly all places the continuing presence of Christian influence depended upon the resident catechist or teacher. As churches became more established African Christians took much of the initiative in the competition which sprang up between rival missions.

The duty of the catechists in the pastoral field was multifaceted. They facilitated the conversion of non-Christians by their own example and by their instructions. They gave catechetical instructions to children and adults; they supervised the Christian communities entrusted to their care: watching over the discipline, the morals and the customs of the Christians, leading morning and evening prayers in the villages, and visiting the sick. Moreover, they were to resolve conflicts in their Christian communities and refer difficult pastoral problems to the priest. On Sundays and church solemnities they were supposed to

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accompany their Christians to the main mission stations for the Holy Mass and occasionally were to present their catechumens for examinations before their Baptism.214

The indigenous catechists had an advantage over European missionaries in that they could engage elements of African cultural heritage in teaching the Christian religion. For example, they could employ oral media such as idioms, riddles, stories, poems, drama, legends, myths, oral history and songs which contain a rich source of African religious spirituality. Komba cites an example of a well-known myth among the Ngoni tribe of Songea. It runs: “God has got eyes all round” (Mulungu ana miho tyee kete), which means God is omniscient. He observes that no missionary dared to use this anthropomorphic expression of God in teaching the Christian religion. The old Ngoni catechist, in contrast, would use this divine attribute in expounding the Christian doctrine to his fellow Africans more comprehensively.215

Despite their vital role in evangelization, African catechists have been scarcely described in the literature on the history of evangelization of Songea. Only the role of European missionaries tends to dominate the scene. It would be quite important to give a sufficient coverage on the contribution of the catechists. First, this is a matter of historical veracity. But second, it would serve to encourage Africans to appropriate the Christian faith, knowing that their own sons and daughters were agents of its establishment.

Even western anthropologists and theologians studying Christianity in Tanzania today perpetuate the marginalisation of the early African catechists because their research interests focus largely on the new religious movements, particularly Pentecostalism, rather than the historic churches.216 As a result, there is more literature about the founders of the new religious movements such as Pastor Dr. Gertrude Rwakatare, Bishop Zachary Kakobe, Pastor Josephat Mwingira, and the like, than about pioneer African catechists such as Xaver Ndomba of Peramiho. These pioneer African catechists have worked arduously to ensure a firm anchoring of the gospel on the African soil. Catechist Xaver, for example, is said to have ministered to the nascent Christian community entrusted to his care when the German missionaries were temporarily repatriated to Europe during the First World War.

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215 See: James Komba, *op.cit.*, 103.

216 See: This is exemplified by some researchers of Tanzanian Christianity I have quoted in this work, namely, Päivi Hasu, Hansjörg Dilger, Reinhard Veller, and Martin Lindhardt. Each of them has conducted researches focusing on Pentecostalism in Tanzania.
1.6.2.5 Employment of Modern Mass Media for Evangelization

The use of media of social communications for the work of evangelization is greatly encouraged in the Church.217 The missionaries of Peramiho have been in the forefront in this aspect. They employed sacred music, drawings, paintings, sculpture and print media. They established their own printing press and publication offices which facilitated the publication of books and mission periodicals such as Katoliki, Mwenge and Mlezi. The publications are available at their bookshop at Peramiho along with other Christian literature.

1.6.2.6 Structures for the Continuity of Evangelization

The Church’s missionary activity must involve the building of a living and effective local Church for furthering the work of evangelization.

The work of planting the Church in a given human community reaches a certain goal when the congregation of the faithful already rooted in social life and somewhat conformed to the local culture, enjoys a certain firmness and stability. That is to say, it is already equipped with its own supply (perhaps still insufficient) of local priests, Religious, and lay men, and is endowed with these institutions and ministries which are necessary for leading and expanding the life of the people of God under the guidance of their own bishop.218

The Benedictine missionaries undertook this task by establishing religious houses, catechetical colleges, and seminaries. In 1938 the Benedictine missionaries founded the Congregation of the African Benedictine Sisters at Chipole. A similar institute for male religious, the Benedictine Fathers and Brothers of Hanga, was founded in 1957. Moreover, a Catechetical Training Centre for indigenous catechists was established at Mgazini in 1945.219 Besides, a minor seminary was first established at Kigonsera and later transferred to Likonde. Likewise a major seminary which had been established at Kigonsera since 1936 was shifted to Peramiho in 1940 and has come to be known as Peramiho Major Seminary.220 This seminary stands to this day and trains candidates for the priesthood from the dioceses of the southern metropolitan zone and beyond. The missionaries also organized regular courses and retreats for the on-going formation of priests, religious, catechists and the laity in general. Apart from these institutes, a lay ministry known as the Auxiliaries of the Apostolate was introduced in 1957. Its first members were two German ladies, Miss Hildegard Nivelstein and Miss Helga Tilmann. Later they were joined by Miss Mary Turuka and other African ladies. Their

217 See for example, Inter Mirifica, No.1-2 and Redemptoris missio, No. 37.
219 See: Kamati ya Historia na Habari, op.cit., 184.
220 See: Ibid., 79.
ministry focused on the social development of the people, particularly helping women to promote their social and economic conditions.221

1.6.3 Development Ecclesiology as Option for the Poor

Apart from promoting life-affirming aspects through the message of the gospel, the missionaries also fostered the option for the poor by advocating a development ecclesiology. By this is meant that the Church worked to promote integral human development of the indigenous people. This task is part and parcel of evangelization. As Ecclesia in Africa avers, “integral development—the development of every person and the whole person, particularly the poorest and the most marginalised in the community should be at the very heart of evangelization.”222 The missionaries fulfilled this task not only through kerygma (the proclamation of the gospel) but also by providing social services, particularly in the areas of education, health, and socio-economic projects.

In 1975 Eduard Desax carried out a research in Tanzania on the role of the Benedictine missionaries in the integral development of the local people.223 He affirms that the Benedictine missionary task has been a great contribution to the economic development of the country. Desax’s work serves to demonstrate the Catholic Church’s commitment to the option for the poor in Songea. The work was however conducted in 1975; this was barely six years after the birth of the local Diocese of Songea. This means the study has covered more the missionary period than the post-missionary period. The current study will therefore examine briefly how the Catholic Church of Songea both under the Western missionaries and indigenous leadership has committed itself to the option for the poor. This option for the poor is discernible in the following major areas: the establishment of educational institutions, health care services, charitable organizations and development projects.

1.6.3.1 Mission Schools as Venues of Option for the Poor

Mission schools were fundamentally used by the Benedictine missionaries as a means of converting indigenous people to Christianity, since initially older people proved unreceptive.

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222 Ecclesia in Africa, No. 68.
of Christianity. The missionaries were convinced that through schools the entire mission land would be won for Christ. They hoped that once in school the young people would open their own hearts quite naturally to the message of Christ. Tertullian had once said with reference to the early converts in North Africa: *anima naturaliter Christiana*, i.e. “the human soul is by its very nature Christian”. Moreover, the school children were expected to evangelise their families. They would act like “tiny apostles”, opening every home to the missionary and converting their parents. School buildings were also meeting places of prayer and religious services. Indigenous teacher-catechists were assigned to teach at the schools, along with Priests, and Religious Brothers and Sisters who also supervised the schools. Teachers of secular subjects were regularly to teach religious classes as well. Baur has estimated that in Africa 80 to 90 percent of all Christians may have been converted in schools.

It has to be stressed that the mission schools enabled boys and girls to learn writing, reading and arithmetic. Popularly known as “bush-schools”, these schools were established literally in the bush, namely in the mission stations without infrastructures, although they might be well populated. Besides, the school programme was aimed at teaching the children the value of work in the Benedictine spirit of *ora et labora*. Manual work in the fields occupied much of the school curriculum and was a daily school routine. Apart from schools, a Teacher Training College and Vocational Training Centre were established at Peramiho to impart the young people with the practical skills of tailoring, leather works, carpentry and masonry works.

Mission schools were also a tool of liberating Africans from structural oppression perpetrated by colonial powers. The schools had a political impact in that through them the missionaries proclaimed the universalizing God, hence promoting social justice. As a result, many educated black people were inspired to rise up and demand their freedom and other rights. Many politicians who led the struggles for independence from colonial rule were the

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226 See: John Baur, op.cit., 150.
227 See: Sebastian W. Napachihi, op.cit. 84.
229 See: John Baur, op.cit., 414.
230 See: Eduard Desax, op.cit.,164.
231 See: Sebastian W. Napachihi, op. cit., 85f.
232 See: Kamati ya Historia na Habari, op.cit., 158.
product of mission schools. In Tanzania, Julius Nyerere who was the first president of the republic is an outstanding example. Similar African nationalists include Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, and others. Thus colonial rulers and settlers in Africa resented Christianity for its doctrines which underpinned sentiments of universalism and human equality. The apartheid Regime of South Africa under the Afrikaner Nationalist Party, for instance, instantly closed some mission schools on coming to power in 1948. It accused the mission schools of giving Africans “the wrong expectations.” The fear was that the Christian overtones of universalism and equality would dethrone white supremacy.

This gives credence to the role of mission schools as a means of promoting integral development among the indigenous people. It also testifies to the fact that Christianity during the era of pioneer missionaries in Africa has also been a partner of liberation. Complimenting this role of Christianity as a tool in the African liberation against colonialism, Ndabaningi Sithole, a church pastor and Zimbabwean nationalist, was fond of the parable: “When Europeans took our country we fought them with our spears, but they defeated us because they had better weapons... But lo! The missionary came in time and laid explosives under colonialism. The Bible is now doing what we could not do with our spears.”

1.6.3.2 Health Care: Evangelization is “Healing Wounds”

The provision of health care in Songea was given a high priority and it was a duty particularly assigned to the Sisters of St. Scholastica of Tutzing. It was hoped that through the care of the sick the indigenous people might come to see the expression of Christian charity and hospitality and thereby accept Christianity. Initially the sick in the villages surrounding Peramiho were visited daily. Later in 1928 the nuns were able to open a small hospital at Peramiho. The engagement with health care earned the Benedictine missionaries the title of Wakwaya vilonda (i.e. the healers of wounds), whereas the whole practice of the care of the sick came to be termed by the indigenous people as kazi ya Mungu (the work of God).

234 See: Ibid.
235 Ibid.
237 While it is often accentuated that the pioneer missionaries in Africa have been an ally of colonisation, their role as partner in liberation and development needs also to be emphasized in order to have a balanced view of the missionary story in Africa.
239 See: Sebastian W. Napachihi, op. cit., 90.
241 See: James Komba, op. cit., 11.
Similar services for the poor and the vulnerable included orphanages and leprosaria. In addition, the missionaries established a three-year course Nursing and Midwife school at Peramiho in 1952. The certificate offered by the school was recognized by the state.243

It is notable that, just as in the case of indigenous catechists, the contribution of African assistants in health care has remained largely unknown in the literature about the early missionary activities in Songea. Iliffe notes, for instance, that the chief burden of caring for leprosy patients at a leprosarium did not fall on doctors or missionaries. It fell on their African assistants, the dressers and dispensers. Peramiho had a huge leprosy settlement with 1556 leprosy patients in 1938. Unfortunately, nothing much is known about the African chief dispenser who was the vital figure at the settlement, except his name Cosmo Mango.244

1.6.3.3 Social and Economic Projects

From the very beginning of their missionary activities in Tanzania the Benedictines strived to promote the dignity of the indigenous people. Thus they put in place some social projects to that effect. For example, as early as 1888, a child asylum centre was built at Pugu in which 30 children were immediately brought under the care of the Religious Sisters.245 Most prominently was the contribution of the missionaries in the fight against slavery. It is worth recalling that in the Catholic Church it was Pope Leo XIII who took serious steps to address the problem of slavery. On 20th November 1890 he issued his encyclical letter Catholicae Ecclesiae in which he condemned the institution of slavery which was pervasive in the missions. Besides, his encyclical spelt out that henceforth all collections made on Epiphany Day were to be sent to the Propaganda Fide in Rome to be distributed to the missionaries who were engaged in the fight against slavery in Africa.246 Subsequent to the encyclical, the Bavarian Government in Germany entered into agreement with the Holy See where it was decided that the money collected in the Bavarian Dioceses on Epiphany Day should be given to the Benedictine missionaries in Tanzania who were engaged in eliminating slavery. With the money the Benedictine missionaries redeemed some slave children whom they accommodated in “Christian villages”.247 A missionary, Fr. Horner, describes moving scenes at Zanzibar slave market as slave children would implore the missionaries to redeem them:

247 Sebastian Napachihi, op.cit., 103.
Among the slaves that are offered for sale on the market, you can see sometimes poignant scenes. Because it is known that we redeem children from slavery, we often see these poor kids, how they look at us with a touching smile on their lips and say: "Mzungu, nunua mimi – white man, buy me!"248

Thus evidence abounds to demonstrate that the work of evangelization was accompanied by the physical liberation of the indigenous people.

The missionaries also provided the material needs of the people. Mission stations were great employers and those who dealt directly with the local people were the lay Brothers (Stationsbrüder). Moreover, the Brothers taught the people masonry, such that many people in Songea today construct their houses with burnt bricks. They also taught the people the skills of animal husbandry and farming. For example, in 1963 Br. Nikolaus Fuchs founded a pig farming cooperative at Matimira with a membership of 56 families.249 Even mission schools engaged pupils in gardening and farming in order to make them acquainted with relatively modern practical agricultural methods. Admittedly, the involvement of the pupils in agriculture was also another way of making them contribute to the production of their own food.250

Environmental stewardship was also promoted by the missionaries. In many mission stations such as Peramiho, Matogoro, Mahanje, and Litisha, to mention but a few of them, the missionaries planted trees such as mahogany, ironwood, and acacia, in order to obtain termite-resistant wood for future construction projects, for the preservation of water sources, and for environmental conservation in general.251 At Msalaba- Mkuu Parish Fr. Benno Schneider OSB laboured tirelessly to conserve the natural forest around his parish. With such efforts he managed to prevent wanton tree-felling and bush fires.252

The Social Action Department of the diocese organized courses and seminars for missionaries, African priests and lay people in leadership positions in the parishes to engage them in the promotion of agriculture, credit co-operatives and food aid in their respective parishes. According to their aim, priority for the developmental initiatives was to be given to members of the “Catholic Action”, Legio Mariae, catechists, and the Village Development Organization.”253 Moreover, the Social Action Department promoted domestic schools where

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249 See: Eduard Desax, op.cit., 179.
250 See: Sebastian Napachiihi, op.cit., 85.
251 See: Ibid., 168.
252 This comment came from the parishioners of Msalaba-Mkuu who appreciated the efforts of Fr. Benno OSB in forest conservation. Interview at Msalaba Mkuu, June 2005.
253 Eduard Desax, op.cit., 200.
girls were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, tailoring, knitting, weaving, gardening, cooking, washing, and ironing, as well as religion, childcare, health, nutrition, and so on.  

Indigenous African Priests also played a vital role in transforming the socio-economic conditions of the local people. In the 1960s, African priests of Songea initiated some projects intended for uplifting the economic conditions of boys in their post-school period. Famous among these projects were the so-called “Union-farms” which were begun in 1964 as small cooperatives. The Social Action Department of the diocese supported them financially. Up to 1969 there were 32 such farms. The priests also initiated what was known as “Boys’ Clubs” to teach boys various skills of simple craftsmanship.

1.6.3.4 Confronting Systemic Oppression

We have pointed out how the indigenous people of Songea resented the close relationship between the Benedictine missionaries of Peramiho and the German colonial authorities. Despite the alleged complimentary between the colonial project and the missionary idea, there was a disjunction between them. This was most notable when the missionaries confronted the government law enforcers when they mistreated the people. The period of the suppression of the Maji Maji discussed above epitomises this missionary intervention. The main protagonist was Fr. Johannes Häflinger, the superior of the mission in Kigonsera. He reportedly appealed to the District Commissioner (D.C) Mr. Richter to set free the Christians imprisoned at Songea. He also decried the cruel scorched-earth policy (Hungerstrategie) deployed the German military to subdue the people fighting in the Maji Maji. It is not reported if the colonial officials heeded to Häflinger’s appeals. Yet his bold denunciations of the atrocities committed by the colonial official to some extent marred the relationship between the missionaries and the colonial government. The missionaries were accused of creating a district within a district. Häflinger himself had to suffer more serious consequences as he personally came to be more at loggerheads with the colonial officials. Nonetheless he remains a good example of the Benedictines who boldly subverted the colonial structures of injustice in defence of the poor and the oppressed.

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254 See: Ibid., 201.
255 See: Ibid., 201.
256 See: Sebastian Napachiri, op.cit., 179.
257 See: Ibid., 179ff.
258 See: Ibid., 181.
1.6.4 Setbacks to the Option for the Poor

The missionary commitment to the option for the poor, though largely commendable, was nonetheless marred in some respects. This was prompted by the missionary alienation of African religious and cultural elements, a longstanding overdependence of the indigenous people on the resources of the missionaries, a failure of the missionaries to interrogate the prevailing systemic injustice, and a pastoral approach adopted by the missionaries where the “maintenance” of the existing Catholic community was preferred.

1.6.4.1 Religio-Cultural Alienation of Indigenous People

If, as noted, integral liberation of the poor is the result of evangelization, that liberation will conversely be hindered through attitudes that prevent the people from appropriating gospel values. Such an understanding can help to illustrate the impact of the religio-cultural alienation of Africans by the missionaries. African Religions constitute the oldest form of religious expression in Africa. Unlike Christianity and Islam, they lack formal organizational structures. Their leaders are often formed under a family mentor and their education levels can be low. They have no sacred books and definitive creeds upon which to base their religious analysis, and they are, in fact, not missionary-oriented. Nevertheless, there is a wide spectrum of religious elements in them. The following categories are commonly shared by most African Religions: belief in the existence of a Supreme Being; belief in spirits or divinities; widespread belief in an afterlife; witchcraft and magic practices. Other categories include the existence of a moral sense and consciousness of evil, the idea and practice of sacrifice, and the use of prayer.

In their traditional religious thought the indigenous people of Songea have always believed in a Supreme Being, Chapanga (the Creator), and in life after death. Death for them is an act of one’s transition to the world of the dead clan members (kuhamba kwa vayangu). Inability to join clan members after death is the punishment suffered by a person who fails to live a morally good life here on earth. Such a person will be eternally condemned to remain stranded at the cross-roads (kuyima pa njila malekanu). Ancestral veneration has a vital place as well. Ancestors (mahoka) are construed as the departed members of the extended families and are considered to be the “living- dead”. The indigenous people do not perceive


260 See: Ibid.


262 Informant: Mr. Emeran Pahalipote Goliama (aged 86 years), Songea, June 1988.
the ancestors as mere souls of the departed, rather as whole persons transferred to the next life. Life after death is envisioned as a replica of earthly life and comprising most of the phases of earthly life. But unlike Chapanga, ancestors are not worshipped, they are venerated. Significantly, they are believed to continue taking part in the affairs of their family left behind. Presumably, the strong bonds of kinship that operate among people in the phases of earthly life continue in the ancestral realm. An ancestor or ancestress is entitled to regular sacred communication from terrestrial relatives through prayers and ritual offerings (kuteta mahoka). The relatives do this as an expression of their love, faithfulness, homage and gratitude to him or her. The ancestor or ancestress, on the other hand, is expected to give a favourable response to the communicative initiative of his earthly clan members by bestowing spiritual as well as bodily benefits upon them as a token of love, faithfulness and thanksgiving towards them.

However, as Doerr testifies, pioneer missionaries in Songea undermined the religious significance of African Religions. Strenuous efforts were made to stamp out all the elements of African Religions. This attitude was also common with the other Western missionaries and anthropologists. The Edinburgh 1910 Conference for example, termed

268 The Edinburgh World Missionary Conference was held in June 14 to 23, 1910 at Edinburgh Scotland convening major Protestant denominations and missionary societies predominantly from North America and Northern Europe. No missionary organizations from the Eastern Orthodox Church and Roman Catholic Church were invited. The Conference was intended to consider the missionary problems in relation to the non-Christian world, with a view to seeking ways in which the Christian Gospel could more effectively impact the world’s non-Christian religions. See: Kwame Bediako, Christianity in Africa, The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion (New York: Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 1995), 192f.
African Religions “animism”. Animistic religions were thought to be empty of religious content and consolation as well as devoid of any preparation for Christianity.

Africans, even Christian converts, have often responded to this religio-cultural condemnation with a strong religio-cultural resilience. Their resistance has often been expressed in the form of syncretistic religious practices. Christians would continue to embrace some elements of their African Religion along with Christianity. In Songea, the Ngoni chief Nkosi Mputa Gama of Peramiho exemplifies cases of such religio-cultural resistance. Having appropriated the Christian faith, he and his people were among the faithful flock at Peramiho Parish. As one expression of his faith, he regularly led a good number of his people to attend church services on Sundays. In his pastoral report in 1902, Fr. Cassian Spiss OSB commended the religious fervour displayed by this chief. Yet things changed after Fr. Francis OSB, the parish priest of Peramiho, ordered his African Catechist Xaver to set the Mahoka (ancestors) hut at Maposeni on fire. The hut was known as Ng’anda ya Nyasele, i.e. the hut of the ancestors under the patronage of Nyasele who was the headwife of the chief. The chief retaliated violently by burning Peramiho Mission and slaying both the priest and the catechist. Nduna Mtazama Gama, then a page of Nkosi Mputa, later recounted the incident. He reported that as the mission station Peramiho was burning, Nkosi Mputa called out Father Francis, his prisoner, and remarked sneeringly while pointing at the burning mission station: “‘look over there! I have paid you in your own coin.’” Chief Mputa now harboured animosity towards the missionaries and this disturbed the previous equilibrium of peace that was conducive to effective evangelization.

Alienation of African culture by the missionaries also constituted setbacks to evangelization. In the 1950s debates rocked the Archdiocese of Songea (then Diocese of Peramiho) around the practice of eating meat at funerals. An instruction from the Pastoral

269 The term “animism” was coined by British anthropologist Sir Edward B. Taylor in 1871. It was a pejorative designation generally used to describe belief systems and ritual practices that apparently revolved around the worship of souls and spirits, including ancestral and nature spirits. Arguably, the designation “primal religions” is a better alternative than labels such as “animistic,” “primitive” or “pagan” that he regards as more derogatory. The term “primal religions” is used to describe the most basic or fundamental religious forms in the overall history of mankind. In African theological writing primal religions are more commonly referred to as “African Religions” (AR). See: Jehu Hanciles, op.cit., 124f.

270 See: Jehu Hanciles, op.cit., 126. Contrary to this view, some theologians argue that pre-Christian Africa’s interaction with God was first and foremost a preparation for the Gospel. J. Kombo, quoting J. Mbiti, maintains that metaphors like “hewer,” “carver,” “creator,” “originator,” “potter,” “architect,” and so on, were used by different African people to describe God as the universal Creator-father and are comparable to the same symbols in the Old Testament. See: James Kombo, “The Trinity in Africa”, in: Journal of Reformed Theology, Vol.3, No. 2 (2009), 129. See also John S. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy (London: Heinemann, 1969), 39, 44, 53.

271 See: Siegfried Hertlein, Wege christlicher Verkündigung, erster Teil, 103.


273 Ibid.

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Conference of the Diocese issued in 1939 had directed Christians to stop slaughtering animals and eat meat on funeral days. Customarily the indigenous people slaughtered animals such as cows, goats, sheep, and chickens to feed the mourners and other participants at funerals. This practice was known as *mamilila* or *mamililo*. The missionaries forbade it on the suspicion that it was a sacrificial offering to the gods, hence a pagan practice. The indigenous people, however, did not understand it as a sacrificial meal offered to their tribal gods. The Wametengo of Mbinga, for example, understood *mamilila* merely as a gesture of hospitality or payment to the funeral participants.\(^{274}\) The Ngoni similarly viewed it as an expression of gratitude to the funeral guests.\(^{275}\) For all, the instruction of the pastoral conference was repugnant to the African culture of hospitality and gratitude. Consequently, the African Christians generally found the pastoral instruction of the missionaries unacceptable.

These examples suggest that an outright demonisation of African religious and cultural values sometimes constituted an impediment to the appropriation of the gospel. In this context, even the most liberating values of the gospel might not be readily accepted by the indigenous people. Evidently, there has been a tendency among the Christians in Songea to cling to their traditional cultural and religious beliefs despite sustained efforts to suppress such beliefs. In my view, this resilience is emblematic of the fact that some of these traditional beliefs, after all, offer the African some religious content and consolation. The approach towards these beliefs, therefore, should not simply be one of seeking to suppress them outright. Rather it should be an approach that promotes dialogue with them, a dialogue that opens the way to the inculturation of the Christian religion in the African context.

1.6.4.2 The Attraction of “Rice Christianity”

In the foregoing section, we have described how the Benedictine missionaries strived to make the indigenous people become self-supporting through various projects. However, the Archdiocese of Songea is yet to become self-reliant, instead a double-faceted dependency syndrome is discernible. On the one hand, individual Christians have grown to depend overly on the church institutions and leaders, particularly on the priests and the religious. But on the other hand, the church institutions themselves are over-dependent on foreign aid for both their pastoral activities and socio-economic projects.

\(^{274}\) See: “Dekanatskonferenz des Dekanates Lituhi,” 5th June, 1965 (typescript), V., and “Bericht über die Konferenz des Dekanates UMATENGO, Totenmahl am Beerdigungstag” in Litembo, 22nd -23rd May, 1956 (typescript), I.

\(^{275}\) See: “Konferenz des Dekanates Peramiho,” 5th June, 1956 (typescript), I.
Notably, the problem of overreliance on foreign donations is deep-rooted. It can be traced back to the early days of evangelization. Initially, mutual exchange of gifts characterised the relationship between the pioneer missionaries and the indigenous African people. The former regularly gave gifts to the African chiefs and to the poor ordinary folks.\(^{276}\) In a reverse traffic, the indigenous people supplied food stuffs to the missionaries and offered volunteer services.\(^{277}\) The early signs of dependency were already discernible in the tendency of the indigenous people to convert to Christianity on the basis of material benefits. Probably the missionaries themselves inadvertently encouraged this attitude since they were eager to win many converts. At any rate, the tendency to appropriate Christianity merely for material motives came to be quite unsettling to the missionaries. They referred to it as die Gefahr des ‘Reischristentums’ (the danger of “rice Christianity”).\(^{278}\)

It was the aftermath of the Maji Maji, nevertheless, which gravely fostered the dependency syndrome. As described above, the course of the war and its subsequent suppression had resulted into unprecedented starvation and long-standing poverty in the region. To quell the problem, the Benedictine missionaries urged the German colonial authorities to stop their punitive hunger strategy against the indigenous people.\(^{279}\) But equally important, the missionaries organized relief action to feed thousands of starving people.\(^{280}\) Later the missionaries ordered seeds and livestock from other regions such as Iringa and supplied them free of charge to the indigenous people of Songea so they could produce their own food again.

Arguably the aftermath of the Maji Maji reinforced hierarchical power relationships. It turned the missionary into “Bwana mkubwa” (the great master), “Bwana mganga” (the medical practitioner), or simply “Baba” (father). Concretely, such designations meant that the missionary was now always expected to be the refuge when one needed counsel and help.\(^{281}\)

According to Fr. Ingbert Klinger OSB, the *Ujamaa* system also contributed to the dependency of the indigenous people on the missionaries because many people were impoverished by the

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276 See: Siegfried Hertlein, op. cit., Erster Teil, 103.
277 The contribution of the indigenous people to the missionary work was also through the service of porters. Many young Africans accompanied missionaries in their pastoral trips carrying their baggage and supplies. For example, on 14\(^{th}\) August 1905 when Bishop Cassian Spiss and other missionaries were killed by Maji Maji warriors at Mikukuyumbu, Kilwa, they were in the company of about sixty porters from Songea (Ungoni). One of them was killed along with the missionaries while the rest managed to escape. Bishop Cassian was on his pastoral trip from Dar es Salaam to Peramiho where he was to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation. The porters had to walk about 650 km from Songea (Ungoni) to Kilwa to meet the missionaries and from there walk with them back to Songea, while carrying their baggage. See: Sebastian W. Napachihi, op.cit., 165f. However, this contribution of the indigenous people in the missionary work has so far not received due attention in church history books in Tanzania.
278 Siegfried Hertlein, op. cit., Erster Teil, 103.
279 See: Ibid., 179f.
281 See: Ibid.
The dependency syndrome has persisted in the post-missionary period and indeed hinders personal initiatives for poverty alleviation.

1.6.4.3 Failure to Interrogate Structural Injustice

History is unbiased in revealing that some missionaries in Africa appeared to have collaborated with colonial rulers, for instance by acting as go-between in entering into agreements which eventually cheated the indigenous Africans out of their land and resources. The relationship between Missionaries of Peramiho and the German colonial regime was also suspect at times. It is reported, for example, that Kigonsera mission station was used by the German colonial authorities as a resting post on their way to and from punitive expeditions in Umatengo (Mbinga). This was the case for instance on 2\textsuperscript{nd} March, 1902 when Lieutenant Albinus, his assistant office Mr. Pitsch, and some twenty askaris went to fight the people of Mandawa village. They passed at Kigonsera mission where they ate and then proceeded to Mandawa. After the battle which claimed the lives of some forty Matengo people, the colonial military came back to the mission station where they accorded a warm reception and given food. The Lieutenant would advise the missionaries beforehand not to work in that village on the day he planned to attack it. At Peramiho, the indigenous people sometimes stopped selling chicken and eggs to the missionaries as they resented the relationship between the missionaries and the German colonial officials at Songea military station. To the indigenous people the colonial officials were oppressors and to see the missionaries collaborate with them was tantamount to conspiracy against the oppressed.

The Benedictine Abbot Norbert Weber of St. Ottilien was apparently in Tanzania when the Maji Maji War broke out in 1905. Shortly later on 20\textsuperscript{th} December of that year, he had an interview with an Austrian newspaper \textit{Reichspost} in Rome. He maintained that the Maji Maji occurred merely at the instigation of the tribal chiefs who used all sorts of superstitious magic to drag their people into war. The people were otherwise quite peaceful. Thus the representative of the mission avoided to expose the complex colonial structural oppression that led to the war and instead shifted the responsibility for the war to an anonymous

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282 Interview, Nairobi, Kenya, 12\textsuperscript{th} April, 2005.
283 See: Ambrose Moyo, op.cit., 312.
284 See: A.C.B.M Chronik von Kigonsera, 2.3. 1902.
285 See: A.C.B.M Chronik von Kigonsera, 4.3. 1902.
These few examples demonstrate how the Church in Songea sometimes did not interrogate structural injustice. Undoubtedly this attitude could in turn impinge on the reception of the liberating message of the gospel.

Scholars of African Christianity have wondered why the remarkable expansion of Christianity in Africa has occurred during the post-colonial period and not during the colonial period. Some suspect the reason to be the missionary-colonial collaboration. They contend that the mutual links between colonialism and mission constituted an obstacle to the growth of Christianity in Africa. Thus with the attainment of political independence that stumbling block was ultimately removed.

1.6.4.4 “Maintenance” Pastoral Approach

Another setback to the option for the poor can be linked to the maintenance pastoral posture which the Church in Songea adopted in the mission stations. A maintenance-oriented mission station or parish is one which is mostly focused on its current members, while forgetting to reach out to inactive Catholics and non-Catholics. In such a parish the members “absorb most of its time, energy, and resource.” In Songea, the maintenance pastoral approach resulted partly from deficient cooperation between the indigenous people and missionaries. This happened, for example, when the indigenous people refused to send their children to the mission schools. The maintenance pastoral framework might also have been adopted as a logical consequence of the numerical growth of Christianity. More pastoral attention might have been inevitable in ministering to the growing mission stations or parishes. The greatest beneficiaries of this pastoral outlook were those surrounding the mission station, and mostly those who practised the Catholic faith. The provision of social services and developmental projects also operated in the rhetoric of maintenance-oriented approach. The focus was mostly on active Catholics.

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288 See: Johannes Wenger, „Der Maji-Maji-Krieg (1905-1907) im Spiegel der Berichterstattung von zeitgenössischen österreichischen Tageszeitungen, Diplomarbeit zur Erlangung der Magistergrades der Philosophie aus der Studienrichtung Geschichte“ (Universität Wien, 2007), 106.
292 Practising the Catholic faith and morals was generally a necessary condition for securing employment at the mission stations.
293 Missionaries often provided the indigenous people with some amenities such as second-hand clothes (mitumba) and foodstuffs at a relatively cheap price. However, according to some informants from Mpandangindo and Namabengo parishes, one condition for accessing the goods was a valid tithe receipt.
concentrated around Peramiho and a few large mission stations. The social and economic projects were centred at the mission-station and administered by a lay brother (Missionsbruder), a nun or priest. With regard to agriculture, for instance, peasants had to go to Peramiho to learn sustainable agricultural methods. Muruma Centre trained the peasants how to improve soil nutrients by growing sunhemp leguminous plants. If, on the contrary, extension officers were sent to teach the peasants at their villages, the villagers would probably become mutual learners and mutual teachers in the aspects of food productions and other social projects. This approach could have inculcated the work ethic for poverty alleviation at a wider and a more lasting scale.

The argument here is not to take issue with the maintenance pastoral posture as such. In evangelization the nurturing and strengthening of the faithful Catholics through pastoral activities and social action are certainly necessary. Yet for a parish to be mission-oriented, it needs to go beyond the borders of active Catholic membership. The missionary nature of the Church requires it. In fact, an effective option for the poor entails a missionary-oriented Church.

1.7 Evangelization and Option for the Poor: Post-Missionary Period

The dawn of the post-missionary period in the Archdiocese of Songea came in the early 1960s. The task of evangelization was now to be primarily in the hands of the local Church of Songea, although the missionaries continued to be key players. The last Benedictine bishop, Abbot-Bishop Eberhard, took the transition seriously. He always wanted that the faithful be taught to feel responsible “for their own church, for their own country, for their own future.” This quest concurred with the missionary challenge of Pope Paul VI to the Church of Africa. In his homily at the canonisation of the Ugandan Martyrs in Rome on 18th October 1964, the pope referred to the Church in Africa as having become “a new homeland (cheti cha zaka ya Kanisa).” Hence priority would be given to those Catholics who proved themselves to be active in their Church stewardship by tithing faithfully (Information was gathered from a seminar on Small Christian Communities at Namabengo in June 1990 and Mpandangindo in 2000).

The encyclical Evangelii Nuntiandi states that the Church herself stands in constant need of being evangelised, converted, and renewed, so that she may evangelise the world with credibility. See: No. 15.


See: Ad Gentes, No. 2.


Ibid., Vol. 2, 22.
of Christ.””

Again, at the symposium of bishops from Africa and Madagascar in Kampala in 1969, the pope underscored the missionary responsibility of the African Church:

Africans, you are from now on your own missionaries. To be your own missionaries means that you, Africans, ought to pursue the building of the Church on this continent. The day is coming when we shall no longer call your effort “missionary” technically speaking, but native, indigenous, truly yours.

The Archdiocese of Songea as a local Church is now more than forty years down the road. How has it concretely responded to this missionary call? We have noted previously that the Church’s first missionary duty must be the proclamation of the Word of God for the sanctification of souls. On this regard, the archdiocese has continued the legacy of its pioneer missionaries. It has maintained and in some cases further developed the pastoral structures and institutions for the facilitation of evangelization. These pastoral institutions, as discussed in preceding sections, include parishes, centres for the formation and care of candidates for the priesthood, catechetical training centre, and institutes of consecrated life. The maintenance of these pastoral institutions has ensured the continuation of the Church’s option for the poor through the nourishment with the gospel message.

1.7.1 Social Ministry of the Church

The Archdiocese of Songea has also committed itself to the option for the poor through its social ministry. Helping the people to break the chains that keep them in the bondage of privation and disease is part of evangelization. The various institutions that operate in the archdiocese provide various social services, works of mercy and socio-economic projects for the empowerment of the people. In fact, in some villages, the Catholic Church remains the sole provider of such services. Briefly, the social services pertain to the areas of education, health, care of vulnerable social groups, as well as the economic empowerment of women and the youth. They can be listed as follows: 32 kindergartens, 5 primary schools, 8 secondary schools, 7 vocation training centres as well as 8 domestic schools. There are also four hostels for students, three of which are for girls and one for boys. Moreover, since 2011 there is a faculty of education of St. Augustine University of Tanzania, whereas an agricultural college under the Daughters of Mary Immaculate and Collaborators has been in operation since 2012. In the area of health care, the archdiocese has one hospital, 21 dispensaries and a nursing school. As for the care of vulnerable social groups, the archdiocese has 3 orphanages and maintains a programme for supporting orphans who have lost their parents through AIDS.

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302 EIA, No. 56.
The children live with members of their extended families but the programme supports them with school uniforms and writing materials.

The archdiocese is also deeply involved in projects for the economic empowerment of the people. It runs an agricultural centre at Msalaba Mkuu where smallholder farmers learn the methods of sustainable farming. The archdiocese has also encouraged tree-planting in villages in order to conserve the environment.\textsuperscript{305} In addition, it has created Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs) with open membership for all Christians. SACCOs are grassroots financial institutions which have become a booming sector in Tanzania today. Being grassroots institutions, they enable communities at local level to easily participate. Thus they are simple and well suited to the socio-economic milieu of the rural setting and poor communities. Members of the SACCO under the Archdiocese of Songea are entitled to a financial credit of up to 50 percent of their deposits. Some take such credits for building houses, paying education fees, opening income generating projects, and so on.\textsuperscript{306} Another way of empowering the people economically is through the establishment of a commercial bank. This has been a joint venture of the Catholic dioceses of Tanzania. The bank with the name Mkombozi Commercial Bank, obtained its banking licence in 2009. Its owners are the Catholic dioceses, parishes and individual people from all religious persuasions.\textsuperscript{307} Many Christians from the Archdiocese of Songea have got shares and accounts in this bank. The bank offers various types of loans including business loans, premium loans, and executive loans.\textsuperscript{308}

1.7.1.1 “Yunus-Type” Women Microcredit in Songea

Microcredit or micro-lending is an approach to poverty eradication originally developed by a Bangladeshi banker, Muhammad Yunus.\textsuperscript{309} The poor, particularly women, organize themselves into small groups and borrow money from their microcredit without collateral. Chapter Six provides more elaboration on this poverty alleviation approach. What is noteworthy in this section is that micro-lending has been replicated in the Archdiocese of Songea and it helps individual women and their households improve their economic conditions. The promoters of this poverty eradication initiative in the archdiocese are two Indian missionary communities of Religious Sisters: the Ursuline Sisters of Mary Immaculate and the Daughters of Mary Immaculate and Collaborators (DMI). To illustrate the positive

\textsuperscript{306} Informant Mr. Ngatunga, chief accountant of SACCO in the Archdiocese of Songea, 12\textsuperscript{th} July 2010.
\textsuperscript{309} Elaborations on this subject are provided in Chapter Six.
role of microcredit in the economic lives of the women in Songea, we shall briefly examine the microcredit run by the DMI Sisters because it has a greater coverage.\textsuperscript{310}

The DMI Sisters began to organize women groups in urban and rural localities across the Archdiocese of Songea in 2003.\textsuperscript{311} By the year 2010 the groups numbered 632 with a total membership of 3950 women. Regular seminars for the microcredit members are organized on project management skills, sustainable agriculture and livestock keeping, food processing, HIV/AIDS, and so on. With loans from banks and other financial institutions,\textsuperscript{312} individual women can establish small projects such as livestock-keeping, fruit and vegetable garden, tailoring, bakery, small shops, grinding mills and so on.

Although the microcredit is under Catholic nuns, its membership is not faith-based. Christian women, Muslim women, women from other belief systems and those without any religious affiliation can become members and are eligible to loans. Their common cause is only poverty alleviation. Some of the members are men, though a mere minority. Notably the inclusive approach makes microcredit a viable method of fighting against poverty across a large segment of people in the society. And from a religious perspective, microcredit becomes a venue for the dialogue of action between members of diverse religious persuasions. This does not mean that evangelization is ultimately reduced to a purely human, social project. On the contrary, the microcredit model promoted by the Religious Sisters becomes a ministry witnessing the transcendent dimension of the salvation offered by God in Christ. The commitment to the option for the poor is one of the things that non-Christians more easily identify with. As such, Christian witness in this dimension is prone to open the hearts of non-Christians more to considering the gospel.

For the purpose of this study, an open interview involving 100 members of the DMI women groups was conducted.\textsuperscript{313} Many testified that through their projects their household economy has improved. Some said their family diet had improved; others were grateful to be able to pay school fees for their children or to build houses for their families, still others were proud to become financially independent from men. In short, examples abound to demonstrate that micro-lending has empowered many households through the empowerment of the womenfolk.

The following testimonies are telling examples:

\textsuperscript{311} This information is available in a typescript report from the women groups presented on 17th July, 2010.
\textsuperscript{312} According to their report the loans range between Tanzania shillings 70, 000, 000 (c.US $ 47,000) and 90,000,000 (c. US $ 60,000).
\textsuperscript{313} The interviews were conducted at Songea on 17\textsuperscript{th} July, 2010.
I come from a poor family; I could not fulfill the basic needs of my family. In this situation I have joined the DMI women group and learned how to run a business and save some money. Now with the help of the women group I am able to get loans which I invest in crop cultivation. Though I have 7 children I am able to pay for their education and fulfill the basic needs of my family. I have also received a loan for making bricks for sale. This business is helping me a lot to improve my family condition. I am grateful for this opportunity. I promise to repay the loan within 6 months.\textsuperscript{314}

Another member of the microcredit said:

My main occupation was agriculture, but because I could not afford the price of fertilizers, I had to stop farming. I underwent a lot of problems in the family. Then I joined the DMI micro-lending which helped me resume crop farming and start a dairy cow project. From the earnings I now started saving some money. Now I can run my family and pay for the education of my children. I have also started another income-generating project: keeping pigs and poultry. I promise to repay my loans in six months time.\textsuperscript{315}

Many other women made similar testimonies about their upward economic mobility due to the microcredit. Interestingly, most of these women were married and lived with their husbands. And yet they all spoke of improving “my family condition” and “educating my children”, as if they were single mothers and sole bread-winners in their families. I asked myself, where are their husbands? In fact, patriarchal gender roles in Songea assign men the duty of chief bread-winners in the family. The women’s claim that they are the ones improving the economic conditions of their families suggests that the microcredit economic model empowers the women economically. But it also suggests that this model to a certain extent subverts the prevailing patriarchal gender roles. These changes create more room for household poverty alleviation. Another positive side of the microcredit is that it employs a participatory model of development by involving the poor themselves in the process of poverty alleviation. Hence the Church views the poor as its collaborators and not as its dependents or clients. Through the microcredit model, therefore, the Catholic Church in Songea promotes the option for the poor integrally and inclusively.

\textbf{1.7.1.2 Church as Agent of Advocacy and Lobbying for the Poor}

The Catholic Church of Songea has also been combating conjunctural and structural poverty through its advocacy for the poor and active lobbying for their rights. As already noted, corruption, impunity, and irresponsibility are among the most salient expressions of structural injustice that induce mass poverty in Tanzania. The advocacy and lobbying for the sake of the poor have been mostly evident in the homilies of the archbishops and priests. The archbishops have also issued special messages against bribery and corruption, particularly at liturgical celebrations during Christmas and Easter. More ponderous, however, have been

\textsuperscript{314} Immaculate Nchimbi, aged 46, from Sanangula Village, married, has 7 children.
\textsuperscript{315} Maria Komba, aged 58, from Lipupuma Village, married, has 5 children.
their pastoral statements and pastoral letters. A pastoral letter issued by Archbishop James J. Komba 1981 illustrates this point. It was entitled: “Mungu Wetu Si Mungu wa Rushwa” (i.e. our God does not condone corruption). This pastoral letter has come to win a nationwide acclaim, not least because the then president of the Republic of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, highly recommended its wider readership. Archbishop Komba had requested the president’s views on the subject of bribery and corruption. In response, the president wrote: “Father Bishop...I wish to thank you for teaching us about an issue that today requires the contribution of every good Tanzanian... I hope that the pastoral letter will be read by many Tanzanians, not only in your own diocese, but in the whole of Tanzania.”

The pastoral letter noted that the greatest victims of bribery and corruption are the poor and the weakest members of the society. It underlined the deleterious effects of this evil on these categories of people. It pointedly criticised the police and the judiciary for trampling on the rights these people:

When bribery and corruption permeate the country, the last refuge of the weak and the poor are the police and the judiciary. But when the police and the judiciary are pervaded by these evils of bribery and corruption, the weak and the poor become trapped in a precarious situation where they cannot obtain their rights nor rid themselves of their situation of indignity. This is a civil war. It is slavery with greater ferocity than that perpetrated by the Arabs, since it is a Tanzanian who relegates his fellow Tanzanian into perpetual squalid conditions.

Archbishop Komba also insisted that bribery and corruption were incompatible with the social ethos of traditional African society and with the teachings of the Bible and the Qur’an. Christians and Muslims were therefore called upon to conform to the teachings of their respective religions by rejecting bribery and corruption.

The pro-active voice of Archbishop Norbert W. Mtega for the sake of the poor and the vulnerable is also unmistakable. In his homilies, he has often preached against impunity and graft that continue to eat deep into the Tanzanian fabric, thus perpetuating poverty. His interventions at the Second African Synod in Rome in 2009 reflected his prophetic voice:

Many of our people are tortured, harassed and assassinated simply due to unfounded malicious suspicions fomented by sorcery and witchdoctors. There are no laws to defend them...We need; deeper evangelization, advocacy and prophetic voice to our governments...The survival of our farmers is precarious. Often their plight does not feature in the budgets of our governments and very often they are cheated. The Church in Africa must fight for farmers and pastoralists: That they must get their right share in the budget, that basic infrastructures and basic needs for their work and products are guaranteed, that arrangements be made for stable and good markets, that internal markets be protected, and that they be initiated to saving and lending micro-finance cooperatives...For our politicians peace means ‘a quiet atmosphere which allows them to rob and enjoy the money of their countries’. For them, free and fair elections mean ‘success to bring

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317 Ibid., 7 (translation from Swahili Language, mine).
318 Ibid., 18f (translation from Swahili Language, mine).
319 See: Ibid., 12-17.
people to the polls in total ignorance of their inherent rights’ and of the malicious maneuvers by the candidates...320

The foregoing discussions have demonstrated that even in the post-missionary period the work of evangelization in the Archdiocese of Songea goes hand in hand with the commitment to the option for the poor and the promotion of integral development.

1.7.1.3 Setbacks

The main bottleneck to the option for the poor and integral development in the Archdiocese of Songea is the lack of self-reliance. Admittedly, the archdiocese has not yet become a self-reliant local Church. It continues to depend on the churches of the West for most of its material resources for evangelization and social ministry. Rampant reliance on donations thus hampers its efforts to promote integral development and ameliorate the plight of the poor because the donations for that purpose are often not forthcoming. Subsequent chapters will further elaborate on this point.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has briefly presented the geographical, political, religious, and socio-economic situations of Songea. It has concentrated specifically on the problem of poverty and how the Catholic Church in its work of evangelization has endeavoured to address this problem. It has been noted that this problem is so fluid that it assumes more and more new forms. The chapter has underlined that poverty continues to assume new forms, while its root causes are mostly unjust socio-economic structures. The complexity of the problem thus suggests that any viable strategies to eradicate it must be able to address the systemic structures as well as adaptable to the emergent forms of poverty. This challenge confronts any church that claims to eradicate poverty. So far some of the churches in Tanzania have tended to dissuade their members from political participation. They have urged their members to concentrate on praying for the nation and the leaders as the only effective antidote against corruption and other social ills. Indeed, while prayers are important, they must be combined with concrete actions to tackle the root causes of poverty. Resorting to prayers alone ultimately obscures the real causes of poverty. In addition, failure to view the causes of poverty holistically may eventually render the implemented poverty eradication strategies counterproductive. This may happen, for example, when a Church commits itself to addressing income poverty, while simultaneously endorsing theologies that undermine

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environmental integrity. Ultimately, the cycle of poverty may be reproduced rather than eradicated.

In its evangelization history, the Catholic Church of Songea has always embraced both the proclamation of the gospel and the ecclesiology of development. Moreover, its agents of evangelization have not been foreign missionaries alone, but also indigenous people, first lay catechists and later African Religious Sisters and Brothers as well as priests. The Catholic Church today should review this history and consider it as a boon for the promotion of ecclesial ministries and the apostolate of the laity along with the ministries of the consecrated and the ordained members of the Church.

Chapter Two will explore the trajectories of Pentecostalism in Tanzania.

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321 Puleng LenkaBula, op.cit., 299.
CHAPTER TWO

TRAJECTORIES OF PENTECOSTALISM IN TANZANIA

2.0 Introduction

A global wave of Pentecostalism is sweeping across all of Africa and has left almost no part of the continent unaffected. Some scholars consider contemporary Pentecostalism as marking the third stage of what they term the ‘African Reformation of the twentieth century.’ Some scholars also describe Pentecostalism as the third response of Africans to the missionary message, “which holds the cutting edge of Africa’s new Christianity.” Others claim that the current dramatic Christian resurgence in Africa is mostly attributed to the growth of Pentecostalism. Still others consider Pentecostalism along with urbanisation as the most significant demographic trends that are reshaping the African continent today. Thus the pentecostalisation of Africa has become core in the discourses about African Christianity. In other words, the predominant rhetoric is that Africa is increasingly permeated by the preferential option for the Holy Spirit. Latin America, which experiences an equally intense wave of Pentecostalism, is reportedly undergoing a shift from its Liberation Theology paradigm of “preferential option for the poor” to the “preferential option for the Spirit.”

The current chapter turns our attention to the development of Pentecostal Christianity in Tanzania. It is important to have a glimpse of the general trajectory of Tanzanian Pentecostalism. Historically, most of the major Pentecostal churches in Tanzania were founded in a certain area and later expanded and spread to other parts of the country. Currently, most of the large Pentecostal churches are based in big cities like Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Mbeya and Arusha. Places like Songea have their branches. Moreover, a clear-cut typology of Pentecostalism in Tanzania is hard to maintain since the churches constantly divide and multiply. This chapter will trace the history of Tanzanian Pentecostalism, classify it and analyse its common prominent features. It will also identify the main factors that contribute to its popularity in Tanzania in general, and in Songea in particular. And finally,

the relationship between Pentecostalism and the historic Christianity in Tanzania will be analysed.

2.1 African Pentecostalism

African Pentecostalism or African charismatic Christianity is the label given to the wide variety of new religious movements proliferating in Africa since about 1980s. The movements vary in size from very small to urban mega-churches and even to new denominations. Scholars suggest that a discourse about Pentecostalism in Africa should take into consideration the following aspects, *inter alia*: first, it should note that the churches exhibit a great fluidity, since most of them are in a process of moving towards specialisation in ministry. Some of them tend to specialise in healing, others focus on financial break-through, while others concentrate on exorcism. Some denominations however may combine several of these elements. The second aspect to take into account is that a study on African Pentecostalism should avoid generalisation about the churches because they are distinguished in their myriad forms and exhibit a lot of theological and liturgical differences. On account of this, some commentators have even suggested that we should better speak of ‘Pentecostalisms’; rather than Pentecostalism.

Despite their differences, the various Pentecostalisms have some common features that can be summarized as follows: almost all Pentecostal denominations emphasize the need for a conversion experience, divine inspiration of Scripture, and biblical literalism. Moreover, Pentecostal theology offers a pattern of doctrine that bears much in common with the Holiness movement from which it traces its roots. Hence, the core Pentecostal teaching is sometimes described as fourfold, foursquare, or ‘full gospel’ theological pattern, and stresses that (a) Jesus offers salvation; (b) Jesus heals; (c) Jesus baptises with the Holy Spirit; (d) Jesus is coming again. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is believed to lead to *glossolalia* and ‘signs and wonders,’ including healing, that were characteristic of the early Christians during the post-Pentecost period. Exorcism is also emphasized in order to heal illnesses and diseases, often attributed to evil spirits and malignant powers. Pentecostalism is thus more correctly

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seen as “a movement concerned primarily with the experience of the working of the Holy Spirit and the practice of spiritual gifts.”332 And, in fact, the importance of the Holy Spirit is stressed above biblical doctrines.333 Moreover, Pentecostals provide room for prophetism, dreams and visions. As such, the expectation of miracles is rife among them. In addition, they privilege aggressive evangelism, strict moralism and dynamic worship style. These core Pentecostal doctrines constitute the elements of the religion and are portable into whatever cultural context Pentecostalism enters.

2.2 Typology of Pentecostalism in Tanzania

In practice it is difficult to make clear-cut typology of the various brands of African Pentecostalism. This is true of other parts of the world as well. Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori testify this fact after their four-year research in 20 countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.334 These researchers identify five types of Pentecostalism. These include Classical Pentecostalism, like the Assemblies of God; indigenous denominations that have no connection to North America, such as the Winners’ Chapel in Nigeria; independent Neo-Pentecostal churches that resist denominational labels; the Charismatic Renewal within the mainline Protestant churches and in the Catholic Church; and the ‘proto-charismatic Christians’ who, though lacking roots in traditional Pentecostalism, affirm many of the Pentecostal-charismatic elements.335 Another useful classification of Pentecostalism is that proposed by D.B. Barret and T.M. Johnson. They make a three-category classification which distinguishes Pentecostals into classical Pentecostals, Charismatics and Neo-charismatics.336 Allan Anderson also adopts this type of classification. He refers to the Charismatics and Neo-charismatics as ‘Pentecostal-like’ independent churches in the Majority World.337 The current Pentecostal Christian landscape in Tanzania corresponds more to this three-category classification and for that matter this work prefers to adopt this classification.

333 See: Birgit Meyer, op.cit.,452.
336 Ibid., 930.
2.2.1 Classical Pentecostalism

Classical Pentecostalism is an extension of Methodism, an evangelistic revival movement within Anglicanism, which traces its roots to John Wesley in the mid eighteenth century. Methodism as a form of evangelical Christianity is marked by its emphasis on conversion. It is characterised by evangelistic ardour and places priority on conversion. It urges that people must voluntarily choose the evangelical faith on the basis of powerful conversion experiences, which are often referred to as being “born again”. Methodism privileges baptism in the Holy Spirit as well as the charismatic gifts, particularly speaking in tongues, which are perceived to be ‘initial evidence’ of Spirit baptism. It also holds the Bible in high regard since it is believed to be a text that is possessed of the highest religious authority.

Initially Wesley did not intend to form an independent church denomination; he merely sought reform within the Church of England, calling believers to return to the gospel. However, since the movement adopted the contemporary spirit of Evangelical Revivals (Awakenings), it soon assumed more expansionist proportions. A significant number of Anglican clergy became known as Methodists and after Wesley’s death in 1791 the movement formed a separate denomination in England. There emerged from Methodism what came to be known as the ‘Holiness Movement’. This movement emphasized on Wesley’s doctrine of ‘Christian perfection’, or ‘sanctification’. In North America this doctrine distinguished Methodism from others during the nineteenth century. The doctrine holds that the saved will experience ‘the second blessing’ or ‘second work of grace’ following that received at conversion.

A Scot by the name of John Alexander Dowie (1847-1907), had an important influence on the emerging Pentecostal movement within the Holiness Movement, though fellow members alienated him on account of his criticisms. At first, he was a Congregational minister, but later became an independent healing evangelist in Australia and then in the USA, where he founded the Divine Healing Association in 1890 and the Christian Apostolic Church in 1895. He established several healing homes and published testimonies of his healing practices in a periodical *Leaves of Healing* which was sent all over the world.

In the United States, a Methodist known as Charles Fox Parham, having been influenced by Dowie, adopted the practice of divine healing. He founded the Bethel Bible School in

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339 See: Thomas P. Rausch, op.cit., 930.
340 See: Joel Robbins, op.cit., 120.
Houston, Texas in 1900. It was at this school that Pentecost was said to occur, with mass *glossolalia* or speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues was believed to be a confirmation of Spirit baptism as well as evidence for a return to the outpouring of gifts of the Holy Spirit witnessed at Pentecost in the early Church.

In 1905 William J. Seymour, a one-eyed African-American Holiness pastor, a Baptist preacher from Texas, was a student of Parham’s Bible school in Houston. Having learned the major tenets of the Holiness Movement and developed a belief in *glossolalia*, he converted to Pentecostalism. Then in 1906 he started a famous revival centre in Azusa Street, Los Angeles, in an abandoned stable in a run-down part of the town. Seymour and others promoted the doctrine of tongues as well as an ecstatic Christian life modelled after the experience of the Apostles at Pentecost as narrated in chapter two of the Book of the Acts. At the revival centre, men and women would shout, weep, dance, fall into trances, speak and sing in tongues, and interpret their messages into English. In true Quaker fashion, anyone who felt ‘moved by the Spirit’ would preach or sing. There was no robed choir, no hymnals, no order of services, but there was an abundance of religious enthusiasm.\(^{342}\)

As a consequence, black Pentecostalism emerged and took the Pentecostal teaching even beyond Parham’s orbit.\(^{343}\) It is thus generally accepted that Pentecostalism’s roots lie in the Protestant evangelical tradition that grew out of the Anglo-American revival movement of the eighteenth century, which was known as the Great Awakening. Nevertheless, it was the revival initiated by Seymour’s Azusa Street preaching which marked the birth of Pentecostalism.\(^{344}\) Significantly, the congregation at the Azusa Mission became interracial, with blacks and whites praying and singing together. The overcoming of racial boundaries constituted its novelty in the American Society where racial segregation was the order of the day.\(^{345}\) Parham, who was a strict advocate of the doctrine of racial segregation touted by the Ku-Klux-Clan, expressed his displeasure over this dissolution of racial boundaries:

> Men and women, whites and blacks, knelt together or fell across one another; frequently, a white woman, perhaps of wealth and culture, could be seen thrown back in the arms of a big ‘buck nigger’ and held tightly thus as she shivered and shook in freak imitation of Pentecost. Horrible, awful shame!\(^{346}\)

Such remarks demonstrate that the troubled relationship between the Pentecostal movement and established churches which generally persists till today could be seen right at

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\(^{342}\) Joel Robbins, op.cit., 120.

\(^{343}\) See: Aylward Shorter and Joseph N. Njiru, op.cit., 27.

\(^{344}\) See: Joel Robbins, op.cit.,120.


\(^{346}\) Quoted by Hans Gerald Hödl, op.cit., 123.
the budding stage of the Pentecostal movement. The movement became controversial particularly as it emphasized miraculous healings, prophecy, and speaking in tongues. And as an article from the *Los Angeles Herald* at the time testifies, there was a general cynical outlook towards it:

All classes of people gathered in the temple last night. There were big Negroes looking for a fight, there were little fairies dressed in dainty chiffon who stood on the benches and looked on with questioning wonder in their baby-blue eyes. There were cappers from North Alameda Street, and sedate dames from West Adams Street. There were all ages, sexes, colors, nationalities and previous conditions of servitude. The rambling old barn was filled and the rafters were so low that it was necessary to stick one’s nose under the benches to get a breath of air. It was evident that nine out of every ten persons present were there for the purpose of new thrills. This was a new kind of show in which the admission was free—they don’t even pass the hat at the Holy Rollers’ meeting—and they wanted to see every act to the drop of the curtain. They stood on benches to do it. When a bench wasn’t handy they stood on each other’s feet.347

Mainline Protestant pastors were not in favour of the Azusa Street Mission. Some referred to it derogatorily as “‘a disgusting amalgamation of African voodoo superstition and Caucasian insanity’ that would soon pass away.”348 Yet the Pentecostal movement did not pass away. Instead, it spread rapidly throughout the world, giving rise to such major denominations as the Assemblies of God (AOG), the Church of God in Christ, and the Church of God (Cleveland).349 The movement also led to the emergence of para-church organizations350 such as the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International.

2.2.2 The Charismatic Renewal Movement

There is a certain ambiguity as well between the terms ‘Pentecostal’ and ‘Charismatic’ that calls for some clarification. It is now generally accepted that originally the term ‘Charismatic Movement’ was employed to refer to the practice of spiritual gifts and the baptism in the Spirit in the mainline churches.351 In this sense the expression Charismatic Movement is used to refer to Christians from non-Pentecostal denominations that privilege pneumatological activities. The usage of the expression began in the Episcopalian Church in the USA in 1960. It is regarded as the year that witnessed the most momentous event in the history of

347 Thomas P. Rausch, op.cit., 928.
348 Ibid., 929.
349 See: Joel Robbins, op.cit., 121.
350Para-Church organizations are understood as Christian faith-based organizations, mostly Protestant and Evangelical, which carry out their mission usually independent of church oversight. In their scope most of them are interdenominational, while some are ecumenical. The roles they undertake include evangelistic crusades and discipleship ministries, music and print publications, running radio and television stations, film studios, promoting online ministries, study centres and education institutions, social and political activism and so on.
351 See: Allan Anderson, op. cit., 144.
Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity after Azusa Street revivals. This is because in that year the mainline Protestant churches opened themselves up to the gifts of the Spirit.\textsuperscript{352}

The charismatic movement entered Catholicism in 1967 beginning in USA as well. Thus the so-called Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) movement began officially in that year.\textsuperscript{353} But its preparations can be traced back to the launching of the Second Vatican Council in 1962. Pope John XXIII’s launching prayer began with the words: “Divine Spirit, renew your wonders in this our age, as in a new Pentecost.”\textsuperscript{354} And the theme of the renewing power of Holy Spirit is repeatedly spelt throughout the documents of Vatican II. The Council emphasized the reality of the Church as a charismatic entity where the members of the Church, endowed with gifts of the Holy Spirit, are enabled to live a new Pentecost and proclaim in their own tongue the one faith in Jesus. Accordingly, all the faithful are called upon to contribute to the life of the Christian community in virtue of the charisms bestowed on them by the Spirit and in accordance with the particular needs of the given Christian community and in communion with other members.\textsuperscript{355}

Following the official recognition of the charismatic movement by the Catholic Church, Catholics who received the gifts of the Spirit now began staying in their churches and calling themselves Pentecostal or charismatic Catholics. They often formed charismatic subgroups within their churches. Prior to the opening up of the Catholic Church to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Catholic members, who experienced Spirit baptism, spoke in tongues, or received other gifts of the Spirit, were usually compelled to shift to Pentecostal churches.\textsuperscript{356} Hence, it can be argued that the Catholic Charismatic Movement has served to retain Catholic members. Today millions of Catholics worldwide identify themselves as members of CCR, being found in more than 235 countries.\textsuperscript{357}

Having known the history of Catholic Charismatic Renewal and its formal, canonical recognition by the Vatican, it becomes puzzling why some Catholic dioceses in Tanzania look at the movement with suspicion. Further in this section it will be explained that the way the movement was initially introduced to some dioceses partly accounts for this mistrust.

From the 1970s, as ‘nondenominational’ charismatic churches and organizations developed, the term ‘charismatic’ now came to acquire a broader usage to include all those

\textsuperscript{352} See: Joel Robbins, op.cit., 121.
\textsuperscript{354} Ibid., 80.
\textsuperscript{355} See: \textit{Apostolicam Actuositatem}, No.3.
\textsuperscript{356} See: Joel Robbins, op.cit., 121.
\textsuperscript{357} See: Stanley M. Burgess (ed.), op.cit., 81.
movements outside denominational or ‘classical’ Pentecostalism where spiritual gifts are exercised.

Today, it is often difficult to distinguish between ‘Pentecostals’ and ‘Charismatics’. The situation is further complicated by the fact that often there persist theological and liturgical differences between classical Pentecostals themselves, just as there are many such differences between the classical Pentecostals and charismatic churches. Consequently, churches which have developed later are now often designated as ‘Neo-Pentecostals’ or ‘New Pentecostals’ and ‘Neo-charismatics. It is this category of Pentecostals which is said to proliferate fast in contemporary Africa, Tanzania being included.

It is also notable that the majority in the category of the Charismatic renewal movement are Catholic Charismatics.\(^{358}\) The charismatic and neo-charismatic movements, nonetheless, differ in several ways from classical Pentecostalism. One difference consists in that the former often drops the requirement for one to speak in tongues as proof of Spirit baptism. Another difference is that the charismatic and neo-charismatic movements moderate the ascetic moralism of the classical Pentecostal churches, some even to an extent of allowing their members to drink wine or wear jewellery.\(^{359}\)

### 2.2.3 Neo-Pentecostals or Neo-Charismatics

The category Neo-Pentecostals or Neo-charismatics encompasses the many religious movements that keep proliferating, particularly in Africa. But the same holds true for Asia and Latin America. It involves evangelicals and other Christians who no longer identify with Pentecostal or charismatic renewals, although they stress Spirit empowerment and other Pentecostal phenomena. This category embraces as well independent and indigenous churches that decline the identification of Pentecostal or charismatic. They emphasize deliverance from evil spirits, witchcraft and from the devil through miraculous cures and exorcisms. Many churches of this type preach the Gospel of Prosperity. Pastors who are proponents of the prosperity teaching offer the faithful anointed objects believed to have miraculous healing powers, others emphasize tithing, sacrifices, or making ‘pacts’ with God so as to receive divine blessings.\(^{360}\) In global statistics it is this third category of Pentecostals which is accorded particular significance, although the numerical strength of the classical Pentecostalism and Charismatic Renewal Movement can by no means be underrated.

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\(^{359}\) See: Joel Robbins, op.cit., 121.

\(^{360}\) See: Thomas P. Rausch, op.cit., 931.
According to the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, in the year 2000 there were 126 million Pentecostal-Charismatics in Africa.\(^{361}\) Some of them are denominational, but others are nondenominational fellowships that born-again Christians attend while at the same time maintaining allegiance to their own churches.\(^{362}\) The church under the leadership of Pastor Mensa Otabil in Accra, Ghana, is an example of such fellowships. These churches, also known as third-wave churches, are mostly African founded. Nevertheless, they are globally oriented, maintaining their relationships mainly with American churches. Their salient popularity began to appear from 1970s onward. They are often independent of larger denominations and refuse either the Pentecostal or Charismatic label, yet they affirm the availability of the gifts of the Spirit.

Thus, all the three forms of Pentecostalism identified in this section constitute the broad usage of the term ‘Pentecostal’. This means, Pentecostalism encompasses the terms ‘charismatic’ and ‘Neo-Pentecostal’ and denotes all Spirit-oriented churches and movements. In this work the term ‘Pentecostalism’ or ‘Pentecostal’ or ‘Pentecostal-charismatic’ will be employed in this broad sense, and when the term ‘Charismatic’ will be employed in a restricted meaning of Pentecostal experience in the mainline churches, such as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement, this will be clearly pointed out.

**2.3 Origins of Tanzanian Pentecostalism: Not All Roads Lead to Azusa Street**

There is a tendency among some scholars to make an unreflective use of the term ‘Pentecostalism’ to summarize the phenomenon of growing world Christianity.\(^ {363}\) While it is true that Pentecostal-charismatic Christians contribute significantly to the numerical global expansion of Christianity, it is argued that Pentecostals and charismatic scholars “want to claim the growth of world Christianity as part of their own missionary success.”\(^ {364}\) They, therefore, wish to relate to Azusa Street all movements that are phenomenologically similar to their movement. This attitude of scholars is partly due to the historical background of Pentecostalism. Pentecostal phenomena were allegedly derided in Western Christianity until as late as the 1980s.\(^ {365}\) In America, for instance, the marginalisation of Pentecostals seems to


\(^{362}\) See: Ibid., 452.


\(^{364}\) Ibid.

\(^{365}\) See: Ibid.
have occurred as well with regard to the use of the media for religious purposes. The broadcasting of radio and television religious programmes began in the country in 1920 and 1940 respectively. Yet state regulations, while allotting free air time to mainline churches such as the Lutheran Church and Roman Catholic Church to broadcast their religious programmes, did not give such a privilege to Pentecostal churches. Pentecostal churches in turn had to depend only on ‘paid air time’ to broadcast their religious programmes. 366 Arguably, today Western Pentecostal scholars would wish to demonstrate that despite all the hurdles, Pentecostalism has eventually become successful.

However, as this chapter will demonstrate, not all Pentecostal-like movements in Africa owe their origin to Azusa Street. Many African Initiated Churches (AICs), for instance, emerged out of the creativity of local African prophets most of whom didn’t even know that their counterparts in other parts of Africa, let alone Azusa Street, were forming similar religious movements out of their own local initiative. 367 In the same token, Tanzanian Pentecostalism should be considered as originating from both the influence from classical Pentecostalism and home-grown initiatives of the East African Charismatic Revival.

2.3.1 Classical Pentecostalism

Classical Pentecostal churches were introduced into Tanzania as offshoots of classical Pentecostal churches based in Europe or North America. A succession of classical Pentecostal churches arrived in the country over the years. In 1913 three independent Pentecostal missionaries from Canada ventured into the country; however, two of them died within three months. 368 Since 1927 another Pentecostal church known as the Holiness Mission was active in Mbeya Region, but its work was taken over by the Assemblies of God in 1949. 369 In 1932 there arrived Scandinavian missionaries from the Swedish Free Mission who evangelised in Tabora. The Finnish Free Mission also arrived during the same period. According to Allan Anderson, these missionaries carried out a successful mission and managed to establish churches, hospitals, orphanages, schools, colleges, and clinics across the country, and also a radio station. 370 The Pentecostal churches Association in Tanzania (P.C.A.T) which is regarded as one of the largest classical Pentecostal churches in the country has resulted from the work of the Scandinavian missionaries and indeed it has taken over the work of these

367 See: Elizabeth Isichei, op.cit., 196.
missionaries. Then, there followed the ‘ELIM Pentecostal Church’ which arrived in Morogoro Region in 1946. Later on, many other Pentecostal churches followed.

2.3.2 Local African Pentecostal Initiative

Pentecostal churches of local African initiative emerged within the country mainly thanks to the East African Revival, popularly known as the Balokole Movement. Balokole means Saved Ones in Luganda, a language spoken in Uganda. The movement began in Rwanda and Uganda in the 1930s. Apparently, Tanzania had initially no significant locally based church movements. Almost every independent church was a cross-border extension of such movements based in neighbouring countries, such as Kenya and Malawi. The Pentecostal churches that proliferate today in the country, however, are either from classical Pentecostalism or are African-initiated, without any direct link to the Balokole Movement, despite sharing some of its elements.

The East African Revival was part of a series of localised revivals experienced within African Christianity. Like many others, it had a wide provenance (beyond country of origin). It began in 1930s in Rwanda and spread to Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Sudan, and its ramifications lasted through five decades.

The Revival movement began within the mainline churches. A foreign missionary named Joe Church, a doctor with the Church Mission Society (CMS) working in Rwanda, introduced Simon Nsibambi, a Ugandan from the educated elite, to the ideas of the Holiness Movement. As pointed out previously, the Holiness Movement which emerged within Methodist evangelism was a particular culture which emphasized that a Christian believer should undergo a second religious experience after conversion in order to be empowered for holy living. The East African Revival was initiated within the Anglican Church in Rwanda and Uganda, and Nsibambi and his younger brother Blasio Kigozi became its motor. The watchword of the Revival was zukaka, meaning ‘awaken’.

Its protagonists were predominantly African laity who initiated and sustained it as a response to the perceived lethargy of the Western missionary Christianity. The Revival was a community of prayer and fellowship. It had two foci: first, to launch an attack on allegedly

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373 In Tanzania they are referred to as Walokole in Kiswahili Language.
376 See: Elizabeth Isichei, op.cit., 182.
lukewarm and inclusive Anglican churches which were perceived to compromise with indigenous cultures. Its second focus was to attack the theological modernism embraced by some Anglican missionaries such as J.C. Jones, who was the warden of Mukono theological college in Uganda.\textsuperscript{378} Their theological modernism was perceived to be permissive of decadence in the church.

Doctrinally the Revival placed emphasis on personal encounter with Jesus Christ, mutual confession of sins, and primacy of visions, dreams, prophecy and glossolalia (speaking in tongues); and in their liturgies, the revivalists privileged hymn singing and dancing.\textsuperscript{379} The Balokole considered the traditional way of being Church not only obsolete but also inconsistent with the gospel message.\textsuperscript{380} They perceived the status quo of their church during the period under review as, ironically, worldly whereas the world was being churchly.\textsuperscript{381} The proponents of the Revival held regular revival and evangelistic conferences in which they stressed holiness, public confession of sins, baptism of the Holy Spirit, and separation from spiritually harmful cultures. As their missionary approach, they posited preaching and witchcraft cleansing. Their signature tune was Tukutenderezza Yezu (we praise you Jesus).\textsuperscript{382}

Holiness for the revivalists was often determined in terms of prohibitions. They remained uncompromisingly opposed to any assimilation of Christianity with African custom, as was practised by the lot of those they regarded as lukewarm Christians.\textsuperscript{383} To symbolise their belligerent stand in confronting African traditional custom, they would eat taboo foods while at the same time refusing to eat other types of food such as coffee-beans and groundnuts. And whereas it was customary for people in their society to use ornaments or spears, the Balokole would decline such practices. They also strictly prohibited the use of alcoholic beverages. As countermeasure to alcohol use, they encouraged people to cut down plants used for brewing local beer. The condition to abhor from alcohol was emphasized even in the sacramental sphere where baptism would not be conferred to a child unless both parents were teetotalers.\textsuperscript{384} They also encouraged people to cut down coffee trees as cash crops because now that they were people of the Spirit, they were supposed to shun any kind of investment in earthly things.\textsuperscript{385} Evidently this attitude towards wealth reveals nuances in Tanzanian Pentecostalism since today Neo-Pentecostals, unlike the early revivalists, tout the Gospel of Prosperity in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{378} See: Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 94f.
\item \textsuperscript{379} See: Stanley M. Burgess (ed.), op.cit., 1.
\item \textsuperscript{380} See: Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 94f.
\item \textsuperscript{381} See: Elizabeth Isichei, op.cit., 182.
\item \textsuperscript{382} See: Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 95.
\item \textsuperscript{384} Elizabeth Isichei, op.cit., 182.
\item \textsuperscript{385} See: Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 95.
\end{itemize}
which they privilege earthly investment and flaunt their material success as marks of God’s favour. This will be elaborated in subsequent chapters.

The participation in the Revival by local and foreign evangelists and its enthusiastic reception among school- and college-aged participants had contributed to its flourishing.386 As the Revival became a more vibrant ecumenical missionary movement, it reportedly posed a challenge to various established missionary churches as well as disrupted the regimen of theological colleges.387

2.3.2.1 From Revival Movement to Pentecostal Churches

From Rwanda and Uganda the Revival spread quickly to Kenya, Sudan and Tanzania. Towards the end of the 1930s the Revival had already reached Kagera Region around Lake Victoria zone in northwest Tanzania.388 In later developments the Revival emerged in Tanzania through the evangelistic forays of Kenyan students. But its more significant influence was exerted by the agency of a Ugandan known as Festo Kivengere. He and William Nagenda were among prominent modern-day born again Christians who fervently endeavoured to propagate the revival beyond Uganda. Kivengere, a member of the Anglican Church, is associated with the entry of the Revival in central Tanzania in 1940s where he secured a teaching post in Dodoma at Alliance Secondary School. The school was an ecumenical initiative run by the Anglican Church in alliance with the Moravians and the African Inland Church Mission. Apart from teaching, Kivengere was also an important evangelist in the Anglican Church and became an acclaimed and powerful church figure in central Tanzania. From Dodoma the wave of the Rival spread to other parts of the country.

Besides the Revival Movement, there was an attempt to form an African Independent Church, whereby the ‘Church of the Holy Spirit’ emerged in 1953 by breaking away from the Evangelical Lutheran Church. However, as this church could not exert much influence, about a half of its members had returned to their former Lutheran Church by the year 1962. Many other emergent independent churches in Tanzania then ended in a similar way.389

The Pentecostal Revival, on the contrary, made a spiral leap forward, its adherents who hitherto operated within the mainline churches eventually started having their own services in which they would hop and dance.390 The revivalists despised the rest of the Christian community for not being ‘saved’ or ‘born again’.

387 See: Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 95.
389 See: Ibid.
390 See: Elizabeth Isichei, op.cit.,182.
2.3.2.2 The Clergy in the Revivals

In another development, the Revival which initially was solely a lay movement had now some of its charismatic lay preachers ordained pastors while others became bishops. This transformation of leadership from laity to clergy ushered into the Revival significant qualitative changes in that the born-again believers became more committed in their faith. Quantitative changes also took place, whereby the born-again church members separated from the mainline churches and formed independent churches, and their numbers kept multiplying.391

Under born-again Charismatic pastors, and leaders, the believers raised their level of understanding of the scriptures through the provision of Bible studies. At the same time, the practice of public testimonies which was encouraged in the Revival helped to edify the believers. However, such developments did in effect kindle the fires of schism. While the leaders of the mainline churches urged the born-again church members to adhere to the rules and traditions of their denominations, the latter, on the contrary, resented the absence in the mainline churches of the practices of speaking in tongues, prophetic utterances and healing. These aspects for them were deemed important as manifestations of the most visible gifts of the Spirit. The disenchantment with the mainline churches led to the defection of numerous born-again believers who either joined existing Pentecostal churches or established their own independent churches. The born-again believers now claimed that only they were saved, whereas those who remained in the mainline churches were lost. They also claimed that the practice of speaking in tongues and baptism by immersion (ubatizo wa maji mengi) were prerequisites for salvation.392

Consequently, the churches expanded demographically. Numerous individuals, especially fervent believers defected from the mainline churches, including the Catholic Church, and joined the independent charismatic churches. In the Lutheran Church, for example, the defection of its members gained momentum despite the presence in this church of a good liturgical order, clear performance structures and a solid biblical teaching. These merits did not seem to fulfill the yearning for a genuine African form of worship, and many believers perceived that the Spirit and power rested with the charismatic churches.393

392 See: Ibid.
393 See: Reinhard Veller, “Der Heilige Geist und die Kirchen zur Auseinandersetzung mit Pfingstkirchen und charismatischen Bewegungen in Ostafrika”, in: Winfried Brose and Ulrich van der Heyden (eds.) Mit Kreuz
The wave of Pentecostal-charismatic revivals continued with great intensity through later decades, covering the entire African Continent. And in Tanzania, from the 1970s onwards the Pentecostal churches, particularly the *Assemblies of God*, were among the fastest growing churches.\(^ {394} \)

A second phase of the Revival took place in Tanzania between the 1970s and the 1980s. The reverberations of the first phase of the Revival had by this time received such an echo that the adoption of the ‘signs and wonders’ of Pentecostalism was now taken for granted in some of the mainline churches, such as the Lutheran Church. Moreover, around 1980, some charismatic Lutheran mission workers from Europe came to Tanzania. Most of them were theologians and university lecturers from Scandinavian countries. These brought further charismatic influence into the country.\(^ {395} \)

Further strides were made in Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity as some pastors from mainline churches began to embrace the Revival. For example Moses Kulola, who was a pastor in the African Inland Church in Mwanza, joined the Revival and later became one of the most celebrated charismatic preachers in Tanzania. Likewise Emmanuel Lazaro, a pastor of the Lutheran Church in Kilimanjaro, joined the Revival movement. The two pastors later established the Tanzania Assemblies of God where Emmanuel Lazaro became the Archbishop and Moses Kulola the deputy Bishop.\(^ {396} \)

### 2.3.2.3 Conflicts and Splinter Church Groups

In 1982 the Tanzania Assemblies of God broke up to form two groups: one remained loyal to the Archbishop Emmanuel Lazaro and maintained the original name whereas the second group, loyal to the former deputy Bishop Moses Kulola, came to be known as the Evangelistic Assemblies of God Tanzania (EAGT).\(^ {397} \) The split between Kulola and Lazaro was supposedly caused by conflicts gravitating around personal leadership interests. A similar conflict occurred around the same time in the second largest Pentecostal Church in Tanzania, the ‘Swedish Free Mission’. The group that was not satisfied with the existing church broke away and formed the ‘Pentecostal Association of Tanzania’.\(^ {398} \) The formation of these splinter groups had devastating consequences to the Pentecostal movement, but at the same time it

\(^{394}\) See: Frieder Ludwig, op.cit., 154.

\(^{395}\) See: Reinhard Veller, op.cit., 42.

\(^{396}\) See: Josiah R. Mhalagwa, op.cit., 299.

\(^{397}\) See: Frieder Ludwig, op.cit., 154.

\(^{398}\) See: ibid., 155.
brought more competitors into the religious marketplace in Tanzania. Reportedly, more and more Pentecostal churches emerged which applied to take part in the crusades.\textsuperscript{399}

Another development took place within the Anglican Church. In the city of Dar es Salaam, a lay member of the church by the name of John Edmund, taking on the spirit of the Revival, established his House-to-House Anglican Prayer Ministry. It was a powerful interdenominational ministry of healing with the popular name of HUMANN from the Swahili: \textit{Huduma ya Uinjilishaji na Maombi Nyumba kwa Nyumba}. But as the ministry rested almost entirely on John Edmund alone, it soon disappeared after his death, though his followers continued to take part in the regular Big Harvest Crusade in the country.\textsuperscript{400}

2.3.2.4 Crusades, Youth and Foreign Charismatics

Another remarkable step in the growth of Tanzanian Pentecostalism came with the rise of crusades since 1986. A crusade in this context means a common organizational form by which born-again groups ‘reach out’ to people with the gospel message but their way of doing it “may almost look like a military campaign”.\textsuperscript{401} For example, born-again groups may organize a crusade in which they move from their urban locales to remote rural places in an attempt to stamp out occult forces there.

It was in the City of Dar es Salaam that a group of charismatic laypeople and pastors organized at Mnazi Mmoja grounds an interdenominational crusade termed as the \textit{Big November Crusade}, which since then has continued to be held annually at the central Jangwani grounds. A crusade would last for two weeks, where renowned international speakers would be invited. Branches of the \textit{Big November Crusade} were formed in all regions of mainland Tanzania and evangelization events were organized in Zanzibar which is predominantly Muslim. The local committee that organized the crusades was thereafter consolidated as New Life Crusade Ministry. The committee drew up a twelve-point doctrinal statement in which, while avoiding the contentious issues about \textit{glossolalia} and baptism by immersion, affirmed, in its first three articles, the Bible as the inspired Word of God, the Trinity, and Jesus as Saviour.\textsuperscript{402} Moreover, articles four to eight stressed the born-again experience, pneumatological activities, miracles and the holiness of life. Articles nine to

\textsuperscript{399} See: Ibid.
\textsuperscript{400} See: Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 97.
\textsuperscript{402} See: Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 98.
twelve dwelt on eschatology, namely: rapture, last judgment, millennial reign, and a new heaven and earth.⁴⁰³

Intensification of charismatic presence in Tanzania has been complemented as well by para-church groups such as the Africa Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE), the Tanzanian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (TAFES) ⁴⁰⁴ and the Campus Crusade for Christ (or Life Ministry), all of which have a significant influence on the youth. The AEE, for example, holds crusades with the theme ‘Back to God’; it trains youth evangelists, while helping them also to lead independent, self-reliant lives.⁴⁰⁵

Around the 1980s, Tanzania came into contact with the Christian charismatic renewal movement for the first time. This was yet another Pentecostal influence in the Tanzanian Christian landscape. Another significant influence came from foreign Pentecostal-charismatic preachers like the famous German preacher Reinhard Bonnke who conducted crusades in neighbouring countries. In 1986, for instance, Bonnke held his Fire Convention in Harare, Zimbabwe, in which he had spread millions of leaflets and journals about Pentecostalism.⁴⁰⁶

The Pentecostal literature and the reverberations of the crusade could reach Tanzania too.

2.3.2.5 Appraisal of the East African Revival

The Revival was positively appraised for fostering a culture of honesty, openness, accountability, and restitution.⁴⁰⁷ But some scholars gave it a negative verdict, since they perceived it as promoting elements of exclusiveness or intolerance in the Church and the society at large, and belligerent in confronting indigenous cultures.⁴⁰⁸ Paul Gifford puts it thus as he quotes Adrian Hastings:

‘If the Revival brought a much needed new outburst of commitment to the confession of faith and high moral standards, an intense personal loyalty to Christ which would prove decisive for many moments of crisis, it also brought conflict, narrowness, spiritual arrogance and near schism.’⁴⁰⁹

2.4 Some Major Pentecostal Churches in Tanzania

In the current Christian landscape in Tanzania, apart from the classical Pentecostal churches such as the Holiness Mission, Tanzania Assemblies of God, ELIM Pentecostal

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⁴⁰³ See: Ibid., 97f.
⁴⁰⁴ See: Ibid.
⁴⁰⁵ See: Josiah R. Mhalagwa, op.cit., 303.
⁴⁰⁶ See: Frieder Ludwig, op.cit.,159.
⁴⁰⁷ Paul Gifford, op.cit.,152.
⁴⁰⁸ See: Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 95.
⁴⁰⁹ Paul Gifford, op.cit., 152.
Church, \(^{410}\) Pentecostal churches Association in Tanzania and others, there is a number of big and relatively new Pentecostal churches. These include the Full Gospel Bible Fellowship Church (FGBFC) led by Bishop Zachary Kakobe, the Mikocheni B Assemblies of God led by Pastor Gertrude Rwakatare, the Word And Peace Organization (WAPO) which is founded and managed by Bishop Sylvester Gamanywa and Ephata Church, which is founded and run by Josehat Elias Mwingira, who prefers to be called Apostle and Prophet. \(^{411}\) All these churches are largely based in Dar es Salaam but they are spread all over Tanzania, including Songea.

### 2.5 The Popularity of Pentecostalism in Tanzania: Significant Factors

One of the overarching questions with regard to global Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity is why it attracts so many converts and grows so rapidly. To address that question scholars usually advance multifarious arguments based on Pentecostalism itself as a religious movement and on the local conditions of a particular country or region in which it is received. Our concern in this section is to investigate the factors behind the popularity of Pentecostalism in Tanzania.

The first significant factor is the influence of the East African Pentecostal Revival discussed previously. Indeed, its fires continue to rage in the region to this day. Other factors include the general defining characteristics of Pentecostalism itself, the intensification of Islamic activities, political and socio-economic situations prevailing in Tanzania as well as migration and urbanisation. Let us now explore these aspects systematically.

