

MISSION AS ACTION IN HOPE FOR PEOPLE WITH ALBINISM
IN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN TANZANIA

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Approbals Sheet

PASCHAL JOHANSEN MATUNGWA has successfully defended his dissertation
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Upon the unanimous approval of the Oral Examination Committee with a grade of
PASSED

MARGARET HELEN U. ALVAREZ, Ph.D.

Chair

JOSEPHAT A. RWEYEMAMU, Ph.D.

Adviser

Lily F. Apura - Apura
LILY F. APURA, Th.D.

Member

VICTOR R. AGUILAN, Th.D.

Member

REYNALDO Y. RIVERA, Ph.D.

Member

MSAFIRI J. MBILU, Th.D.

Member

Accepted in Partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY IN MISSIOLOGY

JEANETH H. FALLER, Th.D.

Dean

Divinity School

MARGARET HELEN U. ALVAREZ, Ph.D.

Dean

University Graduate Programs

December 2, 2020

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved son Amani Muchunguzi Matungwa, my second son, who suddenly died at the age of twenty years while attending national service course in Nachingwea, Tanzania on the 6th day of July in 2018 during which I and my wife were far away- in the Philippines. Our beloved son, nothing will replace your absence in our family.

May your soul rest in peace our beloved son Amani.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation sought to understand how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania responds to the issue of albinism. The study is a missiological and theological dimension of missions of the church in the context of various problems relating to an understanding of albinism. Due to misunderstanding the nature of albinism, persons with albinism in Tanzania and Africa in general have been killed and survivors face severe forms of discrimination and violence. Based on the findings, main causes of all problems facing people with albinism are lack of knowledge about the nature of albinism, poverty, myths, witchcraft practices, and effects of globalization. It must be noted that killing people with albinism is against the core African values—‘I am because we are’ and African Philosophy ‘Ubuntu’—which enhance life of all human beings.

In assessing multiple forms of discrimination facing people with albinism, the salvation-history model of eschatological hope was employed as the lens in suggesting the theology of mission as action in hope as submitted by Jürgen Moltmann. Thus, the way of doing mission as action in hope to people with albinism affirms Moltmann and salvation-history concept. The theology of hope insisted by Moltmann and in salvation-history model of eschatological hope takes history seriously and at the same time puts special emphasis on the reign of God to both present and future lives as a hermeneutical key. The ELCT has largely translated the theology of hope in a realized and actualized form of present reality. Nevertheless, it was found that the ELCT had almost all the time translated mission via diaconic ministry as something of emergency relief and charitable work, an approach not appropriate to people with albinism who need instead community inclusion. For this reason, missions of the ELCT need to be redefined in a manner that is informed in its ways of including people with albinism in the society.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Action in Hope: The hope expected for the end of time, now becomes hope in the present reality.

Albinism: Is a genetic condition where people are born without the usual pigment (color) in their bodies. Their bodies aren't able to make a normal amount of melanin, the chemical that is responsible for eye, skin, and hair color. So, most people with Albinism have very pale skin, hair, and eyes.

Mission: (*Missio Dei*)-Mission is seen as a movement from God to the world, and **missions** are various activities of the church with the aim of serving full humanity and the world as well.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AACC	All African Conference of Churches
ADA	American Disability Act
CRCs	Children Rights Clubs
CACs	Community Advocacy Committees
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
ELCT	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
FBOs	Faith Based Organizations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
IMC	International Missionary Council
IFFs	Inter-Faith Forums
IYDP	International Year of Disabled Persons
JPIC	Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation
NWD	North-Western Diocese
PWA	People with Albinism
PWDs	People with Disabilities PWDs
SELVD	South East of Lake Victoria Diocese
ToTs	Teacher of Teachers
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UPIAS	Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation
UREC	University Research Ethics Committee
UTSS	Under The Same Sun
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contextualizes this research that strives to find how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (or ELCT) deals with the issue of albinism. A number of people with albinism in Tanzania and Africa in general have been killed, the reasons including beliefs in witchcraft, lack of enough knowledge about the nature of albinism, poverty and the effects of globalization being escalated by free trade and free market on gold, diamond, and fish. These effects of globalization stimulated a personal desire for fisherfolk and miners especially around the Lake Victoria zone to think more about super profit and personal gain. For this reason, witch doctors started teaching misconceptions by misleading fisherfolk and miners on wealth gain, success and winning political positions when body parts of people with albinism could be obtained and used in their daily activities. Therefore, it must be clearly stated that this research is focused on mission as action in hope for people with albinism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

Background of the Study

Mission as action in hope is one of the mission calls whereby churches are challenged to respond to needs of people suffering from various economic, socio-cultural stigma and other sufferings in order to bring healing, wholeness and hope to all kinds of life including people with albinism. In verifying this concept P. Michael McCabe, a professor in Mission Theology at Tangaza College, Nairobi in his work “Mission as Action in Hope: A Theological Reflection on our Commitment to the Promotion of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) in our World Today,” argues that:

The promotion of social justice, reconciliation and peace form an integral dimension of the mission of the Church - a mission grounded in and giving concrete expression to the hope we proclaim every time we say in the Our Father: “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” This hope is a distinctive and unique hope originates from the Judeo-Christian experience of God’s active engagement in human history, a hope shaped by and patterned upon the passage of Jesus from life, through death, to new life. (Therefore), Christian mission flows from and gives concrete expression to this hope...It is the means by which the future for which we hope is brought into a transforming relationship with the present in which we live. It is “God’s bridge to a world which has not yet come home to the place prepared for it.”¹

Likewise, David Bosch, an eminent South African missiologist, for example, in his book *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (1991), mentions ‘mission as action in hope’ in his discussion of many elements of the emerging ecumenical missionary paradigms.² His use of the concept ‘mission as action in hope’ is historically tied to the rebirth doctrine on eschatology, but one that seeks to bring something of the future in the present, bringing about a creative tension between the ‘now’ and the ‘future.’³ Bosch describes it in this way: “The fullness of the reign of God is still coming, but precisely the vision of that coming

¹ P. Michael McCabe, *Mission as Action in Hope: A Theological Reflection on our Commitment to the Promotion of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) in our World Today*, accessed August 26, 2019, <https://lasalette.info/366-mission-as-action-in-hope-p-michael-mccabe-sma>.

² Bosch explains these Paradigms in his work *Transforming Mission Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* 1991 (Twentieth Anniversary Edition) pages 368-507 as: Mission as the church with others; mission as *Missio Dei*; mission as mediating salvation; mission as the quest for justice; mission as evangelism; mission as contextualization; mission as liberation; mission as inculturation; mission as common witness; mission as ministry by the whole people of God; mission as witness to people of other living faiths; and mission as theology.

³ D. Mashau, “Mission as Action in Hope in the Context of White Poverty in Pretoria: a Case for Bethlehem Mission Centre” (PhD diss., Northwest University, South Africa, 2012), 59, <http://www.uous.ac.za/ActaTheologica>.

kingdom translates into a radical concern for the ‘penultimate’ (second from the last) rather than with the ‘ultimate’ (the final), into a concern for ‘what is at hand’ rather than for ‘what will be.’⁴

Furthermore, Bosch agrees with Jürgen Moltmann, a German Reformed theologian and Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology, that mission as an action in hope is not just creating hope for the eschatological aspect in life; rather, our hope for the future challenges us to address the current challenges in our society now as the response to what will be actualized in the future.⁵ For that reason therefore, Bosch insists that “anyone who knows that one day there will be no more diseases can and must actively anticipate the conquest of diseases in individuals and society now. And anyone who believes that the enemy of God and humans will be vanquished will already oppose [them] now and in [their] machinations in family and society. For all of this has to do with salvation.”⁶

Moreover, as pointed out by Brown, Moltmann finds the power of hope in the ‘coming of God’ as a force for the transformation of the world.⁷ In this case, the mission for us is a motivation of what will be fully realized in the future. Therefore, in a context like Tanzania and Africa in general where people with albinism experience sufferings (as it will be explained later in detail), mission as action in hope therefore, becomes the most needed mode of doing mission in such a context.

It is now well-known theologically that one of the instruments that God uses in His *missio Dei* is the church. This has been accepted by many theologians and agreed upon in many

⁴ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* - Twentieth Anniversary Edition (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 521. See also D. Mashau, “Mission as Action in Hope in the Context of White Poverty in Pretoria: a Case for Bethlehem Mission Centre” (PhD diss., Northwest University, South Africa, 2012), 59, <http://www.uous.ac.za/ActaTheologica>.

⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (New York and Evanston: SCM Press Ltd, 1967), 10-20, but also David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* - Twentieth Anniversary Edition (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 520.

⁶ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 489.

⁷ Stephen Brown, accessed July 25, 2019, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/50-years-after-theology-of-hope-jurgen-moltmanns-vision-continues-to-inspire>.

ecumenical conferences. For instance, it was insisted by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in the year 2013 that the church is called to make present God's holy and life-affirming plan for the world revealed in Jesus Christ.⁸ From that call, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania as one of the churches in the world is challenged to respond to the issue of albinism in Tanzania as an action in hope toward addressing the predicaments facing people with albinism. Before discussing the conditions and sufferings of people with albinism in Tanzania and on what could be the missional response of the ELCT, it is important to introduce the Evangelical Lutheran Church within the country.

General Background of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) operates in Tanzania—one of the East African Countries. Tanzania is situated between latitude 1 and 11 degrees centigrade South of the Equator and between Longitudes 30 and 40 degrees centigrade East of Greenwich.⁹ It covers a total area of 945,087sq.km including 59,050sq.km of inland water.¹⁰ It is bounded on the North by Uganda and Kenya, on the East by the Indian Ocean, on the South by Mozambique and Malawi, on the South West by Zambia, and on the West by Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, and Rwanda, with a total boundary length of 4,826 km, of which 1,424 km is coastline.¹¹

The ELCT is the federation of Lutheran churches in Tanzania, and one of the largest Lutheran denominations in the world with more than 6.5 million members.¹² Geographically,

⁸ World Council of Churches: *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, Busana, Korea 2013, 8.

⁹ Nations Encyclopedia, accessed August 6, 2019, <https://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Tanzania-LOCATION-SIZE-AND-EXTENT.html#ixzz5vpVVwtwv>.

¹⁰ Nations Encyclopedia, accessed August 6, 2019, <https://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Tanzania-LOCATION-SIZE-AND-EXTENT.html#ixzz5vpVVwtwv>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, accessed August 5, 2019, <https://www.elct.org/>.

ELCT covers Tanzania mainland (Tanganyika) and isles of Unguja and Pemba (Zanzibar). The church is led by a presiding bishop and 26 diocesan bishops who are leaders of 26 dioceses. Historically, by 1938, there were seven Lutheran churches in Tanganyika, as the country was known at that time. In 1938, the churches formed a federation known as the Federation of Lutheran Churches in Tanganyika. On June 19, 1963, the seven Churches, under the umbrella of a federation merged to become synods and dioceses of a single Church, known as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanganyika. The following year, when the union with Zanzibar produced a change of the national name to Tanzania, the Church was renamed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.¹³ Now let us see what are the general situations and conditions facing the people with albinism in Tanzania.

General Situation of People with Albinism

According to ‘An International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,’ in the year 2009, Tanzania disproportionately represented over half of 310 recorded attacks on people with albinism in 23 countries of the African region. Children with albinism are the majority of victims targeted and killed. Roughly two-thirds of the recorded murders are children.¹⁴ But also, according to the research done by the organization Under The Same Sun (UTSS) (2013) in Tanzania and submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, since 2007 up to 2013, 72 documented deaths of people with albinism in Tanzania, and 49 survivals including victims and mutilation have been recorded.¹⁵ Furthermore, within the period of one year, UTSS released a report on 1 April 2014 in Tanzania by the office of the Canadian Charity

¹³ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, accessed August 5, 2019, <https://www.elct.org/>.

¹⁴The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, (2009), “Through Albino Eyes: The Plight of Albino People in Africa’s Great Lakes Region and a Red Cross Response, Advocacy Report,” accessed September 15, 2017, <https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/general/177800-Albinos-Report-EN.pdf>.

¹⁵ Report of Under the Same Sun (UTSS), “Children with Albinism: Violence & Displacement of 16th April 2013, 2017,” accessed September 15, 2017, www.underthesamesun.com.

titled *Reported Attacks of Persons with Albinism*. The document reviews 180 countries and lists 129 recent killings and 181 other attacks, all within 23 African countries.¹⁶ The attacks included mutilation, violence, violation of graves, and cases of asylum-seeking.

Likewise, Ikponwosa Ero, an Albino woman from Nigeria and a United Nations independent expert on the “Enjoyment of Human Rights by Persons with Albinism” (2017) revealed:

Persons with albinism are often victims of human rights violations, particularly in Africa. Since 2006, hundreds of persons with albinism, particularly women and children, have been killed or mutilated, and graves have been desecrated in order to obtain and sell fingers, limbs, hair, nails and other body parts to be used in witchcraft rituals. In the vast majority of cases, these violations have gone unpunished. Many survivors have been forced to flee their homes, communities and even countries to seek protection. In addition, most persons with albinism in the region have faced prejudice and stigmatization, as well as multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination on the basis of visual impairment, colour, gender or age, which prevents them from exercising their economic and social rights, condemns them to ostracism (exclusion) and poverty, and limits their life expectancy.¹⁷

This situation indicates that in some communities, erroneous beliefs and myths, heavily influenced by superstition, put the security and lives of people with albinism at constant risk. For example, in Cameroon, some people believe that sacrificing people with albinism can prevent

¹⁶ Report of Under the Same Sun (UTSS), “Children with Albinism: Violence & Displacement of 16th April 2013, 2017,” accessed September 15, 2017, www.underthesamesun.com.

¹⁷ Ikponwosa Ero, “Waiting to Disappear: International and Regional Standards for the Protection and Promotion of the Human Rights of Persons with Albinism June 2017,” International Bar Association: The Global Voice of the Legal Profession, page 12, last modified 10-August-2019, accessed December 15, 2019, <https://www.ibanet.org>.

volcanic eruption.¹⁸ These beliefs and myths are centuries old and are present in cultural attitudes and practices around the world and it is more dangerous in Africa.

Researcher's Experience: One of the Motivations for this Research

In an attempt to protect people with albinism, the Tanzanian government designated certain schools as temporary holding shelters. These shelters are mostly government-run, with a few run by faith-based organizations. They were originally designed for various persons with disabilities and other special needs but have since 2007 been forced to take in hundreds of children with albinism.¹⁹ Due to that tense situation, children with albinism have been placed in temporary holding shelters that are mostly boarding primary schools. Most of these schools are located in the Lake Zone of North-Western Tanzania, where the mentioned problem is very tense.²⁰ Mugeza Mseto Primary School is one of them, located in the North Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania in Kagera region, just less than 300m from the researcher's house (home). The children at these shelters were placed there either by government officials or by their families in the wake of attacks against people with albinism in the country and the simultaneous absence of adequate protection for them at their homes. These children do not trust anybody in the society. They regard all of us as killers. None of us can come closer to them, even if they know us already as their neighbours. They really fear almost every human more than they fear lions. Faced with this terrible situation, the researcher opted to do something that could be of benefit for people with albinism and the community as well. Therefore, one of the motivations for this research is personal because the researcher is an eye witness to the problems facing people with albinism.

¹⁸Under The Same Sun "Names Used for PWA," accessed August 4, 2019,

<http://www.underthesamesun.com/sites/default/files/Names%20uesd%for%20PWA.pdf>.

¹⁹Report of Under the Same Sun (UTSS), "Children with Albinism: Violence & Displacement of 16th April 2013, 2017," accessed September 15, 2017, www.underthesamesun.com.

²⁰*Ibid.*

Efforts of the Tanzanian Government

The Tanzanian government has tried to fight against this problem through various ways. For instance, on April 8, 2008, President Kikwete (the former President of Tanzania) appointed Al-Shaymaa Kwegyir (a person with albinism) as the first member of the Tanzanian Parliament, with the special task of working towards raising awareness.²¹ Then, in October 2009, the government launched an initiative to stop the attacks, which included public inquiries, investigations, and consciousness campaigns about human rights violations connected with the attacks on people with albinism.²² The public inquiries entrusted government officers the task to draft a list of people affected by albinism in order to create a sort of census for finding out the real estimate and guarantee security to those whose lives are in danger including police escorts for children with albinism who go to school. In the same year (2009), the government launched a countrywide initiative for identifying via secret ballot (vote) those involved in the murders and suspended the traditional healers' licenses.²³ In addition, Salewi (2011) in her research discovered that:

The government of Tanzania has taken stringent measures to protect persons with albinism, the President's directive to conduct a nation-wide campaign on collecting people's opinions about the alleged perpetrators, fast-tracking of criminal investigations and prosecutions of perpetrators, drawing up lists all over the country, banning temporary licenses for witch doctors who are also suspected to be the source of such brutal killing, nomination of one member of the parliament who is also an albino through special seats arrangement and identifying boarding schools for children with albinism.

²¹ Veronica Marcon, "Albinism in Tanzania: A Human Rights Issue-An Experience of Monitoring the "White Black", (Degree in Human Rights, Università Degli Studi De Padova, 2014), 63-64, accessed January 10, 2017, <https://www.academia.edu/9140081/Albinism-in-Tanzania-a-Human-Rights-Issue-An-Experience-of-Monitoring-the-White-Blacks>.

²² Veronica Marcon, "Albinism in Tanzania: A Human Rights Issue," 65.

²³ *Ibid.*

These measures have dropped the incidences of killings. Nevertheless, stigmatization and differential treatment of persons with albinism continue and some filed cases before the courts have taken long to be concluded.²⁴

Also, in trying to fight against the problem, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has published a preliminary report regarding discrimination which has been directed toward people with albinism. This report has been submitted as part of the Human Rights Council resolution 23/13 of 13 June 2013. It reinforced that states would adopt specific measures to protect and preserve the rights to life and security of people with albinism, as well as their rights not to be subject to torture and ill treatment, and ensure their access to adequate health care, employment, education and justice.²⁵ For future plans, the International Federation Secretary General Bekele Geleta recommended that:

Albinism is one of the most unfortunate vulnerabilities...and needs to be addressed immediately at international level. This is a cry for international exposure and help to ensure that people suffering from albinism can be protected from inhumane killings and to be sheltered from the merciless hunters of albino body parts for their potions and spiritual medicine. The main issues that should be addressed include skin cancer prevention education, stigma and discrimination denouncement, and swift prosecution of albino hunters and their sponsors. Therefore, it is clear that albinos are facing many issues in their lives, and must be protected on the basis of human rights even if they look different and unlike any other race on earth. It is imperative to inform the medical community and the general national and international public about the tragedies faced by

²⁴ Diana Henry Salewi, "The Killing of Persons with Albinism in Tanzania: A Social-Legal Inquiry," (L. L. M. Degree, University of Pretoria, Pretoria City, 2011), 37-38.

²⁵ Ikponwosa Ero, "Waiting to Disappear: International and Regional Standards for the Protection and Promotion of the Human Rights of Persons with Albinism June 2017," International Bar Association: The Global Voice of the Legal Profession, page 12, last modified 10-August-2019, accessed December 15, 2019, <https://www.ibanet.org>.

albinos to protect them from skin cancer and ritualistic murders by individuals seeking wealth through clandestine markets perpetuating witchcraft.²⁶

On this basis, and until the present, there are some convictions in Tanzania but the first ever conviction for the killing of people with albinism in Tanzania occurred on 23 September 2009 at the High Court in Kahama area. This was a landmark verdict, due to the fact that there have been more than 50 murders known at that time and this was the first actual conviction. The conviction came about following the murder and mutilation of a 14-year-old boy called Matatizo Dunia, who was attacked by three men in Bukombe district in Shinyanga region in December 2008. The men carried Matatizo Dunia from his home late at night before chopping him into pieces.²⁷ One of them was later found with Dunia's leg in his possession. The rest of Dunia's body parts were located concealed underground. The men confessed a desire to sell Dunia's parts to witch doctors.²⁸

Initial Efforts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

It is obviously true that in this context where people with albinism experience various sufferings such as discrimination, exclusion, mutilation, and even death, the mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) is challenged on how to respond to the problem by exploring a kind of hope that can be deployed, so that people with albinism can enjoy fullness of life. In responding to that challenge, the ELCT in 2014 inaugurated an official document entitled "Guideline-Knowledge of Eradicating Violence in the Society" (*Mwongozo-Elimu ya Kuondoa Ukatili katika Jamii*).²⁹ This task was carried out by the ELCT Desk of Policy

²⁶ Report of Under the Same Sun (UTSS), "Children with Albinism: Violence & Displacement of 16th April 2013, 2017," accessed September 15, 2017, www.underthesamesun.com.

²⁷ Under The Same Sun, accessed March 12, 2018, https://www.Three_men_to_hung_for_Tanzania_albino_murder.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ ELCT document "Mwongozo-Elimu ya Kuondoa Ukatili katika Jamii," 2014, 2. A document from ELCT headquarters in Arusha prepared in 2014 by the Desk of Policy Analysis and Advocacy of the ELCT in order to fight against violence in the society including the killings of people with Albinism.

Analysis and Advocacy under the office of the ELCT-General Secretary headquarters in Arusha.³⁰ This guideline aimed at teaching facilitators (Teacher of Teachers-ToTs) who could afterwards teach in all 26 dioceses of the ELCT from diocesan to the family levels.³¹ In particular, the focus of this guideline reads:

1.3 SHABAHA YA MWONGOZO HUU

*Shabaha ya Mwongozo huu ni kutoa elimu ya sheria mbali mbali ili kusaidia kuondoa ukatili katika jamii zetu. ...Ili kufanikisha adhima hii, elimu itatolewa kwa wawezeshaji (ToTs) kwanza namna ya kutumia mwongozo huu ili wao waweze kuendelea kutoa elimu barabara kwa jamii nzima, mpaka kwenye ngazi ya familia... Na kupitia mwongozo huu watu wengi wataelimika na kubadilisha mitizamo yao ya kimaisha na kuhakikisha kuwa haki inatendeka na amani inakuwepo katika jamii zetu, ...mila na tamaduni zenye kupelekea ukatili zinaachwa.*³²(The focus of this guideline is to offer different legal knowledge in order to help in eradicating violence in our societies...In order to accomplish this objective, knowledge will first of all be provided to teacher of teachers (ToTs) the way of using this guideline so that they afterwards continue properly educating the entire society, up to the family level...And through this guideline a number of people will be educated and eventually changing their worldviews in regard to their lifestyle and making sure that human rights is respected and ensuring the presence of peace in our society...and to make sure that customs and traditions that lead to violence are completely stopped.³³

³⁰ Interview with Aniceth Maganya, the ELCT Presiding Bishop's Office Coordinator in Arusha, formerly working as the head of the Desk of Policy Analysis and Advocacy of the ELCT from 2010-2014, on September 25, 2020.

³¹*ibid.*

³² Mwongozo-Elimu ya Kuondoa Ukatili katika Jamii 1-3.

³³ Mwongozo-Elimu ya Kuondoa Ukatili katika Jamii- 2.

For instance; guideline number 2:2 under the title “*Utetezi wa Haki*” (Human Rights Advocacy), insists that “*Kila mtu anapewa Haki sawa za Binadamu kwa sifa yake ya kuwa binadamu. Lakini mara nyingi zinavunjwa. Kwa hiyo ni lazima tuzitetee...mfano mauaji ya albino*” (everyone is granted equal human rights as human being. But every so often it has been violated. Therefore it is our duty to defend it...For example; the killings of people with albinism.)³⁴ Therefore, the focus of the ELCT is very clear in her plans of fighting against the problem of albinism. But the results of the findings of this research discovered that not all 26 dioceses of the ELCT implemented this plan. This duty was left to an individual diocese to decide either to fully engage on that issue of albinism or not.³⁵ Only some dioceses including North Western Diocese, Karagwe Diocese, East of Lake Victoria Diocese, South East of Lake Victoria Diocese, and Diocese in Mara Region have tackled the problem of albinism as explained in chapters four and five of this work.³⁶

Some official statements in regard to the problem of albinism were officially announced by some of the dioceses of the ELCT while others remained silent. For instance, in early March 2015, North Western Diocese on her diocesan meeting that included some international church leaders from several parts of the world especially Africa, Europe and Asia, attended a five-day meeting in Bukoba, and raised a concern over increased incidents of albino and elderly killings.³⁷ At that diocesan meeting the ELCT, North Western Diocese (ELCT/NWD) declared an official statement about albinism on March 4, 2015 and called for bold action to end the problem.³⁸ Up

³⁴ Mwongozo-Elimu ya Kuondoa Ukatili katika Jamii, 5-6.

³⁵ Broad explanation is found in chapter four and five of this work.

³⁶ Interview with Bishop Abednego Nkamuhabwa Keshomshahara-Bishop of the North Western Diocese on 3rd January, 2020; Also interview with Mrs. Naomi Kahigi-The Program Coordinator at the Human Rights Desk of ELCT/NWD, 9th January, 2020; and Interview with Rev. Modest Pasha-ShauKu Program Coordinator of ELCT/NWD, 13th January, 2020.

³⁷ Meddy Mulisa, “Tanzania: Church Leaders Concerned Over Albino, Ritual Killings,” *Tanzania Daily News*, March 6, 2015, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201503060659.html>.

³⁸ Interview with Abednego Nkamuhabwa Keshomshahara, January 08, 2020.

until the present, some programs in that diocese are very active in fighting against the problem of albinism. Then, on March 24, 2017 Bishop Emanuel Makalla of the South East of Lake Victoria Diocese (SELVD) of the ELCT, strongly condemned tyranny against those with albinism.³⁹

However, because the problem was not completely solved, on the 7th day of October 2019 the ELCT/NWD invited some religious leaders, lawyers, and community from Mara, Mwanza and Kagera regions for the inter-faith meeting under SHAUKU Program.⁴⁰ The aim of that meeting was to find how they could work together on matters pertaining to women rights, children and the rights of people with albinism.⁴¹ Some strategies were laid down and positive results are observed as explained in chapter five, but the issue of albinism remains a challenge in the society until today.

All of these measures certainly testify to attempts made by the Tanzanian government in general and the church in particular, but some measures were not sustainable and the killings of people with albinism were not completely eradicated as it was afterwards confirmed by various researchers.

Statement of the Problem

In Tanzania, there are several common myths about albinism that put the lives of persons with albinism at risk. These myths include the belief that body parts of people with albinism can bring wealth and good luck when ground into witchcraft potions.⁴² Although Christianity is a

³⁹ Susan Allen, "Lutheran Bishop in Tanzania Speaks up against the Persecution of People with Albinism," *Lutheran World Information*, March 27, 2017.

⁴⁰ Find more explanation on 'SHAUKU' Program in chapter five of this work.

⁴¹ Interview with Modest Pasha, January 10, 2020.

⁴²Report of Under the Same Sun (UTSS), "Children with Albinism: Violence & Displacement of 16th April 2013, 2017," accessed September 15, 2017, www.underthesamesun.com.

popular religion across the country, it has not succeeded in completely eradicating these false beliefs.

Being challenged by this situation and related issues, the researcher was motivated to do research focusing on mission as action in hope for people with albinism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania as a way of addressing and seeking answers to the problem.

In order to accomplish the aim of this work the researcher intended to find answers to these specific questions:

1. What is the general opinion of church authorities in Tanzania about people with albinism?
2. What are the conditions or situations of people with albinism in Tanzania?
3. What is the Biblico-Theological basis of “Mission as Action in Hope” for vulnerable groups particularly those living with albinism?
4. What is the understanding of mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania connecting to the problem of albinism?
5. What are the mission programs of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania with regard to vulnerable groups particularly people with albinism?

Significance of the Study

As has been indicated in the background of this study, mission as action in hope is one of the mission calls whereby churches are challenged to respond to the needs of people suffering from various economic, socio-cultural stigma and other sufferings in order to bring healing, wholeness, and hope to all kinds of life. This study focused on how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania responds to issues related to people with albinism. The future plan is to

publish this work so that it can be obtained and referred. Therefore, the results of this study should benefit the following:

People with Albinism. The study explored how big the problem is and which immediate measures should be taken by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, the states, NGOs, and the community at large in responding to the problem. Therefore, the study desired to specifically benefit people with albinism to actualize their hope and fulfill their dreams as people created in the image of God and eventually be able to fully integrate themselves to the community.

The Church. The study has proposed a missiological model with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania can consider employing while participating in God's mission with respect to mission as action in hope. Moreover, the study wished to help church leaders gain a deeper understanding of mission as action in hope and enable them to develop relevant programs that focus on helping people with albinism to fully enjoy life. Basically, this study has introduced theological norms of life in the light of God's words for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, given that people with albinism experience discrimination, stigma, and sometimes violence or death because of their appearance.