#### 2.5.1 Influence of the East African Pentecostal Revival

The influence of the East African Revival remains even to-date as Christians in the mainline churches continue to form revivalist charismatic fellowships. But, on the other hand, the revivalist charismatic groups tend to replicate in the mainline churches the schismatic tendencies experienced during the East African Revival. Quite often, when serious disagreements occur between some members of a particular church and their leadership, breaking away and forming separate churches is easily resorted to as a solution.

\(^{410}\) ELIM Pentecostal Church was founded by George Jeffreys in Monaghan, Ireland in 1915. Between 1915 and 1934, Jeffreys spearheaded a revival movement throughout the United Kingdom. The name 'ELIM' was taken from the account in Exodus 15: 27, where the Israelites, leaving the bondage of Egypt under the leadership of Moses, found an oasis called Elim and camped there by the waters. The Church adopted this name because it represented a place of refreshment and it was thought appropriate for a revival movement at that time. See: Peter Day, *A Dictionary of Christian Denominations* (London and New York: Continuum, 2003), 177.

2.5.2 Characteristics of Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism has its own defining characteristics which come to the fore in whatever context it enters. They are its portable elements so to speak. Arguably, these elements contribute towards a global inclination of Pentecostalism, Africa included. The elements include the emphasis on evangelization and pneumatological activities, the centrality of the Bible, the attraction of its ritual life, its social organization, the paradox of continuity and rupture, the teaching of the Prosperity Gospel, the inclusion of women, globalising trends and pervasive employment of modern media of social communications in evangelization. Let us examine these elements, particularly in the Tanzanian context.

2.5.2.1 Evangelization and Pneumatological Activities

Foremost among the aspects is the paramount importance the Pentecostal-charismatic churches place on evangelization. Pentecostals are notoriously conversionists. They privilege the experience of conversion as the driving force of all their teaching and practice. This means, at the heart of the faith an individual act of decision is called for. The conversion experience reinforces a total paradigmatic shift of life where an individual believer sees the value of personal responsibility and practical control over self and over daily life. While required to treasure their own conversion, believers are at the same time encouraged to act as evangelists to convert others. Hence, Pentecostals, clergy and lay alike, are enthusiastic to proselytise nonbelievers and to hook new members from other churches.

Linked to this, is the fact that Pentecostalism espouses egalitarianism in its doctrine. Pentecostals believe that anyone who is inspired by the Spirit can evangelise, regardless of the level of education or formal training. This is in accordance with the Bible which contains truth relating to personal freedom through faith in Jesus Christ and participation in his Kingdom. This truth is revealed and activated by the indwelling Holy Spirit, who is the source of spiritual power (Eph.1:18-20) that leads to personal and group transformation. In other words, Pentecostalism legitimizes individual agency. Accordingly, many church members are involved in the task of evangelization and their outreach is often aggressive. Their outreach ministries are particularly attractive since quite often they are accompanied with delivery ministries associated with the emphasis on pneumatological activities. In Africa, Pentecostals claim that their mission is to re-evangelise the entire continent since “the mainline churches

\[412\] See: Joel Robbins, op.cit., 123.
\[413\] See: Aylward Shorter and Joseph N. Njiru, op.cit., 27.
\[414\] See: Joel Robbins, op.cit., 124.
have practiced powerless Christianity, which has left the spirits that govern the gates of communities unconquered.”

Their proselytizing approach, however, is often fraught with attitudes of contempt towards other churches and abusive language. A South American missionary expressed his concern thus:

Pentecostals typically invite Catholic parishioners to common prayer services, only to attack their faith, using abusive rhetoric (‘all Catholics are going to hell,’ ‘the pope is the anti-Christ’) and ‘all sorts of inducements,’ including money and other gifts such as bicycles, to encourage conversion.

In Tanzania and other parts of Africa members of mainline churches narrate similar experiences in their interface with Pentecostalism. Pentecostals’ tendency to undermine other churches is often mediated even in their use of the media for evangelization. This is epitomised by films that focus on religious themes as produced by the Nigerian film-maker, Nollywood. The films are often preoccupied with moral dilemmas and a wide range of concerns facing contemporary middleclass Africans including violence, religion, witchcraft, prostitution, HIV/AIDS, bribery, corruption as well as economic disparity and hardship. Nollywood films are allegedly the most popular films in Africa today. Being produced mostly in the light of Pentecostal evangelism, the films are intended to convey the Christian message of the superiority of divine powers over satanic powers. But they also feature the way various churches are responding to the problem of moral degeneracy in society. In making such comparisons, their dominant tendency is to portray the superiority of Pentecostal ministry over that of other Christian traditions, particularly the older mainline churches. Mitchell notes, for example, that in some of the films Pentecostal-charismatic pastors are often presented as dynamic, spiritually powerful as well as overcoming or at least helping people to overcome evil forces. Ministers from the historic churches, in contrast, are regularly depicted as being well intentioned but ultimately ineffectual. In the mid 2000s Catholics in Tanzania voiced their disapproval of a Nollywood film, Cross my Sin, which was perceived to undermine the virtue of sacerdotal celibacy practised in the Catholic Church. The film was translated into Kiswahili Language and shown in public places.

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415 Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 126.
416 Thomas P. Rausch, op.cit., 938.
417 This is not to say, however, that members of mainline Churches do not have similar contemptuous attitudes towards Pentecostals. It is common knowledge in Tanzania that tensions between mainline Churches and Pentecostals persist on account of provocations from either side.
420 See: Castor M. Goliama, op.cit., 20.
2.5.2.2 Centrality of the Bible

Another factor specific to Pentecostalism that accounts for its popularity is the emphasis on divine inspiration of Scripture and biblical literalism. The Bible for the Pentecostals occupies a central position and is cherished as an inexhaustible source of inspiration for a daily moral living. They are fond of using the Bible to proof-text their teaching, and this appears to reinforce the credibility of what they teach.

2.5.2.3 Appeal of Ritual Life

Another characteristic of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity that makes it enjoy a worldwide popularity is the appeal of its ritual life. Unlike traditional pattern of worship in which single hymns are sandwiched within the liturgy, services in the Pentecostal-charismatic churches commonly start with a long succession of songs. Lindhardt notes that this contributes to the creation of an atmosphere of divine presence and enables the believers to focus on God. 421 Another advantage of singing is that it is discursive semantic practice and it engages the body, because for the Pentecostal-charismatic Christians it is usually accompanied by dance or oscillatory bodily movements while the participants are in a standing position. According to Lindhardt, this style of hymn singing makes the believers feel an intense and absorbing union with God and the streaming of his power through their bodies. 422 Robbins summarizes the Pentecostals’ manner of worship thus:

‘Services appear spontaneous, experiential and exuberant’... They have an eventful quality, with people waiting to see what the Spirit will do..., and they often erase older boundaries between worship and leisure... Many people are compelled to attend services, revivals, and other ritualized gatherings by a ‘spiritual acquisitiveness’ generated in them that presses believers ‘relentlessly on to the next experience’... These ecstatic rituals clearly are, in part, a counterpoint to the ascetic lives converts are enjoined to live outside of religious contexts, and their structures frequently reiterate the alternation of control and release. 423

It must be added that this manner of worship is more appealing to Africans than the European style of liturgies that the established churches have been practising so far, which appear foreign and stale to the Africans.

2.5.2.4 Social Organization

The popularity of Pentecostal churches also appears to be engendered by its social organization. The Pentecostal social organization is decentralized, segmentary and reticulate.

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422 See: Ibid., 255.

423 Joel Robbins, op.cit., 126.
While lacking any centralized authority, it gives autonomy to local congregations to a remarkable degree. It privileges egalitarianism, fellowship, and mutual assistance and empowerment among its members. David Maxwell has argued that “participation in Pentecostal communities can lead people to perceive themselves as ‘somebody’, a chosen people, clean and set apart, rather than ‘nobody’.”424 Thus, the strong communities provided by Pentecostalism which give practical and psychological support to people are perceived as ideal for the contemporary people of Tanzania going through wrenching transformations in their circumstances.

Respondents in Songea testified how mutual cooperation among Pentecostals functions as a means of attracting members to their denominations. What attracts people to them is the fact that, besides their spiritual engagement, they cater for the non-spiritual needs of their members. For example, they provide material support in times of celebrations such as birthdays and marriages. Likewise, when a member gets sick or in moments of bereavement, fellow Pentecostal members come to offer services of consolation along with communal prayers. As one informant in Songea explained to me:

When a member has lost a relative the other church members fully participate in the funeral arrangements by providing mourners, purchasing coffin, preparing food, transport for mourners and spend the night with the bereaved. On such occasions the church members are even urged to wear their denominational uniforms in order to identify themselves from members of other denominations. Thus in fact, only few members are attracted to these churches primarily because of sermons, church music or similar matters, rather it is the social organization which provides the greatest attraction of the churches. Accordingly, members keep shifting from one church to another in search of a better church. And the churches, knowing this situation only too well, compete to offer the best quality of social services.425

The Pentecostal egalitarianism is inclusive of women and sustains a worldwide web of its members. The interconnectivity of Pentecostal members allows them to easily find support in new locales they enter for evangelical purposes. The practicability of this kind of social organization in the African setting appears to be not only on account of its congruence with the African social system, but also because of the current social trends. The life of Tanzanians, particularly in urban areas, is increasingly pervaded by attitudes of individualism resulting largely from a life of affluence which gives people a sense of self-sufficiency. This trend, coupled with the wave of urbanisation, makes many people today yearn for some kind of community. Some resort to online communities through internet communications, while others prefer to seek membership in tangible church communities. Thus, the more a church community promises to empower an individual member, the more attractive it becomes.

424 Martin Lindhardt, op.cit., 256.
2.5.2.5 Paradox of Continuity and Rupture

The attractiveness of Pentecostalism is also ascribed to what some scholars described as the ‘paradox of continuity and rupture’ which occurs when Pentecostalism enters a given cultural context. In Africa, Pentecostalism displays continuity with the African worldview, but it also demonstrates a rupture from it. Continuity is exhibited, first of all, in what Robbins terms as the “African roots of Pentecostalism.” From the outset Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity in America had embraced enchanted and ecstatic cultural forms which Africans till today find to be congruent to their own. According to Robbins, some elements of African primal spirituality are available in Pentecostal practices such as orality of liturgy, narrativity of theology and witness. African primal spirituality is also visible in the Pentecostals’ emphasis on participation, use of dreams and visions in worship and promotion of healing by prayer. Jehu Hanciles notes that African religious elements such as beliefs in spiritual manifestations and divine intervention in daily life through dreams, prophecy, and miracles are comparable to the biblical worldview. As a result, there exists an extensive cultural affinity between the African and the biblical world. This, eventually, fosters literal interpretation of the Bible which is characteristic of many emergent Pentecostal-charismatic churches in Africa. The perceived congruence between the African worldview and the biblical worldview makes Africans more inclined to accept Pentecostalism since in the words of Pentecostal theologian Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, “the essence of Pentecostalism is to go back to the faith and experience of apostolic times, to live in consistency with the New Testament Church.”

The preservation of indigenous spiritual ontologies constitutes another area of continuity between the African worldview and Pentecostalism. The Pentecostal theology and ministry tend to preserve people’s beliefs concerning the very reality and power of the spiritual worlds from which they have broken away at their conversion to Christianity. By preservation of indigenous spiritual ontologies is here meant that the Pentecostals at least accept the existence and influence of the African spiritual ontologies such as ancestors. They tend to take them seriously. The missionary churches in contrast have all along ignored and discouraged the spiritual powers and occult forces as heathenism. By embracing the indigenous spiritual

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426 See: Joel Robbins, op.cit., 127.
427 Ibid., 126.
428 See: Ibid.
429 Jehu J. Hanciles, op.cit., 130.
430 Thomas P. Rausch, op.cit., 940.
431 See: Joel Robbins, op.cit., 128.
ontologies, the Pentecostal churches have moved close to the experience of many Africans, unlike the established churches that have merely suppressed them.\footnote{See: Rijk A. van Dijk, \textit{Christian Fundamentalism in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Pentecostalism}, Occasional Paper, Centre of African Studies University of Copenhagen (February 2000), 11.}

But there is also an aspect of discontinuity or rupture between the African worldview and Pentecostalism. Pentecostals approach the African worldview by first accepting the existence of the local spiritual ontologies. But they do so not in order to adopt them, but to demonise them. As Van Dijk notes, Pentecostals deem elements of village life as highly suspect since, presumably, they involve links with traditional culture, ancestor veneration, the use of alcohol, the pouring of libations and the like. From the perspective of Pentecostal ideology, all these elements are regarded as demonic and diabolic.\footnote{See: Rijk A. van Dijk, \textit{Christian Fundamentalism}, 12.} Thus Pentecostals do not ultimately follow a path of syncretism by adopting the African spiritual ontologies in their church ideology and practice. Instead, they promote rituals of ‘deliverance’ designed to rid believers of the perceived influence of such spiritual forces. In other words, Pentecostals demonise all forms of spiritual forces rather than negotiate with them for peace, health, wealth, or divination powers.

The discontinuity here is that Africans in their worldview have always regarded the spiritual forces ambivalently, i.e., they have conceived some of them as good and others as evil. Pentecostals in contrast demonise them all, be they ancestral spirits or others.

Some scholars, while giving credit to this approach of Pentecostals towards African spiritual ontologies, have tended, on the other hand, to suggest that established churches have been permissive of the local spiritual ontologies.\footnote{See for example, David J. Garrard, “African Pentecostalism,” in: \textit{Journal of Beliefs & Values}, Vol. 30, No.3 (December 2009), 233.} David Garrard, for example, has argued that:

\begin{quote}

Pentecostal beliefs and practices created immediate confrontation with the practitioner of Traditional African Religion... The teaching and practice of the other Christian denominations was equivocal: you could be a nominal Christian and still practice your traditional religious beliefs. You could attend church on Sunday and consult with the witchdoctor during the rest of the week. There was no need for a total paradigm shift. Pentecostals tolerated no such ambivalence.\footnote{Ibid.}

\end{quote}

Such generalisation is not plausible. The Baptismal Rite of the Catholic Church, for example, clearly states the need for a total paradigm shift on the part of a person who converts to Christianity.\footnote{Ibid. \footnote{The Baptismal candidate has to reject Satan and his works and confess faith in the Holy Trinity and the Church.}} And, it is precisely because of the Church’s insistence on radical change that conflicts have often arisen between the indigenous Africans and the missionaries and later
indigenous church leaders. Western missionaries have always laboured to suppress beliefs in witchcraft, the influence of demonic forces and ancestral spirits. The missionaries demonised these elements as heathen worship. As noted in Chapter One, some missionaries in Songea paid with their blood when they attempted to suppress some African religious elements such as ancestral veneration. From the time of the pioneer missionaries to the present indigenous Church the Catholic Church of Songea has always sternly forbidden its members to consult diviners and to entertain beliefs in witchcraft and demonology. The reinforcement of these prohibitions has been carried out with much the same rigour and vigour as within Pentecostalism today. There has been no permissiveness on this regard and ecclesiastical censure has often been imposed for noncompliance. Yet the practices persist because they are part and parcel of the African cosmological system. Even in other parts of Africa, the indigenous people have generally mounted a strong and long-term cultural resilience that has ensured the persistence and preservation of their spiritual ontologies. Despite church prohibitions the Christians have continued to resort to diviners, often clandestinely, in their firm conviction to acquire protection against spiritual forces. By so doing, they have defied the efforts to suppress the spiritual ontologies over the centuries of Christianity’s presence in the continent.

2.5.2.6 Overcoming Evil Spirits

We have contended that both the Catholic Church and the Pentecostal churches launch a contest against African spiritual forces. It seems to me the point to insist then is not that Catholics continue to consult witchdoctors because their church permits them. The important point rather, is that between the Catholic Church and the Pentecostal churches which one promises an alternative to the healing services of the witchdoctor. The Pentecostal churches certainly promise that alternative and thereby appear before the Africans to be more effective in dealing with the spiritual forces than the Catholic Church. We need to emphasize that the Catholic Church, like other missionary churches, has always considered the African spiritual ontologies as unreal things and unworthy of any serious rational attention.437 Any beliefs in the influence of witchcraft and demonology were not expected of a Christian. With such a dismissive attitude, the established churches have diverged from the experience of Africans.438

438 Ironically, although Catholic missionaries and subsequently indigenous priests have generally discouraged the belief in the influence of ancestral spirits, witchcraft and demonology as unreal phenomena, yet in their pastoral experience they often narrate to have encountered cases of Christians who claim to be tormented by malevolent forces. And to help the victims, they have often attempted to ‘neutralise’ the spiritual forces by holy water. The indigenous people see this action as confirmation of their belief in the existence of such
Pentecostals, on the other hand, have engaged themselves in the contest against the indigenous spiritual ontologies after acknowledging along with Africans that such forces are indeed real and influence the people's daily rhythm of life. Through this approach the Pentecostals are said to have embraced and preserved the indigenous spiritual ontologies, although with the intention at the end of the day to demonise them as well. The essential difference between the established churches and the Pentecostal churches on this subject, therefore, does not consist in one church being permissive of the spiritual ontologies and the other intolerant to them. Rather, the essential difference resides in the point of departure in the process of demonising them.

2.5.2.7 Offering Christian Prophylaxis

Consider this: a Christian is confronted with some kind of suffering that she perceives to emanate from the influence of spiritual forces. A Catholic priest might tell this person to dismiss this belief since it is sheer heathenism and not to take it seriously. He would discourage her from consulting diviners. At best he might console her with a prayer and the sprinkling of holy water on her and her house in order to “neutralize” the malevolent forces and advise the sick person to go to the hospital. These gestures would hardly convince that person not to believe in the influence of malevolent forces. Why then did the priest attempt to “neutralize” them? Conversely she might be led to the confirmation that the spiritual forces denied by the priest are, in fact, alive and kicking. The sick person then opts to consult a Pentecostal pastor. This pastor admits that the influence of malevolent forces is indeed real but assures her of a Christian protection against and deliverance from them. He would perform deliverance ministries to offer a Christian prophylaxis against the spiritual powers.

This scenario partly illustrates how the Catholic Church and the Pentecostal churches in Tanzania differ in their approaches to the crises caused by the beliefs in witchcraft and demonology. Pentecostal healing ministries mean that the healing and protection that an African previously sought from diviners are now available within the church. Accordingly, the Pentecostals seem to revive the healing practices of early Christianity. This partly accounts for the appeal of the Pentecostal churches. Many people turn to them mainly because they expect to obtain healing, exorcism and protection against malignant forces.

malignant forces. Father Gregory Mwageni OSB of Hanga Abbey, for example, narrated to me his experience with malignant forces at Mkumbi Parish (now Mbinga Diocese) some four decades ago. He said that by sprinkling holy water around the presbytery he could drive out the malevolent influence of witches who came to attack him (Interview with Father Gregory was held in 1988 at Songea).
In their contest against the African spiritual forces they even engage modern media of social communications such as television, films and gospel music, in order to dramatise it and encourage believers to view their life as dominated by an ongoing struggle between God and the local spiritual ontologies.\textsuperscript{439} Nigerian films that today have pervaded the African social communications landscape exemplify such a dramatic contest against African spiritual ontologies.

The following incident testifies how faith healing increasingly becomes a salient feature in Tanzanian Christianity today. In 2011 news spread across the country that a retired Lutheran pastor, Ambilikile Mwasapile, was healing chronic diseases including diabetes, cancer and AIDS. His medicine consisted of roots of a \textit{mugariga} tree which he claimed was shown him by God in a dream. He would dispense cupfuls of the concoction to his patients without any prayer, reading of the Bible, or sermon. All a patient needed was to believe that the medicine was effective. For the medicine to be effective the pastor demanded that it should be dispensed by his own hand because allegedly it was to him alone that God had given the mission to perform that particular form of healing. Tens of thousands of people from within Tanzania and beyond kept thronging to his clinic in Samunge Village in Arusha Region.\textsuperscript{440} The fame of this healer was cause for alarm for some churches in the country which practise faith healing. Both Archbishop Zakary Kakobe of the Full Gospel Bible Fellowship (FGBF) Church and Prophet Josephat Mwingira of Ephata Church offered prayers of imprecation against Pastor Mwasapile and his healing activities. Apparently, their great concern was the loss of clients at their various healing centres since people would now seek healing from Mwasapile.\textsuperscript{441}

\subsection*{2.5.2.8 Indigenous Spiritual Ontologies versus Prosperity}

In fostering Prosperity and Modernity motifs Pentecostals maintain rigid pronunciations against village culture and the African extended family institution. The “saved” are supposed to make a complete break with their African past. Today Tanzania experiences the so-called “urban sensitivity” where people tend to look down on backward rural customs.\textsuperscript{442} This sensitivity is currently strong in Tanzania, particularly among young people. Rural areas in Tanzania have been locales of marginalisation in terms of infrastructure and economic development. Thus till today, rural areas are perceived to be the embodiment of poverty.

\textsuperscript{440} See: \textit{Nipashe}, 9\textsuperscript{th} March 2011.
\textsuperscript{441} See: \textit{Mwananchi}, 7\textsuperscript{th} March 2011. See also \textit{Mwananchi}, 15\textsuperscript{th} March 2011.
witchcraft and backwardness. It seems only credible, therefore, to hear Tanzanians saying: “there is no progress or development in the village and ‘if you want to get somewhere in life,... you have to go to town.” Subsequent sections will elaborate how Tanzanians have been disillusioned by Ujamaa villages and how young people now seek flight from rural areas in droves. By promoting urban sensitivity Pentecostalism in Tanzania has remained largely an urban phenomenon.

Notably Pentecostals also discourage any incorporation of African cultural and religious expressions into Christianity. Accordingly, they criticize the attempts of the established churches, such as the Catholic Church, to construct a theology of inculturation through the integration of good African cultural elements into Christian theology and praxis. Their ideology is absolutely opposed to any form of incorporation of African cultural and religious expressions into Christianity. Instead, Pentecostals tend to link themselves up with global circuits, particularly with American televangelists, and embrace wholeheartedly elements of Western culture such as music, dress, and capitalism. They cherish these elements as marks of modernity. Admittedly, as noted previously, there are a few elements in the practice of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity that resonate the African worldview. Such elements include dreams and prophecy. Late in this work we shall explore more elements of congruence.

2.5.2.9 Attitudes Inimical to African Culture

The Pentecostal attitude of undermining African cultural and religious expressions is amazing when analysed against the backdrop of the history of African Initiated churches (AICs). In fact, one reason behind the emergence of AICs towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century was an overall yearning among Africans for their own ethos in Christianity. They perceived the Western-oriented Christianity as not comprehensive enough to meet their spiritual needs since the missionaries generally forbade many African traditional beliefs and practices which they simply labelled as ‘heathen’ or ‘superstitious.’

Thus members of established missionary churches left their churches to join the new African Initiated churches. The AICs combined significant elements of African cosmological system with certain elements of worship and ritual Christianity. Most of them incorporated

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444 By good African cultural elements are often meant all life-affirming elements of culture such as a sense of the sacred, respect for human life, cherishing family life, kinship ties, societal solidarity, and so on.
446 See: David Martin, op.cit.,137-139.
into Christian worship certain aspects of traditional forms of healing, ritual protection, purification, symbols, objects, vestments, medicines, and herbs and other practices that existed in society. These elements were combined with Christian elements “like reading from the Bible, the singing of Christian hymns or the use of Christian names for the spirits they intended to worship or exorcise.” This served to maintain a cultural continuity that attracted Africans to the new religious movements. Africans embraced the AICs because here they found ‘greener pastures’ and a place where they ‘felt at home.’ African Pentecostals, however, have come to reverse all that by demonizing African cultural elements and thereby spearheading a cultural alienation of Africans. It is a paradoxical attitude whose resultant harm to the African cultural heritage may be more far-reaching than that caused by colonialism. This is because the culture-denial is now peddled by Africans themselves.

It is undeniable that African culture, like any other culture, is dynamic rather than static. It is also true that Africans increasingly appropriate elements from other cultures in the world. This occurs more strongly today as Africans are constantly exposed to the bombardment of globalising trends touted by various global forces, Pentecostalism being one of them. Despite such explanations, it remains a subject of great concern when Pentecostals advocate a complete break with African culture and emphasize foreign culture at the expense of African culture. One wonders what will become of the African culture when Pentecostalism becomes the dominant brand of Christianity in Africa.

2.5.2.10 Gospel of Prosperity

This is another aspect of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity in Africa today that constitutes a point of attraction of the churches. Elaboration on it follows in Chapter Three. Suffice it to point out that this teaching counts material blessing as a sign of God’s favour on a believer. Many Tanzanian Christians living in the context of grinding poverty find a compelling reason to join the churches that preach this doctrine in the hope of alleviating their plight of poverty.

2.5.2.11 Individuation and Autonomy of Women

Another important factor that makes Pentecostalism gain a rapid and pervasive popularity in Tanzania is the perception that Pentecostalism empowers women. One aspect which seems to buttress this assertion is the egalitarianism practised in Pentecostalism. It is a system which is reputed to be inclusive of women particularly as they are allowed to become pastors and to

\[448\] Ibid.
preach the gospel. However, there are other factors that lead women to embrace Pentecostalism. In the context of African societies, many women are said to resort to Pentecostalism as a way of escaping from subjugative positions to which they are relegated in the traditionally gendered roles. They find Pentecostalism remarkably appealing since it appears to offer them individuation and autonomy within such traditionally gendered roles.\textsuperscript{449}

In Tanzania women are discriminated against, for instance, in respect to land rights, access to and control over resources and even inheritance of family property in the event of death of their husbands. With regard to the issue of land, for example, traditionally it is male family members who inherit it because women are expected to marry and move to their husbands’ homes.\textsuperscript{450} Moreover, it is asserted that women in some gerontocratic communities are subjected to traditional customs that tend to abuse them sexually.\textsuperscript{451} Some other communities often tend to associate women with witchcraft and this renders them prone to social alienation and persecution. Women may also decide to seek refuge in Pentecostalism after being subjected to frequent acts of domestic violence, while others after being weighed down by problems in their situation as single mothers or widows.

Young urban women are attracted by the born-again doctrine and practice with regard to the spheres of marriage, family and sexuality. In Pentecostalism women hope to find relatively reliable spouses and peaceful husbands that will treat them with love.\textsuperscript{452}

With reference to women conversion to Pentecostalism, the rural-urban migration phenomenon may also be seen as a factor. It has been observed that women in Tanzania increasingly become urbanites especially in Dar es Salaam and other large cities since they flee from gerontocratic hierarchies and discrimination in the rural areas. Other motives for migration that are specific to women include marriage with a man working in city, visiting city relatives, and working in a household. Many women are also attracted to city life by the perceived opportunities for development and modernity available there.\textsuperscript{453} Migration to cities exposes the women to Pentecostal proselytizing mission, after all Pentecostalism is largely an urban phenomenon. Moreover, like any other urbanites, to cope with the vicissitudes in their new city environment, women urbanites will often seek membership in Pentecostal communities since they usually promise their members tangible material assistance and solace in times of need.

\textsuperscript{449} See: Aylward Shorter and Joseph N. Njiru, op.cit., 29.
\textsuperscript{450} See: Verena Knippel, op.cit., 307.
\textsuperscript{451} The Kigoda Cult discussed in Chapter Four is a typical example.
\textsuperscript{452} See: David Martin, op.cit., 140.
\textsuperscript{453} See: Verena Knippel, op.cit., 307f.
This study has found out also that in Tanzania women who claim to be “born-again” (or *walokole*), whether in schools and colleges or at work places, can more easily divert unwanted sexual approaches from men than their non-born again counterparts. The former are apparently more respected on account of their perceivable spiritual power. As a result, many girls at secondary schools and colleges convert to Pentecostalism with the belief that this will ensure their survival as girls and secure their chances of success in studies.

But another point of attraction for women is the Pentecostal practice of healing and exorcism. In Tanzania, more women than men complain of illnesses related to demonic possession or other diseases whose causes cannot be medically established. Even in the context of African traditional healing, it is more women than men who approach the healers and exorcists. This is largely due to the fact that women are often more adversely affected by traditional gender roles and socio-economic, political and religious problems befalling African families and societies.

Exorcisms or possession cults are part and parcel of traditional healing. The cults are believed to be a means of rescuing the possessed from the uncontrollable wild spirits or demons that are said to torment the victims. In Tanzania demons are labelled by the local people as *pepo*, *majini*, or *mashetani*. Thus anthropologists sometimes refer to the possession cults as “*pepo* cults”. It is noted that *pepo* cult is a type of syncretic cult very commonly found in the Islamic world in general and in Islamic Sub-Saharan Africa in particular.455

I. M. Lewis has postulated a theory of *peripheral possession* which can be a helpful analytical tool for the understanding of the seemingly female-specific possession cults. He has suggested that “persons in ‘peripheral situations’ (i.e. women, in male-dominated societies, as well as other subordinate groups) are afflicted by ‘peripheral’ spirits. These are spirits that are not central to the maintenance of the society’s system of morality and are, in fact, often of extraneous origin.” Lewis implies that the spirits are used as ‘oblique strategies of attack’ with the intention to “command attention, to redress grievances as well as to exact concessions from their superiors.”456 Thus in view of Lewis’ theory, we can maintain that most African women seek exorcism because they are victims of attacks of ‘peripheral’ spirits. As for men,

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454 Informant: Ambrose Fundichuma, a traditional exorcist at Tanga village, Songea, July 15, 2010. Women have often sought assistance from traditional healers and exorcists in cases of long illnesses, barrenness and in attempts to make their husbands or lovers single-minded. Their problems are often attributed to witchcraft or demonic possession. Similar attitudes are evident among many Neo-Pentecostals. Frequently somatic and psychosomatic illnesses and failure to achieve success in life are ascribed to the influence of malignant forces.


456 Ibid.
Lewis’ theory asserts that they are affected by “‘central possession religions’…through possession by spirits which directly sustain public morality.”

At the hands of the traditional healers and exorcists women frequently become victims of exploitation, both in terms of material resources and even sexually. Some traditional healers demand sexual favours from their female patients or even rape them. Sometimes such acts are done in the pretext that they are part of the healing processes.

Healing in the context of church rituals, on the contrary, is believed to result from pneumatological power, it is free of charge, and does not involve the kind of sexual exploitation as exerted by traditional healers. It is, therefore, appealing to women. Tanzanian theologian Titus Amigu has noted that between 80 and 90 percent of those who seek healing and exorcism in the Pentecostal-charismatic churches in Tanzania are women. The majority of them are girls in secondary schools and colleges, followed by the cohort of women under the age of between 40 and 60 years. Most of these women have personal difficulties or problems related to family or child-bearing.

2.5.2.12 Pentecostal Globalisation Trends

The other typical Pentecostal element is its globalising trends. Beginning particularly from the 1980s and 1990s, the world has witnessed a dramatic, complex, and globally expanding web of Pentecostal network. It is characterised by flows of people, preachers, money, ideas as well as speedy and intense circulation of images. In view of such trends, some scholars have argued that Pentecostalism can be analysed and partially understood in relation to globalisation. Simon Coleman, for instance, has identified three key dimensions of Pentecostalism that suggest that it has resonances with global processes. First, Pentecostalism uses mass communications media to disseminate its ideas, images and other media products across the world. This aspect is elaborated in a subsequent separate section. Secondly, Pentecostalism promotes internationalism through global travel and networking, conferences and mega-churches that function much in the same way as international corporations. And third, Pentecostalism tends to foster a global meta-culture of praxis that transcends locality and displays striking similarities in different parts of the world.

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457 Ibid.
459 Discussion with Father Titus Amigu, Peramiho Major Seminary, 15th July, 2010.
Another globalising trend of Pentecostalism consists in that it is an organization that promotes internationalism through global travel and networking, conferences and mega-churches that function much in the same way as international corporations. It follows that, such avenues coupled with publications, modern media productions, revival meetings and the like, serve to hold together Pentecostals despite their being a network of far-flung people.\footnote{See: Joel Robbins, op.cit., 125.} The fostering of global connections and the possibility of frequent conferences abroad makes Pentecostalism particularly attractive to young people and elites in Africa. On global travel Radcliffe notes that in the current liquid world it is those who are most mobile, the global nomads, who are the most powerful.\footnote{See: Timothy Radcliffe, \textit{What is the Point of Being a Christian} (New York: Burns & Oates, 2005), 196.} Some Pentecostal churches encourage global nomadism. They urge their members to seek greener pastures abroad especially in the developed western countries as a means of accessing opportunities for prosperity. This is an attractive message to many educated young Africans who are jobless and often without any prospect and increasingly disenchanted with the empty promises of neoliberal economy in their own countries.

In Ghana, for instance, Kwabena testifies that some Prosperity Gospel pastors specialise in praying for visas for supplicants, others preach to visa applicants queuing at embassies, assuring them of God's power to help them secure the coveted visas. They even anoint with olive oil the plastic envelopes containing supporting documents so as to win the favour of the consular officer. Reportedly, in some churches prayers for international travel now rank second only to healing. To encourage their followers to offer generously to God in exchange for the blessing of travelling abroad, some prosperity preachers talk about “receiving visions in which angels distribute Royal Dutch Airlines and British Airways tickets to people in their congregations.”\footnote{J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “Did Jesus Wear Designer Robes?” in: \textit{Christianity Today} (November 2008), URL:http://www.christianitytoday.com/globalconversation/november2009/index.html (accessed 8th January, 2010).}

The close affinity between globalisation and Pentecostalism is further testified by the tendency of Pentecostalism to foster a global meta-culture of praxis that transcends locality and displays striking similarities in different parts of the world. Replicating the globalisation movement, Pentecostalism also seems to be both global and local, and it embraces elements that are both homogenising and indigenising. The localisation of Pentecostalism is expressed, for example, in its engagement with local spiritual ontologies. This aspect will be elaborated in later sections of this chapter. But Pentecostalism tends as well towards indigenisation by emphasizing the placement of the governance of churches in local hands. Robbins points out
that in most cases, Pentecostal churches are staffed from top to bottom with local people. A Church may be part of the major Pentecostal denominations such as the Assemblies of God, nonetheless, evangelists with local roots are created to run it. The leaders then constitute the churches as institutions responsive to local situations:

Where the church is dominated by foreign missionaries from non Pentecostal-charismatic groups, charismatic revivals often provide ‘a handy and effective means for local indigenous Christian leaders to break free of domination by missions’ and make their churches effectively local regardless of their denomination embeddedness.465

The localisation rhetoric makes Pentecostalism operate much like an international corporation that produces goods inexpensively and with local materials. This is partly attributable to the Pentecostal egalitarianism. As described earlier, there dominates in Pentecostalism the assumption that believers do not require special education to preach or run a church, all they require is Spiritual inspiration. And this is open to all members. Such a view fosters the localisation of Pentecostal leadership. The lack of prerequisite credentials for leadership enables nascent churches to tap into a large pool of potential local talent and to give vent to many church members to occupy formal roles in the church. Even converts are given opportunity to engage in some form of service in the church. This corresponds to the ardent zeal of these churches to seek to mobilize as many local people as possible in their institution-building efforts. And indeed, they use every occasion whether in church services, meetings or Bibles studies, to demand a heavy participation of their members in proselytisation.

The requirement to tithe and give offerings constitutes another aspect of Pentecostal-charismatic culture that fosters its ability to create local institutions. Tithing supposedly maintains the local autonomy of some churches and enables poor church members to experience the power of occupying the donor role, and hence to further their sense of involvement in the church.466 Evidently, the Church in Africa is still overly dependent on material and even human resources from abroad. For example, funds for projects including food production, water sanitation, education and health services, for fighting HIV/AIDS, conflict resolution, and the like, are mainly in foreign aid.467 In view of this situation, a church denomination that promises to become self-supporting becomes attractive to the people.

465 Joel Robbins, op.cit., 130.
466 See: Joel Robbins, op.cit., 131.
467 See: Paul Gifford, op.cit., 276f.
2.5.2.13 Evangelism Through Modern Media

The relationship between Pentecostalism and the media deserves a particular attention, since the employment of modern means of mass media in evangelism has been particularly remarkable among Pentecostal churches. In Africa, it is regarded as one of the major factors behind the phenomenal growth of Christianity in the continent. Kalu Ogbu observes that the religious media hit in Africa, as far as African Pentecostals are concerned, is mainly thanks to the ties existing between African Pentecostals and their American counterparts.468

It is almost indisputable that the employment of modern media of social communications contributes enormously to the global spread of Pentecostalism. In Africa, with the increased use of electronic media for evangelization, it has been attested that African Pentecostals have shown a way of rejecting their traditional withdrawal into enclaves of faith and instead have now opted to contest the public space as well as come into direct and successful competition with secular media.469 This view is validated by the current situation in Tanzania where Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations have particularly privileged the use of radio, audio and visual CDs and DVDs, films, television and electronic musical instruments for evangelization.

In Africa, television as media for evangelization began to penetrate slightly in the period between 1960 and 1970 and spread into most of the continent only from the 1980s onwards. Before this time the chief media of evangelization were orality and printed literature.470 And, although the Pentecostal-charismatic churches have emerged later in the history of African Christianity, they have started to employ modern means of mass communications much earlier than the established churches. Ogbu Kalu observes that, while missionaries in the established churches “concentrated on oral communication, education, and charitable institutions, Evangelicals exploited magazines, tracts, and radio because of their mass exposure, simultaneous coverage, and penetrative power.”471

Notably, the American influence among African Pentecostals is not limited to the adoption of modern media for evangelization, but American forms of ministry and church praxis such as the Gospel of Prosperity, are part of the American importation.472 Some Pentecostal television programmes in Tanzania are regularly dominated by American televangelists. While Pentecostals are commended for their wide use of media for evangelization, on the one

468 See: Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 105.
469 See: David Martin, op.cit., 144.
470 See: Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 106.
471 Ibid.
hand, it can be observed, on the other hand, that their engagement with the media handles the religious space in a manner that resembles a marketplace. In the Pentecostal proselytization approach competition is highly idealized such that religion seems to be commercialized like a commodity.

2.5.3 Intensification of Islamic Activities

Another trend in Tanzania that has contributed to the rising popularity of the Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity since the mid 1980s is the intensification of Islamic activities. Adherents of Islam, whose demographical growth is said to have been remarkable in recent decades, employ multifaceted methods to propagate their faith. According to a research conducted in Tanzania and Kenya contemporary Muslims engage in their mission through: public preaching (mihadhara) using Comparative Religious Approach, circulation of tracts and pamphlets that challenge Christianity, publishing newspapers, opening Muslim radio stations, use of the Internet, construction of large mosques (even where very few or no Muslims live in order to make a Muslim presence visible), financial support to Christian families, attracting Christians with employment and business opportunities, offering Christians seats in Muslim schools and colleges, offering Christian youths scholarships in Muslim universities abroad, delivering health and relief services, and so on.473 It is true that Christian churches have already since long employed some of these approaches in their evangelical engagement.

Christians in Tanzania and other parts of Africa fear that Muslims determine to islamise the whole of Africa, since they deem it as a continent that should be Muslim.474 It is said that Muslims have devised specific strategies to that effect. The fears intensified particularly subsequent to the so-called Islam in Africa Conference held in 1989 in Abuja, Nigeria. The conference, besidesarticulating the foundation of Islam in Africa Organization (IAO), also charted out specific strategies for the propagation of Islam in Africa. According to the official communiqué issued immediately after the conference which came to be known as the ‘Abuja Declaration’, strategies set at the conference included the following:

to ensure the appointment of only Muslims into strategic national and international posts of member nations. To eradicate in all its forms and ramifications all non-Muslim religions in member nations (such religions shall include Christianity, Ahmadiyya and other tribal modes of worship unacceptable to Islam). To ensure the declaration of Nigeria (as) a Federal Islamic Sultanate at a convenient date... with the Sultan of Sokoto enthroned the Sultan and Supreme

474 See: Ibid., 119.
Sovereign of Nigeria. To ensure the ultimate replacement of all western forms of legal and judicial systems with the Sharia before the next Islam in Africa conference.⁴⁷⁵

Consequently, the various and usually fragmented Christian denominations in Tanzania find themselves somehow united and unanimous in their resistance against what they consider the encroachment of Islamic dominance.

The atmosphere of Muslim-Christian scramble is manifested by the presence of vibrant street or open-air preaching and debates prevalent in many cities, towns and villages. Both Muslims and Christians use polemical attacks against each other in propagating their own beliefs. Their comparative religious approach, which is frequently bristled with mutual contempt, slanders, and humiliation, often leads to an increase in tensions since the faith communities become increasingly polarised.⁴⁷⁶ Eventually religious intolerance in the society also escalates.⁴⁷⁷ Major examples of inter-religious intolerance took place in Dar es Salaam on Friday, 9th April, 1993 when Muslims vandalized three pork butcheries.⁴⁷⁸ And on 26th and 27th May, 2012 members of UAMSHO, a popular Islamic propagation group in Zanzibar set on fire some church buildings belonging to Pentecostals and Catholics.⁴⁷⁹

Revivalism dominates the current religious topography in Tanzania both in Islam and Christianity. With regard to Islam, Ali Mazrui, a Kenyan Islamic scholar, proposes two issues as central to religious speculation as far as Islam in post-independence Africa is concerned. First, he claims that there is an expansion of Islam, i.e. the religion continues to spread over geographical areas and grows demographically through new conversions. Second, he maintains that there is revivalism within Islam, i.e. a rebirth of faith among Islamic converts and a historical phenomenon nostalgic to re-enact ancient worlds. Describing the two currents, Kenyan Muslim scholar Ali Mazrui, contends that whilst Islamic expansion has been a peaceful process, Islamic revivalism, on the contrary, has been an angry process of re-discovered fundamentalism.⁴⁸⁰ Mazrui is optimistic about the imperative of Islamic expansionism at the expense of Christianity in post-independence Africa. Islamic revivalism manifests itself conspicuously in many parts of Africa. Many young Muslims today are said to

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⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 120.
⁴⁷⁶ See: Ibid., 127.
⁴⁷⁷ In Tanzania inflammatory and militant language is often used by both Muslim preachers during their public preaching (i.e. mihadhara in Swahili) and Christian preachers during their public rallies known as ‘crusades’. Face-to-face public debates often involve Muslim religious scholars and a lay ecumenical Christian group, known as Biblia ni Jibu (‘the Bible is the answer’). Both groups use the Bible and the Quran intensively in their debates and mutual castigation.
⁴⁸⁰ See: John Chesworth, op.cit., 120.
flock to this new kind of Islam. It is perceived to be a purer faith, closer to the roots of the religion, less passive, more engaged with personal study of the Quran and individualization of religion, and at the same time challenging the authority of the older sheiks and traditional ways of practising Islam.\(^{481}\)

This trend is currently spreading among Tanzanian Muslims. In Zanzibar for instance, the Islamic revival movement (\textit{Uamsho}, ‘reawakening’ in Swahili) focuses on purifying Islam from within so as to strengthen it against threats from the outside.\(^{482}\) By ‘threats’ are normally meant Christianity,\(^{483}\) Western cultural influence and the secular State of Tanzania as well as fellow Muslims who are perceived to be \textit{munafik}, i.e. nominal Muslims. There is a growing division between moderate and extremist Muslims in the country.

The reformist Islam in Africa is attributed particularly to Muslim youth who have studied in Islamic countries or in other countries that were generally believed to be stronger in their faith than their home country. It is contended that these youths “have brought back an intellectual orientation that is generally at variance with the traditional Shafi view of certain religious practices. Wahabism, in its puritanical, uncompromising and aggressive form has been imported into East Africa by many of these recent graduates.”\(^{484}\)

In Christianity the emergence of Pentecostal churches and Charismatic movements within mainline churches parallel the Islamic revivals in that they are also opposed to what they perceive as lukewarm or nominal Christianity. They stress holiness, public confession of sins, baptism of the Holy Spirit, and separation from what they consider spiritually harmful cultures.\(^{485}\) And they may be just as aggressive as the Islamic reformist fundamentalists. Admittedly, Christians also generally target Muslims in their evangelization. And there are some Pentecostal groups that seemingly specifically aim their evangelism at Muslim communities. These include: Life Challenge Africa, Sheepfold Ministries and \textit{Njia ya Uzima} (Way of Life).\(^{486}\) Even the interdenominational outreach public rallies known as ‘the Big November Crusade Ministries’ spearheaded by the Christian revivalism in Tanzania had as one of its purposes to evangelise Zanzibar which is predominantly Muslim.\(^{487}\) This was said to be one reason why Muslims in Zanzibar initiated \textit{Uamsho}. Public debates and deliverance ministries conducted by Pentecostals in cities and towns have also been a thorn in the side of


\(^{482}\) See: Ibid.

\(^{483}\) See: Ibid., 239.

\(^{484}\) See: John Chesworth, op.cit., 128.

\(^{485}\) See: Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 95.

\(^{486}\) See: John Chesworth, op.cit., 126.

\(^{487}\) See: Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 98.
Islam, since such are very optimal moments for Islamic religionists to convert to Pentecostalism.

However, the Christian-Muslim tensions are apparently not purely religious. Some scholars argue that religion has re-emerged as an important factor in Tanzanian national affairs following the weakening of the State and the economic collapse of the 1980s. Arguably, at the heat of this re-emergence of religion arises the struggle for pre-eminence in national politics between Muslim and Christian establishments, which compete for control of the secular national state.\footnote{See: N.N. Luanda, “Christianity and Islam Contending for the Throne on the Tanzanian Mainland,” in: Adebayo O. Olukoshi and Liisa Laakso (eds.), Challenges to the Nation-State in Africa (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1996), 168.}

### 2.5.4 Political and Socio-economic Factors

Generally speaking, Pentecostalism appears to flourish mainly among poor and marginalised populations in the regions that undergo rapid social change. The pervasive change that takes place in those regions undermines traditional institutions that hitherto have given meaning and stability to life. This situation has inevitably led to a pervasive sense of disorientation known in sociological circles as ‘anomie’. And this shift has ushered into openness to new sources of meaningful orientation.

As far as Tanzania is concerned, the Christian revivals described above came to coincide with some other major political and socio-economic trends which emerged within the country between the 1970s and the 1980s. These events eventually coalesced to make socio-economic life difficult for most Tanzanians. Most prominent events during the time in review include the implementation of the *Ujamaa* political ideology, the aftermath of war between Tanzania and Uganda, the emergence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and the introduction of neoliberal economic structures by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Pentecostalism came to flourish as part of the people’s response to the prevailing socio-economic conditions related to these events.

Later decades witnessed a massive wave of urbanisation and migration in Tanzania, partly attributable as well to these same major events. Thus urbanisation and migration have also contributed significantly to the Pentecostalisation of Tanzania since as people move they move with their religion.
2.5.4.1 Ujamaa Villages

How did the implementation of *Ujamaa* policy correlate with Pentecostalism? Several aspects indicate that the *Ujamaa* political ideology prepared a fertile ground for the flourishing of Pentecostalism. First, the *Ujamaa* system urged people to live harmoniously together and address one another as ‘*ndugu*’ (or brothers and sisters). Evidently, this challenged followers of different religions and denominations to transcend their religious frontiers and live peacefully together. This was a great boon to the minority Pentecostals since they could preach freely even amid tendencies of subjection to religious bigotry by followers of mainline denominations or other religions.

Second, the forced relocation of the people to the *Ujamaa* villages triggered off internal human migrations in the country at an unprecedented scale. People from different clans and tribes were brought to live together. This concentrated living in villages would facilitate social services (schools, health centres, water pumps, and so on). Yet, from a pastoral perspective, it would also facilitate outreach and engagement with the people. It also opened the villagers to other forms of religion. Nevertheless, these collective settlements also posed many problems. One glaring social repercussion was the predominance of fears of witchcraft and malevolent forces and a pertinent mutual mistrust among the villagers. This study in Songea has revealed that insecurities due to witchcraft fears had greatly permeated *Ujamaa* villages of Litowa and Liweta Farm. Undoubtedly, Pentecostals who privilege ministries of deliverance from witchcraft and malevolent forces could win a big following among such desperate villagers.

Third, the villages generally needed preachers. But unlike Pentecostals, the established churches—since they owned good and old church structures (some of them as old as 80 years)—could not easily leave them behind and go to the new settlements. Pentecostals on their part exploited this situation. Since they did not have established churches they reacted more quickly and more flexibly, adapting themselves to the new challenging situations of the

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489 See: Frieder Ludwig, op.cit., 175.
492 Litowa and Liweta Farm were the best models of *Ujamaa* villages in Songea District.
493 See: Frieder Ludwig, op.cit., 161. Many priests and bishops were also initially reluctant to support *Ujamaa* ideology because of its perceived communist leanings. Nyerere often challenged this reluctance of the Tanzanian clergy. He even wished that the Latin American Liberation Theology clergy were in Tanzania because they supposedly understood the *Ujamaa* policy better than the Tanzanian clergy. Nyerere would sarcastically admonish the clergy that they should not just sit by all the day long, clad in their cassocks and waiting for the faithful to come and confess their sins. Instead, they should join the ordinary people in tilling the fields in the *Ujamaa* villages. Cf. Nyerere’s speeches broadcast by Radio Tanzania in its Programme “*Wosia wa Baba*” (i.e. “father’s last will”).
Ujamaa villages more easily. Thus the social milieu at the Ujamaa villages is another factor that consolidates the claim that the Ujamaa political ideology had fostered the growth of Pentecostalism.

Fourth, the Pentecostalism flourished in the context of poverty that emerged pertinent to the implementation and collapse of the Ujamaa political agenda. The lives of the people were engulfed in a state of social insecurity due to the lack of basic means of livelihood and medical facilities. Under such circumstances religion found its niche to flourish since it remained the last refuge of the people. It still holds true in Africa today that religions remain the last hope of the people amid collapsing state structures.

It is interesting to compare the pastoral approaches of the various churches in tackling the prevailing problems and the corresponding response of the people. It is maintained that the Roman Catholic Church and the mainline Protestant churches could do little to alleviate the economic hardships. They, nonetheless, urged the people to work hard. In other words, they discouraged shortcut means in addressing the problems and advocated the engagement of consistent and continuous efforts in the building of the nation. On their part, they pledged their collaboration with the state leadership to that effect.

Pentecostals, on the other hand, taught the people not to bother about planning their future since it was more gratifying to live without a plan. They accentuated spontaneity and direct encounter with God through ‘signs and wonders.’ In other words, they taught the people to place their hope entirely in God and expect his miracles to redress the situation.

Amid the prevailing precarious life of the Ujamaa villages, the Pentecostal approach proved more appealing to many of the forlorn villagers. They perceived that here was a brand of Christianity that induced one with the hope for the coveted welfare, healing and renewal through divine intervention. Pentecostalism was also more appealing particularly to young people who were disillusioned by the impossibility of planning the direction of their lives in the Ujamaa system.

At that time the Pentecostal churches were such as the US-based Assemblies of God and the ELIM Pentecostal Church which had newly appeared in the Tanzania scene. They did not preach the Gospel of Prosperity as do the Neo-Pentecostal churches today. Yet in the

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495 Ibid.
496 Ibid.
497 Ibid.
498 Ibid.
499 See: Reinhard Veller, op.cit., 42.
context of the Prosperity Gospel too, the people apparently prefer “signs and wonders”, rather than appeal to work ethic, as a means of coming to terms with the current socio-economic difficulties.

2.5.4.2 Neo-liberal Economic Structures

The neo-liberal economic structures introduced since the 1980s have aggravated poverty in Tanzania. The aftermath of the war between Tanzania and Ugandan Dictator Idi Amin also contributed to poverty. The war was fought between 1978 and 1979. Both the cost of the war, estimated at US$1 million per day, and the subsequent peacekeeping role in Uganda consequently drained the coffers of the Tanzania and drove it further into poverty.

Pentecostalism’s rising in popularity in the country can be explained in relation to this socio-economic background. The socio-economic difficulties provided a fertile ground for Pentecostalism to flourish. Languishing in grinding poverty and amid shattered political hopes, the people developed a strong yearning for the attainment of the joys of the heavenly glory. Many spontaneous choir songs came up which focused on such themes as the joy of the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ, the Father’s House in heaven, the New Jerusalem with pearly gates and golden streets.501

Pentecostalism appears to respond to the neo-liberal socio-economic situation as well as enables its adherents to come to terms with the effects of neoliberal economic structures. This it achieves by offering them a chance to change their responses to the limiting conditions imposed by neo-liberalism. The way Pentecostalism helps its members to appropriately respond to socio-economic conditions of the neo-liberal era is allegedly comparable to the earlier forms of popular Christianity that helped African peasants and labour migrants to come to terms with the demands of capitalist imperialism.502

What appears to help Pentecostals to accommodate the currents of neoliberal economic structures can be explained in terms of the doctrines of Pentecostalism and the process of conversion and becoming ‘saved’. With regard to doctrines, there seems to be some areas of congruence between Pentecostal doctrines and neo-liberalism. As Maxwell attests, key traits of the Pentecostal character like “the sense of personal destiny, self-worth, self-reliance and positive attitude” resonate with the qualities of neo-liberalism. By adopting such qualities Pentecostals are equipped with entrepreneurial initiative, self-motivation, and flexibility.


which are required for operating on the unpredictable markets and for facing insecure living.

It is emphasized that, for some adherents of Pentecostalism, these codes of conduct help them achieve a social mobility, while others are assisted so that they don’t fall into extreme poverty and destitution. David Martin maintains that Pentecostalism takes the “poor to destinations somewhat better than survival.”

Furthermore, the process of conversion and becoming ‘saved’ teaches converts to undergo a paradigmatic shift of their lives, a transformation that practically entails not only making a complete break with their past sinful lives, but also restructuring their families. African extended families are discouraged since allegedly they constitute an economic burden. Adherents to Pentecostalism are spared from the ‘weight’ of relatives by encouraging the restoration of the nuclear family as defence mechanism in encountering the effects of neoliberal economy.

This seems to appeal strongly to the currently emerging affluent classes in Africa characterised as they are by growing individualism and sense of autonomy. Becoming a born-again Christian demands that one undergoes a character change that is outwardly expressed in a life of fidelity, hard work, teetotalism and peaceful temper, and the like. Conversion is, therefore, a process of re-socialization by which a convert is drawn away from the world of sin and in turn introduced into a family-oriented life.

Thus, it can be concluded that the Pentecostal codes of conduct are often believed to result in an all-round betterment and a better managed household economy manifested in having more regular income and improved family relationships.

Mutual material support within the Pentecostal fraternal networks also benefits the believers. Local congregations become as well mutual aid communities that address the needs of the members including poverty alleviation.

2.5.4.3 HIV/AIDS Pandemic

Some commentators have pointed to a possible link between the rapid growths of Pentecostalism in the 1980s with the emergence of HIV/AIDS in Eastern Africa during the same period. In fact, HIV infection rates escalated from this period onwards. As already described, socio-economic insecurities prevailed in Tanzania in 1980s. This, subsequently, ushered in an increase in poverty and growing sexual and economic vulnerability of

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503 David Martin, op.cit., 137.
women.\textsuperscript{505} Anthropologists and social scientists point out to such circumstances as being among the reasons behind the spread of HIV/AIDS.

In the face of the incurable AIDS pandemic, the promise of healing preached by Pentecostal churches attracted many patients to join them, just as it continues to attract many members today, for instance, in the Full Gospel Bible Church in Dar es Salaam.\textsuperscript{506}

2.5.4.4 Migration

A number of factors account for migrations of people in Africa today.\textsuperscript{507} Migration contributes significantly to the spread of Pentecostal Christianity within individual African countries, and even from the African continent to the other continents of the world.\textsuperscript{508} In Tanzania the settlement of people in \textit{Ujamaa} villages in 1970s, as noted previously, is one of the major nation-wide events that stirred waves of migrations. This has consequently contributed to make Pentecostalism from the 1970s onwards become sharper and flower to greater heights.\textsuperscript{509} Currently rural-urban migration is one of the most outstanding forms of migration in the country. A combination of \textit{push-} and \textit{pull} factors cause people in rural areas to migrate to cities. The less privileged poverty-stricken rural areas force many young people leave their villages for greener pastures in the cities. Search for employment opportunities, and pursuit of education in the cities and flight from places with land scarcity are also common causes for migrations.\textsuperscript{510} But in some cities like Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, a reverse flow also takes place. The government has a programme whereby beggars (\textit{ombamba}) and loiterers (\textit{wazururaji}) would regularly be evicted from the city and repatriated to their respective rural districts upcountry.\textsuperscript{511}

Historically, Tanzania has been one of the least urbanised countries in the world since Nyerere’s \textit{Ujamaa} political ideology advocated anti-urbanisation policies as it sought to promote villagisation. The \textit{Nguvu Kazi} (i.e. hard work) campaign reinforced by the government resulted into forced evictions of unemployed town-dwellers who were denigrated as loiterers and idlers. Most of those affected by such campaigns were young people. Youth urban population has often been seen as suspect criminals or \textit{wanyonyaji} (social ‘parasites’), a

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\textsuperscript{505} See: Hansjörg Dilger, \textit{Leben mit Aids}, 64.
\textsuperscript{506} Ibid., 60.
\textsuperscript{509} Frieder Ludwig, \textit{Das Modell Tanzania, zum Verhältnis zwischen Kirche und Staat während der Ära Nyerere (mit einem Ausblick auf die Entwicklung bis 1994)} (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1995), 161.
\textsuperscript{510} See: Hansjörg Dilger, \textit{Leben mit Aids: Krankheit, Tod und soziale Beziehungen in Afrika} (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2005), 51.
\textsuperscript{511} Ibid.
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term coined within the rhetoric of *Ujamaa* policy to denounce the rural youth who chose to migrate to cities instead of farm.\footnote{See: Marc Sommers, “Young, Male and Pentecostal: Urban Refugees in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania”, in: *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (2001), 348.} Since the 1970s the country has repeatedly initiated campaigns aimed at repatriating Dar es Salaam’s migrant youth to the rural areas. These measures are indicative of the government’s resistance to recognise and to address the drive of the Tanzanian youth to urbanise. Dar es Salaam is the country’s centre of commerce, education, administration and it is the most powerful magnet for migration. However, since the Tanzanian rural areas are largely characterised by poverty and lack of infrastructures such as electricity, water, good communications systems, health services and the like, the environment there proves inhospitable to young people. Consequently, every effort aimed at stemming the rural-urban migration tide has so far failed. In recent decades the country has experienced one of the highest rates of urbanisation in the world as young people are heading to the cities, leaving their villages behind with old people.\footnote{See: Hansjörg Dilger, *Leben mit Aids*, 51.} These youth are often masses of unskilled, poorly educated people. At the same time, Dar es Salaam, like many other African cities, does not have an urban economic growth that corresponds to its high urbanisation rates. Consequently, poverty in Africa is becoming increasingly a predominant urban issue.\footnote{See: Marc Sommers, op. cit., 348.}

But it is significant to note, as Sommers points out, that such poor youth overcrowding the cities have rarely been a target for humanitarian or development assistance. But equally true, they have not been sufficiently targeted for pastoral outreach as far as most churches in Tanzania are concerned. It is a well-known fact that the majority of Pentecostal converts in Africa are such poor rural migrants to cities where they are relegated to the lower end of the social class scale.\footnote{See: Joel Robbins, op.cit.,123.}

The city of Dar es Salaam is known in youth parlance as ‘Bongoland’ which literally means ‘Brainland’. The nickname reflects the difficulties that the city presents to young urbanites. But it also expresses the identity of the city as a place where the shrewd and cunning are rewarded, “and where survival has become a rite of passage into manhood.”\footnote{Marc Sommers, op.cit., 357.} Confronted with a situation of deprivation, anomie and the anonymity of city life, migrants in Dar es Salaam, dubbed as *wakuja* (i.e. newcomers), are forced to seek communities where they can enjoy a sense of belonging, recognition and social support. Pentecostal churches appear to be particularly appealing to young Africans because they “give people a sense of
dignity, a place in a community of friends which often stands as a surrogate for an extended family fractured by mobility and change.”

The relationship between urbanisation and Pentecostalism in Tanzania has been further underscored by Sommers in his study case of Burundi refugees in Dar es Salaam. Following chronic civil conflicts at home many Burundians have been hosted in Tanzania as refugees for many years. According to regulations refugees are kept in spatially segregated sites like camps and settlements, first in order to limit security risks that refugees may present either in Tanzania or in their country of origin. Secondly, in order to prevent their incorporation into Tanzanian society so that when peace returns in their own country they may be easily repatriated. Thirdly, separating refugees from citizens has the benefit of isolating relief aid for refugees and development aid for local population.

Sommers notes that young Burundi refugees who grew up in the isolated settlements and now seek opportunities in the city of Dar es Salaam far away from their camps in Katumba and Ulyankulu, exemplify the extraordinary determination of African young people to urbanise. They arrive in Dar es Salaam clandestinely knowing only too well that it is illegal. And while in Dar es Salaam, they take every precaution to hide their identity.

Particularly interesting for our purposes is the visibility of the role played by the Pentecostal denomination in the whole process of migration. There appeared to be an informal Pentecostal network that assisted the young refugees financially and socially to migrate to Dar es Salaam. Their Catholic peers living in the same refugee settlements, in contrast, did not have such financial support and networks to enable them to migrate to Dar es Salaam. Although the populations of Catholics and Pentecostals in the settlement camps were roughly the same, Catholic Burundi refugees, due to the lack of such support networks, were virtually nowhere to be seen in Dar es Salaam. According to Sommers, nearly the entire Burundi refugee community in Dar es Salaam attended Pentecostal churches.

It is significant to underline that the Pentecostal community not only assisted the young people to migrate to the city, but also built a survival network that gave the newcomers spiritual and material support to help them negotiate urban living. This is a very important aspect for migrants since migration offers windows into contemporary forms of oppression. In the context of migration, human dignity may not be sufficiently respected; it may be

517 Ibid., 362.
518 See: Ibid., 349.
519 See: Ibid., 348.
humiliated or even destroyed.\textsuperscript{521} And religious institutions like churches are among the factors that play a vital role in integrating migrants.

Some migrants resort to religion either as a coping mechanism or as a tool in the struggle for more life-giving conditions.\textsuperscript{522} Religion in general equips the migrant with spiritual strength. Church liturgy and rituals celebrated in the context of an ecclesial assembly also give migrants a religious assurance. An ecclesial community gives the migrants a sense of belonging, solace and social integration.\textsuperscript{523} Thus, the phenomenon of migration, even at the level rural-urban shift of people, is a challenge to the churches. In fact, “when churches close themselves to the strangers in their midst, when they no longer strive for an inclusive community as a sign and foretaste of the Kingdom to come, they lose their reason to be.”\textsuperscript{524}

Sommers’ comment that Dar es Salaam “sheds light on a new and emerging Africa: one that is young, urban and Pentecostal,”\textsuperscript{525} is also noteworthy. Experience shows that most Tanzanian Pentecostal churches and new religious movements have their headquarters in Dar es Salaam. From there, they establish their satellite churches in upcountry regions and launch regular countrywide crusades. This implies that, if through the migration und urbanisation phenomena Dar es Salaam is becoming Pentecostal, then the ripples of this shift in the Christian landscape will inevitably reach other parts of the country.

\textbf{2.6 Development of Pentecostalism in Songea}

In Songea Pentecostalism made its first significant appearance in the 1980s. At the time the Christian landscape was dominated by the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the Lutheran Church. There were also other Christian groups, including the Jehovah Witnesses, but their numbers were insignificant. The \textit{Tanzania Assemblies of God (T.A.G)} which was the most known Pentecostal Church to set foot in Songea. This study has revealed that as the Pentecostals went about their preaching and proselytizing mission in the streets, they were looked at with great suspicion by the members of the established churches. What elicited the suspicion, among other things, was their strange style of worship, strict asceticism including prohibition of alcoholic beverages and their elitist attitudes towards non-Pentecostal Christians.

\textsuperscript{522} See: Gemma T. Cruz, op.cit., 364.
\textsuperscript{525} Marc Sommers, op.cit., 347.
With regard to the Pentecostal style of worship, the Christians from the older churches considered it to be too emotional. Thus they labelled the Pentecostals ‘wafuasi wa dini ya kulia’ (i.e. members of the religion of crying).\(^{526}\) With respect to alcoholic beverages, the Pentecostals condemned any use of it as sinful. This was a hard teaching to the local people who were used to taking alcohol. Furthermore, the Pentecostals elicited an attitude of elitism as they passed judgment on those who did not convert to Pentecostalism as people who were doomed to hell. They termed themselves *walokole* (i.e. the “saves ones”) because they were “born-again” (*wamezaliwa upya*). Hence, it was only they who were on the right path to eternal life, not those who remained in the established churches.\(^{527}\)

This elitist attitude coupled with the general apathy of the historic churches towards Pentecostalism constituted a troubled relationship between the two sides. Catholic parents in Songea warned their children against this strange denomination. And Catholics members who converted to Pentecostalism were often looked at with disdain by their families and church community. Sometimes they had to endure alienation from their families. In families where Pentecostal members were the majority, the reverse was also true. All in all, in its humble beginnings in Songea Pentecostalism was unpopular.

The Pentecostals were, nevertheless, not deterred. Their evangelism approach remained aggressive and their proselytizing mission ardent. These qualities, and particularly their practice of the ministries of healing and exorcism, increasingly won new members to their side. Catholics still constitute the overwhelming majority among Christians in Songea. However, the number of Catholics who switch to Pentecostalism has been surging up, thus contributing to a dramatic growth of Pentecostalism.

Attitudinal changes vis-a-vis Pentecostalism are also discernible. Instead of the previous position of contempt and disdain, the members of the historic churches now see Pentecostalism as a challenge. Some of its elements are also incorporated in the religious praxis of the church. In the Archdiocese of Songea, this is evident for example, in the adoption of Gospel Musical styles, the reinforcement of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) and the imitation of church fundraising methods used by Prosperity Gospel preachers. An in-depth exploration on the influence Pentecostalism on the historic churches in Tanzania follows in subsequent sections.


\(^{527}\) Ibid.
2.6.1 Factors for Rapid Growth

Let us now turn our attention to the factors that have provided a fertile ground for the spread of Pentecostalism in the area co-extensive with the Archdiocese of Songea. Apart from the factors discussed previously, the rapid spread of Pentecostalism in Songea has come about due to circumstances particularly related to the context of Songea. These include the opening up of Ruvuma Region as a result of the upgrading of Songea-Makambako Road, expansion of educational institutions which expanded the ministry of Pentecostal students, and development of the mining sector which attracted many people from outside Songea, including Pentecostals.

2.6.1.1 Social Communications and Migration

In Songea the rising popularity of Pentecostalism has come about mainly as a result of the influx of people from other regions of the country. As pointed out earlier, Pentecostal doctrines tend to appeal more to young urbanites who migrate to urban areas in search of economic opportunities. The construction of the Songea-Makambako tarmac road has facilitated social communications and hence migrations to Ruvuma Region. It has opened up the remote region which hitherto was almost unreachable during rainy seasons. The work of upgrading a 322-kilometre stretch of road between Songea and Makambako in Njombe District was begun in 1980 and reached its final completion in 1985. Coincidentally this period of the opening of the road was pervaded by the wave of the Pentecostal revivals which I have described previously. The years of the operation of the road have witnessed an exponential increase of immigrants and churches of various denominations in Ruvuma Region. The rapid growth of Pentecostalism through the vehicle of migration can therefore partly be linked to this project, since it was a huge project that employed many migrant workers from other regions and outside Tanzania. Madaba Ward in Songea Rural District where the road constructors, Baufbeauty Company, camped has developed into one of the most Pentecostalised districts of Ruvuma. The agents of this growth were not only Pentecostal preachers but also migrant workers and traders who swarmed this locality. Before the construction of the road, the presence of Pentecostals at Madaba was almost negligible, while the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church dominated the Christian topography. Today, the majority of Christians in the locality are still Catholics, but the presence of Pentecostalism

528 This was the observation of pastors at a pastoral meeting in Songea, June, 2005.
529 Interview with Mr. A. Mbilinyi of Wino Parish, June 2005.
is significant. This is one reason why Madaba and Wino localities are among the locales of this research.

2.6.1.2 Ministry of Pentecostal Students

Schools and high institutes of learning have contributed significantly to the spread of Pentecostalism in Songea as they give room for the propagation of the ministry of Pentecostal students.\textsuperscript{531} The Pentecostal influence is more remarkable in high schools such as Songea Girls’ Secondary School, Songea Boys’ Secondary School, and Songea Teachers’ College. These institutions have high percentages of Pentecostal students as compared to others since they enroll many students from outside Ruvuma Region. Many of the students come from regions such as Mbeya, where the population of Pentecostal Christians is enormous.

In Tanzania Pentecostal students have their own association known as CASFETA-TAYOMI. The acronym CASFETA stands for Christ’s Ambassadors Student Fellowship Tanzania, while TAYOMI is the short form for Tanzania Youth Ministry. The former body operates under the umbrella of the latter. According to the CASFETA Dar es Salaam website, the Pentecostal Student Association exists in almost all primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities across the country. Its mission is to employ various methods in gospel outreach targeting particularly the youth.\textsuperscript{532} Both Pentecostal students and teachers carry out a proselytizing mission in schools and colleges. Prayer meetings, Easter conferences and other gatherings are all opportune moments for converting students to Pentecostalism.

Pertinent to this subject, I will demonstrate further in this work the implications in the Christian landscape which the Archdiocese of Songea should reckon with, following its current move to establish a faculty of the St. Augustine Catholic University and an Agricultural College under D.M.I –M.M.I Indian missionaries.

2.6.1.3 Mining Industry

Demographic migrations in favour of Pentecostalism in Songea have also resulted from mining activities. In the 1980s Tanzania, like other African countries, had experienced a liberalisation of the mining sector as part of the economic structural adjustment and liberalisation introduced by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. During this time state-owned enterprises including the mining sector were privatized, in order, \textit{inter alia}, to reduce fiscal deficit. It was thought that many countries experienced a deteriorating

\textsuperscript{531} Report from members of Catholic Young Christian Students (YCS) at Easter Conference, Songea, 11\textsuperscript{th} April, 2004.

financial situation. Accordingly, a new mineral policy was introduced which encouraged Tanzanian citizens to carry out mining activities. The 1998 Mining Act, for example, stipulated that only Tanzanian citizens were eligible for primary (i.e. small-scale) mining licenses. Consequently, mineral prospecting activities are now carried out in every nook and corner of Tanzania and many young people involve themselves in mining activities. It is estimated that in 1999 alone there were between 450,000 and 600,000 artisanal miners employed in small-scale mining in Tanzania.

It is notable that mining constitutes one of the sectors that largely contribute to the mobility of young people in Tanzania, both spatially and socially. Thus mines have become a migration pull-factor and a melting-pot of people from different backgrounds.

Ruvuma Region, which is rich in mineral deposit potential including gold, various gemstones, coal, and diamond and building materials, has attracted people from all corners of Tanzania and beyond. Almost every district of Ruvuma Region teems with artisanal miners and dealers in mineral business. Among the famous mining sites include Ngembambili, Amani Makoro and Mpepo villages in Mbinga District; Muhuwezi locality in Tunduru District and Chengena Village (now exhausted) in Namtumbo District.

Songea Municipality is impacted by the mining industry not only because it is the headquarters of the region, but also on account of its being the largest town and centrally located. Thus miners and mineral dealers frequently come to Songea to spend their fortunes there or stay there while on transit to and from the mining sites. Some have even opened their permanent businesses in the municipality. This trend is expected to grow since a huge uranium mining project is due to start soon in Namtumbo District, a few kilometres east of Songea Town.

2.6.1.3.1 Social and Environmental Insecurity at Mines

Mining sites present a great challenge to human and environmental security. Many notorious criminals reportedly make the mines their hideouts. Instances of armed robberies and murder are frequent, while prostitution and sexual promiscuity, employment of children, and environmental pollution are common phenomena. The people use polluted water

534 Ibid., 77.
sometimes with extremely high arsenic concentrations. As a result, mortality rates at the mines are generally high.

At Chengena village, for example, as soon as the rich deposits of blue and pink sapphire gemstones were discovered, artisanal miners from all over the country swarmed the area. Mineral buyers from far-flung countries such as Thailand also came to the locality. The gemstone deposit is now exhausted and the village has resumed its previous calm. But as I visited the area in July 2010, I witnessed vast areas of arable land that has been reduced to deep pits, with no possibility of reclaiming it for agrarian activities. Many residents of the village I interviewed about the mines complained about the escalation of HIV/AIDS infection and the soaring of the prices of basic commodities as the aftermath of the mining activities.

2.6.1.3.2 Mining and Occult Economies

It is notable that many small-scale miners engage in occult economies. For example, since the year 2006 widespread killings of people with albinism have been reported across Tanzania. These acts were allegedly fuelled by traditional healers and diviners who propagated superstitious beliefs, particularly among people involved in gold mining and fishing activities in the Lake Victoria Zone, northern Tanzania. The traditional healers had spread the belief that albino organs possess mystical powers that can make a person in the mining and fishing businesses fabulously rich within a short time.

Tales of occult sacrifices abound in the mining areas in Ruvuma Region as well. Some informants narrated to me the problems that artisanal miners allegedly encounter when they try to locate prospective gold and sapphire deposits. They believe that the deposits are well-guarded by spiritual forces and this always poses difficulties to reach them. Thus, presumably, the mining of gold and other precious stones cannot be done successfully without sacrificing to the spirits which are believed to be closely associated with the minerals. As one artisanal miner told me: “huwezi kuifikia dhahabu bila kwanza kutolea sadaka” (i.e. you cannot find gold without offering any sacrifice). It is claimed that the spiritual forces associated with precious minerals are placated by sacrificial offerings which can involve animal blood, the burning of incense, and sometimes even the notorious offering of human blood or human


538 Informants: young artisanal miners who shared with me their experience at the mines at Mpepo in Mbinga District and in neighbouring Mozambique, 20th June, 2011, Songea.
organs. This explains why in Tanzania people with albinistic conditions are hunted down for their limbs to be used in gold mines.

A diviner or sometimes a Moslem sheik would be called to slaughter a goat and sprinkle its blood on the area. Then some silver coins are offered to the spirits and placed permanently at some “sacred” corner and not one is supposed to take them away. According to the informants some miners try to “neutralize” the occult forces by sprinkling the mineral deposits with holy water from the church.

In another instance, I was told the following story:

In one parish, some German missionaries were believed to have buried gold in a casket as they were hurriedly deported to Germany during the First World War. The local people knew the spot where the gold was buried because it was clearly marked by a beacon. However, no one succeeded to take the gold away. Whoever neared the spot would be attacked by a large swarm of bees emerging out of nowhere or would be chased away by a very large, strange-looking snake. However, when ultimately some incense was burnt at the spot, the people saw the strange snake creeping away, glittering with gold. As they approached the spot to grab the coveted gold, nevertheless, it was nowhere to be found.  

Such tales that associate the mining of precious minerals with occult forces abound. It is a subject that requires a research of its own. It would be interesting to find out for example, if the beliefs about the influence of the occult permeate as well industrial (large-scale) mineral prospecting and exploration in Tanzania, where the actors are mostly foreign experts from the Western world.

2.6.1.3.3 Pentecostal Evangelism at Mines

From the foregoing, the mining industry is certainly significant for our purposes. To articulate it, it can be stated that mining as a promoter of migration is attributable to the shift of the Christian landscape in Songea in general and to the proliferation of Pentecostalism in particular. As the people migrate to the mines, they migrate with their religious faith. This has given Pentecostalism an impetus to spread in Songea. Secondly, the artisanal mining industry poses a serious pastoral challenge in terms of human security and environmental integrity. The pertinent question is what is the pastoral response of the churches? And which church, among the myriad of churches in Songea, appears to address the situation at the mines in the best way by promoting humanity dignity and environmental stewardship?

It is notable that at national level Christians churches in Tanzania have worked collaboratively with Moslems to address adverse conditions associated with large-scale

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539 Informant: Maurus Kapinga from Mbinga, June 2011, Songea.
mining in some particular regions of the country. But the Church’s pastoral involvement with regard to the day-to-day vicissitudes confronting small-scale minors was minimal in Ruvuma Region at the time this study was conducted.

Levels of pastoral involvement at mines are quite distinguishable among the various church denominations. In my own observation, Pentecostals have normally more easily penetrated into the setting of small-scale mining industry than Catholics. Evidently their egalitarian social organization and aggressive evangelism facilitate their pastoral outreach. Moreover, the availability of Pentecostal pastors at the mining sites tends to be greater than that of Catholic priests. For one thing, the Pentecostal pastors are more likely to participate in mining and to deal in mineral business than Catholic priests. For another, new mining sites are often located in remote places where church buildings are non-available. Such structures are often constructed by the miners themselves in the course of their stay at the site. But since Catholic pastoral system is mostly locally compartmentalized, the absence of church structures makes it relatively difficult for the priests to carry out effective pastoral outreach in the informal settlements at the mines which some informants had referred to as *bush-cities*.

Furthermore, the Catholic ecclesial organization lays a great deal of emphasis on territoriality. Accordingly, the pastoral care of the miners in a certain locality is normally the responsibility of priests of the ecclesial territory where the particular mine is located. Pastoral outreach to the miners is further complicated by the propensity of many Catholic churches to focus their pastoral activities merely on Sundays and often within the ambiance of Sunday liturgical celebrations.

Pentecostal churches, in contrast, are more likely to have great pastoral influence at the mines since they are more centrifugal. Their area of pastoral outreach is the wider context of all the people at the mines with whom lay believers as well as ministers rub shoulders with on day-to-day basis. In fact, the mining sites described above teem with Pentecostal believers who strive to convert fellow miners, mineral dealers and all who happen to be at the mines.

Another pastoral issue of pastoral impact in this context is directly linked to the Gospel of Prosperity. Mining sites constitute ample material for the prosperity creed to flourish on

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540 For example, in 2009 the Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC), the Muslim Council of Tanzania (BAKWATA) and the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) jointly commissioned a study to investigate the environmental impact of the mining activity in Geita and North Mara mine situated in the Mara District east of Victoria Lake in North Tanzania. The study found that the environment had been seriously contaminated by extremely high levels of arsenic, cadmium, cobalt, copper, chrome, nickel and zinc due to a leaking tailing dam. See article: “Dangerous Levels of Arsenic Found near Tanzania Mine”: URL: http://www.miningwatch.ca/en/dangerous-levels-arsenic-found-near-tanzania-mine (accessed 10th January, 2011).

541 Informant: Oscar Nyoni, an experienced mineral dealer from Songea, 22th June, 2011.
account of the following aspects: First, there is a point of convergence between the Prosperity Gospel and small scale mining industry, namely the “duty” to become rich. Experience has shown that artisanal miners and dealers in gemstones are usually desperate to become rich within a short span of time. Since the Gospel of Prosperity promises to make its proponents rich, small scale mining industry becomes a fertile ground for it. The miners and mineral-dealers may find the Gospel of Prosperity a fitting religious tenet which offers the right perspective towards their goal to accumulate wealth.

Second, the Gospel of Prosperity will be preferred as an alternative to occult economies since it promises to bring about prosperity to the miners without the involvement of the often troublesome occult forces. This point will be elaborated further in subsequent sections. Suffice it to posit here that in the measure that the Prosperity Gospel promises material blessing without the engagement of witchcraft, it would prove attractive to the artisanal miners.

2.7 Pentecostal Churches versus Historic Churches

Discourses on African Christianity are fraught with questions about the popularity of Pentecostalism. The shortcomings of the historic churches and the influence of Pentecostalism on historic churches are some of the issues that often come to the fore. Let us examine them.

2.7.1 What Are They Saying About the Historic Churches?

Some religious commentators premise the popularity of Pentecostalism on what they consider to be shortcomings in the historic churches. They contend that the historic churches espouse alienating theology and structure; that they are far too permissive towards African spiritual ontologies; and that they fail to promote “Africanisation from below”. How plausible are these assertions?

2.7.1.1 Alienating Theology and Structure

Some scholars point to the theology and structure of the mainline churches as one that seems to be alienating to the Africans. They see the lack of emphasis on a subjective experience of God in the theology of these churches. They claim that in these churches Africans encounter superimposed, artificial, social structures which they find alienating. They argue, for example, that there is an emphasis on the organization of the Church as an

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542 See: Thomas P. Rausch, op.cit., 935.
institution as opposed to the African inborn sense of fellowship and mutual caring and sharing. These aspects, they contend, are salient features in a typical African family and in African Religion. Conversely, when the aspect of the Church as an institution, rather than as an organism, is emphasized, the resultant tendency from the African point of view, is the suffocation of that inner need for fellowship. It is thus stressed that churches in Africa today should seek relevant ecclesiastical institutions that will meet the people’s religious yearning and challenges. Even members of mainline churches seem not to wish to sever their contact with the traditional African approaches as they are deemed to convey a meaningful Christian appeal. The new religious movements seem to flourish because they address this very question of inner need for fellowship, since they promote small-scale Church communities which reflect the extended family system in the ecclesiastical context. Driven by the need for fellowship, members of these churches are seemingly contented to gather even in private houses, shacks, in school classrooms or open spaces provided their aspect of being Church as a sharing and caring phenomenon is expressed. The mainline churches are, therefore, challenged to seriously address the shortcoming of their social organization in order to overcome the current regression.

2.7.1.2 “Accommodating” Indigenous Spiritual Ontologies

As noted previously, there persists a perception among some scholars that non-Pentecostal Christianity has been permissive of African religion’s elements of spirits and powers that are contradictory to the Christian teaching, while Pentecostal Christianity has not tolerated such elements. Such a claim, however, is at variance with the actual pastoral praxis of many missionary churches in Tanzania. I have already elaborated in the preceding sections how the Archdiocese of Songea for example, has from the early days of Christianity has confronted the beliefs in witchcraft and demonology. Direct confrontation with traditional healers and imposition of interdict on Christians who took part in witchcraft and demonic rituals were among the common approaches employed by the church to that effect. What ought to be emphasized here is that despite such efforts, witchcraft beliefs in Songea have persisted. And instead of undermining them, Africans now shift their allegiance to the Neo-Pentecostal movements that accept the existence of witchcraft and demonic powers. It has been argued

544 See: Ibid.
545 See: Ibid., 279.
546 See: Ibid.
547 Ibid., 278.
548 See: Elizabeth Isichei, op.cit., 195.
that what has ultimately contributed to the flourishing of Christianity in Africa is the continuity with, rather than deliberate attempts to abolish African religious beliefs.\textsuperscript{550}

\textbf{2.7.1.3 Failure to Promote “Africanisation from Below”}

There is a general claim that missionary churches have not promoted ‘Africanisation from below’, which is another way of saying that they have not helped Africans appropriate Christianity at grassroots level.\textsuperscript{551} However, some scholars contend that mainline churches have indeed fostered the appropriation of Christianity by Africans. The tedious task of planting the Church in African soil has been the credit of the historic churches. What Chapter One has demonstrated with regard to the Benedictine missionaries in Songea epitomises this fact. Most saliently, the historic churches have enabled the indigenous people to appropriate Christianity through the introduction of literacy and subsequently the translation Christian teaching into African vernacular. The task of translation of the Bible, church hymns and Christian writings into vernacular has been one of the major contributions of western missionaries to the development of indigenous African Christian spirituality and theologies.\textsuperscript{552} In fact, most of the Pentecostal churches build on the foundation laid down by the historic churches.

\textbf{2.7.2 Influence of Pentecostal Churches}

In response to the explosive growth of Pentecostalism in Tanzania notable changes are experienced in the historic churches. Charismatic styles once regarded as the preserve of the Pentecostal-charismatic churches are now shared by mainstream churches, including the Catholic Church. This situation is, however, not unique to Tanzania. Jenkins points out that the charismatic or Pentecostal style prevails in churches across the board in all parts of the Global south.\textsuperscript{553}

\textbf{2.7.2.1 Proliferation of Pentecostals’ Styles}

Pentecostal influence is most evident in a charismatic renewal that is now pervasive in the mainline churches. The renewal is characterised by aspects of spirituality such as commitment to prayer, Bible readership, fasting, healing and deliverance. In fact, there is a general desire for an effective spirituality. The Pentecostals’ aggressive use of the media for evangelism,\textsuperscript{550,551,552,553}

\textsuperscript{550} See: Jehu Hanciles, op.cit.,129.
\textsuperscript{551} See: Birgit Meyer, op.cit., 456.
\textsuperscript{552} See Chapter One.
especially print media, radio, films, and television, has certainly increased the visibility and influence of Christianity on the public arena. Even in the daily language of the Christians Pentecostal expressions of Christianity are unmistakable. The invocation of Jesus’ name, for example, is frequent not only at worship but also in the riff raff of life.

At worship or church meetings speakers tend to employ an array of Jesus slogans to emphasize a point when preaching or addressing the congregation. The slogans are short and precise declarations which demand the response of the congregation to express their agreement. Since they are used repeatedly, they are easy to remember and thus serve to communicate the gospel message in a more effective way.

The frequent invocation of Jesus’ name is an expression on the part of the Christian believer of having accepted Jesus as one’s personal saviour, which is one of the tenets of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity. The Jesus slogan thus challenges the believer to seek to understand the identity of Jesus Christ in one’s daily life and retain continuity in relationship with him.

Some of the most commonly chanted slogans run:

President/speaker: Bwana asifiwe! or Aleluya (Praise the Lord! or Alleluia!)  
Congregation: Amen! (Amen!)  
Or  
President/speaker: The Lord is good!  
Congregation: All the time!  
President/speaker: All the time!  
Congregation: The Lord is good!

Arguably, since prayer healing ministries are now practised in the historic churches, sick church members, including the demonically possessed, seek healing from charismatic ministries instead of consulting traditional healers as hitherto. Healing through charismatic ministries is preferred, since it is achieved through the power of the Holy Spirit by prayer alone and not by using paraphernalia, herbs or medicines. 554 Moreover, the incorporation of charismatic elements in the mainline churches works as a retention mechanism in some of the churches because it helps prevent some members from defecting to Pentecostal churches. 555

Other areas in which the influence of Pentecostalism on the historic churches is salient include fundamentalist attitudes particularly in reading the Bible, the Gospel of Prosperity, the emphasis on spiritual forces and the retrogression of the historic churches.

554 See: Frieder Ludwig, op.cit., 156.  
555 See: Reinhard Veller, op.cit., 45.
2.7.2.2 Fundamentalist Attitudes

Pentecostal fundamentalist attitudes, characterized by a literalist reading of the Bible are increasingly adopted in the historic churches. Subsequent chapters will touch on this subject. Other expressions of fundamentalist attitude are evident in the current popular religiosity. We have hinted above about the growing habit of public invocation of Jesus’ name. Presumably, it is an act of Christian witness. Yet, it happens that Christians may invoke Jesus’ name simply out of habit. The invocation of Jesus’ name does not seem to reflect a concomitant Christian spirituality in everyday living. In ordinary conversation a person who has lost his temper may shout to his fellow: “Nitakupiga, kwa jina la Yesu” (“I will beat you, in Jesus’ name!”). Or as one man arrested for criminal charges in Tanzania once cursed the law-enforcers: “Kwa jina la Yesu mshwindwe!” (In Jesus’ name, may you fail to incriminate me!). Verbosity in proclaiming Jesus’ name in the Tanzanian public has increased, but not corresponding steps to overcome religious bigotry, corruption at work places, and the like.

2.7.2.3 The Gospel of Prosperity

The Gospel of Prosperity is another growing Pentecostal trend that can be described as negative in some of its aspects. The doctrine counts material blessing as a sign of God’s favour on a believer. The blessings are identified as prosperity in business, finding jobs for those who are unemployed, getting job promotions, getting expensive cars, houses, and so on. In order to acquire such blessing from God it is emphasized that the believer must tithe faithfully and give generous offerings to the church. And the more the believer gives to the church, the greater the material success he or she is likely to acquire. An elaborate explication on this doctrine follows in Chapter Three.

2.7.2.4 Emphasis on Malevolent Spirits

In Pentecostal-charismatic form of Christianity beliefs in evil spirits largely persist. The Pentecostals accept natural causes of events. Nevertheless, they greatly tend to ascribe problems in life such as sickness, disease, as well as setbacks and misfortunes including failure in business, to the influence of ancestral spirits, witches or demonic powers. They contend that real salvation must include liberation from malignant forces, sickness and disease. And that in keeping with the African worldview, Christianity in Africa will be
meaningful and relevant, if it offers protection against the influence of the malevolent forces.556

Embedded in the beliefs of spiritual forces are power relationships. Witches are considered to be very powerful people in the society, since they can employ witchcraft and demonic powers to harm other people. And, in fact, since Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity is believed to offer the coveted protection, it becomes appealing to many Africans. As the research findings in Songea indicate, the majority of born-again informants did not mention heaven when asked about the main benefit of being born-again. Rather, they pointed out that being born-again gave them the power, protection and a feeling of safety against the influence of witchcraft and demons and other spiritual forces.

This mindset which gives much credit to witchcraft and demons imparts fear, mutual mistrust and a general sense of insecurity particularly among young people, not least because it is churches that preach about such beliefs. In almost all regions of Tanzania, elderly people especially women are often persecuted by young people on witchcraft suspicions. Witchcraft beliefs also have led to an on-going persecution of persons with albinism in the country. Traditional healers had spread the belief that albino organs possess mystical powers that can make a person in the mining and fishing businesses fabulously rich within a short time.557 Consequently, people with albinistic conditions have been literally hunted down and killed for their body parts that sell in highly. Arguably the churches would do well to discourage witchcraft beliefs rather than extol their influence in the lives of people, a fact which ultimately reinforces social insecurities.

2.7.2.5 Retrogression of Mainline Churches

The enormous growth of Pentecostal-charismatic churches is accompanied by a corresponding decline in membership among the older churches.558 The following interview which appeared in a Tanzanian newspaper in 2011 serves to shed light on the situation.

Q. What are the reasons for the continuing growth in the number of revival ministries?
A: People are using their constitutional right in the freedom of worship and propagating personal religious beliefs. Tanzanian people are hungry and thirsty of finding solutions to their current problems. This is happening also in the current political arena too!
Q. What is it that people look for in these ministries that they don’t get at ‘main stream’ / ‘traditional’ churches? (What is missing in the traditional churches?)

558 See: Allan Anderson, op.cit., 121.
A: Most (not all) traditional churches have been treating the Bible as just a historical book. The new ministries have great faith in treating the Bible as source of divine inspiration and supernatural powers! They are making the Bible more relevant and practical. Most (not all) traditional churches teach more about Jesus of Yesterday meaning the historical Jesus who left the planet earth a long time ago, while some (not all) new ministries are preaching about the “Jesus of today” who can perform signs and miracles as he did in the past. People are more attentive and attracted to messages addressing their current problems.

Q. There is a perception that the ministers in these ministries take advantage of people’s immediate needs, such as poverty and diseases to benefit themselves (the ministers). What is your take on this?

A: As you have clearly said, “there is a perception” of that sort in this controversial matter. Since we are dealing with a very serious matter that requires both theological and scientific research, let us conduct one that will provide us a professional report as our base for any conclusion in this matter. However, currently my theological opinion is that not all new ministers out there are fake! Some are and some aren’t! If you ask me why we have those who are fake? My answer will be of Jesus example. Remember among his twelve apostles he had a traitor who was Judas who betrayed him. It is my belief that among twelve true ministers of the Gospel of today there might be a Judas who will behave contrary to what Jesus said and did.

Q: How can one differentiate the true God’s servant from the ‘fake’ ones?

A: The ways we identify true money and fake ones! Unless you happen to know very well how to identify who are the true servants of God, it is very difficult to identify the fake ones! However, if you take this matter honestly and seriously you will be amazed to identify the genuine and fake ministers in both, traditional and new ministries. Also you will be shocked to discover that in all of so called both, traditional and new churches there are genuine believers as well as fake ones too! My conclusion in this matter is that only true believers of God are entitled to identify the true ministers of God! Just like Jesus, he said that only true sheep would be able to identify the genuine shepherd!

Q: Are we heading to the diminishing of traditional churches?

A: It all depends on what you exactly mean by this term “traditional”! If “traditional” to you means “stagnance” [sic.] and “expiration,” then the answer to your question is obviously “yes.” But if “traditional” to you means “the original concept”, that is, “the original intended foundation” then what is happening now could be a new wave of spiritual movement that leads us back to the true and original foundation of the Church that Jesus himself proclaimed and promised that even foundations of hell will never prevail against it! It is about finding the truth, which will not be shaken in time of the testing of faith.559

In Songea, where the majority of Christians are Catholics, Pentecostal growth is coming at the expense of the Catholic Church. Cardinal Walter Kasper has argued that “the challenge represented by Pentecostalism should move the Catholic Church toward self-critical approach, asking why so many leave it and what they find in Pentecostal congregations.”560

The switching of members of mainline churches to Pentecostalism is ascribed by some scholars to the ‘sheep stealing’ tactics of Pentecostals. Others, while granting the aggressive proselytizing approach of the Pentecostals, contend, nonetheless, that the sheep are not always ‘stolen’ but that they themselves stray away. They embrace the new religious movements because they promise to be ‘greener pastures’ and a place where the Africans ‘feel at home’.561

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560 Thomas P. Rausch, op.cit., 935.
In some respects the Pentecostal-charismatic movements influence the Protestant churches and the Catholic Church somewhat differently.

2.7.3 Influence on Protestant Churches

One of the main features of the Pentecostal revivals is the existence of fellowships in almost every established Protestant Church, particularly in urban areas. Believers seek membership in the fellowships to overcome the anonymity of the expanding larger church community and enjoy a greater affinity in smaller ecclesial groups. The fellowships normally operate within the premises of the churches, but independently of church authority. They have their own charismatic form of worship, they form their own leadership recognized by the pastor but not controlled by him. They control their own funds and cater also for the non-spiritual needs of their members, like providing material support in times of celebrations such as birthdays and marriages. Similarly, in moments of suffering such as sickness and bereavement, they offer services of consolation along with communal prayers. Evidently, fellowships tend to form enclaves within the church community where its members often become more committed to the fellowship than to their larger church community. Some members are said to tithe 10 per cent of their income exclusively to their fellowship.

In another development, the established Protestant churches have now given more room to charismatic elements. Now testimonies, visions, prophecies, prayer healing, including exorcism have become an integral part of the liturgy in many denominations and have been accepted as genuine faith expressions. Moreover, bishops and ministers of the established churches perform healing when visiting the sick, in the church, in schools and universities.

The charismatic revival has presumably offered a form of genuine African piety and spirituality. As such, spiritual songs and church music in some established churches have maintained a close affinity to the mentality and piety of the East African Revival. Even the greeting in the Lutheran Church, for instance, has changed from ‘wandugu’ (sisters and brothers) to the charismatic greeting ‘Bwana asifiwe’ (praise the Lord), and its response is often chanted as a chorus: ‘Hallelujah’. Another impact of the Pentecostal revivals is
evidenced in what has now become a common practice of organizing prayer vigils (mikesha) within denominations and participating in the interdenominational crusades.

2.7.4 Influence on the Catholic Church

In the Roman Catholic Church in Tanzania, Pentecostalism has partly helped reawaken a general desire and love for the Bible. The centrality of the Bible in the prayer services of members of Catholic Charismatic Renewal and among protestant Pentecostals challenge many Catholics today to take the Bible seriously. They read it at home, in Small Christian Communities meetings, in Bible study groups and during liturgical celebrations. Bible workshops and seminars are also often organized and involve many lay people. Before the proliferation of Pentecostalism in Songea, Catholics could rarely be seen carrying their Bibles when going for Mass. Today, many do so and often turn their Bibles for reference during homilies. Lay Catholics appear to have developed a great interest in the ministry of the Word. Accordingly, Priests and other preachers of the Word of God are now greatly challenged to be zealous in making the Word of God a source of spiritual nourishment and enrichment for the believers. Catholic media play a vital role in promoting biblical apostolate. Radio Maria Tanzania which is heard in most regions of the country frequently offers biblical reflections and provides listeners with an opportunity to ask questions concerning the Bible.

In the first diocesan pastoral council meeting, for example, biblical apostolate for a deeper evangelization was greatly emphasized.\textsuperscript{568} It was resolved that parishes should design specific programmes for promoting biblical apostolate. The Bible should be treasured as the source, the foundation, the centre and the inspiration of proclamation, catechesis, spiritual life and pastoral life among priests, religious and the lay faithful. Each parish was urged to provide bibles in their bookshops and encourage the faithful to buy and read them. Bible services and seminars for reading and meditating the Bible were also to be conducted in the parishes. It was also urged that the Archdiocese should open a spiritual centre.\textsuperscript{569}

Nuances are also discernible in the Catholic style of worship particularly at Eucharistic Celebrations. During the Pray of the Faithful or silent prayer moments some congregation members tend to speak in tongues. Church choirs are becoming increasingly vibrant. Some typical Pentecostal styles of lively participation in liturgy by dancing and clapping of hands have also come to dominate many Catholic liturgies.

\textsuperscript{568} The diocesan pastoral council was newly formed in 2002 and held its first meeting on 22\textsuperscript{nd} -23\textsuperscript{rd} October, 2002. Its membership includes the archbishop, representative priests, men and women religious superiors, catechists, parish council leaders, representative professionals and parents.

\textsuperscript{569} “Minutes of the First Meeting of the Diocesan Pastoral Council” (22\textsuperscript{nd} -23\textsuperscript{rd} October, 2002) (Translation from Swahili mine) (typescript).
It is true, of course, that the Vatican Council II in its liturgical reforms had emphasized the importance of active participation in liturgy.\textsuperscript{570} And the Archdiocese of Songea has heeded to this call right from the early days of the post-Vatican II period. In implementing the reforms the archdiocese has often stimulated the Africanisation of the church liturgies.\textsuperscript{571} This has given room to the domination of African expressions in the liturgy in terms of language, rhythm, colour and happy participation.\textsuperscript{572} Nevertheless, the interface with Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity has undoubtedly reinforced this new style of worship among Catholics.

\subsection{2.7.5 Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) Movement}

The proliferation of Pentecostalism in Songea has also served to consolidate the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) movement. For one thing, the CCR movement shares many elements with Protestant Pentecostalism, as noted above. But for another, the CCR movement responds to the daily challenges of Pentecostalism in terms of spirituality, Bible readership, and so on.

Although the CCR movement was recognised by Rome in 1967, it was introduced in Tanzania only in the 1980s. Since then, it has become increasingly fervent. Significantly, this movement emphasizes personal experience of God and renewal of faith through an intentional repentance. It rediscovers the early church practice of letting believers exercise in the church community the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Thus prophecies, speaking in tongues, and healing are practised for the sake of building up the church community.

In the Archdiocese of Songea, the CCR movement is most active in the parishes of Mjimwema, Matogoro and Songea. On Sunday afternoons Charismatics in big numbers flock in prayer halls in their respective parishes. Crowds of people seeking healing and exorcism from the Charismatics throng the prayer venues. Indeed, the CCR movement appears to retain Catholics who otherwise would stray to Protestant Pentecostalism. The situation reflects what David Martin says: “the overall tone is charismatic, with choruses, testimonies, exorcisms, and healing and the movement probably picks up energies otherwise likely to flow into Pentecostalism proper or perhaps into the independent churches.”\textsuperscript{573}

Members of the CCR movement from Mjimwema Parish testified to me how the movement had helped them experience the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Some said

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{570} See: \textit{Sacrosanctum Concilium}, Nos. 14, 30.
\textsuperscript{573} David Martin, op.cit., 134f.
\end{flushleft}
they could now love other people more. Others claimed they could approach difficult family challenges more patiently and could forgive those who had wronged them more readily. Still others maintained that they had experienced a renewed love for prayer and a desire to read the Scriptures, to receive the Sacraments and to attend Mass. There were also those who testified to having been freed from their sinful habits that held them in bondage.\textsuperscript{574}

In general, the CCR movement in Songea contributes to improve the quality of Christianity both in terms of personal holiness and commitment of the believers and in supporting local parish churches with material resources.

David Martin sees the charismatic undercurrents affecting the Catholic Church of Tanzania today as representing a ‘bottom-up’ inculturation. The significance of ‘bottom-up’ inculturation is that it facilitates the appropriation of Christianity at grassroots level. He observes:

> traditional Catholicism combines with African tradition under the solvents of charismatic practices, creating on the one side a discourse of spiritual warfare, fastings, exorcisms, and healing, and on the other side a discourse of family integration, mutual support, discipline and hard work... Devotions center on the rosary and the Blessed Virgin, and include the role of the Virgin as protectoress of the chosen nation of Tanzania, freed from colonial bondage under Nyerere.\textsuperscript{575}

The reception of the CCR movement in some Catholic communities in Tanzania has not been smooth, although the movement has been officially accepted and encouraged by the Catholic Church as one of the most effective instruments of evangelization and mission.\textsuperscript{576}

The fears have not been always unfounded. Some Catholics have noted that CCR groups have the tendency to informally appropriate some Pentecostal elements that can be perceived as negative from the perspective of Catholic theology and praxis. In many parishes this has often marred the relationship between the CCR groups and the larger parish communities. Edwin Hernandez narrates a similar experience with the CCR movement in the Catholic Latino/a parishes in the USA:

> CCR-sympathetic communities enlist music- and prayer-styles that are very similar to Protestant Pentecostal and Charismatic groups, which can place them at odds with the broader parish’s worship-life. This disconnect is furthered by the tendency of these groups to worship in tandem at Sunday afternoon services.\textsuperscript{577}

\textsuperscript{574} These were public testimonies of the members of CCR at their prayer meeting, Mjimwema Parish, 21\textsuperscript{st} July, 2010.

\textsuperscript{575} David Martin, op.cit., 135.

\textsuperscript{576} See: Stanley M. Burgess (ed.), op.cit., 80.

\textsuperscript{577} Edwin Hernandez, Rebecca Burwell, Jeffrey Smith, “A Study of Hispanic Catholics: Why Are They Leaving the Catholic Church?“ in: Steven Boguslawski and Ralph Martin (eds.), op.cit., 123.
Thus the suspicion against the movement has been largely due to the propensity of its members to identify themselves with both traditional Catholic beliefs and practices and with Protestant Pentecostal values and worship styles.\textsuperscript{578}

Other factors that might have led to the cold reception of the CCR movement in Tanzania are mainly historical. First, there has been a general tendency among Christians to regard new religious movements with suspicion and label them as “dangerous cults”.\textsuperscript{579} The subject of cults is discussed in Chapter Five. Suffice it to point out here that, whenever new religious movements appeared, they became victims of anti-cult crusades. Charismatic movements have been no exception. Charismatics have been denounced on the basis that they present a new religion that deviates from historic Christianity.\textsuperscript{580} The non-receptive attitude towards the CCR movement may imply that some Catholic Christians still maintain an anti-cult outlook towards the CCR movement.

Second, the way the CCR movement was first introduced in some dioceses of Tanzania has subsequently led to the attitude of apathy towards it. Informants in Songea noted that some new entrants to the CCR movements considered themselves as joining an independent religious movement rather than a Catholic renewal movement.\textsuperscript{581} Some CCR members in Tanzania were said to be so elitist that they would not go to the Sacramental Confession if the ministering priest was not a member of the CCR movement.\textsuperscript{582} Others denied Marian devotions.\textsuperscript{583} These attitudes made Catholic Church communities consider the CCR movement more as an infiltration of Protestant Pentecostalism rather than a Catholic renewal movement.\textsuperscript{584} Quite understandably, some bishops in Tanzania were wary about the movement and some welcomed it into their dioceses with great caution.

On the other hand, some commentators have argued that the CCR groups in parishes and dioceses were largely left without church guidance. Only a few priests and religious involved themselves in the CCR movement because not many bishops came out publicly in favour of

\textsuperscript{578} See: Ibid.
\textsuperscript{580} See: Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{581} Many new members would declare at CCR meetings that they would never go back to their old Church (the Catholic Church). As witnessed, some members of CCR would not attend Sunday mass; instead they would only wait for their CCR Sunday afternoon meetings. The leadership of CCR at Mjimwema in the Archdiocese of Songea informed me that one of their great tasks was to accompany well the entrants so that they may come to distinguish between CCR and an independent charismatic Church (interview with Mjimwema CCR leaders at Mjimwema Parish, on October 8, 2006).
\textsuperscript{582} Informant: Father I. Sanga and Father J. Ndunguru. They recounted their experience with members of CCR at pilgrimage events at the Zonal pilgrimage Shrine in Mbeya Diocese, 2005.
\textsuperscript{583} Informants: Leaders of the CCR in the Archdiocese of Songea, 21th July, 2010.
the movement nor encouraged African priests and religious to do so.\textsuperscript{585} The apparent anti-Catholic attitudes displayed by the movement members were therefore partly attributable to this disjunction.

Fortunately, in the Archdiocese of Songea the CCR movement has now been largely integrated into the parishes and wins a great appeal. Thus the enduring challenge for church leaders and communities is apparently how to help the members of the CCR remain resolutely Catholic in their sensibilities and promote Catholic spirituality.\textsuperscript{586} In fact, in this era of booming Pentecostalism, the CCR movement is not only helping to stir the fires of renewal within the Catholic Church, but constitutes a bridge for dialogue between the Catholic Church and Protestant Pentecostalism.

**2.8 Conclusion**

The foregoing discussions on Pentecostalism in Tanzania lead us to the following affirmations: first, the emergence of the Pentecostal revival movement through the initiative of lay Christians is symptomatic of the fact that African Christians increasingly yearn for the power of the Holy Spirit to enliven their life of faith. The members of the revival movement continue to pose the challenge on the need of African Christians to convert and take their faith seriously. Second, the proliferation of Pentecostalism in Tanzania is due to multi-dimensional factors. This suggests that it is not plausible to ascribe the expansion of Pentecostalism in the country solely to the shortcomings of the historic churches. Hasu sums up well this argument as he discusses the compatibility of Pentecostalism and neoliberal economy in Tanzania:

> Whereas earlier forms of popular Christianity helped African peasants and labour migrants come to terms with the demands of capitalist imperialism, contemporary Pentecostalism responds to another kind of socioeconomic contexts and enables African adherents to come to terms with neoliberalism.\textsuperscript{587}

Hasu’s argument is an implicit call for a due recognition of the invaluable contribution of the historic churches to the growth of Christianity in Tanzania. In fact, no balanced view of the trajectories of Pentecostalism in Tanzania can be proposed without such a due recognition of these churches that have pioneered the work of evangelization and furthered it. But on the other hand, there should be a frank admission on the part of the historic churches that the Pentecostal churches have something good to offer. Moreover, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement which has been classified under Pentecostalism has been well integrated


\textsuperscript{586} See: Edwin Hernandez, Rebecca Burwell, Jeffrey Smith, in: Steven Boguslawski and Ralph Martin (eds.), op.cit., 122.

\textsuperscript{587} Päivi Hasu, “Neo-Pentecostalism in Tanzania,” 225.
in the pastoral system of some dioceses in Tanzania. The movement has now won a great appeal in many Catholics, presenting itself as an effective instrument of evangelization and a retention mechanism against Pentecostal Protestantism.

We are now in a position to turn to Chapter Three and investigate the issue of the Prosperity Gospel.
CHAPTER THREE

THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL AND ITS ADOPTION IN TANZANIA

3.0 Introduction

This chapter turns our attention to the Prosperity Gospel. It will first define it and identify its specific components. Secondly, it will briefly trace its history from its origins in the USA to its subsequent adoption in some countries of Africa and eventually in Tanzania. This chapter unveils some salient features of the Prosperity Gospel that will help us in the process of assessing its impact on current African Christianity and African society at large.

3.1 Definitions of the Prosperity Gospel

The phenomenon called the “Prosperity Gospel” or “the Gospel of Prosperity” has attracted special attention among scholars and commentators of African Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity.\(^588\) This doctrine is, however, not a monolithic theological system; rather, it comprises various brands. Thus any attempt to define it will inevitably entail a risk of distorting and oversimplifying it.\(^589\) In order to minimise such risk, this section presents the definition of the Prosperity Gospel from two various sources, namely, from an encyclopedia and from Paul Gifford, who is a scholar of African Christianity.

According to The Encyclopedia of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity, the Prosperity Gospel can be defined as:

Christian worldviews that emphasize an earthly life of health, wealth, and happiness as the divine, inalienable right of all who have faith in God and live in obedience to His commands. Here we must distinguish prosperity theology, as such, from a “Biblical theology of prosperity.” The former highlights the benefits of God’s blessings and details how to obtain them; the latter stresses the responsibilities of God’s blessings and outlines how to administrate them.\(^590\)

Paul Gifford on his part articulates the Prosperity Gospel as follows:

According to the faith gospel, God has met all the needs of human beings in the suffering and death of Christ and every Christian should now share the victory of Christ over sin, sickness and poverty. A believer has a right to the blessings of health and wealth won by Christ and he/she can obtain these blessings merely by a positive confession of faith.\(^591\)

Both definitions demonstrate the Prosperity Gospel teaching that a faithful Christian must become materially prosperous. The labels Prosperity Gospel, The Gospel of Prosperity, Name-it-and-claim-it, and Blab-it-and-grab-it are given to this theological teaching by its

\(^588\) See: Gerrie ter Haar, op.cit, 36.
\(^589\) See: Stanley M. Burgess (ed.), op.cit. 393.
\(^591\) Paul Gifford, African Christianity, 62.
critics. Its proponents prefer to refer to it by the following labels: the Holistic Gospel, the Health and Wealth Gospel, the Word of Faith, the Health and Wealth Movement, and Faith-Formula. There are various other designations which are assigned to this doctrine by scholars of religion and mission. They include the Theology of Prosperity, the Gospel of Sowing and Reaping, Seed Faith, the Gospel of Abundance, Positive Confession, the Faith Message, the Prosperity Creed, and so on. In this work, the designations Prosperity Gospel and the Gospel of Prosperity will be most frequently employed since they are most widely used in scholarship. Moreover, the expressions Prosperity Gospel churches or the Prosperity Gospel denominations will be preferred when we refer to the new religious movements that advocate the Prosperity Theology.

3.2 Specific Areas of the Prosperity Gospel

The Prosperity Gospel preachers focus on four specific areas, namely: material prosperity, divine healing, “sowing seeds of prosperity,” and ‘positive confession.’

3.2.1 Material Prosperity

There is much emphasis on material success through spiritual empowerment. Getting rich is seen as God’s will and an outward manifestation of his blessings, while poverty is outside of his divine providence. Accordingly, Christians should endeavour to be healed completely from poverty since it is a kind of disease that is attributed to the work of the devil, and hence inimical to productivity. Thus prosperity, particularly in terms of financial assets such as personal and business success, are visible testimony of God’s favour on a faithful believer. It is insisted that all what one needs is to have faith in God through Jesus Christ and blessings will inevitably follow. This implies that wealth can be predetermined or granted in return for the effective prayer or religious merit of the believer. The Prosperity Gospel preachers cite several scriptural texts to proof-text their doctrine. Deuteronomy 8:18ff, for example, is often

595 See: Stanley M. Burgess (ed.), op.cit., 393.
597 Maureen H. O’Connell, Compassion: Loving Our Neighbour in an Age of Globalization (Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books, 2009), 27.
598 As proof-text for this the quote for example 3 John 2: “Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.”
599 Peter B. Clarke (ed.), op.cit., 453.
quoted to buttress the argument that God gives one the power to get wealth. Similarly, Malachi 3:10ff is often used to stress that God gives enormous blessings to those who tithe. The prosperity preachers also read a material literalism in Jesus’ proclamation in John 10:10: “I come that you might have life and have it in abundance.” For the prosperity preachers, God gives abundant life characterized by wealth. Even Jesus’ words in Matthew 9:37: “The harvest is rich but the labourers are few...,” are understood by some of them as a call to harvest souls, money, material things (i.e. cars, houses), as well as influence and power. Another frequently quoted biblical text is Genesis 13:2. Here Abraham is depicted as being blessed by God with riches: cattle, sheep, and gold. In this reference the preachers point out in particular that Abraham was willing to pay tithes to Melchizedek. His faithful tithing guaranteed his material blessings from God. In Galatians 3:14 the Apostle Paul says that “the blessing of Abraham” has come to the Gentiles. The prosperity preachers then conclude that God’s promised generosity as demonstrated with Abraham extends to every believing Christian on earth today. The rhetoric is that just as the covenant between God and Abraham “was a legal contract, so is the promise part of a spiritual contract. Each believer has the ability to access it, claim it, and possess it.”

3.2.2 Prayer Healing

The Prosperity Gospel explains prosperity in terms of health as well. Being ill, like being poor, is attributed to the work of the devil; it is associated with demonic possession. Prayer healing or faith healing is therefore an integral part of the theology and praxis of the Prosperity Gospel churches. According to Andrew Chestnut, “the dialectic between faith healing and illness in the conversion process is key to understanding Pentecostalism’s remarkable success among the poor.” This involves ministries of deliverance in which healing prayers and exorcism rites are performed for the ill and demonically possessed members.

3.2.3 “Sowing Seeds” of Prosperity

Getting rich or being healed of diseases through the Prosperity Gospel is not without conditions. Members are assured of their right to the blessings of health and wealth but these

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601 Maureen H. O’Connell, op.cit., 27.
602 See: Lovemore Togarasei, op.cit., 339.
603 See: Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 255.
604 Ibid.
605 See: Lovemore Togarasei, op.cit., 341.
blessings are obtainable through the ‘sowing of seeds’ of prosperity. In 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 we read that one has to sow generously in order to reap generously. The Prosperity Gospel preachers adopt this analogy of sowing and reaping to emphasize faithful and generous payments of tithes and offerings. Giving to the church is equated to giving God. As such, believers are exhorted to tithe faithfully and to give their offerings lavishly to the church before expecting to “harvest” blessings from God. It is emphasized: “the more you donate, the richer will be your material reward from God.” Church members who are eager to make financial and health breakthroughs as counter-gift from God donate huge sums of money. Consequently, the churches own fat coffers enabling their founders to live lavish lifestyles.

### 3.2.4 Positive Confession of Faith

“Positive confession of faith” is also emphasized as a necessary condition for claiming the blessings of health and wealth from God. Positive confession of faith is the belief that what you say is what you get. It is argued that true faith is not a mere belief; rather it is “acting on the word, speaking into reality what does not exist, and dreaming and envisioning the desired goal.” Faith, it is maintained, begins with desire and when it is confessed then it is substantiated. The “spoken word has power to bring desire into space-time existence.” This assumption on the authority of the spoken word is drawn partly from the doctrine developed from Romans 10:8 which says that “whatever is spoken by faith can address and have an influence on all situations.” Thus, according to the proponents of the Prosperity Gospel, faith is a creative force that Christians can use to shape our world. They contend that God also created this world and universe of ours through his "faith"! Faith is also the key that opens the door to prosperity. Faith in this sense does not necessarily entail the admission of one’s sin. Rather, it merely means that one makes an assertion about having the right to divine beneficence which gives him or her prosperity. According to this doctrine, the “actualizing power of the Word-Faith is a spiritual law which functions independently

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608 See: Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 257.

609 Hans Gasper, Joachim Müller, Friederike Valentin, op.cit., 360.

610 See: Lovemore Togarasei, op.cit., 341.

611 Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 255.


613 Ibid., 395.

614 Peter B. Clarke (ed.), op.cit., 454.

615 See: Ibid.


from the Lawgiver’s will and the practitioner’s morality.” The only condition is to abide by this spiritual principle of positive confession of faith, even if inadvertently. In the same vein, it is held that faith can shape prayers suitably in accordance with the desired type of prosperity. Hence, prayers of any kind “are only efficacious when used appropriately to access the blessings once promised to Abraham.”

3.3 The Epicentre of the Prosperity Gospel in USA

The origins of the Prosperity Gospel are attributed to Kenneth Hagin (1917-2003) of Tulsa, Oklahoma. He served as a Baptist preacher before becoming a pastor with the Pentecostal Assemblies of God. He is said to have received a revelation in 1934 on the text of Matthew 23:11ff. Hagin’s teaching stressed that “prayer for health and wealth was infallibly answered.” For him, not to afford a luxury car is a sign that one has not understood the Gospel. In 1974 he founded his own Bible Training Centre; thereafter his Gospel of Prosperity began to flourish.

The global spread of the Gospel of Prosperity is mainly attributed to Pentecostal evangelists. Famous among them was Pat Robertson (1930 --). In his video teachings, Secrets of Financial Prosperity, for instance, he reveals what he considers the essential keys to the life that God blesses. He also speaks of tips and strategies that one can use to “get out of debt, earn supplemental income, build a safe retirement, invest profitably, learn effective money-management, acquire wealth, and develop an attitude toward wealth that will honour God.”

The Prosperity Theology was later adopted in other continents. Today it is espoused and preached by many Pentecostal and Charismatic churches and Bible schools all over the world, including Africa, Latin America, South Korea as well as Western and Eastern Europe.

Its global outreach is seen as the global spread of American Christian fundamentalism. Brouwer, Gifford, and Rose have noted the predominance of the American gospel in the other continents and commented as follows:

When believers enter a church in Africa, Asia or Latin America, they participate in a form of worship that can be found in Memphis or Portland or New York City. Perhaps it will be

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619 Ibid.
620 Ogbo Kalu, op.cit., 255.
622 Ibid.
623 Stanley M. Burgess (ed.), op.cit., 393.
624 See: Peter B. Clarke (ed.), op.cit., 455.
Pentecostal, or Southern Baptist, or a ubiquitous charismatic product marketed by Bible schools in places such as Tulsa and Pasadena.625

The three scholars have described American Christian fundamentalism as a movement in which the universalizing of the faith is “intertwined with the homogenizing influences of consumerism, mass communication, and production.”626 Evidently, the global spread of the Gospel of Prosperity goes hand in hand with consumerism, and the use of modern media of mass communications. The global spread of the Prosperity Gospel is also perceived to be part and parcel of American global expansionism. Other expressions of this expansionism include McDonald’s Restaurants, American Films and Music, and so on.627 Arguably, the Prosperity Gospel is one way through which the American culture of conspicuous consumption is touted globally. Soong-Chan Rah has made the following observation with regard to the Prosperity Gospel in Africa: “the worst brand of African prosperity teaching is, perhaps unsurprisingly an American export.”628 What is insisted here is the negative impact this gospel has on the life of Africans. The American materialistic treadmill has been described by some as a kind of “clinical mania in which the craving for material rewards in an economy of superabundance is a fatal addiction for which there is no known cure.”629 It has a “pervasive influence upon the American people (exerting) a profound effect upon the character of the individual members of society.”630

A vital question to pose is why the Prosperity Gospel appears to win a global appeal. Brouwer, Gifford, and Rose suggest some of the reasons when they note:

The Protestants disseminate beliefs that can comfort middle-class businessmen at a prayer breakfast in Rio de Janeiro and inspire the poorest of the world’s would be consumers at a Bonnke crusade in Lagos. They proclaim, in a multitude of languages, new kinds of Christian powers and entitlements, such as those enumerated by Kenneth Copeland’s “Voice of Victor,” from Fort Worth, Texas: ‘You are entitled to reign in life like a king…there are certain rights, certain liberties which you have as a son of God…you have the right to use each of the things God has.’631

Significantly, the factors that constitute the attraction of this doctrine are global as well as local. In the case of Africa, for instance, the doctrine has some points of convergence with the African worldview. This is subject will be delved into in subsequent chapters.

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626 Ibid., 3.
627 See: Jehu Hanciles, op.cit. 50f.
628 Soong-Chan Rah, The Next Evangelicalism: Releasing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity (Downers Grove, Illinois, Intervarsity Press, 2009), 133.
630 Ibid.
631 Steve Brouwer, op.cit., 3.
3.4 Antecedents of the Prosperity Gospel

The antecedents of the Prosperity Gospel are communities of bourgeois Christianity with links to several distinctively American Christian traditions. Bourgeois Christianity is a kind of Christian praxis that endorses a “moral therapeutic deism.” It portrays God as wanting people to be “good, nice, and fair to each other,” and happiness and feeling good about oneself as the central goal of life.632 O’Connell maintains that

“American bourgeois Christianity promotes individualism, perpetuates materialism, and tolerates disengaged apathy. As a result of these factors, we are more willing to believe in peace than to live peacefully, to believe in equality more than to treat others equally, to believe in promises of abundance more than to work to create abundance for all, to believe in a friendly divine benefactor interested in our well-being more than to concern ourselves with justice for others.”633

Two American traditions of bourgeois Christianity will be briefly examined here, namely, the Social Gospel Movement and the celebrity status of evangelical preachers.634 However, Russell Conwell’s work “Acres of Diamonds” is also worth discussing here because of its prosperity-oriented rhetoric.

3.4.1 The Social Gospel Movement

The key figure in the Social Gospel Movement in the USA was Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918), who was a Christian theologian and Baptist minister. He rejected the injustice and economic inequalities prevalent at his time as a result of capitalist industrialization. He first preached his Social Gospel in the slums of New York City in the late nineteenth century, challenging American Christians to show in real life the inherent connection between the Gospel and the lived reality of the poor.635 For Rauschenbusch, God himself loves the poor since he is a Holy Comforter rather than a punitive, hierarchical, distant monarch. God is a nurturant spiritual being who is both transcendent and immanent. With respect to his transcendence, God “reflects the transcendent principles of love, light, justice as well as mystical solidarity.” But with respect to his immanence, there dwells within each individual his “divine light that illuminates the way to spiritual growth.”636 Accordingly, all forms of injustice stem mainly from collective sources related to the “Kingdom of Evil”. That kingdom is embodied in coercive political power, militarism, economic exploitation, inequality, graft,

632 See: Maureen H. O’Connell, op.cit., 27.
633 Ibid., 28.
634 See: Ibid., 27.
635 See: Ibid.
corruption, religious dogmatism, bigotry, and upper-class humiliation of the marginals.\textsuperscript{637} The Social Gospel Movement therefore somehow paved the way to the emphasis that God wills the material prosperity of his people, not their poverty.

\subsection*{3.4.2 Celebrity Status of Evangelical Preachers}

A celebrity is someone who is famous especially in areas of entertainment such as film, music, writing, and sport and commands a great degree of public fascination and influence in day-to-day media.\textsuperscript{638} In the USA some evangelical preachers have become celebrities through their works that focused on prosperity. Some have published best-sellers such as \textit{The Purpose-Driven Life; Before You Do: Making Good Decisions you Won’t Regret}; and \textit{The Prayer of Jabez: Breaking through to the Blessed Life}. All these works emphasize that the practice of the Christian faith should lead to material prosperity here and now. Because of the celebrity status the works have spread far and wide beyond their authors’ congregational mega-churches.\textsuperscript{639} This has spearheaded the spread of the Prosperity Gospel.

\subsection*{3.4.3 Russell Conwell’s “Acres of Diamonds”}

\textit{Acres of Diamonds} by Russell Conwell (1843-1925) can also be regarded as an antecedent of the Prosperity Gospel. Conwell is a well-known American Baptist minister. He was the founder and the first president of the Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. \textit{Acres of Diamonds} was his famous lecture that was delivered as a public address over six thousand times.\textsuperscript{640} Its close affinity to the prosperity doctrine is unmistakable. A section of it runs as follows:

\begin{quote}
I say that you ought to get rich, and it is your duty to get rich. How many of my pious brethren say to me, "Do you, a Christian minister, spend your time going up and down the country advising young people to get rich, to get money?" Yes, of course I do. They say, "Isn't that awful! Why don't you preach the gospel instead of preaching about man's making money?" "Because to make money honestly is to preach the gospel." That is the reason. The men who get rich may be the most honest men you find in the community. "Oh," but says some young man here tonight, "I have been told all my life that if a person has money he is very dishonest and dishonorable and mean and contemptible."My friend, that is the reason why you have none, because you have that idea of people. The foundation of your faith is altogether false... \textsuperscript{641}
\end{quote}

It is important to emphasize Conwell’s views against the perception that rich people have got their money through dishonest and dishonourable ways. He contends that

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{637} See: Ibid.
\textsuperscript{639} See: Maureen H. O’Connell, \textit{op.cit.}, 28.
\textsuperscript{640} See: Lee C. Camp, \textit{Mere Discipleship, Radical Christianity in a Rebellious World} (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2008), 181.
\textsuperscript{641} Russell H. Conwell and Robert Shackleton, \textit{Acres of Diamonds} (Harper and Brothers, 1925), 18f.
\end{flushright}
the men who get rich may be the most honest men you find in the community... ninety-eight out of one hundred of the rich men of America are honest. That is why they are rich. That is why they are trusted with money. That is why they carry on great enterprises and find plenty of people to work with them. It is because they are honest men. 642

One can often hear such arguments from Prosperity Gospel preachers, a fact which makes Acres of Diamonds strike a chord with the Prosperity Gospel. Moreover, like current Prosperity Gospel proponents, Conwell was opposed to the tendency of romanticising poverty. But on the other side, he took the extreme position of judging poverty as a consequence of one’s personal sins.

It is an awful mistake of these pious people to think you must be awfully poor in order to be pious...I sympathize with the poor, but the number of poor who are to be sympathized with is very small. To sympathize with a man whom God has punished for his sins... is to do wrong... let us remember there is not a poor person in the United States who was not made poor by his own shortcomings... 643

We can conclude that the Prosperity Gospel had its antecedents in various traditions of American bourgeois Christianity from which it might have drawn some inspiration.

3.5 Prosperity Gospel in African Context

In Africa the Prosperity Gospel first took on numerous guises in West Africa and South Africa. Later it was spread throughout the continent especially from 1980s through evangelistic crusades conducted by American evangelists and African pastors. A paradigmatic example is the Living Faith World Outreach or Winners’ Chapel. This church was founded by Nigerian Pastor David Oyedepo (now bishop) in Lagos in 1983, and sixteen years later it had spread to thirty-eight African countries. 644 “Oyedepo claims that the Lord has told him that Hagin’s ‘baton has been passed’ to him, and he claims he received Copeland’s anointing by sleeping in a bed once slept in by Copeland.” 645 Bishop Oyedepo gears his sermons to the Christian elite and some people call his church the rich people’s church. To him this is an obvious source of pride: “‘we have quite a lot of middle-class followers, a notable number of high class people, and top government officials.’” 646 The motto of his church is “I am a winner” and it is sported on stickers adorning cars and buses that transport the multitudes to his church. Explaining this slogan Bishop Oyedepo contended “it gives you an identity, that I am a winner...it gives you a sense of conviction, that you are heading for something

642 Ibid., 19.
643 Ibid., 21.
646 Karl Maier, This House Has Fallen: Midnight in Nigeria (New York: Public Affairs, 2000), 264.
positive.” He insists that the Lord expects his followers to enjoy material prosperity, and those who embrace the church shall rise from “... the dunghill to the palace.” In 2013 Forbes declared Bishop Oyedepo Africa’s richest pastor, having an estimated net worth of US $ 150 million. He owns four private jets and homes in London and the United States, and a publishing company.

3.5.1 The Fire Convention Conference in Zimbabwe: A Turning Point

The Fire Convention held in 1986 by the famous German preacher, Reinhard Bonnke, in Harare, Zimbabwe, is regarded as one of the events that marked the watershed in the history of the Prosperity Gospel in Africa. The Conference drew 4,000 evangelists from 41 African countries. The famous American Prosperity Gospel proponent Kenneth Copeland conducted one of the key seminars in the main hall of the Conference Centre with the theme: “Evangelism and Prosperity.” This seminar contributed to the anchoring of the Gospel of Prosperity in the African soil. Copeland used the book of Deuteronomy to argue that God wants his people to choose to follow him so that they may prosper. He emphasized that God, on the one hand, promised the people of Israel blessings of material prosperity, success, and abundance of every kind, if they obeyed his voice. Disobedience to the voice of the Lord, on the other hand, would bring upon the people curses of every kind such as sickness, loss and deprivation. For Copeland, God’s offer of choice holds true today as well, but God wants his people to choose obedience to his voice which will lead to their prosperity. Copeland also used the three parables found in chapter four of the Gospel of Mark, which speak about “sowing”. He argued that these parables teach what he termed God’s “law of sowing” or “law of increase” or “law of prospering.” For him, this law is of crucial importance. He accentuated: “in the area of material wealth if you sow, you will reap; if you sow abundantly, you will reap abundantly. But if you sow selfishly, keeping riches for your own comfort, you cannot reap; if you have only a little and cling to that little, you will remain

647 Ibid.
648 Ibid.
650 Ibid., 259.
651 Aylward Shorter and Joseph N. Njiru, op.cit., 34.
653 See: Dt. 29: 9.
654 See: Dt. 28: 3-13.
655 See: Dt. 28: 16-68.
656 Paul Gifford, “Prosperity,” 375.
in your poverty." By sowing Copeland meant giving resources to the Lord or giving to the work of evangelism, noting that “no one who has left house…or lands for my sake and the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time.” He insisted that there is nothing self-seeking in giving in order to receive even more. He contended that even God himself gave his only Son in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

For Copeland, the older Christian traditions are to blame for distorting Christianity to such an extent that the Prosperity Gospel, which is obviously found in the Bible, could not be seen. He held that Christianity took the wrong turn with Francis of Assisi who spread the idea that there was something wrong with wealth and that Jesus was poor. Copeland objects to the teaching that Jesus was poor. It is noteworthy here that, while Francis of Assisi is almost unanimously acclaimed both by Christians and non-Christians for his fidelity in the imitation of Christ and obedience to his teachings, for Copeland he is only a distorter of Christianity. Copeland’s other significant point at the Fire Conference was his insistence that the motive of furthering evangelism justifies any means of obtaining wealth. He maintained that “all the world’s money is under Satan’s control, but must be put to the Lord’s work; however, as long as someone is contributing to evangelism frankly, I don’t care where he gets the money.”

Following the Fire Convention Conference in Zimbabwe, millions of copies of Bonnke’s teachings were spread as far north as East Africa, including Tanzania. This served to propagate the Prosperity Gospel far and wide. Even today Bonnke and his Christ for all Nations (CfaN) ministry continue to spread the Prosperity Gospel in Africa. Bonnke makes many trips and conducts numerous crusades across Africa in which normally hundreds of thousands of attendants are attracted. Night-long sessions of praise, healing and charismatic preaching characterise his crusades. His recurrent theme is Africa shall be saved or Africa is being saved. Bonnke’s preaching is fraught with promises of deliverance, miracles and blessings.

657 Ibid.
658 Mk. 10, 29f.
659 See: Jn.3:16.
660 See: Rom. 8:29.
661 See: Paul Gifford, “Prosperity,” 386.
662 Ibid., 381-382. Such an attitude is rather unfortunate in a context where grand corruption already relegates millions of Africans into poverty. In Tanzania, Churches are urged to be instrumental in fighting against corruption by starting with their own members. There is seen the growing attitude of not caring about the source of the lavish donations the Churches receive from rich and prominent figures. This is so even if these figures may be widely implicated in grand corruption. This point will be further discussed in the course of this study.
Other versions of the Prosperity Gospel flowed into Africa from other places like Southeast Asia, and the West Indies. Africa has also produced famous Prosperity Gospel preachers. Besides David Oyedepo, other key Pentecostal figures of some global renown include Nigerian Benson Idahosa, and Ghanaians Nicholas Duncan-Williams and Mensa Otabil. The prosperity doctrine is however only one aspect of their whole package of ministries. Remarkably, the Prosperity Gospel is now widely practised in Africa. Research findings by the Pew Research Center’s Forum in nineteen Sub-Saharan African countries revealed that more than half of the Christians in most of the surveyed countries believed in the Gospel of Prosperity. In its current trajectory the Prosperity Gospel conveys the impression that it is out to replicate the post-Constantinian Christendom of Europe in terms of wealth. That Church often falls under criticism today on account of its immense wealth. It owned huge properties (land), banks, businesses and created church princes. The Church seemed to be the “outward and visible sign of an aristocracy at prayer.”

3.5.2 Prosperity Gospel and Indigenous African Religiosity

Why does the Prosperity Gospel seem to anchor its roots easily in Africa? Socio-economic problems, beliefs in witchcraft and demonology as well as indigenous African religiosity apparently provide a fertile ground for the flourishing of this teaching. These factors are elaborated in different sections of this work. This section focuses on the role of African indigenous religiosity, specifically the perception of the creative power of the uttered word. Indigenous African religiosity and spirituality cherish the power of a spoken word in shaping social relations. Magesa underlines this fact quite aptly. He points out that in indigenous African religiosity and spirituality the spoken word plays an important role in the understanding of moral behaviour. The word is not only an expression of the spirit, but it is the spirit itself, or the breath. Thus it is the power, the strength or authority. Once the word has been expressed, be it verbally or through gestures or merely by intention, then it can create or destroy. It all depends on the spirit with which the word is uttered, whether it is good spirit or bad spirit. Thus for the Africans, the word which is spoken in harmony or is intended

664 See: Allan Anderson, op.cit., 158.
for harmony, is perceived to bring about blessing. On the contrary, a careless word uttered in anger or one which is ill-intended can have disastrous consequences on community relationships or universal harmony in general. Magesa sees this element of indigenous African religiosity and spirituality as having a deep affinity with the biblical view of the creative power of the Word of God. This is well depicted in the Old Testament texts such as the creation narrative. Here God is presented as creating by the power of his Word. God merely speaks and creatures come into existence. Similarly, in the New Testament Jesus is portrayed as the powerful Word of God who creates, heals, calms the storm, raises the dead to life, drives out demons, and so on. In all these deeds, Jesus speaks the word and it is done.

Despite its affinity with the biblical worldview, the African perception of the creative power of the word appears to be independent of the biblical or any other influences. It is a manifestation of God’s self-revelation in African culture.

Thus I posit that this kind of perception of the creative power of the word makes African Christians prone to become literalist readers of the Bible. The literalist and fundamentalist reading of the Bible that characterise the Gospel of Prosperity may be a case in point. Prosperity Gospel preachers tend to say that “you will be what the Bible says you will be!” Hence, if the Bible says a believer will become rich, then he/she will certainly become rich. Even their thesis of “positive confession of faith” which we have discussed previously concurs with this African perception of the creative power of the spoken word. Notably, some Prosperity Gospel preachers in Tanzania exploit this trust that the African people have on the creative power of the word, namely, using it to line their own pockets.

### 3.5.3 Prosperity Gospel and Literalist Reading of the Bible

The translation of the Bible into African vernacular along with literacy have fostered Bible readership in Africa. Both translation of the Bible into vernacular and literacy are factors that constitute one of the major contributions of Western missionaries to the development of indigenous African Christian spirituality and theologies. Sanneh has aptly articulated the relevance of translation into vernacular. He has argued that “Christianity is a

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668 See: Gen. 1: 26 and 2:18.
670 See: Mt. 8:5-13; Mk. 3: 1-6; Lk. 6:6-11.
671 See: Mk.4:35-41.
672 See: Jn.11: 43-44.
673 See: Mt.8:28-34.
675 See: Jenkins, Philip, The New Faces of Christianity, Believing the Bible in the Global South (New York: Oxford University Press, 20069, 35.
676 See: Ambrose Moyo, op.cit., 314.
translated religion without a revealed language... Translation is the Church’s birthmark and its missionary benchmark. Without it the Church would be “unrecognizable or unsustainable.”

Sanneh has maintained that translation led to a cultural renewal that encouraged Africans to view Christianity in favourable light. It also facilitated the formation of African Initiated Churches, since Africans could now read and interpret the Bible by themselves and from the perspective of their own worldview. The fruits of the translation work are also seen in that “today, at least one book of the Bible is available for approximately 650 of Africa’s 2,000 languages and 150 languages have complete Bibles.” It must be added that many African Christians today read the Bible and in some cases it may be the only book available in the family.

Prosperity Gospel preachers seem to prefer Old Testament books to New Testament ones. The popularity of the former is due to their narrative aspects. There are many narratives and incidents in the Old Testament that African Christians in general find to bear resonance with their own worldview. Africans read their own life stories in them. As some commentators have noted, the agricultural environment of the Hebrews makes Africans feel they belong to the biblical world and that the Bible is theirs. For example, the current widespread land-grabbing practices in Tanzania which are perpetrated by the rich and the powerful against the poor replicate the affair at Naboth’s vineyard in the Old Testament. Moreover, the fragility of life in Old Testament times reflects the life of many Africans today who experience the austerity of poverty, hunger, war, refugees, the plight of women and children and so on. Issues depicted in the Old Testament in relation to family solidarity and extended family system and the communal character of life have also a close affinity to African social milieu. Africans also read their own social system in the struggles of biblical figures like

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678 See: Lamin Sanneh, op.cit., 18.
Joseph, Moses, Gideon, Samuel, Saul and many others who attained greatness. They identify some of them with their current leaders who take sides with the poor amid corruption and mass exploitation. Some biblical personages like Abraham are extolled as examples of faith to be emulated in everyday living, just as the Letter to the Hebrews presents them.\(^{684}\) For the Prosperity Gospel preachers, Abraham is also an example of faithful tithing.

Admittedly the affinity between the biblical worldview and the African worldview to some extent contributes to the literalist reading of the Bible among Prosperity Gospel proponents. In their view, the Bible has to address their daily needs, problems and concerns. It is believed to have power to combat evil and sickness. It is perceived to replace even the arsenal of oracles of traditional healers. Now there is no need to consult healers, instead the pastor will use the Bible to perform faith healing. That power is found not only in the biblical texts but also in the physical object of the Bible itself. Notably, the Prosperity Gospel members tend to respond uncritically to the Old Testament narratives. They often downplay the importance of hermeneutical approaches to the Bible which provide a Bible reader with expansive understanding of the Bible, its background and meaning.\(^{685}\) They privilege a selective reading of the Bible, underlining passages that confirm familiar ideas and prejudices, but neglect the context of the passages.\(^{686}\) They draw on themes and passages that are relevant to their teaching on material prosperity and that will help endorse their challenge of the \textit{status quo}.

3.5.4 Tanzanian Prosperity Gospel Churches

Some of the most famous Prosperity Gospel churches in Tanzania include the Mikocheni B Assemblies of God under the leadership of Pastor Dr. Gertrude Rwakatare, the Full Gospel Bible Fellowship Church led by Bishop Zachary Kakobe, the Efatha Church led by Pastor Josephat Mwingira, and the Mana Ministry led by Christopher Mwakasege. This is an interdenominational charismatic ministry operating within established denominations particularly the Lutheran and New Life in Christ Church.

It is widely believed that Pentecostalism in general and the Gospel of Prosperity in particular, flourish partly because of the socio-economic concerns of the people. The history of Tanzania underpins this argument. In the late 1960s and early 1970s Pentecostal churches, such as the US-based Assemblies of God and the ELIM Pentecostal Church, then newly introduced in Tanzania, attracted many followers. Their popularity was believed to result

\(^{684}\) See: Heb. 11.


\(^{686}\) See: Philip Jenkins, \textit{The New Faces of Christianity}, 35.
from their flexible reaction to the “spiritual vacuum” created by the countrywide socialist Villagisation Programme.687 These churches managed to establish their branches in the artificially created *Ujamaa* settlements where the established (mainline) churches, including the Catholic Church, were reluctant to go. The Pentecostal churches thus mediated the social and economic tensions that were arising in the context of *Ujamaa* policies. In the mid 1980s the socialist regime was abandoned and Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) dictated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank were adopted. SAP put in place the liberalisation of the Tanzanian economy. It was again the Pentecostal churches that gained from the negative socio-economic effects of the programmes and the simultaneous challenges and dilemmas emanating from globalisation.688

The subsequent proliferation of the Prosperity Gospel churches is associated with the social, economic, and spiritual uncertainties that continue to shape the lives of the people in the post-neoliberal period. It is a period characterised by growing inequalities and social insecurities. Since the Prosperity Gospel ministries that operate under such circumstances promise poverty alleviation and faith healing, they consequently draw a great popular appeal. In these ministries the people hope to be provided with the means of coming to terms with the prevailing socio-economic situation.689

**3.5.4.1 Salient Features**

On account of their multiplicity and nuances, it is hard to classify the Prosperity Gospel churches in Tanzania into neat categories. However, basing on growing literature on the new religious movements, we can attempt to identify the following salient features. First, most of the founders of the Prosperity Gospel churches have a secular professional background. Secondly, the founders’ biographies manifest an upward socio-economic mobility. Thirdly, both rich and poor members of the churches anticipate blessings in terms of material prosperity and healing. And fourthly, the public role of the Prosperity Gospel churches is minimal. As far as their professional backgrounds are concerned, most of the Prosperity Gospel church leaders have been civil servants or have served in public offices that are related to economic matters or community-based services. Pastor Rwakatare, for example, worked as personnel manager for the port authority in Dar es Salaam. Later she did her doctoral studies in community development and Christian education.690 Bishop Zachary Kakobe previously

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688 See: Ibid., 96f.
689 See: Ibid.
690 See: Ibid.,98.
worked as a meteorologist and musician in a local dance orchestra.\footnote{See: Hansjörg Dilger, “Healing the Wounds of Modernity: Salvation, Community and Care in a Neo-Pentecostal Church in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania,” in: \textit{Journal of Religion in Africa}, Vol. 37 (2007), 65f.} Christopher Mwakasege, being an economist, has worked as Executive Director of Tanzania Social and Economic Trust (TASOET), a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). He has also served as advisor in matters related to the national external debt crisis and debt reduction strategy under president’s office and as member of the Government Public Expenditure Review Working Group representing NGOs.\footnote{See: Päivi Hasu, “World Bank and Heavenly Bank,” in: op.cit., 682.} Some of the church leaders continue to exercise their secular profession alongside their pastoral ministry. Thus Pastor Rwakatare, for instance, guides services at her church every Sunday, while carrying out her duties as Member of Parliament, a post to which she was appointed by President Jakaya M. Kikwete in 2007. Apart from that, she supervises her community-based projects, i.e. the St. Mary’s school group, an orphanage centre and so on. Mwakasege similarly exercises his pastoral ministry while simultaneously functioning as an economist in the government and an activist in a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). The latter functions enable him to travel regularly to international meetings with people from international institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank.

This professional background distinguishes the Prosperity Gospel Church leaders from most Catholic priests in Tanzania who usually pursue their formation as religious leaders from their youth and have no secular profession background. Of course, there are some exceptions among the Catholic Priests. For the Prosperity Gospel Church leaders, their secular professional background enables them to sustain social networks and to mobilise local and international resources for their pastoral ministry. In expounding their Prosperity Gospel doctrine some apply their secular knowledge, for instance, the rhetoric of the market economy. The biographies of most of the Prosperity Gospel Church leaders vividly portray an upward socio-economic mobility. Their status before taking up their pastoral ministry is often in sharp contrast to their status afterwards. They now belong to the affluent middle or upper class members of the Tanzanian society. To some of their followers their upward socio-economic trajectory offers enough testimony to the effectiveness of the Prosperity Gospel. Their poor church members thereby feel encouraged to continue hoping for their anticipated miracles of financial breakthrough. With regard to membership, the Prosperity Gospel churches boast some of the richest citizens and prominent members of the country. This is premised on several factors. One factor is that the Prosperity Gospel has broadened the notion
of being “born-again” to include the possibility of material enhancement in everyday life. This factor makes the rich feel at home in these churches since being rich, even amid poor brothers and sisters, is not seen a scandal. Here the rich find a departure from the teaching of the older, historic churches that tend to pronounce blessings on the poor. Thus for instance, the congregation of Mikocheni B Assemblies of God Church in Dar es Salaam which places high emphasis on material wealth is regarded by the general public as “the church of the rich” (kanisa la matajiri). Many of the members in this church are women belonging to wealthy middle and upper classes in Dar es Salaam. Moreover, the entrepreneurship teachings in the churches constitute an attractive atmosphere for rich business people. Business matters are dealt with in the ambiance of the church and material prosperity is guaranteed by positive faith in Jesus Christ rather than by the employment of the occult. But again, quite obviously, the Prosperity Gospel churches have many rich and prominent members because they are largely an urban phenomenon. In Tanzania, the majority of the middle class and the young educated elite live in urban areas, while the majority of poor and those with low education levels live in rural areas.

3.5.4.2 Politically Mute

The Prosperity Gospel churches in Tanzania seem to play a minimal role in the public sphere. The expression “public sphere” in this context delineates the sociospatial arena where the excellence of the public good is exposed. According to the German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas, public sphere in the Greek polis was constituted in discussion (lexis), which could involve consultation and sitting in the court of law, and in common action. “Public sphere” in this sense means a social, economic and political space where individual people, institutions and disciplines interrelate for a political action. When we apply this concept of public sphere to the role of churches we notice that the Prosperity Gospel churches in Tanzania are not lagging behind in terms of “going public”, that is, being open to all, being known and accessible. They take advantage of the modern media of social communications, particularly radio, television, film and newspapers, to flood the public sphere with images and sounds devoted to “spiritual warfare” and their promises of financial

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breakthroughs. But in terms of a common political action for the sake of the public good, their participation is minimal. They are generally mute before corrupt systems, unless the interests of their own denominations are jeopardized. For them, prayers and preaching the gospel are the only antidotes to the problems of irresponsibility, corruption and other social maladies that are eating deep into the Tanzanian social fabric. It is due to such non-involvement that some have described these churches as politically irrelevant. Was Jesus Christ in his society also politically irrelevant? The gospels demonstrate that Jesus prayed hard and preached the Good News. He was the praying and preaching pastor par excellence. And yet Jesus did not desist from being a vocal critic to the corrupt system of his day. His Sermon on the Mount epitomises this fact.

The Sermon on the Mount begins with a dizzying commentary designed to turn upside down the political and social world of the Roman Empire of Caesar Augustus and of the Jewish religious elite of Judea and Jerusalem... it is also the opening move of a more drastic and fundamental reassessment of political and social affairs, applying not only to its own time but also to all future times, down to our day.

What makes some of the church leaders mute is partly their own entanglement with politics as partisan members. In fact, political partisanship may often lead church pastors to compromise the prophetic message in the event of the oppression of the poor by their own political parties.

3.5.4.3 Patterns of Poverty Alleviation

Each of the Prosperity Gospel churches in Tanzania carries out some kind of poverty alleviation initiative. Each mobilises local and international resources for the support of its initiative and each has its different approach to poverty alleviation. According to the praxis of the churches three patterns of poverty alleviation can be identified: the institutionalization of social services, the denomination-centred social services provision, and the spiritual revival pattern of poverty alleviation. The first category, i.e. the Prosperity Gospel churches that have institutionalized their social services, is exemplified by the Mikocheni B Assemblies of God Church. Churches that ascribe to this mode have started to institutionalise their services by establishing schools, orphanage centre and other community-based projects. For the building of the schools Rwakatare received financial support from a US organization called Christian Working Woman. The aim of the organization is “to equip and encourage Christians in the

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697 See: Lovemore Togarasei, op.cit., 341.
698 See for example the Gospel of Luke.
699 See the Gospel of Matthew chapters 5 to 7.
work place to love Christ more and to demonstrate this love by applying biblical principles to their lives.\textsuperscript{702} Funding for the establishment of the orphanage centre was largely from contributions of church members. Rwakatate regards her social engagements as primarily an effective means of proselytisation.\textsuperscript{703} The second category comprises Prosperity Gospel churches whose mode of poverty alleviation is denomination-centred, i.e. their initiatives towards poverty alleviation have remained integrated largely into the church’s organizational structure. The Full Gospel Bible Fellowship Church epitomizes this category. The churches embracing this mode have not established formalized community-based projects; rather they concentrate mostly on preaching and doing missionary work within Tanzania and beyond. The monetary and other material resources of the church, mainly from tithes and generous donations of church members, are channelled into missionary activities including the construction of churches, paying for airtime for the church’s own television programme and the buying of bicycles for rural pastors.\textsuperscript{704} Due to that, Kakobe is strict in matters pertaining to church stewardship in tithing. At times he must exert pressure to make the payment of tithes forthcoming. Once he threatened to terminate the church membership of those who did not tithe, calling them thieves who did not deserve to be in his church because they were robbing God: “Go, I don’t want to see you absolutely…One who does not tithe will be cursed…You know that we need money because our church has become too small…We want to demolish it and on this ground construct a six to seven-storey building capable of accommodating thirty-thousand people.”\textsuperscript{705} Such an urge suggests that even in the Prosperity Gospel churches the voluntary payment of tithes may sometime not be an easy process.

The package of salvation as understood in the FGBFC entails, on the one hand, the possibility of becoming a morally integral person. But on the other hand, it involves the promise of material success and progress for those living in poverty. As a veritable path towards poverty alleviation the church stresses healing prayers and the promotion of the idea of “spiritual family” within its organizational structures. Healing prayers coupled with ongoing engagement in church activities are emphasized as a means to ward off the influence of malignant forces that cause illnesses and poverty. The “spiritual family” on the other hand, consists of small home churches with twenty to thirty members each. The members build mutual support networks, which react flexibly and quickly to their needs. They have imposed for themselves “duties” and “shifts” of taking care or nursing a member in case of a serious

\textsuperscript{702} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{703} See: Ibid.
\textsuperscript{704} See: Ibid., 100.
\textsuperscript{705} Msemakweli, 8\textsuperscript{th} August, 2007 (translation from Swahili, mine).
illness. In the context of diseases such as AIDS coupled with Tanzania’s fragmented health system, such church-based mutual support systems are effective and attractive to the people living in poverty. With the idea of the “spiritual family” the FGBFC aims at building a new moral community in the country and beyond. However, some Tanzanians have expressed concern over churches that do not establish hospitals and other social services for the wider society but confine such services solely within denominational membership.

The third pattern of poverty alleviation among the Prosperity Gospel denominations is what we might term “the spiritual revival pattern”. Mwakasege’s Mana Ministry exemplifies this approach. Churches belonging to this category tend to associate poverty alleviation with spiritual revival. For Mwakasege, wealth precedes spiritual revival. Using the creation narrative in the Book of Genesis, he maintains that God created all the riches for human beings on earth. He also argues that “the riches have to be there first in order for the evangelical services to function and to be paid for.” He claims to have been told by God that economic changes in Tanzania would go together with spiritual changes: “I will go to Tanzania to bring revival (uamsho) that you have not yet seen. But before I bring the anointment (upako) of revival I will bring the anointment of wealth (utajiri) to my people so that they will be able to pay the cost of the forthcoming revival.” The leading motto of his charismatic ministry is “Feed my sheep.” It is a message taken from the Gospel of John, and is perceived to reflect the spiritual and material needs of Tanzanians. Mwakasege insists that, by virtue of Jesus Christ’s death on the cross, born-again Christians are justified to claim that they deserve to become healthy and wealthy in their earthly life. For him, it is not God’s will that people are poor. “God created man [sic.] as his own image; God is not poor and therefore he did not create man [sic.] as the image of the poor...” Mwakasege maintains that poverty alleviation comes through a change of mindset in accordance with the current demands of the market economy and giving voluntary offerings to God. In his outdoor seminars, radio, television and homepage messages, he stresses the responsibility and the right

707 See for example readers’ comments to article “Parokia yakusanya sh 65 milioni,” in: Mwananchi (25 July 2011), URL: http://www.mwananchi.co.tz/biashara/13-biashara-za-kitaifa/13937-parokia-yakusanya-sh65-milioni, accessed 20th October, 2011). Readers of this article appreciate the social services which are generally rendered by established churches such as the African Inland Church, the Anglican Church, the Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, and the Seventh Day Adventist Church in terms of hospitals, schools, hospices and so on. At the same time they express the public desire to see that churches like the FGBFC also deliver social services for the wider society instead of concentrating their services on church members alone.
709 Ibid.
710 See: Jn. 21:17.
712 Ibid., 684.
of Christians to give offerings to God. He stresses that Christians have the responsibility to
give to God his due share in order to receive a hundred-fold from him but also for the purpose
of spreading the gospel. Christians have also the right to give contributions to God at
Mwakasege’s own church crusades in order to receive hundred-fold. For that matter,
Mwakasege says that he accepts any money offered him even by a poor widow, since the
miracle awaiting that person lies in giving the last money to God through him (Mwakasege).
If he, Mwakasege, does not accept the offering, he might hinder the possibility of miracle for
the poor donor.  

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has briefly presented the evolvement of the Gospel of Prosperity in USA and
its subsequent adoption in Africa in general and in Tanzania in particular. Significantly,
Reinhard Bonnke, Kenneth Copeland and the local African Prosperity Gospel preachers
emphasize conspicuous consumption, the acquiring of abundant riches for the work of
evangelism and individual prosperity. Nevertheless, they never pause to ask about the source
of the abundant money they expect their church members to acquire. They are utterly
uninterested with the issue of interrogating the structural injustice that is the cause of so much
poverty in Africa. In Tanzania some of the Prosperity Gospel churches have institutionalized
their social services. Others follow a spiritual revival pattern of poverty alleviation. This
pattern is more theoretical and fitting for the elite and business people who have access to
resources rather than the poor and the illiterate. Many of the churches continue to maintain an
inward-looking, denomination-centred pattern of social services provision. This pattern
eventually excludes many non-denominational members from the possibility of eradicating
their poverty. With such a stance, the contribution of the Prosperity Gospel in the socio-
economic transformation of the Tanzanian society becomes only modest.

In Chapter Four we shall examine the expressions of the Prosperity Gospel in Songea.
Most of the churches operating in Songea are offshoots of the ones we have surveyed in this
chapter.

713 See: Ibid., 687.
CHAPTER FOUR

EXPRESSIONS OF THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL IN SONGEA

4.0 Introduction

Chapter Three has examined the history of the Prosperity Gospel and its ultimate adoption in the context of Tanzania. Let us now examine its trajectory in the region that is coterminous with the Catholic Archdiocese of Songea. This will be an evaluation based on quantitative and qualitative data gathered from an empirical study conducted in Songea. The analysis underlines two doctrines: the doctrine of the spirit of poverty and the doctrine of talents. These doctrines are integral to the vision of the “this-worldly” salvation embedded in the Prosperity Gospel. The chapter will then explore the avenues of prosperity which the Prosperity Gospel explicates. These avenues constitute the strong points of the Prosperity Gospel. In addition, the chapter will point out the various areas that contribute to the popularity of this teaching as well as expose its shortcomings. Pointedly, the liabilities embedded in the Prosperity Gospel contribute to its failure to bring about a socio-economic transformation in Songea.

The choice of Songea as the locale of our study has been premised on several factors. The first factor is the presence of an overwhelmingly Catholic Population in Songea; the second is the ecclesiological orientation of the Archdiocese of Songea, while the third is the novelty of the Prosperity Gospel in Songea. As to the first factor, the Archdiocese of Songea has experienced extensive evangelization by Benedictine missionaries. This has led to the predominance of Catholic Christianity in this area. Now that the Pentecostal Prosperity Gospel is also flourishing in Songea, it is interesting to investigate its development amid the predominant Catholic population. With regard to the second factor, it is notable that from the early missionary days onwards, evangelization in the Archdiocese of Songea has gone hand-in-glove with the commitment to uplift the indigenous people from conditions of poverty. This commitment is consonant with the Catholic Church’s ecclesiology which is an ecclesiology of integral development. This means, along with the proclamation of the Word of God, the church considerably promotes socio-economic services to the indigenous people. Thus the Catholic Church has advocated a pro-poor ecclesiology that favours a life-affirming social ministry to all people. Today, however, the Catholic Church witnesses a significant switching of its members to the churches that espouse the Prosperity Gospel ethos. Here some questions inevitably arise: why do the Catholic Christians desert their church despite the church’s

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714 See the statistics in Chapter One.
efforts to promote the option for the poor? It is notable that the Prosperity Gospel denominations in Songea do not even run any significant institutionalised social services like schools and hospitals. What then makes these churches appealing to the Catholic members? These questions are provocative and cry for answers. And as to the third factor, i.e. the issue of the novelty of the Prosperity Gospel, it can be said that it was only from the 1990s onwards that this teaching assumed its significant spread in Songea. In my research in Songea, many of the respondents were not even familiar with such modern ecclesiological expressions as “The Prosperity Gospel” or Injili ya Mafanikio as the dub it in Kiswahili language. Yet most of the respondents could identify to me the churches that emphasize this teaching. They could enumerate the churches in the region that emphasize a great deal the praxis of economics (uchumi), entrepreneurship (ujasiriamali), and that privilege sermons of tithing and church donations (mahubiri ya kutoa michango ya zaka na sadaka). This novelty constitutes one areas of attraction of the Prosperity Gospel churches. The novelty of the Prosperity Gospel does not mean, however, that we cannot investigate its influence on the people. Its influence is already measurable. Arguably this investigation has the advantage of tracing the advancement of the Prosperity Gospel in Songea right from its budding stages. In other words, the hermeneutical method of the pastoral circle evaluates the Prosperity Gospel from its early developments. The findings of this study may help future pastoral researchers to continue tracing the trajectory of the Prosperity Gospel in the region, reviewing its impact in the church and society and accordingly proposing further pastoral actions.

4.1 Prosperity Gospel Churches in Songea

Several churches are known to have introduced the Prosperity Gospel in Songea. They are the Evangelistic Assemblies of God, the Redeemed Church, the Full Gospel Bible Fellowship Church (FGBFC), and the Efatha Ministry, to mention but a few of them. The churches often organize regular crusades and deliverance ministries which often include famous preachers from other regions or even from abroad. Evangelism in these churches privileges the use of modern media of social communications. Crusades, deliverance ministries and other important events are broadcast and televised from Dar es Salaam or from local media stations. Channel Ten Television is one of the most famous channels in the country on this regard. Other modern mass media include films recorded on DVD and video cassettes. They are widely watched at home, in entertainment halls, and public transport vehicles. Most of the film productions come from the Nigerian Film industry, Nollywood and from some American televangelists. The Nollywood films in particular are often translated by local Tanzanian
filmmakers into Kiswahili language in order to reach more Tanzanian consumers. On account of their popular appeal, these films seem to be very instrumental in spreading the Prosperity Gospel. Their prime appeal consists in that, on the one hand, they tend to dramatise Africa’s everyday realities of witchcraft, demonology, and occult economies. They portray the Pentecostal pastor, “the anointed man of God”, and the whole Pentecostal movement as being a new Christian force in the society that overcomes the spiritual forces that cause social insecurities. Being an institution of “overcomers”, the Prosperity Gospel churches tout themselves as a substitute for the African traditional healers who so far have been the refuge of the people when confronted with the malevolent influence of spiritual forces. But on the other hand, the agents of the mainline Christianity are depicted in these films as being less powerful to perform this role of ‘overcoming’ malignant forces. The films then serve the purpose of proselytisation. They induce the people with the belief that their socio-economic security will derive from their appropriation of the Prosperity Gospel Christianity. This is the message of the Prosperity Gospel churches in Songea and on account of it these denominations appear to preach a new Christian message, an unprecedented message of hope as it were.

4.2 Evaluation of Research Questionnaire

In the research a total of 400 respondents filled questionnaire forms distributed to them, 200 amongst them were Catholics and 200 non-Catholics. The questionnaire form for Catholic respondents consisted of 32 questions, while that for non-Catholics had 50 questions. This difference owes to the fact that the questionnaire for the non-Catholics targeted more Prosperity Gospel Pentecostals. It was only logical that more questions had to be directed to them in order to uncover the crux of the matter.

4.2.1 Age of Respondents

With regard to age, the respondents ranged between 16 and 72 years. However, the vast majority of Catholic respondents ranged between 50 and 59 years of age. This is because most of the Catholic respondents were selected among members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) movement. And in the research locale, most CCR members were in their 50s. On the part of the non-Catholic respondents, most of them were below 30 years of age. This seems to prove the hypothesis that non-Catholic churches in Songea are relatively younger.
4.2.2 Gender of Respondents

Differences in gender participation in the research were remarkable. Among the Catholic respondents, the number of women was 120, whereas that of men was 80. For the non-Catholic respondents, the number was 100 for either gender. It must be stressed that these results demonstrate the participation of the Christians in this particular quantitative research; they do in no way reflect the faith practices of the individual respondents. Nevertheless, results from the qualitative data suggest that Catholic men in Songea generally lag behind vis-à-vis their non-Catholic counterparts in terms of religious participation.

4.2.3 Knowledge of the Prosperity Gospel

Non-Catholic respondents appeared to be more knowledgeable of the Prosperity Gospel than Catholic ones. For example, question number 26 in the questionnaire for non-Catholics was: “Is the teaching of ‘sowing and reaping’ common in your church?” The results indicate that 98 percent of the non-Catholic respondents said that the Prosperity Gospel was common in their churches of affiliation. For many Pentecostal respondents it was almost a truism to speak of the Gospel of Prosperity since Jesus Christ’s Gospel is nothing but a Gospel of Prosperity.

Table 1. Non-Catholic respondents: Q. 26: Is the teaching of ‘sowing and reaping’ common in your church?

Matters were different with regard to Catholic respondents. First, they were asked if they knew anything about the practice of ‘sowing and reaping’ in the Neo-Pentecostal churches (question number 6). To this question 56 percent of them answered in the positive and 44 percent in the negative. But that 56 percent consisted mostly of the members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement (CCR). Secondly, the Catholic respondents were asked if the
practice of ‘sowing and reaping’ was also common in their own Catholic communities (question number 13). In response, 31 percent of them said that it was common, while 26 percent said it was not, and 43 percent did not know anything about it. Significantly, Catholic laity appeared to be better informed about the Gospel of Prosperity than the clergy. But even among the laity, members of the CCR surpassed the rest of their congregation in the knowledge of the Prosperity Gospel. Admittedly, members of CCR have more social intercourse with Protestant Pentecostals especially during crusades and other evangelistic meetings. On the part of the Catholic clergy, 85 percent of them admitted having no knowledge of the Prosperity Gospel. The 15 percent who admitted knowing it were either linked to CCR groups or lecturers at Peramiho Major Seminary. The ignorance of the clergy suggests that there is little contact with the new religious movements. This research is therefore partly an effort to arouse among the clergy an interest in the emergent religious movements.

4.2.4 Does the Prosperity Gospel Attract Catholics to Pentecostalism?

What possibly attracted Catholics to Neo-Pentecostal churches (question number 4)? In answer to this question the following results emerged: 61 percent of the respondents said that it was the practice of ‘sowing and reaping’, since presumably this teaching offered a believer an opportunity to alleviate poverty. Nonetheless, 88 percent mentioned healing and exorcism as the main point of appeal. This means ultimately, that it is the Gospel of Prosperity that mostly attracts Catholics to the Neo-Pentecostal churches since ‘sowing and reaping,’ healing, and exorcism are all components of it.

![Bar chart](chart.jpg)

**Table 2: Catholic respondents: Q. 4: Factors that attract Catholics to Neo-Pentecostal churches.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociability of members</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Good preaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tangible Assistance</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Teaching of &quot;sowing and Reaping&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other factors</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Healing/Exorcism</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Other major areas which the respondents mentioned as attracting Catholics to Neo-Pentecostalism include good preaching; ecclesial fellowship, and tangible assistance to needy church members. In answer to question 5 some respondents mentioned modernity, the possibility of broadening social networks, and international travelling.

### 4.2.5 Numerical Growth of Neo-Pentecostal Churches

What motives led the non-Catholics to shift to their current churches? (question 7). The most frequently given answer to this question was that believers’ had high expectations of miracles of healing and exorcism performed in their new churches. And the second motive was the practice of “sowing and reaping”. The believers were attracted by the promise that after paying their tithes and giving generous offerings to their denomination they could wait hopefully for the blessings from God as reciprocation. Today most Christian denominations in Songea share many styles of worship and do emphasize the centrality of the Bible. Thus it seems that for a certain denomination to excel, it has to offer more than merely spiritual benefits. Consequently, denominations compete to demonstrate social relevance by promising material security and advancement to their members.

![Table 3: Non-Catholic respondents: Q. 7: What attracted you to join this church?](image)

### 4.2.6 Sharing of Material Blessings

Critics of the Gospel of Prosperity have often pointed out that the teaching encourages wealth accumulation and conspicuous consumption but not the sharing of possessions. Two questions were therefore posed in order to explore this subject: first, whether the prosperity creed exhorted rich church members to share their material blessings with less fortunate
members (question 42), and secondly, whether the teaching encouraged the sharing of material resources with non-congregational members (question 43). To the first question, 11 percent of the respondents answered in the affirmative, and 62 percent answered in the negative, while 27 percent gave no answer. As to the second question, 9 percent said the Prosperity Gospel encouraged sharing with non-church members and 59 percent said it did not, while 32 percent did not know whether it encouraged or not. When asked about the motive for the sharing of possessions with non-church members (question 44), 95.5 percent of the respondents did not answer that question. Those who answered mentioned different motives as follows: 2.5 percent said the motive was purely Christian charity, and 1.5 percent said that the sharing of possessions was a Pentecostal proselytisation mechanism. Moreover, 0.5 percent of the respondents could not tell any motive.

![Pie chart showing responses to question 43]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't know</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Non-Catholics: Q. 43: Whether the Gospel of Prosperity encourages the sharing of wealth with non-members of the church

The question of sharing resources among Prosperity Gospel Pentecostals and their perceivable motive was also posed to Catholics (question 8 and 9). To the first question, 7 percent said that there was sharing; 60 percent denied it, while 33 percent said they did not know anything about this issue. As for the motive for sharing, 0.5 percent said it was purely Christian charity. However, 6 percent said that the offer of material goods or social services to non-Pentecostals frequently attached the condition of conversion to Pentecostalism, but 93.5 percent said they did not know the motive.
4.2.7 Greatest Beneficiaries of the Prosperity Gospel

Manipulation-hypothesis has often permeated the discourses about the Gospel of Prosperity in Africa. It is perceived that the greatest beneficiaries of the Prosperity Gospel are ultimately the preachers. In this study, question 31 was addressed to non-Catholic respondents to find out their views on this assertion. The following results were revealed: respondents who said that the Prosperity Gospel benefitted the pastors more than lay church members were 35 percent, 13 percent denied it and 52 percent said they did not know who benefitted most.

4.2.8 Upward Economic Mobility Hypothesis

The proponents of the Prosperity Gospel have often claimed that this teaching embodies a great potential for poverty alleviation. Consequently, many Christians seem to embrace it with the hope of overcoming their poverty and achieving economic advancement through it. In this study, Catholic respondents were asked if they thought the Gospel of Prosperity really helped Catholic believers improve their economic conditions. Responses were as follows: 15 percent said that the Prosperity Gospel helped Catholic believers improve their financial situation, 10 percent said it did not, while 75 percent said they did not know whether it helped or not. Similarly, non-Catholics were asked whether in their denominations individual members improved their economic conditions through the practice of the Gospel of Prosperity (question 30). The respondents who affirmed that the Prosperity Gospel enabled some denomination members to achieve an upward economic mobility were 25.63 percent, while those who objected were 9.55 percent, and those who said they did not know were 64.82 percent.

4.2.9 Unfulfilled Miraculous Expectations

If a believer does not achieve material success even after tithing faithfully and offering generously to the church, what may be the explanation? This question was posed before non-Catholic respondents (question 33). The response was: 41 percent maintained that the failure was an indication of lack of faith on the part of that believer, and 9.5 percent argued that a Christian who failed to gain success might not have repented a certain sin. 49.5 percent of the respondents said that the unsuccessful church member had probably not worked hard enough. We notice from these results that, on the whole, the majority of the respondents believed that the unfulfilled promise of material prosperity was due to spiritual factors of lack of faith and sin of the individual Christian concerned. It was interesting then to know what the Christians usually did after realizing that the Prosperity Gospel did not bring forth the expected material blessings (question 34). According to the findings, 28 percent of the non-Catholic respondents
maintained that despite economic failure, believers would remain in their church and continue patiently to pray, tithe and give generous offerings. Nevertheless, 43 percent of the respondents said that some believers would opt to leave their church and seek another one. Still, 8 percent admitted that some believers would resort to consulting traditional medicine men to solve their problems which the church had apparently failed to solve. However, 21 did not know what steps believers took in case their expected blessings did not materialize.

4.3 Prosperity Gospel and This-worldly Salvation

Pentecostal theology emphasizes that the born-again must experience a transformative encounter with God. The direct character of that encounter is facilitated by the Holy Spirit, the empowering presence of God.\textsuperscript{715} For the Prosperity Gospel Pentecostals, that transformation is not merely spiritual; rather, it includes the empowerment of the believer to realize personal ambitions in life in terms of success and material prosperity. Corten and Marshall-Fratani articulate well this point as they observe:

The emphasis on miracles of health and prosperity which are at the heart of the new wave implies a new relationship between the experience of conversion and the conception of salvation…Salvation is now absolutely this-worldly, and the evidence of new life has become as much material as spiritual. Moral rigor and strict personal ethics have not been superseded, yet the notion of transformation has been broadened to include the possibility of material change in everyday life.\textsuperscript{716}

To realize that transformation the one who converts to Pentecostalism is expected to undergo a complete break with his or her past, which is understood as being delivered from the bondage with the past. The African past is deemed to present hurdles in the process of economic development. Deliverance from that past is thus inevitable for the born-again to access the merits of modernity and achieve prosperity. Two key doctrines underline this understanding of pneumatological transformation: “the doctrine of the spirit of poverty” and “the doctrine of talents.” Both doctrines serve to link the imperative of deliverance from the past with the prevailing socio-economic and political culture of the people.\textsuperscript{717}

4.3.1 The Doctrine of the Spirit of Poverty

This doctrine insists that the root cause of poverty is bondage with the past traditional African culture. This means bondage with village culture, ancestral veneration, the extended family system and the culture of commensality in general. Allegedly, African culture


embodies the spirit of poverty, since it is associated with witchcraft and backwardness. The extended family is often considered to be imbedded in gerontocracy which quite often becomes oppressive to women and young people.\textsuperscript{718} The culture of commensality seems to make it difficult for one to save money and resources for one’s own nuclear family. For one to achieve an economic advancement, a complete break with blood ties and obligations of the extended family is therefore inevitable. Blood ties and obligations should be maintained only if the extended family is prepared to be transformed into the Christian fraternities.\textsuperscript{719} Thus, “the doctrine of the spirit of poverty” urges born-again Christians to be singled-minded and let themselves be guided by only one spirit, namely, the Holy Spirit. They should desist from being possessed by the multiple spirits that are associated with the traditional African culture.

This doctrine sounds plausible in the Tanzanian context of socio-economic difficulties. Tanzanian regimes and the prophets of neo-liberal economic structures had promised to bring about economic development in the country. Those promises, nevertheless, have become anything but empty promises. They sound hollow in the prevailing situation of deprivation. Sanders has maintained that after the introduction of the neo-liberal economic system, life in Tanzania has not been “natural”, “obvious” and “amoral” as the prophets of modernity seemed to suggest. On the contrary, the free market has opened floodgates of “ambiguities, uncertainties and profound moral dilemmas.”\textsuperscript{720} One of the dilemmas has been the re-emergence of traditional healing methods, divination practices, occult economies and diverse expressions of witchcraft. During the early post-independence days the Tanzanian Government reportedly discouraged and debased African traditional healing methods describing them as unmodern. Instead, it promised to promote modern hospitals.\textsuperscript{721} But given the current failure to provide modern medical facilities affordable to the common citizens, the African healing methods seem to make a forceful comeback. They are seen by the people as somewhat serving to hold their anxieties in balance. The people perceive them as fillers of the lacuna created by the empty promises of modern hospitals.