The Government. Because this work is expected to be published, the suggested solutions of this research may bring attention to the Tanzanian government especially in increasing efforts for security and protection of people with albinism. This study may also assist Tanzanian government officials in the making of policies on the protection of the rights of persons with albinism.

The Society/Community. The published book of this dissertation may likewise be used to enlighten and create awareness of society in regard to people with albinism. Some suggestions

could be used by Church leaders and volunteers in sensitizing the community about the reality and nature of albinism.

Silliman University. The study desired especially to benefit the Divinity School, by providing a source of reference for the next researchers in similar studies to develop another theological basis and to identify new guidance that discusses mission as action in hope. Additionally, this study can be explored from other perspectives in order to introduce different approaches depending on the academic discipline. For instance, apart from theological approach, the problem of albinism can either be discussed scientifically, sociologically or based on human rights.

United Evangelical Mission and other Ecumenical Partners. In view of the fact that the end of this study has produced missiological bases on how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania responds to the issue of albinism, it may be used by the United Evangelical Mission and other ecumenical partners in implementing programs in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The potential publication based on this research may be helpful to non-government organizations and faith-based organizations in implementing their programs while dealing with the issue of albinism particularly in Tanzania.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study centered basically on a missiological approach on how the church in her mission can particularly set sights on the issue of albinism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

The geographical research of the study was focused on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. The researcher was not able to travel all over the country; rather, sampling

procedures were followed. Consequently, although specific areas were selected to represent the entire region, the data were analyzed and used to generalize to the entire country.

Research Design and Methodology

Mouton and Prozesky (2001) define a research design as “a plan or blueprint of how someone intends conducting the research.”⁴³ The research design of this study aligned with the research problem and questions regarding the missiological and theological dimensions of the mission of the church in the context of various problems relating to the understanding of albinism. A qualitative research method was employed. As Bricki and Green (2007) affirm, qualitative research method aims at answering questions concerning the ‘what’, ‘how’, or ‘why’ of the phenomenon.⁴⁴ Therefore, the importance of qualitative assessment in this study lies in the fact that it dealt with the assessment of attitudes, opinions, and behavior.⁴⁵

In order to get appropriate information relating to this issue, this study investigated church documents such as the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran church in Tanzania, Bishops’ reports, minutes of the church meetings relating to vulnerable groups, and documents concerning church programs such as advocacy and human rights issues. The aim of studying these church documents was to find out if and how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania in her mission activities created a missiological and theological basis of hope regarding people with albinism in Tanzania.

⁴³ Earl Babbie Johann Mouton and Payze Voster Boshoff Prozesky, *The Practice of Social Research* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa, 2001), 74.

⁴⁴ N. Brikci & J.A. Green, *A Guide to Using Qualitative Research Methodology* (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine: Research Unit, 2007), 2-3.

⁴⁵ Earl Babbie Johann Mouton and Payze Voster Boshoff Prozesky, *The Practice of Social Research* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa, 2001), 74f.

In selecting informants, non-probability sampling techniques were employed.⁴⁶ Thus, informants were not randomly selected, but instead, purposely selected. As Mouton and Prozesky explain, informants are members of the groups who can talk directly about the group *per se*.⁴⁷ Therefore, informants were selected on the basis of their knowledge of the phenomenon under study. For this reason, this study set its sights particularly on some church leaders such as Bishops, General Secretaries, and personnel or directors of developments or human rights desks/ departments within the dioceses. This is because they have the authority to speak on behalf of the church and, of equal importance, they had genuine information about the topic of this study. However, personnel at the ELCT head office in Arusha region were also contacted to gain access to official and relevant information from various Lutheran dioceses in Tanzania on the subject of mission to people with albinism.

Furthermore, because this study aimed at identifying some conditions relating to people with albinism in Tanzania, some persons with albinism were also interviewed. In addition, participant observation was also used by the researcher to collect data. Moreover, some of the reports from non-government organizations (NGOs) such as Under The Same Sun (UTSS)⁴⁸ and human rights reports/documents reporting particularly on people with albinism in Tanzania and Africa in general were employed in order to provide critical conditions facing people with albinism. Finally, some official reports from some of the head teachers and directors of boarding

⁴⁶ Earl Babbie Johann Mouton and Payze Voster Boshoff Prozesky, *The Practice of Social Research* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa, 2001), 168. See also Rweyemamu, Josephat. *Conversion Discourse in African Perspective* (Kamen: Hartmut Spenner, 2014,) 38-39.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Under The Same Sun is a Canadian-found organization with support focused on Tanzania and based in Dar Es Salaam founded in 2008 by Peter Ash with a vision to 'Promote via Advocacy and education, the wellbeing of persons who are always marginalized or misunderstood. They are driven by the belief that all people have intrinsic value and since they are created in the image of God. Therefore, they are acting upon the moral and human rights values to support victims to end the discriminations and persecutions of the innocent albinos.

schools where children with albinism lived were also studied and some teachers and students with albinism were interviewed (Appendix A: Interview Guides).

Questions were well planned and structured in two different categories of questions. Some were closed (where the respondent was asked to select an answer from among a list provided by the researcher) and others were open-ended questions (where the respondent was asked to provide their own answer to the question).⁴⁹ This technique involved writing down the questions to which the respondents individually responded also by writing.

A semi-structured interview technique either by phone or email was also employed. According to Johnson, in semi-structured interviews, the interviewer and respondent engage in a formal interview by using an interview guide—a list of questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation, usually in a particular order.⁵⁰ A semi-structured interview is best used when one will not get more than one chance to interview someone.⁵¹ All leaders were asked the same questions, but there were additional more specific questions for some, depending on the nature of the context. For this reason, many questions were dependent on the key informant. This method was used because it was the most practical for respondents both near and far.⁵²

The study used a qualitative approach in data analysis. The data were carefully read in order to gain a holistic grasp of thematic structures from the respondent's descriptions. Then they were arranged into different themes informed by research questions. Themes were identified by highlighting them differently to reflect each person's perceptions. This helped the researcher to

⁴⁹ Earl Babbie Johann Mouton and Payze Voster Boshoff Prozesky, *The Practice of Social Research* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa, 2001), 233.

⁵⁰ Robert Wood Johnson, "Qualitative Research Guideline Project," accessed August 12, 2019, <https://www.qualres.org/HomeSemi-3629>.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Kisilu Donald Kombo, and Delno L. A. Tromp, *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction* (Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa, 2006), 89.

organize themes that had similar meanings and others that were different but of great interest to the study.

The masculine pronoun of God used in this work, especially quotations from the Bible, does not represent the gender of God. Also, the use of terms such as ‘people/person with albinism’ was preferred rather than the term ‘albino’ in order to stress that they are people first who then have the condition of albinism. However, the term “albino” was used in quotations from verbatim data. Also utilized was the term witchdoctors to mean “false traditional healers” as distinguished from traditionalists or traditional healers who are the “true traditional doctors”.

Several missiologists agree that missiological study by its nature is integrative in its methodological approach.⁵³ This means that the flourishing of missiological research is the result of benefiting from the utilization of methodologies from the related disciplines of the social sciences, linguistic sciences, statistical sciences, and so on.⁵⁴ For example, Bosch (1991), in combining research methodologies from philosophy of science, mission theology, and mission history, identified the six main paradigm-shifts in the history of the theology of mission. According to Enoch Wan, Bosch, after analyzing the main influences of the Enlightenment on Christian thought, powerfully illustrated the advantage of integrative research methodology.⁵⁵

Therefore, this study employed moral/religious model including some other models, and salvation-history models in data analysis and evaluation. The reason for employing the former model is that one of the major root causes for the discriminatory acts against people with disabilities is religion-related. Traditional Biblical and theological perspectives on disability give

⁵³ Enoch Wan, “Rethinking Missiological Research Methodology: Exploring A New Direction,” accessed August 20, 2019.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254574296_Rethinking_missiological_research_methodology_exploring_a_new_direction/link/558d675f08ae15962d893668/download.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

the impression that disability is a tragedy and a punishment or curse from God for sin.⁵⁶ Furthermore, theological interpretations of disability have significantly shaped the ways in which society relates to people with disabilities. Retief and Letsosa (2018) are right in their argument that the Bible is intermingled with texts that have been interpreted in oppressive ways and together these continue to reinforce the marginalization and exclusion of people with disabilities in the social, economic, political, and religious life of society.⁵⁷ On the other hand, the salvation-history model was chosen because it takes history seriously and at the same time it puts a special emphasis on the reign of God as a hermeneutical key. Equally important the salvation-history model presents the concept of the reign of God as both present and future. From that understanding therefore, this study has developed a theology of hope that takes history seriously but also respects the concept of the reign of God as both present and future.

Ethical Considerations

Clearance was secured from the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) (Appendix B). Also an official letter from the researcher's employer was granted in order to officially introduce the researcher for allowing him to access official documents/information within the country (Appendix C). With regard to the key informants, their informed consent was obtained before proceeding with the research (Appendix D). Also, the informants were asked if they wanted to remain anonymous. In the conduct of the study, full confidentiality of the informant was assured. No information that discloses the informant's identity would be released or published without the specific consent of the informant.

⁵⁶M. Retief, & R. Letsosa, "Models of Disability: A Brief Overview," *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 74(1), a4738 (2018), accessed August 20, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4738> and <https://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v74n1/06.pdf>.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

Organization of the Study

This work has six chapters. The first chapter deals with the background of the study by showing the worldwide problems related to the research problem. It states clearly the current problem by focusing on “Mission as Action in Hope for People with Albinism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.” Also in this chapter is the aim of the study and the general and specific objectives. In addition to research questions, the research design and methods as well as the scope and limitations of the study are also clearly demarcated.

The second chapter primarily involves the examination of documents such as books, reports, theses, dissertations, and journals that directly relate to this research. On these bases, the researcher constructed arguments for the study by relying on views from a number of them—including what has been done and what questions remained unanswered. This chapter moreover explains the general perception of people with disabilities and the mission of the Church for them. In data analysis, the moral/religious model and salvation-history model were identified. Furthermore, Chapter II has vividly introduced Biblico and the theoretical framework by defining key concepts of this research and by showing research direction that helped in the analysis and interpretation of research findings.⁵⁸ The theology of hope is depicted in this chapter as the theology that affirms life in the midst of suffering and death.

Chapter III describes various conditions and situations that affect people with albinism specifically in Tanzania. This part of the study relied mostly on the reports and documents from some organizations such as Under the Same Sun, Albino Foundation, and others that dealt specifically with people with albinism. However, reports from directors and head teachers of the

⁵⁸ Sarah Vinz, Sample Theoretical Framework of a Dissertation, from <https://www.scribbr.com/dissertation/theoretical-framework-example/> Retrieved on 15th May, 2019.

boarding schools/shelters where children with albinism lived were also depended on. These conditions portray the real situation facing people with albinism.

The fourth chapter describes how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) understands mission in relation to people with albinism. Given that the term ‘mission’ is wide and it can mean different things depending on time and context, this chapter therefore set its sights on obtaining only information about mission in relation to people with albinism in Tanzania. For this reason, there were set demarcations of the term in order to avoid broader understanding of its meaning. The research did not intend to trace historical or theological understanding of the term mission, but it particularly tried to acquire information relevant to ELCT’s encounters of the problem of albinism in her missions.

In order to adhere to this goal, the constitution of the ELCT was studied. Furthermore, the aim of this chapter was also to acquire answers to the following specific questions: Does mission in the ELCT mean something more than saving souls and planting churches? Does mission in the ELCT mean something more than emergency relief and charitable work? Does mission in the ELCT touch people with albinism? In addition, some documents relating to deaconical work were also studied. Moreover, this chapter included the results of the interviews. From the analysis therefore, the study identifies how the Church understands her mission in relation to people with albinism.

Chapter V explores and analyzes specific programs of the ELCT with respect to people with albinism. In analyzing these programs, the study looked into whether or not the ELCT has special programs for people with albinism.

Finally, an overall summary of this research may be found in Chapter VI. Also offered in this chapter are recommendations and suggestions in regard to mission as action in hope for

people with albinism in Tanzania and how the ELCT, other institutions, and the community can tackle the issue of albinism in society.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND BIBLICO-THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter primarily involves examining documents such as books, reports, theses, dissertations, and journals that directly relate to the research. Thus, the myths and misconceptions of African societies on albinism were looked into and arguments were constructed based on these views. The theology of hope is depicted as a theology that affirms life in the midst of suffering and death. It also explains how different theologians understand mission as action in hope in relation to *missio Dei*. Different conceptual models of eschatology are portrayed in connection with mission, action, and hope. A general perception of people with disabilities and the mission of the church to persons with disability is explained. Then, the Biblico-theological framework is configured as the structure of this study focusing on the mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania to people with albinism.

Theology of Hope: A Theology that Affirms Life in the Midst of Suffering and Death

The conception of hope is multifaceted; it can be approached from a variety of fields together with theology, psychology, and philosophy, to mention but a few. In so far as people have a general image of it, the multiple contexts of hope make it a difficult notion to understand. Some consider hope as somewhat illusory; that is, as nothing else but wishful thinking or a strong desire to see things get better in the future. Others see it as an abstract optimism,

according to which everything will be fine.⁵⁹ In analyzing this issue, this dissertation approaches the concept of hope through theological lens.

Foundation of the Theology of Hope

Several theologians agree that the theology of hope emerged as a new approach to theology in the 1960s.⁶⁰ Its leading proponent was a German theologian, Jürgen Moltmann, a Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Tübingen. His theology is well known in his book *Theology of Hope* translated from German language *Theologie der Hoffnung* in 1965. In his theology, Moltmann challenges the notion of looking at the noun ‘hope’ in futuristic views. He believed that God’s promise to act in the future is more important than the fact that he has acted in the past.⁶¹ He called upon the Christian community not to withdraw from public life, but to actively participate in the world in order to aid in the coming of the better world. He also pointed out that a Christian is to be regarded as a ‘hoper’ who is impatient with evil and death in this present age.⁶² His main argument is that *the theology of hope* is to show how theology can set out from hope and begin to consider its theme in an eschatological light.⁶³

Therefore, it was Moltmann who put the foundation of the theology of hope. Many other biblical scholars agree with Moltmann in the way he portrays his arguments. For instance, Mashau insists this theology (theology of hope) has had much influence and impact in the third-world churches. African theologians have called for the theology of hope in the face of poverty,

⁵⁹ Barnabe Anzuruni Msabah, “Empowerment by Hope: A Phenomenological Study on the Health and Wellbeing of African Refugee Migrants” (PhD diss., University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, 2016), 39.

⁶⁰ D. Mashau, “Mission as Action in Hope in the Context of White Poverty in Pretoria: a Case for Betlehem Mission Centre,” (PhD diss., Northwest University, South Africa, 2012), 60, accessed on September 15, 2017, <http://www.uous.ac.za/ActaTheologica>.

⁶¹ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (New York and Evanston: SCM Press Ltd, 1967), 16-17.

⁶² Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 18-19.

⁶³ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 11.

HIV and Aids and other human afflictions.⁶⁴ However, in this study the theology of hope is used in the face of discrimination, stereotypes, and many practices of derogatory form affecting people with albinism in Tanzania and Africa, in general.

Theology of Hope and the Doctrine of Eschatology:

The Conflict between Hope and Experience (Romans 8:24-25)

Moltmann reinterpreted the doctrine of the last things (eschatology) as a doctrine of hope, seeing it as a starting point for a new understanding of God in history, of Christ and salvation, of the church and her mission. His insistence in understanding the theology of hope is that eschatology should not be its end, but its beginning.⁶⁵ For him, eschatology is the medium of Christian faith, and the key in which everything in it is set.⁶⁶ In his theology of hope, Moltmann wants to settle the conflict between hope and experience (found in Romans 8:24-25) that reads: “For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees. But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.”⁶⁷ From that notion, everywhere in the New Testament, Moltmann insists, the Christian hope is directed towards what is not yet visible. For him, this kind of expectation is hoping against hope and thereby brands the visible realm of present experience as god-forsaken, temporary reality that is to be left behind.⁶⁸ For that reason, he contends that an old hope for the end of time now becomes hope in the present reality, a hope opposed to the way things are.⁶⁹ That is why in his

⁶⁴D. Mashau, “Mission as Action in Hope in the Context of White Poverty in Pretoria: a Case for Bethlehem Mission Centre” (PhD diss., Northwest University, South Africa, 2012), 60, accessed on September 15, 2017, <http://www.uous.ac.za/ActaTheologica>.

⁶⁵ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 16.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Romans 8:24-25.

⁶⁸ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 18.

⁶⁹ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, i

preface, Moltmann has already explained his aim that "...it is to show how theology can set out from hope and begin to consider its theme in an eschatological light. For this reason they enquire into the ground of the hope of Christian faith and into the responsible exercise of this hope in thought and action in the world today."⁷⁰ He further maintains that:

Those who hope in Christ can no longer put up with reality as it is, but begin to suffer under it, to contradict it. Peace with God means conflict with the world, for the goad (drive/push) of the promised future stabs inexorably into the flesh of every unfulfilled present. Such hope, he continued, makes the Church the source of continual new impulses towards the realization of righteousness, freedom and humanity here in the light of the promised future that is to come.⁷¹

Therefore, he affirms that it is much more important to present hope as the foundation and the mainspring of theological thinking as such, and to introduce the eschatological perspective into our statements on divine revelation, on the resurrection of Christ, on the mission of faith and on history.⁷²

In addition, in his lecture in January 2016 at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, Moltmann reflected on the themes of his writings over his long theological career of what it means to live, to think and to hope in the presence of God's love. He argued that: "In human beings, knowledge of the 'living God' awakens a thirst and hunger for life, it makes them

⁷⁰ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 11.

⁷¹ Stephen Brown, accessed July 25, 2019, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/50-years-after-theology-of-hope-jurgen-moltmanns-vision-continues-to-inspire>, also obtained in: Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and Implications of Christian Eschatology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 21-22.

⁷² Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (New York and Evanston: SCM Press Ltd, 1967), 19.

dissatisfied with what they are, and impels them to look for a future in which more life will enter the lives they already have.”⁷³

That is why Stephen Brown, the author of “A Study on the Role of the Churches in East Germany's ‘Peaceful Revolution’” (1989) and a contributor to the *Encyclopedia of Contemporary German Culture* (1999), argued that the insistence on such future-oriented, divinely-inspired dissatisfaction is one that has been present in Moltmann's theology since publication of *Theology of Hope* in 1964.⁷⁴ Also, Bosch, while discussing mission as action in hope, emphasizes theology, history, and the development of eschatological understanding.⁷⁵ He also challenged futuristic views in regard to the theology of ‘hope.’ He said:

We need a way beyond both (eschatologization and historicization of mission). We need eschatology for missions which is both future-directed and oriented to the here and now. It must be an eschatology that holds in creative and redemptive tension the already and the not yet; the world of sin and rebellion, and the world God loves; the new age that has already begun and the old that has not yet ended; justice as well as justification; the gospel of liberation and the gospel of salvation...Christian hope does not spring from despair about the present. We hope because of what we have already experienced. Christian hope is possession and yearning, repose and activity, arrival and being on the way.⁷⁶

⁷³ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and Implications of Christian Eschatology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 21-22, also obtained in Jürgen Moltmann, *The Living God and the Fullness of Life* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2016), 23.

⁷⁴ Stephen Brown, accessed July 25, 2019, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/50-years-after-theology-of-hope-jurgen-moltmanns-vision-continues-to-inspire>.

⁷⁵ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 510-523.

⁷⁶ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 520.

Furthermore, Mashau (2012) insists that the theology of ‘hope’ has implications for both the present and future.⁷⁷ In his model of healing especially in South Africa in the context of white poverty in Pretoria, Mashau outlines the theology of ‘hope’ as a kind of theology needed most in this world of severe pain and suffering. His main argument is that “theology of hope does not encourage the spirit of withdrawal from the present world and its problems. On the contrary, it encourages Christians to participate in a meaningful way in the fight against evil and suffering in this world. (He maintains) the militant church continues to strive in the midst of all tribulation hoping for a better future. This encourages the church, out of compassion and mercy, to identify and accompany those in pain in their journey in life (James 4:13-18).”⁷⁸ He further maintains that:

Theology of hope is based on the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. He (Jesus) became our Emmanuel (God with us) when he humbled and identified Himself with the fallen humanity in their shame and rejection. His ministry was characterized by mercy and compassion, such that He also accompanied them in their journey of pain and suffering until he paid for their debts by hanging shamefully on the Cross (Philippians 2:5-11)... Theology of hope is grounded in the resurrection power of Jesus Christ...that Christians now live in anticipation of a better future... (However), theology of hope has implications for the present....⁷⁹

⁷⁷ D. Mashau, “Mission as Action in Hope in the Context of White Poverty in Pretoria: a Case for Bethlehem Mission Centre” (PhD diss., Northwest University, South Africa, 2012), 60, accessed on September 15, 2017, <http://www.uous.ac.za/ActaTheologica>.

⁷⁸ D. Mashau, “Mission as Action in Hope in the Context of White Poverty in Pretoria: a Case for Bethlehem Mission Centre” (PhD diss., Northwest University, South Africa, 2012), 61, accessed on September 15, 2017, <http://www.uous.ac.za/ActaTheologica>.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

Just as Oscar Cullmann observes the missionary work of the Church is an eschatological foretaste of the kingdom of God, and the Biblical hope of the end,⁸⁰ Mashau is right by insisting that theology of hope has implications for the present. He maintains:

It gives the church strength to adhere to faith in the midst of trouble. The militant church continues to strive in the midst of all tribulation hoping for the better future, a future where it will become victorious when the earth and heavens and all of the redeemed humanity are restored (Revelation 21). An exegetical reading of Revelation 21 holds the following pointers with regard to the inauguration of the new Jerusalem, the holy city of God: it will be a marvel; it will be a future home for God's people from among nations; it will be a perfect home with perfect beauty; it will last forever; it will be filled with God's presence and glory, and it will be the inheritance of God's people. It can be concluded that the militant church (*ecclesiae militates*) will become a triumphant church tomorrow.⁸¹

This model of mission creates a theology of hope as a kind of theology most needed in this world. Theology of hope is therefore understood as a theology that seeks to affirm the life of God's people in the midst of suffering and death based on Jesus Christ, who not only identified with God's people in their shame and rejection but also accompanied them in their journey of life in pain and suffering.⁸²

From this broad understanding, mission as action in hope employs the Salvation-History Model of Eschatological Hope and the understanding of Moltmann, Bosch, and Mashau in

⁸⁰ Oscar Cullman, "Eschatology and Missions in the New Testament," in *The Theology of the Christian mission*, ed. G. H. Anderson (London: SCM Press Limited, 1961), 42-54.

⁸¹ Mashau, "Action in Hope," 61.

⁸² Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (New York and Evanston: SCM Press Ltd, 1967), 338.

building its theology of hope that could help people with albinism in Tanzania to actualize their dreams.

Mission as Action in Hope in relation to *Missio Dei* and the Understanding of Eschatology

A new World Council of Churches Affirmation on Mission and Evangelism entitled “Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes” (2013) produced an ecumenical sensitivity to seek vision, concepts, and directions of a renewed understanding and practice of mission and evangelism in changing landscapes.⁸³ These affirmations include the following: mission begins in the heart of the Triune God and the love that binds together the Holy Trinity overflows to all humanity and creation. The missionary God who sent the Son to the world calls all God’s people (John 20:21) and empowers them to be a community of hope. The church is commissioned to celebrate life, and to resist and transform all life-destroying forces, in the power of the Holy Spirit (John 20:22) to become living witnesses to the coming reign of God.⁸⁴ These ecumenical sensitivities remind the church to revisit some of her theological understanding while participating in *missio Dei*.

In short, as one may put it, the church is a sign of hope and an expression of the kingdom of God here on Earth.⁸⁵ Therefore, *missio Dei* as the most recent mission paradigm encompasses mission as action in hope in its wider perspective. This perception challenges us to see that *missio Dei* is incomplete without addressing the challenges of people suffering from various predicaments including people with albinism. As far as an integral dimension of mission

⁸³ World Council of Churches: *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (Busana Korea, 2013), 1.

⁸⁴ World Council of Churches: *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, (Busana, Korea 2013), 1.

⁸⁵ WCC: “Together Towards Life,” 9.

of the church is concerned, one of the challenges of mission in this study is to find which kind of hope the church offers to people with albinism in Tanzania and Africa in general. In that case, therefore, actions towards healing and wholeness of life of persons and communities are important expressions of the church's mission.⁸⁶

Eschatology as the Christian Hope:

The Desire of Hope in a Situation of Commotion

John R. Lup, Jr. in his doctoral dissertation entitled "Eschatology in a Secular Age: An Examination of the Use of Eschatology in the Philosophies of Heidegger, Berdyaev and Blumenberg", defines eschatology as that which seeks and analyzes answers to the question of what will happen at the end—the end of time, the end of man, the end of civilization.⁸⁷ Therefore, concepts of the future are 'terminal images.' Lup (2013) points out that the idea of eschatology was born out of the desire of hope in a situation of tumult/confusion⁸⁸ whereas, McGrath (1994) had argued that the modern use of the term eschatology arose in a theological context while studying final things or discourse about the end.⁸⁹ For that reason, in order to understand the theology of hope one may also comprehend and figure out the theology of eschatology.

⁸⁶WCC: "Together Towards Life," 8.

⁸⁷ John R. Lup, Jr., "Eschatology in a Secular Age: An Examination of the Use of Eschatology in the Philosophies of Heidegger, Berdyaev and Blumenberg" (PhD diss., University of South Florida, Florida, 2013), 5, accessed August 26, 2019, <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd>.

⁸⁸Lup, Jr., "Eschatology in a Secular Age," 6.

⁸⁹ Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 465.

Genesis and Nature of Christian Hope-Eschatology

The term eschatology as Lup explains, originates from the Greek *eschatos* meaning *last*, end, or final things and was primarily applied to *space*, as in farthest or extreme in distance.⁹⁰ However, it is the aspect of *time* that is usually emphasized in this kind of understanding of eschatology. In its essence, the scope of eschatology traditionally includes two general categories: *individual* or *personal* eschatology, and *general* or *cosmic* eschatology.⁹¹ Individual eschatology addresses questions of life after death, the relationship of body and soul, the possibility of consciousness after physical death, immortality, and so on, while general eschatology entails the return of the Messiah, the resurrection and judgment, heaven and hell, and so on.⁹²

Furthermore, Christianity came into the world of history as an eschatological faith—a faith that offered a sure and universal hope, and hence a faith and a hope to be proclaimed to all humanity. A dominant and defining characteristic of the life and mission of the early church was this eschatological thrust.⁹³ The first Christians situated and interpreted their experience of Christ within the framework of Israel's historical eschatology. In the coming of Jesus and in raising him from the dead, God's eschatological act had already been inaugurated, but it had not yet been completed. Jesus' resurrection and ascension into glory signified the beginning, the first fruits, of a fulfillment still to come—a fulfillment of which the gift of the Spirit was the promise. Only another future intervention by God would wipe out all the contradictions of the present. Moreover, the early Christian church believed that this final intervention (the *Parousia*) was

⁹⁰ Lup, Jr., "Eschatology in a Secular Age," 5.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Lup, Jr., "Eschatology in a Secular Age," 6.

⁹³ Lup, Jr., "Eschatology in a Secular Age," 5.

imminent.⁹⁴ With the delay in the advent of the *Parousia*, and under the impact of Greek philosophy, this eschatological perspective of early Christianity was pushed aside, played down, or radically re-interpreted. The Christian message was transformed from the proclamation of God's imminent historical reign to the proclamation of the only true and universal religion of humankind.⁹⁵ Faith in God's promises yet to be fulfilled was replaced by faith in an already consummated eternal kingdom. Christ's resurrection came to be viewed as a completed event. The early church's expectation of a new heaven and a new earth was forgotten or disregarded.⁹⁶

As pointed out by Lup, the eclipse of historical eschatology manifested itself in other ways as well. The early church's distinction between the present age and the age to come was revised *into a distinction between time and eternity*. Christians now focused their expectations on a heaven beyond this world, rather than on God's involvement in history. Attention shifted from the historical Jesus to the pre-existent Logos, and the message of Christ was spiritualized. It became a message about saving one's soul from the world rather than transforming oneself and the world by love.⁹⁷ Most theologians agree that it was after World War II, on the occasion of the Willingen Conference of the international missionary conference in 1952, when it referred to an entrance of the eschatological foundation of mission into the ecumenical discussion.⁹⁸

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

⁹⁵*Ibid.*

⁹⁶*Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Lup, Jr., "Eschatology in a Secular Age," 2.

⁹⁸ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1991), 514.

Recovery of the Christian Hope: Hope Grounded in the
Experience of the Loving and Compassionate God in Human History

At first sight, the connection between mission and eschatology may appear remote. As Nelson puts it, mission as concerned with the practical task of proclaiming the gospel to the world is a somewhat obscure doctrine relating to what are generally termed ‘the last things.’⁹⁹ Moreover, mission appears to stand at the very center of the church’s obligation and is an imperative of the present whereas eschatology is thought to be a subject largely theoretical and speculative in character, forming, more or less, an afterthought to the central facts of the faith.¹⁰⁰ Nonetheless, it is a sign of the new thinking at work in the church today that this approach of separating mission and eschatology no longer satisfies the understanding of God’s mission. Arguing along the same lines, Nelson claims that:

We have moved very far from the conception of eschatology as a secondary element in Christian belief to a point where we recognize it as central and determinative for our understanding of the mission as a whole. Neither are we content with the conception of mission as simply a practical task for which no theological insights or norms are necessary. Indeed, we are coming to realize that not only are the missionary tasks of the church inseparably linked, but eschatology and evangelism have a special and particular relevance for each other.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ R. A. Nelson, “Mission and Eschatology,” *The Ecumenical Review: WCC*, accessed September 24, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-6623.1954.tb01673.x>, and <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1758-6623.1954-tb01673.x>.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

From this argument one may, however, ask, what then does eschatological hope mean for the mission of the church? Several scholars especially Moltmann, Lup, Bosch, Mashau, and many others have clearly discussed this question with the same approach. For instance, Lup (2013), in his work “Eschatology in a Secular Age: An Examination of the Use of Eschatology in the Philosophies of Heidegger, Berdyaev and Blumenberg”, affirms that one of the striking characteristics of twentieth century theology has been the recovery of the eschatological, hopeful perspective of early Christianity, first in Protestant, and later in Catholic theology.¹⁰² It is believed that no theologian has done more to rehabilitate Christian hope than the great German Protestant theologian, Jürgen Moltmann. In his best known work, *Theology of Hope* (1964), he wrote, “from first to last, and not merely as an epilogue, Christianity is hope, forward looking and forward-moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present.”¹⁰³ Consequently, Moltmann took issue with a tradition that had so spiritualized the Christian hope as to depict it of little or no earthly use and underlined the socio-political relevance of this hope. Carl Braaten, too, as pointed out by Lup, has underlined the critical importance of eschatology, stating that “hope cannot be isolated from other themes of faith and be dealt with in a treatise on the last things. Instead, it determines the horizon of all Christian understanding and is thematically structural for all the contents of faith and action.”¹⁰⁴

Therefore, one may find that this kind of hope is grounded in the experience of the loving and compassionate God who chooses to engage in human history. It is the hope, not for a distant and unreachable future, but for a future that is breaking into the present and that involves a

¹⁰² Lup, Jr., “Eschatology in a Secular Age,” 2-4

¹⁰³ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (New York and Evanston: SCM Press, 1967), 16.

¹⁰⁴ Lup, Jr., “Eschatology in a Secular Age,” 3.

radical transformation of the world. It is the hope for a new heaven and a new earth that summons us to active engagement on behalf of the oppressed. Furthermore, it is the hope which is shaped by the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, who confronted sins and evils in society. However, different scholars have been discussing the term under various models in missiological forms of thought.

Conceptualizing Eschatological Models on Missionary Thinking

Different conceptual models of eschatology have been discussed in connection with mission, action, and hope. Bosch, in discussing differing understanding of eschatology, asserts that the ‘new eschatology’ was far from uniform. Wiedenmann (1965:26-49, 55-91, 131-178) as quoted by Bosch (1991), distinguished four major eschatological models, each of which had a significant impact on missionary thinking. These eschatological models are the dialectical, the existential, the actualized and the salvation-history model.¹⁰⁵

The Dialectical Model of Eschatological Hope. The dialectical model is a way of discovering what someone thinks to be true by considering opposite theories. It is derived from the young Karl Barth and influenced missiologists such as Paul Schütz, the young Karl Hartenstein, Hans Schärer, and Hendrik Kraemer.¹⁰⁶ In this model the absolute transcendence of God and his being totally separated from the world are insisted. God is in heaven; we human beings are on the earth. The only connection between God and human beings is God’s

¹⁰⁵ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1991), 514.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

intervention in judgment and grace. It is on the future coming of the reign of God in its fullness, but views it as being launched only by God at the end of history.¹⁰⁷

The Existential Model of Eschatological Hope. The existential model is a theological understanding from R. Bultmann which was applied missiologically by Walter Holstein. In this model, Bultmann views eschatology as the event that clarifies itself between the proclaimed world and the individual human being.¹⁰⁸ Under this model, mission is limited to the offer of the possibility of a decision and of a new self-understanding in light of the proclamation. According to Bosch, this understanding of eschatology had no ethic for public life and left the church helpless in the face of the demons of power-politics.¹⁰⁹ In addition, this model had no room for any expectation of a different future of the eruption of the reign of God. It insisted on the private apocalypse in the life of the individual human being.

The Actualized/Realized Model of Eschatological Hope. The actualized originates from Paul Althaus and also inspired Gerhard Rosenkranz.¹¹⁰ This model sees the end-time through the lens of the present. Because the world has in principle its end in the judgment of the kingdom in Christ, every moment in history, and likewise history as a whole, is end-time, always equally close to the end. This model insists that the early Christian confession that the Lord is at hand is as applicable today as it was then.¹¹¹ The *Parousia* is not to be looked forward to as historical event, but is the suspension or delay of all history. Therefore, it is unimportant and it makes no difference whether the end is chronologically close or distant. This model of eschatological hope

¹⁰⁷ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 514.

¹⁰⁸ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 514.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 515.

believes that mission as the proclamation of a kingdom of God is already present but yet hidden.¹¹²

The Salvation-History Model of Eschatological Hope. The salvation-history model is basically the theology of Oscar Cullmann, Walter Freytag, and the old Hartenstein.¹¹³ Wiedenmann (cited in Bosch), judges all three of these interpretations to be examples of historical eschatologies. Only this fourth model takes history seriously.¹¹⁴ Bosch is right when he argues that it became increasingly clear, since the 1930s, that the dialectical eschatology of the early Barth as well as the views on eschatology of the understanding of Bultmann (The Existential Model), and Althaus (the Actualized Model) were leaving people helpless in face of the challenges of the modern world.¹¹⁵ Therefore, this fourth approach distinguishes itself from the other three in several respects. Principally, it puts a special emphasis on the reign of God as a hermeneutical key. Equally important, it presents the concept of the reign of God as both present and future. Bosch puts this concept clearly when he says:

Israel looked to the future for salvation, but now that future was split in two. The new age has begun; the old has not yet ended. We live between the times, between Christ's first and his second coming; this is the time of the Spirit, which means that it is the time of mission. As a matter of fact, mission is the most important characteristic of and activity during this interim period. It fills the present and keeps the walls of history apart...It is a

¹¹²*Ibid.*

¹¹³ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 514.

¹¹⁴ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 515.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*

preparation for the end (taking) 2Thessalonians 2:6-7 as reference to mission. Until the missionary task is completed, it is “holding up” the end.¹¹⁶

This study likewise supports the idea that the salvation-history model of eschatological hope, broadly speaking, constitutes the most significant advance over other earlier models. Therefore, this study employed the salvation-history model as well as religious model and other models as explained in chapter four as the lenses in analyzing mission as action in hope to people with albinism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

General Perceptions and Worldviews of Christians on the Relationship between the Church and Mission

The term ‘mission’ is very broad. In discussing it, one must set demarcations on which interpretation of the term one wants readers to grasp. As Bosch clarified, since the 1950s there has been a remarkable escalation in the use of the word ‘mission’ among Christians.¹¹⁷ The term itself has historically, theologically, and traditionally been used to have different meanings. For instance, it denoted to (i) the sending of missionaries to a designated territory, (ii) the activities undertaken by such missionaries, (iii) the geographical area where the missionaries were active, (iv) the agency that dispatched the missionaries (the non-Christian world or mission field), (v) the center from which the missionaries on the mission were fielded, (vi) a local congregational church without a resident minister or bishop and still dependent on the support of an older, or the

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 1.

already established church, and, (vii) a series of special services intended to deepen or spread the Christian faith.¹¹⁸

Based on these concepts of the term mission, it can be contended that mission has historically, theologically, and traditionally been understood as the property of the church (church-centered mission). Bosch has summarized this understanding of mission in this way: “if we attempt a more specifically theological synopsis of ‘mission’ as the concept has traditionally been used, we note that it has been paraphrased as (a) propagation of the faith, (b) expansion of the reign of God, (c) conversion of the heathen, and (d) the founding of new churches.”¹¹⁹ This emphasis (church-centered mission) has also influenced the understanding of mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

However, the problem of understanding mission has usually proceeded from the assumption and belief that mission was only what Western missionaries were doing by way of saving souls, planting churches, and imposing their ways, worldview, and will on others as the yard stick.¹²⁰ Furthermore, early twentieth century mission was understood in a variety of ways.¹²¹ Up to relatively recent times, as Bosch put it, mission, in the Catholic Church at least, tended to be ecclesiocentric. Sometimes it was interpreted in soteriological terms—as saving individuals from eternal damnation—or it was understood in cultural terms—as introducing people from the East and the South to the blessings and privileges of the Christian West.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 1.

¹²⁰ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 399-401.

¹²¹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 398-399.

Sometimes it was defined as salvation-history—as the process by which the world would be transformed into the kingdom of God.¹²²

It was during the 20th century when the understanding of the term ‘mission’ gradually shifted from church-centered mission to *missio Dei*.¹²³ Nevertheless, this dissertation found that this shift of understanding from church-centered mission to *missio Dei* is clearer in the academic arena and at top conferences than at the grass roots, particularly at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. As McCabe insists, mission meant the extension of the church as it was known to the ends of the earth rather than the transformation of the Church and the world in the light of the Christian hope of a new earth and a new heaven.¹²⁴ But Bosch has expanded the understanding of the term “mission” by explaining it in various lenses while looking at elements of an emerging ecumenical missionary paradigm.¹²⁵ For Bosch the term “mission” is broad and we need to look at it as: mission as the church with others, as *Missio Dei*, as mediating salvation, mission as the quest for justice, as evangelism, as contextualization, as liberation, as common witness, mission as ministry by the whole people of God, as witness to people of other living faiths, as theology, and as action in hope.¹²⁶

All these elements of ecumenical missionary models carry the entire meaning of the term “mission.” For this reason, therefore, the church in order to understand the meaning of “mission”

¹²² Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 399.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ P. Michael McCabe, “Mission as Action in Hope: A Theological Reflection on our Commitment to the Promotion of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) in our World Today,” accessed August 26, 2019, <https://lasalette.info/366-mission-as-action-in-hope-p-michael-mccabe-sma>.

¹²⁵ Mission as the church-with-others, Mission as *Missio Dei*, Mission as mediating salvation, Mission as the quest for justice, mission as evangelism, mission as contextualization, mission as liberation, mission as inculturation, mission as common witness, mission as ministry by the whole people of God, Mission as witness to people of other living faiths, mission as theology, and Mission as action in hope.

¹²⁶ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 1991, 377-519.

has to look at it at a broader perspective. Moreover, in the context of erroneous beliefs affecting people with albinism, mission could be understood only when it answers their problems. That is why the approach and theology of this dissertation is *mission as action in hope*. How people with albinism can actualize their hope in the present reality is the concern of this dissertation. Therefore, how mission could be understood in these erroneous beliefs is dealt with in chapter four. However, to well address the understanding of mission, it is inevitable to tackle the concept and theology of *missio Dei*.

Origin of the Concept of ‘*missio Dei*’

The term *missio Dei* is Latin for God’s mission. Thomas Kemper, a general secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, traces the term to Augustine with early use of the term *missio Dei* to describe an aspect of God's work in which the church participates.¹²⁷ But, according to the International Bulletin of Missionary Research (2014) and many other missiologists such as Bosch, the contemporary use of the concept in a more comprehensive way is closely associated with a conference of the International Missionary Council held in 1952 in Willingen, West Germany.¹²⁸ *Missio Dei* at Willingen had a strong Barthian implication of mission as the work of the Triune God—indeed a veritable missionary God. The mission of God is the foundation for church's mission, and "the mission of the church ensues from the nature of the church (missionary by its very nature) as the Body of Christ," says the 1982 WCC statement on mission and evangelism, reflecting the spirit of Willingen.¹²⁹ Similarly, Mark Laing saw the concept of *missio Dei* as having emerged at the Willingen

¹²⁷International Bulletin of Missionary Research, Vol.38, No.4, October, 2014, 187-189, <http://www.internationalbulletin.org>.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*

¹²⁹*Ibid.*

conference¹³⁰ whereas Bosch and Küng trace the concept back to Karl Barth in 1932.¹³¹ In his work, *Transforming Mission*, Bosch (1991) says: “After the First World War, however, missiologists began to take note of recent developments in biblical and systematic theology. In a paper read at the Brandenburg Missionary Conference in 1932, Karl Barth...became one of the first theologians to articulate mission as an activity of God himself.”¹³²

Basing on the origin of the concept of *missio Dei*, most theologians agree that all the way through, the Barthian influence was fundamental.¹³³ In this case, Barth may be called the first clear exponent of a new theological paradigm that radically broke with an Enlightenment approach to theology as Küng (1987:229) put.¹³⁴ Consequently, according to Bosch, Barth’s influence on missionary thinking reached a peak at the Willingen Conference of the IMC in 1952 that mission was understood as being derived from the very nature of God (*missio Dei*).¹³⁵ This shift in understanding of mission as *missio Dei* has been embraced by almost all Christian churches—first by Conciliar Protestantism, but subsequently also by others such as Eastern Orthodox and many Evangelicals. It was, furthermore, endorsed in Catholic mission theology.¹³⁶ For sure, for an understanding of the shifts especially in Protestant thinking regarding the relationship between church and mission, the contributions of the world missionary conferences

¹³⁰ Mark Laing, “Missio Dei: Some Implications for the Church,” *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. XXXVII, no.1 (January 2009): <http://www.mis.sagepub.com>.

¹³¹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 399.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 399

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 1991, 400.

from Edinburgh in 1910 to Mexico City in 1963,¹³⁷ are of primary importance.¹³⁸ Insisting on the understanding on mission, Bosch argues that:

We may, however, never limit mission exclusively to this empirical project; it has always been greater than the observable missionary enterprise. Neither, to be sure, should it be completely divorced from it. Rather, mission is *missio Dei*, which seeks to include into itself...the missionary programs of the church. It is not the church which undertakes mission; it is the *missio Dei* which constitutes the church. The mission of the church needs constantly to be renewed and re-conceived.¹³⁹

Thus, this new emphasis shifted the Protestant understanding of the source of mission from an ecclesio- or anthropocentric source to a theocentric source—the Triune Godhead. Really, it was a major theological advance.¹⁴⁰ In the words of McCabe, viewing mission in the light of God’s reign demands that the scope of the church’s mission become more comprehensive than has traditionally been the case. Service of God’s reign provides missionaries with a theological framework that makes commitment to justice, peace, reconciliation and the

¹³⁷ In Edinburgh 1910, a major concern was the absence of missionary enthusiasm in the churches of the West; the theological question of the relationship between church and mission was hardly touched. At the Jerusalem conference of the IMC (1928), however, the relationship between ‘older’ and ‘younger’ churches received a considerable amount of attention and became a prominent issue. Tambaram (1938) discussed the relationship between church and mission as well as between ‘older’ and ‘younger’ churches in a more theological manner. The Willingen meeting of 1952, assembled in the aftermath/repercussion of World War II took up the same theme. In the preceding years there has been an almost imperceptible (unnoticeable) shift from an emphasis on a church-centered mission (Tambaram 1910) to a mission-centered church. Therefore, Willingen began to flesh out a new model of mission. It recognized that the church could be neither the starting point nor the goal of mission. God’s salvific work precedes both church and mission. We should not subordinate mission to the church nor the church to mission; both should, rather, be taken up into the *missio Dei*, which now became the overarching concept. That is why the church changes from being the sender to being the one sent. This entire evolution indeed meant a momentous shift in the understanding of church and mission especially in the Protestant church. Bosch 1991, 378-380)

¹³⁸ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 1991, 378.

¹³⁹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 1991, 531-532.

¹⁴⁰ Mark Laing, “Missio Dei: Some Implications for the Church.”

integrity of creation essential and integral dimensions of the Church's mission, rather than preliminary or secondary elements.¹⁴¹ In trying to flesh out the *missio Dei* concept, Bosch summarizes self understanding of the church in God's mission (*missio Dei*) as follows:

In the new image mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. (Therefore), God is a missionary God...It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfil in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church...Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission...There is church because there is mission, not vice versa.¹⁴²

From that understanding, therefore, one may conclude that the church is missionary by its very nature, since it has its origin in the mission of God.¹⁴³ Therefore, one of her calls isto voice for the voiceless groups especially people with albinism and with other disabilities in general. For the church to voice for people with albinism and disabilities in general, she has to fully understand different perceptions of society in regard to people with disabilities.

Different Theoretical Constructions on Disability

The Cambridge International Dictionary of English defines disability as the state of lacking some physical ability or any restriction resulting from impairment that prevents someone from performing an activity in a manner or within the range considered normal for a human

¹⁴¹P. Michael McCabe, "Mission as Action in Hope: A Theological Reflection on our Commitment to the Promotion of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) in our World Today," accessed August 26, 2019, <https://lasalette.info/366-mission-as-action-in-hope-p-michael-mccabe-sma>.

¹⁴² Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 400.

¹⁴³*Ibid.*

being.¹⁴⁴ But according to the American Disability Act (ADA), individuals with a disability are persons who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, have a record of such impairment, or are regarded as having impairment.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, the World Health Organization (WHO) suggests that disability is the consequence of impairment in functional performance and activity of a person. It is a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.¹⁴⁶ Disability studies have also revealed that the most prevalent types of disabilities are those related to visual impairment, hearing impairment, mental handicap, and physical disabilities. In view of the various definitions of disability, one could say that a person with a disability is considered as one who is unable to perform an activity within the range considered normal for others.

Common Perception of African Community to People with Disabilities

Barbara Watt from South Africa, in writing about “The Inclusion of People with Disabilities in the Church”, asserts that according to the current report of the WHO, there are almost 650 million (11%) people with disabilities (PWD) in the world.¹⁴⁷ Also White (2017), a professor in the Department of Science of Religion and Missiology, University of Pretoria, South Africa, in his research entitled “The Biblical View of Humanity and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: The Call and Mission of the Church”, likewise estimated the

¹⁴⁴ The Cambridge International Dictionary of English.

¹⁴⁵ P. White, “The Biblical View of Humanity and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: The Call and Mission of the Church,” accessed August 8, 2019, <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxwDqfDKcpfNlknRsxkhKkpHVplb>.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Barbara Watt, “The inclusion of People with Disabilities in the Church,” accessed February 22, 2019, <https://www.the-inclusion-of-people-with-disabilities-in-the-church>.

number of people with disabilities in the world, saying that 10% of the world's population (approximately 650 million people) live with disability with 80% of the latter living in developing countries. White says that the needs and rights of persons with disabilities have been high on the United Nations agenda for at least three decades.¹⁴⁸

However, Watt asserts that people with disabilities in the church have endured much wrong teaching regarding faith and healing. Some churches could not allow people with disabilities to become church leaders into their churches.¹⁴⁹ He puts clear that this group of people would be the most uneducated, the most unemployed, and they would have the most transport, housing and family problems. From a Christian perspective, they are the most unreached people in the world. Unfortunately, due to inaccessible buildings, negative attitudes, ignorance and some incorrect teaching, PWDs are not generally included in the life of the church.¹⁵⁰ Actually, Watt's opinions and suggestions are of help in regard to people's attitudes toward people with disability.

Disability studies are particularly prominent in the academic settings of the humanities, social sciences, and theology. Scholars in this field have taken a variety of approaches and employed different methodologies to analyze the many facets of this complex phenomenon.¹⁵¹ Laying emphasis on the mission of the church to people with disabilities, James N. Amanze (2019), a professor in systematic theology at the University of Botswana, supports the idea that in recent years, disability become a focal point of discussion in many parts of the world with the

¹⁴⁸ P. White, "The Biblical View of Humanity and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities."

¹⁴⁹ Barbara Watt, "The inclusion of People with Disabilities in the Church."

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ P. Cushing and T. Smith, "A Multinational Review of English-Language Disability Studies Degrees and Courses," *Disabilities Studies Quarterly*, 29, (2009).

increasing awareness that PWDs are disadvantaged because of their condition.¹⁵² He adds, throughout history, PWDs have been downgraded to the status of second-class citizens and in some instances treated inhumanely.¹⁵³ This is because, in many cultures, particularly in Africa, issues of disability are surrounded by fear with strong belief that they are caused by sin, witchcraft, or evil spirits.¹⁵⁴ This has led to a negative attitude toward PWDs in the world generally and in Tanzania in particular where people with disabilities especially those with albinism suffer because of their appearance.

Mission of the Church on Disability

Trying to change attitudes to disability is really an uphill struggle. On looking at the issue of disability under God's mission, a small group of theologians representing the marginalized groups, who met in Geneva in June 2011 under World Council of Churches, challenged the church for relying on traditional understanding of mission. They asserted that God's mission is beyond church interests in safety, stability and expansion, but expresses itself in contexts of struggles for dignity, justice, and life for those to whom these are denied. They insisted that God's mission is not only addressing their suffering but also their struggles to overcome unjust, and life-denying forces that hold their life. In other words, the mission of God is not only to build the church but also to transform the world through affirmations and actions of courage and hope.¹⁵⁵ Their assertions aim toward the possibility of discovering church as an event of

¹⁵² James N. Amanze, "The Mission of the Church to People with Disabilities in Southern and Central Africa: An Appraisal," *An International Review of Mission*, 108, no. 1 (June 2019), accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.questia.com/read/1G1-594180938/the-mission-of-the-church-to-people-with-disabilities>.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ World Council of Churches, "Mission from the Margin: Toward a Just World," *An International Review of Mission*, (2012), 154.

liberation and transformation. From that understanding therefore, they argue that mission is not acts of charity or of binding the wounds of the victims. Rather, it is about exposing and if possible, ending the sinfulness of the world. Mission is action that confronts the forces of evil that deny and abuse life, and transforms situations of people so that the purposes of God for God's good creation may prevail.¹⁵⁶

This study argues that one of the missions of the church regarding people with disabilities is to promote and enhance their human dignity. In so doing, the church is fulfilling the basic divine demands of God and also as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).¹⁵⁷ Historically, the UDHR traces its roots to a few years just after the Second World War. The values enshrined in this declaration set universal standards on how the people of the world should treat one another. Its preamble recognizes and reaffirms the inherent dignity, equality, and indisputable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.¹⁵⁸ The UDHR notes that human beings should treat one another in a spirit of brotherhood because we are all born free and equal in dignity and rights and because dignity is an essential part of what it means to be human.¹⁵⁹

In addition, different missiologists have discussed how the church has engaged in God's mission in relation to marginalized groups. Gallagher and Hertig (2009), in editing *Landmark Essays in Mission and World Christianity*, affirm that Jesus identified Himself with the poor, proclaimed wholeness for the sick, liberty for the captives, and restoration for the marginalized

¹⁵⁶ WCC, "Mission from the Margin," 154-155.

¹⁵⁷ James N. Amanze, "The Mission of the Church to People with Disabilities in Southern and Central Africa: An Appraisal."

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

and deprived.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, Bevans and Schroeder, explain that the mission of the church “is to be involved not only in the alleviation of human suffering and exclusion but also in the eradication of their roots.”¹⁶¹ Further, in the World Council of Churches conference in 2013 in Busana, Korea, it was affirmed that God’s purpose for the world is not to create another world, but to re-create what God has already created in love and wisdom.¹⁶² They attentively alerted the church that Jesus Christ related and embraced to those who were most marginalized in the society, in order to confront and transform all that denied life.¹⁶³ From that point therefore, the church of Christ is called to make present God’s holy and life-affirming plan for the world revealed in Jesus Christ.¹⁶⁴ This is why Bosch argues that “the church is missionary by its very nature,”¹⁶⁵ maintaining that “it is impossible to talk about the church without at the same time talking about mission.”¹⁶⁶ Likewise, Newbegin had earlier clarified that: “The church’s missionary dimension evokes intentional, that is direct involvement in society; it actually moves beyond the walls of the church and engages in missionary points of concentration such as evangelism and work for justice and peace.”¹⁶⁷

Furthermore, in showing the responsibilities of the church, at the WCC conference in 2013 at Busana, Korea, it was maintained that the communion of Christ’s disciples must become an inclusive community and exists to bring healing and reconciliation to the world.¹⁶⁸ This

¹⁶⁰ Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig (editors), *Landmark Essay in Mission and World Christianity* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009), 44.

¹⁶¹ Stephen B. Bevans & Schroeder P. Roger, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2005), 370.

¹⁶² WCC, “Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes,” (Busana: Korea, 2013), 10.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 400.

¹⁶⁶ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 381.

¹⁶⁷ Lesslie Newbigin, *One Body, One Gospel, One World* (New York: International Missionary Council, 1958), 21, 43.

¹⁶⁸ WCC, “Together Towards Life,” 10.

implies that the church is called to be a prophetic sign; a prophetic community through which and by which the transformation of the world can take place.¹⁶⁹ For this reason, missionary activities such as advocacy for justice and hope are no longer the sole prerogative or right of national assemblies and central offices but a form of witness which calls for the engagement of the church.¹⁷⁰ With regard to this situation, the WCC had already in May 2011 concluded with a plea in the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation that “churches must help in identifying the everyday choices that can abuse and promote human rights, gender justice, climate justice unity, and peace.”¹⁷¹ Their grounding in everyday life gives the church both legitimacy and motivation in the struggle for justice and peace in this world.¹⁷² As the family of God, Bunch (2001) insisted that the church is responsible for all people who have been called into the *koinonia* toward realization of their full humanity as God intended it to be before the fall.¹⁷³ Since it came into being, the church has been the visible presence of God on earth; as the body of Christ, it carries into its very being the scars of the divine Savior, incurred in the redemption of humankind. That is why the church cannot afford to stand aloof while other institutions try hard to alleviate the situation of people with albinism.¹⁷⁴

By the year 2012 then, the WCC affirmed that throughout Scripture, God calls people into community and sets the expectation that they care for one another. Jesus began his ministry

¹⁶⁹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 381, 398.

¹⁷⁰ WCC, “*Together Towards Life*,” 12.

¹⁷¹ “Glory to God and Peace on Earth: The Message of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation,” Kingston, Jamaica, 17-21 May 2011, 2, accessed February, 9, 2020, <http://www.overcomingviolence.org/en/resources-dov/wcc-resources/documents/presentations-speeches-messages/iepc-message.html>.

¹⁷² WCC, “*Together Towards Life*,” 12.

¹⁷³ Wilton H. Bunch MD PhD M.Div., “Toward a Theology of Inclusion for Those with Disabilities,” *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health*, 5, no. 4 (2001): 37-44, DOI: 10.1300/J095v05n04_03.

¹⁷⁴ Wilton H. Bunch MD PhD M.Div., “Toward a Theology of Inclusion for Those with Disabilities,” *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health*, 5, no. 4 (2001): 37-44, DOI: 10.1300/J095v05n04_03.

by claiming that to be filled by the Spirit is to liberate the oppressed, to open eyes that are blind, and to announce the coming of God's reign (Luke 4:16-18). He went about fulfilling this mission by opting to be with the marginalized groups of his time in order to confront and transform all that denies life.¹⁷⁵ Jesus insisted: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18).¹⁷⁶

This Word of God from Luke 4:18 reminds us that "the church as one of the instruments of God's mission, is sent by God to bring hope to the hopeless, freedom to the oppressed, and life in abundance to the poor. Also a biblical text from 1Peter 2:9 puts clearly that the church is not the sender but the one being sent. Brunner (1931) is often quoted in this connection: "The church exists by mission as a fire exists by burning."¹⁷⁷ He argued that the Spirit of Christ who empowers the church in mission is also the life of the church. Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit into the church at the same time He sent the church (John 20:19ff).¹⁷⁸ This is why Bosch held that the church exists in being sent and in building herself up for the sake of mission.¹⁷⁹

Insisting on Bosch's concept about the nature of the church, Van Gelder (2000), an American missiologist, writes:

...the church, as the people of God in the world, is inherently a missionary church. It is to participate fully in the Son's redemptive work as the Spirit creates, leads, and teaches

¹⁷⁵ WCC: Together Toward Life, 6.

¹⁷⁶ (Luke 4:18).

¹⁷⁷ Emil Brunner, *The Word and the World* (London: Student Mission Movement Press, 1931), 108.

¹⁷⁸ Emil Brunner, *The Word and the World* (London: Student Mission Movement Press, 1931), 108.