Our analysis of the Prosperity Gospel in this context is that it is a movement that has entered into this scene of deprivation as a contender of the African traditional healing methods, divination practices, and occult economies. It promises to provide a pathway along

\textsuperscript{718} See: David Martin, op.cit. 147.
\textsuperscript{719} See: Ibid.
\textsuperscript{720} Todd Sanders, op.cit., 173.
which those overwhelmed by feelings of powerlessness and frustration can act upon. Its preachers try to draw a popular appeal in the neo-liberal environment. They highlight the prevalence of dichotomies in the society, namely, the dichotomy “between the good and the bad, the benevolent and the malevolent, the Christian and the non-Christian, and, above all, between the inferior African past against a superior future.” In their rhetoric, to embrace the Prosperity Gospel is to embrace the good, the benevolent, the real Christian life, the modern and the future. The movement’s dualistic vision of life conceives success as always attributable to God. On the contrary, any kind of failure, including failure in business matters, owes to the spirit of poverty embodied in witchcraft, demonology, and the influence of ancestral spirits. The movement stresses that progress is one’s due by virtue of his or her Christian faith. However, this right is often impeded by the spirit of poverty. As such, there is need for a continuous battle against the powers of the old satanic order through the power of the Holy Spirit. The movement itself leads this battle by driving out the evil spirits. The performance of deliverance rituals which often entails the cursing of the perceived source of the spirit of poverty is urgent. Thereby the liability of the historic churches on this regard is emphasized. In the course of planting the Church in Africa they are said to have envisaged a once-for all transition of the indigenous people from heathendom to Christianity and placed little emphasis on the need to maintain an on-going battle against the powers of the old satanic order.

4.3.1.1 Appeal of the Doctrine

The doctrine of the spirit of poverty contributes to the appeal of Pentecostalism in the Archdiocese of Songea. A scenario that took place among Bena communities of Mahanje and Wino parishes can be used to illustrate this point. Catholics constitute the vast majority of Christians in these localities. At the same time beliefs on the ancestors and their enormous influence on the living persist among the Christians. It is held that, the ancestors can bring blessing or inflict suffering upon the living, depending on the treatment accorded them by their earthly clan or family members. Accordingly, the Bena communities practise rites of passage that are associated with the ancestral cults. One of such cults involves the use of a stool (or in Bena language kigoda), which is believed to be sacred. So we can refer to the cult as Kigoda Cult. Parents are supposed to perform the rite of passage after having their first male child. The rite then initiates them into the class of elders of the clan. The ritual

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723 See: David Martin, op.cit., 142.
724 See: Ibid.
prescribes that the husband must be a first-born son himself in order to be entitled to receive the *kigoda* on behalf of his clan. His duty is to be the custodian of the *kigoda* and to guard it faithfully. He has to perform a regular ritual ‘sitting’ on it in order to impart ancestral blessings upon the clan. Any non-compliance in the ritual is feared to provoke the wrath of the ancestors. The man entrusted with the *kigoda* has now become the priest of the *Kigoda Cult* and becoming a Christian priest is for him out of question. Begetting children is highly prized in the rituals; childless couples are therefore despised in these communities. The rituals are also said to be associated with incest practices between men and their daughters-in-law participants; this makes the rituals repugnant particularly to women and young people. Many family feuds and discord have surfaced on account of the rituals. The performance of the rituals is shrouded with an atmosphere of great secrecy and threats of reprisals from the elders and ancestors for any public revelation of the practice.

It has been reported that *Kigoda Cult* has catalyzed the spread of Pentecostalism in the concerned parishes because Pentecostals spoke openly against it and invited the people to shift to Pentecostalism as a means of freeing themselves from its perceived oppression. Catholic pastors, on the contrary, did not address this problem. Consequently, many young Catholics converted to Pentecostalism as refuge. David Martin has argued that one factor that attracts young Africans to Pentecostalism is the flight from oppressive gerontocratic authority. The *Kigoda Cult* narrative seems to concur with this opinion.

In 2004 the Archbishop of Songea, Norbert W. Mtega, together with Father Nicholas Mlelwa, who originates from those localities and Father Emmanuel Fussi, who was then the parish priest of Wino made a thorough research on the cult. They visited the localities and held public meetings with the people. They encouraged the Christians to speak openly about the cult. After a prolonged tension and conflict many Christians handed their *Kigoda Cult* paraphernalia to the archbishop to be burned on bonfires. Many people, particularly the youth and women, felt greatly relieved by the action. Some elderly people, nevertheless, expressed resentment over the action as an affront to their tribal customs. This scenario exemplifies the appeal of the doctrine of poverty as it confronted the *Kigoda Cult* which was perceived by its malcontents as a veritable cause of the spirit of poverty and oppression.

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726 See: Ibid.
728 See: David Martin, op.cit., 145.
729 Informant: Father Emmanuel Fussi.
4.3.1.2 Weakness of the Doctrine

The Prosperity Gospel preachers maintain dualistic attitudes. Thus they tend to inform the vision of a believer to ascribe the current socio-economic difficulties in Tanzania merely to the sinister elements of African culture. This leaves the current malfunctional systems that perpetrate the conditions of poverty unchallenged. For example, while being silent about the problem of grand corruption and attitudes of greed that now than ever before pervade the Tanzanian social fabric, the preachers tend to amplify witchcraft and demons as the cause of poverty.

4.3.2 The Doctrine of Talents

In the practice of this doctrine believers are exhorted to pay tithes and offer generous donations to their denominations. It is emphasized that only when the believers invest their talents with God, can they expect God to ensure their accumulation: “If you tithe, then your financial doors will be opened. If you don’t, then they will remain closed.”730 My respondents in Songea often remarked that one should not expect blessings from God if he was a miser and that not tithing was tantamount to robbing God! Thus only the person who has given generously should expect to receive material blessings from God in return. Accordingly, accumulating wealth and becoming rich is considered to be a mark of God’s favour on the generous giver of tithes and offerings. But ultimately, achieving accumulation of wealth is a confirmation that one has been delivered from the bondage of poverty and the past life.731

When it comes to giving talents, rich middle-class members have a particular relevance to the churches. On the one hand, pastors often remind them that failure to tithe and to give generous offerings to their church may ultimately lead to the loss of their wealth, because God will not bless them. But on the other hand, the persons receive preferential treatment during congregational meetings in order to encourage them to give generous offerings. A Pentecostal Church member recounted the following episode in relation to his church:

I have been going to this church for about one year now. The attendance is good, the songs are attractive and believers seem to worship seriously. Yet I am not happy with my church... My concern is this: if you are a church member with high social status or you are rich and tithe regularly, even when you come late to Sunday service, the church ushers will force you to occupy a front seat... Those who came before you would be removed in order to give you a place to sit. I believe that in James 2:2-3, Christian communities are warned against such preferential practices. Again, it is obvious that our pastor loves money and on account of this he tolerates the immoral behaviour of rich church members. If a rich church member... misses out at a Sunday service, the pastor becomes very sad. He wants such people to attend his church...
because his preaching is televised weekly on Channel Ten. He wants such famous people to appear so that they may act as ‘bait’ for hooking other people to his church. He himself calls such high-profile church members masangara (or ‘Nile perch’)... They are men in their expensive suits and women in their big headgears... Is this a church or a club?... Is this not running a church like a business enterprise?732

This experience is not an isolated case. In this study 18 percent of non-Catholic respondents in Songea admitted that rich members of their congregations were assigned special seats and accorded special respect at places of worship.

4.3.2.1 Appeal of the Doctrine: Donations as Sacrificial Act

Donations of money in the doctrine of talents are understood as sacrificial giving (or sadaka), not fundraising, though they usually result in large collections of funds. There is a necessity for a believer to give part of himself or herself to God by giving material property as offering. With this offering the believer is perceived to form a bond with God and nourish his/her relationship with him. God on his part is expected to guarantee the believer the blessing for which he or she is yearning.733 The mutual exchange between a believer and God is on contractual basis. It draws parallels with the neo-liberal world where contractual relationships and individual sense of empowerment and prosperity predominate.

Evidently, the Gospel of Prosperity has adopted the market model for promoting religious participation. It demonstrates that religion or religious services must be advertised and sold like any market commodities.734 It is the rhetoric of the market which is here at play. The main virtue of the God that the people embrace is the “ability to deliver in the here and now.”735 But why is so much emphasis placed on money? Clearly, it is money that one gives as offering to God because today the money system prevails. We are living in a money society and a money culture. And churches need money for financing their projects. The Prosperity Gospel-oriented Brazilian Bishop Macedo maintains that money today has become an integral part of life, and just as the body cannot survive without blood, similarly the church cannot survive without money.736 Money has an economic and trans-economic meaning at the same time; it is at once a medium and a symbol. As medium, it is a means of exchange, a standard measurement and storage of value. And as a symbol, money in all its forms of manifestation namely, as capital, property, credit, interest and debt, represents power, future security, and

733 See: Martin Lindhardt, op.cit., 51.
734 See: Ibid.
influence. Secondly, there is a sacral aspect of money. Money has increasingly undergone a paradigmatic teleological change from being a medium to being an object in itself. Thus Mammon has become the new master that everyone has to serve and trust. It has become one of the principalities and powers of our time, demanding and receiving absolute devotion. Moreover, money, rather than goodness and happiness, has now become the measure of human wealth. Consequently, money is not only a blessing and an expression of prosperity but also a danger and a threat. The doctrine of talents affirms that the bond of unity sealed between a believer and God by offering money drives away Satan, the source of all evils. Instead, it assures the believer of health, prosperity and happiness.

4.3.2.2 “Where there is Faith in Jesus, There is Success”

The doctrine of talents is practically exercised in the daily business life of the believers. Jesus’ name is frequently used in commercial advertisements. The association of Jesus’ name with success in business is quite pervasive these days. Slogans abound that portray Jesus Christ as the source of success in business enterprises. The slogans imply that the only condition to achieve that success is to create a bond with Jesus. The commercialization of Jesus’ name is evident in commercial vehicles such as buses, trucks, and taxis. Shops, restaurants, and kiosks also indicate similar trends. There are slogans that inspire people to love and serve Jesus in order to get prosperity here on earth. For example: “Where there is faith (in Jesus), there is success”; “Jesus is power”; “Yesu anatosha” (Jesus is enough); “Yesu anatisha” (Jesus is awe-inspiring), and so on.

One needs to interpret these slogans from the life context of the business owners who use them. Some reflect the pre-conversion economic situation of the person who has now become a successful born-again. But others are meant to counteract the prevalent perception among Tanzanians that economic success is only possible through the expedient of the occult. Other slogans are expressions of thanksgiving to Jesus for the success that one has been endowed with. For example: “Jesus, you are faithful,” or “thank you Jesus,” and so on.

4.3.2.3 Weakness of the Doctrine

Linking Jesus’ name to one’s business is admittedly a way of imploring Jesus’ protection and blessing for the business. However, some business people use the slogans merely as a

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738 See: Ibid.
740 See: Leonildo Silveira Campos, op.cit., 418.
tactic for attracting potential customers. They maintain a self portrait of God-fearing persons and hence faithful in their business. Their potential clients need not suspect them of bogus deals, even if the potential for such deals is there. But again, the doctrine of talents implies that no one can become successful in life purely by God’s grace. Every success that one seeks must be ‘bought’ with talents. Chapter eight will elaborate more on this issue.

4.4 Avenues to Prosperity: “Anything You Want to Become You Can Become!”

The foregoing analysis of “the doctrine of the spirit of poverty” and “the doctrine talents”, leads us to explore the avenues of success related to the prosperity doctrine. First, success is perceived to come through the motivation of the church. Preachers motivate their members to seek success. They stress that “anything you want to become you can become, the only thing stopping you is you.” This implies that not to become rich or successful in life or being poor is necessarily a consequence of one’s own fault. In Songea the Prosperity Gospel churches organize regular capacity building seminars and workshops to inculcate drive and determination among their members. This goes hand in hand with instilling upon them a sense of personal self-worth. Arguably, “one thing that keeps poor people stuck in their circumstances is their lack of a sense of self-worth. They have no confidence that they can move up the economic ladder, because they are constantly told they are a failure.”

The second avenue is the promotion of entrepreneurship among church members. At the seminars and workshops members learn entrepreneurial skills such as organizational development, financial accounting and so on. There is a similarity between the evangelism skills that one learns at the church and the management skills that are necessary for running entrepreneurial business. The churches market their message, set up new franchises (i.e. daughter churches) and manage customer satisfaction in much the same way as secular businesses do.

The third avenue is the encouragement offered by the churches to their followers to adopt particular ethics in their lifestyles. Such ethics include hard work, saving, investing, organizing time, sobriety, and marital fidelity and so on.

“Sowing and reaping” is the fourth avenue to prosperity. In underlining the “seed faith” Prosperity Gospel Pentecostals use the biblical metaphor of “sowing and reaping” The

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742 Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, Global Pentecostalism, op.cit., 169.
743 See: Ibid.,171.
metaphor highlights the fact that both faith and giving offerings to the church are the instruments of advancement for a believer.

The fifth avenue is the role of “the anointed man of God” (*mtunishi wa Mungu*). It is believed that a believer receives success and prosperity through “anointing” by the agency of “the anointed man of God.” As such pastors are keen to point out that by divine mandate they are the “anointed men of God” and thereby have the ability to prosper their followers. Believers should hold them as dispensable for their (believers’) success and prosperity. The pastors warn that any attempt to disregard the role of the “anointed man of God” will impinge on prosperity. This implies that for the sowing of talents to yield rich fruits of success it must be done through the pastor.

### 4.5 Emphasis on Miracles

The Prosperity Gospel focuses on miracles as the means of achieving any success whether in matters pertaining to health, business, studies, sport, or employment. The Prosperity Gospel preachers are often exhorting their members: “Your miracle is on the way!” Thus those seeking employment, for example, would be challenged by the preachers not to expect to find a job, if they are not generous givers in the church. As often witnessed, job-seekers would send application letters to various firms and then spend thousands of shillings as church offerings in order to influence their miracle of finding the dream-job. Students would undergo a similar procedure of offering generous church donations when they want to influence the miracle of passing their examinations. In chapter eight we shall describe the theological import of miracles. But suffice it to note here that linking success with miracles the way this doctrine proposes carries the danger of diverting the attention away from some values and socio-economic ills. For example, one may play down the necessity of diligence at work and studies, or one may overlook the problems of nepotism and corruption that are often associated with employment issues. Gifford has articulated well this point:

> By advocating the gospel of prosperity it (born-again Christianity) dissuades adherents from evaluating the present economic order, merely persuading them to try to be amongst those who benefit from it. With its emphasis on personal healing, it diverts attention from social ills that are crying out for remedy. Its stress on human wickedness and the fallen nature of ‘the world’ is

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745 For example, 2 Cor. 9: 6 states: “The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” And Gal. 6:6-8 states: “Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches. Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”


747 See: Ibid.

no incentive to social, economic and constitutional reform. By emphasizing personal morality so exclusively, it all but eliminates any interest in systemic or institutionalised injustice. By making everything so simple, it distracts attention from the very real contradictions in the lives of so many in (South) Africa.\footnote{Paul Gifford, \textit{The New Crusaders: Christianity and the New Right in Southern Africa} (London: Pluto, 1991), 65-66.}

The significance of miracles must therefore be well understood in dealing with matters pertaining to the socio-economic reconstruction of the society.

\textbf{4.6 Prosperity without Social Responsibility: The Case of “Bongo Culture”}

Culture, simply stated, is a set of meanings and values which inform our way of life. According to Robert Schreiter, culture “provides systems or frameworks of meaning which serve both to interpret the world and provide guidance for living in the world”\footnote{See: Robert Schreiter, \textit{The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local} (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 29.} Thus, beliefs, values, attitudes and rules for behaviour are integral components of culture. Schreiter also sees culture as having a dimension of performance. This means that it includes rituals which bind members of a particular group together and enable them in a participatory way to embody and enact their histories and values. Culture as performance encompasses all sorts of embodied behaviours that people portray. In this section, I contend that the Prosperity Gospel in Tanzania reinforces what we might call “Bongo Culture”. This concurs with what we have noted in Chapter Three about the seminar of the Prosperity Gospel preacher, Kenneth Copland, at the Fire Convention Conference in Harare. He urged the participants to use any means at their disposal to get money for evangelism; it did not matter what the source of that money was! Such attitudes warrant corruption among Christians in the name of the gospel. They also make the Prosperity Gospel avoid any critical challenge to the prevailing economic order. Instead, the proponents of the Prosperity Gospel are persuaded to strive to be amongst those who benefit from the prevailing social, political and economic system.

“Bongoland” was a nickname of the city of Dar es Salaam familiar in youth parlance. The name means literally “Brainland”\footnote{See: Marc Sommers, op.cit., 357.} (brain is \textit{ubongo} in Swahili). Today, however, the designation “Bongoland” has become the nickname of the whole country of Tanzania. It reflects difficulties that the citizens, particularly the youth, encounter. It implies that one has really to use his brain in order to survive. It is a philosophy of winning bread by all means whereby the shrewd and cunning appear to be rewarded for their deeds. The concomitant exhortation in everyday conversation is: “\textit{kuwa mjanja, Bongo hii!} (i.e. “be cunning, this is Tanzania!”). This engenders attitudinal changes that are characterized by a striving to be in
the forefront in benefitting from whatever the social structure offers. The beneficiaries of the social system do not pay heed to its deleterious effect on the rest of the society. Since it permeates the lives of many Tanzanians today, I term it “Bongo Culture”. This culture diminishes the sense of altruism. It undermines the common good and fosters the culture of impunity. For example, the perpetrators of graft in Tanzania are often called “Wajanja wachache” (i.e. a few cunning people). This language minimizes their offence. Yet it is precisely these “cunning people” who perpetuate poverty in the country.

Some churches are permeated by similar trends. The churches raise money and demand large sums as offering from their members. Yet they will very seldom raise questions about how that wealth is acquired. As one has rightly queried, “could it not be that people from whom churches get money are poor people’s robbers?” 752 It is perplexing to many in Tanzania to see that churches speak vehemently against graft (ufisadi), while at the same time they appear to reap financial benefits from politicians implicated in it. Quite often, diverse church denominations invite such politicians to their fundraising events for the construction of churches, inauguration of church choirs, and installation of church leaders. In all these events the politicians dish out large sums of cash in contribution. By receiving the donations from the figures whom the public accuses of corruption, the churches seem to exonerate them. Some Tanzanians have expressed their concern saying: “is it because the churches themselves gain financially from the politicians that they decide to turn a blind eye to their corruption charges?” 753 These are challenging words indeed. They summon the churches to be the ‘voice of the voiceless,’ 754 rather than reinforcers of “Bongo Culture” which is vulnerable to the poor.

### 4.7 Prosperity Gospel versus Liberation Theology

The Church in Africa has arguably a lot to learn from the Latin American Church which came into contact with Pentecostalism about a decade earlier. The approach towards the option for the poor is one area in which those lessons can be drawn. Its pro-poor Theology of Liberation 755 in all its forms has always stressed a theological understanding of unjust

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754 See: EIA, No. 44.

755 In Tanzania, Julius Nyerere’s socialist ideology (Ujamaa) similarly created liberation theology in the country. Since this political ideology was adopted as the state’s political system, liberation theology thus became also Tanzania’s “state theology”. See: Frieder Ludwig, Church and State in Tanzania: Aspects of Changing Relationships, 1961-1994 (Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 1999), 123. Nyerere deemed this policy as critical for the promotion of human dignity, equality and for the change of unjust structures in the country. He often
structures and the struggles to change them. However, the Latin American Church, which is overwhelmingly Catholic, has witnessed a remarkable challenge since the advent of Pentecostalism. The Pentecostal movement has come to challenge Liberation Theology. While the latter fostered the option for the poor, the poor themselves are increasingly converting to Pentecostalism. The theological trend is now shifting from the preferential option for the poor to the preferential option for the Holy Spirit. Turning away from Liberation Theology means in effect that the poor now relinquish from participating in addressing the social structures that cause their poverty. This is indeed perplexing as well as ironical. To resolve this irony, Miller and Yamamori have argued that Pentecostalism has proved to be more attractive than liberation theology because it tends to solve the problem of poverty of one person at a time. And it does that without involving violence. Arguably, solving the problem of one person at a time seems to be particularly plausible in our current century which is replete with problems such as the AIDS pandemic. In most cases this problem requires a person-specific approach. For Miller and Yamamori, the other differences between liberation theology and Pentecostalism are theological. First, unlike Liberation Theology, Pentecostalism “is saddled with an eschatology that foresees the imminent return of Christ, which militates against long-term social and economic struggle.” Secondly, while the favourite biblical text of Liberation Theology is the story of the exodus from Egypt, Pentecostalism tends to focus more on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. At any rate, in Pentecostalism attempts are made for the option for the poor but without addressing the root causes of their poverty, namely, the socio-economic structures. This is the case with Bonnke’s version of Prosperity Gospel which has been widely adopted in Tanzania.

“The Jesus one meets within Bonnke’s crusades is not a Jesus who questions and challenges the social and political structures of the time, but one who helps the Christian to be among those who benefit from them. He is a super-natural wonder-worker whose death has won (once for all) the blessings which those who are born again enjoy, and thus become successful in a world shaped by the post-colonial carriers of modernity.”

Doubtless, when African Christianity is pervaded with such attitudes, chances are that many Africans will ultimately continue to languish in poverty while celebrating church
vibrancy. Liberation Theology in contrast, trades a more comprehensive vision of option for the poor since it addresses the structures of sin and envisages the upholding of the common good of the society at large.

4.8 Prosperity Gospel and Its Promises of Alternatives

The Prosperity Gospel promises alternatives. This is most saliently seen in the following areas: its denominations appear to become self-reliant, faith healing is portrayed as an effective way of dealing with malignant forces. Moreover, it promises to contain the occult economies. Furthermore, in containing the occult, the Pentecostal “anointed man of God” is presented as being more powerful than the Catholic Priest. In addition, the doctrine promises to dismantle religious monopolistic systems as well as bring about modernity and material success to its participants.

4.8.1 Self-reliant Church Denominations

The Prosperity Gospel presents itself as a movement that offers new insights into church stewardship. Its members tithe faithfully and offer generous donations. They expect their stewardship to be reciprocated immediately by God through material blessings. Rich members offer themselves as major donors. Cases of spectacular offerings are often reported. They include lavish cash donations, jewelry, cars, financing crusades and pilgrimages of denomination members abroad. These donations help the denominations finance their evangelistic activities, construct and maintain church buildings, purchase musical instruments and public address systems and paying salaries to their pastors.

The Efatha Church under the leadership of Pastor Josephat Mwingira is an example of a prosperous Prosperity Gospel Church. Pastor Josephat Mwingira established the church in 1996 in Kilimanjaro and officially registered it as Efatha Ministry in 1997. The main church centre was started in Dar es Salaam in 2003 with about 60 people. Today the church claims a total membership of over 300,000 Christians in the whole of Tanzania, including Songea where it started less than a decade ago. The church has also started daughter churches in Kenya, Zambia and Malawi. In terms of self-reliance, the church owns a bank and vast areas of agricultural land in different parts of Tanzania and runs various projects. Significantly, Mwingira is proud to announce that Efatha does not rely on foreign aid,

763 Informants: members of CCR, Mjimwema Parish, 17th July 2010.
765 Ibid.
donations or funding because its members raise all the funds required. The principle of “giving in order to receive” (or “sowing and reaping”) is of supreme importance at Efatha Church. The sums of weekly collections, tithes and offerings are estimated to be between 15 and 30 million Tanzania shillings (i.e. between 7,000 and 14,000 Euro). Interestingly, as Päivi observes, this church constantly urges its members to work hard and be successful so that they may be able to make the donations required by the church.

4.8.2 Faith Healing

The concept of healing can be described as a comprehensive process of restoring and sustaining health and growth on physical, social and spiritual levels. Healing is therefore understood to be integral. In indigenous African systems of thought healing is construed as a process that entails “harnessing and controlling pervasive power in the universe to remedy sickness and misfortune.” To heal is, therefore, to engage the cosmic powers in the negotiation of the problems of disease, social disharmony and other life-afflicting conditions. The therapeutic process normally involves the use of tangible medicine and rituals which are employed concurrently or sequentially.

The popularity of faith healing can be better explained when this healing method is compared to the African traditional healing and modern hospital medication.

4.8.2.1 Faith Healing versus African Traditional Healing

Traditional healers and Prosperity Gospel healers appear to have a shared concern. Both propose therapeutic methods that promise to address the “same illness-causing spiritual afflictions and occults threats.” Prosperity Gospel healers also incorporate the same idioms of the traditional healers in that their healing practices are associated with prayer vigils and healing camps. And in both cases the possessed fall into trance and speak in tongues. Additionally, the exorcists in both cases use similar formulas. Thus the exorcist would utter such words as: Toka shetani! (out Satan!). But in the Pentecostal exorcism rituals the exorcist would add the words: “kwa jina la Yesu” (“in the name of Jesus!”). Thus one often hears: Kwa Jina la Yesu nakuamuru mtoke! (In the name of Jesus, I order you release!).

767 See: Ibid., 231.
768 Ibid.
Undoubtedly these points of convergence facilitate the understanding and reception of faith healing among African Christians. On the other side, the resonance of faith healing with traditional healing poses a challenge to the Prosperity Gospel. The people may be tempted to compare its healing “products” to those of the African traditional healers. Both seem to exhibit mysterious powers in areas such as business-generating and anti-witchcraft services. Both stand a high risk of abusing their perceived healing powers for material aggrandisement. Faith healing, like traditional healing, is also subjected to the standards of free market. Lindhardt has observed that under the prevailing situation in Tanzania “it is tempting to see the Faith Gospel as one among many market options for the consumer seeking prosperity, more broadly, spiritual assistance in everyday affairs.”\(^{772}\) Accordingly, potential clients have to maintain an attitude of utmost care when selecting their commodities because deceit is rampant. The Pentecostal, however, utterly condemn traditional medicine as the work of the Devil. Instead, they extol Jesus as the most powerful of all healers.\(^{773}\) This Christian alternative makes faith healing particularly attractive to Christians.

4.8.2.2 Faith Healing versus Modern Hospital Medication

Faith healing is also becoming popular in Songea when considered vis-à-vis modern medication. Modern medical treatment methods are associated with the institution called “hospital”. Etymologically, the word “hospital” comes from the Latin *hospes*, denoting a stranger or foreigner, hence a guest. Originally hospitals were understood as places for delivering hospitality to strangers, the poor, the hungry, the sick, pilgrims, and so on.\(^{774}\) The modern function of hospital as an institution for health care and provision of treatment to patients by specialized staff and equipment is a new development first recorded in the 1540s.\(^{775}\)

The development of hospitals as institutions of hospitality is associated with Western monasticism. As monasticism took root in the fourth century as an essential expression of the Christian life, hospitality became an integral part of monastic identity. Major figures in the early period of monasticism included Basil, Chrysostom, Jerome and others. All of these founded many institutions that specialized in offering hospitality to poor strangers and locals. John Chrysostom, for example, insisted that hospitality should be “face-to-face, gracious,

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\(^{773}\) See: Ibid.


\(^{775}\) See: Ibid.
unassuming, nearly indiscriminate, and always enthusiastic.” Hospitality dispensed in this way became a proof of the pastoral concern for the poor on the part of the monastic or parish communities. It was their “preferential option for the poor.” However, since the Middle Ages, medical and pastoral professionals have followed markedly divergent paths, drawing a line of distinction between medicine and religion. Subsequently, the hospital institution introduced secularised concepts of hospitality, health and healing. These secularised concepts have been introduced into Africa through the modern western missionary movement. They are a foreign phenomenon in the African traditional life because in Africa “religion and health are inextricably bound within traditional cultures.” The Gospel of Prosperity becomes popular in Songea because it advocates faith healing whereby matters pertaining to religion are linked with those pertaining to health. This at the same time reflects the African traditional life.

But we have noted in Chapter One that the Catholic Church in Songea is so far the main faith-based health services provider in the area. Is this not linking religious matters and faith matters as well? This is an interesting question. Respondents in this study overwhelmingly indicated that the public generally recognises the huge contribution of the Catholic Church in the provision of health services. Yet most could not immediately see the inherent link between the church-based health services and evangelization. It is apparently a nuanced vision when compared to the situation in the pioneer missionary period when the Benedictine health care services were acknowledged by the indigenous people in Songea as “kazi ya Mungu” (God’s work). One explanation is that the workers in Catholic health care institutions hardly demonstrate their work as the fulfilment of the church’s social doctrine. Prosperity Gospel preachers, on the contrary, announce their healing rituals as being an integral part of their evangelism. Equally significant, medical treatment even when done at church health institutions still conveys a secular aura. It does not promote religious participation on the part of the healed person. Faith healing, in contrast, usually leads to the confirmation of the faith of the healed person and may even inspire that person to join the congregation of the healing pastor. The Prosperity Gospel churches appear to draw a great appeal because they enable a believer to obtain simultaneously spiritual nourishment and bodily healing.

779 See: Chapter One.
In the Catholic Church, there is usually a division of labour and tension between medicine and religion, and between biomedical therapy and faith healing. In that rhetoric, the Catholic Church in Songea does not generally encourage public faith healing services for physically or mentally ill people. Even biomedical practitioners often regard with suspicion the religious healing methods, including prayers and meditation. It is true, nevertheless, that in some hospitals doctors sometimes advise patients to consult traditional healers when the diagnosis of certain diseases fails: “jaribu kutembea,” they urge the patients. Because of the division of labour, afflictions believed to arise from demonic possessions or from witchcraft, are generally not being taken care of by the hospitals, whether in mission hospital or otherwise. In his research in Peramiho (Songea) Murchison found out that some spirit-possessed persons explicitly rejected biomedical treatment; for instance, receiving an injection at the hospital. Murchison was researching on the relationship between traditional healing and biomedicine in the context of HIV/AIDS. He concluded that biomedicine is generally ineffective in treating conditions associated with spirit possession. It is traditional healing which is the most effective form of treatment for such conditions. Meanwhile, this study has revealed that so far therapeutic facilities for mental illnesses and mood disorders are incredibly scanty not only in Songea, but also in the whole of Tanzania. In Songea there is a small psychiatric unit at the Regional Hospital which, however, is underequipped.

From the foregoing, we can affirm that the inability of modern medicine to treat conditions perceived to be spirit possessions and the lack of centres for behavioural therapy, have ultimately coalesced into a vast therapeutic vacuum. This vacuum is happily filled by the Prosperity Gospel and other charismatic churches that practise faith healing. They combine healing and spirituality; thus they appear to “respond to a basic human need to make sense of the contingencies of everyday life, especially physical, mental, and social suffering.” Ritual healing has another advantage over biomedicine, namely, it does not reduce the body and mind to physiology and neurology. Instead, its therapeutic approaches take into account the entire social and economic environment and the biography of the patient.

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780 Informants: patients who were discharged from one hospital in Ruvuma Region as their illnesses could not be diagnosed, July 2010.
782 Katharina Wilkens, op.cit., 296.
783 See: Ibid.
4.8.2.3 Example of the Full Gospel Bible Fellowship Church (FGBFC)

The Full Gospel Bible Fellowship Church is a Neo-Pentecostal Church founded in 1989 by Zachary Kakobe now archbishop. The description of the church as “full gospel” means that its believers, like the early Christians, are filled with the Holy Spirit in a way that is described in the New Testament books; that is “they have access to miraculous power, the gifts of the Spirit, including the rites of healing and casting out demons.”

Archbishop Kakobe is the central figure of the church in Tanzania. He lives in Dar es Salaam where he leads the largest congregation of the church in the country at its headquarters located at Mwenge. In the year 2000 the church claimed a total membership of more than one hundred and twenty thousand and over five hundred regional and local churches nationwide.

In Songea the FGBFC is one of the most significant of Prosperity Gospel churches. It is commonly known as Kakobe’s church (Kanisa la Kakobe), since he is its central figure. Its main centre is located at Mjimwema locality within Songea Municipality. The church was established in the 1990s and by 2011 it has established several sub-churches and small communities. It has its own local bishop and a number of pastors. Most of the newly established sub-parishes are entrusted to the care of young women. The majority of them are said to have been miraculously healed of their illnesses through the ministry of the FGBFC. Their taking up of the ministry is therefore partly in gratitude to God for their cure.

Many people are attracted to this church on account of its promise to deliver them from the influence of malignant forces. Notably, the church itself entertains such beliefs. According to Dilger who carried out a study of the FGBFC in Dar es Salaam, various categories of demons are identified in this church: first, there are demons that are believed to influence a person’s immoral behaviours such as adultery and fornication. Their victim is said to be embodied with the demon of adultery/ fornication (pepo wa ngono). Secondly, there is the category of demons that are thought to embody diseases such as cancer and epilepsy. Thirdly, there are demons that thwart people’s success in life, cause their marital problems, or prevent them from finding a job or getting promotion at work. Apart from demons, there are other malignant powers that cause diseases and suffering. The HIV/AIDS pandemic, for example, is construed as punishment from God on immoral mankind. However, its immediate causality is attributed to malevolent forces. Other ailments, including infertility and curses (laana) are believed to be sent by mischievous relatives or ancestral spirits.

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784 Steve Brouwer, Paul Gifford, and Susan D. Rose, op.cit., 5.
785 Informant: Mr. Mganda, a member and elder of the FGBFC in Songea, 12th July, 2010.
786 See: Hansjörg Dilger, “Healing the Wounds of Modernity,” 68.
787 See: Ibid.
Overwhelmed by such worries and insecurities, the people come to the FGBFC for healing, deliverance and protection. Healing and exorcism take place through prayers and the laying on of hands. It is reported that through healing, most members of this church have come to establish their first links with it. Healing prayers are performed either individually on weekday at the house of one of the leaders or in a room at the main church. One of the pastors guides the healing. But it may also be performed collectively during the Sunday services, being guided by a bishop or a pastor. The church members play an active role in the prayers and the laying on of hands. They jump up from their benches, speaking in tongues, and shouting away the influence of the demons as well as cursing their enemies, while music from the church band accompanies them.\textsuperscript{788} Admittedly in the context where the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other diseases are prevalent and modern medical facilities are scarce and expensive, the healing rituals performed by the FGBFC attract many to join the church.

4.8.2.4 Promise to Contain the Occult

The expression “occult economies” means simply the practice of connecting a witchcraft dimension to the means of generating wealth.\textsuperscript{789} The practice is rife in Tanzania. Some anthropological researchers have noted that Tanzania has a limitless market for the occult.\textsuperscript{790} Following the pervasive spread of the free market, witchcraft can now be bought from the market. Ultimately, speculation about “the occult” has increased accordingly. Occult economies permeate the broad spectrum of economic life of the people. In the agrarian sector, for example, some peasants are said to spread charms around their crop fields to make them more prosperous. Others are often accused of employing the labour of zombie spirits (ndondochara or msukule) to maximize farm production. Still others are believed to have the capacity to scoop crops from the fields of their neighbours. Hence diviners have to be invited to spread protective charms around the fields (kuzindika shamba).\textsuperscript{791} Such superstitious beliefs reinforce perceptions that productivity comes from witchcraft rather than from diligent work and thrift. Left unredeemed, occult-sympathetic peasants will never effectively participate in the current development initiative of the country termed Kilimo Kwanza (Agriculture First), which prioritizes agriculture.\textsuperscript{792} Business enterprises in Songea, as in other parts of Tanzania,...

\textsuperscript{788} See: Ibid., 67.
\textsuperscript{789} See: Todd Sanders, op. cit., 173.
\textsuperscript{790} See: Ibid.
\textsuperscript{791} Informants: Villagers of Liganga at a public meeting, Liganga Village, March 1997.
\textsuperscript{792} The implementation of Kilimo Kwanza was envisaged to prepare ground for Tanzania’s future prosperity. It encompassed a wide range of economic activities that would serve to give agriculture a particular focus. The following were some of the planned activities: to allot a fitting national budget for agricultural sector, to identify and survey land for large-scale food crop farming, to improve irrigation schemes, to provide inputs
are believed to be successful if they involve the use of the occult. The smooth running of business is generally hindered by stiff market competition, difficulty to obtain enough capital and low purchase power of potential clients. Consequently, the people resort to witchcraft either to influence success in the business or to protect it from perceived jealous business competitors. Occult economies have led to the trafficking of human organs, particularly human skin.\textsuperscript{793} Equally sinister are the widespread killings of the people with albinism since 2006. Their organs are also used in occult economies. Politicians are also believed to deploy witchcraft as a means of protecting their wealth gained through corruption and fending off sanction. The belief is bolstered when the people see that corrupt leaders in the country often get away with it. For the ordinary people this situation is not emblematic of the growing culture of impunity,\textsuperscript{794} rather it is the triumph of witchcraft expedients.\textsuperscript{795} Certainly there is no way to substantiate claims that business flourishes through witchcraft. Yet the numerous accounts suggest that occult practices are widespread in the country. Significantly, these practices appear to increase in Tanzania mainly in response to growing social inequalities associated with “modernity”. The people believe that with the help of spiritual forces they can manage to maintain their social positions in the face of the new inequalities.\textsuperscript{796}

The problem is not unique to Tanzania. In his Africa trip in November 2011, Pope Benedict XVI addressed himself to this question. While in Benin, he urged Christians in Africa to open their hearts to the power of the Holy Spirit which would release them from the deception of syncretism and the bondage of occultism and evil spirits.\textsuperscript{797}

The Gospel of Prosperity becomes attractive amid widespread occult economies because it promises an alternative for acquiring economic prosperity and social mobility without the engagement of witchcraft and occult expedients. Thus to the question how do I accumulate wealth and become rich as a Christian? The Prosperity Pentecostals will answer: “the Holy Spirit is the answer.” Crudely put: “Love Jesus and get rich.”\textsuperscript{798} Their preachers promise to soothe the trauma of social dislocation, depression and anomie owing to the transition to urban modernity through the power of the Holy Spirit. They preach that it is the Holy Spirit who

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and strengthen strategic grain reserves, to improve food storage facilities, to seek ways that will facilitate achievement of an advantageous access to the local and world markets, to improve road and railway infrastructures, to implement electricity projects, and so on. See: The East African, URL: http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/-/2558/610842/-/t2heshz/-/index.html (accessed on 29th October, 2011).

\textsuperscript{793} See: Todd Sanders, op.cit., 160.

\textsuperscript{794} See: The Guardian, 5\textsuperscript{th} November, 2011.

\textsuperscript{795} See: Martin Lindhardt, “More Than Just Money,” in: op.cit., 47.

\textsuperscript{796} See: James Pfeiffer, op.cit., 84.


\textsuperscript{798} Lee C. Camp, op.cit., 182.
now provides the broad protection against any threats to health, wealth and well-being that the spiritual forces may pose, not the traditional healers. To encounter the practice of occult economies, the advocates of the prosperity ministries condemn those they suspect of having acquired material wealth through mysterious ways. They contend that “money given by God is legitimate and free of dangers and immoral aspects that haunt wealth generated through occult alliances.” They make public ritual offerings and testimonies to demonstrate that their material success is a divine blessing. Being disillusioned by the rapid devaluation of the Tanzania shilling and the rising inflation in the country, Pentecostal respondents informed me that they pray for whatever money they happen to get. They believe that the prayer will protect their money from any occult powers and make it come to profitable use. Without God’s blessing, money becomes slippery (“pesa haikamatiki”).

Interestingly, in some Catholic churches in Songea, Dodoma and Dar es Salaam, I witnessed believers dipping coins into holy water stoup at church entrances. I came to learn that they were business people who sought God’s blessings over their business. It was believed that for the money to bring prosperity in business it must be invested with divine power. Money alone, without divine power, comes to nothing. Thus the Prosperity Gospel is attractive, particularly to the young elite and entrepreneurs because it is perceived to create room for achieving material prosperity without getting entangled into occult economies.

4.8.2.5 The “Anointed Man of God” versus the Catholic Priest

There is an increased perception today that the Pentecostal “anointed man of God,” (*mtumishi wa Mungu*) has more power to overcome the influence of malignant forces than the Catholic priest. The “anointed man of God” is a church leader who is perceived to be a supernaturally gifted figure. He/she is the one who gives the church members a total religious experience. His/her role is to overcome problems and to enable members of his/her church get access to the power of the Holy Spirit and gain material success and prosperity. “The anointed man of God” is believed to be more overcoming than the Catholic priest, as far

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800 The emphasis on the “anointed man of God” is ironical, when considered from the perspective of the Protestant Reformation. Pentecostalism reiterates the tenets of the Protestant Reformation when it urges Christians to seek a “direct”, personal relationship with Jesus Christ and an immediate access to the power of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, it is insisted that neither sacraments, nor the mediation of the ordained priest, nor of sacralised Church buildings, nor elaborate rituals are required for one to have access to Jesus and the Holy Spirit. In order to be able to personally receive the spiritual powers that are necessary for living a successful Christian life, a believer needs only to nurture a deep bond with Jesus Christ. Such powers will also help him/her to overcome the influence of malevolent forces in daily life encounters. For Gifford, the act of extolling the role of the “the anointed man of God”, as the Prosperity Gospel churches now do, is a “certain sacramentalisation reversing the Reformation.” See: Paul Gifford, *Ghana’s New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy* (London: C. Hurst &Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 2004), 61.
as combating evil forces is concerned. They themselves claim to have powers to protect and deliver believers from the influence of malignant forces. They perform particular pastoral ministries to demonstrate that. Fears of witchcraft and demonic forces constitute one of the greatest areas of insecurities among the people of Songea. For that reason, some respondents admitted that they joined the Pentecostal denominations because they wanted to be assured of their security against malignant forces.

Catholic priests, whether expatriate or indigenous, have also been believed to possess powers over witchcraft and demons. Rumours of priests fighting witches at cemeteries or at the presbyteries have been circulating in the villages. Yet, the Catholic priests in Songea, except for those few who perform charismatic faith healing and exorcism rituals, do not stage a public combat against witches and demons as the Pentecostal pastors do. Consequently, the people come to perceive the Pentecostal pastors, the “anointed men of God”, as having superior powers over the malevolent spirits than Catholic priests. They are believed to be more effective overcomers of the malignant forces. Today Christian denominations in Africa compete for relevance on the basis of their response to the impact of malevolent forces in the society. Hoehler-Fatton narrates a similar experience with Roho (Holy Spirit) Movement in Kenya. She notes that since the movement’s healers or seers (popularly known as “the people of heaven”) are considered to be among the superior forces against evil forces, they are consulted even by staunch Catholics for help.

4.8.2.6 Confronting Religious Monopoly

The liberalisation phases in Tanzania coupled with general globalising trends have caused institutional shifts that have left no sector of life untouched. Socio-economic and religious institutions have all been affected. For example, the socialist monopolies associated with the single party state under the ruling political party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) now seem to weaken and dissolve in a liberalised marketplace. The parastatal SUKITA, once a booming

801 Informant: Fr. Gregory Mwageni of Hanga Abbey, Archdiocese of Songea, 1988. Fr. Gregory narrated his encounter with a diviner whom he tried to stop from carrying out his apprenticeship because he was antagonizing parishioners. One night the diviner came to the priest’s house intending to break into it through the window and harm him with his magic as reprisal. As Fr. Gregory sprinkled holy water on him the witch left in fear.
802 The Catholic Baptismal Rite includes a ministry of deliverance, but it is not perceived in the same way by the people as the dramatic Pentecostal deliverance ministries.
commercial arm of CCM, and corporations such as the National Milling Corporation (NMC) and the Regional Trade Corporations (RTC) have all become defunct. Their services have been taken over by private people and companies.

Religious organizations, too, have not been spared by the current tides of change. What once consolidated their influence is increasingly being taken over by other institutions. In fact, many of the church institutions have assumed a downward trajectory amid stiff competition and lack of resources. This means that some monopolies once held by these established religious organizations have now given way to fragmentation. Green has noted that as the consequence of the diversification of the institutional landscape, established churches in Tanzania now tend to lose their totalising dimension and become more narrowly focused organizations, left with their core areas of responsibility.806 In terms of social services provision in the Songea the Catholic Church became a monopoly owing to the absence of alternatives under colonialism and post-independence regimes.807 Consequently, the church maintained a powerful influence over the local population.

Given the current trends, however, private entrepreneurs also provide social services, thus breaking the monopoly of the church. Markets are flooded with new and second hand manufactured clothes, footwear, electronic equipment, and many other kinds of goods mostly from China. Pharmacies and dispensaries, vocational training centres, car repair garages, fuel filling stations, and other services are widely available. Meanwhile, church institutions have become poorer and can hardly maintain their social services provision status without substantial aid from abroad. Markedly there is a transformation from an affluent church to a poor church. This transformation seems to generate malcontents who view the Catholic Church as having lost its glamour.808 At the same time, the current proliferation of new religious movements increases the diversity of religious organizations and institutional possibilities. Instead of the prior monopoly of the Catholic Church, a wide range of choice in terms of religious affiliation and practice is now available.809 The Prosperity Gospel flourishes in this context because, first, the religious malcontents now opt to join it. But secondly, as Hexham and Poewe have noted, new religious movements constitute an expression of “revolt against the unquestioned central authority not only of orthodox Christianity, but also of a life

807 See: ibid., 643.
808 This reason is given by many Spiritual Year seminarians who decide to leave their vocation after some pastoral experience in parishes. Cf. Vocation Director Report on Vocation Sunday in 2003 in Vocation Committee Meeting Minutes, March 15th 2004 (Unpublished).
explained and ordered by specialists and dominated by the intellect.”

It is such a revolt against the monopoly of the Catholic Church and other older churches in Songea that partly contributes to the numerical growth of the Prosperity Gospel movement.

4.8.2.7 A Church of Modernity and Affluence

Demonstration of modernity and material success constitutes another area of attraction of the Prosperity Gospel. Meyer has argued that members of the Prosperity Gospel churches tend to present themselves as the “ultimate embodiments of modernity.”

This includes a dramatic display of their material success. As Gifford notes, a Christian in these churches is always presented as a successful person. Thus the wearing of trend-setting modes of dress and flaunting of possessions of great wealth is preferred. Pastors are often encouraged to dress smartly like successful entrepreneurs. They also use accoutrements that signal great economic power. For example, they drive posh cars and own beautiful mansions. When walking the streets, they often carry sophisticated mobile phones or laptops alongside their bibles.

Bodily healing and the need to make the body beautiful and attractive, and to give it comfort and rejuvenation are also stressed as expressions of prosperity. They are presented as the hallmark of the “born again.” The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG) typifies such church trends. The church was formed by Edir Macedo in Brazil in 1977 and by 2010 it was present in almost 200 countries. In Tanzania it is well established in Dar es Salaam where it has several branches. Advocating the message of financial breakthrough, it attracts members from various regions of the country, including Songea.

Healing and bodily integrity are greatly stressed in this church. It is argued that, the body is the place where physical and spiritual powers interact. Thus, sin, poverty, disease and the lack of success in life result from the influence of malignant forces. The church publishes a magazine, Folha Universal, which contains regular columns about feminine beauty, gymnastics, the best mode

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810 Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe, op.cit., 154.
813 See: David Maxwell, op. cit., 362.
of each decade, cosmetic tips, advice on rejuvenation, and on matters of hygiene as integral to its Prosperity Theology. Its Dar es Salaam website also offers health and beauty tips.

Modernity and affluence in the Prosperity Gospel churches are also displayed at the places of worship. Splendid mega-churches equipped with modern electronic instruments are constructed to accommodate thousands of believers. With such developments, in my view, Tanzanian Pentecostalism departs markedly from its early humble house-churches that were reminiscent of the early Christian communities, to the current huge and splendid churches that are redolent of the Constantinian Christendom. The Prosperity Gospel churches that operate in Songea have currently no mega-churches, apparently because their membership is still minimal. Yet affluence and modernity are discernible. The FGBF Church building at Mjimwema, for example, is constructed with stones. This sets it in sharp contrast with most other churches in the region which are constructed with burnt bricks. The interior decoration is also impressive. The Siloam Church at Msamala in Songea Municipality is another example. It is also so beautifully structured and decorated that it stands in stark contrast to its surrounding buildings. The churches also privilege the use of modern electronic equipment for evangelism. This aspect will be discussed in details in subsequent sections. I posit that these outward expressions of affluence and modernity contribute to the appeal of the Prosperity Gospel churches.

4.9 Prosperity Gospel and Gospel Music (Muziki wa Injili)

In previous sections I have mentioned how modern media of mass communications, especially television, radio, CDs and DVDs, films, the internet and print media, contribute to the propagation of Pentecostalism in general, and of the Prosperity Gospel in particular. This section examines how Gospel Music (Muziki wa Injili), as part of mass media, plays that role. The Swahili expression Muziki wa Injili will be preferred to its English translation “Gospel Music” because in the context of Tanzania it conveys more clearly the concept of this music genre.

4.9.1 The Role of Music in African Cultural and Religious Contexts

Before exploring the subject of Gospel music, a general remark on the role of music in the African cultural and religious context is helpful. Most music in traditional African cultures

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816 See: Ibid.
818 Gospel Music began in America within Protestantism in the 18th century as some Puritans introduced a new way of singing hymns apart from the palms which was the practice hitherto. The new hymnody was “characterized by somewhat repetitive restatement of basic Protestant affirmations, ease of singing, and a
is not meant merely to provide entertainment or aesthetic enjoyment. Rather, it also serves to convey a particular message. Among the indigenous people of Songea, for instance, it is customary to pass an important message across the society through music, i.e. singing, playing an instrument or dancing.\textsuperscript{819} A message presented in musical form has a particular persuasive power among Africans and normally receives a greater attention than when propagated by ordinary speech. Thus it is not surprising that the launching of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation \textit{Africæ Munus} in Benin in November 2011 was accompanied by a concert performed by African popular musicians. The concert focused on the theme of the second African Synod.\textsuperscript{820} By using the language of music that is intelligible to all Africans, the church hoped to spread the message of the Synod more effectively.\textsuperscript{821}

The use of music for the purpose of assisting rituals is probably the most important and most frequent use of music as far as traditional African culture is concerned. According to John S. Mbiti, there exists an intimate relationship between religion and music. Religious songs are “…repositories of traditional beliefs, ideas, wisdom and feelings…Music, singing and dancing reach deep into the innermost parts of African peoples, and many things come to the surface under musical inspiration which otherwise may not be readily revealed.”\textsuperscript{822} In an attempt to describe the origin of music in relation to African rituals, Nadel has formulated a theory in which he claims that music came into existence following the desire of the African people “to have a special language other than ordinary speech for communication with the world of spirits.”\textsuperscript{823} In view of the prominence of music in African religious rituals, Nadel’s theory can be held plausible.

In Christianity, musical expressions in worship are predominant. They are used to express, reflect and articulate the Christian faith. St. Augustine of Hippo underlines this fact quite sentimental emotional content.” Gospel songs later came to be spread in other parts of the world through revivals and Sunday schools. See: J. Gordon Melton (ed.), \textit{Encyclopedia of Protestantism}, ‘Hymns/Music’ (New York: Facts on File Inc., 2005), 280.

\textsuperscript{819} Traditional music forms among the people of Songea include dances such as \textit{lizombe}, \textit{ligwamba} and \textit{beta} among the Wangoni, \textit{todi} and \textit{lipuga} among the Wandendeule, \textit{limbamiza} among the Bena, \textit{mganda} among the Wanyasa and Wamatengo, and other traditional dances that are exclusive for women such \textit{chomanga} and \textit{chihoda}. Moreover, each tribe has a variety of musical instruments which are used for entertainment and communicating message.

\textsuperscript{820} The theme of the Second African Synod was “The Church in Africa in the service of reconciliation, justice and peace.”


succinctly in his exposition of psalm 72.824 He maintains that hymns are praises offered to God in the form of singing; but if the praise of God is not contained in them, then these cannot be considered as hymns. He avers: “Qui enim cantat laudem, non solum laudat, sed etiam hilariter laudat; qui cantat laudem, non solum cantat, sed et amat eum quem cantat...”825 (“for anyone who sings praise is not only praising, but praising cheerfully. The singer of praise is not only performing musically but showing love for the one who is sung about”). He states, furthermore, that praise is at the same time a public proclamation of the one who is being praised.826 Let us now examine how Muziki wa Injili promotes the Gospel of Prosperity.

4.9.2 Meaning of Muziki wa Injili

The concept of Muziki wa Injili can be described as follows:

(It) is a Church music genre... Unlike the mainstream or art Church music in Tanzania that is normally performed either unaccompanied or accompanied by organ or electric keyboard, Muziki wa Injili is characterized by the employment of body movement, incorporating improvisation and featuring the use of electric guitars and keyboards. The music is performed in various global and local popular music styles such as rumba, soukous, reggae, zouk, rhythm and blues (R&B), rap, salsa (charanga) and taarab [sic.].827

4.9.3 Popularity of Muziki wa Injili

The popularity of Muziki wa Injili in Tanzania is due to several factors: first, Muziki wa Injili is normally not notated in either staff or solfa notation but largely “composed, transmitted and preserved orally and aurally.”828 This makes it easier to sing, repeat and memorise its message. The hymns present an oral theology of the ordinary Christians.

Second, Muziki wa Injili comprises singing, dancing, and the playing of musical instruments and sometimes even the clapping of hands. The songs “communicate as much to the body and the emotions as to the mind. With the movements of the body the whole person is involved in worship, making one spiritual, while remaining corporeal.”829 All these bodily gestures and the musical accompaniments foster active participation of the audience. The singing is sometimes done in an onomatopoeic way to mime the playing of a trumpet of an angel. This is intended to create an ambiance of a foretaste of the joy of heaven, “where the

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825 Enarratio in Psalmum 72, 1.
826 See: Ibid.
828 Ibid.
believers will be caught up in angelic celebrations. This resembles the “rapture practice” touted by some evangelical churches in North America today in preparation for the impending end of the world. Rapture readiness is perceived to be an “act of faith with bodily practice, artefacts, and materiality.” Accordingly, believers are encouraged to jump high in air in practice for the rapture, since jumping presumably makes it easier for the rapture to occur.

Third, Tanzania witnesses the proliferation of church choirs (kwaya) that sing this music genre. The Swahili term kwaya has a deeper meaning in the Tanzanian Christian context than the English word “choir” from which it is rendered. As Gregory Barz explains:

A kwaya is a community that gathers several times each week to define its spirituality musically. Wanakwaya (members of a kwaya) come together to pray, to sing, to support each other in terms of need, and to both learn and pass along new and inherited faith traditions.

Church choirs have the advantage of spreading the Word of God as well as the faith traditions of their particular churches.

Fourth, in terms of content, songwriters of *Muziki wa Injili* place a great deal of emphasis on contemporary life alongside eschatological motifs. Thus issues like marital relationships, economic problems, HIV/AIDS, and problems of alcoholism, often constitute the main themes, apart from other-worldly themes like “the heavenly glory.”

Fifth, the ambiance of performance of *Muziki wa Injili* is not confined to hours of church services but extends to occasions of evangelical meetings, crusades, and in concert halls. This allows for a greater public participation in *Muziki wa Injili* as compared to liturgical hymns. Its performance is also not limited to groups of church choirs. Individual musicians also perform it and may record and sell their music in the form of audio and video cassettes, CDs, and DVDs.

Sixth, the proliferation of recording studios, made possible by the use of computer and internet technology and increased broadcasting opportunities on television and radio stations serve to promote *Muziki wa Injili*. Some of the recording studios and mass media are owned by church organizations.

Seventh, *Muziki wa Injili* songs are somewhat ‘songs of revolt’ for young people who negotiate their identity in a church perceived to be dominated by older men. The resentment of young people over the predominance of older men in the church has often been voiced in

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830 Peter Wood and Emma Wild-Wood, op.cit.,172.
832 See: Ibid.
834 See: Imani Sanga, op.cit., 146ff.
835 See: Gregory Barz, op. cit. 2ff.
different parishes in the Archdiocese of Songea as well. But in terms of church music, the traditional church hymns have been dominated by older people. The youth now seek their self-expression in Muziki wa Injili. All these merits contribute to the popularity of Muziki wa Injili. In fact, it can be said that currently the popularity of Muziki wa Injili supersedes that of secular music. And those who sell this music profit economically. Undeniably, this fact partly accounts for the conversion of many secular music artists in Tanzania to the Pentecostal churches that provide ample room for Muziki wa Injili.

The disadvantage of Muziki wa Injili, however, is that the songs are mostly short-lived. This owes largely to their mode of transmission which is mostly oral, and to the fact that the songs are often centred on an individual gospel-singer celebrity. In addition, some songwriters of Muziki wa Injili in Tanzania aim more at economic gain from their composition rather than proclaiming the Word of God. This may eventually compromise the prophetic voice of the songs.

4.9.4 Muziki wa Injili as Conveyor of The Prosperity Gospel

The Prosperity Gospel is a salient feature in Muziki wa Injili. The content of the songs tend to focus on material prosperity motifs. The songs also tend to adopt the so-called "Vumilia theology" which often ignores unjust social structures.

4.9.4.1 Prosperity Motifs in Hymn Content

Many songwriters today privilege themes with material prosperity as their central message. Nigerian singer, Uche, has aptly captured this fact in the lyrics of his song known as “Double double.” He sings that God is a good God who, “when you believe in him, doubles your money, houses, cars and everything you have.” The following lyrics from an unidentified composer in Tanzania were quite a hit in Songea at the time of this research:

“Waliokudharau siku moja watakuheshimu...” (i.e. those who have been despising you will come to respect you). The lyrics imply that embracing Christ enables one to achieve a higher socio-economic status and win respect. Similarly, a famous gospel singer in Tanzania, Rose Mhando, sings about the “sweetness” of Jesus (Utamu wa Yesu) in her album released in 2011. Some of the lyrics in this song reiterate prosperity motifs:

836 It has been stated in some pastoral meetings, for example, that the reason behind the non-participation of the youth in Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the predominance of male adults in those meetings in terms of decision-making. This is according to the observations of members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, Songea, 2002.
837 Peter Wood and Emma Wild-Wood, op.cit., 156.
838 Lovemore Togarasei, op.cit., 345f.
839 Recorded and distributed by Audiovisual (E.A) Ltd., Dar es Salaam.
Ukitaka magari mazuri onjeni utamu wa Yesu (i.e. if you want posh cars, taste the sweetness of Jesus). Ukitaka majumba mazuri onjeni utamu wa Yesu (i.e. If you want beautiful houses, taste the sweetness of Jesus). The themes of Muziki wa Injili that connote material prosperity of a believer include “victory”, “success”, “restoration of dignity”, “respect” and so on. Additionally, prosperity motifs possibly come to be embedded into Tanzanian indigenous music through the process of hybridization of foreign musical expressions which bear such motifs. 840

4.9.4.2 “Vumilia” Theology

Replicating the Prosperity Gospel preachers, songwriters often tend to dwell on displaying problems rather than offering tangible solutions. Notably amid the prevailing socio-economic and political problems in Tanzania much of Muziki wa Injili promises solace, comfort and consolation to those who fear death, and those in suffering and difficulty. In other words, the hymns simply provide a way of understanding the problems and the survival mechanism within the daily context of poverty of the people, and their social insecurity. Yet these hymns do not proclaim Jesus Christ who leads Christians to engage the world and try to change society. They proclaim the Jesus who encourages resignation in the face of austere suffering experienced by the people. Some theologians have referred to this kind of theology as vumilia theology. 841 It is a theology that offers a framework of escapism and comfort. Believers are encouraged “to put up with, or endure, the present situation because the world is inherently evil and things will be better in heaven.” 842 Rose Muhando’s song titled Nipe Uvumilivu (i.e. give me perseverance) offers a good example of vumilia theology. She impersonates a single mother who has been deserted by men who have fathered children with her. Living in austere poverty, she prays to God for perseverance:

Nimekukimbilia wewe Bwana (I have run to you for refuge, Lord)
Mwamba wangu na ngome yangu (my rock and my fortress)
Watoto wangu wanahangaika (my children are in troubles)
Walonizalisha wamenikimbia (the fathers of my children have run away from me)
Baba nipe uvumilivu (Father, give me perseverance)
Maisha yangu yamo mashakani (my life is uncertain)
Baba nipe uvumilivu (Father, give me perseverance)

840 See the discussion on the process of hybridization of music by Imani Sanga, op.cit., 146ff.
841 See: Peter Wood and Emma Wild-Wood, op.cit., 156.
842 Ibid.
Even with regard to HIV/AIDS some songwriters tend to proclaim theologies that focus on blaming the victim for his or her sinful life or merely encouraging believers to ‘hide’ themselves in Jesus Christ as an antidote.\textsuperscript{843} The ‘pyramidal’ social structures that produce and maintain the existence of the poor and ultimately lead to high proportions of HIV-infections are never called into question. Eventually, it is symptoms rather than the underlying causes of the HIV/AIDS pandemic that are tackled in the hymns.

4.10 Prosperity Gospel in Institutes of Education

The Prosperity Gospel draws much appeal among young people in secondary schools, colleges and universities. Students in Songea are well known for their anxieties in relation to their day-to-day life at schools or colleges, the question of education fees, performance in examinations, and future employment opportunities. This makes them prone to join churches that promise to tackle these issues. In secondary schools, it is also observable that suspicions of witchcraft and demon possessions are common experience, particularly in girls’ boarding schools. Some student respondents informed me that girl students often fake demon possession in order to avoid examinations or in reaction to mistreatment by teachers.\textsuperscript{844} Not infrequently Christian pastors are invited to drive out demons that allegedly beset school premises. Again, it is widely believed among students that embracing the Prosperity Gospel assures one of success in studies and examinations. It is said that born-again students count it a shame for them to fail in their examinations.\textsuperscript{845} On account of their higher academic levels, college and university students seem to cherish the Prosperity Gospel even more. They deem it to be the gateway to success in education, job opportunities, and chances for travelling abroad as well as a stepping-stone to modernity. University students are particularly enthralled by nondenominational Prosperity Gospel churches that count themselves as the original Christian churches. These churches renounce administrative hierarchies like bishoprics and diocese as present in the mainline churches. They also disdain the concept of revelation as expressed by faith healers and Pentecostals.\textsuperscript{846} Issues of divinity and salvation are approached rationally. And the study of the Bible is done systematically in order to be able to communicate it well to non-Christians. The churches privilege education and

\textsuperscript{843} See: Castor M. Goliama, op.cit., 16-17.
\textsuperscript{844} Informants: Students from Songea Girls’ Secondary School, July 2010.
\textsuperscript{845} Ibid.
emphasize the study of anthropology, which they believe to be a ‘secular tool’ for combating secularism.  

In fact, one of the trends among Catholic university students is the decline in the perceived importance of being Catholic. They seem to pay less attention to the reception of sacraments, praying the rosary, and other elements of Catholic identity. Of central importance for them is reading the Bible and living a good Christian life. They tend to have a deinstitutionalized and democratic view of the church. Influenced by other churches and the contemporary political currents of democracy, the young Catholic adults want a more egalitarian, participatory as well as democratic church. Knowing these attitudes is helpful for a suitable pastoral approach at the campus.

### 4.11 Prosperity Gospel: Congruence with African Religions

The Gospel of Prosperity and African Religion have some areas of shared concern. For the purpose of this section we shall examine two areas: First, both conceive God as the God of abundant life. Secondly, both maintain a similar vision of the causality of suffering. These areas of congruence make the indigenous people of Songea “feel at home” when they appropriate the Gospel of Prosperity. In African Religion material prosperity has always been an important objective of communication with the invisible world. Presumably all prosperity originates from the invisible world. The people’s immediate welfare is believed to depend on the powers inhabiting the spirit world.

#### 4.11.1 African Names of God: God is the God of Abundant Life

It has to be pointed out first of all that the African conception of the name of God is relevant to African Christianity. Sanneh has pointed out that the name of God has played a significant role in the conversion of Africans to Christianity. He argues that Africans best responded to Christianity where in the process of appropriating it the indigenous name of God was preserved. He avers:

> The name of God is basic to the structure of traditional societies. It forms and regulates agricultural rituals, territorial cults, agrarian festivals, the solar calendar, fertility ceremonies, mortuary observance, anniversary customs, units of generational measurement, naming rules, ethics, rank and status, gender relations, filial obligation, gift making, sacrificial offering and so on.

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847 See: Ibid., 138.
848 Informants: University students, Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), Nairobi, May 2005.
849 See: Gerrie ter Haar, op.cit., 90.
850 Lamin Sanneh, op.cit., 31.
Thus when African names for God were appropriated in Christianity, corresponding implications for social and cultural renewal would be maintained. African Religions being conveyors of the names of God eventually became relevant anticipations of Christianity.\textsuperscript{851}

In the traditional religious thought of the people of Songea, various names and attributes ascribed to God depict God as being inherently a God of abundant life. The divine titles include \textit{Mulungu}, \textit{Chapanga}, \textit{Magavila}, \textit{Mwene}, and \textit{Ngalwala}.

\textbf{4.11.1.1 “Mulungu”: God is “Perfection par Excellence”}

\textit{Mulungu} is the name of God commonly used in Bantu languages. Its Swahili rendering is \textit{Mungu}. Emmanuel Mapunda has argued that this name seems to derive etymologically from the verb ‘kulunga’, which means ‘to aim at’ or more precisely ‘to have aimed at being oneself’, i.e. self-realization, self-fulfillment. Thus, the name \textit{Mulungu} conveys the concept of God as ‘The One who is Self-perfection Itself’ or ‘Perfection par excellence’.\textsuperscript{852} The Ngoni people believe that \textit{Mulungu} has a healing power. It is common to hear a person say: “I have been poisoned. I must seek out a doctor who will give me good medicine... \textit{Mulungu} will help me so that I shall recover...”\textsuperscript{853} The Bena hold similar beliefs and maintain that departed spirits and medicine-men can bring about healing simply because they participate in the power of \textit{Inguluvi}, the Bena name for \textit{Mulungu}.

\textbf{4.11.1.2 “Chapanga”: God is the Creator}

The Ngoni and the Ndendeule refer to God as \textit{Chapanga}, i.e., the one who has created all things and arranged things around us in a definite order.\textsuperscript{855} The verb \textit{kupanga} from \textit{Sutu} language, now adopted also in Swahili language, had originally the meaning of putting in order, arranging, constructing. The indigenous people believed that \textit{Chapanga} was the Sustainer of the world in which they lived. His work of creation was believed to be witnessed even by the celestial and terrestrial powers that symbolise his power.\textsuperscript{856} The people have frequently appealed to \textit{Chapanga}’s intervention in such occasions as birth, drought, crop failure, and the emergence of an epidemic. \textit{Chapanga} has always been regarded as the regulator of birth, fortune as well as death. Thanksgiving rituals would be performed during

\textsuperscript{851} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{852} Emmanuel Mapunda, “Truth According to the Ngoni of the South-West Tanzania and the Catholic Moral Theology, A Dissertation Submitted to Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis Academia Alfonsiana in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Moral Theology”, (Rome, 1983) (Unpublished), 34.
\textsuperscript{853} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{854} Ibid., 84.
\textsuperscript{855} See: James J. Komba, op.cit., 97.
\textsuperscript{856} Ibid.
first harvest. But in the event of drought, rituals intended to avert Chapanga’s punishment and to implore him to bring good harvest, would be performed. Moreover, since the people associate creation with ownership, they also refer to Chapanga as Mkolomlima (the Owner of the Land per se). Interestingly, the indigenous people have always believed that Chapanga is free to give persons the gift of life as he wills and likes. Nobody has the right to demand it from him, nor criticise his work of creation. He is seen as Bambu (Master), thus he can do what he likes. That being the case, when a person is born with a physical disability it is considered Chapanga’s own will. And, in fact, Chapanga’s might is believed to be better manifested in his creation of cripples than in that of able-bodied persons.\(^{857}\) To despise people with physical disability is therefore tantamount to laughing and criticising Chapanga himself.\(^{858}\)

4.11.1.3 “Magavila”: God is the Alloter

The attribute Magavila means that it is God who allots every person what he or she has. The verb kugava means to divide, to allot. The Ngoni regard Chapanga as a God who gives, he is a generous God. He gives one his or her earthly life, children, health, wealth, and happiness. Being Magavila, God is also believed to determine all human destinies. Thus a person bidding farewell to family members or friends will often say: Talakonganeka kavili Chapanga akapalayi (We shall meet again, if the Creator wills). But Chapanga is also the one who metes out justice to all people alike, irrespective of their social status. As such, when an unjust treatment is perceived, the tendency is to appeal to God. The offended person would often say: Talakonganeka kunani kwa Chapanga (we shall meet above, before the just God).

4.11.1.4 “Mwene”: God is Omnipotent

The attribute Mwene refers to God as a powerful Being. The forces of nature such as thunderstorm, earthquakes, floods, rains, drought, the facts of days and nights, eclipses, epidemics, and the like, are perceived to represent him symbolically. Thus when tremors of the earth occur, the Ngoni would say: Mwene ipita hinu (he himself is now passing).\(^{859}\) But confronted with a terrifying thunderbolt, they would usually remark: Mwene ahyomili (he himself is angry). The designation Mwene portrays God as the owner of all things including life of which human beings are mere custodians.

\(^{857}\) Ibid., 98.
\(^{858}\) The people explained to me that if you laugh at a person with physical disability, the same kind of disability will befall you. Interview with elders at Shule ya Tanga Village was held on 11\(^{th}\) July, 2010.
\(^{859}\) See: James J. Komba, op.cit., 84.
4.11.1.5 “Ngalwala”: God Never Gets Sick, God is Immortal

The attribute *Ngalwala* depicts God as the source of life or rather as life itself, since he neither falls sick nor dies. He is immortal. Recognising their own situation of fragility, mortality, the feeling of hunger and other aspects of uncontrollable human weakness, the indigenous people come to acknowledge that there must be an immortal Being to which they have to affiliate themselves in the form of religious dependence.\(^{860}\) Being *Ngalwala*, God is conceptualized as being rich, abundant in life, and one who is ready to shower his material blessings to those who please him. Consequently, associating with this God assures one not only of spiritual benefits, but also of life and material prosperity. This prosperity includes health, wealth, fertility, good harvest, and any other imaginable expressions of success. Failure to observe the stipulated conditions in the relationship with God and the spiritual realm is believed to hinder prosperity, and conversely cause suffering.

We can thus conclude that the concept of God as the God of abundant life and prosperity is not foreign to the African traditional religious concept. As such, the Prosperity Gospel doctrine that God is the God of abundance and that he wants to make faithful believers materially rich is a familiar message to the African ear.

4.11.2 On the Causality of Suffering and Death

Another area of convergence between African Religion and the Prosperity Gospel revolves around the subject of causality of suffering and death. In African religious thought “all life is religious, all life is sacred, all life is a piece.”\(^{861}\) It follows that, the Greek philosophical adversarial binaries of body versus soul and spirit versus matter are foreign to African Religion. John Taylor, a Christian missionary in Africa, has maintained that a sense of cosmic oneness is an essential element in African Religion: “... no distinction can be made between sacred and secular, between natural and supernatural, for nature, man and the Unseen are inseparably involved in one another in a total community.”\(^{862}\)

Such a worldview has far-reaching implications. One area that frequently boggles the African mind is the question of causality, particularly when one is confronted with issues such as suffering and death. Gifford has noted that in African Religion, “although natural causality is not entirely disregarded, causality is to be discerned primarily in the spiritual realm.”\(^{863}\)


\(^{862}\) Winton Arthur Lawson, op.cit., 37.

Accordingly, the Ngoni people of Songea, for instance, will unhesitatingly attribute to God their good and bad inclinations, their ideas, their cares, their jealousy and disappointment. But suffering, death, and even lack of economic success are often ascribed to the influence of witchcraft, demonic forces and the influence of ancestral spirits. The Prosperity Gospel similarly ascribes the causality of material success to the Spirit of God, but that of suffering, poverty, business failure, and other sinister effects, to the influence of demons, witchcraft and ancestral spirits.

4.12 Influence of the Prosperity Gospel on the Catholic Church

This research has found out that the proliferation of the Prosperity Gospel to some extent influences the Catholic Church in Songea. The areas in which this influence is most saliently discernible are the practice of faith healing and exorcism as well stewardship.

4.12.1 Yearning for Faith Healing

An unprecedented yearning for faith healing is discernible in the Archdiocese of Songea today. Evidently the encounter with the Prosperity Gospel churches has advertently or inadvertently influenced Catholics. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) movement has remarkably responded to this demand. This movement usually shares much with evangelical Pentecostal movements. The ministry of the CCR has now been consolidated in many parishes of the archdiocese. At Mjimwema Parish, for example, I witnessed crowds of people coming to the CCR centre. Sr. Gertrude OSB, who pastorally accompanies the CCR movement, explained to me that Christians of different denominations as well as Muslims troubled by various ailments come to seek faith healing at the CCR centre. The CCR members perform healing and exorcism and give counselling services. In 2011, the CCR members from Mjimwema and Songea parishes conducted deliverance ministries at Liganga Parish in the western part of the archdiocese. Many Christians in that parish were believed to be affected by witchcraft beliefs. Delivered Christians handed their witchcraft objects to the CCR members to be burned.

4.12.2 Church Economic Stewardship

The Archdiocese of Songea is far from being a self-supporting Church. It remains overly dependent on material resources from abroad. What Gifford has observed with regard to the older churches in other parts of Africa holds true for Songea as well. Notably, funds for

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864 See: James Komba, op.cit., 80.
865 Informant: Sr. Gertrude OSB, Spiritual leader of CCR at Mjimwema Parish, 13th June, 20011.
evangelization per se, for various projects, including education and health services, for fighting HIV/AIDS, for the upkeep of orphans, and so on, are mainly in foreign aid. Currently new methods of attracting resources from European churches have evolved, like the so-called ‘twinning’ or partnership. Some parishes of the Archdiocese of Songea, such as Hanga, Ifinga, Kitanda, and Ligunga are twinned with parishes in Germany. Evidently, the parishes of Songea tend to be at the receiving end. Becoming self-supporting is therefore a critical issue in the archdiocese. How will the Church manage to sustain its pastoral ministry and social services provision status amid diminishing material and human resources from Western churches? Undeniably inadequate material means in terms of finances and means of transport pose one of the greatest challenges for the fulfillment of the Church’s mission to evangelise in Africa. This is particularly so because most of the parishes in Africa are in rural areas. Rural areas in places like Songea are well known for their marginality status. They are inhabited by the poorest people of the country. They are deficient of enabling infrastructure like good transportation system, modern means of social communications, and electricity. This lack of material resources, as Cardinal Polycarp Pengo of Dar es Salaam underlines, ultimately hampers effective pastoral ministry.

To promote stewardship and self-reliance, the archdiocese has put in place various measures. For example, in 2002 it established a development department named Development in the Archdiocese of Songea (DASO) or Maendeleo Jimbo Kuu la Songea (MAJIKUSO). This organ has facilitated needs assessment seminars conducted all over the archdiocese. The seminars were meant to determine the problems that hinder self-reliance and to identify appropriate solutions. Advocacy seminars have also quite often been organized to raise the awareness, increase the knowledge and discuss concrete steps towards self-reliance. DASO has been facilitating on-going empowerment seminars for lay people and the clergy in the various parishes. Subsequent to such strategies, a growing commitment to stewardship is now witnessed in the archdiocese. This is particularly seen in the urban parishes of Bombambili, Mjmwema, Matogoro and Songea. In all these parishes huge church construction and repair projects have been carried out through self-reliance initiatives. Parishioners also manage to provide their priests and catechists with remuneration. Even the Archbishop Norbert W. Mtega has often testified to this fact.

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867 See discussions in Chapter One.
869 He expressed his appreciation of the stewardship spirit at the inauguration of the new parish of Mjmwema in on 2nd November 2003, at the opening of Bombambili parish-hall in June 2011 and in many other occasions.
Notable in these self-reliance endeavours is the influence of the Prosperity Gospel tactics. For example, its fundraising tactics are increasingly adopted by Catholic fundraisers. This was evidenced in 2002 when the Episcopal Conference of Tanzania launched a National Mission Committee at Songea. The committee was intended to be an organ for promoting lay participation in stewardship and evangelization in the Catholic Church in Tanzania. The liturgical celebrations took place at Maji Maji Stadium and large multitudes of people participated. The clergy and the laity shared the pulpit in a homily that focused mainly on stewardship in the Catholic Church. Some of the preachers gave personal testimonies on how they received material blessings from God after tithing and giving generous offerings for church ministry.

One preacher testified: “I contributed generously to our parish construction project, sometimes even denying myself some necessary things. But soon afterwards God rewarded me; quite unexpectedly I was offered a beautiful house at a very cheap price.” And another said: “I have always paid my tithes faithfully, although my salary is low and the financial situation precarious. Yet God has blessed me abundantly for that sacrifice because recently I got a promotion.” Such fundraising rhetoric has not been common in the Catholic Church. It is clearly redolent of the Prosperity Gospel language.

Father Paul Chiwangu, then parish-priest of Songea, often invited lay Catholics from the Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam to promote stewardship among his parishioners. Catholics in Dar es Salaam seem to be farther ahead with regard to stewardship. This may be partly attributed to their greater affluence and their interaction with the large Prosperity Gospel churches operating there. One of the invited guest preachers employed the analogy of the mobile phone to emphasize his point. He argued: “If you don’t pay your tithes and if your heart is so ungrateful that you don’t see the need to give God your resources, it is like you are “beeping” God. And if you “beep” God, he will certainly call you.” He meant that a Christian who neglects church stewardship resembles a mobile phone user who tries to sustain mutual communication with a partner by simply flashing the partner instead of incurring the cost of calling him or her. For the preacher, “beeping” Christians are those who seek to follow Christ, but are not ready to incur the cost of discipleship or carry the cross of discipleship. He insisted that God’s response to this attitude will be to terminate the earthly life of such Christians. With such hard language the visiting preachers have often succeeded to raise substantial amounts of money. 

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870 Words from a preacher from Dar es Salaam at Stewardship promotion, Songea Cathedral Church, July 2007.
871 Ibid.
The Prosperity Gospel approach of using scriptural texts to proof-text tithing and other Christian duties is also becoming increasingly familiar in the Catholic Church of Songea. Malachi 3: 8-9\(^{872}\) is one of the most frequently quoted texts, although often out of context. Michael Mbano, secretary of the Diocesan Lay Council, for example, reported of using this biblical text to promote fundraising at Maguu Parish in neighbouring Mbinga Diocese. The parishioners were mostly coffee farmers and in that year coffee production was poor and its prices were falling. Mbano preached to them that the crop failure was nothing else but a curse \((laana)\) from God because when their coffee brought them wealth and prosperity they forgot to contribute to church ministry. This was tantamount to robbing God. The parishioners were touched by this message and offerings began to increase.\(^{873}\)

4.12.3 Offertory Hymns

Modern Catholic offertory hymns are also assuming new trends. Their theological emphasis is frequently fraught with prosperity motifs. The following offertory hymn composed by F. Mtegeta exemplifies this fact:

Chorus: *Leteni ndama walionona madhabahuni kwa Bwana, tena toeni bila kinyongo moyoni, ndipo mtabarikiwa naye* (Bring fat calves to the Lord’s altar, and offer him without grudges, then you will be blessed).

Leader: *Toeni sadaka safi iliyo bora ya kupendeza mtabarikiwa na kuongezewa na Mungu Baba* (Offer a pure and quality sacrifice which is pleasing (to God) and you shall be blessed and receive abundant gifts from God the Father).

*Kumbuka yule mjane aliye toa senti moja, alibarikiwa na kuongezewa na Mungu Baba* (Remember that widow who put a penny in the treasury, she was blessed and given in abundance).

Such offertory hymns are preferred by Catholic congregations in Songea today. Their singing is often accompanied by a dancing style that is usually familiar with *Muziki wa Injili*.\(^{874}\) The congregation is easily cajoled to go forward to the altar and give money and other offerings as a kind of investment with God. God then is expected to respond by blessing the giver with abundant gifts. Evidently these modern offertory hymns stand in stark contrast to those with European origin or local African offertory hymns that were composed before the spread of the Prosperity Gospel. For example, in the hymn-cum prayer book *Tumsifu Mungu: Chuo cha Sala*\(^{875}\) used in the Archdiocese of Songea, the hymns are less permeated by the

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\(^{872}\) The quotation reads: “Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How are we robbing thee?’ In your tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me; the whole nation of you.”

\(^{873}\) Informant: Michael Mbano, Songea, July 2010.

\(^{874}\) The dancing or vigorous bodily movement is often disco-like in its style.

\(^{875}\) *Tumsifu Mungu* (i.e. “Let us Praise the Lord”) is an imitation of the hymnal-cum-prayer book *Gotteslob* which is used in liturgical celebrations in European German speaking countries. It was compiled in 1978 by Songea diocesan liturgical committee. It incorporates both Gregorian chants and African hymns composed in the 1960s and 1970s. Some of its hymns are translated from *Gotteslob*.
material prosperity motifs. An offertory hymn by Cassian Spiß OSB, the first Benedictine missionary in Peramiho, runs:

Sadaka za zamani tena hazitufai, twakutolea Baba mikate na divai (The old sacrifices are no longer suitable for us, we offer you Father bread and wine)

Vinageuka kweli Mwili na Damu, kwa enzi yake Yesu, kwa enzi yake kuu (They truly become the body and blood of Jesus Christ, through his command and his almighty power)

Ee Mungu, angalia sadaka bora hii, ukatuhurumie, utoe fadhili (O God, look at this good sacrifice, forgive us, give us your favour)

Pamoja na sadaka ya Yesu Mwanao, twakutolea Baba mwili na roho (Together with the sacrifice of your Son Jesus Christ, we offer you Father, body and soul).

An offertory hymn composed by an African musician, Stephen Mbunga, provides another example:

Utakalo Baba ndilo hasa... sadaka (What you our Father really want is sacrifice)
Kwa hiyo twakutolea... sadaka (Thus we offer you sacrifice)
Mkate huo... sadaka (This bread is sacrifice)
Viwe kweli... sadaka (Let them be truly a sacrifice)
Yake Yesu... sadaka (The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ)
Haya Baba upokee... sadaka (Thus receive Father my sacrifice)
Mwili wangu... sadaka (My body is sacrifice)
Mapenzi yangu... sadaka (My will is sacrifice)
Mali yangu... sadaka (My possessions are sacrifice).

Material motifs in these hymns are not completely absent; however, the main motive for giving offerings to God are clearly stated as being thanksgiving to him for his love. Moreover, the hymns accentuate grace. The believers implore God to accept their gifts, to sanctify them, and change them into the body and blood of his Son, and give them the grace of Communion in return. The motive of giving God the gifts then is not principally to acquire material blessings from him but rather to receive his grace. This theological emphasis of the grace of Communion promotes the option for the poor. It proposes that the grace received from the body and blood of Christ should commit the believers to the poor, and to the sharing of resources with all. As Benedict XVI notes, “transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ…is the beginning of the transformation of believers, which should lead to the transformation of the world until Christ becomes all in all.”

Given the increasing tendency of material prosperity motifs in Catholic liturgical hymns, it is important to emphasize the general principles underlying sacred music as laid down by the Vatican Council II and reiterated in the “Chirography” of Pope John Paul II. The

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877 Ibid., No.170.
878 Daniel G. Groody, op.cit., 220.
879 See: Vatican Council II, Sacrosanctum Concilium, Art. 6
880 The “chirography” was a papal document signed by the pope, it provided instructions on an administrative order on sacred music. It stressed that music used for sacred rites must have sanctity as its point of reference.
liturgical reforms of the council emphasize that the purpose of sacred music is “the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful.” In keeping with these guidelines, liturgical hymns should not emphasize material blessings at the expense of grace.

4.13 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to present the expressions of the Gospel of Prosperity movement in the Archdiocese of Songea. It has identified several factors that account for its popularity. The first factor revolves around the subject of power relations. This has been distinguished into four categories: First, it is power relations that emerge with respect to the influence of malignant forces on the society. The Prosperity Gospel movement becomes attractive because it promises the people protection against witchcraft and demonic powers. Second, it is power with regard to the hegemony of the older churches. The Prosperity Gospel movement has emerged at the time when the Catholic Church and other historic churches appear to lose their socio-economic monopoly subsequent to the onslaught of the global market culture. The global market rhetoric engenders a transformation from a monopolistic religious economy to an unregulated one. Thus faith-based organizations, just like commercial firms, compete for religious consumers. The switching of the members of the older churches to the Prosperity Gospel movement is one of the consequences of such power struggle. Third, it concerns power relations vis-a-vis women. The Prosperity Gospel movement displays an egalitarianism that empowers women to preach the gospel and to participate in decision-making processes. To the mostly patriarchal societies of Songea this is a gender regulating posture in favour of women empowerment. It is a posture that certainly draws women to this religious movement. Fourth, it is about economic power relations. The prosperity Gospel presents itself as a better option for the poor than the historic churches. The people embrace it to try their luck.

The second factor that furthers the popularity of the Prosperity Gospel is the perception that it conforms to the demands of urban society and modernity. Growing urbanisation and pervasive globalisation forces reinforce this perception. Besides, the doctrine itself is a novelty in Songea; this fact makes it appealing to the Christians who seek changes.


882 Sacrosanctum Concilium, Art. 6, # 112.
The third factor is the proliferation of modern media of social communications. *Muziki wa Injili*, television, radio, films, CDs and DVDs, the Internet, electronic public address systems, print media and others, all contribute to make the Prosperity Gospel popular.

The fourth factor is the appeal of the Prosperity Gospel among secondary school, college and university students. They pin their hopes on this doctrine because it promises them protection against malevolent forces at the campus, the passing of examinations, and success in studies as well as in future career.

The fifth factor is that the Prosperity Gospel demonstrates some sort of congruence with African Religion. There is a shared concern between the Prosperity Gospel and African Religion in their emphasis of the material benefit of religiosity and worship. Both conceive God as the God of abundant life. On the other side, both view malignant spirits as the cause of suffering and death.

The chapter has also pointed out that the Prosperity Gospel preachers tend to downplay the role of God’s grace and the significance of the cross of Jesus Christ. In relation to Catholics, the chapter has revealed some areas in which the Prosperity Gospel seems to exert some influence; these areas include faith healing and exorcism; church economic stewardship, particularly fundraising tactics; Gospel Music, the composition of liturgical hymns with material prosperity motifs.

Significantly the chapter has demonstrated the existence of ambivalent relationships between the Prosperity Gospel and the poor in Songea. On the one hand, the Prosperity Gospel promises to hold the key for poverty alleviation and the empowerment of the poor. But on the other hand, it embodies some elements that are inimical to the option for the poor and socio-economic upward mobility. This ambivalence suggests that this doctrine cannot engender a remarkable socio-economic transformation in Songea despite its growing popularity.