¹⁷⁹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 381.

the church to live as the distinctive people of God... The nature of the Church is based on God's presence through the Spirit. The ministry of the church flows out of the church's nature. The organization of the church is designed to support the ministry of the church.¹⁸⁰

Furthermore, in John 10:10, Jesus says, "... I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." With respect to John 10:10, Borlado and Wan Chai remind us of our responsibilities as the church participating in '*Missio Dei*.' They insist that a church must be 'of', 'with', and 'for' the vulnerable.¹⁸¹ These prepositions 'of', 'with', and 'for' emphasize belonging, accompanying, and purposes respectively, especially when one approaches mission from the marginalized groups.¹⁸²

Church of the Vulnerable-Belonging

In the context of powerlessness and vulnerability, the church inevitably becomes the church of the vulnerable. Jesus himself became poor with the purpose of serving from that condition. In addition, the birth of Jesus Christ is surrounded by powerful social implications that both affirm and identify with vulnerability. The absence of a delivery room is testimony to the vulnerability surrounding his birth (Luke 2:7).¹⁸³ Moreover, they argue that vulnerability is also seen in his ministry. He himself said, "...the Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head"

¹⁸⁰Craig Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church* (Grand Rapids, Mi.: Baker Books, 2000), 31, 37.

¹⁸¹ Danilo-Azuela Borlado & Wan Chai, "An Ecclesiological Reflection in the Context of Powerlessness and Vulnerability," in *Engaging the World: Christian Communities in Contemporary Global Societies*, eds. Afe Adogame, Janice McLean & Anderson Jeremiah (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books International, 2014), 30-37.

¹⁸² Considering the common phrase that '*It is the shoe wearer who knows where it pinches*'; therefore, these prepositions aim at putting much emphasis to how we can feel someone's pain. By doing so we try to put yourself on his/her position/situation. 'Of'-shows the possession, belonging; 'With'-indicates to accompany or becoming together, while 'for' insists on purpose especially when something intended for or something intended to be given to.

¹⁸³ Danilo-Azuela & Chai, "Powerlessness and Vulnerability," 30-37.

(Matthew.8:20). This statement speaks of discomfort and deprivation of some of the basic necessities in life. Thus, among others, it points to Jesus' personal experience of vulnerability during his earthly life.¹⁸⁴ They furthermore, insisted that the vulnerability of Jesus is best articulated by Paul¹⁸⁵ For example:

Who, being in very nature of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-even death on a Cross (Phil.2:6-8).¹⁸⁶

This is vulnerability in its greatest depth and broadest sense. Therefore, these facts are the solid biblical foundational factors that give birth to the consciousness and shape of the church as the church of the vulnerable groups, in this case, the group of people with albinism in Tanzania and Africa in general.

Church with the Vulnerable-Accompanying

The church is a gift of God in the world and exists to bring healing and reconciliation to the world.¹⁸⁷ Therefore, God's accompanying presence with the vulnerable continues to the present as the church participates in God's mission. Paul articulates the intentional decision of Jesus Christ to the vulnerable people from 2Cor.8:9: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you, through his poverty, might become rich."¹⁸⁸ This is the deliberate act of Jesus Christ becoming poor. Jesus

¹⁸⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ (Philemon 2:6-8).

¹⁸⁷ WCC: Together Toward Life, 2.

¹⁸⁸ Danilo-Azuela & Chai, "Powerlessness and Vulnerability," 30-37.

identified with the poor by becoming poor for the purpose of enriching the poor. Also, from Exodus 13:21-22, we see God's guiding/guidance, providing and accompanying presence for a most vulnerable people as they wandered in the desert for 40 years on the way to the promised land.¹⁸⁹

In this way therefore, the church in showing God's accompanying presence to people with albinism has to stand together with them in order to fight all ingrained beliefs associated to people with albinism.

Church for the Vulnerable-Purpose

The church located in the context of vulnerability, composed of the vulnerable and ministering with the vulnerable, can be authentically called the church if it consciously exists for the vulnerable.¹⁹⁰ In Luke 4:18-19 as it has already been pointed out, we have a summary but straightforward statement of Christ's mission leaning (responsiveness) toward the vulnerable of his time and culture.¹⁹¹ This text portrays a very important model of mission to the marginalized; that is, transformation or changes (from blindness to sight recovery, and so on), not leaving things as they were, but changing them into betterment. This becomes the purpose for vulnerable groups. Also, Jesus insisted in Matthew 25:45-46 that "...He will reply, I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these brothers of mine; you did not do for me. Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."¹⁹² This means that the service to the vulnerable ones is the service to Christ, in that way the service to the

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² Matthew 25: 45-46.

Triune Godhead.¹⁹³ Moreover, in James 1:27 we read, “pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”¹⁹⁴ Additionally, the Johannine epistles bear this focus; for instance, 1John 3:17 reads, “if anyone has material possessions and sees his brothers (sisters) in need but has not pity on him (her), how can the love of God be in him (her)?”¹⁹⁵

Thus, God’s community exists for one another in love, especially by helping the needy among them. Here, the emphasis is that, in the context of powerlessness and vulnerability, the church must exist for the vulnerable members of God’s community.¹⁹⁶ Therefore, in the context of Tanzania where people with albinism struggle for their life, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania has tremendous responsibilities.

Research on Myths and Misconceptions of African Society on Albinism

Some researchers have investigated root causes of misunderstanding on the issue of albinism and found that ingrained beliefs in witchcraft, lack of enough knowledge about the nature of albinism, and poverty are the main causes of the problem facing people with albinism.¹⁹⁷ These negative attitudes have been around in African society for many generations, but in recent years witch doctors have been teaching misconceived ideas about the promise of wealth, success, and power when albino hair, limbs, or other parts of the body are used in a

¹⁹³ Danilo-Azuela & Chai, “Powerlessness and Vulnerability,” 30-37

¹⁹⁴ James 1: 27.

¹⁹⁵ 1John 3:17.

¹⁹⁶ Danilo-Azuela & Chai, “Powerlessness and Vulnerability,”30-37.

¹⁹⁷ Andres E. Cruz-Inigo, Barry Ladizinski, and Aisha Sethi,“Albinism in Africa: Stigma, Slaughter and Awareness Campaigns.” *Dermatologic Clinics* 29, no. 1 (January 2011):79–87, doi:10.1016/j.det.2010.08.015.

potion as part of witchcraft practices.¹⁹⁸ For this reason, a number of people with albinism in Tanzania and Africa, in general, have been killed; some of them have lost their internal organs due to these beliefs and most of them are children and women.

In 2013, Julia Mutungi, a Lutheran pastor in the ELCT, East of Lake Victoria Diocese, researched on “The Killing of Albinos in Sukumaland, Tanzania: A Challenge to the Church's Mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania - East of Lake Victoria Diocese.” Her main concern was to seek to understand *what* were the mission strategies used by the church in Sukumaland in encountering the killing(s) of people with albinism and *how* were these strategies implemented. She discovered that the root cause of the problem was the ingrained and deep-rooted beliefs in witchcraft. She insists that the Sukuma people are followers of their indigenous religion which is rooted in witchcraft.¹⁹⁹ Similarly, Veronica Marcon’s (2014) research was on “Albinism in Tanzania: A Human Right Issue-An Experience of Monitoring the ‘White Black’” with the aim to explore the social exclusion and struggle towards the enjoyment of the rights of people with albinism in Tanzania mainland.²⁰⁰ Marcon sought to spread awareness on the condition of people with albinism in Tanzania in order to promote social integration and health care for those affected.²⁰¹ Marcon insisted that:

¹⁹⁸ Andres E. Cruz-Inigo, Barry Ladizinski, and Aisha Sethi, “Albinism in Africa: Stigma, Slaughter and Awareness Campaigns,” *Dermatologic Clinics* 29, no. 1 (January 2011): 79–87, doi:10.1016/j.det.2010.08.015.

¹⁹⁹ Julia Gabriel Mutungi, “The Killing of Albinos in Sukumaland, Tanzania: A Challenge to the Church's Mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania-East of Lake Victoria Diocese” (Master's Thesis, University of Stavanger School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger, 2013), ii.

²⁰⁰ Veronica Marcon, “Albinism in Tanzania: A Human Rights Issue-An Experience of Monitoring the “White Black”, (Degree in Human Rights, Universita' Degli Studi De Padova, 2014), 63-64, accessed January 10, 2017, <https://www.academia.edu/9140081/Albinism-in-Tanzania-a-Human-Rights-Issue-An-Experience-of-Monitoring-the-White-Blacks> 5.

²⁰¹ Veronica Marcon, “Albinism in Tanzania,” 6.

People with albinism have no simple life. They have to face stigmatization and misconceptions about their condition. The deep ignorance surrounding albinism led to an inhuman practice sadly diffused in some African countries but more widespread in Tanzania: the killings and mutilations of people affected by the syndrome. Belief in witchcraft is pervasive through the country and it can be used to explain occurrences that seem to have no explanation and as a means through which those who believe in it try to achieve their personal aims.²⁰²

Marcon cites the WHO Report made in 2003 that revealed that in Africa, 80% of the population resorts to traditional medicine for primary health care.²⁰³ This is because, she added, like many other African countries, Tanzania is still deeply rooted in traditional and superstitious beliefs even though many adhere to the Christian and Islamic religious faiths.²⁰⁴ Marcon, in her research, concluded that it is possible to understand the extent of the traditional medicine market and, therefore, the room in which witchdoctors can sell remedies involving the body parts of people with albinism.²⁰⁵ According to her,

The Victoria Lake area is where much of the attacks took place, stating that the responsible who drive the purchase are mainly who work in the mining and fishing industries. Mwanza region, with over 3,000 registered witchdoctors, along with Shinyanga and Mara regions, represents the epicenter of the occult belief that PWA

²⁰² Veronica Marcon, "Albinism in Tanzania," 29.

²⁰³ WHO Media Centre, 'Traditional Medicine,' accessed January 24, 2017, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/2003/fs134/en/>

²⁰⁴ Veronica Marcon, "Albinism in Tanzania," 25.

²⁰⁵ Veronica Marcon, "Albinism in Tanzania," 26.

possess magical powers which can promote personal wealth and success and the area where the majority of murders occurred.²⁰⁶

On this basis, this study argues that in her research, Marcon (a westerner), was not able to distinguish between witchdoctors and traditional healers. Traditional medicines used by African traditional healers are vital in Africa because they have no chemical mixture in it and they have been used from time immemorial with positive results. This work argues that it is very important and sensitive to differentiate between traditional healers and witchdoctors in Africa, although we cannot overlook the problem of swindlers/tricksters. On this same issue, Mbiti asserts:

To African societies the medicine-men (women) are the greatest gift and the most useful source of help. Other names for them are ‘herbalists,’ traditional doctors... These are the specialists who have suffered most from European-American writers and speakers who so often and wrongly call them ‘witchdoctors’—a term which should be buried and forgotten forever. Every village in Africa has a medicine-man (woman) within each, and he (she) is the friend of the community. He (she) is acceptable to everybody and at almost all times, and comes into the picture at many points in individual and community life.²⁰⁷

However, Marcon’s research found that the situation facing people with albinism in Tanzania is characterized by lack of knowledge about the nature of albinism. She said “this is due to lack of knowledge and to the several superstitious beliefs widespread, which results in exclusion from education, employment and marriage and in recent years in murders and mutilations.”²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Nairobi: East African Education Publishers, 1969), 166.

²⁰⁸ Veronica Marcon, “Albinism in Tanzania,” 4.

Salewi has also done research on the killings of people with albinism, reported in her paper entitled “The Killing of Persons with Albinism in Tanzania: A Social-Legal Inquiry”. In her research, she cited the study of Kromberg, Zwane, and Jenkins (1987) on albinism focusing on African history with regard to stories, myths and tales, noting that these have developed and changed over time.²⁰⁹ They found similar myths advocating that families with babies with albinism are victims of witchcraft,²¹⁰ concluding that lack of knowledge about albinism can lead many to superstitions.

In tracing further reasons behind killing people with albinism especially around Lake Victoria, Marcon concurs with Dave-Odigie that poverty was one factor:

Poverty and illiteracy rates are both extremely high, and witchdoctors are viewed as local authorities, who provided a system of explanation for people suffering from poverty and hardship. For many, managing the forces of divination and sorcery is essential for enhancing their lives and the 2009 boom in the fishing and mining industries provided for some Tanzanians evidence of its efficacy and proof of the influence of witchdoctors.²¹¹

This situation makes clear that people involved in this particular business try everything to ensure that luck is on their side, including magic. The capitalist profit-maximizing values increased desire for material wealth, thus competition intensified, turning traditional beliefs in the magic of ritual into beliefs in the magic of wealth. For that reason, one may find the close relation between the escalation of the killings of people with albinism and the impact of economic globalization emphasizing individualism, material gain, personal wealth, and

²⁰⁹ Salewi, “Killing of Persons with Albinism,” 6.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ Veronica Marcon, “Albinism in Tanzania,” 27.

individual/private super profit rather than human values, dignity, and humanity. The effects of globalization in escalating the killing of people with albinism becomes more strong because the massive killings were from 2009/2010 onwards when booms in the fishing and mining industries provided for some Tanzanians evidence of its effectiveness and proof of the influence due to the free trade and markets, but before that period of free trade and free market the killings were in a very lesser extent mostly done at the family level. One must be aware that human values, human dignity, and humanity are the code values for Africans in enhancing life and the insistence on the community rather on individual desires. That is why this work harmonizes with Marcon on the impact of economic globalization and the rise of killings, but still ignorance about albinism is the main reason. However, Marcon relates,

The companies involved in fishing activities are mainly private ones which are owned by European businessmen. Upon the building of fish factories in the 1980's there was an immense economic boom, and fishermen were promised great wealth, but this forecast was disappointed due to overfishing and grave environmental degradation occurred around 2005. Moreover, it is important to notice that fishing, with its related risks, storms and sometimes difficult quest, leave room for interpretations that glean from the occult. These circumstances led to increasing competitiveness among fishermen and many scholars underline a correlation between failing fisheries and an increased motivation to resort to occult practices. Fishermen, as miners, felt the desire and need for recurring to an occult economy to satisfy the economic expectations that their industry did not meet.²¹²

²¹² Veronica Marcon, "Albinism in Tanzania," 28.

Hence, Salewi in her research discovered the same problem:

Recently, people with albinism have grown to be vulnerable to attacks and unwarranted killings from persons who believe that their body parts and limbs of people with albinism can be superstitiously used to generate income. In Tanzania, albino organs, particularly genitals, limbs, breasts, fingers and the tongue are reportedly on high demand by people involved in mining and fishing activities in the Lake Victoria Zone, especially Mwanza, Shinyanga and Mara regions. This is due to the rumors that the albino organs possess mystical powers that can make a person fabulously rich within a short time. Since the mining and fishing industries are currently enjoying an unprecedented boom, so the two sectors are attracting people from all walks of life and cultures and this factor has increased the albino risks.²¹³

Additionally, as cited by Salewi, Lund and Gaigher (2002) conducted a study on the health intervention program for children with albinism at a special school in South Africa. Although their study focused on health interventions for children with albinism, they concluded that the existence of poverty in society combined with superstitions would magnify problems related to albinism.²¹⁴ Also, in finding the source of negative attitudes to people with disabilities, Watt affirms that there are many misconceptions about disability in the world in general, but also in the church as well. Fear and a lack of understanding in many societies cause people with disabilities to be ignored.²¹⁵

²¹³ Salewi, "Killing of Persons with Albinism," 8.

²¹⁴ Salewi, "Killing of Persons with Albinism," 6.

²¹⁵ Barbara Watt, "The Inclusion of People with Disabilities in the Church," accessed February 22, 2019, <https://www.the-inclusion-of-people-with-disabilities-in-the-church>.

In this vague situation, the researcher argues that the main cause of several unsafe myths about people with albinism in African societies is the lack of enough knowledge about albinism. However, economic impacts of globalization especially in Tanzania escalated the killings of people with albinism. During that time some policies of globalization such as free market and free trade increased high demand of fish, gold and diamond. Thus, miners and fishermen, out of personal interest, desired profit through various ways. The situation made witchdoctors to mislead people to believing that body parts of people with albinism could increase opportunities for their success. On this basis, it can be argued that economic impact of globalization was the main reason for the killing of people with albinism. It is further argued, however, that tackling the enduring worldviews that seem to govern people's thinking, is particularly difficult.

The Research Gap

From the review of literature, one may find that the problem of negative attitudes to people with disabilities especially in Africa is very high. Therefore, this current study builds on previous research by filling the gap. As Smith in Rweyemamu (2014: 26) observed, it is academically advised to identify academic writings related to the topic in question to see what has been done and what questions remain unanswered.²¹⁶ Similarly, Komidar (also cited in Rweyemamu, 2014: 26) argued that no new research can be undertaken without a reference to the research that has already been done in the field.²¹⁷

²¹⁶ Josephat A. Rweyemamu, *Conversion Discourse in African Perspective: A Social-Missiological Study Among the Haya in the Lutheran Church, Northwestern Tanzania* (Kamen: Hartmut Spenner, 2014), 26.

²¹⁷ Rweyemamu, *Conversion Discourse in African Perspective*, 26.

No adequate research has already been done in Tanzania addressing issues relating to people with albinism with the approach of mission as action in hope. Several researches relating to people with albinism have been conducted in some parts of Tanzania and Africa in general with different approaches (nature and scope). Most of the studies on albinism have been conducted specifically in the area of human rights, healthy problems such as skin cancer, stigmatization, discrimination, myths and tales associated to albinism, employment opportunities, and economic hardships facing people with albinism and disabilities in general.

Based on the problems previously mentioned, therefore, it is the task of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania through missiological approaches to provide appropriate theological answers regarding the problems facing people with albinism. This study has developed themes based on the experiences of people with albinism in the light of biblical teachings. These themes at the same time became key words in developing Biblico-Theological Framework of Mission as Action in Hope for People with Albinism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

Biblico-Theological Framework

By combining the related literature, this study has a structure that provides a Biblico-theological framework focusing on the mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania to people with albinism. The conditions and situations facing people with albinism have been clearly described here and more broadly in the next chapter. Anthropologists, lawyers, theologians, human rights defenders, and others have also discussed this issue from their perspective.

Thus, this study has identified different topics relating to disability, church, and mission. Additionally, four eschatological models on missionary thinking have been identified and topics on how the church understands herself in God's mission (*missio Dei*) have been explored in this chapter and are explained more in chapter four of this dissertation.

With respect to the missiological concepts of *missio Dei* and theology of hope this study—"Mission as Action in Hope for People with Albinism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania"—aimed at constructing a theology that identifies people with albinism as human beings who deserve inclusion, participation, and the freedoms enjoyed by every other person. At the same time, it aimed at equipping them to conquer their unique challenges and empower them to meet their needs as well as thrive in all areas of life.

As such, the theology of this study is from a missiological perspective. This part of biblical theological foundations of mission as action in hope focuses particularly on two interlinked streams: the triune God's mission and the church as missionary by its very nature, as it was stated by Bosch.²¹⁸ In this manner, this study is in line with Moltmann, Bosch, and Mashau on how they understand the theology of hope.

Consequently, the Biblico-Theological bases missiologically employed the salvation-history model of eschatological hope as the lens in analyzing the findings. This model was furthermore used as the lens to challenge the moral/religious model and other various models of disabilities that shape people's perceptions and ideas as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania participates in *missio Dei* with respect to people with albinism. The salvation-history model missiologically developed the theology of hope that fits people with albinism. Moreover,

²¹⁸ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 381.

it was used to evaluate traditional biblical and theological perspectives and interpretations on disability in both Old and New Testaments. The theology of hope constructed in this work believes that in any biblical interpretation, ‘contemporary context’ is the first consideration. This is because theology is a matter not just of abstract reflection, but of exposition of understandings based on an

Figure 1. Biblico-Theological Framework.

active engagement to see another kind of order at work in this world—the realization of God’s kingdom on earth today. It is argued, however, that the coming reign of God is not merely an article of faith for the future, but it is in some sense already present in the life of the text-readers. Furthermore, theology of hope in this work insists that the biblical interpretation needed is to read the signs of the times and put much emphasis on the text-reader’s context—the context of multiple forms of discrimination to people with albinism and with disability in general. Therefore, this study insists that any interpretation of the Bible is unacceptable if it does harm to any human being.

CHAPTER III

CONDITIONS AND SITUATIONS CHALLENGING PEOPLE WITH ALBINISM IN TANZANIA AND AFRICA, IN GENERAL

Having discussed the theology of hope as the theology that affirms life in the previous chapter, this chapter focuses on various conditions and situations challenging people with albinism in Tanzania and Africa, in general. This part of the research relies mostly on the reports and documents from some organizations especially Under the Same Sun,²¹⁹ and other foundations dealing specifically with people with albinism as well as interviews of some persons with albinism and reports from directors and head teachers of schools/shelters where children with albinism live. These conditions portray real life-situations facing people with albinism. Thus, this chapter is more descriptive in nature although conceptual analysis was used to enrich discussion and interpretation of the information collected.

Numerous challenges continuously confront many people with albinism in most African countries. By implication, people with albinism in Africa represent one of the largest vulnerable groups in the society. It is clear that in many developing countries such as Tanzania, people with

²¹⁹ "Under the Same Sun" (UTSS) is the civil society organization most and influential working on behalf of people with Albinism in Tanzania. It aims at improving the standard of living of people with Albinism by fighting the stigma attached to condition, promoting public awareness and education, and enhancing their overall health. It is committed to ending the often-deadly discrimination against people with albinism. It promotes, via advocacy and education, the wellbeing of persons with albinism who are misunderstood, marginalized, and even attached and killed because of their genetic condition. While it acts globally, much of its focus has been on the crisis faced by people with albinism in Tanzania. The activities of this organization have also been strongly intertwined with the intervention of national health institutions such as the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center (KCMC) in Moshi and the Tanzanian Albinism Society (TAS). See also Taylor and Francs, *Anthropology & Medicine*, accessed August 17, 2019, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5351792/>.

albinism continue to be socially less valued and are dehumanized and rejected.²²⁰ Ikponwosa Ero,²²¹ a woman with albinism from Nigeria, a United Nations independent expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism, and an international advocacy and legal officer of Under the Same Sun in Tanzania, gives her testimony as follows:

As a young child growing up with albinism in Nigeria, I remember waking up each day with my heart pounding. How was I to handle another day of taunts from the public and verbal abuse from the streets? Being hyper visible in a context where the majority did not understand albinism but believed in negative superstitions about it, caused great anxiety in my mind. I hoped for the day when things would change for the better but, by all indications, it seemed like they would not. That said, never in my deepest fears did I imagine that things would become worse... (For example) in the last decade, over 600 persons with albinism across 28 countries in the region have been killed, or mutilated and traumatized after surviving attacks. These numbers are reported cases alone. It is believed that many cases go unreported for various reasons, including the involvement of family members, as well as a lack of formal monitoring mechanisms to accurately track and report cases. The situation is highly concerning.²²²

²²⁰ Interview with Hemed M. Musa an Assistance Head Teacher at Mugeza Mseto Primary school; one of the Boarding Primary Schools where children with Albinism live, January 21, 2020.

²²¹ The UN Expert: Ms Ikponwosa Ero (Nigeria) was designated in June 2015 as the first “UN Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of Human Rights by Persons with Albinism,” by the Human Rights Council. Inspired by her experiences as a person with albinism, Ms Ero has, for more than a decade, been engaged in the research, policy development and practice of human rights concerning persons with albinism. As international advocacy and legal officer of Under the Same Sun, an NGO with a focus on albinism, she has participated in multiple activities and panels at the UN in Geneva and New York. She has extensive experiences in research, policy development and advocacy in the field of albinism. She is the author of numerous papers and articles on the issue, including on the categorization of people with albinism in the international human rights system.

²²² Ero Ikponwosa, “Waiting to Disappear: International and Regional Standards for the Protection and Promotion of the Human Rights of Persons with Albinism June 2017,” International Bar Association: The Global Voice of the Legal Profession, page 6-7, last modified 10-August-2019, accessed December 15, 2019, <https://www.ibanet.org>.

Centering on human rights, Ero adds that people with albinism are a unique group whose human rights issues have generally gone unnoticed for centuries, the result being deeply ingrained stigma, discrimination and violence against them across various countries. The complexity and uniqueness of the condition means that their experiences significantly and simultaneously touch on several human rights issues including, but not limited to, discrimination based on colour, discrimination based on disability, special needs in terms of access to education and enjoyment of the highest standards of health, harmful traditional practices, violence including killings and ritual attacks, trade and trafficking of body parts for witchcraft purposes, infanticide and abandonment of children.²²³ Ero furthermore argues that in many other parts of the world, people with albinism are among the poorest and most marginalized. They often face multiple and intersecting discrimination on the coexisting grounds of disability and colour, among others. They are often excluded from public policies in key sectors such as health and education.²²⁴

Moreover, most people with albinism in African society have faced prejudice and stigmatization, as well as multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination on the basis of visual impairment, colour, gender or age, preventing them from exercising their economic and social rights, condemns them to ostracism and poverty, and limits their life expectancy.²²⁵ By and large, within areas of Africa, albinism is a common cause of discrimination. People with albinism are

²²³ Ero Ikponwosa, "Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of Human Rights by Persons with Albinism," accessed August 25, 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Albinism/Pages/IEAlbinism.aspx>.

²²⁴ Ero Ikponwosa, "Persons with Albinism: Specific Measures are Fundamental to the Actualization of Leaving no One Behind," accessed August 25, 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NwesEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23748&LangID=E>.

²²⁵ Ero Ikponwosa, "Waiting to Disappear: International and Regional Standards for the Protection and Promotion of the Human Rights of Persons with Albinism June 2017," International Bar Association: The Global Voice of the Legal Profession, page 12, last modified 10-August-2019, accessed December, 2019, <https://www.ibanet.org>.

not seen as similar to others; they are instead seen as ‘different’ from those who are a part of the African population. People with albinism are expected to exclude themselves from the educational system, employment opportunities, transportation systems, and housing conditions. In addition, people with albinism have difficulties in getting jobs due to their physical appearance and visual impairments also prevent them from getting an occupation. This is why many persons with albinism are left impoverished and with low socio-economic status.²²⁶

Nebre (2018), in studying “Social Discrimination against People with Albinism” contends that people with albinism in Africa have faced different forms of discrimination due to their genetic condition with low skin pigmentation and melanin levels in their hair, skin, and eyes to varying degrees.²²⁷ These people have a high percentage of visual impairment and life-threatening sensitivity to the sun. In addition, affected individuals face negative outcomes of social, cultural, and economic prejudice because of the lack of color that their skin provides. Moreover, people with albinism are rejected by the rest of their community and are at a high risk of being killed because of their unique physical features.²²⁸

Similarly, Kabue and colleagues, working on “Disability, Society and Theology: Voices from Africa”, claim that people with disabilities still find themselves isolated. As a result, in society there are walls of shame, prejudice, hatred, competition, fear, ignorance, theological prejudice, and cultural misunderstanding.²²⁹ This reality ascertains that albinism in Africa

²²⁶Taylor and Francis, *Anthropology & Medicine*, accessed August 17, 2019, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5351792/>.

²²⁷Mariah Nebre, *Social Discrimination Against People with Albinism*, accessed August 8, 2019, https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/.../Journals_two/17_nebre.pdf.

²²⁸Mariah Nebre, *Social Discrimination Against People with Albinism* https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/.../Journals_two/17_nebre.pdf.

²²⁹ Samuel Kabue, Ester Mombo, Joseph Galgalo, and C. B. Peter, *Disability, Society and Theology: Voices from Africa*, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvgc606m>.

generally and Tanzania in particular, is still profoundly socially misunderstood. The physical appearance of people with albinism is often the object of erroneous beliefs and myths that foster multiple forms of situations including marginalization and social exclusion.²³⁰

Likewise, the Albino Foundation—an advocacy organization that empowers people with albinism and educates society about albinism in Nigeria and the world—affirms that living with albinism is discouraging and challenging especially in Africa.²³¹ This is because people with albinism in Africa face stigma, discrimination, abuse, prejudice, stereotyping, dehumanization, and sometimes brutal killings. In addition, without having enough information on the condition, parents, families, and communities have been at pains to explain the condition when a child with albinism is born.²³² Similarly, in Tanzania people with albinism live with the risk of uncertainty; they live in suffering, struggling with their own identity and agency in the situation of dehumanization.²³³

Thus, this study has discovered that societies define what it means to be human, and when a group is defined as anything less than human, acts of discrimination become acceptable. That is why people with albinism worldwide have been victimized by being viewed as a mystically odd group that does not belong to the mainstream. This undesirable status has resulted in very unfortunate stigma-based attention from their fellow citizens and culture. Most of the stigma-based attention visited upon people with albinism is maintained by, often unspoken, societal rules that have resulted in endemic and structural discrimination against them. This

²³⁰OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights), accessed August 8, 2019, <https://albinism.ohchr.org/human-rights-dimension-of-albinism.html#human-beings>.