Chapter Five will examine the Gospel of Prosperity from the point of view of the Protestant Ethic and the “Maji Cult” millenarian movement.
PART TWO
THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL AND THE OPTION FOR THE POOR:
SOCIO-ECONOMIC, BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS
CHAPTER FIVE

THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF “THE PROTESTANT ETHIC” AND “MAJI CULT” MILLENIANISM

5.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to compare the Prosperity Gospel with the Weberian Protestant Ethic and the Maji Maji millenarian Cult of Songea. It is the argument of this chapter that the practice of the Prosperity Gospel in Songea displays a number of Protestant Ethic and millenarian Cult characteristics. An elaborate correlation is therefore helpful to illustrate the significance of the Prosperity Gospel in Songea.

Global debates are currently underway about the influence of the Prosperity Gospel on African Christianity. The proponents of this movement tend to demonstrate that it replicates the Protestant Ethic made famous by the influential German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) in his thesis *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Thereby they suggest that this movement fosters a modernizing work ethic in Africa, hence a catalyst of socio-economic change. Such proponents include, among others, Peter Berger, David Martin, and Amos Yong. As subsequent sections will show, Max Weber’s thesis of the Protestant Ethic has been criticised in some respects. Yet it is still helpful in the analysis of the relationship between religious tenets and economic ethos.

There are also critics of the Prosperity Gospel. These do not see this doctrine as embodying a religious force that can engender a remarkable socio-economic change in Africa. Commentators who hold such an opinion include, *inter alia*, Paul Gifford, Puleng

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884 See Chapter One.

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LenkaBula, and Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu. Their objection is premised mainly on the fact that the Prosperity Gospel movement in Africa tends to place a great deal of emphasis on miracles and the intervention of malevolent spiritual forces. At the same time, the members of the movement do not foster the interrogation of unjust systems that underlie the problem of poverty. Being engrossed in miracles, the Prosperity Gospel replicates some aspects of millenarian cults. One of the basic characteristics of the millenarian cults, as epitomized by the famous Cargo Cults of Melanesia, is the expectation of miraculous transformation of societies. On account of that, some scholars have described the emergence of such millenarian movements as a result of human search for solutions through an irrational fantasy. Other scholars, on the contrary, have noted that to turn to some millenarian solution should not be seen as merely escapist. Rather, the cargoist and other millenarian hopes should also be seen as “the instruments of a longed-for human fulfillment.” Arguably, even in Christianity “the classic Christian hope climaxes in the Second Coming rather than in the gradual achievement of the Kingdom.”

What this chapter attempts to emphasize, nevertheless, is that in engineering a socio-economic transformation the appeal to miraculous expedients does not suffice. The chapter will demonstrate that the “Maji Cult” that permeated the Maji Maji Uprising in Songea in the early 20th century was a typical millenarian movement. It extolled miraculous expectations as the means to fulfill its millenarian hopes. Admittedly the Maji Cult is no longer fashionable in Songea. Yet it continues to inform anthropological analysis. And this is the point of its employment in this chapter.

Additionally, the chapter does not imply that the Prosperity Gospel churches are a homogenous movement, equally embodying the Protestant Ethic and millenarian cult characteristics. In fact, there are diverse Prosperity Gospel denominations. Some emphasize more the Protestant Ethic while others the miraculous expedients. The denominations surveyed in Songea, which are the focus of this chapter, fall under the latter category. The

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896 Ibid.
question at stake is: how far liberating is the Prosperity Gospel propounded by such
denominations as far as the socio-economic conditions of the local people are concerned?

To avoid being misleading, it must be stated at the outset that not all the aspects of the
Protestant Ethic and the Maji Cults will be investigated in this project. Rather, only a few
areas related to the economic ethos of the Protestant Ethic and the millenarian features of the
Maji Cult will be selected and compared to the Prosperity Gospel.

5.1 Religious Tenets and Economics

Marx Weber and some outstanding Anglican Church figures cited below are among those
who have attempted to testify that Christianity has played a significant role in the
development of Western Capitalism. Notably the history of modernity is traced back to the
Protestant Reformation. Generally, as Bruce notes, the Reformation facilitated and hastened
the advance of individualism and rationality. To these two aspects is ascribed the fundamental
change which subsequently took place with regard to the nature of religion and its place in the
world.\footnote{897 See: Steve Bruce, Religion in the Modern World: From Cathedrals to Cult (Oxford: Oxford University Press,
1996), 3.}

5.1.1 The Weberian Thesis

According to Max Weber, the Protestant Reformation was a key factor for the development
of capitalism. His famous essay: The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism written in
early twentieth century is said to have paved the way in the analysis of the relationship
between religion and economics. Weber used the expression “the Protestant Ethic” to advance
his argument that Protestant churches, in contrast to the Catholic Church, were keener to
emphasize hard work, thrift, the value of time, a disciplined lifestyle, and so on.

A glance at the occupational statistics of any country of mixed religious composition brings to
light with remarkable frequency…the fact that business leaders and owners of capital as well as
the higher grades of skilled labour, and even more the higher technically and commercially
trained personnel of modern enterprises, are overwhelmingly Protestant.\footnote{898 Max Weber, op.cit., 59.}

Weber asserts further:

The Catholic is quieter, having less of the acquisitive impulse; he prefers a life of the greatest
possible security, even with a smaller income, to a life of risk and excitement, even though it
may bring the chance of gaining honour and riches. The proverb says jokingly, “either eat well
or sleep well”. In this present case the Protestant prefers to eat well, the Catholic to sleep
undisturbed.\footnote{899 Ibid., 40f.}
In order to establish a link between the Protestant Ethic and the development of modern form of Western capitalism, Weber highlighted the difference between the latter and the “economic traditionalism”\(^{900}\) that preceded it. For him, what marked off the pre-industrial societies from the capitalistic industrial societies was their attitude to work and wealth accumulation. He maintained that the working methods of pre-capitalist people were characterised by laziness. Apart from sloth, they observed a work ethic that hallowed custom and was so tradition-oriented that it lacked innovation. Their other liability was recklessness in their approach to wealth accumulation. In this aspect they displayed an attitude of fatalism or opportunism since they relied on gambling their fortunes on merchant adventures or foreign wars.\(^{901}\) This attitude thwarted the maximization of productivity. The capitalists on the contrary, worked hard and focused on reinvesting their profits. They were innovative, and did away with the tendency to do business according to what was customary and traditional. And, rather than depending on chance and gaining huge profits by treacherous means, they subjected everything to a systematic scrutiny in order to obtain the best results.\(^{902}\) They also devoted themselves to work painstakingly for a decent profit. Furthermore, employers as well as employees adopted a disciplined lifestyle, making sure that they avoided the dangers of sloth, intemperance, and practised restraint in matters related to indulgence of the senses.\(^{903}\)

The question at stake here is how Protestantism came to play part in this new attitude to work and wealth accumulation that came to define capitalism. Max Weber saw the clue in the way capitalist development was distributed at that time. He observed that capitalism did not take off in countries with predominantly Catholic populations such as Italy, Spain and Portugal.\(^{904}\) Rather, capitalism boomed in some places such as parts of Germany and Holland, England and colonial America where the Protestant Reformation (especially Calvinism) had greatly influenced the society.\(^{905}\) Comparing the Catholic and Protestant Christian traditions, Weber came to the conclusion that Protestants were more likely to occupy managerial

\(^{900}\) Ibid., 35.

\(^{901}\) See: Ibid., 20.

\(^{902}\) See: Ibid., 21f.

\(^{903}\) See: Ibid.,52.

\(^{904}\) It is interesting to raise the question if the Weberian myth about the work ethic of the Southern European (mostly Catholic) states still lives on. Interestingly, for example, amid calls for financial support packages from some ailing Eurozone states, namely Greece, Spain and Portugal, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany gave a speech on 24\(^{th}\) May, 2011 in which she criticized the social welfare states of her European allies. She called upon workers in those Southern European states not to enjoy more vacation days and earlier retirement ages than their Northern European counterparts. Merkel’s comments were interpreted as a call for the Southern European states to work harder, a fact which prompted anger both at home and abroad. (See: Spiegel online International, URL: http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,763618,00.html (accessed 20\(^{th}\) July, 2011).

\(^{905}\) However, contrary to Weber’s claims, empirical evidence shows that other areas of Catholic dominance had also achieved considerable early capitalist successes, for example, parts of Germany, France, and Italy.
positions while Catholics tended to dominate in working class trades. From this observation he postulated that there exists a causal connection between what he termed the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism.

Benjamin Franklin who embodied the Protestant Work Ethic appeared to be Weber’s model of capitalistic ethic. It is an ethic which emphasized punctuality, frugality, industry. Evidently, the Reformation leaders did not behave in the manner of today’s Prosperity Gospel preachers who tell their followers to go and make money. However, their key ideas and work ethic had eventually produced a new attitude towards work and industry.

Weber postulated two key theological ideas to mark a nexus between the Protestant Reformation and the development of capitalism: calling (vocation) and predestination.

5.1.1.1 Reformers’ New Concept of Calling (Vocation)

Weber argued that the concept of calling introduced by Martin Luther (1483-1546) marked a turning point as far as worldly activities were concerned. Luther insisted that all professions are of value regardless of whether they are religious or secular. In the same line of thought the English Puritan divine Matthew Perkins defined a vocation as “a certain kind of life imposed on man by God for the common good.” This new understanding served to redefine and promote mundane roles and occupations. It sacralized the pursuit of the secular roles and occupations since they were now perceived as expressions of piety and as capable of being pleasing to God. Being a priest or a church minister was no longer regarded as being more important than embracing secular professions like business entrepreneurship. In other words, being a secular profession did in no way define it as intrinsically less valuable than priesthood. From Luther’s point of view, even an economic business could be a sacred calling, what mattered was that one performed it diligently and faithfully. The fulfilment of one’s duty in worldly affairs thus came to be understood as the highest form that the moral activity of an individual could take.

Consequently, the Reformers challenged the prevailing division of labour in the church. Religion in Pre-Reformation Christianity was done by proxy whereby monks and the secular clergy did religion and piety, while the laity merely supported. The Reformers contended that this kind of division of labour placed too little premium on personal piety. Luther insisted that every man should be his own monk. He meant that there was need for all people to behave in

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907 See: Ibid., 52.
908 See: Ibid., 79-80.
909 Steve Bruce, op.cit., 15.
a consistently moral and religious manner; that duty did not belong to monks alone. With these and other new definitions of vocation or profession, Weber commended the Reformation for having engendered a significant change both in terms of work ethic\textsuperscript{911} and with regard to power relations in the church. Power now shifted from the hierarchy or religious professionals to the ordinary believers.

5.1.1.2 John Calvin’s Doctrine of Predestination

John Calvin (1509-1564) is another Protestant Reformer whom Weber commends for being instrumental in the promotion of the Protestant Ethic. Calvin’s notion of predestination was the second key Reformation idea that Weber adopted to postulate his suggestion that the Reformation played part in capitalistic development.\textsuperscript{912} The Calvinists taught that Christ died as a sacrifice not for the redemption of all but only for the elect. Accordingly, not everyone was going to be saved. Salvation was meant only for a few people while others would be damned. The Calvinists’ predestination doctrine was also based on their interpretation of a biblical passage in Romans 9:9-24. They came to conclude that God not only has foreknowledge of who is going to be saved and who is going to hell, but he actually predestines as well some people to eternal salvation and others to eternal damnation. Thus there is nothing that one can personally do to earn salvation since neither human merit nor guilt determines one’s election. It all depends entirely on God’s grace.

Commenting on the Calvinists’ doctrine, Weber noted that it not only rejected salvation through church and sacraments, but also inclined believers to individualism and rejection of friendship. He maintained that the doctrine of predestination created a salvation anxiety among the faithful. A Calvinist Christian was always concerned with the question of whether he or she was one of the elect or not.\textsuperscript{913} There was anxiety about identifying the sign that accompanied one’s election so that one could determine his or her destiny. Amid such anxiety, the Christians often heard the clergy teach that the signs of election included honest, disciplinary living and material success. The clergy insisted that one has the duty to attain certainty of election and justification (\textit{certitudo salutis}) in the daily struggle of life. This assertion led church members to embrace what Weber described as ‘this-worldly asceticism.’\textsuperscript{914} Believers sought to demonstrate their conviction of being part of the elect by

\textsuperscript{911} See: Ibid., 81.
\textsuperscript{912} See: Ibid., 98-101.
\textsuperscript{913} See: Ibid., 115.
\textsuperscript{914} See: Ibid., 140.
living a life of systematic self-control which at every moment did not lose sight of the inexorable alternative, chosen or damned.

Weber could discern here a link between religious tenets and economics. He pointed out that in their “this-worldly asceticism” the believers needed no longer to retreat from the world to the monastery. Instead, they would work diligently in their calling, while avoiding temptations of the flesh such as drinking, sexual promiscuity, and gambling as well as other frivolous behaviour associated with tavern life. And because they would embrace the Protestant Work Ethic and avoid frivolous pleasures that waste away money, they would now end up accumulating more money which they would invest in their business activities. This would result into prosperity and hence, capitalism. But the material prosperity of the believers could be taken at the same as a sign from God that they are as well part of the elect.915

It is noteworthy that Weber did not mean that the Reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin were bent head and toe only to encourage the accumulation of wealth, while paying no heed to the plight of the poor. Rather Weber meant that the Protestant Work Ethic that fostered and focused on the accumulation of wealth among Christian believers came as a pertinent consequence of the Reformation’s key ideas. This appears to have happened inadvertently and ironically. This understanding departs from the position of the Prosperity Gospel preachers who literally urge their members to go and create wealth.

5.1.2 Commerce and African Missions

Marx Weber is not alone in claiming that religious worldview could serve to stimulate a valorisation of economic activity. Similar perceptions dominated in Great Britain and preoccupied the missionary rhetoric in relation to Africa. A speech by Bishop Samuel Wilberforce in May 1860 at Leeds on behalf of the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa exemplifies this fact. Wilberforce pointed out that the gospel and commerce were intimately connected: “In the first place, there is little hope of promoting commerce in Africa unless Christianity is planted in it; and in the next place, there is very little ground for hoping that Christianity will be able to make its proper way unless we can establish a lawful commerce in the country.”916 David Livingstone similarly maintained that Christianity and commerce were two inseparable pioneers of civilization. In his Cambridge Senate House speech in 1857, he urged that a path should be cleared in Africa for Christianity and commerce.917 Christianity and commerce were so intimately associated that in some denominations failure in business

915 See: Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, op.cit.,164.
916 Quoted by Kossi A. Ayedze, op.cit., 207.
by church members was construed as evidence of their moral failure. And church deacons and elders were required to investigate such church members. Subsequent to this pattern of thinking Christians came to be characterized as “a wealth producing people, an exporting people, and so, a commercial people.” We may now pose and ask whether European missionaries instilled among evangelized Africans the same thinking framework with regard to Christianity and economic activity.

European missionaries did not instil the spirit of business among Africans. It appears that they mostly reinforced the medieval ethical concept of economics as a vice. In medieval ethical parlance the terms *oeconomos* and *dispensator* were used in relation to virtues, as denoting good household management. But the term *villicus* was used in the discussion of economics as vice. With the emphasis of business practice as vice, business people were hardly seen as models of excellent virtue. Accordingly faithful Christians in Africa were encouraged to shun business and commerce, to frown upon wealth and despise it. Instead, they were taught to be content with peasant economies.

Various factors are thought to have bolstered this discouragement of Africans to engage in business and wealth accumulation. First, it seems that some missionaries acted in compliance with the colonial agenda that discouraged commercial efforts among Africans in order to avoid potential competition. Missionaries in Belgian Congo under King Leopold are often cited as a typical example of colonialists’ collaborators on this regard. The Benedictine missionaries in Tanzania did not take part in the colonial administrative machinery. Yet due to their treaty they signed with the German government they were expected to be instrumental for the achievement of the German colonial political and economic objectives. Secondly, some missionary congregations could not encourage Africans to engage in commercial enterprises because the missionaries themselves, as a matter of policy, were not to engage in

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919 Kossi A. Ayedze, op.cit., 208.
920 Ibid.
921 See: Kelly S. Johnson, op.cit. 145.
922 See: Ibid. 201.
923 See: Ibid., 198f.
924 On 16th April 1887 the Benedictine Congregation signed a treaty with the colonial company *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft* (D.O.A.G) which invited it to take up mission in Tanzania, then *Deutschostafrika*.
See: Sebastian W. Napachihi, op.cit., 50f.
commercial activities. This was the case with the Benedictine missionaries in Tanzania. In the course of time, however, some Benedictine missionaries carried out small commercial activities, especially shops, as contribution in the upkeep of the mission stations. And from the 1990s, the Abbey of Peramiho owned a gold-mine at Lukarasi in Mbinga District where mining activities continued until recently.

Thirdly, some missionaries in Tanzania have been wary that money economy might corrupt African Christians. This was evidenced in the coffee growing areas around Mount Kilimanjaro in northern Tanzania, where Leipzig Lutheran missionaries established mission stations in the early twentieth century. A disagreement arose between the missionaries and Africans over the uses to which coffee profits should be put. While many Africans wanted to use coffee profits to buy imported European goods; many Germans, on the contrary, believed such purchases would corrupt what they termed a “pure” African tradition. As one of the missionaries, Bruno Gutmann, argued:

> Our task is to help the Africans to preserve and strengthen their in-digenous bonds and the ties of kinship…As the alternation of frost and heat will crumble stone, so the African peoples crumble under the action of a money economy with its alternation of stimulus and pressure…

Stambach has commented that the German mission strategy was to evangelise and not to overly "marketize" African society. Manifestly, missionaries have often emphasized poverty as a gateway to heaven and such an emphasis has dominated approbation of wealth. The claim of private property has often been frowned upon, while money has frequently been associated with Mammon. Little attention has been given to the positive aspect of wealth and private property as taught in the Scriptures and patristic writings.

Recently a researcher Maia Green was astonished to find that the Catholic Church in Mahenge Diocese in Tanzania was struggling to run various economic projects and encouraging economic stewardship among its Christians in order to become a self-sustaining diocese. Maia thought such efforts make Christianity a religion of business. It is not clear why Maia took issue with the African diocese while European dioceses are similarly sustained by projects and contributions of church members who are conscious of their stewardship.

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925 Paragraph 8 of the aforementioned treaty stipulated that the Benedictines were not allowed to engage in commercial activities in the colony. They were permitted to produce goods only for the upkeep of their mission stations. Any excess produce was to be handed over to D.O.A.G members, who in turn were to sell it at a three to four percent profit margin. See: Sebastian W. Napachihi, op.cit., 47.


927 Ibid.


929 See: Chapter Seven.

responsibility. She seems to suggest that the parishes of Mahenge should not seek financial
and material contributions from their local people because the diocese receives substantial aid
from Europe. She did not quantify what she called “substantial” donations. Nor does she seem
to have an idea how such donations are sharply declining and that Western churches are
urging African churches to be self-reliant. On the other hand, it is ironical that the donations
sent to African churches from Western churches are money accrued from breweries,
butcheries, factories and other businesses run by Christians and church institutions in West.

One is tempted to ask: are Maia’s arguments perhaps a remnant of the missionary attitude
that taught the African Church to shun business and wealth accumulation? Undoubtedly these
received negative attitudes towards entrepreneurship make the role of the church in the option
for the poor in Africa become somewhat ambivalent because creativity for landmark poverty
alleviation strategies is discouraged.

5.1.3 The Prosperity Gospel versus the Protestant Ethic

Some scholars have commended the Prosperity Gospel as a modernizing force in Africa on
account of the Protestant Ethic it is perceived to inculcate among its adherents. For them, this
economic ethos constitutes its point of appeal.931

5.1.3.1 Puritan Code of Ethics and Upward Socio-Economic Mobility

Like the Puritans, the Prosperity Gospel stresses that being a born-again is becoming a new
creature in Christ.932 Consequently, one is supposed to live a ascetic life, avoiding drinking
alcohol, gambling, engagement in illicit sex, and any wastage of time and money on frivolous
pleasures. Their excess money can now be invested in business, education, and so on.933 A
born-again person is expected to be honest and transparent in both personal and business
relations and a person who works diligently. This ascetic lifestyle renders Pentecostal
members trustworthy and reliable workers. Thus the asceticism of Pentecostal Christianity
renders members trustworthy; these qualities are often sought by employers.934 Again, a born-
again is a loving spouse, a responsible parent, and one who treats all people with

931 See: Peter L. Berger, “Redeeming Prosperity, A Response to Asamoah-Gyadu’s ‘Did Jesus Wear Designer
932 See: 2 Corinth. 5:17.
933 Testimony of former hip-hop musicians, who have converted to Pentecostalism, televised interview, Dar es Salaam, 14th June, 2011.
934 See: Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, op.cit.,164.
compassion. These qualities pave the way to upward socio-economic mobility of the members.

In Tanzania, it is witnessed that a host of secular music artists abandon it as they convert to Pentecostalism. They claim that secular music is associated with sin since it is often performed in the ambiance of dance halls and night-clubs. Now that they have decided to renounce Satan and accept Jesus as their personal saviour, they will engage only in Gospel Music. On the other side, it is believed that Gospel Music has now become more popular and sells better than secular music. The trend to convert to Pentecostalism is discernible as well among famous comedians and entertainers.

Some scholars have suggested, nevertheless, that it would be too simplistic to demonstrate the interaction between the Protestant Ethic and the upward economic mobility of a Pentecostal convert by merely citing the obvious points of convergence between the capitalist work ethic and personal ethic. Rather, the whole constellation of factors that pertain to Pentecostal worship and practice should be taken into consideration.

5.1.3.2 Prosperity Gospel: New Pentecostal Economic Ethos

The Puritan code of ethics we have just described is common to most Pentecostal denominations. Yet the Prosperity Gospel departs from the traditional Pentecostalism in that it emphasizes a struggle for commodities and wealth accumulation. This is not the type of ascetic Protestantism that Max Weber and his interlocutors have explored. It is notable that although Calvinist theologians, for example, encouraged virtues consistent with the spirit of capitalism, avarice and materialism were unhesitatingly condemned by Calvinist leaders. By encouraging conspicuous consumption, the Prosperity Gospel marks a radical transformation in the Pentecostal economic ethos. Moreover, the earliest expressions of Pentecostalism have been rather mystical and otherworldly. Some of the classical denominations like the Assemblies of God largely assumed ascetic trends; they became legalist, while putting organizational restraints on the free expression of the Holy Spirit. Prosperity Gospel Pentecostals in contrast tend to be more inner-worldly. They insist that

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935 See: Ibid.
936 Among the most famous of them include Mzee Makassy, Remmy Ongala and Cosmas Chidumule. They all converted to Pentecostalism. See ThisDay, the Voice of Transparency, URL: http://www.thisday.co.tz/?l=10482 (accessed 24th July, 2011).
937 In 2011 a famous comedian in the country nick-named Masanja Mkandizaji converted to Pentecostalism. In one of his interviews aired in ITV television he affirmed his conversion claiming that every clever person today accepts Jesus as his or her personal Saviour.
938 See: Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, op.cit.,169-171.
939 See Chapter Two.
940 See: David Maxwell, op.cit., 364.
941 See: Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, op.cit., 172.
their reward should come now rather than postponing it until the next life. And in matters pertaining to healing and divine intervention, they “imbibe a strong element of mysticism in their belief in the supernatural.”942 Another novelty of the Prosperity Gospel Pentecostals is their tendency to show off their wealth and assert it as mark of God’s favour on the believer who has tithed faithfully. This feature was not embedded in the earliest expressions of Pentecostalism.943

The economic ethos introduced by the Prosperity Gospel partly impinges on the poor and this to some extent defines the ambivalent role of this doctrine in poverty alleviation.

5.1.4 Prosperity Gospel and the Quest For Solidarity

Respondents in Songea have pointed out that the Prosperity Gospel encourages wealth accumulation among its members. And the relatively rich members tend to flaunt their personal wealth before the poor members. Thus the sharing of wealth with the poor is not encouraged; less so outside the denominational enclaves.

5.1.4.1 Possession Sharing and “Money-theism” versus Ubuntu Solidarity

This lack of sharing of possessions militates against the African ubuntu philosophy of life which is a survival mechanism for poor communities. The term ubuntu originates from the Nguni languages of Southern Africa, but has now acquired a wide usage in theological circles. The corresponding word for ubuntu among the Ngoni and Ndendeule in Songea would be umuntu (literally, the state of being human). Its Swahili rendering is utu, or more precisely utu bora. The expression utu bora abounds in Tanzanian secular and theological literature especially because Nyerere’s Ujamaa political ideology placed a great deal of emphasis on the dignity of the human person.944 The concept ubuntu underlines a very high value of human worth and conveys a concept of humanism. The concept is rooted in a communal setting as opposed to individualism. It posits a culture that privileges communality as well as the interdependence of human beings. It “conveys the belief that each individual’s humanity is truly expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through

942 Ibid.
943 See: Birgit Meyer, op.cit., 460.
recognition of his or her humanity." Therefore, *ubuntu* offers a conceptual paradigm of solidarity of humans and can be summarized in the catchword: “I am because we are.”

Another comprehensive term that expresses this paradigm of solidarity among the people of Songea is *majengenelu* (translated literally as “mutual building” as well as “co-building”). It conveys the meaning of mutual concern and love, dialogue, community life, fellowship, warmth in human relationships, communal peace and tranquillity. *Majengenelu* is the practical expression of *ubuntu* and the force which serves to safeguard the ideals of *ubuntu*. Among the people of Songea the *ubuntu* economic ethos has often been displayed in their joint enterprises such as building houses, cultivating fields and harvesting crops, hunting, dance, war and so on. Among the Ngoni, the term *mgovi* is used to express this solidarity especially in activities pertaining to work. It is indeed a narrative of solidarity that embraces diversity, community and inclusivity in all activities. In all their communal events the people organized themselves into team-work, work party or joint expedition. This has proved to be a convenient survival mechanism where communities are still poorly endowed technologically and financially. It is an arrangement that has expressed the need of mutual assistance within the community, and of helping those who cannot help themselves. In contrast to the capitalistic individualism, the African *ubuntu* solidarity has always ensured that resources are so distributed that no member of the society suffers from poverty while others are enmeshed in riches.

It is the argument of this chapter that the *ubuntu* paradigm of human relationships and other values of African Religion and culture, such as a sense of the sacred with regard to life and of creation, need to be promoted. These have a particular import as the world is becoming increasingly characterized by secularism, science and technology and their concomitant neglect of human and environmental integrity. In such a context the values of African Religion and culture have come to constitute another way of living and being in the world. This is their contribution to global ethic. According to Groody, these values foster the cultivation of ordered relationships, deeper level of intimacy and honesty as well as “a renewed vision of respect for God, one another, and the earth.”

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948 See: Daniel G. Groody, op.cit., 145f.
The Prosperity Gospel reinforces in the Church of Africa neo-liberal economic ethos\textsuperscript{949} which is characterized by “money-theism”.\textsuperscript{950} This is a systemic posture associated with global capitalism that prides the idolisation of capital. In this system, the value and worth of human beings has become increasingly reduced to a “market fundamentalism” and “people are measured in terms of their net worth, accumulated possessions, and incomes rather than their human worth, the quality of their character, and their spiritual worth.”\textsuperscript{951} The \textit{ubuntu} paradigm thus becomes a critical challenge to the Church in Africa to be wary of the tendencies of “money-theism”.

\textbf{5.1.4.2 Reinventing the Christian Virtue of Solidarity}

The aforementioned Prosperity Gospel attitudes towards possessions also challenge Christian communities to foster the Christian virtue of solidarity. The Apostle Paul’s call to the Corinthian Church to foster table fellowship provides an inspiration.\textsuperscript{952} The Christian table fellowship was supposed to be a ritual of incorporation, of group solidarity, and a demonstration of reciprocal hospitality. For the Christians of Corinth, on the contrary, their table fellowship degenerated into a ritual of competitive dramatisation of disparities of wealth and status between the members whereby some of them displayed social superiority. Paul warned that such a practice posed a serious threat to the unity and the life of the ecclesial community in general.\textsuperscript{953}

Despite the motive of safeguarding church unity and integrity, the practice of solidarity is imperative, as an expression of Christian charity. Prosperity Gospel preachers seem to be informed by the \textit{Zeitgeist} which places a great deal of emphasis on the quest for upward mobility. Precisely because of this tendency that solidarity as an expression of Christian charity is called for. Christian solidarity is a form of downward mobility for the sake of the poor. It imitates the downward mobility of Jesus Christ the Incarnate Son of God who, “though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”\textsuperscript{954} Such downward mobility “puts its emphasis on people rather than possessions, on action on behalf of justice rather than accomplishments on behalf of the ego, and on the God of hope rather

\textsuperscript{949} See Chapter Two.
\textsuperscript{950} See: Daniel G. Groody, op.cit., 23.
\textsuperscript{951} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{952} See: 1Cor.11:17-34.
\textsuperscript{954} Phil. 2: 6-7.
than the god of greed.”

Thus a credible option for the poor entails the overcoming of tendencies that jeopardise the Christian virtue of solidarity.

5.1.5 The Prosperity Gospel versus the “Maji Cult” Millenarianism

This section sets out to investigate the elements of the *Maji Cult* which in some respects can be compared to the Gospel of Prosperity. Before attempting such a venture, it is important to define the concepts of “millenarianism” and “Maji Cult”.

5.1.5.1 The Notion of Millenarianism

Millenarianism is defined as “the belief in a future ‘millennium,’ i.e. a thousand-year period of blessedness.” As a Christian concept, millenarianism is based mainly on a strictly literal interpretation of the biblical Book of Revelation. It stresses that “before the Last Judgment… Christ will return to the earth in order to establish an earthly kingdom, a kingdom which will last for 1000 years, the ‘millennium.’” The dream of the millennium has preoccupied various cultures on earth and in various historical periods, as the people felt themselves burdened with the difficulties of earthly life. Under such circumstances they came to conceive of a life free from suffering and need, sickness and death. It is a life without misfortunes and where all creatures live surrounded by abundance, without lacking anything whatsoever. It is a life where people live joyfully and harmoniously. Accordingly, various pertinent movements have emerged imbued with such concepts. The movements have been labelled differently depending on the part the phenomenon of millennium has played in them. Thus they have been termed as “millennistic”, “millenarian” or “chiliastic” movements. A distinction is made between *active* and *passive* millenarian movements. The former type refers to those movements which regard the realization of the millennium as something close at hand. Sometimes even an exact date for the fulfillment of the expected transformation is set. The latter designation concerns those movements which have postponed the realization of the coveted transformation to a far-distant and uncertain future. In the active millenarian movement the members expect the impending fulfillment of the transformation. As a result, they are busily occupied in making the necessary preparations for the great day. In the passive

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959 See: Palle Christiansen, op.cit.,7.
millenarian movement, on the contrary, the adherents have resigned themselves to their fate and current existence. They only look forward to salvation in the next world.\footnote{960}{See: Ibid., 15.}

In Christianity, the primitive church exemplified an active millenarian movement, while modern Christianity generally exhibits a passive millenarianism, except for some preachers who emerge at intervals and claim to know the exact date of the end of the world.\footnote{961}{In March 2011, for example, a US Baptist preacher, Harold Camping, from Oakland, California predicted that the end of the world (the Second coming of the Lord) would be 21\textsuperscript{st} May, 2011 around 6 pm. He reckoned that two percent of the world’s population would be immediately “raptured” to Heaven, while the rest of the population would be sent straight to hell. See: URL: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-preacher-warns-end-of-the-world-is-nigh-21-may-around-6pm-to-be-precise-2254139.html (accessed 20\textsuperscript{th} July, 2011).}

In Tanzania, Archbishop Zachary Kakobe of the Full Gospel Bible Fellowship in Dar es Salaam has repeatedly warned that we are living at end-times (\textit{hiizi ni siku za mwisho}) and one has to seek membership in a church that will take him or her to heaven. He once made such an admonition to discourage people from abandoning healing ministries in his church for another pastor of the Lutheran Church, Ambilikile Mwasapile, who was believed to use herbs to heal chronic diseases.\footnote{962}{See: \textit{Mwananchi}, 7\textsuperscript{th} March 2011. See also \textit{Mwananchi}, 15\textsuperscript{th} March 2011.}

The \textit{Maji} Cult which we explore in subsequent sections belongs to the category of active millenarian movements. This section is not intended to demonstrate causal or historical links between the \textit{Maji} Cult and the Gospel of Prosperity in African Pentecostalism. Rather, it aims at comparing the Gospel of Prosperity with the \textit{Maji} Cult, a comparison which should be helpful for the interpretation of the former. By so doing, nevertheless, this work does not propose that churches or religious movements that propagate the Prosperity Gospel in Africa are themselves “cults”.

\textbf{5.1.5.2 Definitions of “Cult”}

Scholars define the term “cult” from different perspectives such as from theological, academic, and sociological point of view.\footnote{963}{See: Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe, op.cit., 30-35.} However, for our purposes the following definition suffices. According to \textit{A New Dictionary of Christian Theology}, the label “cult” in its broadest sense refers simply to a “system of religious beliefs and rituals or to that system’s body of adherents. More specifically, a cult is a particular form or pattern of ritual or worship.”\footnote{964}{Alan Richardson and John Bowden (eds.), \textit{A New Dictionary of Christian Theology} (London: SCM Press, 1983), 137.} In this sense, expressions like “the cult of the saints” or the “cult of the Virgin Mary” would mean simply forms of worship dedicated to the adoration, service and honour of these persons or a deity.
The following remarks are as well noteworthy. Firstly, sociologists and theologians make a distinction between “cults” and “sects”. Whereas “sects”, being products of religious schism, tend to maintain continuity with traditional beliefs and practices, “cults” on the other hand, arise spontaneously and maintain novel beliefs and practices.

Secondly, in the course of history, the term “cult” has taken pejorative connotation. This holds true in the theological domain as well as in the sociological one. From the former point of view, anti-Semitic tendencies which permeated early biblical literary criticism scholarship have been a contributory factor. And from the latter’s aspect, some crimes committed in various parts of the world by some groups identified as “cults” or their group leaders, have tarnished the public image of “cults”. Reportedly high profile crimes including sexual abuse, murder, and mass suicide have been perpetrated in association with “cults”. Consequently, in the mass media as well as among average citizens the practice of “cults”, or any new religious movement, has become increasingly suspect. Fears have often engulfed the public that cult converts have been brainwashed, that they adhere to millenarian teachings which focus on a catastrophic transformation of this world, that they associate themselves with occurrences of sexual deviance and abuse as well as perplexing incidents of mass violence.

Although not all new religious movements proclaim millenarian visions, most of them do. At the end of the Cold War, for example, there emerged evangelical Christian movements in the United States of America which maintained two branches of millenarian thinking about the return of Christ’s kingdom to earth. The first branch posited a premillenarian thinking. It envisioned Christ to come again to reign on earth for a thousand years. And the second branch was a postmillenarian thinking which imagined the return of Christ at the end of a thousand-

965 Etymologically the term “sect” is apparently understood simply as a derivative of the Latin word “secare” to cut off, hence separation or schism; however, its meaning is chiefly from the Latin word “sequi”, i.e. to follow. Thus a “secta” is a school of thought or a mode of life with tenets, teaching, or doctrine that one has to embrace. See: Benignus Chukwunedum Ogbunanwata, New Religious Movements or Sects, A Theological and Pastoral Challenge to the Catholic Church (Bern: Peter Lang, 2001), 107.

966 See: Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe, op.cit., 36.

967 It is reported that some scholars, for example, had covertly desired to distance Christianity from the Jewish influences of the Gospel of Matthew. See: Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe, New Religions as Global Cultures, Making the Human Sacred (Oxford: Westview Press, 1997), 30.

968 A typical example in Africa in recent times is what took place on March 17, 2000 near Kannungu Village in south-western Uganda. In what seemed to be mass suicide or homicide perpetrated by leaders of a Christian group known as the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God (MRTCG) an estimated 338 members of the movement perished in an inferno within their own church building. See: Emmanuel M. Katongole, A Future for Africa, Critical Essays in Christian Social Imagination (Scranton: The University of Scranton Press, 2005), 119.

year period. This theological vision was engendered by the prevailing talk about a “new world order.” This alarmed many evangelical Christians as they interpreted this to mean the global domination of secular government, contrary to their desire for a Christian American nation that would fulfill the messianic expectations of the coming of Christ.

One branch of postmillenarian evangelical thought proposed the so-called Dominion Theology which maintained that “Christianity had to assert the dominion of God over all creation, including secular politics and society, in order for messianic expectations to be fulfilled.” Dominion Theology has its extreme right wing theological movement known as Reconstruction Theology. Its exponents seek to create a Christian theocratic state, imbibing the Calvinist theonomical ideas which had insisted that the authority of God should be necessarily presupposed in all worldly matters.

Significantly, even some new religious movements in Songea today tend to endorse anthropocentric dispensationalist theologies which emphasize human dominion over nature rather than stewardship towards it. They could proof-text their teaching through a literalist reading of the Bible. For example, they interpreted the biblical creation narrative in Genesis chapter one as sanctioning such human dominion. From the perspective of environmental ethics, such religious movements are perceived to violate ecological justice.

Interestingly, it is noted that some ancestral cults in Songea usually practised zero-tolerance towards environmental degradation. Particularly at sanctuary sites, elders would allow no felling of trees, no bush-fires or digging out of the earth. Thus such ritual practices had the effect of conserving nature. However, having said that, I neither wish to essentialise that the indigenous people of Songea have passed through an eco-golden age which now, nostalgically, is foreign to current generations. Nor do I assume that the cultic rituals were motivated by the challenge to uphold environmental values. Rather, what I posit is that the indigenous people of Songea led by their elders regarded as sacred all the bush areas where they usually met to placate the ancestors or perform rituals pertaining to rain-making and other issues. To romantise these cultic rituals as expressive of a conscious environmental stewardship would not be plausible, since till today the people perpetrate some practices which violate environmental justice. Quite often the people are accused of causing

971 Mark Juergensmeyer, op.cit., 183.
972 See: Ibid.
973 See: Puleng LenkaBula, op.cit., 299.
974 Informants were some elders of Liganga Village, John Halla, A. Kihwili, J. Ndomba, S. Komba, and others, speaking about environmental sensitivity in the traditional life of the Ngoni people, interview at Liganga Parish, Songea, in September 1997.
environmental through their practices of shifting-cultivation and bush-burning routines for the purpose of hunting.

The third observation to make is that, today scholars prefer the less prejudicial phrase “new religious movements” as alternative for the labels “cult” and “sect”. But this expression is also inadequate since many such movements are not really new. In his attempt to design a typology for African religious movements, H.W. Turner proposes the term “movements” as the most sufficiently general term to cover “churches, secession-groups, prophet movements, healing homes, cults, shrines, and religious communities of all kinds.” According to him, this term has a corporate connotation, has not restricted usage, and conveys dynamic overtones “appropriate to phenomena that are involved in the great cultural, social, and religious changes under way in Africa.”

Another important remark is that according to scholars there should be a balanced view in the judgment of the new religious movements. On the one hand, most of them are genuinely harmless in contemporary times. But on the other hand, it is unwise to underestimate any influence or potential danger of groups that appear to be insignificant.

5.1.5.3 The “Maji Cult”: A Millenarian Movement

The history of the Maji Maji War has been briefly described in Chapter One. Some researchers have recently noted that the narratives on the conflict are many and varied; there is no master narrative. Nevertheless, the role of maji, the “medicine water” dispensed by the prophet Kinjikitile Ngwale, is central to the narratives. From that perspective, we can term the Maji Maji a “Maji Cult”. This is plausible even if the narratives on the war vary considerably.

5.1.5.3.1 Millenarian Characteristics of the Maji Maji

The Maji Maji was a millenarian movement whose chief hope was the eradication of German colonial rule and whatever foreign element that was in the land. The revolt was initiated by the Wamatumbi and Wangindo who lived in another region far from Songea. The Ngoni people joined it because they wanted to get rid of the Germans and ultimately restore their nationalism.

The uniqueness of this rebellion as a religious movement consists in that it was a movement which promised invulnerability of Africans through war medicines, while

976 Ibid.
977 See: Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe, op.cit. 1.
979 See: Elzear Ebner, op.cit., 133.
combining an apocalyptic or millenarian message.\textsuperscript{980} The evolvement of the rebellion took several steps. In its initial stage, it was merely a religious ritual of the Ngindo people. A rumour had emerged and spread the belief that at Kibesa shrine on the Rufiji or the shrine at Ngarambe, ancestors could come back to life or at least they could communicate with their earthly relatives.\textsuperscript{981} At that shrine, the people worshipped Bokero, the god of rain and fertility. According to the rumour:

Two ladies who had been harvesting sorghum that afternoon suddenly beheld a man dressed in a dazzling white kanzu; it was too white to look at in the afternoon sun. Before they could run away he disappeared... after returning ... he began talking of prophetic matters. He said, ‘All dead ancestors will come back; they are at Bokero’s in Rufiji Ruhingo. No lion or leopard will eat men. We are all Sayyid Said’s. The Sayyid’s alone. Be it an Mpogoro, Mkichi, or Mmatumbi, we are all the Sayyid Said’s. The lion was sheep and the European was red earth (utupu nkere) or fish of the water (liyemba lya masi). Let us beat him.’ And he caught two lions which he tethered with a creeper, and people danced likinda before those two lions. They remained harmless. Then the word of this man spread afar.\textsuperscript{982}

At the second stage, the movement proclaimed that an angry God would bring floods and lions to destroy the Germans and some traders, particularly Arabs. And at its last version, the movement required all Africans to join hands in the cause of fighting the foreigners. The fight was declared as a cause that was decreed by God himself. Those who were committed to God’s purpose and consented to take part in it had to drink the \textit{maji} medicine which presumably would protect them from German bullets. But those who did not comply put themselves in the risk of being attacked by others. It was insisted that refusal to take part in the rebellion incurred God’s wrath; God would destroy all nonparticipants either through his sword or his lions.\textsuperscript{983} A typical character of millenarian movements is here demonstrated, namely, that one can choose to be saved or to be damned. Another necessary preparation for the revolt was the declaration of taboos by the prophet. The \textit{maji} recipients were required to observe sexual taboos and a list of other taboos: every old medicine in their possession had to be burnt; every red goat, pigeon, and chicken had to be killed, but not eaten. The people should not wash. If one saw a snake, he should strew flour on the spot where it crept. No cassava should be eaten. The people should tie little stalks of millet to the head and when fighting the German forces they should always look forward and shout “\textit{masimasi}” (\textit{majimaji}).\textsuperscript{984} Sources do not explicate how the taboos were inherently related to the rebellion. However, Palle’s analysis of the Melanesian Cargo Cults helps to shade some light on the

\textsuperscript{981} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{982} Johannes Wenger, op.cit., 60.
\textsuperscript{983} See: Ibid., 103f.
\textsuperscript{984} See: Elzear Ebner, op.cit., 134f.
significance of such taboos in millenarian movements. He points out that the prophets’ insistence upon the cult members to adopt new codes of morals was meant to urge them to make a complete break with the traditional ones. It was intended to foster community life and to do away with customs and institutions which formerly gave occasion for friction and conflict among them. The new moral codes required that same standards and conduct should be set for both men and women such that no groups among them would continue to live at variance. Their common hope for the golden future was now their unifying factor.\footnote{985}

The Maji Cult however failed to repel German bullets. The German Schutztruppen emerged victorious from the war, having inflicted high casualties on the indigenous people. Interestingly, while historians attribute the German victory to their superior military power, the indigenous people saw it from the perspective of millenarianism. It was argued that the behaviour of the recipients of the millenarian message played a significant role in assuring that the millenarian hopes were fulfilled. The failure of the Maji Cult was therefore presumably due to the failure of the maji recipients themselves to abide by these taboos. Had they adhered to the rules of the cult, the desired goal would certainly have been achieved. To hold the recipients of a millenarian message accountable for the results is a typical element in millenarian movements.\footnote{986} In their millenarian convictions, the indigenous people did not dismiss the Maji Cult as an impossible position. They believed that only the poor handling of the ritual prevented the achievement of the desired goal.\footnote{987} Moreover, they believed that the failure of the medicine was only on this particular incident of the Maji Maji; the maji medicine as such was not ineffective. Significantly their defeat by the Germans did not deter them from maintaining their millenarian aspirations, namely, the deliverance from foreign element and attainment of a better future. In other words, the longing for the reconstruction of the polity persisted.\footnote{988}

5.1.5.3.2 Similarities with the Xhosa Cargo Cults in South Africa

The Maji Cult in Songea displays striking similarities with a Cargo Cult millenarian movement among the Xhosa in South Africa. Palle narrates that in the 1850s the Xhosa practised Cargo Cult rituals as part of a prophetic movement.\footnote{989} The Xhosa are part of the “Aba-Nguni” or “Nguni” people of South Africa. Following a conflict there, some of the
Nguni clans emigrated from the kingdom and sought refuge in other African lands north of South Africa. Some of them settled in Songea in the 1840s where they came to be known as “Ngoni” or “Wangoni”.

The Xhosa Cargo Cult rituals as described by Palle had the following characteristics. First, the Xhosa expected the return of their ancestors with some material goods (cargo). Their cargo list consisted of herds of cattle that they imagined to be as numerous as the stars of heaven. Secondly, the impending advent of the millennium was envisaged to ultimately drive out all European foreigners living among them. To anticipate their millenarian events, the people slaughtered all the cattle and destroyed all the field crops. Instead, they sewed enormous leather sacks in which large quantities of milk were expected to be stored, since the millennium was believed to bring abundant milk, flowing more abundantly than water.

This history bolsters our assumption that millenarian beliefs in Songea were either rife among the indigenous people, just as they were among the Wamatumbi and Wangindo who triggered the Maji Maji, or they were brought by the Ngoni people from South Africa.

5.1.5.3.3 Millenarian Beliefs Versus the Prosperity Gospel

The interest of this chapter is to compare the Prosperity Gospel with the Maji Cult because it is a well-known phenomenon in the history of Songea. The emphasis of “magical interpretation” and miraculous expedients in the Prosperity Gospel marks the correlation with the Maji Cult. The pastors keep exhorting their members: “Your miracle is on the way.” This slogan is often found in church advertisements, car stickers, and shops. It “embodies the power of the still unfulfilled, yet resilient ‘expectations of modernity.’” Another area of congruence is the fact that in both the Maji Cult and the Prosperity Gospel the recipients of the millenarian message are held responsible for the failure of the millenarian hopes. In the former, the cult participants were blamed for not abiding by the taboos associated with the maji. In the latter, the believers are often told their personal sin hinders their financial breakthrough. Significantly, imbued with “magical interpretation” and miraculous expedients the churches in Africa may not spearhead a socio-economic change in the continent. Moreover, a credible approach to the option for the poor should address the socio-economic structures that cause poverty rather than merely holding the victims of poverty responsible for their condition.

992 See: Ibid.
993 Birgit Meyer, op.cit., 460.
5.2 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the Prosperity Gospel in relation to the Protestant Ethic and the Maji Cult. The former encourages hard work, entrepreneurship and other lifestyles that have the potential to bring about a socio-economic transformation. The latter, on the contrary, encourages appeal to miraculous expedients to obtain such a transformation. But which of the two approaches is more pronounced in the Prosperity Gospel preached in Songea? Pursuant to this study, the Prosperity Gospel denominations in Songea emphasize more miracles as expedients for healing, exorcism and financial breakthroughs, influenced through tithing and offerings. Hard work is not stressed as much as miracles. The prosperity preachers appear to suggest that the fruits of modernity will be delivered miraculously. This attitude eventually represents an advanced stage of the decline of the Protestant Ethic, rather than a promotion of it.

But the Prosperity Gospel denominations in Songea are not alone. Other researchers have also noted that these denominations in Tanzania and other parts of Africa tend to focus on the achievement of “health and wealth through divine intervention, miracles, seed-faith, prayer and spiritual power.” But on the other hand, the prosperity preachers would attribute any failure, be it in business, job promotion, and so on, to witchcraft and demonic powers associated with malicious people. Thus rather than counselling their members to work hard, to plan as well as to order their lives properly, many such religious leaders tend to focus their messages on “miracle”. Gifford has similarly observed that many of the new religious movements proliferating in Africa today do little to encourage work ethic. These are the pitfalls of enchanted Christianity in Songea, and, in fact, in much of Tanzania.

Exceptions, nevertheless, are reported from some parts of Africa. The Ghanaian Prosperity Gospel preacher, Pastor Mensa Otabil, is one of them. In his sermons and writings, he does not emphasize miracles and the anointing with oils as a poverty alleviation approach. Rather he stresses the work ethic. He refutes the association of spiritual ontologies with poverty alleviation and the achievement of sustainable development. For him, people do not become failures through witches, wizards or demons; rather they become failures on account of

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995 See: Ibid., 239.
997 Lovemore also reports on Prosperity Gospel denominations in Zimbabwe and Botswana which also emphasize the work ethic. See: Chapter Three.
choices either made by themselves or on their behalf. It is human responsibility that thwarts development, not a demonic control.\textsuperscript{998}

Given the proliferation of enchanted Christianity today, there is an urgent need for the churches in Songea to stress the association of rationality and spirituality. In his encyclical letter \textit{Fides et Ratio}, Pope John Paul II states that “faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth…”\textsuperscript{999} The pope notes, furthermore, that at times, “those whose vocation it is to give cultural expression to their thinking no longer look to truth, preferring quick success to the toil of patient enquiry into what makes life worth living.”\textsuperscript{1000}

In his works, Max Weber also treated the subject of rationalization. He used this word in many different ways. One usage which is relevant for our purposes is the understanding of “rationalization” as the opposite of enchantment. An enchanted world is understood to be one filled with mystery and magic. The opposite of it is disenchantment. Used in this context, this word “disenchantment” does not mean the act of narrowing religious or spiritual elements of the world and promoting secularization. Rather, it simply refers to the process of emptying the world of magical or spiritual forces, or of playing down of the agency of demons.\textsuperscript{1001} It is this doing away with magical thinking that the churches in Songea need to emphasize in their pastoral praxis, if a vision of integral development is to be realized. An integral development requires that both spirituality and rationality be stressed.\textsuperscript{1002} Spiritual power is needed in order to make one successful. But in the absence of rationality, human life, well-being and prosperity will always be perceived in terms of miracles and the demonic interventions. The churches in Songea are thus challenged to foster the spirit of hard work, thrift, disciplined lifestyles and rationality along with Christian spirituality.

In his book, \textit{The Trouble with Nigeria}, Nigerian scholar, Chinua Achebe has criticized the attitude of the ruling elite of many developing countries to live in a world of make-believe and unrealistic expectations and has called it the “cargo cult mentality”. For Achebe, the post-independence leaders had simply issued lofty proclamations about a better future for their countries, but never made any corresponding efforts to achieve the realization of the promises.\textsuperscript{1003}

\textsuperscript{998} See: Ibid., 237.
\textsuperscript{1000} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1002} See: Ibid., 240.
Chapter Six will analyse the proposals of two world famous economists and one African politician on how to end extreme poverty in poor communities.
CHAPTER SIX

OPTION FOR THE POOR: ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INSIGHTS

6.0 Introduction

The Prosperity Gospel in Songea, as in other parts in Africa, presents itself as a new paradigm of poverty eradication. It proposes spiritual solutions, particularly miracle expedients, as the main pathway to poverty elimination and wealth creation. This chapter seeks to examine poverty eradication proposals laid out by expert economists Jeffrey Sachs and Muhammad Yunus and Tanzanian politician Julius K. Nyerere. Thereby the contention of the chapter is that effective poverty eradication in Africa entails the engagement of multidimensional approaches. It requires the implementation of sound economic principles bolstered by the upholding of the demands of social justice. Thus neither the engagement of spiritual solutions, nor sound economic principles alone, will suffice to rid Africa from its current poverty trap. Moreover, amplifying the proposals of Nyerere, the chapter maintains that Africa needs to learn from other continents but eventually it should design its own way of poverty eradication, rather than simply copying the solutions tested elsewhere.

6.1 Jeffrey Sachs and the End of Poverty

Jeffrey Sachs is a world-renowned American professor of economics and director of Earth Institute, Columbia University. Particularly noteworthy for our purposes is Sachs’s commitment to end poverty, promote economic growth, fight hunger and disease as well as foster sustainable environmental practices. This commitment has taken him to several countries across Africa. He is widely considered to be the world’s leading expert on economic strategy and poverty eradication. He is a leader in sustainable development and a senior United Nations advisor. He is said to have advised Pope John Paul II on the encyclical Centesimus Annus (On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum), which partly reflects on the rapid downfall of communism and the adoption of the market economy in the former communist countries of Eastern and Central Europe. Sachs has also been the leading academic scholar and practitioner on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) since the adoption of the goals in 2000. He is economic advisor to the governments of several

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1005 See: Ibid.
1006 In the encyclical Centesimus Annus Pope John Paul II speaks much about talents and the knowledge of new technologies, entrepreneurship, acumen in marketing, personnel management, and other skills as the new source of economic affluence.
African countries, including Tanzania. He is director of the Millennium Villages Project which operates in more than one dozen African countries, Tanzania being one of them. His engagement with African leaders has also focused on the promotion of smallholder agriculture and the strengthening primary health systems. It is these factors that prompt us to engage him in this discussion on how best to tackle the problem of impoverishment in Africa.

This section analyzes some of Sachs’s proposals for ending extreme poverty in Africa.

6.1.1 What Are the Causes of Africa’s Poverty?

Sachs has diagnosed the causes of poverty in Africa. He holds that the factors that usually hamper the economic growth of poor countries in the world, including those of Africa, are common. However, it is in Africa that many of the negative factors come together to make the continent a veritable empire of world’s economic challenges. A snapshot tour of what Sachs considers to be the overarching economic challenges confronting Africa is therefore important.

First of all, Sachs sees poverty itself as a cause of economic stagnation. He calls this situation the “poverty trap”. Extremely poor countries cannot pull themselves out of their poverty, because they are too poor to save and accumulate the capital needed for their economic upliftment. Their incomes are used simply to stay alive, leaving nothing for infrastructure development, for establishing efficient educational and health systems and so on.

The second setback to economic growth in Sachs’s view is physical geography. He notes that problems related to physical geography are frequently overlooked in the discussion of economic development. Geographical conditions affect Africa adversely. Sachs observes that roughly two thirds of Africa’s population lives in the drylands and savanna ecozones, where hazards of drought are severe. This makes Africa’s agricultural performance the worst in the world in terms of cereal yields. For half a century yields have barely budged, whereas the population has been soaring. Topographically, much of Africa is land-locked, while most of its population lives on highlands where rainfall is more reliable, but far away from navigable rivers, long coastlines, or good natural harbors. Landlocked and remote regions are severely burdened by transportation costs and the difficulty of connecting to world markets. These burdens stifle all forms of modern economic activity, making such remote economies the last regions to achieve economic development. The problem becomes even more acute

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1007 See: Jeffrey D. Sachs, The End of Poverty, 56-66.
1008 See: Ibid., 58.
because historically, colonial powers did not build much infrastructure such as railways in the interior of Africa. Geographical conditions also impede Africa’s economic growth in that the continent’s tropical environment makes it prone to malaria. Africa’s disease burden is unique in the world and malaria, Africa’s first killer disease, is particularly debilitating to the economy.

The third factor is what Sachs calls the “fiscal trap”. A country may lack the resources to invest in public goods and services like education, health system, communication system, power grids and so on. This lack of resources may be due to the extreme level of poverty of the population that makes revenue through taxation not feasible. The government itself may also be too inept, corrupt or incapacitated to collect tax revenues. But it may as well be overwhelmed by a tremendous load of past external debts. A country may be compelled to use its limited tax revenue to pay debts instead of financing new investments.

The fourth factor that impairs economic development is the government’s failure to fulfill its tasks: to provide the needed infrastructure and social services to the whole population, to create an environment conducive for private business investment, failure to maintain internal peace and safety and to contain high corruption levels. It may also be a failure to maintain a sound judicial system that safeguards personal rights, contracts and so on.

The fifth factor is the imposition of cultural or religious barriers. Such barriers may pose an obstacle to economic development when they are meant to discriminate against a section of the society. Typically, the role of women in the society is often blocked by denying them economic and political rights and education. Denying women their basic economic security and legal rights implies that a larger segment of the society is left without such rights. This impoverishes them. Similar implications of impoverishment can be foreseen when cultural or religious barriers apply to religious or ethnic minorities, as for example by denying them schooling, health facilities, or job training.

The sixth factor behind economic stagnation is geopolitics. Sachs contends that the factors affecting poor countries in their economic development can be manipulated from abroad by powerful countries. Intent to topple a certain regime they do not like, powerful countries may impose trade embargos on a poor country. Consequently, sanctions often impoverish the population of the targeted country but without toppling the regime.

The seventh factor that contributes to the dwindling of economies is the lack of innovation. Unlike in rich countries, there is little motivation for innovation in poor countries. First of all, their impoverished governments cannot afford to back the basic services in government laboratories and universities. But secondly, the local purchasing power to buy a new product
is usually low. Eventually, inventors find it hard to recoup the large fixed costs of developing a new product. This is one reason why many poor countries experience a brain-drain of scientists. Sachs has maintained that over a span of two centuries, the innovation gap has been one of the fundamental reasons behind the economic divergence between the richest and the poorest countries in the world. Lagging behind in innovation, the poor countries have been unable to get a foothold on economic growth. But as the poor countries stagnate in innovation, the rich countries move from innovation to greater wealth to further innovation.\textsuperscript{1009}

The eighth factor behind the poverty of poor countries is what Sachs refers to as “the demographic trap”. He notes that this phenomenon is one reason for the poverty trap. Clarifying, he says that when impoverished families choose to have large numbers of children, they cannot afford to invest in the nutrition, health, and education of each child. Poverty under such circumstances is also likely to be exacerbated because a rapid population growth brings with it enormous stresses on farm sizes and environmental resources. According to Sachs, education law, and social action would empower women to make fertility choices and this would be one way of overcoming the trap of poverty. Girls’ education would enable women to more easily join the labour force and increase their earning power. To achieve this, however, money is required; but the poor economies lack money. This then demonstrates quite vividly the demographic trap: “High population growth leads to deeper poverty, and deeper poverty contributes to higher fertility rates.”\textsuperscript{1010} The poorest countries are also places where families have the most numbers of children, and where the populations continue to grow.

Tenth, Sachs cites as well some historical facts that have contributed to Africa’s economic stagnation. He recalls the reality of the Cold War period in which post-independence African leaders who collaborated with the Eastern Bloc or demanded better terms on Western investments in African minerals and energy deposits were opposed by the rich Western countries. He reveals that some of the African leaders such as the charismatic first prime minister of Congo, Patrice Lumumba, had to pay with their lives.\textsuperscript{1011} On the other hand, Western countries did not want to invest in long-term African economic development, although they knew that such investment was what was actually needed. They did not want to pay the price for it.

Having discussed the overarching areas of Africa’s economic stagnation, Sachs concludes that the root causes of Africa’s prolonged economic crisis are the difficulties related to

\textsuperscript{1009} See: Ibid., 62.
\textsuperscript{1010} Ibid., 66.
\textsuperscript{1011} See: Ibid., 189.
Africa’s geography. Topographical and climatic conditions and their concomitant implications coalesce to make Africa the epicentre of world’s development challenge. Rising poverty, hunger, disease, and environmental stress consequently define the daily narrative of the people.\textsuperscript{1012} On the other hand, poor governance, corruption, Africa’s harsh colonial legacy, and the West’s depredations in the post-independence period do not constitute the heart of the problem. Sachs maintains that

other regions of the world that are now prospering rapidly have also been similarly subjected to decades and centuries of severe damage through colonial rule and postcolonial meddling. Vietnam is a case in point, a country that had to fight for decades and yet emerged from that brutal experience to achieve very rapid economic growth.\textsuperscript{1013}

Sachs also dismisses outright the all too common claim that Africa’s poverty is the result of the slothfulness of Africans themselves.\textsuperscript{1014}

\textbf{6.1.2 Sachs’ Proposals for Ending Africa’s Poverty}

Having identified and diagnosed the bottlenecks to African economic development, Sachs suggests a systematic template that he thinks might be helpful to address the problem of extreme poverty and achieve a decisive economic breakthrough. The major remedies he proposes include: giving Africa far more aid, far more cancellation of Africa’ foreign debt, far better trade terms and far more access to technology. He contends that poverty has been overcome in the past. He mentions China and India as examples of countries which, within a few decades, have managed to move a great section of their populations from extreme poverty to prosperity. Sachs’ central argument is that successful development requires public investments, but unfortunately, governments in impoverished countries of Africa are often too cash strapped, and too indebted, to finance the requisite investments.\textsuperscript{1015} The remedial investments that the African states badly need are simply unaffordable.

He claims that a country basically progresses from a subsistence economy, to a commercial economy, to an emerging-market economy, to a technology-based economy. Each stage represents a higher level of capital per person and development as compare to the preceding one.\textsuperscript{1016} In order to break from the poverty trap of subsistence economy, there must be sustained efforts to improve agronomic conditions so that even poor farm families can manage to save for the future and that governments can obtain tax revenues.


\textsuperscript{1013} Jeffrey D. Sachs, \textit{The End of Poverty}, 191.

\textsuperscript{1014} See: Ibid., 226.

\textsuperscript{1015} See: Ibid., 223.

\textsuperscript{1016} See: Ibid., 209.
Raising the aid for Africa is what Sachs thinks to be the most important thing required to break the poverty trap. He urges Western governments to keep their promises of charity, arguing that the elimination of extreme poverty in Africa is something that is realistic and achievable at a very low cost. The money from the Western governments would go to what he calls the “Big Five” of African interventions, namely: first, boosting agriculture by promoting the use of new technologies, fertilizers and pesticides; second, improving basic health services through the provision of mosquito-nets and essential medicines; third, investing in education through the provision of free school meals and the expansion of vocational training; fourth, providing electricity to villages in order to facilitate the use of water pumps, grain mills, and school computers, and transport and communications services; and fifth, providing clean water and sanitation in the villages and urban areas in order to prevent diseases such as malaria.\(^{1017}\) He maintains that anti-Malaria projects are being economically justifiable investments, because the economic impact of malaria is estimated to cost Africa billions of dollars per year.\(^{1018}\) Sachs is confident that with financial commitment from Western countries, right policies and key interventions, extreme poverty in Africa can be eradicated by the year 2025.

6.1.2.1 Appraisal

Sachs offers a broad survey of African poverty statistics. He views the causes of Africa’s poverty as being largely geographical, geopolitical and socially structured. Accordingly, Africa’s poverty is more realistically surmountable through socio-economic and political means. Sachs also proposes some remedies. His proposals call for far more aid for Africa, far more cancellation of Africa’s foreign debt, far better trade terms and far more access to technology. These proposals are, in fact, not quite new in the discourses about poverty eradication in Africa. Sachs does well to reiterate them, thus sounding the alarm about the problem of poverty in Africa. His special attention to the reduction of household poverty is noteworthy because this area is often neglected by African policy-makers.

In my view, Sachs’s analysis of Africa’s poverty deserves the attention of the Prosperity Gospel churches in Africa. As noted in preceding chapters, these churches tend to emphasize spiritual causes for all aspects of Africa’s poverty and subsequently propose miraculous interventions as solutions. This perspective eventually obscures the real causes of and the required solutions to Africa’s poverty. What Sachs calls the “Big Five” of African

\(^{1017}\) See: Ibid., 233-234.
\(^{1018}\) See: Ibid., 200.
interventions are actually the same strategies that the Catholic Church and other older churches in Songea have all along stressed in their social ministry.

Furthermore, Sachs does not blame the victims of poverty for their status quo. He does not blame Africa’s poverty on the laziness of the people as it is all too commonly presumed. His own experience in the continent has taught him to dismiss such stereotypical attitudes. Significantly, stereotypical portrayals of the victims of poverty often stifle the search for proper solutions. The main problem in Africa is the lack of capital for investment as we have seen above. Some human practices such as environmental degradation and the maintenance of high fertility rates also contribute to the problem of poverty. However, Sachs does not accentuate the side of the “sin” of the people; instead, he urges that the people should be given an initial push to enable them navigate the path of economic advancement. With this perspective Sachs departs markedly from the Prosperity Gospel preachers who maintain that poverty is an outcome of the personal sin of the poor people themselves.1019

6.1.2.2 Beyond Almsgiving: Quest for the Paradigm of Economic Justice

Sachs’s commitment to the question of Africa’s extreme poverty is commendable. Nevertheless, some of his basic assumptions warrant serious interrogation. First is his contention about the root causes of poverty in Africa. Sachs recognizes the role of the troubling legacies of colonial rule, the Cold War, and external debts in shackling Africa’s economies. He also points out how Africa’s natural resources are plundered by multinational companies and African governments.1020 Surprisingly, he does not let these insights inform his proposals for ending poverty in Africa. He does not see these problems as the root causes of poverty in Africa. For him, the root causes are Africa’s “unlucky” inheritance of topographical and climatic conditions that are inimical to human health and impair modern communications and the accessibility to world markets. Africans themselves, nevertheless, point to global political economy, corruption, poor governance, environmental degradation, and privatization, as the root causes of poverty, not peripheral.1021 Strikingly Sachs self-consciously avoids discussing these central issues that expose the prevailing structural injustice.

Second, in his proposals Sachs portrays Africa as a permanently and uniformly poor, disease-stricken and malnourished continent. This perspective allows him to depict the

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1019 Refer to the discussion in Chapter Three.
1020 See: Ibid., 324.
continent as being in a helpless state and that Western financial aid is inevitably the saviour. Consequently, he does not come up with any meaningful proposals as to how Africa can possibly help itself. Does the key to Africa’s poverty really lie in the financial commitment of rich countries? This assumption is not plausible. As Sachs himself has noted, the required financial commitment from the rich countries is not actually on offer. But we should ask: can there be a real cure emanating from foreign aid? Or can we say that such great dependency on aid-money only serves to downplay the rich potential of human and natural resources available in Africa? How can the real cure for Africa’s poverty emanate from aid-money from these countries? Such a great dependency on aid-money only serves to downplay the rich potential of human and natural resources available in Africa.

Debunking the current model of foreign aid, a famous Zambian economist, Dambisa Moyo, illuminates the way in which Africa’s overreliance on aid continues to trap it in a vicious circle of aid dependency, corruption, market distortion, and further poverty. She points out that those African countries that have overly relied on foreign aid have, in fact, become economically worse off. By proposing financial commitment from the Western governments as the key solution to Africa’s poverty, Sachs works within a charity paradigm which obscures the underlying problem. The real problem is not that Africans cannot reach the advanced levels of development themselves as Sachs seems to suggest. The problem, rather, is that Africans are actively prevented from climbing the higher ladder of development through the perpetuation of unjust socio-economic structures in the global economic order. Sachs focuses on almsgiving to Africa, while being silent about the need to transform such unjust structures. He mentions the prevalence of abuse perpetrated by multinational companies in the extractive industry in Africa. Yet he does not propose ways to curb the ongoing exploitation of Africa’s minerals and other natural resources. Again, he portrays Africa’s agricultural performance as the worst in the world; still he does not indicate how widespread land-grabbing in Africa aggravates the poor agricultural performance. Experience in Africa shows that land-grabbing makes many smallholder farmers lose their fertile productive land to multinational companies. The latter do not use the land to produce food crops but biofuels for the rich countries. The decline in local agricultural production and food shortages are ultimately inevitable.

1022 See: Dambisa Moyo, _Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa_ (London: Allen Lane, 2009), 49. Carol Lancaster also advances the argument that aid to Africa has so far failed to work. See also Carol Lancaster, _Aid to Africa, So Much to Do, So Little Done_ , Chicago and London: A Century Book Foundation, 1999.
Contrary to Sachs’ amplified assumption, we argue here that the quest to liberate Africa from its trap of poverty does not entail merely a paradigm of charity from the Western governments. What is imperative, above all, is the exercise of economic justice towards Africa. To illustrate this point, we can consider an African country which receives a charity worth a few million dollars in the form of anti-malaria bed-nets. That is fine. But at the same time the recipient country loses its mineral resources worth billions of dollars through a systematic plunder by the donor country. Is this real charity? Had there been a just economic relationship, the poor country would have used its own revenues from the mineral resources to fight against malaria and poverty.

We therefore subscribe to the view of the economist Dambisa Moyo that Africans can more effectively fight against poverty when they become entrepreneurs and not just continually relying on handouts. She notes that business rather than free handouts to Africa is what constitutes the secret of China’s success in Africa today. China’s foray into Africa is all business, but it eventually promises food on the table of Africans, education for their children, and the development of infrastructure. Aid-money from the West, on the other hand, hampers entrepreneurship and becomes an incentive for corruption, and internal conflicts. Thus in order for Africa to get onto a solid economic footing, aid must be eliminated. Free of aid, corruption in Africa would likely fall, entrepreneurship will rise, Africa’s growth engine would start to chug and the life of the majority of Africans might actually improve.

A similar call to free Africa from Western handouts dominated the Protestant Church in Africa in the so-called moratorium debate from 1971-1975. It was initiated by John Gatu, the secretary-general of the Presbyterian Church in Kenya. During a visit to the United States he declared to his hosts that he had not come to beg for money or personnel, but to request that the missionary aid in money and personnel to the African Church should cease for at least five years to make the African Church learn self-reliance. For Gatu and other Africans who were enamored by the moratorium proposal the termination of missionary aid might foster the indigenization process of the African Church and minimize the “eternal juniority” of the African Church in its relationship with the West. But the lack of support from both missionaries and some African Church leaders the moratorium debated was abandoned and

1023 See: Dambisa Moyo, op.cit., 151ff.
1024 See: Ibid., 152.
1025 According to Moyo, this happens because the aid-money often benefits a few government and business elite.
1026 See: Dambisa Moyo, op.cit., 144-145.
1027 See: Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 275ff.
1028 Ibid., 277.
has paled into oblivion. The dependency of the African Church on the West continues in earnest.

6.1.2.3 Relationship Between Justice and Charity

Sachs’ emphasis on charity to Africa and his apparent silence on the quest for the transformation of global economic structures call for a discussion on the relationship between charity and justice. In Christian ethics, justice and charity are two distinct ways of expressing faith in the services of others. In the Scriptures images of both virtues abound. Embodying justice, the prophets make a powerful cry for basic structural reform in society.\textsuperscript{1029} Charity, on the other hand, is epitomized by the Good Samaritan who responds promptly to the need of a victim of violence.\textsuperscript{1030} Thus, whereas charity is characterized by actual relief, justice on the other hand seeks fundamental changes to ameliorate further patterns of suffering. According to Catholic social ethics justice means what is due others by objective standard.\textsuperscript{1031} It is a minimum of charity. But charity is the spontaneous response over and above justice. In his encyclical \textit{Deus Caritas Est}, Pope Benedict XVI argues that the primary agency of justice should be the secular state. The formation of just structures is its direct duty and the Church cannot and must not replace the state in this duty. This does not mean that the Church should remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice. The duty of the Church is first to provide for the works of charity and second, to contribute indirectly to the building of a just society through its teaching and advocacy in society.\textsuperscript{1032}

Consonant with this advocacy role, the social mission of the Church in Africa has to express itself in the promotion of integral human development. The Church should help to eliminate the sources of injustice and the structures of oppression even those imposed at international levels. Failure to interrogate the structures of injustice obscures the root causes of poverty. Similarly, the tendency to spiritualize the causes of poverty as notable among some new religious movements today may ultimately constitute another bottleneck to poverty eradication efforts in Africa.


The 2006 Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh is another economist who makes intense attempts to champion the cause of eradicating poverty. The promotion of

\textsuperscript{1029} See for example: Isa. 10: 1-2; Ez. 7: 9-10; Jer. 22: 13; Amos 5: 14-24.
\textsuperscript{1030} Lk. 10: 25-37.
\textsuperscript{1031} See Chapter Seven.
\textsuperscript{1032} \textit{Deus Caritas Est}, No. 28.
microcredit bank is his approach to poverty eradication. It is an innovative way of fighting against poverty through non-governmental organizations. The poor organize themselves into small groups and borrow money from their microcredit without collateral. The idea of lending to small groups rather than to individuals is helpful in the context of the poor. It implies that collateral can be replaced by trust and group enforcement. The group monitors its members and insures that they repay their loans. In case a group member defaults, the whole group is held accountable and obliged to pay back the defaulter’s loan. This is an expression of solidarity among the poor for their common cause of fighting against poverty.

Micro-lending has made it possible for very poor people and even beggars to take out small loans. The borrowers use the money for establishing small income-generating projects. The beggars can enter the business of selling goods from door to door along with begging door to door. Other borrowers use the loans for housing, agriculture, social development, and so on. The availability of micro-lending has indeed enabled microscale entrepreneurs to overcome the hurdle of low income, low saving and low investment. Yunus testifies that more than 98 percent of the loans are repaid. He argues that the poor regard the credit as their only opportunity to break out of poverty. Thus non-repayment of their loans would be losing their one and only chance to get out of poverty.\textsuperscript{1033}

Microcredit in Bangladesh evolved gradually. It started in 1977 at the level of a village among the barefooted poor people. Then it spread across one district, followed by several districts and eventually, the entire country. By the year 1983 the microcredit model developed into a full-fledged financial institution called Grameen Bank (or Rural Bank). Today the model of the Grameen Bank has been replicated across the developing world. And microcredit has been widely adopted as a tool in the fight against poverty.\textsuperscript{1034}

The microcredit model has been conveniently replicated in the context of Songea, as noted in Chapter One. The final chapter of this study will stress that the Archdiocese of Songea needs to propagate it far and wide in order to help more people overcome poverty.

6.2.1 Interrogating the Status Quo of the Poor

Yunus presents a case of a noted economist who makes a journey into the real world of the poor. He made repeated visits to villages in Bangladesh, which helped him learn about the problems of the poor from their own perspective.\textsuperscript{1035} He noticed how the poor were committed

\textsuperscript{1033} See: Muhammad Yunus, \textit{Banker to the Poor: Micro-lending and the Battle Against World Poverty} (New York: Public Affairs, 1999), 58.

\textsuperscript{1034} See: Jeffrey D. Sachs, \textit{Common Wealth}, 305.

\textsuperscript{1035} See: Muhammad Yunus, \textit{Banker to the Poor}, 45-58.
and determined to break free from poverty. Nevertheless, no formal financial structure was available to cater to the credit needs of the poor. The financial institutions in the country did not help the poor widen their economic base. The local moneylenders took over this credit market but they benefitted on the poor by charging them very high credit rates. These usurious rates made some of the borrowers unable to repay their debts. This exploitation trapped the poor further in the poverty cycle. Contemplating a solution, Yunus made an experimental microcredit enterprise. He lent a simple loan of $ 27 to 42 women so they could purchase bamboo to make and sell stools. This turned out to be an eye-opening insight to him. Within a short span of time the women were able to repay their loans while continuing to support themselves and their families. Evidently microcredit helped the poor break their reliance on the moneylenders and ultimately increase their income. Yunus confronts the perception that the poor do not qualify to receive loans from banks. He is opposed to the view that the poor are not creditworthy. Credit institutions have always used the criterion of creditworthiness to justify their favour of the rich and exclusion of the poor. For Yunus, the rejection of the poor as unworthy of credit is a financial apartheid imposed by the banks. He also finds economists at fault for their attitude of not challenging this prevailing assumption inimical to the poor.

The brunt of the exclusion from the benefits of credit was particularly felt by women. Yunus notes that the conventional banks in Bangladesh refused to lend money to women, even if they belonged to high income bracket. For that reason, Grameen Bank deliberately opted to focus on lending to women. In fact, women showed themselves to have the talent and skill to become income-owners. Women are less likely to squander the loan. Unlike their male counterparts, women borrowers brought much more benefit to their households. Children could immediately benefit from their mothers’ projects, for example in terms of payment for their education. Generally, women proved to have more drive to overcome poverty than men. This is a clear testimony of the vital role of women in household poverty reduction.

Significantly, central to the foundation of the microcredit bank is Yunus’s argument that poverty is neither created by poor people themselves, nor the result of any incapacity on the part of the poor. For him, poverty is created by the social system, by the institutions that have been designed by human beings and by the concepts formulated by such institutions. The deficiencies in human institutions create poverty. Financial institutions are a case in point because they hold the poor as unworthy of credit. According to Yunus, therefore, a poverty

1036 See: Ibid., 71.
1037 See: Ibid., 72.
reduction strategy must inevitably question the structures that maintain assumptions inimical to the empowerment of the poor.

6.2.2 Microcredit as Empowerment of the Poor

By forming the microcredit unions Yunus defines a new paradigm in social economics. Micro-lending has revolutionized banking by vindicating the creditworthiness of the poor. Ultimately a new form of capitalism and a new kind of enterprise have been born based on altruistic attitudes. Yunus himself terms this kind of capitalism social business. It is a business dedicated to solving social, economic, and environmental problems that continue to plague humankind, leading to hunger, homelessness, disease, pollution and ignorance. Microcredit, moreover, is a people’s economy. It represents the people’s own efforts towards self-employment. Fostering the people’s self-employment potential is, in fact, a clear recognition of their ingenuity and creativity.

Yunus contends that the best way to improve the material condition of the poor is to offer them a hand-up rather than a handout. Loans are such a hand-up. His main premise is that credit - which commercial banks usually refuse the poor - is what is needed to enable the poor break out of the poverty cycle. Credit does not merely facilitate the smooth running of trade, commerce and industry; rather it has a positive socio-economic implication. It creates economic power which eventually translates into social power. Accordingly, a section of the society favoured to receive credits ultimately increases both its economic power and social status. Yunus is convinced that the poor are quite capable of prospering provided they were given the credit necessary to break out of poverty. Contrary to prevailing views, the poor are creditworthy. In fact, they are more likely to repay their loans than the rich, because in their poor social status they cannot risk not paying. As such, Yunus urges financial institutions to be inclusive institutions. Nobody should be excluded from the benefits of financial services because they are vital for a person’s self-realization. Denying some people credit is an infringement of their chance to explore their potential to take care of themselves and to contribute to the well-being of the world. Thus Yunus proposes that credit should be given the status of a human right.

\[1039\] See: Muhammad Yunus, Banker to the Poor, 152.

6.2.3 Microcredit More Effective in Poverty Reduction than Foreign Aid

Whereas Sachs sees the key to poverty reduction in poor countries lies in financial commitment of the Western governments, Yunus pins the hope on microcredit. The disadvantage of foreign aid according to Yunus is that in their budgets the question of poverty reduction is only an afterthought.¹⁰⁴⁰ Whereas microcredit goes directly to the household of the poor, most donor nations use their foreign aid budget largely to employ their own people and to sell their own goods. Yunus notes that much of the aid-money goes straight to tiny elite of local suppliers, contractors, consultants and experts. It is used mostly to purchase foreign-made consumer goods or it ends up as kickbacks to officials and politicians who facilitate the signing of the contracts. Much of it also goes to government spending, and it is fraught with corruption. Yunus points out that even world financial institutions like the World Bank are not much helpful in poverty reduction. Experts and consultants from these institutions take over the projects and mold them the way they want them, rather than listening to the point of view of the recipients of the loan. Ultimately, the beneficiaries of most aid-money are those who are already wealthy, not the poor. Unless the aid organizations conceive a new aid methodology, which would aim at the direct elimination of poverty, they will remain but irrelevant to the poor.¹⁰⁴¹

6.2.4 Microcredit More Needed than Overpopulation Scare

Yunus also differs from Sachs with regard to the impact of high fertility rates on economic development. Sachs sees rapid population growth as an impediment to economic growth and proposes the legalisation of abortion¹⁰⁴² and other measures to limit it. Yunus in contrast does not see overpopulation as a hurdle to economic development. He insists that instead of scaring the people into action about rapid growth of population, governments and international agencies should focus on improving the economic status of the people in general and that of the people at the bottom half in particular.¹⁰⁴³ He points out quite rightly that governments and population agencies are not putting nearly as much effort into poverty reduction as they put into their overpopulation scare tactics. He wonders why governments and international agents are not keen about promoting microcredit which serves to improve the quality of the life of the poor and instead concentrate more on population growth control. He argues that population control measures such as pressuring illiterate men and women to physically

¹⁰⁴⁰See: Ibid., 144-146.
¹⁰⁴¹See: Ibid., 146.
¹⁰⁴²See: Jeffrey Sachs, Common Wealth, 189f.
¹⁰⁴³See: Ibid., 134.
remove their ability to procreate are not necessary. What is needed is the promotion of education of women and the improvement of the economic conditions of the people. These measures will eventually bring population growth down. Education delays marriage and procreation. Better educated women are also more likely to earn a livelihood and improve their economic conditions. In his experience, once Grameen borrowers have improved their lives through self-employment, they display a remarkable determination to have fewer children, educate the ones they have as well as participate actively in democracy.

6.2.5 Appraisal of Yunus’s Poverty Alleviation Approach

The micro-lending system founded by Yunus is practical and seems to be a helpful and easily adoptable poverty alleviation approach. This is probably one reason why it has become a model that is today replicated in many continents of the world. It has become a true global movement for poverty alleviation. The Prosperity Gospel claims as well to be a global movement that serves to eradicate poverty, though for its part it is faith-based. The two movements have some salient points of convergence. Both encourage their members to see themselves as the motor behind their economic development. Both exhort their members to be economically successful and not to enter the job market to seek jobs from anybody. They should be employers rather than employees. However, there exist also salient points of divergence between the two movements. Prosperity Gospel preachers tend to blame poverty on the sin of the poor person himself or herself. Yunus and his microcredit members in contrast see poverty as a consequence of structural injustice. Again, complaints often surface about the tendency of the Prosperity Gospel preachers to exploit the poor. Yunus on the contrary is celebrated for liberating the poor from the exploitation of moneylenders and for offering the poor a lifeline through a long-term micro-lending institution. The conditions for socio-economic mobility in the Prosperity Gospel are the possession of an unwavering Christian faith, the practice of the doctrine of talents, the doctrine of the spirit of poverty, and the work ethic. Yunus’s microcredit for its part is inclusive and urges credit institutions to be inclusive of the poor. In the microcredit religious faith is not a condition for the poor to climb the ladder of economic development. The borrowers are simply exhorted to observe discipline, unity, courage, and hard work in all walks of their life. They are also encouraged to promote aspects of their lives that pertain to justice, education, health, nutrition, habitation and, above all, to be faithful in repaying the loans.

1044 See: Ibid., 135.
The foregoing discussion demonstrates that church-based poverty alleviation approaches in Africa can undoubtedly draw much from secular organizations such as Yunus’s microcredit. Yunus’s diagnosis of the problem of poverty in Bangladesh is striking. He visits the poor and learns about their misery. He then interprets their situation and designs an appropriate socio-economic action to enable the poor pull themselves from their poverty cycle. Microcredit was his first experimental socio-economic action. It is an innovative solution to poverty without any tendency to profit from the poor. It can be easily replicated in small communities such as Small Christian Communities SCCs). These communities which embody the Church as Family of God can become concrete venues of poverty eradication in the Catholic Church.

6.3 Julius K. Nyerere: Quest for An African Solution to the Social Question

“The best way to discover why Tanzania remains poor and depends on handouts is not to examine its soil or its rainfall, but to read the collected speeches of Mr. Julius Nyerere.”

Julius Nyerere was a former president of the United Republic of Tanzania for more than two decades between 1962 and 1985. He was a statesman, political, and social theorist. As compared to many of his fellow contemporary African leaders, he has left behind a fuller record of his thought and political programme on behalf of the dignity and humanity of the poor in his writings and speeches, poems, translated works, and other written reflections. Nyerere was a devout Catholic Christian and inquiry for his beatification is currently underway in Tanzania with the authorization of the Vatican. His canonization will undoubtedly pose a challenge to African politicians to realize that it is possible to serve their people in a way that is pleasing to God.

Nyerere’s Ujamaa (family-hood) was a political ideology that largely trod the path of the Latin American Liberation Theology. It was thus a sort of Tanzania’s “state theology”. Significantly, it was a specifically black African attempt to provide an alternative approach to the social question. The phrase “the social question” refers to all situations and problems regarding justice, freedom, development, relations between peoples, and peace. When promoted, these values become a boon to poverty eradication. But their deficiency perpetuates poverty.

1045 Chapter Seven discusses the role of the Small Christian Communities in Africa as an embodiment of the Church as Family of God.
1046 James V. Schall, Religion, Wealth, and Poverty (Vancouver: Fraser Institute, 1990), 15.
Nyerere proposed a development path that was distinct from both the Eastern (communist) bloc and the Western (capitalistic) bloc. He encouraged Tanzanians to study the techniques and political systems of both blocs to see if they could provide a clue to the solution of the country’s problems. Yet they should copy neither of them as their model. “We should be willing to learn from our fellow men [sic.], and we should contribute to the common pool of knowledge and experience. We can do this if we use our brains—that is, if we THINK.”

Ujamaa sought to return to the traditional African society to “unpack” the values conducive to a specifically African approach to poverty alleviation.

Traditionally we lived as families, with individuals supporting each other and helping each other on terms of equality. We recognized that each of us had a place in the community and this place carried with it rights to whatever food and shelter available in turn for the use of whatever abilities and energies we had. The old and the sick, or those whose crops had been destroyed by natural disasters, were not left alone in their suffering. Other people shared with them, and did so without any feeling on their side that this was “charity” from the better off, or involved any loss of human dignity for the one who was (through no fault of his own) in need.

This vision of option for the poor allowed Nyerere to reject the reliance on aid-money as a means of achieving a sustainable development. He avers:

Firstly... there is no country in the world which is prepared to give us gifts or loans, or establish industries, to the extent that we would be able to achieve all our development targets... Secondly, even if it were possible for us to get the money for our needs from external sources, is this what we want? Independence means self-reliance. Independence cannot be real if a nation depends upon gifts and loans from another for its development.

What Nyerere says of the nation-state can apply as well to the churches in Africa; their pastoral targets cannot be sufficiently fulfilled if it relies overly on foreign donations.

6.3.1 A Pro-poor Church Stands On the Side of Justice

Nyerere offers useful insights into the Church’s role in the option for the poor. Being a Christian, he looks at the social question from a Christian point of view. He points out that the purpose of development is the human being and that it is the creation of both material and spiritual conditions that enable a human being to become his best. For Nyerere, religion, and specifically Christianity has revolutionary power as a transformative agent of society based on

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1050 Ibid., 198.
1051 Ibid., 238f.
1052 There are telling examples of churches that have become prosperous because they adopted the policy of self-reliance. For example, Paul Yonggi Cho, the founder of the Full Gospel Church in Seoul, South Korea, is said to have founded his church in the city rubbish dump. He refused financial assistance from partner churches in America and sent out missionaries instead. This Prosperity Gospel Church is now placing millions of dollars into missionaries all over the world. With a membership of 500,000 Christians, it is the biggest in the world. See: Paul Gifford, “Prosperity: A New and Foreign Element in African Christianity,” 377.
equality, justice, human rights and dignity. “That is easy for Christians to understand because Christianity demands that every man [sic.] should aspire towards union with God through Christ.” Nyerere sees mass poverty in Africa and across the world as a sign of failure in the practice of religion, and specifically the Christian religion. Mass poverty is an injustice and oppression in the world; its perpetuation is unchristian as well as ungodly. What perpetuates mass poverty is not something inherent in creation or nature but the socio-political and structural conditions created by human systems.

Thus Nyerere urges the Church to be always part of the people’s poverty, part of their struggle against poverty and on the side of social justice and the promotion of the common good of the given society:

> Only by sharing work, hardships, knowledge, persecution, and progress, can the Church contribute to our growth. And this means sharing in every sense as ‘members one of another’. For if the Church is not part of our poverty, and part of our struggle against poverty and injustice, then it is not part of us.¹⁰⁵⁴

The Christian religion has the moral responsibility of creating or supporting attitudes and structures in society that aim to minimise or eradicate mass poverty. This obligation is imbedded in the Christian faith itself such that not to fulfill it amounts to betrayal. The Church must itself become a source of social justice.¹⁰⁵⁵ Nyerere reminds Christians of the central tenet of the Christian belief that the human person is the image of God. Mass poverty and its consequences are therefore contradictory to this tenet: “We say that man was created in the image of God. I refuse to imagine a God who is poor, ignorant, superstitious, fearful, oppressed, wretched—which is the lot of the majority of those He created in his own image.”¹⁰⁵⁶ For Nyerere, the Church exists to create and demonstrate visibly the dignity that is in every person by virtue of his / her creation and as a reflection of God. Thus, true to its mission, the Church must actually involve itself into a “revolutionary” process for the sake of the poor and the marginalised. Nyerere holds:

> “The Church must help men [sic.] to rebel against their slums; it has to help them to do this in the most effective way it can be done. But most of all the Church must be obviously and openly fighting all those institutions, and power groups, which contribute to the existence and maintenance of the physical and spiritual slums—regardless of the consequences to itself and its members.”¹⁰⁵⁷

Nyerere commends the example of the few individual Catholic churchmen and churchwomen around the world who have become victims of assassination, imprisonment or

¹⁰⁵⁴ Ibid., 90.
¹⁰⁵⁶ Ibid., 216.
¹⁰⁵⁷ Ibid., 220.
re-location because they worked for the people and spoke for them against their oppressive regimes. On the other hand, he is critical to those representatives of the Church and the Church’s organizations that preach resignation in the face of poverty.

Very often they appear to accept as immutable the social, economic and political framework of the present world. They seek to ameliorate intolerable conditions through acts of love and of kindness where the beneficiary of this love and kindness remains an ‘object’. But when the victims of poverty and oppression … try to change those conditions, the representatives of the Church stand aside.”

A commitment to the creation of structures of lasting social justice must therefore be for the Church a crucial task to fulfill. No real social transformation can be reached, if efforts are not directed to addressing the root causes of social injustices.

To overcome the problem of mass poverty and the alienation of the poor, the Church should not be contented to remain at the level of charitable activities. He insists that caritative efforts such as maintaining orphanages, catering for disabled people, and so on, are certainly required and are laudable as expressions of Christian witness of the love of God for all humanity. However, Nyerere wants the Church to go beyond caritative efforts and help the poor to rebel against those institutions, and power groups, which contribute to the existence and maintenance of mass poverty. For him, “kindness is not enough, piety is not enough and charity is not enough…those who are now suffering from poverty…need to be helped to stretch themselves. They need to be empowered in their own ability to take control of their own lives.” He reminded the churches: “the poor and the oppressed should come to you not for alms, but for support against injustice.”

If the Church fails to be pro-poor and to stand on the side of social justice and the promotion of the common good of the given society, it will become “irrelevant to man [sic.] and the Christian religion will degenerate into a set of superstitions accepted by the fearful.” Or worse, “it will become identified with injustice and persecution.” If this happens, the Church will die, and humanly speaking it will deserve to die “because it will then serve no purpose comprehensible to modern man.”

6.3.2 Appraisal of Nyerere’s Proposals

The intent of Nyerere’s Ujamaa was to offer a moral contribution to ethical thought vis-à-vis contemporary economic, political and social conditions. Its relevance is first seen in the

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1058 See: Julius K. Nyerere, Man and Development, 93-94.
1059 Ibid. 85.
1060 Ibid., 90.
1061 Ibid., 95.
1063 Ibid., 216.

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particular seriousness it displays as an alternative systemic perception on human dignity, justice, rational material consumption, and option for the poor. Nyerere looks at the social question mainly from within the African situation based on African cultural assumptions and social-ethical conditions.\footnote{To uphold the dignity of human beings and consequently address the problem of poverty in Africa Nyerere urges society to treat all human beings as equal. See: Julius K. Nyerere, \textit{Freedom and Development/ Uhuru na Maendeleo} (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1973), 370-373. Human dignity and the centrality of the human person in development are also emphasized by Nyerere as the antidote to poverty in his work: Julius K. Nyerere, \textit{Man and Development} (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1974), 84.} Nyerere’s specifically African approach to the social question thus serves to promote African identity and pride. As the section on African theologians will demonstrate, the subversion of African identity and pride constitutes one of the greatest impediments to Africans’ struggle against poverty. Nyerere’s thought, therefore, can form a basis for African cultural and economic renaissance.\footnote{See: Laurenti Magesa, “Nyerere on \textit{Ujamaa} and Christianity,” in: op.cit., 251.}

Nyerere stresses the public role of the Church so much that he sees the commitment to the promotion of social justice and the option for the poor as the only purpose of the Church comprehensible to modern mankind. Apparently, he wishes to demonstrate the gravity of this public role of the Church in the context of poverty. He does not intend to correct the Church’s teaching that the proclamation of the Word of God is the first purpose of the Church. At the presentation of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, \textit{Africae Munus}, in Benin in November 2011, Pope Benedict XVI underlined the priority of the task of proclaiming the Word of God. He urged the Church of Africa to ensure that mission remained the central objective of the Church.\footnote{See: http://www.zenit.org/article-33866?l=english (accessed 6th September, 2012).} But at the same time, the responsibility of exercising the ministry of charity (\textit{diakonia}) is one expression of the Church’s deepest nature.\footnote{Benedict XVI, \textit{Deus Caritas Est}, No. 25.}

Nyerere’s vision of the transformation of society might appear not to provide room for non-Christians because it focuses on the Church. Yet Nyerere does not exclude non-Christians. In fact, he calls for cooperation between the Church and other social forces for the cause of social justice. He insists that Christians should not consider themselves as having a monopoly of virtue.\footnote{Julius K. Nyerere, \textit{Man and Development}, 95.} His vision clearly spearheads a dialogue of action which is a great quest in modern times, particularly in multi-religious contexts such as those found in Africa. Where dialogue in various forms prevails, i.e. dialogue of life, church-state dialogue, interreligious dialogue and ecumenical dialogue, then this creates more room for the dialogue of action. In the dialogue of action people will work jointly for their common cause, including
the cause of social justice. In Songea, an ecumenical dialogue of action exists between the Catholic Church (T.E.C members) and the mainline Protestant churches (CCT members). This is happening through the effort of Christian Social Services Commission (CSSC). This dialogue of action needs to be extended to involve other churches and non-Christian faith communities.

Nevertheless, Nyerere thinks that a Christian imagination can contribute to the transformation of African societies that are inflicted by mass poverty. For him, Christians should be more revolutionary in matters of justice and human dignity than anyone else because of the very foundation or source of Christian behaviour, i.e. the Christian faith-in-practice. Christians are motivated in their actions by the belief in the equality of persons as creatures and images of God, and the belief in the God of Jesus, who is a God of justice and human dignity. Accordingly, it becomes imperative for the practice of Christianity to reorient society in a certain concrete direction of “rebellion” against systems and structures that dehumanize people, and toward justice, human dignity, and peace. Nyerere’s ethical ideas echo the tenets of the Social Teaching of the Church.

Finally, calls to emulate Nyerere are heard from diverse spheres in Tanzania, particularly from the political and the religious. In fact, what sustained the moral credibility of Nyerere’s Ujamaa ideology was the code of ethics stipulated in the Arusha Declaration. That code of ethics was crucial in ensuring that structures of social injustice that perpetuate poverty and dehumanize people were kept at bay. The reinforcement of that code of ethics constituted one of Nyerere’s greatest achievements for the sake of the poor and human dignity. It is ironic, therefore, if Tanzanian political and church leaders on the one hand make repeated calls to emulate Nyerere, while on the other hand do not pay heed to his call to confront unjust social

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1071 This is an ecumenical Body established in 1992 by the Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC) and the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) to facilitate the provision of social services by Church institutions in Tanzania in the area of education and health. The CSSC works in collaboration with the Tanzanian Government, German Government and German Church Organizations Misereor and others. The rationale for the foundation of CSSC was that the Tanzania Central Government was undergoing social reforms whereby it was carrying out the process of devolving powers to plan and manage social services to local authorities. Churches being major providers of social services were required to organize themselves locally so as to participate fully in the reforms. CSSC states as its objective “to contribute to the physical, mental and spiritual development of the Tanzania people through facilitating the provision of quality social services to all, regardless of colour, race and creed and to foster promotion, improvement and expansion of education, health and other social services all over the country.” See: Christian Social Services Commission Profile (2003), 2.
1072 See: Julius K. Nyerere, Freedom and Development, 216.
1073 Nyerere wanted the Catholic Church to live up to the teachings of Pope John XXIII, Pope Paul VI and of the Second Vatican Council which emphasized social justice, the promotion of human dignity, and the common good. See: Julius Nyerere, Man and Development, 94-95.
structures that perpetuate poverty in the country. The public domain longs for the reinforcement of the leadership code of ethics.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has drawn from the works of famous economists Jeffrey Sachs and Muhammad Yunus, and Tanzanian politician Julius K. Nyerere to show that poverty eradication in Africa cannot be achieved without the transformation of unjust socio-economic structures. The structures are prevalent both at global level and within African states themselves. With regard to Sachs, the chapter has commended his efforts to draw a global attention to the reality of Africa’s extreme poverty. Sachs’s proposals for eliminating Africa’s poverty however suffer from one great shortcoming: they are disproportionately focused on aid to Africa. Ultimately the unjust global economic structures, the root causes of poverty, are obscured and left unchallenged. Mohammed Yunus on his part advocates an economic system of microcredit which is directly geared towards improving the lives of the poor, including street beggars. Yunus’s critical argument is that a viable poverty eradication strategy is one that transforms the unjust social structures that perpetuate poverty and directly offers the poor a possibility for an upward economic mobility.

Such insights are food for thought for the churches in Africa, pertinent to their social ministry that is committed to poverty eradication. Nyerere’s works speak eloquently to the duty of the Church on this regard. He calls upon the Church to be always on the side of the poor and of social justice. For him, churches that do not side with the poor in their rebellion against conditions that perpetuate their poverty are irrelevant to humanity. Significantly Nyerere’s thought and work remain a legacy or “testament” to humanity to be applied even in the present circumstances. He offers a viable approach towards the option for the poor and the promotion of human dignity.

Chapter Seven will present some biblical and theological insights into the question of option for the poor.

CHAPTER SEVEN

OPTION FOR THE POOR: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

7.0 Introduction

This chapter undertakes to investigate the issue of the option for the poor according to some biblical texts and Christian social teaching. The Word of God is the ground and expression of hope of the poor. It induces their self-consciousness and stands in solidarity with them. As this is a theological work, we need to take into consideration what God has revealed to us in his word with respect to our attempts to improve the quality of human life.  

Although what the Bible says about poverty and wealth cannot be taken as prescriptive for the current society in Africa, the biblical emphasis on the fate of the poor and the powerless prompts us to ask how our society today deals with these categories of people. The chapter will as well explore the issue of the option for the poor from the perspective of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). This will include a survey on the writings of some Church Fathers, some documents of Vatican Council II, and some papal encyclicals. A number of reasons make such an examination crucial. First, it is helpful to appraise the Catholic social doctrine in the current context African where new forms of poverty and new categories of the poor continue to emerge. Second, the commitment to the ministry of charity in the Church necessitates the promotion of the rich deposit of Catholic Social Teaching. Third, there is need to underscore the fact that the commitment to option for the poor has been part and parcel of the Church right from the early Christian communities to subsequent centuries. Thus it is nothing new.

7.1 Biblical Concept of Poverty

The Bible is rich with terms which express the concept of ‘poor’ or ‘poverty’ both in the material and spiritual sense. A close historical contextual analysis of the biblical texts is therefore necessary in order to identify the kind of poverty which is referred to in a particular text. Nonetheless, of the two kinds of poverty, material poverty is the more salient. Poverty in the material sense is mostly portrayed as an undesirable condition rather than an ascetic

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1076 See the description of spiritual poverty in the General Introduction.
discipline to be embraced for the purpose of attaining a higher goal.\textsuperscript{1077} It is this kind of poverty that will be the central point of investigation in this chapter. The Bible gives several broad causes of poverty of this kind. They include religious apostasy in cases like breaking the Sabbath and neglect of cultic responsibilities. Other causes are natural disasters such as locusts, famine, drought, hurricanes, tornados, lightning, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. Poverty is also due to human factors like migration, environmental degradation, and depletion of natural resources.\textsuperscript{1078}

However, almost in the whole Bible, poverty is seen consistently as the result of oppression perpetrated by the rich who are normally rulers as well. Both in the Old Testament and the New Testament pyramidal social structures persisted in which the largest social class at the lowest rung was that of the poor. The rich are blamed for the plight of the poor either by their oppressive action or by their failure to act in favour of the poor.\textsuperscript{1079} The Lord condemns both attitudes. Thus the socio-economic structures of injustice are portrayed as being principally the root causes of poverty in the Bible. In the Old Testament, this is epitomized by the monarchical era in Israel which was characterized by growing social inequalities. In the New Testament, the Palestine of the time of Jesus and the societies surrounding the early Christian communities in various regions witnessed similar situations.

In this sense, the term ‘poor’ therefore refers especially to those groups of people who suffer from economic deprivation, have no social status and those who are subjected to unjust treatment either by foreign rulers or by the authorities within their own land.\textsuperscript{1080} The misuse of power by the rich and the rulers is pervasive; it eventually subjects the ordinary people into perpetual poverty.

\textbf{7.2 Option for the Poor in the Old Testament}

The notion of “option for the poor” features highly as one of the most central themes of the Bible, though the phrase itself is not a biblical one.\textsuperscript{1081} The Old Testament depicts the oppression of the poor as a vicious circle. Oppression drives the people into poverty, but at the same time poverty perpetuates or aggravates oppression.\textsuperscript{1082} Besides, the Old Testament shows that some groups of ‘the poor’ are at risk of suffering from double oppression because

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item See: Bruce M. Metzger, Michael D. Coogan (eds.), \textit{The Oxford Companion to the Bible} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 604.
  \item See: Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 257.
  \item See: Jonathan J. Bonk, \textit{Missions and Money Affluence as a Missionary Problem Revisited} (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2006), 121.
  \item See: Donal Dorr, op.cit., 6.
  \item See: Albert Nolan, op.cit., 50.
  \item See: Donal Dorr, op.cit., 6.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
they are poor and simultaneously happen to be widows, orphans, or resident aliens. People belonging to such social categories are greatly vulnerable to exploitation, since normally they have nobody to defend them.

The issue of power and powerlessness also comes to the fore. The Old Testament describes power as belonging to God and that God shared his power with human beings when he created them. God is also depicted as having special care and coming to the defence of the poor. He takes a preferential option for such people. In the Book of Proverbs, for example, we read: “To oppress the weak insults the Creator, kindness to the needy honours the Creator.” The book also states: “Whoever is kind to the poor is lending to Yahweh who will repay him the kindness done.” It also gives the following admonition: “Do not despise the weak, for he is weak, and do not oppress the poor at the gate, for Yahweh takes up their cause, and exhorts the life of their extortioners.”

God’s option for the poor was well known among pious Israelites like Job. For him, generosity to the poor was a necessary condition if one had to encounter God without fear:

Have I been insensible to the needs of the poor, or let a widow’s eyes grow dim? Have I eaten my bit of bread on my own without sharing it with the orphan?... If so, let my shoulder fall from its socket, let my arm break off at the elbow! For the terror of God would fall on me and I could not then stand my ground before his majesty.

7.2.1 The Exodus Event: The Epitome of God’s Option for the Poor

The exodus renders testimony to “Yahweh’s resolved capacity to intervene decisively against every oppressive, alienating circumstance and force that precludes a life of well-being.” The Egyptian bondage of the people of Israel in Pharaoh’s construction project is a prominent example of the misuse of power. In the exodus event God’s option for the poor is being exercised as God intervenes to save the Israelites from their bondage. God tells Moses to go to Pharaoh and declare “Let my people go.” He leads the Israelites’ escape from Egypt and delivers them through the miraculous parting of the Red Sea. The exodus event was an epitome of God’s option for the poor. It was “the original and paradigmatic saving act of God.”

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1083 See: Gen. 1: 26, 28.  
1086 Gen. 22: 22-23.  
1087 Jb. 31:16-23.  
1088 See: Ex. 1:11.  
1089 Ex. 9:1.  
1090 See: Ex. 1:11.  
1091 Albert Nolan, op.cit., 52.
In Egypt the poverty of the Israelites was material and economic, but more strikingly it was the direct result of structural oppression prevalent in the Egyptian society. God took notice of the Israelites, he “saw their oppression, heard their cries, and helped them to escape from their oppressors.” Three decisive “exodus verbs” that confirm this assertion are discernible in the texts: “bring out”, “deliver”, and “redeem”. The verb “bring out” speaks about a geographical exit. Again, “I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians...” The verb “deliver” references an abrupt physical act of grasping or seizing in order to pull out of danger. Moreover, “I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with might acts of judgement.” The verb “redeem” bespeaks a transformative action particularly with reference to economic action within a family which is meant to maintain family property, or to avenge in order to maintain family honour. Thus the verb conveys the image of family solidarity for the maintenance and wellbeing of the family that Yahweh, who acts as a kinsperson, engenders.

God takes option for the oppressed Hebrews and this act constitutes in exodus a fundamental revelation about Yahweh. David Pleins has maintained that the exodus event is more about the development of a critique of the kingship system and foreign domination than an analysis of the structures of poverty that affect the community. Nevertheless, God’s intervention for the sake of the oppressed is quite manifest; he takes them completely out of the system. He sets out to liberate the oppressed rather than seeking to reconcile or make peace between Pharaoh and the oppressed Hebrew slaves within the corrupt Egyptian system. And out of the freed slaves God forms a new kind of society that is envisaged to be a classless society based on mutual sharing of goods and care for one another.

Furthermore, the exodus event reveals the need for the victims of oppression take an option for their own cause. Moses, himself not among the oppressed Hebrew slaves, is shown as taking the cause of the oppressed Hebrews and persuades them to take their own cause. He urges them to have faith and trust in Yahweh. Usually it is expected that the non-poor should take option in favour of the poor. Thus it is somewhat a novelty that Moses urges the

1092 Ibid.  
1094 Ex. 13: 3; Ex. 12: 41.  
1095 Ex. 3:8; 5:23.  
1096 Ex. 6:6; Ex. 15: 13.  
1097 See: Walter Brueggemann, op.cit. 175.  
1098 See: Ibid.  
1100 See: Ibid.  
1101 See: Albert Nolan, op.cit., 53.
poor and the oppressed to take an option of their own cause. But as it is often the case, not all the poor will engage themselves in the cause of their class of the poor. Many of them will possibly be too broken in spirit and too lacking in hope of success. Others on the other hand, may abandon the cause of the poor as a whole and concentrate instead on their own private cause of social mobility into ranks of the oppressor.\(^{102}\) Such an approach among the poor gives room for the perpetuation of oppression of the poor in the society concerned.

In the exodus event God also revealed himself as the sole healer of the people of Israel.\(^{103}\) Michael Brown has suggested that Yahweh did not have a “healing monopoly”, since undoubtedly there were human physicians and healing deities both in Egypt and in Canaan. But if the nation of Israel in its early formative years had to maintain a monotheistic worship of Yahweh then it was imperative for it to learn that the Lord alone was their healer.\(^ {104}\) Thus the deities that the people of Israel encountered, for instance Sekhmet, Marduk, and Baal should not be regarded as their healer.\(^ {105}\)

The exodus event involved the proclamation of the law consisting of the rules of conduct given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai. Instructions on the use of land were part of the law since the possession of land was to be the cornerstone of the new society.\(^ {106}\) The land-tenure system the Israelites experienced in Egypt was called “prebendal”.\(^ {107}\) In that system land was seen as a tradable commodity. But finally, land was the possession of the king who represented the state. For the common citizens therefore land was not inalienable, rather, it was viewed as an historical accident. The land system was generally permeated by “rapacious social policy of the strong against the weak.”\(^ {108}\) In the law, on the contrary, God instructs the Israelites to follow a land-tenure system that is governed by patrimony. In that system land is basically the Lord’s property. However, every Hebrew family is endowed with a perpetual right to the land. God emphasized in the law: “…for the land is mine, and you are but aliens who have become my tenants.”\(^ {109}\) Here the ownership of land is inalienable. The produce of the land could be sold but the land itself should be retained in perpetuity. The system grants one privileges but it also imposes responsibilities on his family inheritance.

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\(^{102}\) See: Ibid.

\(^{103}\) See: Ex. 15: 26.


\(^{105}\) The concept of God as healer is yet another expression of God’s option for the poor because it denotes God’s offer of “shalom” (peace) i.e. “soundness” or “well-being” to his people as a consequence of their obedience to the covenant. See: Diane B. Stinton, “Jesus as Healer,” 15.

\(^{106}\) See: Christopher Owczarek, op.cit. 71.


\(^{108}\) Ibid.

The clash between the prebendal and patrimony-based land-tenure systems is well illustrated in the story of Naboth’s vineyard. Jezebel embodies the former, while Naboth the latter. Significantly, the patrimony-based land system bestows a certain dignity on the human person because land possession gives one social power. Conversely, the lack of land and the social power that goes with it diminishes the human dignity of the affected persons. By commanding that land be retained in perpetuity, God safeguards human dignity. This is manifested in the law’s stipulation of the Sabbath economic practices in which every fiftieth year the land that had been bought was to be restored to its original holder. Land could then be gracially shared among all who had need. In matters related to the use of land the Torah always reminded the people to be particularly mindful of the weak and vulnerable. Even those who could not live off their own land such as widows, orphans, strangers and Levites could not live as beggars since the law permitted them to collect their needs from the land of others. This was to be for the good of the poor. The law states that there should be a release or ‘rest’ of the land in the seventh year whereby the land is not cultivated by its owner so that the produce becomes common property. The poor may thereby harvest the food and wild animals may be able to eat of it. The legal texts in Exodus and Leviticus thus portray “a characteristic of grace-formed community” among the people of Israel that took a strong option for the poor.

7.2.2 Deuteronomy’s Vision: “There Shall Be No Poor among You”

The book of Deuteronomy is an exhortation to the people of Israel to have a single-minded devotion to Yahweh because of their unique covenant relationship with him. Social justice issues pervade the entire book. Chapter 15 of this book exemplifies this fact. As the people of Israel are on the eve of their entry into the Promised Land, their leader, Moses, sets forth a radical vision of life they have to live in conformity with the covenant relationship. The core of his call envisions the establishment of a new kind of society in which there should be no poor: “But there will be no poor among you (for the LORD will bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance to possess).” Specifically, the Deuteronomic vision provides that in the seventh year debts should be cancelled and slaves

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1110 See: 1Kgs. 21.
1111 See: Lev. 25.
1112 See: Lev. 19: 9-10, see also Lev. 23:22.
1113 See: Ex. 23:11.
1114 See: Lee C. Camp, op.cit., 185.
1115 Deut. 15: 4.
released.\textsuperscript{1116} This would eventually put an end to debt-slavery. But after the former slaves are set free, they are not simply to be left to their own devices, rather, they are to be given “gifts” to enable them make a fresh start. In this way the “laws of the Torah serve not only to specify the rights of the poor people but also to regulate how more successful Israelites are to deal with those on the margins of the ancient Israelite economic.”\textsuperscript{1117} There is also a law concerning the release of the land parallel to those in the legal texts of Exodus and Leviticus. The immediate beneficiaries of this law are the landless poor, since landowners, in contrast, would be able to eat the producer of their own land. However, Deuteronomy 15 goes further than Exodus and Leviticus by extending the laws of release to include landowners who were weighed down by the burden of debt.\textsuperscript{1118} With the same social vision that was attentive to marginality, farmers were required to leave unharvested the edges of a field of grain and not to pick the produce that dropped during harvesting. One might wander into another’s vineyard or wheat field and eat one’s fill, provided one does not carry any away.\textsuperscript{1119} The dignity of the poor was also safeguarded by the system of paying tithes. In every three years 10\% of one’s produce had to be brought to the community store for the poor.\textsuperscript{1120}

Old Testament scholar Norbert Lohfink has noted that the terminology used by Deuteronomy to refer to those in need also implies the vision to establish a new society. He maintains that throughout the ancient Near East and in much of the Old Testament landless groups such as “aliens”, “widows”, and “orphans” were considered to be among the poor. Deuteronomy has however redefined the concept of the “poor” such that these categories of people are never referred to as poor. Despite that, Deuteronomy depicts the “aliens”, “widows”, and “orphans” as people who, on account of the particular circumstances, must be provided for in a different manner.\textsuperscript{1121} The Deuteronomic vision was thus intended to ensure that no permanent poor underclass was established among the people of Israel. But simultaneously, it demonstrates that the care of the landless and poor was to be one of the most important measures of the effectiveness of the people of Israel in living out loyalty to Yahweh.\textsuperscript{1122}

\textsuperscript{1116} See: Deut. 15: 12-18.
\textsuperscript{1119} See: Deut. 23: 24-25.
\textsuperscript{1120} See: Deut. 14: 28, 29.
\textsuperscript{1122} See: Peter T. Vogt, op.cit., 37.
7.2.3 The Challenge of the Prophets

In the prophetic tradition, God initiates the option for the poor by sending prophets to admonish the rulers of Israel who oppress the people. Prophets like Amos, Hosea, Elijah and others, point to the present injustices and warn of impending dire consequences if the rulers do not take corrective action. The prophets’ key role was to be God’s voice in denouncing the injustice and calling for remedial action. Their cause of justice for the poor was Yahweh’s cause. Through the voice of the prophets the nation was going to be measured for its uprightness and justice. If it was not upright, it would surely collapse. The only way out for it was to “let justice flow like water, and uprightness like a never-failing stream.” However, since the prophets identified themselves with the cause of the oppressed this resulted into their own oppression at the hands of kings who persecuted and imprisoned them.

7.2.4 Attitude towards Wealth and Prosperity

The Old Testament on the one hand maintains a positive view towards wealth and prosperity. It assumes the sanctity of personal ownership of property. The Book of Exodus for example, encourages generosity and prohibits stealing and covetousness. Wealth is portrayed as being capable of making a person happy, secure in the present life and unworried about the future. Old Testament suggests that the acquisition of wealth and prosperity is related to the moral behaviour of a person. Some people appear to be poor and unsuccessful in their lives on account of their righteousness. They desist from acquiring wealth and prosperity through unjust means. Others, nevertheless, seem to be promised tangible rewards from God precisely because they lead a righteous life. On the other hand, some texts of the Old Testament depict wealth and prosperity as being inherently dangerous spiritually. Wealth and prosperity may tempt a person to forget and defy God and foster a false sense of security and self-sufficiency. An affluent life may also hinder repentance of sin.

Wealth and prosperity are also most frequently condemned in the Old Testament as tangible symbols of brutality, disobedience and endemic injustice. Thus they are by no means

1123 See: Amos 7: 7-9.
1124 Amos 5: 24.
1125 See: Jer. 20:13.
1126 See: Jonathan J. Bonk, op.cit.,100.
1127 See: Ex. 20:15-17 and Deut. 5: 19-21.
1128 See: Eccles.5:19-20.
1130 See: Deut.8:1-20.
1131 See: Ps. 30:6; Prov. 18:11.12; 28:11; Eccl. 5:8-15.
signs of God’s blessing as a reward for personal or national righteousness. The prosperity of Egypt for instance was built on slavery. The prosperous inhabitants of Canaan are simultaneously portrayed as being notoriously wicked. So too, the affluent cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are bywords for decadence. Many kings of Israel and Judah similarly were famous for their material and political prosperity but also notoriously wicked. But on the other side, the Old Testament often presents cases of righteous persons who undergo suffering and wicked persons who enjoy prosperity. Job epitomises righteous persons who suffer. The suffering of the just person becomes one of the most perplexing theological conundrums facing humanity. This is because it is incompatible with the attributes of God as omnipotent and absolutely just.

7.3 New Testament Insights into Option for the Poor

It is beyond the scope of this work to span the entire gamut of the New Testament teaching on the option for the poor. For our purposes, this section will focus on Luke-Acts, while other scriptural texts will be referred to in passing.

7.3.1 Socio-Economic Stratifications in Jesus’ Time

The social and economic classification of the Jews in Jesus’ time was threefold. First, there was the upper class. This consisted of the occupants of palaces, big traders, landowners, bankers, members of the Sanhedrin, and families of the chief priests. Second, there was the middle class which was formed by small traders, small famers, craftsmen, fishermen, the Levites, and priests. Third, there was the group of the poor. This class was still categorised into two. The first category comprised the poor who were known as ptōchos. Stegemann has noted that ptōchos is the most frequently used term in expressing poverty in the New Testament. These people owned nothing; they were destitute and had to live on alms. Their livelihood was sustained by charity prescribed by the Torah. The alms were in the form of

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1133 See: Jonathan J. Bonk, op. cit., 120.
1135 See: Gen. 13:13; 18:16-29; Ez. 16:49.
1136 Examples are Baasha (1King. 15:33-16:7); Omri (1King. 16:21-28); Ahab (1King. 16:29; 22:40); Ahaziah (2King. 8:25-29).
1137 See: Job 21: 7-14.
1138 See: Jonathan J. Bonk, op.cit., 121.
1139 See: Mery Kolimon, op.cit., 46.
1141 See: Ibid.
food, clothes and money. The lack of food for these people was absolute. This means they had to suffer from hunger (and thirst). The Beatitudes in Luke 6:20 refer to such people when they identify the situation of the poor with hunger and sadness. The poor do not know if tomorrow they will have something to eat and drink. They lack what a human being necessarily needs for the body and for living. The evangelist Luke suggests that, apart from the poor who were resident in particular locations, there were also itinerant ones. Lazarus for example, was a sick poor man who lay at the gate of the rich man longing to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table.

The Book of Revelation associates poverty with nakedness. Being naked depicts more accurately the real situation of destitution. It seems to have been an exception that the blind beggar Bartimaeus could even own a coat since this seemed almost beyond the means of a destitute poor. In fact, the typical situation of a pauper was what John the Baptist seems to suggest in his call: “He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.” In the Letter of James the poor are characterized by being naked, i.e. ill-clad and freezing. Thus it is stressed that clothing a naked person is clothing Jesus himself.

The second category of the poor was formed by those who were referred to as penēs. These were the poor who were still able to make a living like slaves and day labourers. Their salary was a denarius a day. As such they owned little or moderate possessions and were thus forced to live sparingly. Some of the penētes were small farmers and artisans who had to work by themselves and in general had live frugally. The term penēs, however, is used only once in the New Testament in 2 Cor. 9:9, where it is applied in connection with an old Testament quotation. Another terminology for poverty related to penēs is penichros. However, this term is found only once in the New Testament, namely in Luke 21:2. Likewise, the word endeēs, i.e. “the needy” is to be found only in Acts 4: 34. Thus according to the social stratification of the time, the extreme contrast to the rich class, the plousioi, was the class of the ptōchoi.

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1143 See: Mk. 14: 7; Mt. 25:35f; Lk. 16: 30; Acts 3:1ff.
1144 See: Lk 3:11; Mt. 25:35f; 6:25; James 2:15f.
1145 See: Lk:14:21-23
1146 See: Lk. 16:20.
1147 See: Rev.3:17.
1148 See: Mk.10:50.
1149 See: Wolfgang Stegemann, op.cit. 11.
1150 See: Jam. 2:16.
1151 See: Mt.25:36.
1152 See: Wolfgang Stegemann, op.cit., 8.
1153 See: Ibid.
The rich class lived on their own possessions and made a good living by making others work for them.

In most cases in the New Testament the term poverty is used in a socio-economic sense. Metaphorical use of the term poverty is also found in some texts, for instance in Gal. 4:9, where Paul refers to the elemental spirits as being “poor”. In 2 Cor. 8:9 Jesus is referred to as poor. The Beatitudes in Mt.5:3 speak of “the poor in spirit”. Nevertheless, even a metaphorical meaning of poverty conveys to the reader the real situation of the poor. Thus when the ‘elemental spirits’ are referred to as ‘poor’ in Gal. 4:9, this denotes their ‘powerlessness’, ‘weakness’ and ‘sickness’. These expressions are typical conditions of poverty. The poor are those who are powerless, weak and sick. Similarly, Revelation 3:17 argues that those who claim to be rich, to have prospered and to lack nothing, in fact, do not know that they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. This characterization is here metaphorically used. Nonetheless, it presents one of the most comprehensive and realistic descriptions of poverty as widely depicted in the New Testament. It follows that, in the New Testament the poor, the cripple, the blind, the lame, _inter alia_, are mentioned as belonging together. The class of the extremely poor people was already in existence in classical antiquity. Nevertheless, it seemed to have escalated to greater proportions during the Roman Empire. The Roman Regime crushed the indigenous people politically and oppressed them economically. Subsequently, the preponderous use of the term _ptōchos_ in the New Testament reflects the real socio-economic situation prevalent at the time. It signifies that the category of the destitute and struggling wretched people was conspicuously significant.

Their situation of poverty was attributed to the following factors: first, the Jewish religion made onerous demands on them. They had to pay a tithe on almost all of their produce. Apart from that, there was the annual half shekel which every male adult was required to pay for the upkeep of the temple. Consequently, the Jewish religion created two social and economic categories of people: the category of the oppressors and that of the oppressed. The former generally consisted of the Sadducees and Pharisees, the scribes the chief priests, and the elders (the nobility and rich landowners). The latter included the poor, the blind, the lame, the crippled, widows and orphans, the sinners, the tax collectors, and prostitutes.

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1156 See: Lk. 14: 13, 21; 4:18f; 7:22; Mt. 11:5; 25:35f; Gal. 4:9.
1157 See: Wolfgang Stegemann, op.cit., 8.
1158 See: Ewin James, _Prosperity or Greed? Exposing the errors and dangers of Prosperity Gospel_ (Denver, Colorado: Outskirts, Inc., 2009), 45f.  
1159 See: Albert Nolan, op.cit., 57.
Second, the Jews were heavily taxed by Herod the Great, the political representative of the Roman colonial rule. He intended to raise money to finance his lavish construction projects including the mammoth Temple of Jerusalem. The construction of the temple began in BC 19 and even at the time of Jesus, forty-six years later, was not completed.\textsuperscript{1160}

Third, the Roman authorities exacted heavy taxes from the Jews just as they did to other colonial subjects. The tax-collectors employed onerous methods and were tainted with corruption. This oppression made the coming of Jesus, the messiah, to be surrounded with enthusiasm and expectation from the Jews who hoped he would overthrow the Roman colonial rule and eventually rid them of their financial burden.\textsuperscript{1161}

Admittedly, some of the elite in that society might have owned their possessions legally. Nevertheless, the legal, political and economic systems of the society were corrupt and repressive for the poor.\textsuperscript{1162} As such in his ministry Jesus draws attention to the internal structures of oppression that were predominant within the Jewish religion and society. His option for the category of the poor and the vulnerable is clear and unequivocal. His ministry is the ministry of empowerment \textit{par excellence}. According to Stegemann Christian communities outside Palestine in the urban regions of the Roman Empire did not consist of poor people of the category of \textit{ptōchoi}. The poor in these regions belonged to the category of the \textit{penētes}. Apparently, Paul came to know some \textit{ptōchoi} among the “saints” in Jerusalem and his church community organized fundraising for them.\textsuperscript{1163}

7.3.2 Luke-Acts on Wealth and Poverty


It can be stated unequivocally that that Luke-Acts – the scriptural witness that speaks most emphatically about the human use of possessions as a response of faith – bears no trace of the contemporary heresy called the prosperity gospel. However much televangelists and others trumpet the ‘scriptural’ character of their claim that faith brings with it material prosperity…they choose to follow a handful of Old Testament texts in the Deuteronomic

\textsuperscript{1160} See: Ewin James, op.cit., 46.  
\textsuperscript{1161} See: Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{1162} See: Mery Kolimon, op.cit., 47.  
\textsuperscript{1163} See: Rom. 15:25ff; 1Cor. 16:1ff; 2Cor. 8:1ff; 9:1ff; Gal. 2:10.  
tradition, and ignore completely the unanimous witness of the New Testament, which portrays
discipleship not in terms of worldly success, but in terms of radical obedience and service—
service that involves the sharing of possessions rather than the accumulation of them.

This neglect is all the more surprising because Luke-Acts is central to the Pentecostal
tradition that shapes its pneumatological theology.\footnote{See: Amos Yong, \textit{Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbour} (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 100.}

### 7.3.3 Option for the Poor in Luke-Acts

Jesus’ option for the poor as underlined in Luke-Acts does not focus on the category of people who are morally and spiritually poor. It is undeniable, though, that the concept of spiritual poverty also exists. What is conspicuously evident is that Jesus takes sides with the outcasts of the Jewish society, namely, the sinners, prostitutes, tax-collectors, and with those who were hungry and thirsty as well as street-beggars. It is not spiritual poverty which is here at stake. What moved Jesus to identify himself with these people was not their piety but their suffering.\footnote{See: Albert Nolan, \textit{op.cit.}, 58.} This point needs to be emphasized in Tanzania today where for many new religious movements action for the poor is premised on moral integrity symbolized by joining their particular denomination.

Jesus’ option for the poor according to Luke-Acts narrative includes both his own deeds in favour of the poor and his teaching on the use of possessions. Jesus’ deeds are, first of all, witnessed through his performance of miracles of healing and exorcism which explicate his own interpretation of the kingdom of God.\footnote{See: Lk. 4: 31-37, 38-42; 5:12-16, 17-26; 6: 6-11, 18f.} He links the healings and exorcisms to the saving intent of God himself. “But if it is through the finger of God that I drive devils out, then the kingdom of God has indeed caught you unawares.”\footnote{Lk. 11: 20.} Consequently, the God of the Kingdom proclaimed by Jesus “is coming as the ultimate end of sickness, death and evil.”\footnote{See: Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmueller, \textit{The Biblical Foundations for Mission} (New York: Orbis Books, 1983), 149.} John’s pericope of chapters 2 to 12, termed the “book of the signs”, is also an important christological reference in this line because it sets forth the meaning of Jesus in terms of his deeds.\footnote{See: Luke Timothy Johnson, \textit{op.cit.}, 28.} Most of these deeds portray Jesus’ option for the sick, the poor and the marginalised. Besides, there is a theological link between this pericope and Luke 9 in that the works of Christ give evidence to his life and identity.\footnote{See: Stan Chu Ilo, Joseph Ogbonnaya and Alex Ojacor (eds.), \textit{The Church as Salt and Light: Path to an African Ecclesiology of Abundant Life} (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 19.}
Second, Jesus’ other deeds that constituted his own definition of God’s kingdom were witnessed in his ministry of compassion to the peripheral people. He reached out with compassion to those who were cast out from community by Jewish Law. His action restored their dignity. Jesus utilised various instruments and contexts to enhance, bestow or acknowledge someone’s dignity. For example, he had table fellowships with outcasts and tax-collectors.\textsuperscript{1172} By eating with such people Jesus turned the table of the Jewish society.

Third, Jesus interpreted the Jewish Law in favour of the marginalised. For example, he justifies his healing on Sabbath of the woman who had suffered for eighteen years. He calls her “daughter of Abraham.”\textsuperscript{1173} Similarly, Jesus refers to Zacchaeus, the despised, diminutive tax-collector as “son of Abraham”.\textsuperscript{1174} It was empowering for a Jewish person to be called “child of Abraham”. The designation establishes a link between that person and the Covenant, and with the God of the Covenant. It bestows that person an identity, integrity and value.\textsuperscript{1175}

Moreover, Jesus allowed himself to come into physical contact with the ritually unclean persons and the social outcasts through touching, kissing, or embracing them. Jesus’ ministry was also inclusive of women\textsuperscript{1176} and was open to despised people such as the Samaritans.\textsuperscript{1177} This was anti-typical to the Jewish religion which excluded these categories of people. Jesus’ pastoral approaches consequently created liminality in previously fixed social religious borders and fostered inclusion, togetherness and dignity of the persons concerned.\textsuperscript{1178}

As pointed out, these deeds of Jesus constitute his own definition of the kingdom of God. For some commentators it is within the framework of the kingdom of God programme proclaimed by Jesus Christ that the niche of the Prosperity Gospel can be located.\textsuperscript{1179} They maintain that the kingdom of God programme has made provision to rid the world of all forms of evil, including poverty. Consequently, they contend that all believers in Christ are given the right to enjoy the fullness of God’s spiritual and physical blessings in the here and now.\textsuperscript{1180} Consonant with this thesis, therefore, it is maintained that the kingdom of God programme validates the practice of the Prosperity Gospel. However, since the Prosperity Gospel glorifies affluence and material prosperity as signs of God’s favour, it does not seem

\textsuperscript{1172} See: Lk. 7:31-35.
\textsuperscript{1173} Lk. 13: 16.
\textsuperscript{1174} Lk. 19:9.
\textsuperscript{1176} See: Lk. 8: 1-4.
\textsuperscript{1177} See: Lk.10:10-37, 17:11-19.
\textsuperscript{1178} See: Johann du Plessis, op.cit., 584.
\textsuperscript{1180} See: Ibid.
to emphasize the place assigned to the poor in the kingdom of God. According to Luke, the poor, the ptōchoi, are seen by Jesus as the owners of the kingdom of God, not the rich.\textsuperscript{1181} Concurring with this view, Moxnes maintains that Jesus did not portray the kingdom of God in imperial pictures. On the contrary, he depicted it in the image of households, with God as housefather.\textsuperscript{1182} Being a household, the kingdom of God provides room for the poor and common people who become firstborn sons and daughters. The poor do not belong to the category of the powerless anymore, since they are promised access to power in the familia Dei.\textsuperscript{1183} This power, nevertheless, is unique, since it views greatness in terms of service and love, rather than in exploitative hierarchical relationships. In fact, Jesus himself shows that one way of upholding the option for the poor is through diakonia i.e. service and caring for the poor. In the Acts of the Apostles, likewise, Luke demonstrates how the early Christian communities endeavoured to witness to this diakonia and love. For these Christian believers, choosing God entailed selling surplus possessions and joining with the poor in a sharing community in which no one would be in need.\textsuperscript{1184}

\textbf{7.3.4 Discipleship Motif: A Disciple of Jesus Must Be Pro-poor}

Discipleship motif is one criterion that Luke’s theology proposes concerning the relationship between possessions and following Jesus Christ. For Luke Jesus wants his followers to live beyond mammocracy. Thus he presents them with a critical option: to choose God or mammon, since no one can serve two masters at a time.\textsuperscript{1185} Choosing God entails selling surplus possessions.\textsuperscript{1186} Jesus stresses that “whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it.\textsuperscript{1187} The Greek word for “gain” used by Luke here is peripoieo, meaning to “possess”. Hence, if one would try to hold onto his life as a possession he or she will lose it. After all a person’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions he has. And it is foolishness for one to entrust the security of his existence in stored possession.\textsuperscript{1188} Disciples are to secure for themselves a reward from God by the distribution of alms to the poor.\textsuperscript{1189} The obsessive

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item See: Lk. 6: 21.
\item See: Mery Kolimon, op.cit., 45.
\item See: Acts 2:44-46.
\item See: Lk. 16: 13.
\item See: Lk.12:33-34; 14:33.
\item See: See: Lk. 17:33.
\item See: Lk. 12: 15-21.
\item See: Lk. 16: 10-13; 19-31.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
preoccupation of the Pharisees and lawyers with ritual purity at the expense of almsgiving is disapproved by Jesus.\textsuperscript{1190}

7.3.5 Stewardship Motif: A Steward of God is A Steward of the Poor

Apart from the discipleship motif, Luke suggests another paradigm for Christians with regard to the option for the poor namely, stewardship. He begins by presenting several stewardship parables, including the Parable of the Faithful and Wise Steward,\textsuperscript{1191} the Parable of the Unjust Steward,\textsuperscript{1192} and the Parable of the Ten Minas.\textsuperscript{1193} The stewardship motif is pervasive in the Gospel of Luke and underlines a master-slave relation between Jesus and his disciples. In fact, for some scholars, the master-slave relationship is even more dominant than the teacher-pupil relationship which constitutes discipleship.\textsuperscript{1194}

Several requirements of stewardship are identifiable in Luke’s theology of stewardship: first, what a steward owns does not belong to him but to his master. Second, a person’s stewardship is not permanent but provisional and any time he may be required to give an account. Thus he must be alert all the time. Third, the work of the steward will be judged: a faithful accomplishment of it will be rewarded, otherwise punishment will follow.

Of particular interest for our purposes is Luke’s theology of stewardship of wealth, that is, on the proper use of possessions. Luke gravely emphasizes this dimension of stewardship apparently to posit that a Christian is a steward of God and the proper way to use his possessions is therefore almsgiving.\textsuperscript{1195} Luke approaches this subject either directly or indirectly. He addresses the sayings of Jesus to the rich and wealthy in his community in order to criticise their wrong attitude towards possessions. To consolidate his argument, he presents bad as well as good exemplary models of stewardship of wealth or improper and proper stewardship of wealth.

7.3.5.1 Improper Stewardship of Wealth

Luke demonstrates bad models of stewardship with parables. One parable is that of the Rich Fool.\textsuperscript{1196} He portrays its protagonist as worrying about his possessions and craving for more wealth, believing that his life consists in the abundance of his possessions. Jesus

\textsuperscript{1190} See: Lk. 11: 37-52.  
\textsuperscript{1191} See: Lk. 12: 42-48.  
\textsuperscript{1192} See: Lk. 16: 1-13.  
\textsuperscript{1193} See: Lk. 19:11-27.  
\textsuperscript{1195} See: Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{1196} See: Lk.12:14-21.
counters this attitude with a proverbial saying: “A man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”\textsuperscript{1197} And at the conclusion of his conversation Jesus presents yet another proverbial saying: “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.”\textsuperscript{1198} The parable of the Rich Man\textsuperscript{1199} is another example. In Luke’s time rich people sometimes proffered festive meals to the poor just to make a show of their superior position, wealth and name. “It was a rare but very precious opportunity for the poor to satisfy their hunger.”\textsuperscript{1200} The sumptuous feasts the man holds and his purple and fine linen garments testify to his affluence. Yet he does nothing to relieve the painful hunger and disease of the poor Lazarus at his gate. This negligence is antithetical to the duty to love God and the neighbour as commanded of all Jews.\textsuperscript{1201} Instead of living for God and his neighbour the rich man pursues the goal of self-gratification.\textsuperscript{1202}

The parable of the Rich Ruler\textsuperscript{1203} is another bad model of stewardship. The Rich Ruler displays a strong attachment to wealth and his great amount of capital assets. This attitude prevents him from selling his property for the sake of the poor. Apart from these parables Luke presents many other texts that are related to improper use of wealth. Strong adherence to wealth, wasteful use of it, and hoarding it are some of the expressions of wrong stewardship of possessions these texts indicate. These parables were meant to be a harsh criticism to members of Christian communities who were reluctant or unwilling to hand out some possessions to the poor.

7.3.5.2 Proper Stewardship of Wealth

Good exemplary models of stewardship as pointed out by Luke include the Galilean women who out of their own possessions devotedly provided for Jesus and his band of disciples in their itinerant ministry.\textsuperscript{1204} Luke mentions also the Parable of the Good Samaritan whose moral is to urge Christians to help anyone in predicament\textsuperscript{1205} and the incident of Zacchaeus who exhibits concern for the poor.\textsuperscript{1206} For Luke, if the rich householders like Zacchaeus give half their wealth to the poor, salvation has come to their house.

\textsuperscript{1197} Lk.12: 15.
\textsuperscript{1198} Lk.12: 21.
\textsuperscript{1199} See: Lk. 16: 19-31.
\textsuperscript{1200} Kyoung-Jin Kim, op.cit., 188f.
\textsuperscript{1201} See: Dt.6:5; Lev.19:18.
\textsuperscript{1202} See: Kyoun-Jin Kim, op.cit., 190.
\textsuperscript{1203} See: Lk. 18:18-43.
\textsuperscript{1204} See: Lk. 8: 1-3.
\textsuperscript{1205} See: Lk. 10: 29-37.
\textsuperscript{1206} See: Lk. 19: 1-8.
7.3.5.3 Early Christian Communities: “There Were No Poor Among Them”

Almsgiving motif as an expression of right stewardship of possessions came to permeate the Christian communities. The book of Acts renders credence to this fact. Yet unlike the Gospel of Luke, the book of Acts does not show direct and explicit exhortations to the rich to give alms to the poor. There is a single passage in Paul’s farewell sermon to the elders of Miletus where exhortation to help the poor is evident. Paul exhorts the elders to help the weak, quoting the Lord’s command: “it is more blessed to give rather than to receive.” The term “weak” in this context implies the poor, i.e. those who are weak financially. As such, helping them is tantamount to almsgiving.

Notwithstanding the conspicuous lack of direct exhortations to help the poor, the book of Acts contains copious materials with almsgiving motif. It is prominently seen, for example, that the early Christians had all things in common. They would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all as any had need. Consequently, “there were no poor among them.” With this practice the kingdom of God was proclaimed and embodied. Luke’s comment that “there were no poor among them” invokes the Old Testament Deuteronomic text discussed above, which says of the people of Israel “there shall be no poor among you.” This correspondence suggests Luke’s view that the early Christian community was being governed by the model of inclusivity and mutual care which the Deuteronomic vision depicted.

Equally important, almsgiving in the early church communities was not confined to poor individuals. Churches also gave alms to other churches. The hunger relief organized by the Church of Antioch in favour of the church community of Judea epitomises this kind of almsgiving. This “inter-church” relief could be reckoned as an act of almsgiving of a different sort, namely “benevolence of an institution with wealth towards an institution in need.” Similarly, Paul praises the churches of Macedonia for their generosity, despite themselves experiencing continual ordeals of hardships and intense poverty. Their generosity bore the significance of service (or diakonia) since it was meant to meet the existing needs of the recipient community. It was also an expression of fellowship (or koinonia) of the community. Koinonia denotes partnership. Paul encourages the Corinthian

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1207 Acts 20:35.
1208 See: Luise Schottroff and Wolfgang Stegemann, Jesus and the Hope of the Poor (New York: Orbis Books, 1986), 111.
1210 See: Acts 4:34.
1212 Kyoung-Jin Kim, op.cit., 221.
1213 See: 2 Cor.8: 1-2.
Christians to remember the example of Christ who “though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor.”[1214] There should be a balance between those who have in abundance and those who are in need.[1215]

On the other hand, Paul rebukes the Christians of Corinth for their manner of eating and drinking the Lord’s Supper which reinforced economic stratifications; their behaviour portrayed both contempt for the Church of God and humiliation of the poor.[1216] Paul stresses the need for Christians to share their resources with the poor. For him amassing wealth in the face of need constitutes injustice. God provides people with wealth not only for their personal gratification and luxury but for the meeting of needs. Here lies a critical challenge to the Prosperity Gospel churches and others that one who has received abundant blessings from God has to share abundantly as well. The sharing of possessions in and by a Christian community makes the understanding of possessions transcend the purely material aspect. It becomes an exercise of grace[1217] and a confirmation that the Christian community owns the good news of Jesus.[1218]

In 1Timothy 6: 6-19, Paul also speaks against mammoncracy in Christian communities. He argues that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Piety with self-control, on the other hand, is a big profit. “Religion does bring large profit, but only to those who are content with what they have.”[1219] At that time the Greek word porismos or “profit” was already used to denote self-enrichment or acquisition of economic gains.[1220] Paul notes that some Christians regard their religion as a means of earning their living and others as a source of material enrichment. He warns that avarice leads a believer to ruin and destruction. And the deleterious effect is not only on the greedy person himself but on the whole humanity (or anthropoi) and the whole created order.[1221]

Paul’s words of admonition may speak eloquently to the current religious context of Songea. The tendency to seek material enrichment through religious means permeates many churches. Christians long to become “men of God” in their ecclesial communities, with the ulterior motives of material aggrandizement. Many strive to found their own churches for that

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[1214] 2 Cor.8:9.
[1216] See: 1Cor.11: 17-34.
[1217] See: 2 Cor.8:7.
purpose. But Paul in the above quoted pericope teaches that to be a real “man of God,”\textsuperscript{1222} does not mean to orient one’s life towards material profit. Rather, it means to order one’s life in justice, piety, faith, love, perseverance and kindness.

7.3.6 Mutual Empowerment of the Poor

Critical to the prevailing exploitative political economy, Jesus offers an “alternative kingdom of God network” through mutual exchange of goods organized by a general principle of reciprocity. The parable of “the friend at midnight”\textsuperscript{1223} exemplifies it. In it Jesus encourages mutual empowerment among the poor themselves. The parable seems to be rooted in the local customs of hospitality prevalent under Jewish peasant economic system. The guest arrives at midnight, yet the host is obligated to serve proper food. And the host could seek help from fellow villagers because helping one another was encouraged by the economic system. A villager’s help to another was not deemed as a loan but a direct gift which the recipient was obligated to reciprocate when the situation reversed.\textsuperscript{1224} This system had shifted with the introduction of the money economy by the Roman Empire where hierarchical and exploitative relationships now came to dominate.

This kind of relationship which is analogous to the African Ubuntu paradigm of relationship is what Jesus here reinforces in his kingdom of God motif. Instead of replicating exploitative economic systems, Jesus’ followers are urged to develop solidarity and to practise an economic alternative based on reciprocity. Thus the vision of the kingdom of God as the household of God becomes the foundation for the powerless to support each other as God’s children. Moreover, Jesus wants the poor to restore their own dignity and confidence by being aware that they are “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world.” He challenges them not to lie down, or resign in their adversity; instead they should stand up and walk.\textsuperscript{1225}


One of the central themes of Luke-Acts is hospitality. Accordingly the doctrine of the Prosperity Gospel should have made hospitality one of its salient features, given that Luke-Acts is central to the formulation of Pentecostal theology. That is however not the case. In fact, even within the guild of biblical scholarship the centrality of the theme of hospitality in

\textsuperscript{1222} The term “man” is here used in the generic sense to mean “human being”.
\textsuperscript{1223} See: Lk. 11:5-8.
\textsuperscript{1224} See: Mery Kolimon, op.cit., 48.
\textsuperscript{1225} See: Lk. 17: 19.
Luke-Acts has not gone unnoticed. How this centrality has gone largely unnoticed within the tradition of the Prosperity Gospel is something perplexing.

7.3.7.1 Jesus and Pneumatological Hospitality

The Lukan narrative portrays the entire life of Jesus, including his ministry of hospitality as pneumatologically constituted. Inhabited by and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus proclaims God’s salvific hospitality. In inauguration of his ministry, he reads from the Prophet Isaiah to articulate his concern for the poor, the weak and oppressed and to announce to them that God’s kingdom belongs to them. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” His proclamation of “the year of the Lord’s favour” to the oppressed and the vulnerable people echoes the practice of economic grace prescribed by the Torah. Thus the Lukan narrative depicts Jesus as the anointed one, the Christ who is empowered in all aspects by the Holy Spirit to carry out a ministry that focuses on the traditionally marginalised of the society. He is the one who represents and embodies the hospitality of God.

Several motifs of Jesus’ Spirit-inspired hospitality come to the fore. First, Jesus himself is shown as being dependent on the welcome of others. As such, he characterizes the hospitality of God partly as the exemplary recipient of hospitality. The Lukan narrative portrays vividly Jesus’ dependency on other people’s hospitality: “from his conception in Mary’s womb by the power of the Holy Spirit, to his birth in a manger through to his burial (in a tomb of Joseph of Arimathea).”

In his public ministry Jesus was invited in many homes as he himself had nowhere to lay his head. He also received whatever his hostesses and hosts served. Thus he was the guest of Simon Peter, Levi, Martha, Zacchaeus, and many others including

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1226 See: Amos Yong, op.cit., 100.
1227 See: Ibid., 101.
1228 See: Lk. 4:1; Acts 10:38.
1229 See: Isa. 61:1-2.
1230 See: Lk.4:18-19.
1231 See: Dt. 15: 1-23.
1232 See: Amos Yong, op.cit., 101.
1233 Ibid.
1234 See: Lk. 9:58.
1235 See: Lk. 10: 5-7.
1236 See: Lk. 4:38-39.
1237 Ibid.
1238 See: Lk. 5: 29.
1239 See: Lk. 10:38.
1239 See: Lk. 19:5.
Pharisees who often criticised him. Jesus utilises his role as guest to announce and enact, through the Holy Spirit, the hospitality of God. For example, when his two disciples invited him to stay with them at Emmaus, it turned out that rather than they serving him, it was he who “took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.” The disciples then recognised that “it was they who had been guests in the presence of the divine all along.”

The public ministry of Jesus thus depicts him as being both the recipient of hospitality and as the one who heralds and embodies the redemptive hospitality of God.

He is the ‘journeying prophet’ of the Spirit who eats at the tables of others but at the same time proclaims and brings to pass the eschatological banquet of God for all those who are willing to receive it. Those who welcome Jesus into their homes become, in turn, guests of the redemptive hospitality of God.

The second motif is evident in the various meals scenes in the gospel. One notices that it is the poor and the oppressed, rather than religious leaders, that are seen to be the most eager recipients of the divine hospitality embodied in Jesus Christ. For Jesus, the meals scenes are convenient occasions to call upon the religious leaders to embrace outsiders, the oppressed and the marginalised of the society. To do so, Jesus breaks with the prevailing social convention and rules of hospitality. For example, he enters into suspect homes, fails to wash before meals, and even rebukes his hosts. On this basis, Jesus establishes the inclusive hospitality of the kingdom of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. The beneficiaries of this inclusive pneumatological hospitality include women, children, slaves, the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.

Divine hospitality is also illustrated in Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan, which reveals deep tensions between Jews and Samaritans. The Samaritans had rejected Jesus’ visitation, yet he presents the Samaritan as fulfilling the law, loving his neighbour and embodying divine hospitality. Yong sees the parable of the Good Samaritan as presenting a principal lesson for interreligious hospitality. He argues that contemporary Christians must imagine fresh possibilities for performative encounters with the members of other faith communities. The people of other faiths might be instruments through which God reaches out to his people. And they might fulfill the requirements for inheriting eternal life precisely through their hospitality to their neighbours. This lesson is undoubtedly applicable as well to the current age of global

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1240 See: Lk. 5: 17; 7:36; 11:37; 14:1; 22:10-14.
1241 Lk. 24: 29-30.
1242 Elizabeth Rankin Geitz, Entertaining Angels: Hospitality Programs For the Caring Church (Harrisburg, Pa: Morehouse, 1993), 28ff.
1243 Amos Yong, op.cit., 102.
1244 Ibid.
1245 See: Lk. 10: 25-37.
1246 See: Amos Yong, op.cit., 103.
migration in which Christians are often confronted with an unprecedented challenge to extend
a hand of hospitality to strangers.

7.3.7.2 Ecclesial Witnesses of Pneumatological Hospitality

In the book of Acts, Luke shows that the divine hospitality manifested in Jesus Christ is
now extended through the early church by the power of the Holy Spirit. On the one hand, the
Holy Spirit is the divine guest resident in the hearts and lives of the believers upon whom he
has been powered out on the Day of Pentecost. But on the other hand, he empowers the
people of God to bear witness to the hospitable God to the ends of the earth. This means
that pneumatological hospitality and Christian mission are mutually intertwined. A Christian
community cannot claim to be Spirit-filled while at the same time it undermines hospitality
towards the poor and the needy.

The ministry of Peter and Paul, according to the book of Acts, attests to the practice of
hospitality in the early church. Both apostles are presented as recipient as well as conduit of
God’s hospitality. Peter is a guest and host to Simon the tanner, Cornelius’ servants, Mary the mother of John Mark, and so on. Similarly, Paul is beneficiary of divine
hospitality through various people. For example, he is welcome to stay at some people’s homes, he is treated his wounds, escorted, protected, cared for, and entertained, and so on. On the other hand, Paul himself becomes a host by welcoming all
those who are open to receive the hospitality of God. Besides Peter and Paul, mutual
hospitality is also portrayed by the members of the early Christian communities. Having
received the gift of the Holy Spirit, “they had all things in common, broke bread at home and
ate their food with glad and generous hearts.” Mutual care and daily distribution of food
characterized their rhythm of life. Evidently, their practice of pneumatological hospitality
promotes the option for the poor in the ecclesial community. The table fellowship of the early

\[1247 \text{ See: Acts 2: 1-14.}
1248 \text{ See: Acts 1:8.}
1249 \text{ See: Acts 10: 6.}
1250 \text{ See: Acts 10: 23.}
1251 \text{ See: Acts 12: 12-17.}
1252 \text{ See: Acts 9:18, 11, 17-19, 25, 27, 30.}
1253 \text{ See: Acts 16: 15.}
1254 \text{ See: Acts 16: 32-34.}
1255 \text{ See: Acts 17:15.}
1256 \text{ See: Acts 23:23-24.}
1257 \text{ See: Acts 24: 23; 27:3.}
1258 \text{ See: Acts 24:26.}
1259 \text{ See: Acts 28:23-30.}
1260 \text{ Acts 2:44, 46; 4:32-37 and 5:42.}
1261 \text{ See: Acts 6:1.}
Christians, moreover, enacted and realized the table fellowship of God, which is always reconciliatory. In this case, the table fellowship of the Christian communities marked the reconciliation of Jew, Samaritan, and Gentile, male and female, young and old, slave and free. This eventually led to the growth of the church.

7.3.8 Jesus’ Unique Dignity Does Not Spare Him the Cross

Luke’s Christology presents Jesus as having an extraordinary origin because of his divine identity. Jesus’ genealogy, baptism, temptation, transfiguration, and crucifixion reveal that he has a special (inherent) dignity as the Son of God. Luke also presents Jesus’ messianic ministry as consisting of preaching the good news of the gospel to the poor, caring for the sick, freeing those bound by Satan, restoring sight to the blind, forgiving sins, and calling sinners to repentance. Both his divine identity and the nature of his messianic ministry are christological descriptions that accord him with a unique dignity, unlike anybody else. Despite such a dignity, Jesus is not spared suffering and death on the cross. His dignity does not imply affluence, power or prosperity on earth. Rather, it is closely linked to his suffering. His genealogy, baptism, temptation, transfiguration and crucifixion also show a link between Jesus’ dignity and his suffering.

In Luke 9:22 Jesus announces his passion, naming the chief priests, scribes and elders as those who shall reject him and make him suffer grievously. Talbert has noted that this passage is significant in understanding Jesus’ Christology. Jesus is revealed as the culmination of the missio Dei as the second Adam. By his submission to God he becomes antithetical to the disobedience of Adam and Israel in the old dispensation. Jesus’ passion is therefore to be read as the newness of the way the God of Israel exists within history. This offers the potential for experiencing suffering as purification.

It must be emphasized, nevertheless, that the link between Jesus’ dignity and his suffering does not mean that Jesus suffers no violation of his dignity. Nor does it imply that injustice and violence have no bearing on ethics. Rather, it means that by his suffering, Jesus becomes the beacon of hope to all those individuals and groups who suffer violations of their own dignity.

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1263 See: Acts 2: 47.
1264 See: Lk. 3: 23-38.
1265 See: Lk. 3:21-22.
1267 See: Lk. 9: 28-36.
1269 See: Lk. 4: 18.
1270 See: Stan Chu Ilo, Joseph Ogbonnaya, Alex Ojacor (eds.), op.cit. 9.
human dignity. He identifies himself with the suffering and the marginalised giving them the hope that evil and pain will not have the last say in their lives.

The understanding that Jesus’ dignity and his cross are related is significant for a comprehensive Christian vision of dignity and suffering today. If Jesus’ unique dignity was linked to the cross how can his followers undermine his cross? Disciples of Jesus may need to endure pain, persecution and suffering in order to witness to Jesus’ redeeming love. Jesus himself invites his disciples to take up the cross: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." He insists: “he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.” For Christians, therefore, the cross of Jesus is not inimical to human dignity; on the contrary, it is a mandate to promote human dignity and life-enhancing aspects.

7.4 Option for the Poor in the Social Teaching of the Church

Let us now examine the phenomenon of the option for the poor according to the social teaching of the Church. But before delving into it, it is worthwhile clarifying the notion of the social teaching of the Church.

7.4.1 The Social Teaching of the Church

The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes the social teaching of the Church in these general terms:

The Church’s social teaching comprises a body of doctrine, which is articulated as the Church interprets events in the course of history, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit in light of the whole of what has been revealed by Jesus Christ. The Church’s social teaching proposes principles for reflection; it provides criteria for judgment; it gives guidelines for action.

The social teaching of the Church, also referred to as Christian social doctrine, is usually understood simply as the equivalent of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church. Broadly speaking, this concept refers to “all the principles, concepts, ideas, theories, and doctrines that deal with human life and society as it has evolved over time since the days of the early church.” In more specific terms, it refers to the contemporary church and papal documents

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1271 See: Johann du Plessis, op.cit., 590.
1272 We have discussed in previous chapters that the proponents of the Prosperity Gospel tend to dissuade themselves from embracing the cross of Jesus because on his cross Jesus has accomplished everything for humanity, what remains is for the Christian to enjoy prosperity and success rather than endure suffering again.
1273 Mt. 16: 24.
1274 Mt. 10: 38.
1275 See: Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nos. 2422-2423.
and encyclicals that address the social problems confronting today’s world. This is a rather relatively recent phenomenon that began particularly in the pontificate of Leo XIII, with the promulgation of his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891. Since that time, the Catholic Church’s approach to the social question has departed remarkably from its previous one. Now there is a direct papal involvement in the systematic and positive development of Catholic teaching on social questions. Horst Sing has noted that

since the beginning of industrialisation Christianity has, more than any other religion, dealt with the social question. In this context it is particularly the Catholic Church that has developed a social doctrine that is not only to be understood in theological sense but also corresponds to non-theological-philosophical understanding.

The social doctrine of the Church makes moral judgments about economic and social matters “when the fundamental rights of a person or salvation of souls requires it.” It is meant to enlighten people and enable them to interpret contemporary reality and seek appropriate paths of action. It seeks to challenge those dimensions of society that diminish people’s relationships with God, with fellow human beings as well as with the environment and themselves. It is simultaneously a tool used by the Church to promote factors that foster these relationships. Its four core principles according to the *compendium* of the social teaching of the Church are: human dignity, the common good, subsidiarity and solidarity.

### 7.4.2 Option for the Poor in Patristic Writings

“Church Fathers” are certain ecclesiastical writers of Christian antiquity distinguished for their orthodoxy of doctrine and holiness of life and have been therefore approved by the Church as witnesses to its faith. They are divided into two groups: Latin (West) and Greek (East). The patristic era as a literary period extends between the end of the apostolic age (ca.100 A.D) and the death of Pope Gregory the Great in the West (who died in 604) and John Damascene in the East (who died in 749). The list of the Church Fathers is long; it includes

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1277 See: Ibid.
1280 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 2420.
1282 See: Daniel G. Groody, op.cit., 93.
figures such as Clement of Alexandria, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan, Augustine of Hippo, Leo the Great, Gregory the Great and others. The rich repertoire of patristic teaching about Christian faith and discipleship in the first centuries of Christianity is exhibited in various literary forms such as homilies, letters, treatises, biographies, histories, apologies, scriptural commentaries, liturgical texts, apothegms, songs, poems, journals, and others.  

A review of patristic teachings is relevant to the current study. First, these teachings recall the community called Church to the Christian faith and discipleship of the early Christian centuries. Since Pentecostal churches in Africa claim to return to the faith and discipleship of the early church, it is relevant to examine the questions with which those Christians were most preoccupied. The question of wealth and poverty, which is at stake in our study, was a burning issue for the early Christian community. It was queried, for instance:

“Should Christians retain their possessions? Was the possession of property lawful or not? How much was too much? Was a rich Christian a contradiction in terms? Could one follow Christ wholeheartedly and not give up one’s possessions to the poor? What was the Christian’s responsibility to the poor?”

Thus, patristic literature certainly offers a rich source for the study of the faith and discipleship of early Church, including the attitude of the early Christians towards wealth and poverty. Secondly, the Church Fathers were church leaders who took the social question seriously. Despite writing from diverse periods of time, cultural backgrounds and social locations, their ideas that pertain to poverty, liberation and justice portray some degree of unanimity. Evidently, their message, though ancient, carries a contemporary meaning in the context of poverty and injustice in Africa. It is a message that can provide for contemporary African Christians the foundation from which to understand a faith that seeks justice. Besides, the aforementioned questions that boggled the minds of the early Christians are certainly food for thought for the proponents of the Prosperity Gospel today.

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1286 See: Ibid.

1287 The Pentecostal churches, including the Prosperity Gospel Churches, claim to be faithful to the Bible thus rediscovering the faith and discipleship of the early church that the historic churches have distorted. See: Thorsten Doß, op.cit., 9. Refer also to the assertions of Copeland in Chapter Three about St. Francis of Assisi as having distorted the biblical teaching on wealth and poverty.

1288 Christopher A. Hall, Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1998), 170.

1289 Many Protestant Christians, just as was Martin Luther and other reformers, have a deep suspicion that the abuses of late medieval Roman Catholicism have their seeds in the thoughts of the Church Fathers. See: Christopher A. Hall, op.cit., 12. We contend that even if such claims were true, still patristic literature provides a rich source of knowledge about the Christian practices of the early church, inasmuch as the Church Fathers are chronologically closer to the primordial church.

1290 As noted, the phrase “the social question” is used in Catholic Social Teaching to refer to all situations and problems regarding justice, freedom, development, relations between peoples, peace, and so on.
7.4.2.1 Patristic Theology of the Poor

The Church Fathers lived in a society where a sharp contrast between the rich and the poor persisted. While the rich such as bankers, owners of enormous landed estates, traders, proprietors of ship and others wallowed in enormous wealth, many poor and sick people were sleeping on the streets and scrambling with dogs for leftovers. The Cappadocian Church Fathers: Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom, were the first among the Church Fathers to raise the question about the share of the poor in the resources of this world. They deplored the squalid conditions endured by the poor amid great affluence. Apparently, poverty conditions at the time were aggravated by the sinking economy of the Roman Empire in the 4th century.

Their approach in fighting against poverty, however, should not be compared to the methods of a modern economist who would lay down concrete economic programmes or to that of a modern politician or social worker who would aim first at tackling the root causes of poverty. Poverty alleviation by addressing the socio-economic root causes of poverty was an alien practice both to Church Fathers and their society at large. Being deeply religious people, the Church Fathers employed their Christian faith and conviction as the weapon for overcoming the extreme social distress experienced by the people. As subsequent sections will demonstrate, patristic theology empowers the poor by confronting the wealthy with Christian moral teaching. The Church Fathers read and explained the Bible in the light of their pastoral responsibilities, including the responsibility to give a response to the problem of poverty. They criticized both the wealthy people of society and church leaders for their neglect of the poor. They urged the rich to give alms and share their possessions with the poor and exhorted them to embrace voluntary poverty, since it is freeing.

Some commentators see the writings of the Church Fathers as not empowering the poor to get out of their poverty trap. They maintain that the writings appear to glorify material poverty by exalting voluntary poverty and despising wealth. For the commentators, the Church Fathers depict poverty as if it were a necessary evil that could not be fought against and that “the poor had the duty to remain poor and be submissive to the rich.”

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1292 Ibid.
1293 Ibid.
1294 Ibid.
1295 Ibid., 2.
1296 See: Kossi A. Ayedze, *op.cit.*, 204.
1297 Ibid.
Chrysostom (350-407) is one of the Church Fathers to whom this attitude is ascribed, as exemplified by his following passage:

> come let us compare the king and the prisoner, and thou wilt often see the latter in pleasure and sporting and leaping, while the former with his diadem and purple robe is in despair, and hat innumerable cares, and is dead with fear... for which of the things in our present life seems to three pleasant? A sumptuous table, and health of body, and glory, and wealth? Nay, these delights, if thou set them by that pleasure, will prove the bitterest of all things, compared thereunto. For nothing is more pleasurable than a sound conscience, and a good hope.  

Such a disproportionate presentation of the merits of material poverty and the danger of material wealth is perhaps what makes some commentators deduce that the Church Fathers glorify material poverty.

Other Church Fathers in contrast employ a more balanced language that portrays them as neither glorifying material poverty, nor necessarily demonising wealth. This position is epitomised by Clement of Alexandria (ca.150-ca.220) and Augustine of Hippo (354-430). In his sermon *Who Is the rich Man That Is Saved?* C1298 Clement discusses issues of wealth and poverty along with other issues pertaining to social justice. In his exegesis of Mark 10:23-25, C1300 he rejects the literal interpretation that the man of wealth in this text is told to throw away what he possess and renounce his wealth. If such were the case, Clement argues, there would be no hope for the rich. Rather what the man of wealth is told is to “banish from his soul... his notions about wealth, his attachment to it, his excessive desire for it, his morbid excitement over it, and his anxieties—those thorns of existence which choke the seed of true life.” C1301 Clement holds that poverty in and of itself is neither a guarantee of sound character, nor of an open disposition to God’s kingdom and priorities. A poor person may be trapped by envy and greed. Likewise, wealth in itself is not a vice and a rich person may experience a genuine poverty of heart. For Clement, the mere giving up of one’s possessions is nothing new and does not open the door to perceiving the essence of Christ’s kingdom. In fact, philosophers and many other people even before the coming of Christ have given up possessions for purely mundane motives. C1302 Rather, for both the rich and the poor, what is

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C1300 “How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!” …It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”


C1302 See: Ibid., 24.
required in order to heed the Lord’s command about possessions is to strip off the passions from the soul itself and from its dispositions, to uproot and expel from the mind all that is alien.

Augustine of Hippo holds similar balanced views on poverty and possessions. He seems to be aware of the tendency to glorify the poor and to demean the rich as prevalent in the New Testament, especially in Luke, and in certain pagan authors. Like Clement, he does not tend to view poverty and wealth per se as being respectively synonymous with virtue and vice. He even displays the validity of private property when he rejects the view of the Apostolics who refused to receive into their communion those who owned private property. In the same vein, he attacks the Manicheans who on account of their contempt of material things believed that the baptized should not own property such as fields, houses and money. Augustine points to the existence of a fundamental equality and mutual dependence between the rich and the poor, despite their economic disparity. He is emphatic that both the rich and the poor should beware of the vice of avarice: “Poor people, you listen too. You should pay out too; you shouldn’t go plundering either. You should give of your means too, you too curb your greed.”

Citing the example of the rich man who is compared with the camel in Jesus’ parable of the camel and the needle’s eye, Augustine maintains that the man in question could be anyone, rich or poor, who is seized with the desire for such goods. Thus Augustine’s commitment to the option for the poor is unmistakable. In this commitment, he goes further than most of the Church Fathers by exhorting church communities not to respond merely to the effects of suffering, but to help tackle its root causes: “You give bread to a hungry person; but it would be better were no one hungry, and you could give it to no one. You clothe a naked person. Would that all were clothed and this

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1305 See: De Moribus Ecclesiae, 1.34.75-1.35.77.
1308 Lk. 18: 18-27.
necessity did not exist.” Augustine’s theology thus suggests that the root causes of poverty are surmountable.

### 7.4.2.2 Motives for Patristic Theology of the Poor

Let us now articulate the motives on which the patristic theology for the poor has been grounded. The most salient of the motives are protological, christological, evangelical, ecclesiological, and soteriological ones.

#### 7.4.2.2.1 Protological Motive: Common Patrimony

On the whole, the point of departure of the patristic theology of poverty is the doctrine of creation. The patristic theological line of argument starts with the admission of common patrimony: God is the Creator of all human beings and nature. The writings appeal to reason and Scripture to make the people understand who they are as human beings before their loving Creator. Human beings should know that God is the master of all creation and the ruler of human life. Since the world and its goods belong to God, their Creator, the rich should not cling to their possessions; rather they should share them with the poor. On the basis of creation, moreover, the Church Fathers view social justice as involving a tripartite understanding of relationship: “understanding one’s relationship with one’s Creator, understanding oneself as a creature, and understanding creation properly.” Thereby the focus is on how the rich are to treat the poor or how they are to use their possessions rightfully on behalf of God. With this vision, greed for excess wealth must be condemned. Cyril of Alexandria (376-444), for example, notes that being greedy is going against what it means to be a creature of God. Ambrose of Milan, likewise, argues that:

> The earth was established as common (patrimony) for all, for both rich and poor alike. Why do you arrogate for yourselves alone, you who are rich, exclusive right to the land? No one is rich by nature, for nature begets everyone as poor. Indeed, we are neither born with garments nor are we begotten with gold and silver.”

Augustine also recalls the rich to their beginning as creatures as he says:

> He (God) gave you both this life as a single road to travel along. You have found yourselves companions, walking along the same road; he’s carrying nothing, you have an excessive load.

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1312 Ibid.
1313 Ibid.
He’s carrying nothing with him; you are carrying more than you need. You are overloaded; give him some of what you have got.\textsuperscript{1316}

Chrysostom, who speaks incessantly for the poor and the needy,\textsuperscript{1317} similarly grounds his theology of the poor on creation. His indefatigable advocacy for the poor is particularly evident in his homilies on the Gospel of Matthew and on Pauline Letters. He maintains that, on account of their common patrimony, human beings are interconnected. Accordingly, they have a fundamental calling to create a community of radical sharing and mutual interdependence. Disparities between the “haves” and the “have-nots” that normally dominate the human scene are, therefore, antithetical to the divine intention for humankind.\textsuperscript{1318} Amassing to oneself the Lord’s property that was meant for the common good is evil. Chrysostom insinuates that wealth is not a sign of God’s blessing intended only for the benefit of one’s family and friends.\textsuperscript{1319} When such a partiality is maintained in the distribution of resources, many in the society will ultimately be relegated to adverse conditions of poverty. Significantly, the patristic protological vision of humanity presents a critical corrective to the attitudes of individualism, self-sufficiency and any attitude that allows one to enjoy wealth alone, while others in the society suffer from want of resources. As Chrysostom avers:

\begin{quote}
If you enjoy (wealth) alone, you too have lost it: for you will not reap its reward. But if you possess it jointly with the rest, then will it be more your own… As it is a vice in the stomach to retain the food and not to distribute it, (for it is injurious to the whole body,) so it is a vice in those that are rich to keep to themselves what they have. For this destroys both themselves and others.\textsuperscript{1320}
\end{quote}

Thus on the basis of common patrimony, Chrysostom, like many other Church Fathers, urges Christians to offer hospitality to the stranger, the poor and the needy. He practised his theology for the poor by devoting a substantial income to the construction of hospitals and charitable institutions.\textsuperscript{1321} He specifically insists that hospitality has to be dispensed personally, that is, with the donors’ own hand, instead of leaving this duty exclusively in the hands of those who preside in the Church. He argues that with a face-to-face bestowal of alms to the needy, the giver receives a double reward, namely, the reward of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
  \item See: Eberhard F. Bruck, op.cit., 26.
  \item Ibid.
  \item See: Daniel G. Groody, op.cit., 60.
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\end{footnotesize}
giving and that of kind service. Excessive attachment to material goods is in Chrysostom’s view something rather unfortunate, because after all material things are transient in nature and human beings themselves are merely provisional or temporary owners of the world’s goods. It is self-deception for one to believe that he or she can own property in a permanent or absolute sense? “When you die, willingly or unwillingly, all that you have goes to others, and they again give it up to others, and they again to others…”

7.4.2.2.2 Christological Motive: In the Poor Christ Suffers Hunger and Nakedness

Patristic theology of the poor is also grounded on christological motives. The Church Fathers believe that:

“the framework that shapes the life of a Christian must be nothing other than the life of Christ. This framework asserts itself against those frameworks in every generation that would suggest that life consists in the endless accumulation of goods, the maximization of profit, the ambitious rise to power and other forms of idolatry that directly contradict the Narrative of the Gospel.

Augustine, for instance, urges the Christians to imitate Christ who identifies himself with the poor. He underlines this theological teaching by citing Acts 9:4, where it is said that the persecution of the Christians by Saul is the persecution of Christ himself. So Christ is rich and poor; as God, he is rich, but as man he is poor. Seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven Christ is rich. But here on earth he is hungry, thirsty, and in rags. Here he is poor and in the poor. Thus, giving alms to the poor is giving to Christ himself. He contends that both the poor and the rich are members of the body of Christ. Thus, in the poor, the body of Christ suffers hunger, thirst and nakedness.

7.4.2.2.3 Evangelical Motive: Neglect of the Poor is Antithetical to the Gospel

For the Church Fathers, almsgiving is an expression of mercy, justice, and love toward the poor; it is being a Christian. In other words, not to turn away from the empty bellies of the

1324 Ibid., 63.
poor\textsuperscript{1328} is illustrative of that fundamental attitude of fraternity and justice demanded by the gospel. As Ambrose of Milan affirms, “no virtue produces more abundant benefits than... justice, which is more concerned with others than with itself, neglecting its own advantages and preferring the common good.”\textsuperscript{1329} The Church Fathers often encourage Christians to adopt a simple lifestyle because it is freeing; they should avoid throwing themselves into the sea of unbridled consumption which is enslaving. According to Chrysostom, wealth makes those captured by it “its slaves... it persuades them even to be grateful for it, and the more they become enslaved the more does their pleasure increase... ”\textsuperscript{1330} Consequently, the spirit may be crippled, amounting to a great hindrance to the spiritual journey because the craving of ephemeral values may make one lose sight of gospel values.\textsuperscript{1331} Besides, with such an attitude one can hardly have an eye for the poor.

\textbf{7.4.2.2.4 Ecclesiological Motive: Avarice Eclipses Ecclesial Unity}

The amelioration of the plight of the poor is presented by the Church Fathers as one way of building up ecclesial community and preserving its unity. Thus Augustine exhorts his Church congregation to fulfill this duty as he maintains:

I’m begging you, I’m warning you, I’m commanding you... Give to the poor whatever you like. You, see, I won’t conceal from your graces why I thought it necessary to preach this sermon to you. Ever since I got back here, every time I come to the Church and go back again the poor plead with me and tell me to tell you that they need to get something from you.\textsuperscript{1332}

For Augustine, sharing possessions is one way in which the various members of the body of Christ support one another for the good of the whole body. Conversely, greed among the members of the body of Christ is detrimental to some members: “when you possess superfluities, you possess what belongs to others.”\textsuperscript{1333} Chrysostom is also concerned that inordinate love of possessions affects the unity of Christian communities because it often results into divisions and blinds Christians to the needs of others. He notes that where avarice dominates, neither a person’s conscience, nor friendship, nor fellowship, nor the salvation of


\textsuperscript{1331} See: Daniel G. Groody, op.cit., 73.


his soul would be given high priority. Thereby Chrysostom challenges church leaders and all the Christian faithful to rethink about their attitudes towards the poor and material possessions. He metaphorically contrasts priests of the early days of the Church with those of his own day and age. The former, he says, used chalices of wood, but had hearts of gold. The latter, on the contrary, used chalices of gold but had hearts of wood. The expression “hearts of gold” means a pure and generous attitude towards the poor, while “hearts of wood” denotes the opposite attitude. Chrysostom thus admonishes priests and the laity to model their lives on the life of Christ and the witness of the first Christians. He recommends the example of the apostles, who, he says, were rich not because of their money or possessions, but because of their spiritual wealth and charitable deeds. Chrysostom advocates an attitude of stewardship towards possessions since only with such attitude can one use property in service of others and God. He points out as well the social dangers due to “money-theism” i.e. making Mammon our god:

For the ‘love of money is the root of all evils’ (1Tim. vi:10). Hence come fights, and enmities and wars; hence emulations, and railings, and suspicions, and insults; hence murders, and thefts, and violations of sepulchres... And all the evils that you may find, whether in the house or in the market-place, or in the courts of law, or in the senate, or in the king’s palace, or in any other place whatsoever. It is from this that you will find they all spring.

In fact, whenever such social evils that Chrysostom mentions permeate the society, it is the poor who mostly suffer the consequences. Indeed money-theism ultimately impinges more on the lives of the poor than on that of the rich.

7.4.2.2.5 Soteriological Motive: Neglect of the Poor Endangers One’s Soul

There is a soteriological motive in the Church Fathers’ teaching on the option for the poor. To exhort the rich to give alms to the poor, the Church Fathers warn of the danger of idolatry that is often embedded in possessions. They stress that possessions may be too corrupting that a person may be distracted from his or her pursuit of divine goals: one may be carried off the track and treasure material possessions at the expense of matters pertaining to eternal life. Chrysostom expresses this fact succinctly: “Tell me not then of the abundance of (rich people’s) possessions, but consider how great loss the lovers of this abundance undergo..."