²³¹The Albino Foundation, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://albinofoundation.org/living-with-albinism/>.

²³²*Ibid.*

²³³Salewi, "The Killing of Persons with Albinism in Tanzania," 2.

means that the condition is often known, but not well understood.²³⁴The result is that people with albinism have often been deeply misunderstood, mystified and consequently stigmatized. Nearly all misunderstandings, mystification and stigma are traceable to the most visible aspect, which is their appearance.²³⁵

This tragedy has recently gained the attention of the local, national and international communities. It has resulted in several resolutions at the United Nations and African Union levels. It has also received support via mention in declarations and statements of international and regional bodies including faith based organizations. However, negative perception of the community regarding the condition is still prevailing.²³⁶ What remains is how to deal with this issue with the goal of answering the general question: how should people with albinism be protected?

The condition of albinism has several facets that expose people with albinism to multiple and intersecting forms of life-situations, including stigma and discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes, marginalization and social exclusion, and innumerable more.

²³⁴Under the Same Sun, "Frequency of Albinism/Rates of Occurrence: North America, Europe, Africa and Tanzania"; see also, Under the Same Sun, accessed January 15, 2017.

<http://www.underthesamesun.com/sites/default/files/Frequency%20of%20Albinism.pdf>; and "Children with Albinism & the Right to Health, summary report on Tanzania with implication for other parts of sub-Saharan Africa" (2012), p. 2, accessed January 15, 2017.

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Children/Study/RightHealth/UndertheSameSun.pdf>.

²³⁵Under the Same Sun, "Frequency of Albinism/Rates of Occurrence,"2.

²³⁶*Ibid.*

Stigma and Discrimination

Within African societies, people with albinism face the consequences of a challenging life because they are considered to be ‘different’ from other members of society.²³⁷ Albinism is a condition that cannot be hidden especially in Africa where most of the citizens are dark skinned. When a person with albinism is in a group of dark skinned people, they stand out; they are a visible minority and are in every part subjected to open discrimination.²³⁸ Some claims from the Albino Foundation express that discrimination infringes on their fundamental human rights and basic freedoms.²³⁹ Their report for example puts clearly that many women have been divorced by their husbands and rejected by families after giving birth to children with albinism. They have been accused of sleeping with men of other races, of being cursed and unclean, and of being witches. Moreover, children with albinism have also been hidden from the public, forbidden from socializing with others, and treated as outcasts.²⁴⁰

Oddly enough, because of discrimination and stigma, people with albinism often consider themselves to be disabled in many African countries.²⁴¹ Is it really true that people with albinism are disabled? In four years of my secondary school education, I was in the same class with one boy with albinism; his name was Elisha Mganga from Sengerema in Mwanza region. For almost four years he was excluded from partaking in self-reliance activities such as manual work like digging, slashing grass, and the like. This was not because teachers wanted him not to be

²³⁷ Mariah Nebre, *Social Discrimination Against People with Albinism*, accessed August 8, 2019, https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/.../Journals_two/17_nebre.pdf.

²³⁸ The Albino Foundation, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://albinofoundation.org/living-with-albinism/>.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ Interview with Hemed M. Musa an Assistance Head Teacher at Mugeza Mseto Primary school, January 21, 2020. Mugeza Mseto Primary school is one of the boarding schools in Tanzania where children with Albinism stay while attending primary education for at least seven years.

exposed to sunlight, but they took for granted that he was unable to do such work; for them, he was the abnormal person/student. In the western world however, there is a controversy as to whether or not albinism is a disability.²⁴² This is also a big challenge that needs to be discussed in our society. Nevertheless, for the group Under the Same Sun, the awareness campaigns around the country of Tanzania have carried the message that people with albinism are as ‘normal’ as other individuals. The only real difference is that they are more sensitive to sunlight, and for this reason they are unable to carry out heavy work under the sun. The UTSS, therefore, insists that people with albinism should not be marginalized; on the contrary, they should be protected by their community members and supported by the government in order to create an inclusive society²⁴³

Furthermore, according to the research done by Francis Benyah in Ghana with the title “Equally Able, Differently Looking: Discrimination and Physical Violence Against Persons with Albinism in Ghana” (2017), people with albinism encounter a lot of discrimination in the job market, marriage, education, health, religion, social life, and inheritance. He adds that in Ghana especially, educational institutions do not provide them with the requisite resources and materials to enhance their education.²⁴⁴

Taylor and Francis (2016) compiled and published *Anthropology and Medicine*, where an article written by Giorgio Brocco shows how the subjectivities of people with albinism in Tanzania are shaped and re-shaped through local moral conceptions as well as globalizing bio-

²⁴² Interview with Johansen Rutabingwa, a retired General Secretary of the ELCT/NWD, January 03, 2020.

²⁴³ Taylor and Francis, *Anthropology & Medicine*, accessed August 17, 2019, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5351792/>.

²⁴⁴ Francis Benyah, *Equally Able, Differently Looking: Discrimination and Physical Violence Against Persons with Albinism in Ghana* accessed August 8, 2019, https://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1011-76012017000100008 and also from <https://dx.doi.org/10.17159/2413-3027/2017/v30n1a7>.

medical explanations of albinism.²⁴⁵ The results of their work while discussing on “Albinism, Stigma, Subjectivity and Global-local Discourses in Tanzania” show that:

The majority of people with albinism in Tanzania live in marginalized social conditions and a state of economic vulnerability because, apart from having a different physical appearance and suffering from visual impairments, they cannot actively take part in agrarian work due to their sensitivity to the sun, and this effectively excludes them from engaging in the major productive activity in most rural areas.²⁴⁶

In addition, according to the report of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee studying the situation of human rights of people with albinism, security and displacement of people with albinism are linked to the overall issue of discrimination.²⁴⁷ The report affirms that various forms of discrimination are evident, based on the cruel and violent lives of people with albinism. That is to say, if they happen to survive infanticide at birth, they face a constant threat of physical attacks. Furthermore, skin cancer remains a life-threatening condition for most persons with albinism and most of them die under the age of 40.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵Giorgio Brocco, “Albinism, Stigma, Subjectivity and Global-Local Discourses in Tanzania,” *Anthropology & Medicine*, Compiled by Taylor and Francis Group (UK Limited, Published online 29 June 2016), 23:3, 229-243, DOI:10.1080/13648470.2016.1184009, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5351792/>.

²⁴⁶ Giorgio Brocco, “Albinism, Stigma, Subjectivity and Global-Local Discourses in Tanzania,” *Anthropology & Medicine*, Compiled by Taylor and Francis Group (UK Limited, Published online 29 June 2016), 23:3, 229-243, DOI:10.1080/13648470.2016.1184009, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5351792/>.

Human Rights Council, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/.../Albinism/A-HRC-28-75_en.doc but also from A/HRC/24/57, para 84.

²⁴⁷ Human Rights Council, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/.../Albinism/A-HRC-28-75_en.doc but also from A/HRC/24/57, para 84.

²⁴⁸ For example, one epidemiological study estimated that fewer than 10 per cent of persons with Albinism in Tanzania survive to age 30, and only 2 per cent were expected to reach age 40. See Andres E. Cruz-Ingo et al., “Albinism in Africa: Stigma, Slaughter and Awareness Campaigns”, *Dermatologic Clinics*, vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 7981 (2011) (citing J. Luande et al., “The Tanzanian Human Albino Skin Cancer,” vol. 55, p. 1823 (1985)).

But, it has to be sensitively known that stigma and discrimination against people with albinism is a global phenomenon. While it has been reported that people with albinism globally face discrimination and stigma, information on cases of physical attacks against people with albinism is mainly available from countries in Africa. The manner in which discrimination faced by people with albinism manifests itself and its severity vary from region to region. In the western world, including North America, Europe and Australia, discrimination often consists of name-calling, persistent teasing and bullying of children with albinism.²⁴⁹ In those regions, the substance of discrimination is deep-rooted in misconceptions and misunderstanding about albinism, notably perpetuated by the media and popular culture, which consistently portray people with albinism in a negative light.²⁵⁰ Given the rarity of albinism in those regions (an estimated 1 in 17,000 to 20,000), the media and popular culture are major sources of information on the condition for the majority. According to the World Health Organization report, per 2006, it was estimated that in North America and Europe 1 in every 17,000 to 20,000 people have some form of albinism. The condition is much more prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa, with estimates of 1 in 1,400.²⁵¹ In Tanzania, people with albinism represent 1 in every 1,429 births, a much higher rate than in any other nation.²⁵² According to Al-Shymaa Kway-Geer, the former Member of Parliament who has albinism, there were 6,977 officially registered people with albinism in Tanzania by the year 2014. However, it is believed that there may be up to 17,000 undocumented. Tanzania is thought to have the largest population of people with albinism in

²⁴⁹See Under the Same Sun (UTSS), www.underthesamesun.com/.

²⁵⁰In popular culture, particularly in literature and in film, persons with albinism are portrayed as villains, demons, ghosts, freaks of nature, mystical anomalies or village idiots.

²⁵¹Under the Same Sun, "Frequency of Albinism/Rates of Occurrence," 2-5.

²⁵²*Ibid.*

Africa.²⁵³ Therefore, unless specific albinism awareness-raising is conducted by support groups and civil society, such discrimination is unlikely to be brought to light.

The current research has discovered that people with albinism face more severe forms of discrimination and violence in those regions where the majority of the general population are relatively dark-skinned. The degree of contrast in pigmentation between the majority and the people with albinism in a community tends to correlate positively with the severity and intensity of discrimination faced by people with albinism. In other words, a greater degree of contrast in pigmentation often gives rise to a greater degree of discrimination. That appears to be the case in some sub-Saharan African countries where albinism is shrouded in myth and dangerous erroneous beliefs. However, this research was eager to search information apart from Africa, especially in some countries in Asia and America to find out how people in those areas perceive people with albinism.

According to the research done by Samdani and Khoso entitled “A Unique Albino Village of Bhatti Tribe in Rural Sindh, in Pakistan,” little information is available from other regions such as Asia, South America and the Pacific including in the Philippines where the researcher of this work takes his doctoral studies.²⁵⁴ However, some reports indicate that in China and other Asian countries, children with albinism face abandonment and rejection by their families. A recent epidemiological study of people with albinism from a specific tribe in Pakistan explains the multi-layered human rights problems faced by people with albinism, including lack

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ Azam Jah Samdani and Bahram Khan Khoso, “A unique albino village of Bhatti Tribe in rural Sindh, Pakistan, with oculocutaneous albinism manifestations: an epidemiological study, *Iranian Journal of Dermatology*, (Iranian Society of Dermatology, 2009), pp. 42–46. See also “Feature: Nepal’s Albinos Caught between Reality and Myth”, (Shanghai Daily.com, 9 October 2014).

of understanding of albinism, social rejection, medical and psychological problems as well as confinement to poverty. Reliable testimonies received from Mumbai, India also indicate that people with albinism tend to be viewed as cursed on account of their appearance. That perceived curse is considered contagious by some, such that people with albinism are effectively ostracized and isolated from and by mainstream society. Such isolation has been reported to occur even when people with albinism are moved into special schools such as schools for the blind owing to their visual impairment. Such treatment even within the community of people with disabilities shows the pervasiveness of discrimination against people with albinism.²⁵⁵

Given the fact that evidence such as these about albinism especially in Asia has only come to the fore in these recent years, it has to be noted that the absence of information on other regions should not be interpreted to mean that there is no problem of discrimination, stigmatization and violence in those regions. Rather, there should be a general presumption that there are human rights issues facing people with albinism in each region. That presumption can be rebutted by targeted studies in the near future. This signifies that more research is needed. All in all, lack of sufficient knowledge remains a significant barrier to tackling stigma and discrimination.

All forms of discrimination affecting people with albinism are interrelated, and there is an inextricable link between discrimination and poverty. “The right to education of people with albinism, for instance; is adversely affected by the vision impairment they suffer from. A poor education, in turn, affects their right to an adequate standard of living, consigning many people

²⁵⁵*ibid.*

with albinism to poverty.”²⁵⁶ As a result, the economic and social rights of people with albinism are disproportionately affected by various types of poverty.

Obviously, people with albinism face multiple forms of discrimination worldwide. This is because albinism is still profoundly, socially, and medically misunderstood.

Prejudice and Stereotypes

In many parts of the world, people with albinism are largely seen as being incomplete. Therefore, the use of insulting names for people with albinism has led to prejudice and stereotypes that in turn lead communities to condemn them based on the condition rather than first appreciating their humanity.²⁵⁷ An indication of the prejudice and stereotype of people with albinism is represented by the many denigrating labels that circulate widely in Africa. In Tanzania, most of the descriptive terms used to refer to people with albinism are humiliating. They seem to suggest a lesser being; for instance such terms as *zeruzeru* (ghost), *mzungu* (white person), and *dili* which literally means ‘deal’, and refers to the trade of the body parts of people with albinism in the black market.²⁵⁸ Also in the *Haya* language (the vernacular language of the researcher of this study), a person with albinism is called Ekinyamagoye—indicating that they are not human beings, but later that language was somehow softened and called *Omwela* (the white). These stereotypes to people with albinism are represented by many denigrating labels in Africa, indicating that in African society, a person with albinism is regarded as a lesser human being.

²⁵⁶ A/HRC/24/57, para. 71.

²⁵⁷ The Albino Foundation, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://albinofoundation.org/living-with-albinism/>.

²⁵⁸ Taylor and Francis, *Anthropology & Medicine*, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5351792/>

Marginalization and Social Exclusion

According to the research done by Nebre, the main perpetrators who marginalize and discriminate people with albinism are family members who are unwilling to share their food and clothes with the affected individual. Some discrimination to people with albinism include getting beaten to death, spat at, mocked, avoided by peers, and called a harsh name as previously indicated.²⁵⁹

Another social setting in which individuals with albinism can suffer from social exclusion is in schools. For example, at Mugeza Mseto Primary School, a child with albinism was hit by a fellow pupil (Nester) and her front tooth was damaged for the reason that the classmate did not want an albino pupil to sit near her in the classroom.²⁶⁰ When Nester's mother was required to give Nester some ethical guidance, she responded with "why are you (teachers) letting my daughter sit together with albino?"²⁶¹ The case is only one of many that explains why people with albinism are socially isolated and excluded from society.

Moreover, human rights reports show that people with albinism are routinely ignored from employment by both private employers and governments due to their condition.²⁶² They are thought of as being incapable or as being a burden. On the other way, employers almost always refuse to offer jobs to a person with Albinism because they know that many people will avoid their business. For example, the researcher of this work has never seen any albino person serving

²⁵⁹ Mariah Nebre, *Social Discrimination Against People with Albinism*, accessed August 8, 2019, https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/.../Journals_two/17_nebre.pdf.

²⁶⁰ Interview with Nester, a class five pupil at Mugeza Mseto who damaged the tooth of an Albino child in 2017.

²⁶¹ Interview with Nester, a class five pupil at Mugeza Mseto who damaged the tooth of an Albino child in 2017 and her mother (Adelina).

²⁶² The Albino Foundation, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://albinofoundation.org/living-with-albinism/>.

in any of the hotels in Tanzania. If they happen to be employed, they are sometimes assigned tasks that require them to work outside.

In view of the fact that many people with albinism in Tanzania and Africa in general are not well educated for various reasons, they therefore do not have better economic means. As a result, without a proper education, individuals with the congenital condition (both men and women) consequently cannot aspire for employment other than cultivating their own field, working on the land of others as hired hands or performing various manual jobs under the sun, even though these activities are particularly dangerous for them due to their skin's sensitivity to sun exposure.²⁶³

It also becomes harder for persons with albinism to find a partner because of social exclusion attached to their condition. The social exclusion they experience is extended to marriage affairs, where those affected are denied the right to have a family. In general, African people find it easy to find partners due to the great importance family has in the African culture, but those affected by albinism are frequently forced to lead their lives alone because no one wants them. Marcon believes that love and marriage are probably the greatest test of real acceptance for those who count people with albinism among their friends. A further problem facing people with albinism in marriage is that they must not only be accepted by their partners, but also by their partner's family.²⁶⁴ Families have high chances of rejecting or accepting someone's partner.

²⁶³ Giorgio Brocco, Albinism, Stigma, Subjectivity and Global-Local Discourses in Tanzania," *Anthropology & Medicine*, Compiled by Taylor and Francis Group (UK Limited, Published online 29 June 2016), 23:3, 229-243, DOI:10.1080/13648470.2016.1184009, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5351792/>.

²⁶⁴Marcon, "Albinism in Tanzania," 40-47.

Still on social exclusion, the International Bar Association—the global voice of the legal profession, reported in 2017 that in Africa, women who give birth to a child with albinism may face ostracism and social exclusion. They are also exposed to rejection by their husband or partner, accused of adultery or infidelity, and blamed for giving birth to a child who is generally seen as a curse or bad omen.²⁶⁵ The majority of African fathers of the baby with albinism usually blame the mother for cheating on them. In some cases, the husband will assume his wife has slept with a white man because of the pigmentation of the baby with albinism. This results in an abusive relationship as well as dealing with the consequences that people believe it is her and her family's fault for having a baby with albinism.²⁶⁶ It is common for fathers to tell the mother to either abandon, kill, or leave the baby to starve due to cultural beliefs and norms.

Furthermore, the common myth in Africa is the fear of albinism being contagious. Families have kept their children away from children who have albinism because of this fear. This proves a big problem knowing that people believe in myths that albinism is a sort of physical disability.²⁶⁷ The belief is that this genetic disease can spread throughout Africa in no time because there is no treatment to prevent it from spreading. With that being said, those who are opposed to people with albinism consider that anything a person with albinism touches can be contaminated and poisoned, so it is important to keep away from them. Another cultural myth is that people spit at those with albinism to help prevent any person with albinism being born within their families and to stay safe from the albinism community. Groups of people that are

²⁶⁵ Ero Ikponwosa, "Waiting to Disappear: International and Regional Standards for the Protection and Promotion of the Human Rights of Persons with Albinism June 2017," International Bar Association: The Global Voice of the Legal Profession, page 26, last modified 10-August-2019, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.ibanet.org>.

²⁶⁶ Mariah Nebre, "Social Discrimination Against People with Albinism," accessed August 8, 2019, https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/.../Journals_two/17_nebre.pdf.

²⁶⁷ Mariah Nebre, "Social Discrimination Against People with Albinism," accessed August 8, 2019, https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/.../Journals_two/17_nebre.pdf.

most likely to spit at people with albinism include pregnant women, to ensure that her offspring will not come out as a person with albinism.²⁶⁸ With many common myths, people with albinism are isolated and turned away from their communities due to superstitions, cultural beliefs, and witchcraft.

The physical appearance of people with albinism is often the object of erroneous beliefs and myths influenced by superstition that foster their marginalization and social exclusion. Consequently, the rejection and ostracism of mothers and sometimes entire families of children with albinism exposes them to poverty and isolation, increases their vulnerability to attacks, and also contributes to infanticide and abandonment of children with albinism.

Discrimination and Basic Human Rights Accessibility

The issue of albinism has been an emerging topic in human rights, particularly in Africa. While rights are not considered to be a part of the albinism community due to the different pigmentation in their skin color, African communities have continued to harass and socially discriminate against people with albinism. According to Nebre, people with albinism are limited to exercise their rights as a human being²⁶⁹ including the freedom of expression or speech. In the Constitution of Tanzania, the international conventions on human rights, institutions of Tanzania's Commission for Human Rights, and Good Governance, states the purposes of human rights explanations and characteristics.²⁷⁰ Within these articles, there are violations for criminals who commit any discrimination against people with albinism. With the help of the government, people with albinism are believed to have equal human rights with others. There are also activists

²⁶⁸*Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ Mariah Nebre, "Social Discrimination Against People with Albinism," accessed August 8, 2019, https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/.../Journals_two/17_nebre.pdf.

²⁷⁰*Ibid.*

who protest the violations of human rights amongst people with albinism, believing that people with albinism are humans who deserve the same rights as others.²⁷¹ The ability of living and being a human being is the meaning of having a connection and bond with their community in order to share the common interests and cultural beliefs together as a unified whole. With the help of a social relationship within the community, people with albinism are able to see the significance of human rights. Nebre also mentions that the way people treat each other is in the determination of having rights and in seeing as wrongdoing to kill a human being.²⁷²

However, some communities still disagree that people with albinism have any part of human rights expression. According to Nebre, rights are ‘legitimate claims’ involving three intersecting dimensions: social, legal and personal.²⁷³ The social aspect provides the meaning of unity as a culture of the same beliefs through each and every person in the community. The legal rights are focused on the intentions of the international and national laws that human rights practices are made without the violation to commit any crime against people with albinism.²⁷⁴ The personal aspect is the value that people with albinism understand the main concept of what human rights means to them.

This research submits that public awareness will contribute to stopping the harmful and violent accusations against people with albinism.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

²⁷² *Ibid.*

²⁷³ Mariah Nebre, “Social Discrimination Against People with Albinism,” accessed August 8, 2019, https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/.../Journals_two/17_nebre.pdf.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Effects of a Visual Problem

Due to the fact that melanin is critical to the normal development and health of the eyes, people with albinism because of their reduced amount of pigmentation suffer from multiple eye defects. According to the scientific research done by the organization Under The Same Sun (2013), most people with albinism are myopic and have, generally speaking, only 20% of normal visual levels.²⁷⁵ This means that most people with albinism are classifiable as persons with disabilities (legally blind) and are in need of reasonable accommodation in school, without which most drop out of school in Tanzania.²⁷⁶ Some families, out of ignorance and due to stigma, have also failed to take their children to school, thinking they are not intelligent enough and cannot read books.²⁷⁷

According to the Albino Foundation, learning institutions in Africa have put students with albinism under the same conditions as other students without taking into account the visual impairment associated with the condition.²⁷⁸ In other cases, students with albinism are taken to schools for the blind while they are not blind. Poor vision may cause students with albinism to be slow learners either due to inability to clearly see the black board or inability to read books and other learning materials. Additionally, the foundation insists that the colors used in writing also matter because students with albinism have a problem with contrast. Also, text books and examination papers are mostly printed in normal size font that may be hard for students with albinism to read quickly.²⁷⁹ It sometimes makes it hard to focus on small narrow print. Students

²⁷⁵ NGO report of Under the Same Sun (UTSS), "Children with Albinism: Violence & Displacement," accessed September 15, 2017, www.underthesamesun.com.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁷ The Albino Foundation, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://albinofoundation.org/living-with-albinism/>.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

with albinism have also been required to finish examinations at the same time as other students whose sights are normal.

According to research by the Albino Foundation, the most common bullies in the learning institutions are the teachers. In some cases, some teachers assign children with albinism to sit in the back as far away from them as possible. For instance, Nebre's research cited a pregnant teacher who feared that her baby would be born with albinism, so she placed the student with albinism at the back of the class for the rest of the year.²⁸⁰This and similar situations have led to poor academic performance and low education levels for students with albinism.²⁸¹

The High Risk of Developing Skin Cancer

Due to the low education levels and the absence of healthcare information about the condition, people with albinism in Africa often take jobs outdoors, without sun protection. Due to the lack of protective melanin pigment in the skin of people with albinism, they are at lifelong risk of sun-induced damage. This exposes them to a high risk of skin cancer. This is why most people with albinism die slowly from advanced skin cancer which they often get by working as petty traders in the sun after they failed to receive an education due to lack of accommodation for their visual impairment. For this reason, according to the research of Under the Same Sun, a large number of them die at the age of 40 years or below.²⁸²

²⁸⁰ Mariah Nebre, "Social Discrimination Against People with Albinism," accessed August 8, 2019, https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/.../Journals_two/17_nebre.pdf.

²⁸¹ The Albino Foundation, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://albinofoundation.org/living-with-albinism/>.

²⁸² NGO report of Under the Same Sun (UTSS), "Children with Albinism: Violence & Displacement," accessed September 15, 2017, www.underthesamesun.com.

The Appearance as White-Skinned People in a Non-White-Race: The Colour Issue

The issue of colour is one of the most dangerous aspects of albinism in Africa. People with albinism are easily noticed in a sea of dark-skinned people and are unable to conceal or hide this immutable aspect even if they tried. Their colouring is the core and the root of all myths against them and the reason why witchdoctors are hunting them to harvest their body parts in certain countries such as Tanzania.²⁸³ These white-skinned people, who are not Europeans nor Asians but happen to be fathered and mothered by black parent have been subjects of discussion among black African society especially in non-white races. Skin colour remains a powerful factor in human politics and in common social transactions between people with albinism, their family, and society. In several countries, people with albinism are considered to be ghosts or a type of supernatural metaphysical evil or non-human being as has already been portrayed in previous chapters.²⁸⁴

Aside from the issue of colouring, some other factors of albinism make people with albinism seem peculiar and noticeable in their community. These include the involuntary eye movement that is visible to most observers and the tendency have gestures and posturing considered socially awkward, including extreme head-tilting and involuntary head-shaking. Most people with albinism also squint heavily in sunlight and this squinting contributes to noticeable facial distortion and appearance. Furthermore, people with albinism tend to read by holding

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ UTSS Experience, also see UTSS/UNICEF, "Situation Assessment of the Centers of Displaced Persons with Albinism in the Lake Zone and Tanga Regions, Findings from Under The Same Sun Survey, 2011," UTSS Resources, (listed as Report on Centers Holding Displaced PWA"), accessed September 20th, 2019, <http://www.underthesamesun.com/resources>, 56.

objects very close to their face; this is due to vision impairment but can seem very strange to observers.²⁸⁵

The unique condition and distinctive appearance are surrounded by myths and stereotypes that have powerful negative impacts on their lives. For example; people look intently at them making them feel as if they have been unfortunate to have come to this part of the world in such skin. In the same vein, people with albinism are not given the chance to show how pleasant they are because they are only greeted from afar as if they are not human beings.²⁸⁶

While the severity of each factor varies from person to person, the issue of appearance remains an important consideration in understanding some of the negative perceptions of people with albinism around the world. Most importantly, it is essential for understanding the unique mystification and resulting stigma they face—a stigma that is not only a result of their medical needs but also due to the perception of the totality of their appearance.

The Mental Health Issue

Research by Under the Same Sun shows that due to the killings and multifaceted conditions that face people with albinism, most of them have developed mental health issues, including persistent fear of being killed at any time or continual grieving by those who witnessed attacks. Oddly enough, there is not enough psychosocial support for the mental state of people

²⁸⁵ UTSS Experience, also see UTSS/UNICEF, "Situation Assessment of the Centers of Displaced Persons with Albinism in the Lake Zone and Tanga Regions, Findings from Under The Same Sun Survey, 2011," UTSS Resources, (listed as Report on Centers Holding Displaced PWA"), accessed September 20th, 2019, <http://www.underthesamesun.com/resources>, 56. Also see: The Albino Foundation/UNICEF, "Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Study on Children with Albinism in Nigeria" 2011/2012, 11-12; Also, Sara Scot, "A New Category of 'Color': Analyzing Albinism Under Title VII and the Americans with Disabilities Act," 2 *J. Gender Race&Just.* 493 (1998-1999), 496, 519.

²⁸⁶ Interview with Hemed M. Musa an Assistance Head Teacher at Mugeza Mseto Primary school, January 21, 2020.

with albinism.²⁸⁷ The majority are left to cope with their mental health on their own in an environment that is likely to make it worse.

All of these conditions and situations facing people with albinism are global, but they are more acute and life-threatening in Africa. This situation notifies the church to think on how she can engage in this issue while participating in God's mission. Because the church is commissioned to celebrate life and to resist and transform all life-destroying forces, actions towards healing and wholeness of life of people and communities are important expressions of the church's mission. This is because, as it has been already clarified, God's mission is not only about addressing suffering but also struggling to overcome unjust and life-denying forces that hold life.

This chapter confirms that people with albinism face the world's response to their overall appearance, often deemed strange, and consequently, mystified and stigmatized. They live in a world historically obsessed with skin colour, a world of misunderstanding that has not particularly anticipated their impairment. As a result, they face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, worsened by long-term misconceptions about the condition. The worst form of this misunderstanding has resulted in physical attacks and killings. All these issues have challenged the church, particularly the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania in her missional strategies and implementations.

This chapter has moreover not only described the situations and conditions affecting people with albinism in Tanzania and Africa, in general, but also it has critically analyzed them. From this analysis it was argued that different models of disability have really influenced the

²⁸⁷ NGO report of Under the Same Sun (UTSS), "Children with Albinism: Violence & Displacement," accessed September 15, 2017, www.underthesamesun.com.

community on how they perceive people with albinism and with disabilities in general.²⁸⁸ In fact, different models of disability have largely and incorrectly shaped African community to immorally perceive people with albinism. For instance, it was ascertained that the moral/religious model is one of the strongest models of disability that traditionally interpreted some of the biblical texts unsuitably. In general, it was determined that this model has portrayed people with albinism in a negative way. That is why it was argued in this work that this model of disability is one of the biggest reasons why the community in Tanzania perceived people with albinism immorally. This study has furthermore showed that the situation became worse when some people with albinism withdrew themselves from the reality of the present life by submitting themselves to life after death. They presume that it is only in heaven where they can experience better life. They submitted themselves to the life beyond this world because they believe that nothing in their life could be changed. This attitude was one of despair. For this reason, the salvation-history model of eschatological hope was employed in this dissertation as the lens for analyzing the findings based on the theology of mission as action in hope. It was strongly argued that any interpretation of the Bible is unacceptable if it does harm to any human being. Hence, how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania interprets her mission in the midst of such suffering of people with albinism is vital. Thus, the next chapter expounds and evaluates on the understanding of mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) in relation to people with albinism.

²⁸⁸ Explanations on these models of disability are found in chapter four of this dissertation.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE UNDERSTANDING OF MISSION IN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN TANZANIA IN RELATION TO PEOPLE WITH ALBINISM

Reflecting on the factual circumstances confronting people with albinism, this chapter sets out to unpack the understanding of mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) in relation to people with albinism. It discusses various mission activities that appear to translate missions of the church in action. In view of the fact that the term ‘mission’ is broad in its essence and implications, this chapter is limited to the ELCT’s understanding of mission pertaining to people with albinism in order to avoid broader discussions of its meanings.²⁸⁹

As already pointed out in the first chapter, the ELCT in 2014 inaugurated the official guideline as the general opinion of the church authorities for fighting violence in society, including the killings of people with albinism.²⁹⁰ Therefore, in addition to other ELCT’s documents such as the church constitution, this chapter focuses mainly on evaluating how the church implements the 2014 ELCT guideline particularly in advocacy and rights of people with albinism. This work of evaluation involves testing three sets of the research key questions expanded from the title of this chapter as follows. Does mission in the ELCT mean something more than saving souls and church planting? Does mission in the ELCT mean something more

²⁸⁹ Bosch has explained different meaning of the term mission as follows: the sending of missionaries to a designated territory, the activities undertaken by such missionaries, the geographical area where the missionaries were active, the agency which dispatched the missionaries, the non-Christian world or mission field, the center from which the missionaries operated on the mission field, a local congregation without a resident minister (Bishop) and still dependent on the support of an older established church, a series of special services intended to deepen or spread the Christian faith. (Bosch, *Transforming*, 1).

²⁹⁰ ELCT document, “Mwongozo-Elimu ya Kuondoa Ukatili katika Jamii ,”2014, 1-50.

than emergency relief and charitable works? Does mission in the ELCT touch people with albinism?

This chapter is composed of nine sections. The first expounds on the historical background, formation, and structure of the ELCT. It is in this part where vision, mission, focus and various activities of the ELCT including the 2014 ELCT guideline for fighting against violence in the community are extensively discussed and evaluated. The second section focuses on explicating and examining various models of disability that have an effect on the ELCT's perceptions and ideas on people with albinism. The next section centers on finding and evaluating the development of the church's attitudinal perspective on the issue of disablement in general and on the problems of albinism in particular. The fourth section highlights theological analysis in biblical interpretations of disability in general in relation to mission as action in hope to people with albinism. Based on the theological analysis in biblical interpretations, this chapter verifies that several verses from the bible have been used to legitimize exclusion of people with disability in general and with albinism in particular from the society and from church activities as well. Therefore, this study found the necessity of expounding ideological analysis in biblical interpretations especially in interpreting biblical texts. For this reason, the fifth section centers on discussing ideological analysis method in biblical interpretations with the intention of introducing fair and nondiscriminatory interpretations as intended by the theology of hope in this dissertation.

Furthermore, grounded on the above discussion, the sixth section concentrates on theology of *imago Dei* in relation to people with albinism with the emphasis that all human beings are created in the image of God. For this reason, section seven gives attention to how the

ELCT encounters the spiritual needs of people with albinism with regard to the misleading theology of miraculous healing provided that the nature of albinism cannot be healed. Then, section eight discusses the theology of hope employed in this dissertation in relation to ‘Ubuntu’ theology as the cardinal heart of African philosophy ‘I am because we are,’ and the last section, section nine, summarizes the entire chapter.

Historical Background, Formation and Structure of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

As stated in the first chapter of this dissertation, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) is the federation of Lutheran churches in Tanzania and one of the largest Lutheran denominations in the world with more than 6.5 million members.²⁹¹ Currently, the ELCT comprises 26 dioceses and is led by a presiding Bishop who is one of the diocesan bishops. Historically, the ELCT was born on June 19, 1963, following a union of the seven Lutheran Churches in then Tanganyika and formed by European and American mission societies.²⁹² However, the name Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania was not adopted until 1964, following the political union between Tanganyika Mainland and Zanzibar on April 26, 1964.²⁹³ The union with Zanzibar also gave the ELCT a greater and more reliable opportunity for doing mission work there. It was in 1964 that the first African missionary was sent to Zanzibar to revive the Lutheran mission work started there by German missionaries (from Bethel Mission) in 1886. The mission societies that started the seven Lutheran Churches united in 1963 and formed the ELCT were the Berlin Mission, Bethel Mission, Leipzig Mission, Augustana Mission,

²⁹¹ The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, accessed August 5, 2019, <https://www.elct.org/>.

²⁹² Godson Maanga, “The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1963-2013,” *Lutheran Quarterly*xxvii, (2014): 179, ATLAS collection.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

Church of Sweden Mission, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, and the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, among others.²⁹⁴ It has to be noted that in 1937 a Lutheran body known as Mission Church Federation was formed by some of the Lutheran mission societies working in Tanganyika and in 1952 it was given the name Federation of the Lutheran Churches in Tanganyika.²⁹⁵ The ELCT began with only seven Lutheran churches/dioceses but now she has 26 dioceses, all led by indigenous bishops.

The seven Lutheran Churches of Tanganyika were the product of the gospel preached by the committed missionaries sent to different areas of the country by volunteer mission societies from Europe and America. These seven churches were The Lutheran Church in Ubena-Konde, The Lutheran Church in Uzaramo–Uluguru, The Lutheran Church in Usambara-Digo, The Lutheran Church in Northern Tanganyika, The Lutheran Church in Mbulu, The Lutheran Church in Iramba-Turu, and the Lutheran Church in Buhaya.²⁹⁶ Most of these Lutheran Churches were named after the main ethnic groups found in the areas evangelized by the early missionaries to Tanganyika.

Three main reasons made the Lutheran churches unite, namely preaching the gospel as one Lutheran team, getting representation before the government, and fighting for religious rights as one unit.²⁹⁷ The idea of churches working as one unit or as one body presents to us a very illustrative picture about our discipleship. Formation of one Lutheran church in Tanganyika made it possible to get representation in national, regional and international church organizations

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ Godson Maanga, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1963-2013," *Lutheran Quarterly* xxvii, (2014): 179, ATLAS collection.

²⁹⁶ Maanga, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1963-2013," 179-180.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

such as the Lutheran World Federation and World Council of Churches. Right from the beginning, the ELCT founders wanted to form a church that would continue being defined, as she has been defined over the centuries, as “the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel.”²⁹⁸ Even prior to establishing the ELCT, members of the Lutheran church saw the necessity for all Christians to live and work in unity—unity in faith, theological teachings, education, medical care, and basic Lutheran writings.²⁹⁹

The decision to unite enabled the Lutheran churches in Tanganyika to have one constitution and a united leadership, contrary to the former system where each church stood alone in terms of constitution and leadership. Thus, the merger of the seven Lutheran Churches brought about the possibility of having one autonomous Lutheran church in Tanzania.³⁰⁰ Based on that unity, each year the ELCT produces a common lectionary called *Kalenda* in Swahili. There is also a Swahili hymnal book that contains the liturgy used by the ELCT dioceses. This particular hymnal book, first known as *Nyimbo za Kikristo* and later *Mwimbieni Bwana*, since 2012 is now known as *Tumwabudu Mungu Wetu* and is used in the all dioceses of the ELCT, making the ELCT largely united in liturgy and worship.³⁰¹ However, some variations on the traditional Lutheran liturgy and worship have followed the increasing imitation of charismatic churches’ modes of worship. In the ELCT, liturgy and hymns are companions of scripture that are given first priority in all 26 ELCT member dioceses. The ELCT is very much aware that the holy scriptures are the source and norm of the knowledge of God’s revelation that concerns the

²⁹⁸ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, accessed August 5, 2019, <https://www.elct.org/>.

²⁹⁹ Maanga, “The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1963-2013,” 180.

³⁰⁰ Maanga, “The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1963-2013,” 180-181.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

Christian faith. The ELCT as one church has vision, mission, and focus that guide the church in her missionary activities.

Vision Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. The ELCT envisions “a communion of people rejoicing in love and peace, blessed spiritually and physically, hoping to inherit eternal life through Jesus Christ.”³⁰² This vision is quite clear because it equally puts into consideration both periods—today’s life and life after death. It expects love and peace here in this world and at the same time hopes in eternal life. This vision when well implemented obviously entails on how the church understands mission because mission is not excluding actual life by stressing on life after death or vice-versa. This point is also insisted by Bosch that the indwelling God is working out His purposes in the world of people, here and now, but also submitting to Christ as Saviour is inseparable from submitting to him as Lord not only in our personal lives but also political and economic systems in the corporate life of society.³⁰³ It has been explained in this work that people with albinism are not rejoicing life in love and peace as the vision of the church envisions; therefore, the vision of ELCT enforces the church to fully engage in fighting and eradicating all evils that people with albinism face.

Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. As indicated in the constitution of the ELCT, the mission of the church is “to make people know Jesus Christ and have life in its fullness by bringing to them the Good News through word and deed based on the Word of God as it is in the bible and the Lutheran teachings guided by the ELCT Constitution.”³⁰⁴ This ELCT

³⁰² Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, accessed March 19, 2020, <http://www.elct.org/#popularlinks>.

³⁰³ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 513, 518.

³⁰⁴ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, accessed March 19, 2020, <http://www.elct.org/#popularlinks>.

mission or objective urges the church to immediately intervene in the issue of albinism in Tanzania and Africa, in general, under the guidance of the ELCT constitution. Nevertheless, the church is challenged for relying on traditional understanding of mission. This study argues that it is not so much about what the church believes and aims at, but in what she does that matters most.

Focus of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. It is clearly stated in the ELCT constitution that the ELCT focuses on propagating the holistic Gospel serving human beings through spiritual, social, economic, and environmental programs/interventions in order to have a God-loving community, hence fulfilling God's mission in Tanzania.³⁰⁵ In serving human beings in a holistic way, the Church carries out mission work within and outside the country using all types of means and media.³⁰⁶ For instance, apart from education (schools), hospital, economic and environmental programs, the ELCT participates fully in diakonia work. The traditional task of diakonia is caring for people in need as well as contributing alms or humanitarian donations. From the very beginning, such service has become part and parcel of all missionary activities of the ELCT. This important service continues in all 26 dioceses of the ELCT through districts, parishes, congregations, institutions and even at the diocesan level. Pastors, evangelists, deacons, sisters, social workers, church leaders and volunteers provide humanitarian service to orphans, children living a precarious life such as in the streets, older adults or poor people living in special camps or homes, widows and widowers, as well as refugees and now also children with albinism living in different camps or boarding schools. The Church furthermore extends help to victims of various

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁶ ELCT has a coordination office responsible for financial reports on church activities. She produces literature for Christian nurturing. The central office has a function of Capacity building, Advocacy and Facilitation (CAF) of the dioceses. The church has common work institutions including: The Tumaini University Makumira that has 6 constituent colleges; Morogoro Lutheran Junior Seminary (L J S); Three schools for the deaf children. The church has also 23 Hospitals and more than 140 health centres and dispensaries spread across Tanzania. She is engaged in PHC, diakonia, HIV counseling, treatment and Palliative Care at national and Diocesan levels. ELCT has a number of water projects as well as poverty alleviation and environment protection projects. The implementations of these projects have had a significant impact on development in the communities, accessed March 19, 2020, <http://www.elct.org/#popularlinks>.

epidemics and natural calamities such as famine, earthquakes, and floods.³⁰⁷ More explanation on this issue is found in the section on health and diaconic ministry in this chapter. It is very clear to the ELCT that without diaconic work and humanitarian activities, her role in society will be doubtful and somewhat partial.

As it is clearly stated in the ELCT constitution, the vision, mission and focus of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania demand that the church fully engage in fighting and eradicating all evils that people with albinism face. However, in actuality, the constitution and its implementation are two different things. The constitution works simply as a guide directing and demarcating the church in her mission, but what really matters is the actual realization of the plans. And the latter can be fully tested at the grassroots level where implementation is carried out. This is why, by surveying faces of missions or mission activities in the ELCT with regard to her vision, mission, and focus, one may accurately measure the results as the church continues participating in *missio Dei* in the context of erroneous beliefs affecting people with albinism.

Mission Activities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania in the Light of Mission as Action in Hope

The church has been participating in various activities with the aim of serving humanity and the world as well. Looking particularly at the ELCT from 1963 when it was formed to date, one could realize that the Church has experienced tremendous changes in terms of growth and missions. From a small church dependent on aid from mission societies, the world has witnessed the ELCT expanding and becoming more self-governing and self-propagating although, in view

³⁰⁷ Maanga, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1963-2013," 180.

of the present economic conditions, there is still a long way ahead to be a completely self-supporting church.

However, some mission activities have been put into action within the ELCT. These mission activities have provided answers to how the ELCT implements mission in relation to people with albinism. It is within these mission activities where specific questions such as the following are answered: Does mission in the ELCT mean something more than saving souls and church planting? Does it mean something more than emergency relief and charitable services? Does it touch people with albinism? These questions ought to be answered because the theology of hope deployed in this dissertation insists on exercising hope in thought and action in the context of erroneous beliefs affecting people with albinism in Tanzania. The hope expected for the end of time now becomes hope in the present reality and this is one of the prophetic tasks of the ELCT. That is why the salvation-history model of eschatological hope that puts special emphasis on the reign of God as the hermeneutical key in biblical interpretations has been used as the lens of this dissertation. Equally important, this lens presents the concept of the reign of God as both present and future.

Involvement of the ELCT in offering Religious and Secular Education

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania is active in providing both spiritual and social services because she recognizes that religion goes hand in hand with spiritual needs and economic development. In the sector of education, the ELCT established schools such as Ilboru Boys Secondary School and Ashira Girls Secondary School which in 1969 were removed from church ownership by the educational act placing all schools in Tanzania under the government's

authority.³⁰⁸ However, realizing the consequences of having no school affiliated to her, the ELCT appealed to the government to be allowed to start a junior seminary and, in response, the government granted permission for the establishment of a Lutheran Junior Seminary that began at Vuga and later moved to Morogoro where it continues today as a comprehensive educational center for the ELCT.³⁰⁹

In the theological arena, the ELCT started Lwandai Theological School in 1947 which in 1954 was transferred to Makumira and named Makumira Theological College, a theological institution that has had a big impact on society, educating theological students from inside and outside Tanzania. It was this particular college which in 1997 gave birth to Tumaini University, owned and run by the ELCT, with some constituent colleges by then, namely Makumira University College, Stefano Moshi Memorial University College, Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University College, Sebastian Kolowa University College, Tumaini University Dar es Salaam College, and Iringa University College.³¹⁰ Another constituent college, Josiah Kibira University College, came to existence in 2012. KARUCO college in Karagwe Diocese, Iringa College which became the ELCT University of Iringa in 2013, and other colleges in various dioceses of the ELCT are on their way to become full-fledged universities.³¹¹

Hand in hand with theological education, the ELCT has established through her dioceses a number of Bible schools that have trained innumerable evangelists, parish workers, and church musicians. Among the leading Bible schools in the ELCT are Mwika in the Northern Diocese, Ruhija in the North Western Diocese, Kidugala in the Southern diocese, Kiabakari in the

³⁰⁸ Maanga, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1963-2013," 182.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ Maanga, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1963-2013," 182-83.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

Diocese in Mara Region, Maneromango in the Eastern and Coastal Diocese, Kiomboi in the Central Diocese, Waama in the Mbulu Diocese, O’ldonyo Sambu in the North Central Diocese, and Usangi in the Pare Diocese, to mention a few.³¹²

With its theological colleges and Bible schools, the ELCT has had an effective and successful mission outreach, inside and outside Tanzania. Pastors and evangelists trained at these institutions have done considerable mission work in outlying areas in Tanzania such as Kigoma and Zanzibar which are still regarded as mission areas. Outside Tanzania, the ELCT has sent pastors and evangelists to Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Uganda, Rwanda, Mozambique, and Zambia. The ELCT mission outreach outside Tanzania has produced the ELCT Kenya Synod—now Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church—formed by Tanzanian employees and business people living in Kenya and the Lutheran Church in the Democratic Republic of Congo.³¹³ The ELCT has been involved in training primary and secondary school teachers at her institutions, such as Marangu Teachers’ College, Bukoba Lutheran Teachers’ College and some others. The ELCT also runs several secondary schools and numerous English medium primary schools through ELCT member dioceses.

On the issue of disability, ELCT has not been left behind as it runs primary schools for the deaf in Mwanga, Njombe and a center for the blind in Njombe that includes primary and secondary education. Also, the ELCT North Western diocese runs a school for the deaf and blind namely Mugeza School for the Deaf.³¹⁴

³¹²*Ibid.*

³¹³Maanga, “The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1963-2013,” 182-83.

³¹⁴ ELCT document, Kalenda ya KKKT 2020, 12-29.

Reflecting on these mission activities, one may argue that the ELCT has been fighting against ignorance *adui ujinga*, one of the three enemies of our nation since independence in 1961. It was then declared that the nation has to fight three enemies, namely *ujinga, maradhi na umaskini*—ignorance, disease, and poverty. Based on the way ELCT has been and continues to engage particularly in secular education from primary to the university levels, it is obviously confirmed that mission in the ELCT meant and means something more than saving souls and church planting. The ELCT has in this way expressed her vision in action in the area of offering religious and secular education in Tanzania. This way of participation is crucial to be pointed out in this dissertation because people with albinism have been joining schools, colleges, and universities owned by ELCT. It can therefore argued that mission in the ELCT has been interpreted into action.

To measure if mission in the ELCT means something more than emergency relief and charitable work, one may also research on how the church participates in health matters and diaconic work, in general.

Participation of the ELCT in Health and Diaconic Ministry

In matters pertaining to health, medical care, and diakonia, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania has remained very active since 1963 until today. Among the big hospitals established by the ELCT are Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre in Moshi, Selian Lutheran Hospital in Arusha, Kiomboi Lutheran Hospital in Singida, Ilembula Lutheran Hospital in Njombe, Bunda Lutheran Hospital in Mara, Ndolage and Izimbya Hospitals in Kagera, the Lutheran Hospital in Arusha Town, and Bumbuli Lutheran Hospital in Tanga. There are also

many dispensaries and health centers started and owned by the ELCT member dioceses.³¹⁵ All of these facilities play a big role within the country in making sure that all Tanzanians including people with albinism who are in most cases suffering from skin cancer receive medical care and treatment. As the country continues fighting the second enemy, *maradhi* (disease/illness), it is clear that the ELCT works hand in hand with the government in providing medical services. Therefore, on the side of medical care, the ELCT has interpreted her mission in action. Holistic mission as it is envisioned in vision, mission and focus of the church, has been implemented.

On the side of diaconic work, the ELCT is participating fully in diakonia and preaching the Gospel. It is obviously known that the traditional task of diaconic work is caring for people in need as well as contributing alms or humanitarian donations. From the very beginning, such work has become part and parcel of all missionary activities of the ELCT. Diaconic works are the very important service continuing in all dioceses of the ELCT—in congregations, parishes, districts, and institutions. Pastors, evangelists, social workers, and others provide humanitarian service to orphans, widows and widowers, as well as refugees, and extend help to victims of various epidemics and natural calamities and now to people with albinism especially children. Without diaconic work and humanitarian activities, the ELCT's role in society is questionable.

The view of mission in terms of diaconic work, when tested by the lens of this dissertation (i.e., the salvation-history model of eschatological hope), brings to mind the influence of the charity model that views disability as victimhood—portraying people with albinism as victims of circumstance who should be pitied. It further describes people with albinism as helpless, depressed, and dependent on other people (or the so called 'normal ones') for care and

³¹⁵ ELCT document, Kalenda ya KKKT 2020, 12-29.

protection. Besides the charity model of disability, the medical model has in one way or another influenced the ELCT on how she has been interpreting her mission to people with disability. in general. The medical model views disability as a disease and therefore, it has to be cured. But albinism cannot be changed to any form, therefore, alms giving and charitable works do not fit for people with albinism.

Because of the influence of these models of disability, the ELCT has in the case of diaconic work been insisting more on humanitarian donations than empowerment or societal transformation on how the community could perceive people with albinism. When this approach is tested under salvation-history model of eschatological hope and the theology of hope of this dissertation, one may ask if this model of humanitarian donation brings the actualized hope to people with albinism. Do people with albinism need only alms contributions? Based on these questions, this dissertation argues that people with albinism can stand on their own if the community accepts them and abstains from hunting them down like animals. It moreover, maintains that people with albinism can efficiently perform different activities being done by what we call ‘normal people.’ First of all, as pointed out in the first chapter, a number of people with albinism do not regard themselves as disabled; it is only society that perceives them as disabled.³¹⁶

Based on this discussion, it can be argued that in addition to other influences, the charity model of disability has highly influenced the ELCT on how she perceives people with albinism. This argument is revealed in most cases of diaconic work done by the ELCT. Nearly all the time, the church has been interpreting mission as that of emergency relief and charitable work. The

³¹⁶ Interview with children with Albinism at Mugeza Mseto Primary School, one of the boarding Primary schools/camps for people with Albinism in Tanzania, January 21, 2020.

standpoint for this dissertation is that mission to people with albinism with their multiple forms of discrimination need something more than emergency relief and charitable work. What is mostly needed apart from charitable services is society transformation. The changed societal attitude from negative to positive perceptions of people with albinism is what demanded of them. They additionally need society's acceptance, respecting their humanity and dignity, becoming full members in society, running their lives by themselves, and objectifying their hopes. It has to be known that the point of self-actualization demanded by people with albinism goes hand in hand with the theology of hope and the emphasis of the salvation-history model of eschatological hope employed in this research.

For further testing of the specific questions asked in this research, however, one may trail the involvement of the ELCT in income-generating projects from the uppermost level to the congregational or family level.

Involvement of the ELCT in Income-Generating Projects

In addition to various activities already mentioned, the ELCT owns guest houses, restaurants, and hotels, such as the New Safari Hotel in Arusha and Kunduchi Hotel in Dar es Salaam.³¹⁷ Some other hotels being run by the ELCT member dioceses include the Lutheran Uhuru Hotel in Moshi, Corridor Springs Hotel in Arusha, Bukoba Hotel in Bukoba, Luther Guest house and Restaurant in Dar es Salaam, Umoja Lutheran Hostel in Moshi, Karatu Lutheran Hostel in Karatu, Njombe Lutheran Centre in Njombe, and Tumaini Lutheran Restaurant in Lushoto. These are some attractive hostels and restaurants owned by various dioceses of the ELCT.³¹⁸

³¹⁷ ELCT document, Kalenda ya KKKT 2020, 13-30

³¹⁸ *ibid.*

Additionally, by way of her different dioceses, the ELCT has undertaken income-generating enterprises such as bookshops, savings and credit unions as well as banks such as the Uchumi Commercial Bank in Northern dioceses and Maendeleo Bank in Eastern and Coastal Diocese.³¹⁹ All the time within the ELCT, material and spiritual development have been considered as inseparable missions. Grounded on such explanations, this work ascertains that the ELCT has practically met the insistence of the theology of *mission as action in hope* of this dissertation.

It has to be known that all these centers and projects have been established as a means of supplying services that go hand in hand with evangelization. They furthermore aim at fulfilling three formula of the church as self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. In point of fact, the way ELCT runs these income-generating projects quenches the desire of this dissertation with its theology based on action in hope. Furthermore, in understanding the power and importance of mass media in educating and transforming the society, the ELCT is not left behind. The ELCT runs several mass media either directly or through her member dioceses. To what extent the ELCT has used her mass media in sensitizing the community with regard to the problem of albinism is next discussed.

Involvement of the ELCT in Mass Media Projects

The ELCT participates in communication by owning radio stations as well as publishing print media. Since 1962, the ELCT has been broadcasting through the Radio *Sauti ya Injili* “Voice of the Gospel,” long established in Ethiopia, with programs prepared first at Mwika Bible School and then in Addis Ababa-Ethiopia.³²⁰ After the toppling of Haile Selassie, the programs

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

³²⁰ Maanga, “The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1963-2013,” 185-186.

were broadcasted from Manzini Swaziland before being transferred to Moshi, where they have been broadcasting to this date.³²¹ The ELCT Eastern and Coastal Diocese owns Upendo FM Radio and TV, the ELCT Iringa Diocese owns Radio Furaha FM, and the ELCT/NWD owns Shnuz FM Radio.³²²

The ELCT also publishes and distributes a popular magazine entitled *Uhuru na Amani*, while *Umoja Magazine* is published by the ELCT Northern diocese. There is Upendo magazine published by the ELCT Eastern and Coastal Diocese, *Amka* published by the ELCT Konde Diocese, and the magazine *Ija Webonele* published by the ELCT North Western Diocese.³²³ All of these print media are used by the ELCT for sharing with the public both secular and religious news. They are the forums by which the ELCT makes a mission outreach to members of society, both Christian and non-Christian. From the sociological point of view, mission outreach is extending God's love to the neighbor because Christian mission, as it is realized by mission enterprise across the world, makes it necessary for Christians to participate in and contribute to the comprehensive salvation that God is bringing about.

In view of the fact that mass media is one of the most important ways of spreading information to the community, mass media is the right tool for teaching the community the nature and reality of albinism. It is true that mass media is one of the most important means in educating any society. When this sector of witnessing and serving the society via mass media is purposefully planned, it can reach different groups of people at the same time and educate the

³²¹*Ibid.*

³²² ELCT document, Kalenda ya KKKT 2020, 13-30.

³²³*Ibid.*

community at large. However, this research did not manage to quantify to what extent the ELCT mass media have been used in fighting against erroneous beliefs relating to people with albinism.

Based on the ELCT document of the guideline for providing knowledge in fighting against violence in society as of 2014, it does not mention using mass media in its implementation. This guideline points out the problem of albinism and suggests ways out which could be used in eradicating the problem. In finding out how the ELCT mass media have been active in broadcasting information relating to people with albinism, Aniceth Maganya, who is currently working as the ELCT Presiding Bishop's Office Coordinator at headquarters in Arusha and also former head of the ELCT Desk of Policy Analysis and Advocacy from 2010 to 2014, affirmed that he cannot remember or find any ELCT official document clearly clarifying how the ELCT mass media participated in the issue of albinism.³²⁴ This is why this dissertation maintains that the 2014 ELCT guideline as the general opinion of church authorities in Tanzania about people with albinism could have directly mentioned its ways of using mass media as one of the tools in educating the community. However, this ELCT document portrays the problem of albinism in society as follows:

Je, umesikia ukatili dhidi ya Albino?

Je, umewahi kuona ukatili huu?

Bila shaka umekwisha kusikia juu ya ukatili dhidi ya albino, kama si kwa jirani yawezekana kwenye vyombo vya habari vikitangaza ukatili huu wa mauaji ya ndugu zetu.

Utakuwa umeshtuka na kuwahurumia sana ndugu zetu ambao si kwa hiari yao wamependa kuwa na ulemavu huo, bali kwa mapenzi ya Mungu wako kama walivyo.

³²⁴ Interview with Aniceth Maganya, the ELCT Presiding Bishop's Office Coordinator in Arusha, formerly working as the head of the Desk of Policy Analysis and Advocacy of the ELCT from 2010-2014, on September 25, 2020.

*Tena yawezekana umeona kwa macho au umeshuhudia ukatili huu ukiendelea kwa jirani, kijijini kwako, kwenye mkoa wako, lakini hata nchini kwetu...aitha, umeumizwa kiroho na zaidi umekosa amani kwa ajili ya jambo hili linalotisha na kudhalilisha utu wa mtu na kutia aibu taifa letu la Tanzania.*³²⁵

(Have you ever heard violence against people with albinism? Have you ever seen that violence? Obviously, you have heard violence against people with albinism, either from your neighbour or via mass media in broadcasting the cruel killings of our brothers and sisters with albinism. Really, you have been shocked and sympathized with them because it is not their will that they become disabled, but it is God's will. Then again, you have probably seen by your own eyes or witnessed this cruelty going on either to your neighbour, in your village, region or within our country...Either you have been spiritually injured and more than that been restless because of that offensive act that dehumanizes human dignity and brings shame to our nation.) (Translation mine)

In addition to finding solutions to other social problems in Tanzania, the 2014 ELCT guideline as the general opinion of church authorities in Tanzania about people with albinism has particularly proposed some ways of eradicating the problem of erroneous beliefs affecting people with albinism. The main question was “what should be done by the church?” under section 4.4.2 of that guideline.³²⁶ To accurately answer that particular question this work decided to research on how the ELCT has been participating in advocating for human rights and social justice.