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1335 Ibid.
1336 Ibid.
in...losing Heaven.”

Chrysostom urges that the honouring of the Body of Christ in liturgical celebrations should be translated into concern and care for the poor in everyday life:

Wouldest thou do honor to Christ’s body? Neglect Him not when naked; do not, while here thou honorest Him with silken garments, neglect Him perishing without of cold and nakedness. For He that said, “This is my body,” and by His word confirmed the fact, this same said, “Ye saw me an hungered, and fed me not;” and, “Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me”... Do not therefore while adorning His house overlook thy brother in distress, for he is more properly a temple than the other.

The final judgment of the dead is also put forward as a motive for the option for the poor. As Basil the Great (330-379) poses the question:

What will you reply to the Judge, you who dress up walls (with adornments) but let human beings go naked?... You who, allowing your bread to grow stale, do not feed the hungry? You who, burying your gold, look down upon the poor who choke in poverty’s tight grip?... When therefore will one care for one’s soul when enslaved by these...desires?

The recurrent patristic question refers the rich to the salvation of their souls: “how much has one to give in order to secure the salvation of his soul?” It is emphasized that greed impinges one’s hope of gaining the heavenly kingdom and having equality of honour with the angels.

The emphasis on the soteriological vision of life is meant to remind one that what really matters at the end are the people, a golden heart and the treasure of heaven, rather than things, the wealth of earth, and golden riches. This constitutes a call to Christians to observe the virtue of justice. Augustine distinguishes “the rich of this world” from the rich of the next world. He regards the humble poor of this world as the rich of the next world. Following the lead of 1Timothy 6: 17-18, he encourages the rich of this world to do good works with their wealth. The rich may keep the bulk of their wealth, but a tenth of their wealth should be given to the needy. As for the poor, he is emphatic that, just as the rich are not to boast of their riches, the poor likewise are not to boast of their poverty. The poor are to beware of pride, lest they be surpassed by the humble rich. They are to be wary of impiety, lest they be surpassed by the devout rich. They are to be cautious about drunkenness, lest the sober rich surpass them. Significantly, Augustine refuses to impose the burden of total financial

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abnegation consistent with a literal or rigorous interpretation of Scripture.\textsuperscript{1343} In Augustine’s view, it is “reasonable to expect the Christian people to keep the commandments, but less than reasonable to expect them to observe the counsel of voluntary poverty.”\textsuperscript{1344} While he acknowledges the superiority of observing the counsel of voluntary poverty, he does not view such voluntary poverty as a guarantee of virtue, nor does he regard wealth as being identical with vice. To enter eternal life, he maintains, one has to seek perfection by holding the counsel of voluntary poverty as well as keep the commandments. He points out that even the rich can enter eternal life if they observe both. Moreover, basing on chapter 25 of the Gospel of Matthew, Augustine posits that the concern for the poor and the vulnerable is the definitive criterion for salvation.\textsuperscript{1345}

7.4.2.2.6 General Remarks

During the patristic epoch, the issue of the option for the poor was a great pre-occupation of the Church. The Church Fathers endeavoured to promote the option for the poor by confronting the wealthy. Basing their theological proposals on protological, christological, evangelical, ecclesiological, and soteriological reasons, they exhorted the rich people to share the God-given resources with the poor. They urged for the practice of almsgiving in the society and the establishment of charitable institutions. In relation to Christian discipleship and the salvation of souls, some of the patristic works speak rather disproportionately in favour of the poor and against the rich. Accordingly, for some commentators the Church Fathers romantise material poverty and discredit wealth. Contextually, however, this disproportionate language was evidently called for by the presence of extreme social deprivation amid great affluence. Others of the Church Fathers are more balanced in their language; they neither present poverty as a virtue nor view wealth as a vice. They maintain that the dangers of riches affect both the rich and poor. Thus, in order to attain eternal salvation, both the rich and the poor have to seek perfection by holding the counsel of voluntary poverty and keep the commandments.

What the proponents of the Prosperity Gospel might learn from the patristic teachings is that rich church members ought to be challenged to have a heartfelt concern for the poor instead of portraying them as the model of Christian believers. The poor, on the other side, should not be held as being necessarily accountable for their poverty. Instead, the churches should empower the poor through their theological doctrine and social ministry.

\textsuperscript{1343} See for example, his Tractate 62.5 on the Gospel of John.
\textsuperscript{1344} Allan D. Fitzgerald (ed.), op.cit., 878.
\textsuperscript{1345} See: Sermo 389, 4-5.
7.4.3 Option for the Poor in the Modern Christian Social Doctrine

7.4.3.1 “Rerum Novarum”

The encyclical Rerum Novarum (On Capital and Labour) was issued by Pope Leo XIII on 15th May, 1891. It is important to explore this encyclical because it marked a paradigmatic shift in Catholic social teaching by being the Church’s first initiative for radical option for the poor. It was the first to place the Church in solidarity with the working class and the poor rather than with the economic and political elite.1346 Moreover, many of the problems addressed in this encyclical still exist today.

Issued at the wake of industrial Revolution, Rerum Novarum was addressed to managers, owners and workers, underlining the socio-economic consequences of industrialization. It is laudable for its vivid depiction of the plight of the poor. Pope Leo wanted to confront the inhuman treatment of the labourers under the capitalist industrial economy. He strongly supported the bonds of social solidarity and responsibility in the overall organization of society. While espousing the rights of the workers, he saw the need to address the social sources of poverty, namely, the prevailing structures of injustice. He therefore urged for a moderate but significant state intervention in the social economic order to ameliorate the plight of the poor. Some of the paragraphs of Rerum Novarum can be brought to bear on our current context of the Prosperity Gospel, particularly with regard to the striving for wealth accumulation and the hope of a happy earthly life. The encyclical condemns unrestricted capitalism and rejects socialism. Capitalism is condemned because by its disproportionate emphasis on wealth accumulation and maximization of profit, it leads to the exploitation of the poor.1347 Socialism is likewise rejected because it induces the poor in their misery with the false hope of an earthly life free from tribulation and suffering. This may ultimately lead to an imposition of greater evils on the poor.1348

In appraisal, the impact of Rerum Novarum came about not so much from its content as from the fact that by issuing an encyclical dealing with social issues the pope was seen to be coming to the defence of the poor. However, according to Donal Dorr, the encyclical has shown several shortcomings. First, the pope did not make a clear option for the poor in the formal sense.1349 Second, the pope called for socio-economic changes for the sake of the poor. Yet he wanted such changes to be initiated “from the top down”, that is, by the very social strata that benefitted from the existing liberal-capitalist order. At the same time, by

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1346 See: Daniel G. Groody, op.cit., 94.
1347 See: Rerum Novarum, No. 20.
1348 See: Ibid., No. 15.
1349 See: Donal Dorr, op.cit., 33.
discouraging the workers’ unions to play a political role for bringing about major social changes, the pope appeared to espouse an escapist spirituality that endorsed the resignation of the poor.\(^{1350}\) This attitude might have made the edges of *Rerum Novarum* blunt in confronting the exploitative liberal-capitalist order.

**7.4.3.2 “Gaudium et Spes”**

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, of the Vatican Council II is another important document that expresses the commitment of the Catholic Church to the option for the poor. The document “locates the Catholic Church in history, as a participant, a teacher, and a partner with other social institutions.”\(^{1351}\) Its fundamental message is the willingness of the Church to engage the world as a partner for the good of the human family. It spells out that: “the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well.”\(^{1352}\) This statement provides theological grounding and interpretation for the social ministry of the Church. With this document, the council demonstrated a paradigm shift in the self-understanding of the Church with regard to its mission in the world, i.e. mission *ad extra*. The Church now understood itself as called to identify itself with the joys and hopes, but also with the grief and anguish of the people of our time, particularly the poor and the marginalised. Accordingly, the poor and the marginalised people with whom the Church has to identify itself and be in solidarity are not only Christians but also members of other belief systems. Significantly, this call to self-identification and solidarity with the poor and the marginalised is not be merely declaratory. Rather, it should be an important component in measuring the pastoral practice of the Church.

In the current context of the Prosperity Gospel in Tanzania, *Gaudium et spes* certainly poses a challenge to the pastoral practice of the churches with regard to the poor and the marginalised. Amid the looming spirit of conspicuous consumption, how far do the Christian pastors and their churches identify themselves with the joys and hopes and the grief and anguish of their contemporary poor and the marginalised people?

**7.4.3.3 “Sollicitudo Rei Socialis”**

The Encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (On Social Concerns) issued by Pope John Paul II in 1987 shows how the Church moved toward a greater acceptance of markets and capitalism

\(^{1350}\) See: Ibid.


than had been evident earlier. This acceptance is partly ascribed to empirical evidence of the
greater prosperity and freedom of democratic market systems. But on the other side, this is
also an indication of a theoretical development in Catholic social thought that placed freedom,
including economic enterprise, high on the list of human attributes.

Despite the recognition of the prosperity and freedom engendered by democratic market
systems, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis does not entirely leave behind the need for social solidarity.
Pope Paul II offers a definition of what he calls the virtue of solidarity:

This then is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many
people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit
oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we
are all really responsible for all.\footnote{Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, No. 38.}

Christian solidarity requires that no one is to be merely passive or active. Rather, there
should be room for the weaker to take initiative, while the stronger are not to insist on every
advantage. Thus, the whole exercise of solidarity is to be informed and guided by Christian
charity. The Gospel of Prosperity can draw a lesson from Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, namely,
adaptation to the demands of free market should not exclude the imperative of Christian
solidarity.

7.4.3.4 “Deus Caritas Est”

Pope Benedict XVI in his first encyclical, Deus Caritas Est (God is Love),\footnote{See: Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter Deus Caritas Est, Nos. 26f.} speaks about
“social charity”. The theological baseline is drawn from the First Letter of St. John the
Evangelist which teaches that God is love and fills human lives with the power of his love.
Benedict describes this God’s love for humanity as his passionate as well as gratuitous
involvement in the human community.\footnote{See: Ibid., Nos. 9-10.} Human beings are called to respond to God’s
generosity with love. Pope Benedict insists that Christians are called each personally and
institutionally to be agents of God’s love to those in need. In other words, a Christian believer
should show an active love for one’s neighbour, especially those who are poor. Thus the
encyclical emphasizes not only on the role of charity, but also that love needs to be organized
if it is to be an ordered service to the community.\footnote{See: Ibid., No. 20.} Hence, there is the need for an organized
ministry of charity. Pope Benedict notes that historically the Church’s institutional practices
of love have always been directly tied to its essential ministry. The Church’s three-fold
responsibilities that express its deepest nature, are proclaiming the word of God (kerygma-
martyria), celebrating the sacraments (leitourgia), and exercising the ministry of charity (diakonia). The pope avers:

As the years went by and the Church spread further afield, the exercise of charity became established as one of her essential activities, along with the administration of the sacraments and the proclamation of the word: love of widows, orphans, prisoners, and the sick and the needy of every kind, is as essential to her as the ministry of the sacraments and preaching of the Gospel.

Accordingly, the essential elements of Christian and ecclesial charity include the following: firstly, following the example given in the parable of the Good Samaritan, which urges universal love towards the needy whom we encounter, Christian charity should be a simple response to immediate needs and specific situations. It should provide for the works of charity: “feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick, and visiting those in prison.” Secondly, Christian charity must be independent of parties and ideologies because it is a way of concretely fulfilling the love which human beings always need rather than a means of serving worldly stratagems. Thirdly, Christian charity should not be used as a means of engaging in proselytism, since love is free and it is not practised as a way of achieving other ends. These essential elements of Christian and ecclesial charity have a particular import in the current competitive religious atmosphere in Songea, since in many sprouting Prosperity Gospel churches the ministry of charity is often oriented towards proselytizing and does not extend beyond church membership.

7.4.4.5 “Caritas in Veritate”

The encyclical Caritatis in veritate (charity in truth) was promulgated by Pope Benedict XVI on 29th June, 2009. Its relevance to the current discussion lies in that it articulates the concept of integral human development. It pinpoints that development it is not measurable or reducible to solely material, statistical and technological indexes. Rather, it involves a broad spectrum of criteria, factors and processes including the realm of faith, ethics and morality. That being the case, the quality of human life can only be reasonably assessed when the economic, social, political, and religious aspects that shape human advancement are taken into consideration. These dimensions need to be highlighted in the discussion of the Prosperity Gospel because its preachers tend to limit the vision of prosperity to the material dimension.

1357 Ibid., No. 25.
1358 Ibid., No. 22.
1359 Ibid., No. 31.
1360 Ibid.
1361 Ibid., Nos. 14, 16, 17.
1362 Ibid., Nos. 18, 21.
Deliberating on the problem of poverty in Africa, the encyclical exposes the role of anthropological poverty in perpetuating Africa’s misery. As pointed out above, anthropological poverty is a mindset that attributes Africa’s failure to achieve sustainable development to a collective oppressive colonial memory. For Benedict, development should be conceived as freedom which embodies “vocation” to liberate the masses of Africans from such a defeatist attitude. Notably, many Africans take refuge in this mentality to justify their enduring bondage to poverty and underdevelopment.\textsuperscript{1363} The task of the Church on this regard is to empower the people to overcome their anthropological poverty.

Another significant insight from \textit{Caritas in veritate} is that the human person is the core and centre of development.\textsuperscript{1364} The centrality of the human person constitutes the criterion for assessing the churches and other organizations in Africa which claim to work for poverty alleviation. To the extent that their initiatives lack the commitment to preserve, strengthen and reinforce the life of the human person, their moral status “becomes suspect as dangerous and immoral.”\textsuperscript{1365} This implies that relationality\textsuperscript{1366} and solidarity,\textsuperscript{1367} which are characteristic elements of the human person, are also channels towards integral human development.

Moreover, the three ideas, namely, the centrality of the human person, relationality and solidarity are redolent of the elements of the African \textit{Ubuntu} paradigm of life discussed in the preceding chapters. By emphasizing these elements \textit{Caritas in veritate} strikes a chord with the African indigenous religio-cultural traditions. African \textit{Ubuntu} solidarity is a convenient approach to the option for the poor.

The encyclical also underlines the intrinsic connection existing between development and ecology. It extols all creation as “the wonderful result of God’s creative activity, which we may use responsibly to satisfy our legitimate needs, material or otherwise.”\textsuperscript{1368} What is important in the process of using nature is to respect its intrinsic balance. The encyclical points out, however, that dysfunctional models and practices of development pose a threat to the earth’s state of ecological health.\textsuperscript{1369} Unfortunately, such practices ultimately redound on humanity itself, since “the way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself, and vice versa.”\textsuperscript{1370} The encyclical therefore endorses that respect for life leads to a
moral duty to protect and care for the environment and the rest of the creation.\textsuperscript{1371} In order to achieve integral human development the society should seek to promote the integrity of both “environmental ecology” and “human ecology.”\textsuperscript{1372} We have noted previously that the greatest victims of environmental degradation in Africa are ultimately the poorest of the poor in the society.

By displaying the interdependence between the human person and the cosmos or creation, \textit{Caritas in veritate} resonates with African indigenous religious traditions. In the latter, it is believed that the natural environment is charged with and inhabited by a multiplicity of spirits which are influential to human beings. This commands respect for the environment. It ultimately serves to underpin the fact that environmental stewardship is also promoted in African indigenous spirituality. Accordingly, it can be suggested that those elements of African traditional beliefs that promote both human ecology and environmental ecology need to be upheld and inculturated in Christianity. A good example might be the ancestral veneration rituals that enhance social harmony and promote the conservation of the environment at the ritual sites.

Corruption is another relevant issue explored in \textit{Caritas in veritate}. The encyclical points out that corruption and illegality are evident in the economic and political systems both in rich and poor countries.\textsuperscript{1373} Its overall perspective is that a social, political, or economic system that does not attend to the ethical imperatives of justice, equity, and fairness in terms of exchange of social, economic and political goods and services, is doomed to failure. To address the challenge of corruption in the context of development, the encyclical proposes the upholding of the virtues of solidarity, gratuitousness and gift.\textsuperscript{1374} While the understanding of such terminologies may be presumed in Christian social doctrine, their practical application may not be the same in all cultural contexts. In current Tanzania, for instance, the practice of solidarity may prove to be even counterproductive to what the encyclical proposes. Corruption in the country permeates every level of the system and weighs down the country’s strategies for development adversely.\textsuperscript{1375} It is notable that the practice of corruption in Tanzania flourishes along the lines of tightly knit solidarity and networking (\textit{mtandao}). It is discernible in favouritism to acquaintances (\textit{kujuana}), close relatives (\textit{undugu}), clients (\textit{uteja wa kudumu}), and so on. These relationships prize mutuality of favours, protectionism and gratuity of services over efficiency, rule of law, and public accountability. Even the giving of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{1371}] See: Ibid., Nos. 48 and 50.
  \item[\textsuperscript{1372}] Ibid., No. 51.
  \item[\textsuperscript{1373}] Ibid., No. 22.
  \item[\textsuperscript{1374}] Ibid., No. 34-39.
  \item[\textsuperscript{1375}] This issue has been discussed in Chapter One.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
bribery is termed *takrima*, a term which implies a harmless gift. Thus there are nuances in the understanding of solidarity, gift, gratitude, graciousness and gratuitousness in the cultural context of Tanzania. This calls for education on the tenets of the social doctrine of the Church to clarify the application of such teaching in the contemporary milieu of Tanzania.

*Caritas in veritate* argues that “development needs Christians with their arms raised towards God in prayer.”\(^1\) Raising arms towards God is prayer is not a problem in Africa, since, as Pope Benedict himself has noted, there is a widespread sense of God in the continent such that one can refer to Africa as an “immense spiritual ‘lung’ for humanity.”\(^2\) The great irony, nevertheless, is the fact that Christianity in countries such as Tanzania flourishes amid corruption, widespread murder of innocents on witchcraft beliefs, impunity, and many other economic, social and political misfortunes. This poses the question about the public role of the churches. Indeed it may be queried: what then is the benefit of the current Christian exuberance in Africa in relation to the integral development of the people? I find this to be a challenge of *Caritas in veritate* to the African churches.

### 7.4.5 Response of the African Synods to Africa’s Scourge of Poverty

This section will examine the response of the Special Assemblies for Africa of the Synod of Bishops or simply the African Synods, to the scourge of poverty in the continent. Discussing the teachings of the synods of the Catholic Church in the context of the Prosperity Gospel might appear to be an attempt to interpret the Prosperity Gospel with the lens of Catholic Social Teaching. That is not the purpose here. The purpose rather, is to investigate various responses, theological and anthropological, to the problem of poverty in Africa. The African Synods have the advantage of being forums for large sections of Africans. This has been afforded by the fact that synods are communal events that take place in the form of conversation.\(^3\) In the preparatory phase of the synods, Christian communities, dioceses, episcopal conferences and religious groups are presented with a *Lineamenta*, i.e. an elaborate questionnaire with discussion points. Participants at the synods represent all levels of affiliation, participation and ministry in Africa and beyond. Synods are therefore very resourceful and their deliberations and propositions offer a wide range of views on the subject at stake. Moreover, many poor people in Africa seem to embrace the Prosperity Gospel

\(^{1}\) Ibid., No.79.
hopeful to find some relief from it. We therefore need to examine the response of the African Synods to the scourge of poverty in Africa.

7.4.5.1 The First African Synod: “Church-Family of God”

The First Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops was convoked by Pope John Paul II in Rome in 1994. Its theme was: “The Church in Africa and her Evangelizing Mission towards the year 2000: ‘You shall be my Witness’ (Acts 1:9). The Synod has been designated as a synod of resurrection and hoped. It was intended to be “an occasion of hope and resurrection, at the very moment when human events seemed to be tempting Africa to discouragement and despair.” Such events were typified by estranging experiences of ethnocentrism, conflicts, injustice, abuses of rights and dignities and so on. The synod chose the model Church-family of God as a pastoral option for Africa. What is a model?

A model is a conceptual and symbolic representation or system by which we try to grasp and express reality in whole or in part... It is a relatively simple, artificially constructed case, which is found useful and illuminating for dealing with realities that are more complex and differentiated... Models... are analogues around which inquiry can be usefully organized... they proceed pedagogically from the known to the unknown...

The adoption of the ecclesiological model Church-family of God was a choice of a pertinent locus and imagery. It is a model that can most appropriately express the reality of ‘Church’ in the African context. With this model the first African Synod has dealt with the issue of the identity and nature of the Church. Its particular focus was on ad intra dimension of the Church in Africa. The imagery of Church-family of God describes communion as the basic nature and identity of the Church. The Church understands itself to be a reality in communion: in communion with God and in communion with one another. In other words, this ecclesiological model is founded on the Trinitarian God and at the same time it reflects the African shared humanity or Ubuntu or Ujamaa paradigm of solidarity. Thus, it is a suitable model under the prevailing socio-economic and political conditions in Africa.

7.4.5.2 Trinitarian Foundations of “Church-Family of God”

Emphasizing the Trinitarian dimension, the synod noted that the image Church-family of God has its origin in the Blessed Trinity at the depths of which the Holy Spirit is the bond of communion. The Greek term perichoresis conveys the core idea for the interpretation of the Trinity as a model for human relationships and foundation of a faith that seeks justice. The term was first articulated in the fourth century by Church Fathers such as Basil the Great,

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1379 See: EIA, No. 1.
1381 See: EIA, No. 55.
Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus\textsuperscript{1382} It refers to the inter-penetration and indwelling of each member of the Trinity to the others. It means that, while the individual identities of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are each maintained, their relationship with one another is characterized by an indwelling love. This Trinitarian love “expresses itself through total mutuality, reciprocity... complete gift of self and total reception of the other.” In this indwelling, Jesus compares his oneness with the Father to the oneness of the fellowship of his Church. “That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (Jn.17:21).

\textit{Perichoressis} thus offers the prototype of the perfect society; it is a model of social communion for the world. It is “a way of understanding God’s invitation to humanity to join the fellowship of intimacy with the Trinity, to move outward toward others in love and realize our fundamental interconnectedness with one another.”\textsuperscript{1383} This is what the ecclesiological model Church-family of God portrays. It points to the fact that the nature and identity of the Church is communion with God and that this consequently, has deep social implications. It offers a helpful path for relating the relationality of familial life to the Trinitarian foundations of the Church. Through the participation in the divine mystery, Christians in faith and through the Spirit should always seek to create a society that conforms to the life-giving and love-generating mutuality of the Trinity.

This should be evident with respect to the commitment of the Church to the option for the poor. The option for the poor has a \textit{theocentric} motivation; it is centred on God. Hence,

“the Christian’s concern about justice for the poor does not stem from one’s social analysis, political ideology, social class, or racial identity – as important as these factors may otherwise be. We are committed to the poor not because of our politics, but our faith. We are summoned to a proactive concern for the poor because of our love for God and God’s prior decisive concern for the least.”\textsuperscript{1384}

The option for the poor is therefore our faith response to the God who is revealed as having a constitutive option for justice.

\textbf{7.4.5.3 African Anthropological Basis of “Church-Family of God”}

Central to the model Church-family of God is also the Church of Africa’s critical appropriation of the African notions of the extended family as a way of reconceiving the

\textsuperscript{1382} See: Daniel G. Groody, op.cit., 62.
\textsuperscript{1383} Ibid.
Church as communion. The notions of *Ubuntu* or *Ujamaa* have brought into relief the fact that the meaning, purpose, and value of the individual are inseparable from the African sense of familial or tribal obligations. The concepts of “togetherness” and “familyhood” fostered by *Ubuntu* or *Ujamaa* promote the values associated with the relationality of the African extended family. However this relationality is not confined to consanguinity but rather considers all sisters and brothers.1385 Evident here is an anthropological perspective that depicts distinctive African understandings of personhood. It is underlined by the famous African proverbial saying: *I am because we are, and since we are therefore I am.* It means “a person is a person through other persons”.1386

In the African context, this *Ubuntu* paradigm of solidarity has deep social and economic implications. It is a profound and intense source of motivation for living, for carrying out economic production activities, for the sharing of resources, for individual and communal defence, and so on. A person with *Ubuntu* radiates the virtues of compassion, welcoming spirit, hospitality, warmth and generosity, willingness to share, openness, availability and affirming attitudes towards others.1387 Thus, as noted in Chapter Five, this African anthropological perspective is instrumental in overcoming household and community poverty. It ensures that there should be no deprived person in the community and even categories of people such as widows and orphans are not left alone, since there will be always someone in the community to take care of them.

The ecclesiological model Church-family is therefore a very potent metaphor and the Church in Africa has rightly chosen it as an appropriate image for its self-expression as a communion. By adopting this ecclesiological model, the Church in Africa envisages Christian communities that are characterised by care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust.1388 It is due to the absence of these virtues that poverty, corruption, extractive social classes and the violation of human dignity largely persist in Africa.

The synod had urged the Church in Africa to promote the option for the poor as witness of action in order to gain credibility in its social doctrine.1389 That is, the Church community should commit itself to the promotion of justice and peace as “integral part of the task of

1387 See: Castor M. Goliama, op.cit.,73.
1388 See: *EIA*, No. 63.
1389 See: *EIA*, No. 52.
evangelization…and part of the pastoral programme of each Christian community.” In fact, it can be contended that such a witness of action is only possible if Christian communities become truly the family of God.

Furthermore, Small Christian Communities (SCCs), which the synod has promoted as a place of concretely living out the values of the Church-family of God, are envisaged to be agents of transformation of society. This means their witness should lead to structural and systemic changes because it “becomes a prophetic challenge to whatever hinders the true good of the men and women of Africa and of every other continent.” Hence, the commitment to the option for the poor by the Church of Africa is imbedded in its self-understanding as Church-family of God.

It is noteworthy that by promoting the image Church-family of God, the Church of Africa “has made its own contributions to the rebirth of the local Church and the subsequent reconsideration of the universal Church as a communion of churches.” It must be pointed out, nevertheless, that as long as the Church of Africa continues to be overly dependent on the Church of the West economically and in other areas, it will not fully assert its ecclesiological contribution as a local Church. In fact, African contributions on the issues of the day do not receive a fair hearing in the court of international discourse. “Africa has practically become an irrelevant appendix, often forgotten and neglected.” Africa’s dependency on other continents is one factor behind its disregard. This holds true for the African nation states as well as the churches of Africa. This call for self-reliance does not mean that the African Church should now undermine missionary cooperation with the universal Church. Rather it means that the African Church should participate in the universal Church as equal partner with other churches.

**7.4.5.4 Integral Development As Evangelization**

The synod emphasized that evangelization should envisage a holistic liberation of a human person, namely setting the human person free from all scourges that oppress him or her materially as well as spiritually. It maintained that evangelization must deal with human development in all its dimensions; it should not confine itself only to the spiritual aspect. So...
the synod spoke of integral development. It noted that there exist profound links between evangelization and human advancement and liberation. The links are anthropological, theological and evangelical in nature. They are anthropological because the human being who is being evangelized is not an abstract thing, but rather a concrete person, subject to concrete social and economic situations. Again, the links are theological because God’s plan of creation goes hand in hand with the plan of redemption. It follows that, questions such as combating injustice and restoration of justice also constitute the areas of concern of evangelization. The first African synod observed, moreover, that the links between evangelization and human advancement and liberation are evangelical because they concern charity. It argued that the Lord’s new commandment of love cannot be proclaimed without promoting justice and peace which, indeed, are the true and authentic achievements of mankind. Thus, the synod insisted that evangelization should not ignore the pressing contemporary human problems such as justice and peace, liberation, development, and so on.

Furthermore, the synod clearly noted the enigmatic situation prevalent in Africa, namely, high levels of poverty despite having abundant natural resources. John Paul II deplores the tragic mismanagement of the available natural resources. He calls it plain theft the practice in which the resources are used for domestic or foreign private interests, instead of being distributed equitably to benefit the poor as well. For John Paul II, even the rich cultural and spiritual resources with which Africa is endowed could be engaged to change the economic poverty that prevails. For instance, the African cultural values and priceless human qualities could be used to remind African governments of their binding duty to protect the common patrimony against all forms of waste and embezzlement caused by citizens lacking public spirit or by unscrupulous foreign agencies. Investment in African cultural values and human resource potentials might achieve an effective reversal of the Africa’s dramatic situation.

The Pope’s exhortation is very important in the current context where Africans are said to have become their own biggest critics. Many of them have started to judge themselves through European eyes, describing anything authentically African—be it religion, a cultural practice, ways of dressing and eating, traditional rites of passage, even architecture well-suited to the climate and landscape—as primitive, backward or uncivilized.

Based on the argument of common patrimony, John Paul II urged rich countries to support the efforts of their counterparts struggling to rise from poverty and misery so that all people of

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1397 See: Ibid., No. 40.
1398 See: Ibid., No. 113.
1399 See: Ibid., No. 42.
1400 Joan Baxter, Dust from our Eyes: An Unblinkered Look at Africa (Wolsak and Wynn Publishers Ltd.: Hamilton, ON, 2010), 51.
the world may enjoy their right of just access to the resources with which God has blessed the world.\footnote{See: \textit{EIA}, No.114.}

Despite its emphasis on integral development, the first African synod compared contemporary Africa to the traveller who fell into the hands of brigands on the road to Jericho. It laments that its people “lying, as it were, on the edge of the road, sick, injured, disabled, marginalized and abandoned…are in dire need of Good Samaritans who will come to their aid.”\footnote{Ibid., No. 41.} For some commentators, such a view might have contributed in part to the failure of the Church in Africa to take charge of its own destiny.\footnote{See: Nathanael Yaovi Soede, “The Enduring Scourge of Poverty and Evangelization in Africa,” in: Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator (ed.), \textit{Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace: The Second African Synod} (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2011), 189.} Africa, instead, needs to insist on the image of the blind man Bartimaeus (Mk. 10: 46-52). Pope Benedict XVI pressed this image into action at the closing mass of the second African synod as witness and courage for Africa to get up.

\textbf{7.4.5.5 The Second African Synod: Reconciliation, Justice and Peace as Option for the Poor}

The second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops was convoked in Rome by Pope Benedict XVI in October 2009. Its theme was: “The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace, ‘You are the Salt of the Earth... You are the Light of the World’” (Mt.5: 13-14). While the first African Synod identified the nature of the Church in Africa as family of God, this second African Synod assigned this Church community a new mission, namely, to work toward reconciliation, justice and peace. This mission of the Church is quite poignant. It touches the socioeconomic, cultural, religious, and political areas wherein lies the predicament of most people in contemporary Africa. The components of reconciliation, justice, and peace define clear imperatives of ecclesial renewal and social transformation in Africa, a continent infamous for its high levels of poverty, abuse of human rights, and violation of human dignity. Reconciliation, justice and peace are values of God’s reign. Once upheld in Africa where hitherto they have seemed to be elusive, these kingdom of God values will embody a veritable option for the poor.

Indeed, it is the poor who are mostly trapped into the vicious cycle of injustice, conflicts and poverty. As Baxter has noted, frustrated young Africans who have been deprived of virtually everything they need for carving out a decent life for themselves can be drawn...
effortlessly into local and regional conflicts. They turn on each other rather than on a global order, or powerful people of their countries who are responsible for their sorry fates.  

Much of what was said in the first African Synod with regard to the scourge of poverty in Africa was emphasized in the second African Synod. The synod highlighted social injustice and environmental injustice as the root causes and perpetuators of poverty in Africa.

7.4.5.6 The Second African Synod and Social Injustice

Pertaining to social injustice, the second African Synod noted that both internal and external factors account for Africa’s lack of peace and the presence of widespread instability and consequently high levels of poverty. Internal factors include nepotism, tribalism, bribery, corruption, irresponsible and incompetent governments, gender-based discrimination of women, religious conflicts, HIV/AIDS, and so on. The synod fathers also represented the perception of many Africans today that the collapse of African values is the root cause of vices such as corruption, impunity, irresponsibility and others. The external causes of Africa’s poverty which the synod discussed were such as huge external debts, and exploitation of Africa’s natural resources, to mention but a few of them. Bemoaning the systematic plundering of Africa’s natural resources, the Lineamenta noted that it is often done to fuel arms trade. It called for measures to counter this practice if any reconciliation is to be achieved, justice fostered, and peace cultivated. The Instrumentum Laboris likewise revealed that there is, in fact, a scramble for Africa’s natural resources by the industrialized countries. Subsequently, there have been frequent wars over these resources, a fact which means that the continent’s wealth of mining reserves are a threat to its peace. Both the Lineamenta and the Instrumentum Laboris stressed that the mismanagement of Africa’s natural resources has made them become something of a scandal and indeed a potential stumbling block on the path to development. Thus in its final propositions the synod spells out clearly that many African people have been victims of this bad public management and exploitation by foreign powers.

1404 See: Joan Baxter, op.cit., 51.
1406 See: Lineamenta, No. 78.
1407 See: Instrumentum Laboris, No. 72.
1408 See: Proposition No. 29.
7.4.5.7 The Second African Synod and Environmental Injustice

According to the second African Synod, another cause of poverty in Africa is environmental degradation perpetrated by the local people and multinational companies. Proposition 22 stresses the fact that everything that God made is good (Gen.1) and that humans must be aware of their responsibility of environmental stewardship. The synod participants proposed that particular churches should promote environmental education and awareness. The churches should encourage people to plant trees and adopt practices that respect the integrity of nature. It was also insisted that particular churches should persuade their local and national governments “to adopt policies and binding legal regulations for the protection of the environment and promote alternative and renewable sources of energy.

7.4.6 Response of African Theologians to the Problem of Poverty

A plethora of publications offer proposals of some African theologians on the Church’s option for the poor. Some recent works include Reconciliation, Justice and Peace: The Second African Synod,1409 and Religion and Poverty: Pan-African Perspectives.1410 We have touched on some of these works in previous sections. In this section we shall examine the proposals of a Catholic theologian Emanuel Katongole and of an African Pentecostal theologian Mensa Otabil.

7.4.6.1 Emmanuel Katongole: The Quest to Interrogate Assumptions

Emmanuel Katongole is a Ugandan Roman Catholic theologian. He has written journal articles and authored, co-authored and edited several books. Relevant to our discussion is Katongole’s ecclesiological reflection mostly captured in his books A Future for Africa and Mirror to the Church. He maintains that it is the malformation of the African imagination that has led to the problematic elements experienced in various African contexts. Widespread violence, corruption and various attitudes that diminish the life of Africans are the outcome of such malformation. Thus for Katongole, if the stories that have contributed in forming such imaginations are not challenged, it will be difficult to construct a hopeful future for Africa.

Katongole cites the example of the Rwandan Genocide of 1994 to elucidate his point. At the time of the genocide Rwanda was over eighty-five percent Christian and it enjoyed the reputation of being the model of evangelization in Africa. Nowhere else on the continent was Christianity so well received as in that country.1411 It is reported, for example, that in the year

1958 alone a certain White Father priest in Rwanda heard a total of 63500 confessions! That means, within a period of about 300 days he heard an average of 210 confessions a day.\textsuperscript{1412} Yet it was precisely this country that became the scene of one of the most horrific murders of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{1413} It may be asked then, is it enough for the African Church to merely celebrate its numerical growth or mega-statistics? The answer is, certainly not! The Rwandan Genocide validates this answer. It occurred in a country that was a model of evangelization in the continent because all along the process of evangelization existing assumptions were not interrogated.

Katongole holds that the legacy of violence that culminated into the genocide was based on a historical narrative that enshrined tribalism as a mode of difference. As Patrick Chabal has also observed, the deadly conflict between the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi (a neighbouring country), was not on account of their being respectively, Hutu and Tutsi. Rather, “it is because the historical circumstances of their living and working together since the nineteenth century were irredeemably altered by colonial rule, setting one against the other.”\textsuperscript{1414} The tribal difference became stronger than any other bond. This narrative was imbibed as well by Christians to such an extent that it defined them more than their bond as Christians. This was witnessed even by Cardinal Roger Etchegaray who visited Rwanda on behalf of the Pope in 1994. He asked the assembled church leaders: “Are you saying that the blood of tribalism is deeper than the waters of baptism?” One leader answered, “yes, it is.”\textsuperscript{1415} The failure of the Rwandan Christians to cross their tribal borders is well captured in a Hollywood film entitled \textit{Shooting Dogs}. The film takes the viewer into Rwanda, then a world reeking of death and mass rape as well as devoid of law and order. It raises explicit questions about theodicy and the place of religious ritual amid such atrocities. The massacres make Father Christopher, a Western Church missionary working in Rwanda, question the level of comprehension among his flock:

“People have been coming to Mass here for God knows how long. They get up, they go to church, they sing, they genuflect, they kneel, they leave. Do you know why? Because they’re told to. They just go through the motions without the slightest understanding of what it is they are engaged in. Whether they’re being told to eat a wafer or hack their own flesh and blood to death.”\textsuperscript{1416}

\textsuperscript{1415} Emmanuel Katongole and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, \textit{Mirror to the Church: Resurrecting Faith After Genocide in Rwanda} (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2009), 22.
\textsuperscript{1416} Jolyon Mitchell, op.cit., , 156.
According to the film, the atrocities make Father Christopher begin to question even the value of his thirty years of missionary work in Africa.\(^{1417}\) There might be some exaggerations about the low level of comprehension of the flock in these cinematic presentations. But Father Christopher’s words depict the fact that evangelization did not make a difference as far as tribalism among the members of his flock was concerned. It is here that the challenge to the churches of Africa lies. For Katongole, what is needed in places bedeviled by ethnic conflicts is not proposals for the reconciliation of the ethnic groups but a re-narration of the situation that challenges even the validity of such socially constructed categories as ‘tribes.’ For him, “to accept racial or tribal reconciliation as the primary theological challenges is already to accept ‘tribes’ and ‘races’ as natural identities, and fail to see them as the result of distinct performances grounded in particular stories.”\(^{1418}\)

Katongole maintains that Christian social engagement is not sufficient for the Church to make a difference in Africa, “a continent that tends to become a veritable empire of hunger.”\(^{1419}\) Rather, the Church must challenge existing assumptions. He notes that much of African Christian social ethics is prescriptive rather than descriptive. It is based on “abstract principles and recommendations” instead of asking probing questions that provide narratives that illuminate why Africa has come to its current state. Such narratives would serve to uncover the fact that much of what is happening to Africa is the outcome of its social history. The narratives would also reveal that politics involves the formation of identities that determine the future of the peoples. Katongole insists that the Church has its distinctive politics; it is not merely an appendix that serves the politics of the secular nation-state. As such, Christian social ethics in Africa should challenge existing assumptions and subsequently come out with a narrative different from that of the secular nation-state. Christian social ethics should interrogate the social history of the continent rather than simply accepting existing narratives.

### 7.4.6.2 Insufficient Postures of Christian Engagement

Katongole highlights three biblical characters associated with the Passion narrative of Christ to pinpoint the insufficiency of the postures of Christian engagement familiar with many churches in Africa. The postures include the pious, the pastoral and the political postures. The pious posture is best represented by Simon of Cyrene who is shown as helping

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\(^{1417}\) Ibid.


\(^{1419}\) Ibid., 173.
the Lord to carry the cross.  He is compassionate and sacrificially gives of himself to bear the burden of Jesus’ Cross. He carries the cross as the soldiers commanded and even before knowing who the condemned man is. Katongole sees Simon as a model of the kind of piety idealized by modern Christianity. He is a model of pious obedience. What is curious, however, is that Simon never stops to ask the authority why Jesus is being crucified. His pious posture prevents him from seeing that at times one needs to stand up against injustice and not bow to earthy authority. Katongole holds that some churches confine themselves to the pious ecclesiological vision and in that way fail to interrogate the social history of the people they serve. “Working with a very clear distinction between the spiritual and material realms, the Pious Church feels that her own competence lies in the deep, internal, spiritual realm from which she provides motivation for the Christian in her struggle in the world.”

In his view, Katongole’s contention speaks eloquently to the current Christian atmosphere in Tanzania. It is a Christian situation characterised by interdenominational struggle for spiritual market and social influence. Consequently, churches tend to assume the pious posture, particularly when relating to political authorities and affluent personalities. They court the friendship of political leaders in order to assure themselves of their survival. But more importantly, they often invite political leaders and influential people to experience a personal relationship with Jesus by becoming “born again”. Their operating principle is that once the politically powerful and the people of influence and affluence accept the gospel in their hearts, the gospel will subsequently trickle down to the rest of the society. As noted previously, in this functional role, the Prosperity Gospel churches in Tanzania regard the rich and the politically powerful as masangara (bait) to attract more church members. It is also true that the rich and the politically powerful usually give substantial amounts of church offerings. Thus evangelistic efforts are sometimes made to aim primarily at winning such personalities. However, neither their responsibility in the perpetuation of the status quo of poverty, nor the source of the money they dish out as church donations will be questioned. As Katongole has observed, the advocates of the pious posture consistently fail to “question the prevailing assumptions about the way things are.”

The second posture of the Church that Katongole discusses is the pastoral posture. This is the posture of the Church as healer and servant of the poor. The biblical character that can be

1420 See: Mk. 15:21.
1421 See: Emmanuel Katongole and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, Mirror to the Church, 98.
1422 Emmanuel M. Katongole, A Future for Africa, 154.
1423 Emmanuel Katongole and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, op.cit.,100.
identified with this Church is Joseph of Arimathea.\textsuperscript{1424} Joseph is presented as a simple, sincere and compassionate man. He appears into the scene “after both religion and government have done their damage to the body of Christ in order to treat its abuse.”\textsuperscript{1425} He embalms Jesus’ body according to custom, wraps it in fine linen and gives it a proper burial. However, Joseph never dares to question who did that to Jesus and why. Katongole sees Joseph of Arimathea as representative of churches whose pastoral work concentrates on social engagement for the sake of those marginalised or battered by the system. The churches tend to assume the role of the Good Samaritan in the society. “After the nation states or paramilitaries or revolutionary forces have done their damage, the Church comes to do its works of mercy.”\textsuperscript{1426} They do provide relief aid, set up refugee camps, bury the dead, offer the last rites to victims of violence and oppression, build schools, run hospitals, and so on. Yet, the pastors and their churches that assume the pastoral pasture rarely question the system or attempt to rise beyond the system. Instead, they often accept the assumptions of the system that perpetuates the poverty conditions of the people.

Another way of Christian engagement that Katongole thinks the Church in Africa tends to adopt is the political posture. This is modelled by the behaviour of the official of the temple guard.\textsuperscript{1427} The prosecution of Jesus involved the cooperation of religious leaders and political authorities. It was at the interrogation of Jesus by the high priest that an official of the temple guard slapped Jesus across the face. The official perceived Jesus’ answer to the high priest bore a tone of disrespect. The official zealously defends the power of the high priest. His conviction seems to be that religious faith must be politically engaged. Thus, any indication of disrespect to the recognised authority becomes an act of offence. The political posture, as Katongole contends, is characterised by loyalty to the governing authorities. Churches that subscribe to this mode of Christian social engagement are keen to be loyal and responsible to the recognised authority or nation state. They can even compromise themselves by getting involved in the systems and processes of this world. But on the other hand, they are not driven to imagine possibilities other than those named by the ruling authority.\textsuperscript{1428} Such Christian churches may go so far as to stir up religious conviction to motivate citizens of a nation state to promote a political ideology at any cost. Moreover, advocates of the political posture are “almost always rewarded with the spoils of power.”\textsuperscript{1429} Drawing from Katongole’s reflections,

\textsuperscript{1424} See: Jn.19: 38-42.
\textsuperscript{1425} Emmanuel M. Katongole, \textit{A Future for Africa}, 154.
\textsuperscript{1426} Emmanuel Katongole and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, op.cit., 106.
\textsuperscript{1427} See: Jn. 18: 19-22.
\textsuperscript{1428} See: Emmanuel Katongole and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, op.cit., 106.
\textsuperscript{1429} Ibid., 104.
we can maintain that politically postured churches may not easily respond to the needs of the poor and the marginalised, if such a step would entail a confrontation with those in authority. This is the challenge of many churches in Tanzania today.

7.4.6.3 Africa Needs “The Prophetic Church of Mary of Bethany”

Katongole analyses a fourth posture, which he terms the prophetic posture. He proposes it as the ideal posture of Christian engagement that the Church of Africa should strive to appropriate. The prophetic Church posture is best exemplified by Mary of Bethany.\footnote{See: Jn. 12:1-8.} She is the woman who made a fool of herself by publicly wiping the feet of Jesus with her hair and anointing them with oil.\footnote{See: Emmanuel M. Katongole, A Future for Africa, 154.} According to Katongole, this woman’s action is both unconventional and shocking. She interrupts the social norms by barging into the dinner party and anointing Jesus with some expensive perfume. She also assumes a prophetic posture by anointing Jesus to be king of her people; she was not authorized to play that role. The anointing with very expensive perfume is even resented by Jesus’ disciples who consider it wastage of resources that could have been better allocated elsewhere. Yet Mary’s action is a prophetic action through which she envisions change. With her single act, she dares to question the social, economic, and political assumptions of her day. She represents the “rebel consciousness” that is essential to Jesus’ gospel.\footnote{See: Emmanuel Katongole and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, op.cit, 117.} She embodies an “alternative witness and a new social order made possible by the life and story of Jesus.”\footnote{Emmanuel M. Katongole, A Future for Africa, 154.} For Katongole, Mary’s Church, on the one hand, is the prophetic Church that cares for the coming reign of God and its obligation to catalyze its coming now. But on the other hand, it is a Church which rises above the spiritual and pious salvation of souls. It is a Church that cherishes the service of the Pastoral Church, but rises above it. Mary’s Church is a “Church of jars, oil, tears, hair and feet. It is a Church that is deeply material. It is a Church that is concerned with the everyday struggles of a community as it strives to remain faithful and to bear witness.”\footnote{Ibid., 155.}

7.4.6.4 General Remarks

I posit along with Katongole that in order for the churches of Africa to be catalysts for poverty alleviation and integral development, they must advocate theologies and ministries that interrogate the prevailing assumptions. Such assumptions include tribalism, ethnic bias, sectionalism, corruption and so on. Not challenging them results in a Christianity that
flourishes amid extreme poverty, diseases, and other socially-constructed life-inflicting conditions. The prophetic Church of Mary recommended by Katongole interrupts the social, economic and political structures. It treads an intermediary path between the disembodied spirituality of the religion of the beyond preached by some mainline churches and the materialistic soteriology of the Prosperity Gospel churches. The prophetic Church interrogates the glorification of poverty familiar with some historic churches and calls to question the glorification of wealth and material prosperity as touted by the Prosperity Gospel churches. The Christians of Songea and other parts of Africa today yearn for prophetic churches that will chart a better future for them, both spiritually and in their material concerns.

Katongole’s proposal is, however, problematic at some levels. First, it seems to view the nation-state as irredeemable and hence abandons it to its own devices. Instead, it focuses on the Church as the only site where a hopeful future for Africa may be enacted. In this view the Church appears to disown the nation-state so that it may not be held responsible for what the nation-state does.1435 Even non-Christians have no place in this proposal. This is an unrealistic stance given that in many African countries including Tanzania, the Church itself continues to reap benefits from the structures of the nation-state. And the society in these countries is pluralistic. It is also worth recalling that even concrete Christian communities themselves are not immune from the life-diminishing tendencies such as corruption that eat through the social fabric. Second, focusing on the Church as an alternative site for a better future for Africa as Katongole does gives the impression that the Church wants to perform the role presently being performed by the nation-state. But as Pope Benedict in Deus Caritas Est notes, “the Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible. She cannot and must not replace the state. Yet as the same time she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice…”1436

Thus, as far as development is concerned, the Church should not view itself as the only sign of the new future for Africa, rather as one of the signs for it. Consequently, the Church must be ready to cooperate with the other signs,1437 be they the nation-state, other belief systems or non-believers.

1436 Deus Caritas Est, No. 28.
1437 See: David Tonghou Ngong, op.cit., 67.
Mensa Otabil is an influential Ghanaian Neo-Pentecostal preacher. He is one of the most prominent Pentecostal leaders on the African continent. He founded the International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) in Accra, Ghana in 1984. On account of his criticism of Ghanaian government he has been called Rabbi to the Ghanaian nation. And because of his different emphasis to Neo-Pentecostal preaching, he has been described as a different voice in Ghanaian Neo-Pentecostalism. Otabil holds two doctorates and is a businessman and a business consultant. Clients in his consultancy include top management staff in West Africa from banks to mining, to multinational companies. He is the chancellor of the private university he has founded, Central University College.

Otabil is passionate about African development. He urges people to have zero tolerance for underdevelopment because it is man-made and not God-made. His version of Prosperity Gospel does not stress the miraculous and the demonic like most Pentecostal preachers do. In fact, he refuses many features common to Charismatic Christianity. For him there is no space for oil, anointing, healing, witches, demons and prophetic gifts. He contends that underdevelopment in Africa will not be rectified by anointing with oil, tithing or by God’s miraculous interventions. Rather, underdevelopment will be rectified when Africans themselves address the deep-seated values and practices that impinge development. He insists that development comes from hard work and not from miracles. Success comes through human agency.

For him, two major areas prevent Africans from flourishing: external discourses that maintain negative perceptions of Africans and ultimately injure the Africans’ image of themselves and negative cultural strongholds that tend to identify Africans with primitivism. In his widely acclaimed book Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia, Otabil addresses these issues. He seeks to correct misunderstandings with regard to the place of black people in God’s salvific plan, to critique African cultural attitudes as well as to advocate black consciousness and the empowerment of Africans.

**7.4.6.6 Against Stereotypical Attitudes Towards the Poor**

The prime focus of Otabil’s theology and his criticism of the emergence of underdevelopment in Africa is culture. He is critical of some African cultural practices which

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1439 See: David Tonghou Ngong, op.cit., 58.
he thinks hinder development or cause underdevelopment. He thus employs the theological
category imago Dei (Gen. 1:26-27). He notes that since human beings are created in the image
of God, they have a relationship with God. That relationship should bring about the good life
which includes material blessings. Christians for him are more entitled to such good life
because through Christ they have a special relationship with God.

But for Otabil, the good life does not come through miraculous interventions. Rather, God
created human beings with the creativity to achieve the good life. For that reason, Otabil
makes culture the prime focus of his theology and his criticism of the emergence of
underdevelopment in Africa. He holds that certain strongholds, people’s assumptions, desires,
understanding and value that partly constitute what is generally labelled as culture, prevent
Africans from enjoying the fullness of life as intended by God.

Otabil’s booklet entitled Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia is probably the only attempt by an
African Pentecostal preacher to challenge negative perceptions of black people the world over
on biblical grounds.\footnote{1442} For him, the stereotypical portrayal of Africans in Western Christian
discourses has the potential to injure the Africans perception of themselves as an intrinsically
inferior race. Stereotypical depictions of black people have assigned them a peripheral rather
than a central position in God’s salvific plan. As a good example, Otabil refers to the
widespread interpretation of Genesis 9 which claims that Noah cursed Ham and that this curse
was passed on to black people. Otabil notes that such negative perceptions about black people
have been dominant in western Christian discourses. But he contends that they are a lie
intended to hold back black people in the world.\footnote{1443} Thus for him, the black people have to
know that they have a revered place in God’s plan of salvation. To demonstrate the centrality
of the black people in God’s salvific plan, Otabil portrays Moses, the person who led the
Israelites out of Egyptian bondage, as having been influenced by his Egyptian (African)
background. Otabil claims as well that Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, was black and he is the
one who taught Moses organizational and judicial practices.

For Otabil, therefore, Africans should rediscover their inheritance which is tied to the story
of salvation as narrated in the Bible.\footnote{1444} Acknowledging their centrality in God’s plan of
salvation, black people will be able to unshackle themselves from the derogatory narrative
that diminishes African dignity and thwarts development. Otabil is careful, nevertheless, to
stress that his promotion of black consciousness is not meant to raise the black people over

\footnote{1442} See: David Tonghou Ngong, op.cit. 59.
\footnote{1444} See: Ibid., 73.
other races since God is not destroying one race to lift up another. Rather, the stress on the liberation of the black race is important in order to bring the truth that would destroy the oppressive and discriminatory structures in the Church and the world, so as to establish God’s purpose for the nations.¹⁴⁴⁵

7.4.6.7 Confronting Negative African Cultural Strongholds

Otabil identifies hurdles to African development that emanate from what he refers to as negative cultural strongholds. They include such features as inferiority complex, tribalism, cultural stagnation, idolatry and fetishism.¹⁴⁴⁶ African inferiority complex is related to discourses that undermine African self-confidence. It is subsequent to Africa’s encounter with the West. Otabil sees the sense of personal self-worth as critical for Africans. His version of the Prosperity Gospel focuses on the promotion of this value.¹⁴⁴⁷ This was evident for example, in his Conference in Dar es Salaam in 2007. The overarching theme in that conference was “empowerment of Tanzanian Christians and their way away from poverty to prosperity.”¹⁴⁴⁸ Otabil pointed out that what impedes Africans from overcoming poverty is inferiority complex since people think they don’t deserve much.

If you are poor in your mind you will attract poverty around you. There are people in Tanzania and the only thing they see is poverty because they are poor themselves...The poverty is not on the ground but it is in the people...if things do not change in your mind you can live in the midst of prosperity but still create poverty.¹⁴⁴⁹

Otabil was also challenging the version of Prosperity Gospel that dominates in Tanzania, Songea included. It is a prosperity creed that attributes poverty largely to witchcraft and demons, rather than to ignorance and lack of creativity and thrift. For Otabil the problem resides in the mindset of the people. He is confident that, when inferiority complex is overcome, Africa can attain the greatness God intends for the continent. Tribalism: it stunts the growth of the African continent because the people tend to take care mostly for people belonging to their own ethnic groups. It is often accompanied by exclusivism and in some extreme cases ethnic conflicts and killings. Cultural stagnation: according to Otabil, Africans insist on living in the past by for example perpetrating labour intensive methods of production instead of using machines. Idolatry and fetishism: Otabil criticizes the tendency of some Africans to seek to attain greatness through spiritual influences rather than through hard work. 

“Village mentality”: this is the tendency to define Africa mainly in terms of ancient village

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¹⁴⁴⁵ See: Ibid., 20.
¹⁴⁴⁶ See: Ibid.
¹⁴⁴⁷ See: Mensa Otabil, Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia.
¹⁴⁴⁸ Päivi Hasu, op.cit., 232.
¹⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 236.
life rather than through modern life. The dominant view then is that what is authentically African is what is rooted in the past and in the villages rather than the present and including the cities. Otabil counters this view. He notes that “all societies began from the village; villages are not African. Everywhere people have lived in villages, but have grown into more cosmopolitan outlooks of life.” Village therefore is not African culture but the culture of Africans who lived in the villages in the past. Aberrant leadership: Otabil is critical of some African ruling elites who see leadership as a means of person aggrandisement rather than as opportunity for service to their people. What is unfortunate is that the ordinary people in Africa often tolerate such bad leaders. Since the people have become accustomed to living in suffering and squalor, they tend to take for granted the attitudes of such leaders.

For Otabil, such negative cultural strongholds have to be overcome if Africa is to enjoy material prosperity, which is God’s will for them. In his book *Four Laws of Productivity*, Otabil proposes some strategies that Africans can adopt to overcome the negative cultural strongholds. Drawing on Genesis 1:28, he presents the four principles of prosperity: be fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth and subdue it. Otabil sees these principles as helpful to spur the African Christian imagination towards the engagement of African talents, the promotion of creativity, the spirit of accountability, hard work and honesty, while discouraging sloth and extravagance.

Otabil’s theological proposals have the shortcoming of not making room for non-Christians. He insists that Africans must see Christianity as central to their overcoming of the historical degradation caused by their relations to the West. For him, the cure to such harm is in Christianity, while African Religions and Islam do not hold such liberating truth. Even among Christians, Otabil’s focus has been mostly on the born-again. Only recently did he begin to treat non born-again Christians with acceptance. Undeniably Christian imagination can contribute in the transformation of the African content. Nevertheless, African societies are pluralistic and thus a Christian development framework that excludes the “Other” is unrealistic. A transformation of such societies requires that Christians should be ready to learn from and collaborate with the non-Christians because the Holy Spirit dispenses truth to them as well.

### 7.4.6.8 Prosperity Gospel As Option for the Poor: Does It Make a Difference in Africa?

The sympathisers of the Prosperity Gospel, as noted in previous chapters, have argued that it this doctrine has compelling reasons to be adopted in Africa because as an option for the

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poor it makes a difference in the African Continent. What is the response of the Church of Africa to this question? As far as the Catholic Church is concerned, there has been so far no direct official response to the Prosperity Gospel. The first and second African Synods did not mention the Prosperity Gospel by name. The Lineamenta of the first African Synod talk about the influence of the new religious movements in general. The Synod Fathers then recommended that a closer study about the new religious movements be undertaken, including establishing the factors that account for their rapid growth in Africa. In the context of the second African Synod, Pope Benedict XVI alluded to the Prosperity Gospel in Africa in his homily at the opening mass of the Synod. He first referred to Africa as an “immense spiritual ‘lung’ for humanity that appears to be in a crisis of faith and hope.” The pope warned, nevertheless, that this ‘lung’, i.e. Africa, risks contamination by religious fundamentalism combined with political and economic interests, being spread by groups related to various religious affiliations. The Prosperity Gospel is a practical embodiment and example of such religious fundamentalism because it considers the “word of God primarily as a tool or means for delivering people from the clutches of poverty and guaranteeing instant prosperity.” The Instrumentum Laboris of the second African Synod also made an allusion to the Prosperity Gospel when it pointed out that what blackens African society is “selfishness which nurtures greed, corruption and the allurement of gain.” Besides the synod, some well-known African Catholic theologians have also treated the subject of the Prosperity Gospel, but not extensively. Most of them have mentioned it in passing in book chapters.

A rather comprehensive theological response has come from evangelical churches. This is quite logical, considering that many Prosperity Gospel teachers mostly have their roots in evangelical churches and traditions or have been brought up under the influence of evangelical para-church ministries. Let us explore the response of an evangelical movement known as the Lausanne Movement. This response was articulated by the

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1454 See: Ibid.
1457 See for example, Emmanuel M. Katongole, A Future for Africa, 245-249; and Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, From Crisis to Kairos, 202.
1459 The Lausanne Movement is a congress which unites diverse evangelicals “in the common task of the total evangelization of the world.” Since 1974 it has focused on world evangelization with a mission statement of
movement’s Theology Working Group, subsequent to its Africa chapter consultations in Akropong, Ghana in 2008 and 2009.\footnote{See: “Christianity Today” online: http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/decemberweb-only/gc-prosperitystatement.html (accessed 12th December, 2012).} The theologians’ statement on the Prosperity Gospel was meant to be a discussion starter for further reflection on this doctrine which is a new feature of African Christianity. This section underlines the relationship between the Prosperity Gospel and poverty as articulated in that statement. With this analysis, we set out to answer the question whether the Prosperity Gospel is really an option for the poor that makes a difference in Africa.

To begin with, the statement of the Lausanne theologians affirms the notion of the Prosperity Gospel that there is a biblical vision of human prospering. It also avers that the prospering mentioned in the Bible is not confined to spiritual domains of a human being; rather it includes material welfare in terms of both health and wealth. Yet the statement rejects the notion that spiritual welfare is measurable in terms of material welfare or that a person’s health and wealth are necessarily a sign of God’s blessing. Such a view is unbiblical and at the same time it pays no heed to the fact that wealth can be obtained by oppression, corruption or deceit. Similarly, the statement rejects as unbiblical the teaching that poverty or illness or early death necessarily result from God’s curse, or human curses or lack of faith. With regard to poverty alleviation strategies, the statement acknowledges that if the Prosperity Gospel encourages hard work, the positive use of all God-given resources such as the earth, human gifts, skills, education, wealth, and so on, then it can have positive effects of human lives. The importance of these values is also stressed in the Bible. For that matter, the statement contends, any kind of asceticism that rejects these values or a fatalism that sees poverty as a necessary evil that cannot be fought against must be rejected. But on the other side, the statement also rejects the Prosperity Gospel doctrine that ascribes success in life entirely to a person’s own striving, negotiation or cleverness. The Prosperity Gospel teaching about ‘positive’ thinking\footnote{The term ‘positive’ thinking has been described in the section of the definition of the Prosperity Gospel.} and other ‘self-help’ techniques are all dangerously contradictory to the sovereign grace of God. It is not Christian to maintain that one can make things happen simply by speaking his own word loud, however well-intentioned that word might be. Arguably, the speaker in this practice becomes his own ‘god’.\footnote{In Genesis, God creates the world simply by his word; similarly in the New Testament Jesus performs some miraculous deeds such as healing and calming storm simply by his word.} Thus practising ‘positive’ thinking withers our relationship with Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

\{}\textit{The whole Church taking the whole Gospel to the whole World.} \textit{It} members convene regularly to discuss a wide range of issues pertaining to evangelization. See: URL: http://www.lausanne.org/en/about.html (accessed 12th November, 2012).}
Another shortcoming of the prosperity Gospel that the Lausanne theologians pinpoint is its emphasis of individual wealth and success without the need for community accountability. This attitude is unchristian. And, viewed from the African perspective, it has actually “damaged a traditional feature of African society, which was commitment to care within the extended family and wider social community.”\(^{1463}\) According to the Lausanne theologians, abject poverty, constant frustration, failure of politicians and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOS) and the loss of the Church’s prophetic voice in public arena contribute to make the Prosperity Gospel flourish. For many poor people, the Prosperity Gospel becomes their only hope for a better future or even for a more bearable present. The Lausanne theologians see that while the terrible poverty inflicting the people of Africa is unacceptable and against God’s will, a helpful or biblical response to it is not provided by the Prosperity Gospel. They note that, first, the Prosperity Gospel originates from North America where its material poverty is not comparable to that of Africa. Second, the Prosperity Gospel vastly enriches its preachers while leaving multitudes without any improvement of their economic conditions. Very often the multitudes remain disillusioned by unfulfilled promises of miracles of financial breakthrough. Third, the preachers emphasize various alleged spiritual or demonic causes, but fail to tackle the root causes of poverty such as economic and political causes including social injustice, exploitation as well as unfair international trade practices. Fourth, the Prosperity Gospel tends to victimize the poor by making them feel accountable for their own poverty, while simultaneously failing to address the real causes of poverty and denounce those who through their greed inflict poverty on others. Furthermore, to the extent that the Prosperity Gospel churches often stress material wellbeing at the expense of teachings such as repentance from sin, saving faith in Christ for forgiveness of sin, and the hope for eternal life, it easily warrants greed to permeate Christian communities without it appearing to be a scandal.

The Lausanne theologians also identify several aspects of the lifestyle and behaviour of many Prosperity Gospel preachers that we can describe as inconsiderate towards the poor. The preachers are said to lead a lifestyle characterized by flamboyance, excessive wealth and extravagance. They employ unethical and manipulate techniques to solicit money. They constantly emphasize on money as if it were a supreme good—which is mammon. This emphasis on money allows them to spend more time for fundraising than for preaching the Word of God. In a similar vein, Ruth Padilla holds the African Prosperity Gospel bishops and

archbishops responsible for granting a “holy seal of approval to lust, greed and consumerism.” Significantly the attitudes of the Prosperity Gospel preachers are certainly incompatible with the option for the poor and are evidently marks of false prophets. As Padilla observes, “power, success, wealth, and health are all wrapped in a tightly secured package that allows no room for questioning, for pain or suffering, for concern about justice, for awareness of the needs of other people.”

Evangelical theologian J. Kwabena, from Ghana, takes a positive view of Prosperity Gospel churches such as Ghana’s International Central Gospel Church led by Pastor Mensa Otabil. Such churches, he says, exhort people to do something about their impoverished situations. Some members of these churches offer encouraging testimonies of upward economic mobility. But on the whole, he views the Prosperity Teaching as being appealing to the upwardly mobile urban youth, while having “little to offer to the many young people who peddle gum, candies, bananas, peanuts and fired pastries to eke out a living.”

Conclusively, the statement of the Lausanne Theology Working Group is not exclusively negative about the Prosperity Gospel. It acknowledges what it considers to be the positive elements of this doctrine. In fact, other sources testify as well the potential of the Prosperity Gospel to engender a socio-economic upward mobility in Africa. In Ghana, for example, as Gifford notes, members of Prosperity Gospel churches gave testimonies of their socio-material betterment through the practice of this doctrine. In Nigeria, the Prosperity Gospel churches, like other Pentecostal churches, have widely institutionalised their social services, having established their own nursing schools, vocational training and marriage counselling centres, healing centres and so on. By institutionalizing their social services, the churches gradually build an alternative to the weak social services provided by the state. Similarly, Togarasei has demonstrated how the Prosperity Gospel churches in Zimbabwe and Botswana serve to alleviate poverty by forming business fellowships, forums, and projects that provide both education and resources for individual entrepreneurship and employment opportunities. Such examples serve to demonstrate the positive side of the Prosperity Gospel acknowledged by the Lausanne Theology Working Group. Of greater concern,
however, is the overarching view of the Lausanne Theology Working Group that the Prosperity Gospel is often unethical, unChristlike, pastorally damaging and spiritually unhealthy. It is a false gospel and offers no lasting hope. These shortcomings are certainly an impediment to the option for the poor.

But, while rejecting the excesses of the Prosperity Gospel, the Lausanne statement itself does not come out with concrete proposals as to how Africans can release themselves from the trap of abject poverty. Hence an endurance question that cries for answers is: what then do the other churches offer as an alternative to the Prosperity Gospel? The subsequent section on General Conclusions and Pastoral Recommendations will tackle this question.

7.5 Conclusion

Chapter Seven has demonstrated how the Bible provides an inspiration for the option for the poor. In the Old Testament, the Exodus Event, the Deuteronomic Laws and the prophetic tradition prominently depict God as a God who always takes sides with the poor, the marginalised and the oppressed. In the New Testament this is evident in the ministry of Jesus Christ. The Lukan narrative Luke-Acts, particularly, portrays the entire life of Jesus as being pneumatologically constituted. Central to this pneumatology is Jesus’ broad ministry of hospitality to the poor. It involved not only healing and exorcism, but also the feeding of the hungry and other deeds that were in favour of the poor, the outcasts, and the marginalized in the society. In imitation of Christ, the ministry of the apostles Peter and Paul and the life of the early Christian communities were also permeated by pneumatological hospitality. In the same vein, the Social Teaching of the Church from the patristic epoch down to the present times promotes the option for the poor. This is an enduring obligation, since without caritas, there is no Church!

This chapter has also surveyed the proposals of two African theologians, Emmanuel Katongole and Mensa Otabil. Both of them have argued that for the Church in Africa to make any real difference in the fight against poverty, it must spearhead a change of the African imagination. This entails a sustained confrontation against prevailing harmful assumptions. Emmanuel Katongole underlines this point with a vivid example of the Rwandan genocide of 1994. He wonders that the genocide occurred in the mostly thoroughly evangelized country in Africa. In his view, the Church in Rwanda is to blame because in its evangelizing mission it did not challenge the negative ethnic perceptions that were deeply ingrained in the social fabric. These insights are helpful in the diagnosis of the Prosperity Gospel and other Christian

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1470 See: ibid.
churches in Africa today. Significantly, their doctrines may be popular and contribute to the spread of Christianity in the continent. Yet the failure to overcome pernicious attitudes emanating from the churches and society may thwart the prospect of the Church to become a factor of reconstruction in the face of poverty and human suffering.

Chapter Eight will make a general appraisal of the Prosperity Gospel and put forward some pastoral recommendations as the way forward for the Church in its commitment to the option for the poor.
PART THREE
EVALUATION OF THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL AND THE WAY FORWARD
CHAPTER EIGHT

GENERAL EVALUATION OF THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL AND PASTORAL PROPOSALS

8.0 Introduction

In this last chapter, we are in a position to make a general evaluation of the practice of the Prosperity Gospel in Songea and subsequently to put forward some pertinent pastoral recommendations. The evaluation focuses on the Prosperity Gospel as a socio-economic transformative factor and on its theological and pastoral implications. The proposals will underline some of the areas that the Catholic Church of Songea needs to take into consideration in its commitment to the option for the poor.

8.1 The Prosperity Gospel and Its Ambivalent Relationship to the Poor

Most of the Prosperity Gospel churches surveyed in this study portray some ambivalence in their relationship to the poor. On the one hand they demonstrate some elements of optimism as far as the socio-economic transformation of their members is concerned. These elements constitute the strengths of these churches. They are the factors that attract many Christians from other denominations, including Catholics, to join the Prosperity Gospel denominations. On the other hand, the practice of the Prosperity Gospel is imbedded with some aspects that impinge on the socio-economic reconstruction of the lives of its members. Let us now examine both sides.

8.1.1 Strengths of the Prosperity Gospel

The Prosperity Gospel denominations in Songea ardently promote economic stewardship. Through the faithful tithing and generous offerings of church members, evangelism activities can be funded, church structures constructed, salaries for pastors paid, and modern electronic mass media equipment for evangelism purchased. They epitomise the struggles depicted by local African churches that are intent to become self-supporting. Again, the Prosperity Gospel churches show the potential to offer their members an impetus for a socio-economic reconstruction in that they allow their members to “recast their poverty as something personal and temporary... If it is personal... an individual can do something about it, which generates both hope and effort.”1471 The prospect for an upward socio-economic trajectory also owes to

1471 John L. Allen, op.cit.,383.
the fact that the churches to some extent exhort their members to adopt a work ethic that privileges self-reliance, diligence, budgeting, and business investment. Moreover, in their moral codes, the churches urge their members to embrace ascetic lifestyles by practising abstinence from alcohol, drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, gambling, or any wastage of time and money on frivolous pleasures. Consequently, the churches provoke their members to think in new ways about their lives, and to always struggle for an upward socio-economic mobility.

Moreover, the Prosperity Gospel churches have a greater chance to broaden their economic opportunities by encouraging international migrations and global networking. Imbedded in the migration phenomenon is the so-called reverse flow of mission. This concept describes “the influx of Christian leaders from the global south into the north.” African Initiated Charismatic and Pentecostal movements are largely the agents of this upsurge of the wave of reverse flow. Undeniably, despite their missionary contribution in the host countries, these African churches have as well the chance to improve their economic opportunities. Their chance may be greater than that of African Catholic missionaries because the African Initiated Charismatic and Pentecostal denominations are more dynamic in Africa and seek the opportunities of migrating to the West more rigorously. For example, recently Cardinal Polycarp Pengo of Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania, the chairman of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), maintained that the reverse flow of mission, despite its merits, carries at least two risks. First, African priests going to the U.S or Europe may seek material gain before genuine evangelization. Secondly, the Church in the West may be fostering a damaging brain drain: “The Church in Africa is deprived of best qualified evangelizers while the materially rich Western Church receives evangelizers whose primary aim is material gain.” The cardinal was speaking on behalf of the Catholic Church in Africa. African Pentecostal denominations, on the contrary, do not seem to share such concerns. They exhort their members to go global because the whole world is their parish. Hence today one can rightly speak of the pentecostalisation of the West through the agency of Pentecostal movements from Africa.

The emphasis on pneumatological soteriology can help Christians strengthen their faith. Arguably, “the resources required for strengthening faith are to be drawn from ecclesial

1472 Ogbu Kalu, op.cit., 271.
1473 Ibid. See also: Mark R. Gornik, op.cit., 100.
1474 See: Mark R. Gornik, op.cit., 269-270.
1476 See: David Martin, Pentecostalism.
According to Anderson, the Pentecostal practices of prophecy, deliverance from malignant spirits and the Gospel of Prosperity proclaim the salvific work of God through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. For him, this expression of pneumatological soteriology combines proclamation and demonstration of the power of the gospel. Anderson views this kind of pneumatological soteriology as a novelty in African Christianity, since the historic mission churches that operate in Africa have hardly done it. Significantly, we affirm along with Anderson that churches have to emphasize the teaching that the power of the Spirit overcomes all other adversarial powers. In fact, as Ngong notes, “no power can overcome the power of God’s Spirit, given that God is creator of the universe.” The Pentecostals’ emphasis on the healing of the body is also an affirmation of the goodness of embodiment, which in turn affirms God’s creation and world.

8.2 Shortcomings of the Prosperity Gospel

According to our research findings, the shortcomings displayed by the Prosperity Gospel outweigh its areas of strength. This fact buttresses our contention that the version of the Prosperity Gospel practised in Songea and in much of Tanzania cannot bring about a socio-economic reconstruction of its members. What are these areas that elicit the weakness of the Prosperity Gospel?

8.2.1 Perceptions of Exploitation of the Poor

According to this study, there are widespread perceptions that the Prosperity Gospel preachers play an ambivalent game; they allegedly exploit the very Christians they promise to deliver from poverty. The Christians who are desperate to get out of their poverty turn to the preachers in the hope of finding some kind of relief. In his book *This House Has Fallen*, Karl Maier observes similar tendencies of exploitation of the ordinary people by the Prosperity Gospel pastors. “The messages of healing, miracles, and prosperity found sympathetic echoes among a populace that had seen the hope of the old boom collapse into the spiral of economic decline and military rule.” In addition, the preachers allegedly take advantage of the spiritual thirst of their congregation members who are evidently patient and eager to hear the Word of God. Their thirst makes them prone to the reception of any kind of

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1477 Mark R. Gornik, op.cit., 268.
1479 David Tonghou Ngong, op.cit., 33.
1481 This was the observation of respondents in Songea and Dar es Salaam.
1483 Ibid., 265.
Christian doctrine that appears to promise salvation. It is more so when that doctrine promises a holistic salvation, i.e. spiritually, physically, emotionally and in other realms.

Interestingly, African Christians of the time of St. Augustine of Hippo seem to have been just as thirsty and patient for the Word of God and were as well subject to manipulation by preachers. Augustine’s own homily suggests this fact. We can cite it here to let it speak eloquently to current African Christian congregations and their preachers. The homily starts with the words: “Listen, listen, beloved ones, you who are intimately connected with the Body of Christ, whose hope is the Lord, your God, and you who are not turning to vanities and empty deceit; and if you have turned to them so far, so listen, so that you no longer turn to them.”

Complaints against the Prosperity Gospel surface not only from Tanzania but also from other corners of Africa. Pastors are accused of not being fishers of men; instead they have turned into “‘reapers of diamond and gold in an endless mine of desperate souls in search of spiritual nourishment.’” The great economic disparity that usually exists between the preachers and the majority of their followers lends credence to this exploitation. As one woman from Ghana observes:

All I see are pastors, reverends, bishops and the like getting richer and richer whilst their congregation looks on, praying and hoping that one day, they will also be as wealthy as the pastor. Can’t these people open their eyes and see it is their monies enriching these so-called pastors?... So day in day out, we hear of people who have been disappointed or duped by a spiritualist.

The situation has led some commentators to conclude that the Prosperity Gospel is to a great extent “a child of modern secular materialism... and that for some of its exponents, religion is a way of making money.” Others have expressed their conviction that, “certainly we will never meet a preacher of the health and wealth gospel who lives in humble circumstances.”

8.2.2 Exclusion of the Poor

There is the tendency to give a preferential treatment to rich church members. Rich donors tend to have more decision power in the important matters pertaining to the congregation. Prosperity Gospel is also more urban-oriented while the vast majority of the residents of Songea (and of Tanzania in general) live in rural areas. The churches are hardly seen to

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1484 *Enarratio in Psalmum* 72, 1.
1487 Aylward Shorter and Joseph Njiru, op.cit., 36.
operate in the poor rural setting. They prefer the elite, the rich and business minded people who normally do not live in poor rural areas. Even in the urban areas the preachers cater mostly to the rich and prominent members of the society. Their televised church services often focus the elite members so as to attract more elite members to join the denominations. They seem to take advantage of the church-going trends currently in vogue in African urban areas. According to Shorter and Onyancha, “church-going habits of affluent Christians correspond to what sociologists call a ‘selective neighbourhood.’ That means affluent Christians would prefer to worship with members of a congregation with economic, educational and professional backgrounds similar to theirs even if that congregation is geographically located far away from their own residential neighbourhood. \footnote{1489} This trend benefits the Prosperity Gospel churches in a particular way because they specifically seek the membership of the affluent and prominent people.

The prosperity doctrine stresses material wealth in the sense of posh cars, houses, wearing trend-setting clothes, and wallowing in money. For most ordinary people even the basic needs like food, clothing, safe water, and good shelter remain a great challenge; to such people to speak of prosperity in the sense of limousines and bungalows is anything but illusory. The rich and the elite find the Prosperity Gospel churches a fitting ambience to enhance their business networking. But on the part of the ordinary people, like petty street vendors (machingas and juakalis), the doctrine does not seem to deliver them from the spirit of poverty. In fact, a real gospel of the poor and for the poor in the Tanzanian context must necessarily have a preferential option for the rural people and those living in slums in urban areas.

Central to this option is human dignity. A person’s human worth is not determined by the amount and times of tithing and offering he or she makes. Rather, it is the fact of being created in the image and likeness of God that makes human beings by their very existence have an inherent value, worth and distinction. The Christian category used to describe this fact is \textit{imago Dei}, which has biblical foundations. \footnote{1490} \textit{Imago Dei} offers a biblical vision of the sacredness of all human life. It means that “God is present in every person, regardless of his or her race, nation, sex, origin, orientation, culture or economic standing.” \footnote{1491} Hence, \textit{imago Dei} endorses the inalienability of the dignity of every person inasmuch as it is endowed by God. It is purely a matter of grace that a human being is \textit{imago Dei}. Even when the \textit{imago Dei}

was tarnished by sin, Jesus Christ, the *Proto-Imago Dei*,\(^{1492}\) restored that grace by assuming lowly human conditions through the Incarnation and by his death on the cross.\(^{1493}\) Thus, both the Incarnation and the Cross of Jesus assure people of low self-esteem of God’s affirmation of their human worth.

Pope Benedict XVI emphasized the implications of the Christian category *imago Dei* in his reflection on World Day of Peace in 2010. He pointed out that, “the human face is an ‘epiphany of God’…when human beings know that they have a common Father (God) and when they let this Father dwell in their hearts, then it will be possible to recognise and respect each other as brothers and sisters.”\(^{1494}\) Such an understanding militates against any tendency of partiality among members of church congregations, be it on the basis of socio-economic status or any other criterion.

### 8.2.3 No Emphasis on the Sharing of Resources

Christian charity in terms of sharing resources with the less fortunate church members and with other people outside the denominations is another area of concern. According to respondents, the attitude of not sharing the God-given material blessings is partly attributed to the tactic of the prosperity preachers. They want each church member to personally participate in ‘sowing’ the talents and thereby anticipate abundant blessings from God in return. This brings offerings from a maximum number of the congregation’s members.

A biblical vision of Christian charity however shows that when God provides one with wealth, it is not only for personal gratification and luxury, but for sharing as well with those in need. We have already highlighted how the Scripture, specifically Luke-Acts, stresses pneumatological hospitality, a practice that graced Christian communities from the early days of Christianity. Deficient of property-sharing motifs, therefore, the Prosperity Gospel cannot help the poor climb the socio-economic ladder. As Bruni has argued,

\[\text{an economic activity that wants to contribute towards well-being, to help people and also through material goods, to ‘flourish’ must make room for the dimension of gift, of love, of communion. Otherwise, economic life becomes the road to serfdom, serfdom of commodities, of self-interest.}\]

\(^{1495}\)

Another dimension of the Prosperity Gospel that infringes Christian charity is the tendency of the preachers and the rich church members to flaunt their wealth in the face of the poor church members. They demonstrate their ostentatious residences, expensive cars and various

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\(^{1492}\) See: Col.1:15.

\(^{1493}\) See: Phil. 2: 5-11.

\(^{1494}\) "Benedict XVI Offers Key to Peace,” in: *Zenit*, URL: Zenit.org (accessed 2\(^{nd}\) January 2010).

forms of flamboyant lifestyles. Apparently this is also a way of encouraging the poor church members to engage in “sowing and reaping”; it is a mechanism for winning more members to the churches. Ironically, most of the money the preachers use in funding their flamboyant lifestyles, which they flaunt in the faces of the poor congregation, is believed to accrue from the tithes and donations of the poor church members. The New Testament provides many instances that warn Christians against humiliating those with nothing and flaunting their possessions, thus distress those with less wealth. The Letter to the Corinthians demonstrates that by flaunting their food the rich Corinthian Christians render the Lord’s Supper counterproductive. Peter’s Letter similarly, urges Christians to refrain from flaunting their wealth; instead they are to emphasize their good character: “Let not yours be the outward... decoration of gold, and wearing of fine clothing, but let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit.”

8.2.4 No “Hermeneutic Privilege” of the Poor

The Prosperity Gospel does not provide a critical challenge to the prevailing abuses in the socio-economic order that perpetuate poverty. It does not accord the poor that special kind of cognitive respect that is referred to as the hermeneutic privilege of the poor. It does not raise its voice against corrupt social systems. Its proponents tend to see poverty as something personal and temporary, and not structural. And by viewing it as personal, in fact, they mean that it is caused by personal sin. Christians would often hold Satan accountable for all social evils. Thus a prosperity preacher in East Africa told his audience: “If you are sleeping on an inch-thick mattress, tell the devil ‘kwaheri’ (i.e. ‘get lost’) and you will sleep on a seven-inch or ten-inch one.” His attitude would not question why some people sleep on an inch-thick mattress or don’t have mattresses at all. Christians would be exhorted to strive to be amongst those who benefit from the socio-economic system. We have noted that this tendency reinforces in Tanzania what might be called “Bongo Culture” or “Ujanja Culture”. Again, the Prosperity Gospel preachers in Tanzania urge their church members to give donations for evangelism with the promise that God will in turn bless them with material abundance. Yet the preachers do not bother to question about the source of the money that their church members lavishly donate to the church. The money can possibly be obtained illegally, for

1496 See: 1Cor. 11: 21-22.
1497 1 Pt. 3:3-4.
1499 John L. Allen, op.cit., 383.
1500 See: Chapter Four.
example, through corruption, and not questioning its source may appear to warrant the practice of corruption.

8.2.5 Emphasis on Evil Spirits and Wrong Interpretation of Miracles

The Prosperity Gospel churches in Songea and in much of Tanzania give so much credit to witchcraft and demonic powers that the satanic principle is made to loom large in the psyche of many. Their preachers do not emphasize the work ethic as much as they do the magical interpretation and miracles. Although the preachers eventually present the power of the Holy Spirit as the power that overcomes all malevolent spirits, the insecurities due to the thought of evil spirits lurking around the people remains higher than the thought of God. This disproportionate emphasis of evil spirits, should indeed make Christians wonder as to who actually is in control of the universe, God or the evil spirits? Pastor Mensa Otabil was right to question this attitude when he addressed Tanzanian Pentecostals, “why do you give so much credit to demons?”

Pastor Otabil leads the International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) of Accra, Ghana, which also privileges the Prosperity Gospel. But this denomination places a great deal of emphasis on hard work and entrepreneurship and does not stress “magical interpretation” and the anointing with oils as a means of influencing socio-economic prosperity. We contend therefore that, if left unredeemed, the attitude of stressing “magical interpretation” dominant in Tanzanian Pentecostal Christianity will present a persistent snag to the socio-economic reconstruction of the country.