³²⁵ ELCT document, “Mwongozo-Elimu ya Kuondoa Ukatili katika Jamii,” 2014, 17-18.

³²⁶ ELCT document, “Mwongozo-Elimu ya Kuondoa Ukatili katika Jamii,” 2014, 18.

The ELCT Advocating for Human Rights and Social Justice

Although the ELCT is a religious body, she nonetheless involves herself in demanding human rights, advocating for the weak, and fighting for genuine democracy as well as fair distribution and sharing of the national resources. For instance, prior to general elections, the ELCT tries as much as possible to inform people on the necessity of voting and how to use the balloting procedures. Hence, at the headquarters of the ELCT there is a desk for human rights and social justice that coordinates all activities relating to advocacy in all dioceses of the ELCT.³²⁷ Building argument from this explanation, it is very clear that fighting for human rights is one of the key responsibilities of the ELCT, a contention insisted upon by Moltmann—that the dignity of the human being is the foundation of all kinds of rights as human rights promote human dignity.³²⁸

Arguing along the same lines, Maanga asserts that the church should stand for human rights because the meaning of human rights is for all citizens to get equal rights in front of law, being protected by the government, not being segregated, being given the right to live, getting security, and not to be tortured, imprisoned, exiled, and so on.³²⁹ Another kind of human rights is for a person to go wherever they want and having freedom of speech and worship. All of these were well explained in the 2014 ELCT guideline in finding some ways out of fighting against violence in the society. Focusing on people with albinism in particular, the 2014 ELCT guideline as the general opinion of church authorities in Tanzania about people with albinism, suggested two main ways that can be used by the church in alleviating the problem of albinism in society,

³²⁷ Maanga, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1963-2013," 186-187.

³²⁸ Jürgen Moltmann, "Christian Faith and Human Rights," in *How Christian are Human Rights*, Ed. by E. Lorenz (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1981), 16.

³²⁹ Maanga, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1963-2013," 187.

including educating the community about the nature of albinism and breaking silence, as shown in section 4.4.2 of the 2014 ELCT guideline.

4.2.2 Je, tufanye nini?

Pamoja na kuwahurumia waathirika wa ukatili huo , tunao wajibu wa kuwanusuru na kuwatetea ndugu zetu hawa ambao wana haki ya kulindwa, kutambuliwa, kuishi na kuwa huru wakati wowote.

Imani yetu ya kikristo inatuhimiza kuwatia moyo watu wanyonge na kuwasaidia watu dhaiifu, wasioweza kujitetea wenyewe. (1 Timotheo 5:14)

Kwa juhudu za pamoja tunaweza kutokomeza ukatili huu kwa;

- (i) Kuelimisha jamii juu ya athari za ushirikina na uchawi, madhara na matendo ya mauaji.*
- (ii) Kuvunja ukimya na kutoa taarifa kwa vyombo husika kwa wote wanaojihusisha na mauaji haya.³³⁰*

[4.4.2 What shall we do?

Apart from sympathizing with victims of that violence, we are responsible to assist and advocate for our brothers and sisters who have rights to be protected and recognized to survive and become free all the time/in any time. Our Christian faith urges us to encourage the marginalized people and support the weak ones, those who cannot voice for themselves (1 Timothy 5:14).

With our efforts in unity we can eradicate this violence through;

- (i) Educating the society on the effects of superstition and witchcraft and the consequences of killings.*

³³⁰ ELCT document, "Mwongozo-Elimu ya Kuondoa Ukatili katika Jamii," 2014, 18.

- (ii) Breaking the silence by reporting all people engaging in these killings to the responsible authorities.] (Translation mine).

With respect to *mission as action in hope* as the theology of this dissertation, the ELCT has, in advocating for human rights and social justice, fulfilled her call of serving humanity in all its fullness. Based on the findings, however, it may be argued that the ELCT has translated the theology of hope in real and actual forms of present reality. The salvation-history model of eschatological hope which interprets the expected 'life after' in 'the present reality,' harmonizes with the way ELCT understands mission in this particular section of advocating for human rights and social justice.

But as it is broadly explained in chapter five of this dissertation, the problem lies in implementation at the grassroots level especially in the ELCT member dioceses. This research shows no common approach in the ELCT on how member dioceses implement ELCT's goals. The duty of implementation is left to the individual diocese to decide either to fully engage in fulfilling ELCT's goals or not.

One vivid example cited in this work is the implementation of the 2014 ELCT guideline as the general opinion of church authorities in Tanzania about people with albinism. It was noted that only five dioceses among 26 dioceses of the ELCT were active on the issue of albinism (more discussion on this in chapter five). Apart from this weakness, the ELCT has done incredible work advocating for human rights and social justice, the mission directly touching people with albinism. The church has furthermore been involved in decision-making on matters pertaining to national challenges.

The ELCT in Making Bold Decisions amidst Serious Challenges

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania has traditionally been voicing for the majority and advocating for the weak. For instance, in 1994, as a way of addressing the problem of corruption prevailing in the nation, the ELCT issued the Bagamoyo statement—*Tamko la Bagamoyo*.³³¹ The church took the stand of economic and political changes in the country, opposing material and monetary aid embedded in conditions, violation of the constitution, illegal trade, misuse of public funds, and robbing citizens of their land to sell to foreigners. The ELCT stated defiantly and fearlessly that it would only support a government that is accountable and transparent—a democratic government that respects human rights, is directed by the constitution and the rule of law, and promotes solidarity and unity among its citizens.³³² Generally, the statement brought about some positive changes in the country because state leaders decided to take some measures to try to correct their wrong doing. Therefore, the church took her stance as the tool of *missio Dei* to rebuke all illegal action exploiting and misusing national resources and devaluing human dignity. This is one of the missionary calls and tasks of the church in this world.

Some people may wonder why the ELCT, a holy institution, involves itself in secular affairs that led to statements such as those made at Bagamoyo and Dodoma. But it should be remembered that the ELCT is not treading on secular ground but rather operating within the framework of useful social laws or guidelines.³³³ Therefore, any kind of faith, including the

³³¹ Bagamoyo statement is the ELCT official statement which rebukes corruption within the country. It was released in 1994.

³³² See ELCT, *Tamko la Bagamoyo* (Bagamoyo Statement: Bishops' Conference on Political and Economic Democracy), Bagamoyo, March, 1994, 9-13.

³³³ Maanga, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1963-2013," 188.

Christian faith, has laws that guide people as well as enable them to live in peace and order. Without laws, human society becomes utterly chaotic. In order to understand situations or events such as those that fueled the Bagamoyo and Dodoma Statements, we need some understanding of social laws.³³⁴

Furthermore, it has to be known that in Tanzania, by the time the statements of Bagamoyo and Dodoma were made, the standard of education was falling, and crimes were on the increase. There was alarming religious intolerance, murder of innocent people, rigging of elections, and embezzlement of public funds; corruption was at a high rate.³³⁵ In addition, society was faced with social problems such as HIV/AIDS. Inflation was a merciless monster in Tanzanian society and the gap between the haves and the have-nots widens every day because of the bad policies of globalization. Poverty was on the rise and the negative effects of globalization and injustice caused by economic multinationals were causing untold pain on the citizens, including members of the ELCT.³³⁶ This is why it was the right time for the ELCT to utter official statements; it has to be known that the church is missionary by its very nature, and one of her calls is to bring God's Kingdom in this world. In regard to the theology of hope being stressed in this dissertation, one may argue that the ELCT had interpreted her mission in action.

However, the situation in Tanzania has now changed because corruption has decreased due to the seriousness and good governance of the current President Dr. John Joseph Pombe Magufuli and his team leaders. Because of the current good governance, Tanzania in 2020 is among the middle income countries in the world, as reported by the World Bank: "on July 1,

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

³³⁶ Maanga, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1963-2013," 188.

2020, the Tanzanian economy had been upgraded from low to lower-middle income status.”³³⁷

One might ask what has caused the change in classification for Tanzania. Tanzania’s gross national income (GNI) per capita increased from \$1,020 in 2018 to \$1,080 in 2019, exceeding the 2019 threshold of \$1,036 for lower-middle income status. Thus, Tanzania is currently classified as a lower-middle income country. The upgrade is due to the country’s strong economic performance of over 6% real gross domestic product (GDP) growth on average for the past decade.³³⁸ This economic growth benefits all citizens in Tanzania including the church herself, church members, and specifically people with albinism.

In fact, for a period of 57 years since its inception in the year 1963, the ELCT has been influencing people from all walks of life. Starting with not even half a million members, the ELCT has made a long step in spiritual and material development. The ELCT will now improve considerably if stewardship can be taught effectively with the intention of making this Church more self-reliant. Well-planned teachings on stewardship will make the ELCT less and less dependent, thus more effective in fulfilling her role in society. This could be the remedy of the problems that hinder the church in engaging in some programs relating to people with albinism as it was pointed out by White that the program on people with disabilities in general within the church in Africa was discontinued in 1996 due to financial challenges.³³⁹ Also, the All African Conference of Churches (AACC) insisted on the same reason that one of the problems that hinder the church to run programs relating to people with disabilities in general is lack of enough

³³⁷ William G. Battaile, “What does Tanzania’s Move to Lower-Middle Income Status Mean?,” accessed October 1, 2020, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/african/what-does-tanzanias-move-lower-middle-income-status-mean>.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

³³⁹ P. White. *The Biblical View of Humanity and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: The Call and Mission of the Church*, accessed June 18, 2019, <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxwDqfDKcpfNIknRsxkhKkpHVplb>.

funds. The AACC workshop on disability discourse for theological colleges done in Kenya (1991) proved that “many of their member churches of All African Conference of Churches (AACC) are not yet fully integrated to people with disabilities into their church and community life. The reason being provided is that many African churches have only promising development projects for persons with disabilities, while others have no such projects due to the lack of money.³⁴⁰

From this reason, the issue of self-reliance cannot be ignored. Churches need to be economically independent in order to fulfill their plans and goals. To overcome dependency syndrome, the ELCT should work hard to be self-reliant in terms of finance/investments and personnel. If the ELCT wants to widen her scope of progress and respect she must try her best to be less dependent on money and personnel from sister/brother churches from overseas. The ELCT should be self-supporting so that she can maintain a good image, nationally and internationally. Without being self-reliant, the ELCT cannot be self-governing and self-propagating, the essential qualities expected of any stable church.³⁴¹

However, apart from the general problem of traditionally understanding mission as the property of the church—the church-centric mission that has affected almost all churches in Africa—the ELCT has nevertheless, remarkably translated mission activities in the light of serving humanity in all aspects of life. In evaluating how the ELCT understands mission with respect to people with albinism, one may in fact, realize that the ELCT has not been left behind

³⁴⁰ All African Conference Churches. Workshop on Disability Discourse for Theological Colleges, Kenya, 1991, accessed June 18, 2020, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents.wcc-programmes/unity-mission-evangelism-and-spirituality/just-and-inclusive-communities/people-with-disabilities/reports/workshops-on-disability-discourse-for-theological-colleges-kenya>.

³⁴¹ Maanga, “The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1963-2013,” 190-191.

on the issue of albinism. For instance, the ELCT in 2014 introduced an official guideline on how she could overcome violence in the community. However, the church is still facing several challenges specifically on the dilemma of albinism because of the scarcity of funds. This problem was also confirmed from ELCT headquarters in Arusha that some dioceses of the ELCT could not run programs for advocating the problem of albinism because of the insufficient of funds.³⁴² On this basis, this dissertation argues that funds could not be the main problem if those dioceses could set their priorities by including the concern of albinism. In fact, the problem is not money per se, but priorities because within those dioceses we find many other projects taking place. This dissertation ascertains that the problem of albinism could be viewed as the problem of the nation. As the country fights it national-wise, then all 26 ELCT member dioceses could have joined their efforts in dealing with the problem. This dissertation urges all ELCT diocese members in their short and long term plans of their mission activities to include the issue of albinism because the negative perception of albinism and people with albinism is not found only around the Lake Victoria zone; rather, it has spread to every corner of the country. Thus, community transformation with regard to people with albinism and albinism itself is very important within the entire country. Consequently, to really fight against the problem of Albinism in Tanzania and Africa in general, it is important to track the models of disability that shape people's perceptions and ideas.

³⁴² Interview with Aniceth Maganya September, 25, 2020.

Models of Disability and Repercussions to Missionary Thinking in the ELCT
for People with Albinism

In chapter two of this dissertation, four different conceptual models of eschatological hope were described and the salvation-history model of eschatological hope was deployed as the lens of this dissertation. The four eschatological models are the dialectical, the existential, the actualized and the salvation-history, each of which had a significant impact on missionary thinking.³⁴³ It has to be noted that not only eschatological modes had a significant impact on missionary thinking but also different models of disability that influence people on how disability is perceived, particularly people with albinism.³⁴⁴ For this reason, this dissertation has decided to evaluate different models of disability with the intention of finding their repercussions to the missionary thinking in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and at the same time challenging the wrong perceptions with respect to mission as action in hope.

The research done by Jochemsen on “Vision on People with Disabilities in Development Cooperation,” affirmed that in some developing countries, especially in rural communities, disabilities are regarded in general as fate, a result of bad deeds from the past, a penalty of higher powers for errors and/or bad behavior of parents and ancestors, black magic, witchcraft or

³⁴³ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 514.

³⁴⁴ The assessment of various models of disability is important, because as Smart (2004:25-29) points out, such models serve a number of important purposes: They provide definition of disability, explanations of causal attribution and responsibility attribution, guide the formulation and implementation of policy, determine which academic disciplines study and learn about people with disabilities, shape the self-identity of people with disabilities, and also cause prejudice and discrimination. Also from: M. Retief, & Letsosa, R. *Models of Disability: A Brief Overview*, HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies 74(1), a4738, 2018, accessed August 20, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4738> or <https://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v74n1/06.pdf>.

supernatural forces.³⁴⁵ Looking particularly at people with albinism, it is not universally clear whether they are regarded as people with disability or not. This is because up to today, there is a world-wide growing discussion on whether people with albinism are disabled or not. However, in many parts of the world, people with albinism are largely seen as being incomplete. By and large, people with albinism in Africa are categorized in the group of disability. For example, in Tanzania people with albinism are named *walemavu wa ngozi*, which means individuals with skin disability.

Different scholars have discussed on it and each of them comes out with different opinions. For instance, according to Marcon, albinism in Tanzania is considered as a disability due to the fact that the congenital disorder entails huge health risks and limits the capacity of who has it.³⁴⁶ Marcon did not specify what was meant by capacity, but she generally referred to “low capacity.” One might ask, capacity in which area? This way of understanding of regarding people with albinism as having low capacity has consequently shaped society at large. However, it is argued in this research that various models of disability are the major influencing factors that shape people’s perceptions of people with albinism and disabilities, in general.

Drawing inspiration from Niebuhr’s work *Christ and Culture* (1956) and Dulles’ views in *Models of the Church* (1974), Retief and Letsosa describe nine models of disability³⁴⁷ namely the moral/or religious model, the medical model, the social mode, the identity model, the human rights model, the cultural model, the charity model, the economic model, and the limits model.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵ H. Jochemsen, In His Image: Prisma Vision on People with Disabilities in Development Cooperation, accessed June 10, 2018, <https://www.people-with-diasbilities-in-development-cooperation>. 5.

³⁴⁶ Veronica Marcon, “Albinism in Tanzania,” 39-45.

³⁴⁷ M. Retief, & Letsosa, R. *Models of Disability: A Brief Overview*, HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies 74(1), a4738, 2018, accessed August 20, 2019,

<https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4738> or <https://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v74n1/06.pdf>.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

These various models of disability have largely shaped people's perceptions and ideas about people with disabilities (PWDs). Such a preliminary assessment of various models of disability is important, because, as Smart (2004:25–29) points out, such models serve a number of important purposes:

- Models of disability provide definitions of disability.
- Models of disability provide explanations of causal attribution and responsibility attributions.
- Models of disability are based on (perceived) needs.
- Models of disability guide the formulation and implementation of policies.
- Models of disability are not value neutral.
- Models of disability determine which academic disciplines study and learn about people with disabilities.
- Models of disability shape the self-identity of people with disabilities.
- Models of disability can cause prejudice and discrimination.³⁴⁹

These models of disability continue to impact the way in which people perceive people with disabilities. Therefore, as pointed out by Retief and Letsosa, any researcher who wishes to

³⁴⁹ Smart, *Models of Disability*, 25-29.

engage in research from a disability perspective will do well by first engaging in some critical self-examination to determine the extent to which one or more models of disability influence their thinking about people with disabilities.³⁵⁰ Once the researcher is clear about which model(s) of disability shapes their thinking, they may commence the creative process of constructing a disability theology that is Christ-centered, biblically rooted and relevant to the lives of people with disabilities.³⁵¹

The reason for looking into these different models of disability is that people with albinism who are the focal point of this research are regarded as “disabled”. Thus, one cannot evaluate factors affecting people with albinism without studying different models that have for a long time influenced society to negatively perceive people with albinism.

The Moral or Religious Model: Disability as an Act of God

According to Retief and Letsosa, the moral/religious model of disability is the oldest model of disability and is found in a number of religious traditions, including the Judeo-Christian tradition.³⁵² Under this model, disability is regarded as a punishment from God for a particular sin or sins that may have been committed by the person with disability or their parents. Emphasizing on the same point, Henderson and Bryan present a detailed clarification of this model of disability stating that many people believe that disabilities are the result of lack of faithfulness to social morality and religious behavior. They further explain that some beliefs are based upon the assumption that disabilities are the result of punishment from an all-powerful

³⁵⁰ M. Retief, & Letsosa, R. *Models of Disability: A Brief Overview*, HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies 74(1), a4738, 2018. Retrieved on 20th August, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4738> and <https://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v74n1/06.pdf>.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

³⁵² 74(1), a4738, 2018. Retrieved on 20th August, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4738> and <https://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v74n1/06.pdf>.

being.³⁵³ Furthermore, some forms of traditional Bible interpretation exclude people with disabilities by connecting blindness, lameness, deafness, uncleanness, chronic illness, mental illness, demonic possession, and other forms of disability with human sin, evil, or spiritual incompetence. Sometimes it is not only the individual's sin that is regarded as a possible cause of their disability, but also any sin that may have been committed by their parents and/or ancestors.³⁵⁴ The moral model sees people with disabilities as victims instead of responsible human beings.

Elaborating on the negative impact of this model on the individual with disability and their family, Rimmerman (2013) emphasizes the consequences of such a view, in the sense that it may lead to entire families being excluded from social participation in their local community.³⁵⁵ A good example of that perception is the issue of bearing an albino child in an African family. Some women in Africa who give birth to children with albinism have been accused of sleeping with ghosts therefore, they are unclean; eventually, some are abandoned by their husband.³⁵⁶

A further well-known form of the moral or religious model of disability is the idea that disabilities are basically a test of faith or even salvific in nature. Niemann (2005) offers a brief explanation of the perception of disability as a test of faith, whereby individuals and families are personally selected by God to receive a disability and are given the opportunity to release themselves through their endurance and piety.³⁵⁷ Basing on this argument, it is argued that this way of perceiving disability brings spiritual problems because some people conceive of passing

³⁵³ G. Henderson & W. Bryan, *Psychosocial Aspects of Disability* (Charles C. Thomas: Springfield, IL, 2011), 7.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁵ A. Rimmerman, *Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 24

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁷ S. Niemann, "Persons with Disabilities," in *Religious and Spiritual Issues in Counseling: Applications across Diverse Populations*, eds. M. Burke, J. Chauvin & J. Miranti (New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2005), 106.

the test of faith as receiving physical healing. If the person does not experience physical healing of their disability, they are regarded as having a lack of faith in God. Similarly, Amanze argues that this way of understanding makes society view people with disabilities as a God-given opportunity for character development. He moreover adds that such an understanding regards the development and deepening of particular character traits such as patience, courage, and perseverance as the primary focus of God's plan for people with disabilities.³⁵⁸ This emphasis is still prevailing in most Pentecostal and Charismatic churches but also it has infiltrated even the ELCT, particularly in personal dynamics.

Even though the moral/religious model of disability is no longer as prevalent as it was in pre-modern times, the basic perception underlying the model is still frequently encountered in the way people reason when confronted with illness or disability, in general and people with albinism in particular. Furthermore, there are certain cultures especially in Africa where this model of disability is still a predominant view especially in some societies dominated by religious or magical ways of thinking. In such societies, people with disabilities are often severely marginalized, even facing the prospect of abandonment or infanticide as we see some cases of killing children with albinism at the family level.³⁵⁹

Additionally, Niemann highlights the negative influence of the moral/religious model of disability on theological reflection that “whether congenital or acquired, many theologies have historically constructed disabilities to be a curse, one often associated with the attribution of

³⁵⁸James N. Amanze, An International Review of Mission. *The Mission of the Church to People with Disabilities in Southern and Central Africa: An Appraisal*, (WCC 2019), accessed August 8, 2019, <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxwDqfDKcRtbCbqxlZkpxlZkptZpDsTIZ?projector=1&messageParId=0>

³⁵⁹ Under The Same Sun “Names Used for PWA,” accessed August 4, 2019, <http://www.underthesamesun.com/sites/default/files/Names%20uesd%for%20PWA.pdf>.

shame onto an individual or family.”³⁶⁰ However, most contemporary biblical scholars and theologians reject the moral/religious model of disability although it is still found in some form or other in some theological interpretations.

The salvation-history model of eschatological hope challenges the way the religious model portrays people with disabilities and with albinism in particular. The religious model does not conform to the theology of hope for people with albinism in this work; it does not provide an actualized hope to people with albinism. The hope it provides to people with albinism is the ‘expected’ hope of the new world that contradicts the theology of hope in this dissertation. This work emphasizes on the theology that sets out from hope and begins to consider its theme in an eschatological light—the theology of hope that emphasizes that eschatology should not be its end, but its beginning. This is why this dissertation contends that an old hope for the end of time now becomes hope in the present reality, a hope opposed to the way things are.

The Medical Model: Disability as a Disease

The medical model of disability has been influential in society. Retief and Letsosa (2018) argue that from the mid-1800s onwards, the medical (or biomedical) model of disability began to gradually replace the moral/religious model in the field of medical science.³⁶¹ Under this model, disabilities are mostly regarded as illness that needs treatment or remedy. Along the same lines, Olkin (1999) outlines the basic characteristics of the medical model of disability in this way:

³⁶⁰ S. Niemann, “Persons with Disabilities,” in *Religious and Spiritual Issues in Counseling: Applications across Diverse Populations*, eds. M. Burke, J. Chauvin & J. Miranti (New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2005), 106.

³⁶¹ M. Retief, & Letsosa, R. *Models of Disability: A Brief Overview*, HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies 74(1), a4738, 2018, August 20, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4738> or <https://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v74n1/06.pdf>.

Disability is seen as a medical problem that resides (dwells/lives) in the individual. It is a defect in or failure of a bodily system and as such is inherently abnormal and pathological. The goals of intervention are cure, amelioration of the physical condition to the greatest extent possible, and rehabilitation (i.e., the adjustment of the person with the disability to the condition and to the environment). Persons with disabilities are expected to avail themselves of the variety of services offered to them and to spend time in the role of patient or learner being helped by trained professionals.³⁶²

Moreover, Thomas and Woods (2003) say that the medical model of disability is sometimes referred to as a personal tragedy because it defines disability in a fundamentally negative way. They add that disability is regarded as objectively bad, as unfortunate condition, a personal tragedy for both the individual and their family, and something to be prevented and, if possible, cured.³⁶³ As Carlson (2010) points out, this negative conception of disability has contributed to some of the questionable medical treatments performed on people with disabilities, including, for example, involuntary sterilization and euthanasia.³⁶⁴ Therefore, according to the medical model, people with disabilities deviate from what is normal.³⁶⁵ Terms such as ‘invalid’, ‘cripple’, ‘spastic’, ‘handicapped’ and ‘retarded’ are all derived from the medical model. This approach to disability reinforces the notion that people with disabilities are not comparable with their able-bodied counterparts. The medical model of interpretation of disability projects a dualism that

³⁶² R. Olkin, *What Psychologists should Know about Disability* (New York: Guilford Press, 1999), 26.

³⁶³ D. Thomas & H. Woods, *Working with People with Learning Disabilities* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003), 15.

³⁶⁴ L. Carlson, *The Faces of Intellectual Disability* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 5.

³⁶⁵ M. Retief, & Letsosa, R. *Models of Disability: A Brief Overview*, HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies 74(1), a4738, 2018, accessed August 20, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4738> or <https://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v74n1/06.pdf>.

tends to categorize the able-bodied as somehow ‘better’ or superior to people with disabilities’.³⁶⁶ Insisting on this point, Thomas and Woods maintain that medical professionals who subscribe to the medical model tend to treat disabilities as problems to be solved, often failing to take into account the various aspects related to the person’s life as a whole. They further highlight the medical model’s focus on the limitations associated with a person’s disability that essentially disregards environments that might intensify or adversely affect a person’s functional abilities. As a result, this model tends to regard the person with disability as the one who needs to change or be fixed, not the conditions that might be contributing to the person’s disability.³⁶⁷

This attitude fails to take into account the vital distinction between impairment and sickness. For example, albinism can neither be cured nor corrected. But, first of all most people with albinism do not regard themselves as disabled and even if they did, they do not consider themselves as sick. This dissertation argues that many disabled people are not sick, but have ongoing impairments that do not present as daily health problems. The nature of albinism cannot be changed by any means; it is not a certain disease to be cured. Therefore, the depiction of people with disabilities as sick should be discouraged especially when the ELCT participates in mission with regard to people with albinism.

Due to the limitations of the medical model of disability, a social model seem to be the solution and challenge to the medical model. How society perceives people with disabilities under a social model of disability is explained next.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁷ D. Thomas & H. Woods, *Working with People with Learning Disabilities* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003), 15.

The Social Model: Disability as a Socially

Constructed Phenomenon

The social model is another influencing factor that affects people with albinism. The model devalues people with disability in the form of social exclusion and oppression. Historically, as pointed out by Retief and Letsosa, this model was motivated by the activism of the British disability movement in the 1960s and 1970s.³⁶⁸ It was developed in reaction to the limitations of the medical model of disability. One of the most important documents in the development of this approach is the “Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation (UPIAS)” manifesto.³⁶⁹ Fundamental to the social model of disability is the notion that disability is ultimately a socially constructed phenomenon. Oliver, a disabled activist and lecturer, who also coined the phrase ‘social model of disability,’ stresses the need to focus on the social aspects of disability, especially how the physical and social environment impose limitations upon certain categories of people.³⁷⁰ From this point of view, disability is a socially constructed disadvantage, which is, in a very real sense, imposed on people with disabilities, constituting a particular form of social oppression.³⁷¹

Focusing on people with albinism, the social model of disability has imposed some limitations on people with albinism by excluding them from employment, sports, and many other social activities just because of their appearance and being regarded as unable. This shows that

³⁶⁸ Retief, M. & Letsosa, R. *Models of Disability: A Brief Overview*, HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies 74(1), a4738, 2018, accessed August 20, 2019,

<https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4738> and <https://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v74n1/06.pdf>

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁰ M. Oliver, “A New Model of the Social Work Role in Relation to Disability,” in *The Handicapped Person: A New Perspective for Social Workers*, ed. J. Campling (London: RADAR, 1981), 28-29.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

the social model of disability has had a profound influence on how disability is understood in our time. However, the model has played a crucial role in shaping social policies concerning people with disabilities, not only in national levels but also in the international level.

Social model theorists have responded to critiques such as these by pointing out that they neither deny the fact that some forms of illness may have disabling consequences nor do they deny the role of medical professionals in treating various illnesses. For these theorists, the problem is that medical professionals fail to distinguish between a person's illness and their disability. Therefore, the social model, although formerly thought as one correcting the perception of the medical model, also interprets people with disability in a negative form.