More significantly, in their integral health-wealth package the prosperity preachers interpret miracles in a manner that is not quite empowering to the Christians. At this juncture, a word about the theological significance of miracles would be helpful. Cardinal Walter Kasper makes an in-depth analysis of the theological meaning of Jesus’ miracles. His work is helpful for our purposes. He notes that Jesus’ miracles are meant to foster discipleship and mission. “The casting out of demons is meant to release men to follow Jesus and share in the Kingdom of God.” In Jesus’ miracles discipleship and mission are closely linked because Jesus gives his disciples not only authority in word, but also authority in action, i.e. they have to work miracles (Mk. 6:7; Mt.10:1; Lk.9:1). Consequently, Jesus’ miracles constitute the eschatological gathering together of the people of God which concerns particularly the lost, the poor, the weak and the rejected. These marginalised people are enabled here and now to

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1501 This issue has been discussed in Chapter Two.
1502 See: Chapter Three.
1504 Ibid.
1505 See: Ibid.
experience symbolically the salvation and love of God and in turn bear witness of it to others.\textsuperscript{1506} Another important aspect, according to Kasper, is that Jesus’ miracles go closely together with faith. Gospel reports of miracles constantly end with the words, “Your faith has made you well”.\textsuperscript{1507} The connection between faith and miracles is twofold. The first connection consists in that the purpose of miracles is to lead to faith or to provoke the question ‘who is this?’.\textsuperscript{1508} They are meant “to awaken the basic human attitude of wonder, and thus enlighten people.”\textsuperscript{1509} Yet, for Kasper, it cannot be proved that a certain miracle is an act of God. In fact, the gospels show that miracles can be given a different interpretation, namely as the work of the devil.\textsuperscript{1510} That means, therefore, miracles are not extravagant prodigies that simply force people to their knees. If such were the case it would be impossible for miracles to lead people to faith. God, on the contrary, does not ‘steamroller’ the people; rather he wants a free answer from them. That being the case, “miracles can never be sufficient basis for faith.”\textsuperscript{1511} The second connection between faith and miracles for Kasper lies in that to recognize miracles as acts of God presupposes faith. Miracles are signs for faith. By faith is here meant confidence in Jesus’ miraculous power. It is a trust that God’s power does not end even when human possibilities are exhausted. In this sense, therefore, miracles are Jesus’ answer to human prayer seen as an expression of faith. Yet Kasper underlines one aspect that is worth noting in our discussion about the Prosperity Gospel:

“But when we say that faith and miracle are related as prayer and answer, that does not mean that faith and prayer create the miracle. It is the mark of faith that it expects everything from God and nothing of itself. The believer ultimately has no confidence in himself. The saying ‘Lord, I believe; help my unbelief’ (Mk 9.22b-24) applies here. Only in this final openness does faith become capable of receiving miracles from God. Then it becomes true of the believer that all things rare possible to him (Mk 9.22-23; Mt.17.20). This faith shares in God’s almighty power; that is why miracles are promised to it.”\textsuperscript{1512}

I subscribe to Kasper’s view against the view of the Prosperity Gospel that implies that miracles are a creation of a Christian’s personal faith, prayer, and faithful tithing. With their disproportionate extolling of miracles in obtaining wealth, health and success, the prosperity preachers inadvertently undermine the value of diligence, thrift, and long term development vision. The expectation that Jesus will change everything miraculously diminishes the incentive to take control over circumstances and one’s future, “by planning, strategising,

\textsuperscript{1506} See: Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1507} See: Mk. 5:34; 10:52; Lk. 17: 19.
\textsuperscript{1508} See: Mk. 4:41; Mt. 12:23; Mk. 1:27.
\textsuperscript{1509} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1510} See: Lk. 11: 15.
\textsuperscript{1511} Walter Kasper, op.cit., 86.
\textsuperscript{1512} Ibid.
struggling and mobilising?”¹⁵¹³ It suggests that Jesus will rescue people from their inhuman living conditions and solve all their problems of development without the cooperation of the human beings themselves.¹⁵¹⁴ The Christian view of salvation according to the Catholic Church and other mainline churches is that “God works through the active co-operation of his human creatures, not in spite of them.”¹⁵¹⁵ Consonant with this view, therefore, “to wait passively for miracles to happen is far from the mentality of Jesus in the New Testament.”¹⁵¹⁶ The Prosperity Gospel doctrine has thus introduced into African Christianity a radically different soteriological vision. According to Cardinal Peter Turkson, the president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, such as vision may ultimately further impoverish the African countries.¹⁵¹⁷

There is also a pastoral concern. As the empirical section of this study suggests, there are Christians who have been disillusioned by unfulfilled miracle expectations. Studies in Asia and Latin America have similarly shown that the frustration owing to the failure of the Prosperity Gospel to deliver its promises now constitutes a great pastoral problem.¹⁵¹⁸ In Brazil, likewise, such disillusioned Christians are referred to as “people disappointed by grace.”¹⁵¹⁹ Their number is reportedly increasing and most of them opt to completely abandon religious affiliation. Their pastoral care is now posing a great challenge to the Church.¹⁵²⁰

8.2.6 Restrictive Pneumatological Soteriology

African pneumatological reflections today tend to be largely fixated on the functional aspect of the Spirit rather than the person of the Holy Spirit in relation to the triune divine life.¹⁵²¹ This is partly due to the fact that the rapid growth of the new religious movements has attracted many anthropologists to do reflections on the Spirit in Africa.¹⁵²² Their reflections, however, have dwelt largely on the societal functions of the Spirit, not on theological themes.¹⁵²³ For the Prosperity Gospel, the pneumatological emphasis tends to relegate the power of the Holy Spirit to a quasi-magical power by which, success, wealth, prosperity, and

¹⁵¹³ Aylward Shorter and Joseph Njiru, op.cit., 90.
¹⁵¹⁴ See: Ibid.
¹⁵¹⁵ Ibid. 90-91.
¹⁵¹⁶ Ibid.
¹⁵¹⁷ The Cardinal made this argument on 10th January, 2013, at a Conference on Peace and Justice at Vienna University.
¹⁵¹⁸ See: Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, op.cit., 175f.
¹⁵¹⁹ Leonildo Silveira Campos, op.cit., 418.
¹⁵²⁰ See: Ibid.
¹⁵²¹ See: David Tonghou Ngong, op.cit., 33.
¹⁵²³ See: David Tonghou Ngong, op.cit., 33.
health are achieved. As the preceding section has also shown, two strands of pneumatological soteriology can be identified: the pneumatology for combating malignant forces and the pneumatology for conspicuous consumption. The former is accentuated by deliverance ministries and ostentatious healing and exorcism practices performed during crusades. The latter is celebrated as the power of the Spirit to pour out material prosperity and affluence on the believers, to deliver them from the spirit of poverty. The consequent public impression in Tanzania is that a Church that does not promise to overcome malevolent spirits is not a spirit-filled Church. And priests who do not perform faith-healing and exorcism are less convincing as doing their ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit as compared to the priests involved in the charismatic movement. It is perhaps due to the competition with Pentecostal pastors that in Nigeria many priests today are said to yearn for the charismatic gift of healing and exorcism. In Tanzania a Church that does not essentialise the promise of material abundance to its members is not perceived to be Spirit-filled Church. We have to note, however, that the pneumatology that is oriented towards conspicuous consumption is tailored to suit the consumerist mentality pertinent to the forces of globalisation. Such a pneumatological emphasis fosters exclusive competitiveness rather than hospitality to the poor and the marginalised in the society.

Significantly, I contend that this kind of pneumatological salvation which now proliferates in Africa narrows down the field of the Spirit’s salvific work in the continent. According to the New Testament, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are many and are expressed through many members of the body of Christ. The Acts of the Apostles shows that the members of the body of Christ are endowed with gifts that differ. The Holy Spirit produces many tongues that “anticipate, herald, and even paradigmatically manifest the many gifts—poiemata (works)—of the Spirit in, to and through the churches.” The many tongues signify that the disciples are endowed with gifts that differ, but for the common good, that is, the edification of the church community. Furthermore, the New Testament associates the Holy Spirit, the pneuma with power from “from on high” but that power is not confined to the healing ministry, rather, it opens up the life of the church’s ministry to many practices. Healing and exorcism the works of the Spirit, but reducing pneumatology to these functions alone

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1524 This was a testimony of a Nigerian priest at a seminar of African, Asian, and Latin American Catholic Priests studying at Vienna University.
1525 See: 1 Cor. 12: 7ff.
1527 Amos Yong, op.cit., 62.
1528 See: Rom. 1:4; 8: 2-26; 15:19; 1Cor. 2:4; 12:3-13; 2 Cor. 3. 17-18; Gal. 3:5; 5:25.
1529 See: Lk.24:49.

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ultimately impoverishes pneumatological salvation in Africa. Churches in Africa should not be contented to describe themselves as Spirit-filled (Makanisa ya Roho) simply because they practise faith-healing and exorcism.

On the other hand, the pneumatological theologies and ministries that privilege healing and material prosperity, despite their apparent appeal in Tanzania, neither help the society to alleviate poverty, nor improve health services. Ironically, widespread disease and abject poverty persist in the country despite the proliferation of these pneumatologies. But again, the prevalent prosperity pneumatological soteriology tends to be mute about issues of great significance in Africa. These include the need to promote justice, peace, and reconciliation. The churches are thus called upon to urgently foster these fruits of the Holy Spirit.

8.2.7 The Role of God’s Grace Minimized

The Prosperity Gospel preachers maintain that the strength of a Christian’s faith towards God is measured by results, namely, his financial breakthroughs, material prosperity and good health. These results are often seen not only as evidence of spirituality, but also as mark of God’s favour on the faithful Christian. The implication of this doctrine is that the faith of the Christian is a condition for God’s action. It implies that the blessings received by the Christian do not come purely from God’s grace. One is also led to deduce that those Christians who do not achieve financial prosperity and bodily healing from their ailments are necessarily deficient in faith.

Grace (charis), however, is a gift of God distinct from his gift of human life. It consists of God giving himself to human beings. According to Karl Barth, “God created human nature expressly in order to enter into a covenant with man.” Grace is therefore totally undeserved. However, “God’s gracious relationship with human beings is always a relationship with sinners.” This relationship is thus good news for sinners, since they can expect forgiveness and participation in the divine life. Will God, the gracious Father of heaven, who “makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” refuse any of his children his blessings? But, on the other side, experience in the pastoral field testifies that many Christians have remained always poor, despite being faithful believers. The Prosperity Gospel thus runs the risk of frustrating such faithful Christians.

1530 See: Allan Anderson, op.cit., 221.
1531 Quoted in Alan Richardson and John Bowden (eds.), op.cit., 245.
1532 Ibid.
1533 Mt. 5: 45.
8.2.8 The Gospel of Prosperity, Not of the Cross

The Prosperity Gospel preachers do not emphasize the gospel of the cross of Jesus. They do not encourage their members to take it upon themselves in their lives. Pastor Gertrude Rwakatare of Mikocheni B Assemblies of God, Dar es Salaam, for example, has often insisted: “Sisi hapa tunahubiri Injili ya Mafanikio, Injili ya Msalaba waachie Wakatoliki” (i.e. “Here we are proclaiming the Gospel of Prosperity, leave the Gospel of the cross to the Catholics”). Even when the cross is mentioned in the churches, the tendency is to emphasize that it is for the sake of the born-again to enjoy life. The preachers insist that Jesus Christ has suffered and died on the cross for our sake once for all. In his death he took as well our sickness and poverty. Hence, the Calvary package included salvation and prosperity. As Jesus has finished all suffering on our behalf, what remains for a Christian is to enjoy life rather than undergo suffering again. The prosperity preachers imply that the quest for modernity and prosperity ought to preclude Christian suffering. The cross of Christ should not be romantised; it is a symbol of weakness. As Hexham and Poewe have noted, in a world where the mythological idiom of modernity is given loyalty, religious emphasis is no longer on suffering rather on “health, positive energy, euphoria, and peak experiences.”

With this theological vision of the cross, the Prosperity Gospel ignores the positive and necessary role of persecution and suffering in the life of a Christian. The cross of Christ is not emphasized as a symbol of victory over sin, the world and death. But to undermine the cross of Jesus Christ is to undermine God’s love which has been poured out to us. God’s universal and all-embracing love has been manifested through Jesus’ downward mobility in the mystery of Incarnation and through his brokenness on the cross. It is through such an economy of salvation that Christ could reach the poor and all those that the world rejects. Because it seems to undermine the cross, some commentators have assessed the Prosperity Gospel as an offer of “cheap grace” and that it diverges from the traditional Protestant soteriology. Indeed, as J. Kwabena notes, the Prosperity Theology may have some ground to recover with respect to “its weak theology of suffering and, to some extent, its neglect of the lessons from the cross of Christ.”

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1534 See: Sermon at her church services, June 2008, Dar es Salaam.
1535 See: Paul Gifford, op.cit., 284.
1536 Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe, op.cit., 154.
1537 See: Phil.2: 5-8.
1538 See: Leonildo Silveira Campos, op.cit., 418.
8.2.9 Consumerist Overtones in Worship

The Gospel of Prosperity fosters a consumerist culture in the Church of Africa. Consumerism produces commodification whereby mutual relationships among persons and a person’s relationship to things and places are influenced by habits, practices and attitudes learned in buying and consuming products. Since the Prosperity Gospel tends to interpret Christianity solely in material prosperity terms, it reinforces a pneumatological soteriology with a consumerist bent. As Pope Benedict XVI notes, the modern world tends to ask: “What did Jesus actually bring, if not world peace, universal prosperity, and a better world? What has he brought?” For the Prosperity Gospel preachers, the answer is that Jesus brought material prosperity and that the “prosperity Jesus” is the centre of the gospel. This christological vision makes Jesus into “a heavenly ATM machine, doling out comfort and material blessings to faithful believers.” For Pope Benedict, however, Jesus, first and foremost, “has brought us God... and now we know the path that we human beings have to take in this world... it is only because of our hardness of hearts that we think this is too little.”

Consumer culture suggests that “people ought to be dissatisfied with anything less than immediate gratification.” Thereby an entrepreneurial tactic dominates which fosters a sense of anxiety over personal inadequacies. Inducing a sense of anxiety is a business tactic which is sometimes referred to as “organized dissatisfaction.” Its relentless message assaults the self-worth and perceptions of people so that they feel dissatisfied with whatever they are and already have. This is evident, for example, where commercial advertisements make the people feel discontented with their skin colour and the size of certain body parts. The so-called face-lifting beauty operation is often motivated by organized dissatisfaction tactic. The operation may involve the correction of nose, breasts, ears, cheek and neck, and so on. The purpose of “organized dissatisfaction” is to turn the people into regular customers so that they buy more and more of the products that supposedly improve their conditions of inadequacy.

To the extent that the liturgical music and preaching in the Prosperity Gospel churches become increasingly permeated by material prosperity motifs, a consumerist culture may eventually be reinforced in Christian worship. This means, first of all, that the understanding

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1541 Joseph Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI, op.cit., 44.
1543 Joseph Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI, op.cit., 44.
1544 Ibid.
and experience of worship by the faithful may be consumer culture-oriented. Imbued with the consumerist rhetoric of immediate gratification, the faithful may tend to seek only those worshipping communities which satisfy them in all aspects. Eventually, Christians keep shifting from one church denomination to another in search of the one that satisfies them in the best way. This is what is witnessed among Christians in Songea, as in other parts of Tanzania.

Second, preachers who are in dire need of financial resources often foster a sort of “organized dissatisfaction” in their congregation. They would cajole the Christians to offer larger gifts to the church with the promise of receiving financial blessings from God in return and to have their material needs met. Music and the collective effervescence of crowd behaviour would arouse the congregation emotionally to move forward and give their offerings. The preacher would also employ a particular rhetoric to that effect. He would often even mention some of the blessings for the congregation members he supposedly saw in a dream. Thus the liturgical worship may be dominated by an ambience of giving more and more gifts to the church and expecting more and more material blessings from God in return.

Third, consumer culture may affect liturgical worship with respect to stability of liturgical elements in that it tends to prize creativity rather than repetition of known elements. In a consumer culture the emphasis is placed more on the new and improved. This is in contrast to Christian liturgical worship which is normally highly repetitive on some significant elements.

Fourth, consumer culture with its philosophy of dissatisfaction challenges the notion that God’s creation, including any human body, is good. The aforementioned face-lifting beauty operation typifies this dissatisfaction. There is need to emphasize today that where Christians are influenced by a culture of organized dissatisfaction and anxieties about personal inadequacy, it is difficult for gratitude to God to take root. Rather than murmuring against God, the Christian community is called to give thanks (eucharistia) to God for God’s good creation, for the bodily welfare of the individual Christians and, above all, for the gift of salvation. The Eucharistic sacrifice which is the source and summit of the Christian life is a thanksgiving sacrifice. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that

in the Eucharistic sacrifice the whole of creation loved by God is presented to the Father through the death and the Resurrection of Christ. Through Christ the Church can offer the sacrifice of praise in thanksgiving for all that God has made good, beautiful, and just in creation and in humanity.

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1545 See: Ibid.
1546 See: Timothy Brunk, op.cit., 294.
1547 See: Lumen Gentium, No. 11.
1548 See: Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1359.
Accordingly, in the current consumerist culture churches have a grandiose duty to promote the spirit of gratitude to God.

8.2.10 Imported Ministry

The Prosperity Gospel is an American model of ministry imported into Africa. The argument here is not that the Prosperity Gospel is unsuitable to Africa simply because it is an imported ministry. The point, rather, is that by relying on an imported ministry, the Church in Africa portrays a lack of creativity to design pastoral ministries that are suited to the local African pastoral contexts. Instead of seeking the power of the Holy Spirit to help them design ministries according to their local pastoral needs, the churches resort to mimicking foreign structures. In this sense, the Prosperity Gospel churches diminish the charisms of the Spirit endowed upon African Christians for the building up of the body of Christ. Jean Marc Ela explores this tendency of the African Church to rely solely on foreign structures; he terms it the “Babylonian captivity of the African Church.” His sentiments are shared by Soong-Chan Rah who maintains that the captivity of the Church involves the multiplication of American models of ministry for export on a global scale. He mentions the export of the American Prosperity Gospel to Africa as a specific example of the captivity of the Church of Africa.

The call then is that instead of being simply fixed within this foreign religious purview, African Church leaders, theologians and their churches should be wary about uncritically adopting foreign brands of pastoral ministries in African contexts. While discerning the diversity of global options, the Church of Africa should prize its own local pastoral resources. The key to African pastoral and socio-economic problems is not to adopt any kind of doctrine or ministry merely because it is in style and effective elsewhere in the world. What matters is the discernment as to whether such a doctrine or ministry conveys a message that is truly representative of Jesus Christ and his message of salvation to the African soul. Some African theologians have linked the Babylonian captivity of the African Church to its material poverty. The Church of Africa will sometimes not listen to what the Holy Spirit tells her to do, but rather act at the whims of the materially rich churches and nations. Accordingly, it is plausible to contend that poverty contributes to diminish the witness of pneumatological salvation in the Church of Africa.

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1549 Jean Marc Ela, op.cit., 154.
8.3 General Remarks

I posit that the Prosperity Gospel in Songea and in much of Tanzania portrays ambivalent characteristics with regard to poverty alleviation. On the one hand, it embodies some aspects that have the potential to engender a socio-economic transformation of its members. But on the other hand, it expresses some elements that are clearly counterproductive to the vision of socio-economic transformation. Moreover, the Prosperity Gospel tends to reduce pneumatological soteriology to the function of overcoming evil spirits and providing abundant wealth and material success. This stance limits other important pneumatological expressions. Finally, I contend that the Prosperity Gospel contributes to the numerical growth of the denominations that embrace it. Nevertheless, due to this concomitant ambivalence it fails to uplift its members and society from the scourge of poverty.

8.4 Pastoral Recommendations: The Prosperity Gospel As “Kairos” Moment for the Church

Despite the above evaluation of the Prosperity Gospel, we can interpret the current proliferation of this doctrine in Africa as a kairos moment for the Church. This New Testament Greek word kairos means “the appointed time in the purpose of God.” For the theologian Paul Tillich, kairos constitutes “those crises or turning points in history which demand specific existential decision while the opportunity is still present.” Pointedly, the popular appeal of the Prosperity Gospel suggests that “the need for the Church to recover its unique and distinct social imagination has become even more urgent.” It is an opportune moment for the Church to take stock of its history and experience with regard to the option for the poor. The people are attracted to the Prosperity Gospel because they hope to encounter a new and kinder face of Christian social engagement. Called to witness Christ amid the context of mass poverty, the Church in Songea and other parts of Africa cannot afford to stand by and watch or dwell on obsolete methods of the option for the poor. A fresh appraisal of the Church’s social ministry and poverty alleviation is therefore needed. The old pastoral methods are apparently insufficient in the current socio-economic context. Instead, the Church has now to discern the signs of the times and accordingly update its pastoral methods and approaches. This is necessary in order to address contemporary root causes of poverty and the ever-new forms of poverty that continue to emerge.

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1553 Ibid.
1554 Emmanuel Katongole, A Future For Africa, xxviii.
In the pastoral praxis of the Church, there is a potential danger to falsely construe the Social Teaching of the Church as a fixed deposit and readymade set of answers that need only to be applied.\textsuperscript{1555} The Social Teaching is, however, a developmental understanding of the Church’s social mission in a dynamically changing world. Thus, it is open to new issues which unfold in the Church. The Social Teaching of the Church must lead to a better understanding of the challenges that the current world faces and thereby provide an ethical foundation for global transformation.

With that in mind we put forward the following pastoral recommendations:

\textbf{8.4.1 Church and Economics: Quest for Balance and Stewardship}

The encounter of the Catholic Church with the Prosperity Gospel poses a challenge to the Catholic Church to adopt a pastoral paradigm that neither romantises poverty, nor glorifies wealth. Tendencies to playdown licit self-support initiatives undertaken by individual Christians or Christian communities must be discouraged. But, on the other side, the Church must also reject any teachings and pastoral practices that today excessively prize wealth creation and material prosperity as if they were the primary mission of the Church.

The practice of stewardship in the Prosperity Gospel churches offers lessons to the Catholic Church of Songea. In classical Greece the word “stewardship” was most closely associated with \textit{oikonomia},\textsuperscript{1556} which denotes good household management. As used in the context of the Church today, the term “stewardship” refers to the engagement of material and human resources for effective evangelization work. It calls for efforts towards fundraising and management in the particular church. It points to the fact that parish and diocesan fundraising is an integral part of the life of Christians, and not merely as a way of paying dues.\textsuperscript{1557} The lesson for the Archdiocese of Songea then is that there is an urgent need to promote stewardship among its faithful. We recommend that right from the level of Small Christian Communities, the faithful should be encouraged to engage in stewardship which is instrumental to effective evangelization work. Their contribution can be in the form of time offered for church activities as well as material or financial donations. Stewardship should be understood as the duty of all members of the Christian community and not as the preserve of the rich members. This point was insisted at the first International Seminar on Stewardship held in Rome in 1973, which was also attended by many representatives from Africa and


\textsuperscript{1557} See: Ibid.
Asia: “We don’t need the rich to support our Christian institutions—we need loving people who share their poverty with a Church of the poor.” The Decree on the Laity of Vatican Council II states that the lay faithful “should especially make missionary activity their own by giving material or even personal assistance. It is a duty and honor for Christians to return to God a part of the good things that they receive from Him.”

The imperative of stewardship in the local African Church echoes the aforementioned call by Pope Paul VI for African missionary responsibility: “Africans, from now on you are your own missionaries.” In fact, that missionary responsibility cannot be construed merely in theological and pastoral terms. Rather, it presupposes the implementation of all the three main pillars of an authentic local Church, i.e. to be self-supporting, self-ministering, and self-propagating. When we speak about the Church’s commitment to the option for the poor and integral development, we inevitably touch the subject of self-reliance in the Church. A self-reliant Church will usually carry out the option for poor more effectively because it uses its own resources. Self-reliance in the local African Church has been a subject of much concern since the early days of the post-missionary period. Writing during the early days of the post-missionary African Church, Adrian Hastings pointed out:

A Church which depends for its existence and essential services upon the continuous charity of other churches is not a healthy, properly established Church. Basic economic self-reliance is as much part of the establishment of the Church, which is the specific purpose of missionary work, as is the indigenisation of its hierarchy.

The proliferation of the Gospel of Prosperity thus serves to reiterate this call for self-reliance in the Catholic Church.

8.4.2 Intensification of Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission

The Tanzanian Catholic Episcopal Conference has a national Justice and Peace Commission which is responsible for promoting justice and peace in the country in the spirit of the Social Teaching of Church. It is concerned with the capacity building of the diocesan justice and peace officers by training them and carrying out research for promoting justice and peace.

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1558 See: ibid, 146.
1559 Vatican II, AA, No. 10, #3.
1560 Following the Synod of Bishops on Evangelization in Rome in 1974, African bishops through their organ, the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) issued an unprecedented statement in which, among other things, they urged the Catholic Church in Africa to seek ways urgently to be self-reliant, self-governing and self-propagating. For the African bishops, these were the three main pillars of an authentic local Church. See: Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion in the Dialogue Debate: From Intolerance to Coexistence* (LIT Verlag GmbH & Co. KG: Wien, 2010), 36.
1561 This is not to say that there should be no missionary cooperation between various parts of the universal Church involving economic matters, rather to pinpoint the necessity of self-reliance in a local Church for a better contribution in the welfare of the universal Church.
peace. Its various programmes include the fostering of democracy and good governance in the
country.\footnote{See: URL: http://tecdirectory.tripod.com/TECBook.htm (accessed 20th December, 2012).} We recommend that the diocesan commission for Justice and Peace should
intensify its activities in the parishes. It should expose the plight of the poor and raise their
concerns. It should also design ways of researching and exposing the average take-home
wages and general household incomes and contemporary prices of basic commodities. This
will be a realistic way of presenting the struggles of the average person in meeting even the
most basic of monthly commodities. Thereby the Church will contribute to inform decision-
makers and the general Tanzanian public about key issues that require urgent and effective
response for an integral, sustainable and socially just development.

The rich repertoire of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) should be shared to all Catholics. As
the American Catholic Bishops have pointed out:

“…far too many Catholics are not familiar with the basic content of Catholic social teaching.
More fundamentally, many Catholics do not adequately understand that the social teaching of
the Church is an essential part of Catholic faith. This poses a serious challenge for all Catholics,
since it weakens our capacity to be a Church that is true to the demands of the Gospel.”\footnote{“Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions,” URL: http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/sharing-catholic-social-teaching-challenges-and-directions.cfm (accessed 20th January, 2013).}

The diocesan commission for justice and peace should also collaborate with the association
of Catholic Professionals of Tanzania (CPT) to ensure that civil servants and workers in
various sectors, particularly those engaged in economic and commercial activities are formed
in Catholic Social Teaching. It should be stressed that civil services and commercial activities
should help to build the common good, and that of every individual. Accordingly, civil
servants and workers in economic sectors should be exhorted to desist from any practices that
are inimical to the common good. These include corruption, evasion of tax payment, the
production and sale of counterfeit goods, sloth and so on. Christians should be challenged to
witness Christ in their daily critical decisions of life, for example, the decision to turn down
an offer for a corruption deal even when one is in dire need for money.

8.4.3 Quest for Empowering the Laity

The laity can be more effectively empowered for the option for the poor if they are first
empowered for the mission of the Church as a whole. This requires that the laity get
acquainted with the teaching of the Church on ecclesial ministry and apostolate of the laity.
This teaching is particularly explicated in the documents of Vatican Council II and in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World (Christifideles Laici). The laity must understand that the reception of the sacraments of baptism and confirmation entrusts them with a general obligation to carry out the mission of the Church that is common to all the Christian faithful. As they fulfill their apostolate, they become leaven and salt of the earth because they penetrate and perfect the temporal order with the spirit of the gospel. Their special vocation then is “to make the Church present and fruitful in those places and circumstances where it is only through them that she can become the salt of the earth.” The engagement of the laity in the renewal of the temporal order is not a matter of option but an obligation. They are obliged to bring the Church to the world and thereby bring the world into contact with the Church, the Body of Christ.

With this teaching, the Vatican Council II “has written as never before on the nature, dignity, spirituality, mission and responsibility of the lay faithful.” It has thus brought an abrupt reversal to the previously dominant trends that were marked by a gradual narrowing of ministry and an enduring diminishment of the role of the laity in the Church. In other words, the council has pinpointed lay ministry and lay apostolate as two admirable ways through which the Catholic laity can participate in the Church’s mission. Apart from the theological reasons advanced by Vatican Council II, experience in the pastoral field also informs the indispensable role of the laity. The laity should be seen as best qualified to take up the renewal of the temporal order because, firstly, they constitute the majority in the Catholic Church membership. And secondly, they are involved in the various sectors of society: politics, social institutions, economic production sectors, and other activities of everyday life.

The Church today needs to draw an inspiration from the early days of the planting of the Church in Africa. The success of the pioneer missionaries in Songea and other parts of Africa hinged significantly on the participation and commitment of indigenous lay catechists and

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1565 See: the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church (Lumen Gentium), the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes) and the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (Apostolicam Actuositatem).
1566 See: Christifideles Laici was issued by Pope John Paul II in 1988.
1567 See: CIC, Can. 224.
1568 See: Vatican II, AA No. 2,7 and GS, No.43.
1569 See: Vatican II, LG, No. 31.
1570 See: Christifideles Laici, No. 2
evangelists. Similarly, one of the greatest strengths of African Pentecostalism today is its egalitarian social organization that empowers the laity to carry out the task of evangelism. What then hinders the Catholic laity in Songea (and Tanzania at large) to carry out their obligation of apostolate effectively? On the one hand, it is true that clericalism largely contributes to the narrowing of lay ministry and diminishing of lay apostolate. Undeniably, the ordained members of the Church tend to appropriate to themselves all the pastoral activities, even those that might be more properly and effectively performed by the laity. But on the other hand, the laity themselves tend as well to maintain a dichotomy between the faith they profess and their daily life. The Vatican Council II has expressed concern over this issue: “This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age.” In Christifideles Laici, Pope John Paul II also notes of the temptation of Christians to be strongly interested in church services and tasks, while simultaneously failing to be actively engaged in the temporal affairs pertaining to political, cultural, social and professional sphere of life. Consequently, Christian orthodox is not translated into orthopraxis in the temporal sphere.

One can maintain that this dichotomy contributes to make Christianity in Africa thrive amid corruption, abject poverty and myriad forms of suffering because the temporal order is not properly infused with the spirit of the gospel through Christian witness. In this respect African Christians may wish to learn from African Traditional Religions because in the African traditional religious worldview there is no dualism between the sacred realm and the secular realm.

Thence comes the imperative to empower the Catholic laity. This should be through profound Christian formation. Opportunities for further education should be provided to catechists and other lay agents of evangelization in theological studies and other disciplines. The laity should also be more actively involved in the decision-making forums of the archdiocese. It is encouraging to note that many educated lay Catholics in Songea are ready to offer their energy for church ministry. Strategies should also be set to enable catechists receive some sustainable remuneration. We recommend that the efforts to empower the laity should take a preferential option for women and the youth. Women constitute the majority in the demographics of both the general population and the Catholic population of Songea. They are the main participants in church services and in the activities of Small Christian

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1573 Vatican Council II, GS, No. 43.  
1574 See: Christifideles Laici, No.2.  
1575 See the argument of John S. Mbiti above.  
1576 See statistics in Chapter One.
Communities. They are the main animators in the Church. As such, they are the main strength of the Church. But on the other hand, women are more prone than men to shift their religious affiliation. The majority of Catholics who convert to Pentecostalism are women.\textsuperscript{1577} Economically, women are the main producers in the families and society. This situation calls for a particular attention to the place of women in the Church. A more inclusive attitude is required in order to give women more room for their ecclesial ministry and apostolate. Youth pastoral ministry also needs a particular attention. Youth constitute the majority in the demographics of both the general population and the Catholic population of Songea. The Archdiocese of Songea has to tap into this great potential of young people. It should show that it is interested in youth, young adults and their unique worlds.

8.4.4 Promotion of Small Christian Communities (SCCs)

We deem Small Christian Communities (SCCs) to be the best venue for the empowerment of the laity and the promotion of church mission. We urge first of all that SCCs should be urgently promoted in the parishes, despite the challenges involved in this task. SCCs should provide more room for the ecclesial ministry and apostolate of the laity. They should reflect the need to learn to listen to the Holy Spirit who speaks through the lay people. SCCs are places where the Word of God is read, meditated and applied. Plans for socio-economic engagement in SCCs will be made in an ambience of prayer and charismatic activities. The SCCs provide an opportunity for encounter between oppressors and their victims, and hence the possibility of reconciliation.

We recommend that the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission organize regular seminars for forming the animators of SCCs in the Catholic Social Teaching (CST). The animators should be charged to spread the knowledge about the CST to their respective Christian communities. Such seminars could be organized according to the various deaneries of the archdiocese. To help enhance the Christians’ knowledge and understanding of the issues pertaining to justice and peace, we recommend that the diocesan Peace and Justice Commission develop a Training Manual on Catholic Social Teaching to be used at the prayer meetings of Small Christian communities. This manual should be a practical guide containing a wide range of themes. Such themes might be: alcoholism, poor or bad governance, corruption, deforestation, environmental degradation, displacement of people, disease, drug abuse, gender violence, hunger, domestic violence, hiking of the prices of goods, illiteracy, laziness, poverty, torture, tribalism, unemployment, unequal distribution of resources and war.

\textsuperscript{1577} See discussions in Chapter Two.
The Small Christian Communities should also be venues where the value of work is inculcated among the Christians.

The members of the SCCs should be helped to have a correct interpretation of the Word of God in relation to these issues, focusing on one theme a day. Then they should have time to reflect the particular theme of the day in the light of the Bible and Catholic Social Teaching. Then there should follow a mutual exhortation of the members to take concrete social action to address the problem at stake. The Justice and Peace Training Manual should adopt the hermeneutical method of the pastoral circle discussed in the General Introduction. This analytical method warrants the evaluation of past pastoral actions and the redesigning of new pastoral plans for further pastoral actions. Equally, it must be made clear that discussing these issues in an ambience of prayer meetings of the SCCs does not amount to an illicit mingling of religion and politics, as the Tanzanian public has often been made to believe. On the contrary, such an action is integral to the role of the Christian laity in the public sphere.

Briefly stated then, Small Christian Communities should be arenas for the economic empowerment of the whole people of God. Income-generating projects may be planned at the SCCs. Seminars on small-scale project management skills may be organized regularly for the laity, the religious and the clergy. The SCCs must emphasize a sense of belonging together and mutual support among the members in order to overcome tendencies of anonymity and isolation. So far many SSCs in Songea have often acted merely as recommendation offices with the task of referring the problems of their needy members to the parish-priests, instead of organizing ways of solving them at their own community level.\footnote{1578}

To reach the youth effectively specific Small Christians Communities for the youth alone should be formed, since the youth in Songea do not normally participate in adult Small Christian communities. These SCCs should be avenues of pastoral guide for the youth but also for designing strategies for integral development of the youth. In order to attract more youth and young adults to the SCCs the use of modern media and social networking sites such as mobile phones, Facebook, and Internet homepages should be encouraged in youth ministry.

8.4.5 Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement: “Inculturation From Below”

The process through which the Church becomes inserted into a given culture is described in the theology of the mission of the Church\footnote{1579} as “inculturation”.

\footnote{1578} This has been a frequent observation of the priests of the Archdiocese of Songea in their pastoral meetings at diocesan and deanery levels. It was also my personal pastoral experience in the parishes of Chengena, Liganga, Songea, and Mjimwema from 1991 to 2007.

Inculturation of the Church is the integration of the Christian experience of a local Church into the culture of its people, in such a way that this experience not only expresses itself in elements of this culture, but becomes a force that animates, orients and innovates this culture so as to create a new unity of communion, not only within the culture in question but also as an enrichment of the Church universal.\textsuperscript{1580}

Inculturation is fostered by the Church because the Church “in virtue of her mission and nature, is bound to no particular form of culture.”\textsuperscript{1581} But in order to be able to offer the mystery of salvation to all people and nations, the Church “must implant herself into these groups for the same motive which led Christ to bind Himself, in virtue of His Incarnation, to certain social and cultural conditions of those human beings among whom He dwelt.”\textsuperscript{1582}

This kind of inculturation in the Catholic Church is done by theologians. But there is also the so-called “inculturation from below”.\textsuperscript{1583} It is the “localization” of a Church to the various cultures with which it comes into contact. Such localization is said to be the greatest strength of Pentecostalism.\textsuperscript{1584} In the Catholic Church, the Charismatic Renewal (CCR) movement replicates this Pentecostal religious experience and hence it is the primary vehicle through which the “inculturation from below” can take place. Through the CCR, the Catholic practice of ritual of exorcism, for example, can be revived. The Church can use more widely the form of ritual of exorcism as provided in the liturgical books or encourage informal ceremonies and prayers for the casting out of evils spirits.\textsuperscript{1585} In fact, the latter is already practised by the members of the CCR in the Archdiocese of Songea, as I witnessed them at Mjimwema Parish. The sheer numbers of those who turned out for such services convinced me that the need for such rituals is indeed great.

The Vatican Council II has emphasized the reality of the Church as a charismatic entity whereby the members of the Church, endowed with gifts of the Holy Spirit, are enabled to live a new Pentecost and proclaim in their own tongue the one faith in Jesus.\textsuperscript{1586} The council has therefore pneumaticized ministry and made it available to all who are called. The exercise of charisms endowed by the Holy Spirit is, on the one hand, the right and duty of the Christian by virtue of his or her baptism.\textsuperscript{1587} On the other hand, it is one way to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, who speaks through the laity. In the spirit of the Council, ministry in the Church is now understood as being based more on the gifts of the Holy Spirit endowed upon the

\textsuperscript{1581} Vatican Council II, GS, No. 42.
\textsuperscript{1582} Vatican Council II, AG, No. 10.
\textsuperscript{1583} Hans Gerald Hödl, op.cit., 126.
\textsuperscript{1584} See: John L. Allen, op.cit. 405.
\textsuperscript{1585} See also John L. Allen, op.cit. 405.
\textsuperscript{1586} See: Vatican Council II, AA, No. 3.
\textsuperscript{1587} See: Ibid.
people of God than on power and authority. Moreover, the type of ministry inspired by the council corresponds more with the spirit of the gospel than with the law.

Accordingly, we reiterate the need to promote the CCR as a way of fostering pneumatological activities in the Catholic Church. When this study compared the pastoral appeal of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) and that of CCR in the parishes of the Archdiocese of Songea, interesting results were obtained: while the establishment of the SCCs has in most cases required strenuous and concerted efforts of the clergy and catechists, the CCR on the other hand has penetrated into the archdiocese quite smoothly through the initiatives of lay people. Initially, the archdiocese was reluctant to incorporate the CCR into its pastoral ministry without allowing it a sufficient probation time. During that period the CCR continued to operate under the leadership of the laity alone. Even today, the ministry of the SCCs in the parishes still requires extra efforts from catechists and the priests. No such efforts are required for the recruitment of the members of the CCR. In the parishes of Songea, Matogoro and Mjimwema, where the CCR groups seem to flourish most, their members are instrumental for the vibrancy of the SCCs in terms of both Bible readership and church stewardship. They usually devote their time for church activities and contribute generous offerings to the parish coffers. This means, the CCR movement has become leaven to both the SCCs and the parishes at large.

These results suggest that, although the first African Synod urged for the promotion of Small Christian Communities in keeping with the pastoral option of Church-family of God, lay Christians in the Archdiocese of Songea seem to be more readily attracted by the CCR movement than by the SCCs. This, in my view, is a sign that our current time is characterized by the preferential option for the Holy Spirit. The CCR, which is the Catholic equivalent of the evangelical Pentecostal movements, serves to retain Catholics who would otherwise shift to these movements.

For the Catholic Church to adjust itself dynamically according to the current pneumatological signs of the time, priests and their parishes should make every effort to promote the CCR, rather than suppress it. The CCR groups need acceptability, proper pastoral guidance, and accompaniment so that they may become an effective instrument of Catholic pastoral ministry. Priests and lay people with the charismatic gifts of healing should be identified, proven and permitted to perform public faith healing services. It would also be helpful to form a diocesan team of exorcists.

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1588 See: Vatican Council II, _LG_. No. 12.
1589 See: Refer to discussions on Church-family of God in Chapter Seven.
It must be emphasized, on the other side, that pneumatological salvation in the Church is not confined to healing and exorcism ministries. And the Church “can hardly depend on purely Charismatic modes of operation to help parishioners grasp the Holy Spirit.”\textsuperscript{1590} Parishes should offer a deep catechetical formation to help the laity grasp this truth and thereby be encouraged to exercise their diverse gifts of the Spirit for the building up of the body of Christ.

**8.4.6 Parish Social Ministry: No Church Without Caritas**

Christian Social Teaching underlines the imperative of organized Christian and ecclesial charity. Apart from recommending the establishment of active social ministry in the parishes, we propose that Caritas organization, which epitomises the Church’s organized charity, must be widely promoted in the parishes. The diocesan Caritas department should coordinate caritas activities so that they take root in the parishes as well, rather than being confined to the diocesan offices. Christian charity requires that it be dispensed on a continuous, stable and reliable basis. This calls for some structures and organization. But it also entails the willingness of the ecclesial community to review existing structures and dynamically adjust the rules in accordance with the changing conditions.\textsuperscript{1591} As a vivid expression of Christian charity, caritas is one of the signs of Christ’s messianic mission.\textsuperscript{1592} It is a place where the poor can feel and experience the liberating power of the gospel, even without it being verbally proclaimed. Hence a local Church that seeks to promote a purely spiritual ministry, which excludes caritative acts, omits an important dimension of being Church. In this work, we have underlined the central place of the practice of charity in the early Christian communities in Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{1593} Caritas reminds Christian communities today of that central Christian role. Caritas also re-echoes the hospitality of Church Fathers such as Basil, Chrysostom, and Jerome who founded many institutions that specialized in offering hospitality to poor strangers and locals.\textsuperscript{1594} Caritas also reiterates the hospitality of medieval Christians. In what the medieval canonists described as *tenere hospitalitatem*,\textsuperscript{1595} the parish clergy were obliged to keep hospitality, i.e. to receive travellers, to welcome guests, to give alms and provide relief to the poor, whereas individual parishioners were exhorted to pay tithes which were used for hospitality and relief purposes. Thus the responsibility to administer hospitality fell squarely

\textsuperscript{1592} See: Mt.11: 4-5.
\textsuperscript{1593} See: Acts 4:32ff; 6:1ff.
\textsuperscript{1594} See: Catherine D. Pohl, op. cit., 49.
\textsuperscript{1595} See: Ibid.
on all Christians in the parish as an integral part of their prophetic mission. Monastic houses were also central institutions for dispensing hospitality. According to the *Rule of Benedict* monks were required to graciously receive all strangers, whether these strangers were clerics, pilgrims or the poor, for Jesus identifies himself with the stranger. “Let all guests who arrive be received like Christ, for He is going to say, ‘I came as a guest, and you received me.’”

As many Christians at that time flocked to the monasteries to learn the ascetic Christian life, the monks had the responsibility of providing them with food, shelter and welcome. Hospitality in the monasteries was a personal and face-to-face encounter between the donors and the recipients of it. This physical interaction served to reflect Jesus’ physical contact with the poor and the vulnerable, and hence it accentuated hospitality as a distinctive mark of Christian identity.

Bishops were pinpointed in a special way as primary agents of hospitality and the provision of relief to the poor in their dioceses. Isidore of Seville, for example, underscores this duty of the bishops in his writings in the seventh century: “a layman has fulfilled the duty of hospitality by receiving one or two (guests); a bishop, however, unless he shall receive everyone... is inhuman.” Similarly, in his *Decretum* compiled in the twelfth century, Gratian stated that, “hospitality is so necessary in bishops that if any are found lacking in it the law forbids them to be ordained.” Thus, it must be emphasized even today that the duty of charitable enterprise belongs to all members of the Church and charity should be dispensed to all persons in need, not only Christians. We recommend that caritas organization in the Archdiocese of Songea should not limit its activities to relief services, rather it should marshal resources to provide education and employment opportunities to young people so as to prevent them from slipping over to lifestyles that relegate them to further poverty.

8.4.7 Towards a Credible Church: Overcoming the “Politics of the Stomach”

The Vatican Council II teaches that the Church has a mission of shedding on the whole world the radiance of the Gospel message. To carry out that mission, however, the Church has first to foster within herself “mutual esteem, reverence and harmony, through the full recognition of lawful diversity. Thus all those who compose the one People of God, both pastors and the general faithful, can engage in dialogue with ever abounding fruitfulness.”

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1597 See: Mt. 25:35.
1598 See: Christine D. Pohl, op.cit., 49.
1599 Ibid.
1600 Vatican Council II, *GS* No. 92.
This self-understanding of the Church and its mission in the world has serious implications on the option for the poor. A credible advocacy for the poor in Africa requires that the Church strive to overcome all tendencies of the so-called “the politics of the stomach” or “the governmentality of the stomach”1601 within its own system. According to Hynes, the “politics of the stomach” is an attitude characteristic of many African political leaders. It is the habit of indulging in self-aggrandizement, while the majority of their citizens languish in poverty.1602 Presumably, this form of corruption is largely responsible for the perpetuation of poverty in many African countries. For Haynes, Christianity in Africa has been affected by this unfortunate “virus” which permeates the institutions of the nation-state. “Christian leaders have used the power structures within their churches to gain personal benefit in the same way that individuals do in Africa when their social and employment positions permit.”1603 He maintains that, at parish as well as diocesan levels, churches are pervaded by factional struggles for access to ecclesial resources.1604 He contends further that senior Church figures in Africa cherish “the Church ‘big men’ mentality” and prefer to forge close relationships with the leaders of the state in order to enjoy some privileges.1605

These challenges are food for thought. This study has already demonstrated how such concerns are concomitant to the practice of the Prosperity Gospel. Nevertheless, we can concur with Haynes that these are the weaknesses of many African Church leaders. Imbued with the politics of the stomach, the Church leaders may not differ from the politicians whom they often excoriate for corruption.1606 Lack of transparency in the management of Church resources is a case in point. Church leaders and their members may not become suspicious of financial donations and gifts offered them by politicians whom the general public implicates with corruption. Evidently, this attitude thwarts the Church’s prophetic mission. The Church eventually loses the moral authority to speak against acts of corruption and other evils perpetrated in the society. In his encyclical Evangelii Nuntiandi, Pope Paul VI argues that “modern man listens more willingly to witness than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.”1607 The Church has to witness justice.1608 In the context of Tanzania, any Church that claims to be pro-poor must ultimately preach against “Ujanja culture” which reinforces corrupt and egoistic attitudes among the people. Christ

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1601 Jeff Haynes, Religion and Politics in Africa, 118.
1602 See: Ibid.
1603 Ibid., 120.
1604 See: Ibid., 118.
1605 See: Ibid. 131.
1606 See: Jeff Haynes, Religion and Politics in Africa, 119.
1607 Paul VI, Encyclical Letter, EN, No. 41.
1608 Justitia in Mundo, No. 40.
reminds his disciples: "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." In order to appropriate the servant status, Christians should be exhorted to interrogate the prevailing social structures that relegate the people into poverty and social marginality. Churches should spearhead the dismantling of extractive socio-economic structures rather than help to sustain them.

8.4.8 Promoting “Green” Catholicism

It has been asserted that the Catholic Church has globally not done enough to promote the common good through environmental stewardship; that so far not a single papal encyclical dedicated to the theme of environment has been issued. Whereas it is true that no encyclical on the environment has been promulgated, Catholic statements on environment issues abound. This is particularly true of the contribution of Pope Benedict XVI himself. His own statements on the environment are regarded by many analysts as being “perhaps the most intriguing dimension of his social teaching.” The statements, now woven into one volume by Koenig-Bricker, radiate the pope’s inspiration for an environmental stewardship to a new generation of Catholics. Environmental issues were also given a considerable attention in the second African Synod. The Synodal Final Propositions speak of environmental and good stewardship of natural resources (Proposition 22), of the reconciliation of humanity with the whole creation (Proposition 29) and of the blessings of the natural resources, land and water (Proposition 30). The papal statements and the Synodal propositions on the environment convey the message that an environmentally responsible lifestyle is a moral responsibility to protect the poor. It is the poor who suffer most from the shortage of resources due to the plundering of the natural resources, environmental degradation and climate change. So there is a close link between the option for the poor and environmental stewardship. As Allen points out,

because of factors such as cheap building materials, low levels of general health, greater dependence on agriculture, and fewer opportunities to flee at-at-risk zones, the poor are especially susceptible to the results of environmental irresponsibility…roughly half the jobs on earth are in farming, fishing, and forestry, and they’re disproportionately held by poor people.

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1609 Mk. 9: 35-37.
1610 This observation was made at a Conference on the activities of the Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace presented by the President of the council, Peter Cardinal Turkson, at Vienna University on 10th January, 2013. The cardinal pointed out his council’s vision to have more programmes on environmental issues.
Loss of income in these trades caused by environmental damage falls primarily upon their backs.\textsuperscript{1613}

What Allen says is witnessed in Songea where environmental degradation is one of the underlying causes of poverty. Consequently, efforts to promote the option for the poor in Songea will only be sustainable if accompanied by corresponding efforts in environmental stewardship. The concept of environmental stewardship in Catholic environmentalism stresses that human beings are stewards of creation, i.e. caretakers rather than masters of it. To overcome ecological crisis, Christians should reject the axiom that nature has no reason for existence save to serve human beings. Accordingly, the Church’s ecological sensitivity should be illustrated in the establishment of “green movements” i.e. movements for environmental stewardship in Small Christian Communities, religious communities, seminaries, catechetical centres, universities, schools and so on. The African Catholic parishes should take a position of leadership in fostering “green” Catholicism.

Concretely, the green movements should collaborate with local government authorities to ensure that households clean their own compounds, since as the universal proverb on ecology runs: “if each person sweeps in front of his or her house, the whole world will be clean.”\textsuperscript{1614} The movements should also foster the spirit of environmental stewardship in their respective communities by regularly taking part in the general cleanliness of the streets and dumps of their particular locations and towns. In the Archdiocese of Songea, we propose that as long term measures, a tree-planting programme should be launched in all the parishes. The implementation of this project should not be seen as an imposition from the diocesan leadership in a top-down fashion. A project of this scale was already attempted by the Archdiocese of Songea a few years ago under the supervision of Father Xaver Komba. Yet probably due to its top-down approach that it was not very successful. In that project, the trees were also planted mostly on church-owned plots. Now we suggest that individual Christians and non-Christian villagers should be exhorted and assisted in every way possible so that they take the initiative to plant trees on their own plots. Moreover, Small Christian Communities and respective village authorities should be involved to ensure that the trees are preserved from destructive free-ranging domestic animals and bush-fires.

Additionally, in keeping with the Tanzanian national motto for agricultural priority “Agriculture First” (\textit{Kilimo kwanza}), we urge the Developmental Department of the Archdiocese of Songea to revamp the sunhemp legume (\textit{marejea}) project which was so

\textsuperscript{1613} John L. Allen, op. cit., 303.
passionately promoted by the late Father Gerold Rupper OSB at Peramiho. This project which has become obsolete was very helpful to poor farmers even beyond Africa. Orders for sunhemp seeds were received from as far-flung countries as Brazil. We also propose that through Small Christian Communities, parishes should facilitate the production of compost fertilizers by small holder farmers in the villages. If well adopted, the sunhemp leguminous plant and the compost fertilizers will contribute to sustainable agricultural practices as well as help many poor farmers increase their farm productivity. At the moment the farmers rely mostly on chemical fertilizers which are not only unaffordable to most of them, but also impoverish the soil fertility. We call upon the newly established Catholic Agricultural College in the Archdiocese of Songea to promote these kinds of green manure.

Furthermore, the Church should be in the forefront in the conservation of forests and wildlife. We urge the parishes bordering Selous Game Reserve such as Kitanda, Ligera, Ligunga, and Namtumbo to actively participate in the government’s efforts to sustain the reserve. The local people should be helped to engage in animal husbandry and other sustainable economic activities. This will serve to discourage poaching practices. The poachers also cause environmental degradation through bush-fires. Many people also lose their lives in the events of exchange of fire between poachers and game reserve wardens.

The formation of the local people in Christian environmental ethics should encompass families and Christian communities. Being convenient forums for the formation in Catholic Social teaching, Small Christian Communities should be helped to have a correct interpretation of the Word of God that leads to environmental stewardship. This requires that regular seminars on both biblical apostleship and environmental stewardship be facilitated. Biblical interpretations that emphasize dominion theologies should be avoided. To engage the worldview of the local people in environmental stewardship promotion, folklore stories and other oral media should be utilised. Folklore stories that depict a mutual dependence between humans and the environment abound among the indigenous people of Songea. The stories challenge human beings to preserve the lives of animals and plants in order thereby to rescue their own lives. For example, human beings are portrayed in the stories as having been rescued from their predicament by the very animals they had once rescued from traps.

Priests should also be thoroughly formed in Catholic Social Teaching and other disciplines pertaining to ecological stewardship. We suggest that Peramiho Major Seminary should accentuate rural theology with a particular attention to environmental studies. Rural theology is a theology which arises out of pastoral experience and ministry with the rural Church communities. As its basic elements, rural theology stresses the recognition of the proper
relation of humans to the rest of creation and to one another. It also pays heed to the identification of “the beginning of a way in which Christians can live their story in community in rural surroundings.” Thus, it can be said that the countryside provides the best environment for the understanding of environmental ecology, human ecology and ecclesial community. Since 76 percent of Tanzanians live in rural areas, seminary formation should have special focus on the rural setting of the people. Such a formation will better equip the priests for their ministry in the Tanzanian context.

8.4.9 Church and Stewardship of Natural Resources

The plundering of Africa’s natural resources by multinational companies is one of the causes of the continent’s poverty. We urge the Church in Africa to work hand in hand with the nation-states to counter this problem and ensure that the natural resources are used to overcome poverty and catalyze economic advancement. The Church-state relationship in this venture should be characterized by dialogue and mutual cooperation. The Church should not regard the state as a system that is corrupt beyond repair and thus merely dependent on the Church’s tutorship. Such a stance will often diminish a dialogical relationship. In the case of Tanzania, we recommend that the St. Augustine Catholic University should establish a faculty of mineralogy in order to empower local experts in the mining sector. This can help to reduce the possibility of exploitation of the country’s mineral wealth through the agency of foreign experts.

The option for the poor in Africa needs as well a strong international advocacy. We urge Africa’s development partners such as the Western Christian development organizations including Missio, Misereor, Church in Need, and Caritas to play an advocacy role on this regard. They should help to raise the outcry against the rampant exploitation of Africa’s natural resources by foreigners. The churches in Africa should also lobby their partner churches in the West for a similar advocacy. Their advocacy might be, for example, through the collection of signatures in protest against the practices of the companies that plunder Africa’s natural resources. We have an inspiration from the partnership between the Archdiocese of Salzburg in Austria and the Diocese of Bokungu/Ikela in Congo DR. Through the collection of protest signatures in Austria and Germany, this partnership could prevent the

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\section*{8.4.10 Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue of Action}

The Vatican Council II has assumed a positive approach towards non-Christian religions and non-Catholic Christian traditions. It has emphasized interreligious and ecumenical dialogue and its adaptation. The conciliar document \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, for example, speaks of dialogue quite extensively. With regard to ecumenical dialogue, it states that “the Catholic Church gladly holds in high esteem the things which other Christian churches and ecclesial communities have done or are doing cooperatively by way of achieving the same goal.”\footnote{See: Vatican Council II, GS. No. 40 and No. 92.} The Declaration on the Church’s Relationship to Non-Christians, \textit{Nostra Aetate}, spells out the Council’s positive appraisal of non-Christian religions.\footnote{NA. No. 2.} Admittedly, African Religions did not receive an explicit mention like Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Judaism. Nevertheless, they were implied in the Council’s generic statement that “the Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy” in other religions found in the world, “which attempt in their own ways to calm the hearts of men by outlining a program of life covering doctrine, moral precepts and sacred rites.”\footnote{Ibid.}

Accordingly, the Catholic Church in Songea should foster an atmosphere of dialogue with non-Catholics and non-Christians, including members of African Religions. Forums should be devised for empowering Catholic Christians to face with openness the challenges emanating from traditional and contemporary cultures. Such forums should update the clergy and the laity on the development of new religious movements and religions. They should also help Catholics in the Archdiocese of Songea to encounter people of other Christian denominations\footnote{The ecumenical collaboration of the diverse Churches in Austria provides an inspiration for that kind of dialogue of action. The Churches foster not only dialogue among themselves for a common social action but also promote dialogue with the civil authorities, with the media of social communications and society at large. See: Ökumenischer Rat der Kirchen in Österreich (ÖRKÖ) (ed.), \textit{Sozialwort des Ökumenischen Rates der Kirchen in Österreich}, Wien, 2003.} and religions. These forums should encourage dialogue with the cultures and the religious other, rather than harbour attitudes of bigotry. Such an ambiance of mutual dialogue is conducive to dialogue of action, i.e. a joint venture of people from various
religious affiliations for integral development and the promotion of the option for the poor, peace, and justice.\textsuperscript{1622}

\textbf{8.4.11 New Evangelization}

Africa is radiant with the fruits of the primary evangelization.\textsuperscript{1623} Yet according to the second African Synod, the continent stands already in need of the new evangelization, besides, of course, the vast task of primary evangelization that is still to be accomplished.\textsuperscript{1624} The Year of Faith that Pope Benedict XVI announced in 2012 offers a critical challenge: “The Year of Faith... is a summons to an authentic and renewed conversion to the Lord... We want this Year to arouse in every believer the aspiration to \textit{profess} the faith in fullness and with renewed conviction, with confidence and hope.”\textsuperscript{1625} According to Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York, a towering challenge to both primary evangelization and New Evangelization today is the phenomenon of secularism.\textsuperscript{1626} For Pope Benedict XVI, secularism is discernible when “the prevalent hedonistic and consumeristic mindset fosters in the faithful and in Pastors a tendency to superficiality and selfishness that is harmful to ecclesial life.”\textsuperscript{1627} Some commentators of African Christianity have associated the spread of the Prosperity Gospel with global currents of secularism, “it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the faith gospel formula is, to a great extent, a child of modern secular materialism emanating from the Americas...”\textsuperscript{1628} These foreign trends, as Pope Benedict XVI noted during the opening Eucharistic celebration of the second African Synod, are maladies that make Africa, the immerse spiritual lung for humanity fail to fulfil its function properly. Notably, it is poverty which to a great extent makes Africa susceptible to such maladies. Thus, the motif of the New Evangelization in the Year of Faith should also mean for Africa the imperative to garner more efforts in fighting against the scourge of poverty.

\textsuperscript{1623} This is evident, \textit{inter alia}, in the phenomenal growth of Christianity and the general vibrancy of Christian communities in the continent as hinted in several sections of this work.
\textsuperscript{1625} Pope Benedict XVI, Motu Proprio \textit{Porta fidei}, Nos. 6 and 9.
\textsuperscript{1627} See: Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Pontifical Council for Culture, 8 March 2008, ibid.
\textsuperscript{1628} See: Aylward Shorter and Joseph N. Njiru, op. cit. 36.
8.5 Conclusion

Due to the stated ambivalence, the Prosperity Gospel in Songea and in much of Tanzania does not offer any significant impetus for a socio-economic development of the people. Its proliferation, nevertheless, provides a challenge to the Catholic Church and other churches to carry out an ongoing research and to update their pastoral methods for the sake of improving the social ministry and specifically fostering the option for the poor. The pastoral proposals articulated in this chapter serve to point out the vastness of the pastoral field into which the Church needs to engage in its social ministry today.
GENERAL CONCLUSION

The main concern of this work has been to investigate how the brand of African Pentecostalism called The Prosperity Gospel poses a theological and pastoral challenge to the Catholic Church with regard to the option for the poor. The phenomenal expansion of the Prosperity Gospel denominations is marked by a corresponding defection of Catholics who join them. As Cardinal Walter Kasper has argued, “the challenge represented by Pentecostalism should move the Catholic Church toward a self-critical approach, asking why so many leave it and what they find in Pentecostal congregations.”

The Prosperity Theology with its twin doctrines: “the doctrine of the spirit of poverty” and “the doctrine of talents” is a new feature of African Christianity. It is practised in many Christian denominations, though it permeates mostly the Neo-Pentecostal denominations. Its rapid and widespread growth makes it an increasingly significant feature in African Christianity.

Historically, the Prosperity Gospel did not originate in Africa; rather its roots can be traced back to the 1930s and attributed to Kenneth Hagin of Tulsa in Oklahoma, U.S.A. This doctrine has been adopted in African countries from the 1980s onwards. In the African context, it displays both elements of continuity and discontinuity with its American version. The continuity is discernible in that its African preachers replicate the American concepts of conspicuous consumption. They teach African Christians that God wants them to be rich in the sense of having posh cars, owning mansions and financial wealth, and achieving success in other life aspects consistent with the “American dream”. Additionally, just like the American televangelists, the African prosperity preachers privilege the use of modern media of social communications to propagate their teaching. However, the African version of the Prosperity Gospel exhibits a discontinuity with its American counterpart in that it is deeply anchored in the African worldview. As such, it is very much engrossed in overcoming malevolent spirits, consonant with the African cosmic view. This convergence with the African worldview contributes to the popularity of the Prosperity Gospel among Africans. Those who espouse this doctrine are made to anticipate not merely financial breakthroughs, but also protection from evil spirits.

Notably, since its emergence in the African pastoral scenario, the Prosperity Gospel has prompted debates about its influence on the religious and socio-economic life of the Christians and the society at large. Those who advocate this doctrine have seen it as religious

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1629 Thomas P. Rausch, op.cit. 935.
tenet that offers compelling reasons for its being adopted in the context of poverty in Africa. They have maintained that, unlike the historic missionary churches, this brand of Christianity furthers both the preferential option for the Spirit and the preferential option for the poor. Thus they have extolled it as a form of religious movement that fosters a modernizing work ethic in Africa, and hence an unprecedented catalyst of socio-economic change in the continent. Its critics, however, have not seen it as embodying any religious force that can engender a remarkable socio-economic change in Africa. They have pointed out its tendency to privilege miracles and to emphasize the intervention of malevolent spiritual forces as a drawback to socio-economic development. Simultaneously, they have underlined the propensity of its members to desist from addressing unjust social structures which are actually the underlying causes of poverty in Africa.

Taking Songea as a study case, this research sought to find out how the Prosperity Gospel influences the Christian landscape and society in Africa. Its focus has been on two central questions of investigation: first, whether the pneumatological soteriology preached by the Prosperity Gospel contributes to a significant socio-economic transformation of the people of Africa, and secondly, to what extent the Catholic Church could learn from the Prosperity Gospel with respect to the option for the poor.

Corollary to this study, my overarching conclusion is that the Prosperity Gospel actually contributes to the rapid numerical growth of African Christianity. Its attraction is predicated on its pneumatological soteriology that places a great deal of emphasis on the pervasive presence of malevolent spirits, magical interpretations of the causality of suffering and events, and the influence of dreams and prophecy. Concomitant to this pneumatology, the Prosperity Gospel denominations perform ministries of healing and deliverance which attract many people. In their preaching, the Prosperity Gospel pastors highlight the expectation of miracles of financial breakthrough and health. They exhort their members to strive for success and abundant wealth. Thus, the pneumatological salvation touted by these denominations is very much narrowed down to the here and now. By accentuating existential hope, these denominations demarcate from the historic missionary churches which presumably have tended to focus their teaching on the hopes for the heavenly joys.

The religious ethos propounded by the Prosperity Gospel becomes attractive to the people particularly amid prevailing socio-economic difficulties. The people who are humiliated by poverty, crushed by personal suffering, and who feel victimized by witchcraft and malevolent powers beyond their control, business people, farmers, miners as well as students—all hope to find material and spiritual solace promised by the Prosperity Gospel. They hear from the
preachers that this doctrine provides formulas for empowerment, for affluence and protection against the influence of malignant spiritual forces. The Prosperity Gospel preachers urge their members to feel that they are winners: “Let me hear you shout you are a winner.” Hence, those who convert to the Prosperity Gospel Christianity are made to believe that, henceforth, nothing will stand on their way to prosperity: whether the witchcraft allegedly performed by their jealous relatives, or the malevolent influence of demons and ancestral spirits, or any other forms of evil spirits. Their belief is that they are now set free to pursue their financial and economic development goals without any fear whatsoever. In Songea and in much of Tanzania, the lack of affordable modern medical facilities for treating psychosomatic disorders also leads the people to resort to faith-healing and exorcism practices. This ultimately serves to promote the healing ministries of the new religious movements.

Now to say that the Prosperity Gospel offers attractive promises is not the same as saying that it actually delivers in those promises. This study argues that in order to have a balanced view of the efficiency or usefulness of the Prosperity Gospel in Africa, we ought to go beyond its popularity and our own academic sympathies. The fact that the Prosperity Gospel draws much appeal among Africans and serves to populate the churches does not necessarily validate its usefulness. The popularity of this doctrine should not lead people to turn a blind eye to its pernicious effects. Theologians need to question, for example, whether the magical interpretations so much extolled in this doctrine really help Africans, even if those interpretations contribute to the numerical expansion of Christianity.

In fact, the in-depth analysis of the Prosperity Gospel done in this study has revealed that the practice of this doctrine is embedded with ambivalent characteristics. On the one hand, it portrays the potential to promote the option for the poor. This is particularly evident in its encouragement of entrepreneurship, thrift, asceticism and work ethic among its members. The Catholic Church and other historic churches may certainly find these aspects advantageous for the improvement of their own economic ethos. Were these positive components the only dimensions that the Prosperity Gospel fosters, this doctrine could then be rightly seen as a factor of significant socio-economic change in Africa. Now, however, such is not the case. The bright side of the Prosperity Gospel is eclipsed by some serious shortcomings. One of these shortcomings is the disproportionate emphasis on miraculous expedients and magical interpretations. Admittedly, there are some exceptions, however. We have cited the example of the International Prosperity Gospel Church led by Pastor Mensa Otabil in Accra Ghana and the Prosperity Gospel denominations surveyed by Lovemore in Botswana and Zimbabwe. These, and perhaps a few others, display an economic ethos which is more oriented towards
hard work and entrepreneurship than miraculous expedients and magical interpretations. Such denominations, nevertheless, are quite few. The other liability of the Prosperity Gospel is the tendency of its preachers to ignore unjust structural systems and to take advantage of the poor who seek material and spiritual solace from their churches. All these negative aspects impinge on the option for the poor. That being the case, the Prosperity Gospel that is practised in Songea and in much of Tanzania is, far and large, fraught with ambivalence. But numerous accounts from other parts of Africa suggest that this ambivalence is a characteristic feature of much of the Prosperity Gospel Christianity in Africa.

According to Maier, moreover, the Gospel of Prosperity in Africa is attractive to people who want to pursue at all cost what the Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo termed as “the six P’s”, namely, “position, power, possession, plaudit, popularity and pleasure.” While pursuing these P’s, nothing else matters for those people, they can buy anything and buy themselves into anything: “honesty is disregarded, indolence is extolled, probity is derided, and waste and ostentation are paraded.” These words summarize well the influence of the Prosperity Gospel in Africa today. I posit, therefore, that, contrary to what its advocates are fond of proclaiming, the Prosperity Gospel in its current form does not contribute significantly to the socio-economic development of Africa.

The proliferation of the Prosperity Gospel, conversely, prompts some concerns about the prospect of African Christianity. Firstly, there is concern about the danger of compromising the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the gospel of love and of the cross. It is notable that the Gospel of Prosperity is increasingly becoming the gospel that the African people today want to hear. In Nigeria, for example, Catholics are often said to urge their parish priests to promote the Gospel of Prosperity in their parishes. The parish priest has to establish healing ministries and the practice of “sowing the seeds of financial blessing”. The parishioners would seek these ministries in the Pentecostal Prosperity Gospel churches if their parish did not provide them. It is observed, furthermore, that Catholic parishes strive to compete with the Prosperity Gospel denominations in constructing mega-churches. Most of the Prosperity Gospel pastors are said to be “under pressure to become ‘large figures’, people of importance… are preoccupied with establishing a large footprint in the soil of history and they are expected to build great sanctuaries and establish great works that will outlive them.” In the Catholic parishes in Nigeria, the money for these construction projects does

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1630 Karl Maier, op.cit., 267
1631 Ibid.
1632 Informant: Father Xaver Saviour Nwaiwu, Nigerian priest from the Diocese of Okigwe in Igbo State.
not come from the Western churches, as it is usually the case in the Catholic Church in Africa. Rather, the projects are now financed by the money accrued through the practice of “sowing the seeds of financial blessing”. Significantly, these projects are becoming the criterion for judging the pastoral performance of the parish priests. The more successful the parish priest is in mobilising the parishioners to construct a mega-church and modern parish complexes, the more credit as a pastor he receives. Hence, it is not so much the parish priest’s fervour in ministering to the souls which counts, but his creativity in wealth creation in the parish. Thus the increasing stewardship and self-reliance in the Catholic parishes is certainly something praiseworthy. However, the danger of “money-theism” is also evident. Again, there is also mounting concern about the economic ethos that is being inculcated among Christians in the style of the Prosperity Gospel. Will the Prosperity Gospel perhaps eventually influence African Christians to tend to embrace more the vision of quick money, short-term success, and ephemeral values at the expense of long-term development vision and eternal values?

Secondly, the reductionist pneumatological salvation propagated by the Prosperity Gospel is also a subject of much concern. To the extent that this pneumatology focuses on the overcoming of evil spirits and the achievement of material abundance, some fruits of the Spirit that Africa urgently needs to promote are not given due priority. These neglected fruits of the Spirit include love, justice, peace, reconciliation, unity, moderation, and creativity. Arguably any Church that considers itself to be a Spirit-filled Church has indeed to foster these virtues which are very urgent in the current context of poverty and instability in Africa. Fostering these virtues may serve to overcome the paradoxical situations where Christian communities become scenarios of untold atrocities.

Thirdly, there is concern about the pastoral care of Christians who feel they have been disappointed by the unfulfilled promises of financial breakthrough and ultimately opt to stop practising their religion.

Fourthly, there is concern with regard to educational matters. It has been noted that students in secondary schools, colleges and universities in Tanzania are now eagerly embracing the Prosperity Gospel. Will these students in the long run perhaps be drawn to focus more on magical-religious expedients and anticipation of miraculous while downplaying scientific researches and diligence?

1634 Informant: Father Xaver Saviour Nwaiwu.
1635 See the observations of the African Synods in Chapter Seven.
A question may arise, however: if the Prosperity Gospel portrays such serious concerns, why then does it proliferate in Africa? There are several explanations for this. One explanation is that the Prosperity Gospel is a Pentecostal movement; hence it enjoys some degree of popularity along with other Pentecostal and charismatic movements in Africa today. It is also a new doctrine in many parts of Africa, including Songea. Because of its novelty the first tendency of the Christians is to embrace it. Its euphoria still captivates many Christians who want to give it a trial. In the course of time, nevertheless, they come to identify its positive and negative dimensions. Some commentators from Latin America, Asia and some parts of Africa have pointed out that for some pastors the Prosperity Gospel is a way of lining their own pockets through the exploitation of their church members. Secondly, it is known that the prosperity preachers advertise their doctrine. They keep exhorting their members to wait patiently for their promised success: “Your miracle is still on the way!” Martin Lindhardt testifies to this fact following his research at the New Life Church in Iringa, Tanzania. He notes that security and protection against dangers related to problems such as alcohol abuse, domestic turbulence, and AIDS, were perceived by the church members as certain and as coming immediately after their being born-again. But economic prosperity was perceived to come over a period of time. Thus, when asked whether their economic situation improved after their conversion to the Prosperity Gospel Church, most of the believers answered: “not yet” (bado) or “just a little” (kidogo). But to rationalize the failure of their prayers and donations to produce immediate material blessings most of them would say: “Mungu ni polepole” (i.e. God is slow). Their belief was that God “does things slowly and does not allow himself to be rushed by human impatience.” One must therefore wait patiently for God’s blessings. This idea of God’s slowness resonates well with a famous Kiswahili proverb, haraka haraka haina baraka (i.e. a rushed action has no blessing). This proverb is sometimes misused in Tanzania when one cites it to justify inefficiency and lack of punctuality.

Thirdly, this study has also revealed that a gullibility of some kind persists and makes some Christians stick to their denominations, despite perceiving signs of being exploited through the deceit of their pastors. Some Christians have either too much confidence in the pastor or they are too desperate to achieve their financial breakthrough through the agency of the pastor. So when the pastor says “God has told me, ‘make sure that the believers give their offerings only in dollars’”, they may not doubt his words.

1637 Ibid., 59.
1638 Ibid.
Finally, the proliferation of the Prosperity Gospel in Africa and its concomitant challenges it poses to the Christians constitute a *kairos* moment for the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is called upon to reappraise its pastoral methods in the social ministry and particularly its approach to the option for the poor. This indeed is also the ardent call of the new Pontiff, Pope Francis I. Even before being chosen pope on 13th March 2013, he demonstrated that this was his personal vision of the Catholic Church’s mission in the present time. This was evident, for example, in his pre-conclave speech in which he shared this vision with his brother cardinals. On evangelization, Pope Francis (then Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio) urged the Church to come out of herself and go to the peripheries, not merely in the geographical sense, but also in the existential sense as manifested in “the mystery of sin, pain, injustice and ignorance.” Thereby, he made a criticism of the ‘self-referent’ Church, which looks to herself in a sort of ‘theological narcissism,’ an attitude which separates her from the world and keeps Jesus Christ within the Church and does not allow him to go out. According to Pope Francis there are, therefore, two images of the Church: one is that of the *evangelizing Church* i.e. the Church that comes out of herself. The other is that of *the worldly Church* i.e. the Church that lives in herself, of herself, for herself. Accordingly, the pope saw the need for the Catholic Church to contemplate possible changes and reforms.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Informants and Dates of Interview

Amigu Titus, Rector and lecturer of Peramiho Major Seminary, June 2011.
Artisanal miners from Mpepo in Mbinga District, June, 2011.
Fussi Emmanuel, parish priest of Wino, June 2011.
Gertrude OSB, nun and catechist, and pastoral leader of Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement at Mjimwema Parish, June 2011.
Group of youths of Chengena Village, July 2010.
Komba Lukas, lecturer at Peramiho Major Seminary, June 2011.
Leaders of the CCR in the Archdiocese of Songea, July 2010.
Leaders of Mjimwema Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement (CCR), June 2011.
Lungu Hugo, priest of the Archdiocese of Songea, studies in USA, June 2011.
Mbawala Ananias, parish priest of Songea, June 2011.
Mbilinyi A, a member of Wino Parish, June 2005.
Members of Catholic Young Christian Students (YCS) at Easter Conference, Songea, April, 2004.
Members of DMI Women microcredit groups (100 members), June 2011.
Mganda, a member and elder of the Full Gospel Bible Fellowship Church (FGBFC) in Songea, July 2010.
Nchimbi Immaculate, villager of Sanangula, June 2011.
Ngatunga, manager of SACCOS in the Archdiocese of Songea, June 2011.
Ngonyani Tumaini, priest of the Archdiocese of Songea, student at Mainz University (Germany), August 2012.
Nwaiwu Saviour, Nigerian priest from the Diocese of Okigwe in Igbo State, March 2013.
Nyalusi Mfilinge from Dar es Salaam, Vienna September, 2012.
Nyoni Oscar, mineral dealer from Songea, June, 2011.
Pastor of Evangelistic Assemblies of God Tanzania (EAGT), Songea, July 2011.
Sanga Innocent, priest of Mbeya Diocese, 2005.
Soko Gerold, parish priest of Mjimwema.
Villagers of Liganga at a public meeting, March 1997.
Village elders of Shule ya Tanga, 11 July 2010.
Pentecostal pastors and elders....

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

A. For Catholic Respondents

1. Age: _______ years
2. Gender:
  □ 1 Male
  □ 2 Female

3. Is the number of those leaving your Church and joining neo-Pentecostal churches significant?
   1 It is significant
   2 It is not significant
   3 I don’t know

4. If yes, what possibly attracts them to these churches? You may choose more than one answer?
   □ 1 Healing/Exorcism
   □ 2 The Teaching of “sowing and Reaping”
   □ 3 Good preaching
   □ 4 Sociability of members
   □ 5 Tangible Assistance

5. Other factors (please name them)

6. Do you know anything about the practice of “sowing and reaping” in the neo-Pentecostal churches?
   □ 1 Yes
   □ 2 No

7. If yes, does the practice of “sowing and reaping” help your neo-Pentecostal neighbours improve their economic situation?
   □ 1 Yes
   □ 2 No
   □ 3 I don’t know

8. In your experience, do the members of neo-Pentecostal churches that privilege “sowing and reaping” stress the sharing of their material blessings with non-Pentecostals?
   □ 1 Yes
   □ 2 No
   □ 3 I don’t know

9. If yes, what may be the motive for their sharing?
   □ 1 Merely out of Christian Charity
   □ 2 To win converts to their churches
   □ 3 I don’t know

10. What satisfaction do the former Catholics seem to get in their neo-Pentecostal churches?
    □ 1 Their spiritual and material needs are met in a better way
    □ 2 Nothing more except faith healing and the practice of “sowing and reaping”
    □ 3 I don’t know

11. Other observation _______
12. Does the practice of “sowing and reaping” seem to make Pentecostal believers spiritually weaker?
   ☐ 1 Yes
   ☐ 2 No
   ☐ 3 I don’t know

13. Is the practice of “sowing and reaping” also common in your Church?
   ☐ 1 Yes
   ☐ 2 No
   ☐ 3 I don’t know

14. If yes, does it help individual believers improve their economic conditions?
   ☐ 1 Yes
   ☐ 2 No
   ☐ 3 I don’t know

15. Does it help your Church become self-supporting?
   ☐ 1 Yes
   ☐ 2 No
   ☐ 3 I don’t know

16. Other observations____

17. What can the Catholic Church learn from neo-Pentecostal churches with regard to the option for the poor?

18. Where do you seek support in case of material needs in your daily life?
   ☐ 1 Family, relatives and friends
   ☐ 2 Parish-priest/curate
   ☐ 3 Church community
   ☐ 4 Caritas office
   ☐ 5 Government offices

19. Other sources____

20. Have you ever obtained such support?
   ☐ 1 Yes
   ☐ 2 No

21. If yes, in which area did you need support? You can choose more than one answer
   ☐ 1 Housing
   ☐ 2 Working
   ☐ 3 Wedding celebrations
   ☐ 4 During bereavement
   ☐ 5 Financial problems

22. Something else____

23. Was the support satisfactory according to your particular need?
   ☐ 1 Very satisfactory
24. In your opinion, is the lack of material support from Church community a reason for members of your Church switching to neo-Pentecostal churches?
   □ 1 Yes
   □ 2 No
   □ 3 I don’t know

25. What is the attitude of Church members towards poor members of your Church?
   □ 1 They are not faithful to God
   □ 2 They are not generous givers
   □ 3 They are not working hard enough
   □ 4 Economic differences are not significant in the Church

26. Other observations ___

27. What is the perception of the Church congregation with regard to rich members?
   □ 1 Their material success is regarded as a mark of their faith
   □ 2 They are treated like any other members of the Church

28. Other observations____

29. Has your parish or Small Christian Community a particular programme to help individual Church members reduce poverty?
   □ 1 Yes
   □ 2 No
   □ 3 I don’t know

30. The Archdiocese of Songea has established SACCOS in various parishes, are they helpful in alleviating poverty among individual Church members?
   □ 1 Yes
   □ 2 No
   □ 3 I don’t know

31. Are the Small Credit Unions of Women Groups established in various parishes by religious sisters, for example, the Daughters of Mary Immaculate and Ursuline Sisters, helping the women reduce household poverty?

32. Have you anything to add with regard to the approach of the Archdiocese of Songea to the option for the poor? ___

**B. For Non-Catholic Respondents**

5. Age: _______ years
6. Gender:
   □ 1 Male
2. Female

7. What is your Church denomination? __

8. Were you already a Christian before joining this Church?
   - 1. Yes
   - 2. No

9. If yes, to which Church did you belong?
   - 1. Anglican Church
   - 2. Lutheran Church
   - 3. Moravian Church
   - 4. Roman Catholic Church

6. Other Church or religion (name)

7. What attracted you to join this Church?
   - 1. “Miracles” of Healing/Exorcism
   - 2. The teaching of “sowing and reaping”
   - 3. Good preaching
   - 4. Company of friends
   - 5. Tangible assistance

8. Other factors _____

9. How long are you a member of this Church?

10. How old is your Church?

11. How often do you go to your Church?
   - 1. Once in a week
   - 2. Several times a week
   - 3. Not regularly

12. Why do you go to Church?
   - 1. Because I want to pray?
   - 2. Because my family and friends also go to Church
   - 3. I receive help and support from the Church community
   - 4. I am attracted by the practice of “sowing and reaping”

13. Other motive ____

14. What is the most attractive element of your Church congregation?
   - 1. Healing/Exorcism and the Gospel of Prosperity
   - 2. Good preaching
   - 3. Company of friends
   - 4. Tangible assistance

15. Other factors ____
16. Is your Church growing in terms of membership?
   - 1 Yes
   - 2 No
   - 3 I don’t know

17. From which faith communities does your Church mostly recruit its members?
   - 1 African Religions (AR)
   - 2 Islam
   - 3 Mainline churches
   - 4 Other Pentecostal and charismatic churches

18. If Mainline churches (name them please)

19. Other faith- communities ___

20. Where do you seek support in case of material needs in your daily life?
   - 1 Family, relatives and friends
   - 2 Church community
   - 3 Government offices

21. Other sources ___

22. Have you ever obtained such support from your Church?
   - 1 Yes
   - 2 No

23. If yes, in which area did you need support? You can choose more than one answer.
   - 1 Housing
   - 2 Working
   - 3 Wedding celebrations
   - 4 During bereavement
   - 5 Financial problems

24. Something else __

25. Was the support satisfactory according to your particular need?
   - 1 Very satisfactory
   - 2 Fairly satisfactory
   - 3 Not satisfactory

26. Is the teaching of “sowing and reaping” common in your Church?
   - 1 It is common
   - 2 It is rare
   - 3 It is nonexistent

27. If yes, is the teaching responsible for the numerical expansion of your Church?
   - 1 Yes
   - 2 No
   - 3 I don’t know

28. Did you ever pray for a special gift from God and received it?
1. I prayed and received it?
2. I prayed but did not receive it
3. I did not pray

29. Does the practice of “sowing and reaping” help the Church to become self-reliant?
1. Yes
2. No
3. I don’t know

30. Do individual Church members improve their economic situation through “sowing and reaping”?
1. Yes
2. No
3. I don’t know

31. Does the practice of “sowing and reaping” benefit more pastors than lay members of the Church?
1. Yes
2. No
3. I don’t know

32. Does the practice of “sowing and reaping” benefit more middle-class members of the Church than poor members?
1. Yes
2. No
3. I don’t know

33. If a believer does not achieve material success even after tithing faithfully and offering generously to the Church, what may be the explanation?
1. He/she has not repented a certain sin
2. He/she has no faith
3. He/she has not worked hard

34. Other reasons ___

35. What is the attitude of Church members towards poor members of the Church?
1. They are not faithful to God
2. They are not generous givers
3. They are not working hard enough

36. Other observations__

37. What is the perception of Church members with regard to members who have acquired material success?
1. They are to be emulated since their material success is a mark of their faith
2. They are treated like any other Church members

38. Other observations ___
39. How are such successful members treated by the rest of the congregation during prayer services?
   - 1  They are assigned special seats in the Church and given special respect
   - 2  They are not treated differently from other members

40. Other observations __

41. What do most believers do after failing to get success in the practice of “sowing and reaping”?
   - 1  Continue to tithe and give more offerings
   - 2  Leave the Church
   - 3  Resort to traditional medicine-men for consultation
   - 4  I don’t know

42. Does the teaching “sowing and reaping” encourage Church members to share their material blessings with less successful members of the Church?
   - 1  Yes
   - 2  No

43. Is sharing of material blessings with non-members of your Church stressed in the teaching of “sowing and reaping”?
   - 1  Yes
   - 2  No
   - 3  I don’t know

44. If yes, what may be the motive for the sharing?
   - 1  Merely out of Christian charity
   - 2  As a condition so that they may join our Church
   - 3  I don’t know

45. Does your Church perceive a bad structural system (e.g. corrupt government) as one of the main causes of poverty among people?
   - 1  Yes
   - 2  No
   - 3  I don’t know

46. Has your Church a system of speaking out against oppressive social structures?
   - 1  Yes
   - 2  No
   - 3  I don’t know

47. If Yes, give an example, please.

48. How does your Church understand the Gospel of the Cross of Jesus Christ?
   - 1  Difficulties on account of the Gospel must be accepted by a Christian
   - 2  Jesus has accomplished all for us, there is no need for a Christian to suffer again
   - 3  I don’t know
49. Is the practice of “sowing and reaping” making your Church members spiritually weaker?
   □ 1 Yes
   □ 2 No
   □ 3 I don’t know

50. Is there anything you’d like to add?
Appendix 3: Map of Tanzania
Appendix 4: Map of the Archdiocese of Songea
ABSTRACT (DEUTSCH)

DAS EVANGELIUM DES WOHLSTANDS IN AFRIKANISCHEN PFINGSTBEWEGUNGEN: EINE THEOLOGISCHE UND PASTORALE HERAUSFORDERUNG FÜR DIE KATHOLISCHE KIRCHE, AM BEISPIEL VON DER ERZDIÖZESE SONGEA, TANSANIA

Schlüsselworte: Pfingstgemeinschaften, Wohlstandsevangelium, Massenarmut, Option für die Armen, Migration, Umweltschutz, moderne Medientechnologien, Neuevangelisierung, Kirche als Familie Gottes, Versöhnung, Gerechtigkeit und Friede, Selbstständigkeit der Kirche, Kairos und Dialog.


In den letzten drei Jahrzehnten hat das Aufkommen von pfingstlerisch-charismatischen Bewegungen die afrikanische christliche Landschaft geprägt, ja das ganze subsaharische Afrika im Sturm erobert. Die am schnellsten wachsenden pfingstlerisch-charismatischen Bewegungen sind angeblich diejenigen, die Das Evangelium des Wohlstands predigen. Das ist eine theologische Auffassung dessen Botschaft kurz gefasst lautet: „Der Glaube ist der Schlüssel, der die Tür zum Wohlstand öffnet.“ Der Wohlstand, vor allem Geldvermögen und

Nichtsdestotrotz findet die Proliferation des Wohlstandsevangeliums zweifellos im Kontext bitterer Armut statt. Diese Situation führt uns dazu, die Plausibilität der vielen Behauptungen über die außergewöhnliche Rolle, die Das Wohlstandsevangelium in Afrikas sozioökonomischer Transformation hat, in Frage zu stellen. Erhöht diese Doktrin wirklich den Wohlstand der afrikanischen Menschen?

Diese Dissertation versucht zu zeigen, dass Das Wohlstandsevangelium eine theologische und pastorale Herausforderung für die Katholische Kirche darstellt, was die Antwort der Kirche auf das Problem der Armut in Afrika betrifft. Sie argumentiert, dass die Lehre des Wohlstandsevangeliums in Songea populär wird, und dass sie tatsächlich für den zahlenmäßigen Zuwuchs und die Resonanz bei den pfingstlerisch-charismatischen Gemeinschaften verantwortlich ist, die sie vertreten. Die Doktrin ist auch ausschlaggebend dafür, dass Katholiken zu diesen neuen Pfingstgemeinden wechseln. Dieser Wechsel vieler Anhänger der Katholischen Kirche die Kirche veranlasst, ihre Herangehensweise an die Option für die Armen zu verbessern. In diesem Sinn kann die Proliferation des Wohlstandsevangeliums heute interpretiert werden als „kairos“ für die Katholische Kirche, um die Option für die Armen in die Tat umzusetzen.

Die Dissertation argumentiert allerdings, dass die Art und Weise, wie Das Wohlstandsevangelium heute praktiziert wird, von großer Ambivalenz in Bezug auf die Armen ist. Einerseits schließt die Lehre einige Aspekte ein, die die Möglichkeiten für die Armen potentiell verbessern könnten. Aber andererseits gibt es auch viele Dimensionen dieser Doktrin, die klar kontraproduktiv für die Situation der Armen sind. Meine Conclusio ist, dass Das Wohlstandsevangelium im gegenwärtigen modus operandi im Großen und Ganzen nicht
der Schlüssel für eine bedeutende sozioökonomische Umwandlung ist, weder in Songea noch in anderen Teilen Afrikas, die ein ähnliches Wohlstandsevangeliums-Ethos haben.
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Studies

1972—1978 Primary School Education
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1985—1987 Philosophical studies at Peramiho Major Seminary
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