The Identity Model: Disability as an Identity

The identity model relates to the social model of disability, but with a fundamental difference in emphasis. This model shares the social model's understanding that the experience of disability is socially constructed, but differs to the extent that it claims disability as a positive identity. Retief and Letsosa offer the following illuminating definition that also explains how the identity model departs from the social model's approach:

Under the identity model, disability is a marker of membership in a minority identity, much like gender or race...Under an identity model, disability is primarily defined by a certain type of experience in the world—a social and political experience of the effects of a social system not designed with disabled people in mind...While the identity model owes much to the social model, it is less interested in the ways environments, policies, and institutions disable people, and more interested in forging a positive definition of

disability identity based on experiences and circumstances that have created a recognizable minority group called ‘people with disabilities.’³⁷²

The identity model has influenced many in the disability community, inspiring people with disabilities to adopt a positive self-image that celebrates disability pride. For example, on 18 December 2014, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming, effective 2015, 13 June as International Albinism Awareness Day.³⁷³ This is very important to people with albinism because on this awareness day, the entire world focuses on albinism. This dissertation advises the ELCT to likewise adopt this UN General Assembly resolution. On this day, all ELCT member dioceses have to sensitize the community at the congregational level on the effects and nature of albinism. However, this dissertation recognizes and acknowledges the efforts of the ELCT of setting apart the 25th day of February each year as the special day for fighting against violence in the community.³⁷⁴

As with the social model, the identity model is not without its critics. One of the major points of criticism against the approach is that it seems to compel individuals to identify with a specific group culture. A further point is that the identity model negates the struggle for redistribution, failing to pay sufficient attention to the reality of economic inequality faced by people with disabilities. It is for this reason that many researches done relating to people with disabilities especially in Africa revealed that several people with disability, including with

³⁷² Retief, M. & Letsosa, R. *Models of Disability: A Brief Overview*, HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies 74(1), a4738, 2018, accessed August 20, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4738> and <https://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v74n1/06.pdf>.

³⁷³ Ero Ikponwosa, “Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of Human Rights by Persons with Albinism,” accessed August 15, 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Albinism/Pages/IEAlbinism.aspx>, and <http://www.un.org/en/events/albinismday>.

³⁷⁴ ELCT document, Kalenda ya KKKT-25 Februari, ‘Siku ya kuondoa Ukatili,’ 2020, I.

albinism, live in a poor condition. From this reality therefore, advocating for human rights was regarded as the remedy of all problems facing people with disabilities including with albinism.

The Human Rights Model: Disability as a Human Rights Issue

A further model similar to the social model of disability is the human rights model of disability. Although some researchers treat the social model and the human rights model as almost the same, Degener (2017) highlights a number of important differences between them as follows:

Firstly, while the social model helps people to understand the underlying social factors that shape our understanding of disability, the human rights model moves beyond explanation, offering a theoretical framework for disability policy that emphasizes the human dignity of people with disabilities. Secondly, the human rights model incorporates both first and second generation human rights, in the sense that it encompasses both sets of human rights, civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights. Thirdly, while the social model mostly fails to appreciate the reality of pain and suffering in the lives of some of people with disabilities, the human rights model respects the fact that some of people with disabilities are indeed confronted by such challenging life situations and argues that such factors should be taken into account in the development of relevant social justice theories. Fourthly, while the social model does not pay adequate attention to the importance of identity politics, the human rights model ‘offers room for minority and cultural identification. Fifthly, while the social model is mostly critical of public health policies that advocate the prevention of impairment, the human rights model recognizes the fact that properly formulated prevention policy may be regarded as

an instance of human rights protection for people with disabilities. Lastly, while the social model can helpfully explain why so many people with disabilities are living in poverty, the human rights model offers constructive proposals for improving the life situation of people with disabilities.³⁷⁵

Viewed via the lens of this dissertation—the salvation-history model of eschatological hope—the human rights model has directly benefited people with albinism. For instance, in three recent seminal resolutions, the Human Rights Council expressed its concern about the situation of the human rights of people with albinism.³⁷⁶ Therefore, this work sees the human rights model as one of the voices for voiceless groups, especially people with albinism in Tanzania and Africa, in general. To some extent, the human rights model goes further in proposing solutions for people with albinism in contrast to the other models. This is why this work, mission as action in hope, goes hand in hand with several of the suggestions proposed by the human rights model of disability. This is because, for instance, in 1976, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP) with the theme ‘Full Participation and Equality.’³⁷⁷ The objectives included:

- Increasing public awareness;

- Understanding and accepting disabled persons, and

³⁷⁵ T. Degener, “A New Human Rights Model of Disability,” in *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: A Commentary* (Switzerland: Springer Cham, 2017), 41-60. Department of Labour, 2002, Code of Good Practice on Key Aspects on the Employment of People with Disabilities, Department of Labour, Pretoria.

³⁷⁶ See Human Rights Council resolution 23/13 on attacks and discrimination against persons with albinism; Human Rights Council resolution 24/33 on technical cooperation for the prevention of attacks against persons with albinism; and Human Rights Council resolution 26/10 on International Albinism Awareness Day.

³⁷⁷ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2004, 4ff. The International Year of Disabled Persons 1981, accessed June 25, 2020, <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/disidydp.htm>.

- Encouraging people with disabilities to form organizations through which they can express their views and promote action to improve their situation.

The General Assembly called for a plan of action at the national, regional, and international levels, with an emphasis on equalisation of opportunities, rehabilitation, and prevention of disabilities. It advocated and encouraged persons with disabilities to take part fully in the life and development of society, enjoy living conditions equal to those of other citizens, and have an equal share in improved conditions resulting from socio-economic development.³⁷⁸ Also, Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) states that “People with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on equal basis with others.”³⁷⁹

Furthermore, the convention insists that if mistreatment occurs, states and people concerned must take all measures to ensure recovery, investigation and, where appropriate, prosecution of mistreatment. In establishing the obligation to promote positive perceptions and greater social awareness towards people with disabilities, it challenges customs and behaviours based on stereotypes, prejudices, harmful practices and stigma relating to people with disabilities.³⁸⁰ Viewing disability from a human rights perspective, it involves an evolution in thinking and acting by states and all sectors of society so that people with disabilities are no

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁹ United Nations General Assembly 2006. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Adopted by the General Assembly, A/RES/61/106 (CRPD), accessed June 25, 2020, <http://www.un-documents.net/a61r106.htm>.

³⁸⁰ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2004, 4ff. The International Year of Disabled Persons 1981, accessed June 25, 2020, <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/disidydp.htm>.

longer considered to be recipients of charity or objects of others' decisions, but holders of rights.³⁸¹ It also involves putting in place the policies, laws and programs that remove barriers and guarantee the exercise of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights of people with disabilities.³⁸²

One evaluating the perception of human rights model on disabilities in general will discover that it conforms to the emphasis of the lens used in this dissertation. Therefore, the salvation-history model of eschatological hope also takes several points from the human rights model in the way it depicts people with disability and with albinism, in particular. However, culture plays a big role as well.

The Cultural Model: Disability as Culture

Most scholars agree that the cultural model of disability developed in the North American context, where disability studies have been approached in an interdisciplinary manner by a number of scholars working in the social sciences and humanities.³⁸³ Junior and Schipper outline the primary characteristics of the cultural model, specifically in terms of how it differs from the medical model and social model. While the latter models focus on only one factor in their approach to disability, the cultural model focuses on a range of cultural factors. Such factors may include medical and social factors but are by no means limited to these.³⁸⁴ For this reason, the

³⁸¹ United Nations Human Rights 2010, 9. Monitoring the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Professional Training Series No.17.

Geneva, accessed June 25, 2020, <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/disiydp.htm>.

³⁸² United Nations Human Rights 2010, 11. Monitoring the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Professional Training Series No.17.

Geneva, accessed June 25, 2020, <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/disiydp.htm>.

³⁸³ M. Retief, & Letsosa, R. *Models of Disability: A Brief Overview*, HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies 74(1), a4738, 2018,

<https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4738> and <https://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v74n1/06.pdf>.

³⁸⁴ N. Junior, & J. Schipper, "Disability Studies and the Bible," in *New Meanings for Ancient Texts: Recent Approaches to Biblical Criticisms and their Applications*, eds. S. McKenzie and J. Kaltner (Louisville KY: Westminster

cultural approach does not seek to define disability in any specific way but rather focuses on how different notions of disability and non-disability operate in the context of a specific culture. Therefore, one may argue that particular cultural locations of disability have been created on behalf of people with disabilities and locations where people with disabilities find themselves deposited, often against their will.³⁸⁵

This cultural model of disability is gaining increased acceptance in the disability community. This is why in Europe where people are white in colour, perception on people with albinism is quite different from Africa where people with albinism are the white minority in community of black majority. This cultural model of disability could be one of the big problems affecting people with albinism particularly in Africa. The question of ‘how come a black person bears the white’ in African society seems to have no clear answer. For this reason, most African societies have been associating albinism with supernatural powers. Therefore, based on this argument, this dissertation ascertains that a cultural model of disability has undeniably affected people with albinism in African community. These cultural attitudes must be challenged and corrected from the negative to the positive through community awareness, making the community start advocating and encouraging people with disabilities to take part fully in the life and development of their society, enjoy living conditions equal to those of other citizens, and have an equal share in improved conditions resulting from socio-economic development. However, while the community tries to serve and help people with disabilities, they inadvertently

John Knox Press, 2013), 23.

³⁸⁵M. Retief, & Letsosa, R. *Models of Disability: A Brief Overview*, HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies 74(1), a4738, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4738> and <https://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v74n1/06.pdf>.

create another model that views people with disabilities as a group of people to be pitied and assisted: the charity model.

The Charity Model: Disability as Victimhood

In contrast to the moral/religious model of disability which has a largely negative view of people with disabilities, the charity model seeks to act to the benefit of people with disabilities, encouraging humane treatment. But many people in the disability community regard the charity model in a very negative way. The model is often seen as depicting people with disabilities as helpless, depressed, and dependent on other people for care and protection, contributing to the preservation of harmful stereotypes and misconceptions about people with disabilities.³⁸⁶ For example, the system of keeping people with albinism in certain shelters especially children isolates them from their families and the community at large. This system of shelters must be a temporary plan while finding a permanent way of eradicating negative perceptions and attitudes of the community on albinism.

In a real sense, the charity model portrays people with disabilities as victims of circumstance who should be pitied. Duyan (2007) explains: “The Charity model sees people with disabilities as victims of their impairment. Their situation is tragic, and they are suffering. Able-bodied people should therefore assist people with disabilities in whatever way possible, as they need special services, special institutions, etc. because they are different.”³⁸⁷

³⁸⁶ M. Retief, & Letsosa, R., 2018, *Models of Disability: A Brief Overview*, HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies 74(1), a4738, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4738> or <https://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v74n1/06.pdf>.

³⁸⁷ V. Duyan, “The Community Effects of Disabled Sports,” in *Centre of Excellence Defense Against Terrorism: Amputee Sports for Victims of Terrorism*, ed. Duyan (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2007), 71.

Furthermore, the charity model has traditionally understood mission in terms of diaconic works of caring for people in need as well as contributing alms or humanitarian donations. It has to be noted that people with albinism need society acceptance, respecting their humanity and dignity, and becoming full members in society.

The Economic Model: Disability as a Challenge to Productivity

The economic model of disability approaches disability from the economic perspective, focusing on the various disabling effects of impairment on a person's capabilities, in particular on labour and employment capabilities.³⁸⁸ While the economic model insists on the importance of respect, accommodations, and civil rights to people with disabilities, such concerns according to Smart (2004), are submissive to the model's estimation of a disabled person's ability to work and contribute to the economy.³⁸⁹ On the other hand, the economic model is often utilized by governments as a basic point of reference for formulating disability policies. However, this model of disability has been criticized for framing disability almost exclusively in terms of a cost-benefit analysis, neglecting to take other important factors into account. Such an economic focus may contribute to the dehumanization of the person with albinism in particular as someone who is somehow missing parts.³⁹⁰

In sum, these eight models of disability have influenced communities and continue to impact the way in which they perceive people with albinism and disability, in general. While these are by no means the only models of disability that may be encountered in our time, they are

³⁸⁸ M. Retief, & Letsosa, R., 2018, *Models of Disability: A Brief Overview*, HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies 74(1), a4738, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4738> or <https://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v74n1/06.pdf>.

³⁸⁹ J. Smart, "Models of Disability: The Juxtaposition of Biology and Social Construction," in *Handbook of Rehabilitation Counseling*, eds. T. Riggard and D. Maki (New York: Springer, 2004), 37.

³⁹⁰ J. Smart, "Models of Disability: The Juxtaposition of Biology and Social Construction," in *Handbook of Rehabilitation Counseling*, eds. T. Riggard and D. Maki (New York: Springer, 2004), 40.

the more dominant models of disability today. When tested via the lens of this dissertation—the salvation-history model of eschatological hope—one may find that only the human rights model of disability has appropriately approached the issue of albinism. The different methods suggested in this model really touch people with albinism with the aim of making them accepted in society.

Therefore, this dissertation contends that the human rights model of disability conforms to the theology of hope of this work. Here is emphasized the theology of hope that sets out from expectation and begin to consider its theme in the present reality in an eschatological light. It further highlights the theology of hope that emphasizes that ‘Eschatology’ should not be its end, but its beginning. From that way of understanding, one may however, find that an old hope for the end of time now becomes hope in the everyday life of people with albinism, a hope opposed to the way things are.

Before discussing in which lines mission can be further understood in Tanzania and Africa in general in regard to people with albinism, and before touching biblical and theological perspective on disabilities in general, it is important to firstly trail the church’s attitudinal perspectives on disablements in general.

General Attitudes of the Church towards People with Disabilities

In order to further understand the mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania regarding people with albinism, it is important to see the big picture of the advancement of the church's attitudes toward people with disabilities in general. Historically, churches especially in Africa did not fully integrate people with disabilities into their churches and community life. This argument has been attested from various reports of international

missionary conferences where different church leaders meet and discuss several issues pertaining to *missio Dei*. For instance, the report of the All African Conference of Churches (AACC) (1991) described that many of their member churches have not yet fully integrated people with disabilities into their church and community life. Many African churches have only promised development projects for persons with disabilities, while others have no such projects.³⁹¹ Also, the World Council of Churches (WCC, 2006) confessed that people with disabilities and other people facing racial discrimination raised questions of justice and required advocacy.³⁹² Likewise, the WCC recognizes that these issues have theological dimensions, and must impact on reflection done with unity, mission and spirituality—one of the roles and missions of the church.³⁹³

Since 1971, the WCC has considered the mission of the church to people with disabilities as an important concern. The Faith and Order Commission, meeting that year (1971) in Louvain, Belgium, discussed disability under the theme “The Unity of the Church and the Unity of Mankind.”³⁹⁴ In that conference, it was emphasized that the unity of the church cannot be achieved without the participation of people with disabilities. Some programs dealing particularly with people with disabilities were prioritized and placed in order. Nevertheless, as

³⁹¹ All African Conference Churches. Workshop on Disability Discourse for Theological Colleges, Kenya, 1991, accessed June 18, 2020, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/unity-mission-evangelism-and-spirituality/just-and-inclusive-communities/people-with-disabilities/reports/workshops-on-disability-discourse-for-theological-colleges-kenya>.

³⁹² World Council of Churches. Joint Report of the Programme and Policy Reference Committees, 2006, accessed September 15, 2019, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/2006/joint-report-of-the-programme-and-policy-reference-committees-adopted>.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁴ P. White. *The Biblical View of Humanity and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: The Call and Mission of the Church*, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxwDqfDKcpfNlknRsxkhKkpHVplb>.

White said, the programme on people with disabilities was discontinued in 1996 due to financial challenges.³⁹⁵ In their attempt to revive this agenda, the stream coordinator and disabilities task force worked hard to get the participation of people with disabilities as advisers at the World Council of Churches' 8th Assembly in Harare and established a new network.³⁹⁶

In addition, as introduced in the second chapter, in trying to stimulate and reinforce the participation of people with disabilities in the church, a small group of theologians who have experienced discrimination and marginalization within the church and society met in Geneva in June 2011 under the WCC to represent the marginalized groups. This group was indeed conscious of other marginalized groups and other cultures and forces that were marginalizing and disempowering many sections of people with disabilities in the church and society. They affirmed that many people were victims of the constant processes of “othering” and “objectification” that derive inspiration from certain unjust and narrow views and values of life that continue to shape much of the cultures, structures and ways of our world.³⁹⁷ While insisting on mission from the margins, they unanimously contended that:

In order to understand the reasons for this attempt to re-imagine mission from the margins, we must recognize a few common features of the experience of those on the margins. First, these groups of people are a part of the church in many contexts around the world that unfortunately experience discrimination and marginalization rights within it. Secondly, they have also been victims of churches' missionary expansion and theologies that took shape amidst legitimized historical processes of discrimination and

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁷ World Council of Churches 2012, “Mission From the Margins: Toward a Just World,” in *An International Review of Mission*, 2012, 153.

oppression of the weak and the vulnerable. And thirdly, these groups of people have been generally referred to or seen as recipients or objects of churches' mission. Therefore... they imagine what God intends for the whole world and creation today. (They argue) traditionally, mission has been viewed and pursued as an action done from a position of privilege, power, and possession. However, if mission is the inevitable vocation of every Christian, what then would be the mission of those who are poor, impoverished, disempowered, and dehumanized? This elaboration of mission through the vantage point of those on the margins unveils creative possibilities for new understandings of mission.³⁹⁸

This new understanding of mission does so, first of all, by claiming that the marginalized people are the most preferred partners of God in mission today. This is because in the biblical texts, we encounter a God who opts for the rejected. Missiologically, God does not opt for the outcasts out of paternalistic compassion but in order to make clear that He stands in solidarity with the victims of all systemic injustice, those who are taken advantage of, and those made vulnerable.³⁹⁹ Taking as an example the situation of persons with albinism in Tanzania and Africa in general, one would see the necessity of protecting their lives especially by transforming community's attitude to them. Undeniably, the mission of God that Jesus engaged in is a mission of realizing the reign of God with those considered the last and the least, the sinners and outcasts. In so doing, Jesus rejected power and privilege, identified Himself with the deprived, took upon Himself their vulnerability and allowed Himself to be broken and crushed. These rejected groups

³⁹⁸ World Council of Churches, "Mission From the Margins," 153-154.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

formed His community, witnessing to them the hope of the reign of God.⁴⁰⁰ Therefore, by following that model of Christ, mission of the church has to set in motion the mission of God that Jesus lived out among the marginalized. This contention points towards the possibility of considering church as an event of liberation and transformation while participating in God's mission. From that way of doing mission, people with albinism can actualize their hope in action, as the theology of this dissertation maintains.

Moreover, this broad perception of mission alerts the church that mission is not merely acts of charity or of binding the wounds of the victims; rather, it is simultaneously exposing and ending the sinfulness of the world. Through that way mission becomes action that confronts forces of evil that deny and abuse life. Mission transforms situations and people's worldviews so that the purposes of God for God's good creation may prevail.⁴⁰¹ Through this affirmation, marginalized people not only defend their understanding of mission but also their freedom of participation in the church and societies as well.

Furthermore, holding mission as proclamation of good news of salvation in word and deed underlines that mission is not a mere narration of the story of salvation in Jesus Christ alone but prophetic utterances, speaking truth to powers, and holding them accountable. Jesus, through His own life, message, and hard choices proclaims that mission is a vocation in risky obedience. He rejects the temptations of easy access to power and glory but opts for hard ways, the way of the cross.⁴⁰² This is mission in Christ's way, the mission of the marginalized people and the mission of God for a new, just world. Along those lines, White stresses that people with

⁴⁰⁰World Council of Churches, "Mission From the Margins," 153-154.

⁴⁰¹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰²World Council of Churches, "Mission From the Margins," 155.

disabilities form an integral part of the church and society and are essential for the wholeness and unity of the church. It is also essential that churches develop an inclusive attitude towards people with disability and welcome them into Christian fellowship. He further submits that the church must recognize the spiritual and material needs of people with disabilities and their families and respond in a Christ-like manner.⁴⁰³

Likewise, reflecting on the ministry of Jesus Christ, White insists that Christ does not want His church to be meaningless in society or to be pushed to the periphery but to be right at the centre of things, right where the action is.⁴⁰⁴ This means that the mission of the church is not only to preach the gospel, but also to be concerned for the welfare of the people within and outside the church.⁴⁰⁵ The 3rd Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (2010) refers to this approach to mission as a godly fulfillment of the church's missional mandate to provide for human welfare.⁴⁰⁶ Similarly, Aboagye-Mensah (1993)⁴⁰⁶ asserted that God expects the church to be a community where all ethnic groups and people of diverse backgrounds meet and accept each other with equal dignity.⁴⁰⁷ Eurich (2012) and Keum (2013) argue that the biblical idea on justice expects such human relationships to be balanced, reciprocal and of quality in order to fulfill the life-giving mission of the Triune God.⁴⁰⁸ Therefore, the ultimate goal of mission is to present

⁴⁰³ P. White. *The Biblical View of Humanity and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: The Call and Mission of the Church*, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxwDqfDKcpfNlknRsxkhKkpHVplb>.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁵ A. Walls & C. Rose, *Mission in the 21 Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* 2008, 35-47. London: Darton, Longman and Todd.

⁴⁰⁶ Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, the 2010, Cope Town Commitment, 2010, 14-14. Cape Town: The Lausanne Movement.

⁴⁰⁷ R. K. Aboagoye-Mensah, *Mission and Democracy in Africa: The Problem of Ethnocentrism*. (1993, 132). *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 17(3):130-133.

⁴⁰⁸ J. Eurich, *Justice for People with Disabilities: Philosophical and Theological Arguments*. 2012, 51. *Religion and Theology* 19(1-2):43-59. And also J. Keum (Ed.). *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes. With a Practical Guide*. (2013, 4). Geneva: World Council of Churches Publications.

love, equality, diversity, mercy, compassion and justice throughout God's creation.⁴⁰⁹ Swinton (2011) goes further and challenges actions such as compassion and mercy by arguing that the appropriate response to disability is not medical treatment or rehabilitation, but social change and radical political actions for justice, inclusion and full citizenship for people with disabilities.⁴¹⁰ This idea of attitudinal change, actions for justice, and full citizenship for people with albinism is what this dissertation stresses.

The group of theologians who were also victims of marginalization furthermore challenged the church for relying on a traditional understanding of mission. This group asserts that God's mission is beyond the churches' interests in safety, stability and expansion, implying that the church has to likewise express herself in contexts of struggle for dignity, justice and life for those to whom these are denied. This group with members real victims of discrimination moreover insisted that God's mission is not only to address their suffering but also their struggle to overcome the unjust, and life-denying forces that impact their life.⁴¹¹ Their assertions aim at the possibility of making the church an agent of liberation and transformation of society including the attitudinal change of the church regarding disabilities.

In essence, this perception is what this chapter wants to build its arguments on in finding how the church understands her mission in the jungle of misunderstanding and misconceptions on the issue of albinism in Tanzania and Africa, in general. At the same time, this part looks forward to rectifying the past emphasis of the term "hope" as something in the future that has for a long-time paralyzed the church. It is apparent that the church is all the time confronted by the

⁴⁰⁹ A. J. Kirk, *What is Mission? Theological Explanations*. 1999, 28. London: Darton, Longmann & Todd.

⁴¹⁰ J. Swinton, *Who is the God we Worship? Theologies of Disability: Challenges and New Possibilities*. 2011, 279. *International Journal of Practical Theology* 14(2):279.

⁴¹¹ *World Council of Churches, "Mission From the Margins,"* 154.

challenges of situational crises and these demand self-reflection and transforming theology within the church in a particular context.⁴¹²

This discussion on attitudinal change of the church towards people with disability verifies that it takes time to change people's perceptions. However, the ELCT has to some extent made advancements in attitudinal change on disability but she has not yet completed her mission. For this reason, the ELCT has to keep on educating the community and creating public awareness with regard to albinism. Furthermore, in reckoning on the situations and conditions affecting people with albinism in Tanzania, this dissertation suggests that mission can likewise be in the ELCT well understood and interpreted along several important lines

Mission as Participation in the Mission of the Triune God (*Missio Dei*)

The origin of the concept of *missio Dei* was already discussed in the second chapter. In this chapter, therefore, is described its contemporary use while looking at how mission can furthermore be interpreted in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania so that mission can directly answer problems affecting people with albinism. These proposed approaches when well implemented in the ELCT especially at the grassroots can bring hope that conforms to the theology of hope maintained in this dissertation.

It has to be noted that the mission of God is the foundation for the church's mission and missions of the church ensue from the nature of the church, given that the church is missionary by its very nature. In finding how mission of the church can directly touch people with disabilities through *missio Dei* perspective, Fazel Freeks (2018) from North-West University

⁴¹²P. Michael McCabe, *Mission as Action in Hope: A Theological Reflection on our Commitment to the Promotion of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) in our World Today*, 2009, 11, accessed August 26, 2019, <https://lasalette.info/366-mission-as-action-in-hope-p-michael-mccabe-sma>.

with the zeal of creating hope for marginalized communities, published research entitled “A Biblical-Theological Approach to Promote Evangelism in Disadvantaged and Poor Communities in South Africa: A Missiological Viewpoint.”⁴¹³ He suggested that mission is the concern of the Triune God—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit—for the whole of His creation.⁴¹⁴ In showing the relationship between mission and church, Freeks asserts that God chose people to build his kingdom and He blesses them in order to be a blessing to all the nations of the earth. The kingdom heals and ultimately brings reconciliation between God’s humanity and God’s whole creation.⁴¹⁵ This point makes clear that one of the prophetic tasks of the church is to express hope in a society or group of people that lives in despair,⁴¹⁶ such as, for example, persons with albinism.

Along the same lines, the “New Mission Affirmation” unanimously approved by the WCC central committee held in Crete, Greece on 5th of September 2012 affirms that:

Mission begins in the heart of the Triune God and the love which binds together the Holy Trinity overflows to all humanity and creation. The missionary God who sent the Son to the world calls all God’s people the church (John 20:21) and empowers them to be a community of hope. The church is commissioned to celebrate life, and to resist and transform all life-destroying forces, in the power of the Holy Spirit (John 20:22).⁴¹⁷

⁴¹³ Fazel Freeks, “A Biblical-Theological Approach to Promote Evangelism in Disadvantaged and Poor Communities in South Africa: A Missiological Viewpoint”(PhD diss., North-West University South Africa, 2018), 240.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ World Council of Churches, “Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes,” Busana, Korea 2013, 1.

Similarly, within Roman Catholic perspective as pointed out by Bevans and Schroeder, mission is understood fundamentally as rooted in the continual self-giving and self-revelation of God within the history of creation.⁴¹⁸ The church is then understood as the people that God has chosen not only to participate in the saving life of the divine community, but also to be agent and cooperator in God's outreach to the whole of creation. Hence, the church is the instrument of God to proclaim His kingdom in all parts of life. They also argue that God's involvement in history was made concrete in Jesus of Nazareth—that through Jesus, God is revealed, not as interfering in human life and decreasing human freedom, but as calling people to greater and more abundant life.⁴¹⁹ Furthermore, they maintain that in order for this historical deed to have perpetual meaning, Christ sent the Holy Spirit from the Father to carry out His saving work. Therefore, throughout all ages, the Holy Spirit gives the entire church the power of service. For this reason, the church is challenged all the time to identify closely with the peoples and cultures among whom she works.⁴²⁰ Arguing similarly, Bosch, while discussing *Faces of the Church-in-Mission*, claimed that “missiologically,...the central theme of our missionary message is that Christ is risen, and that, secondly and consequently, the church is called to live the resurrection life in the here and now and to be a sign of contradiction against the forces of death and destruction—that it is called to unmask modern idols and false absolutes.”⁴²¹

Therefore, with this perception, as Bosch insists, mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God from God's love for the sake of the world.⁴²² This new

⁴¹⁸ Stephen B. Bevans, SVD and Roger P. Schroeder, SVD, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Quezon City: Claretian Publication, 2005), 287.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁰ Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 287-288.

⁴²¹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 527.

⁴²² Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 400.

paradigm implies that it is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world, but it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church. Mission is in this manner a movement from God to the world whereas the church is an instrument for that mission.⁴²³ From this influence of the new understanding of mission, the missiological paradigm that shaped the planning and implementation of Edinburgh 2010 was the *missio Dei* paradigm. As a result, the Edinburgh 2010 Common Call opened by affirming that “we believe the church, as a sign and symbol of the reign of God, is called to witness to Christ today by sharing in God’s mission of love through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.”⁴²⁴

For this reason, the church in her mission, witnesses to the fullness of the promise of God’s reign and participates in the ongoing struggle between that reign and the power of darkness and evil.⁴²⁵ This appeal demands the church to bring end to oppression and injustice while enforcing commitment to a new life of mutuality, justice, and peace.⁴²⁶

Along this line of understanding that mission is God’s commission (*Missio Dei*) and the church is called to participate, the ELCT is then called to respond to the needs of people with albinism who are suffering just because of their appearance. Furthermore, the ELCT should be faithful to the calling of God by following Jesus and partaking in the *missio Dei*, by bringing love, hope and peace to people with albinism. In so doing, the church will be devotedly responding to her call with respect to *missio-Dei* perspective while participating in God’s

⁴²³ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁴ Kirsteen Kim & Andrew Anderson (eds.), *Edinburgh 2010. Mission Today and Tomorrow* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2011), 1.

⁴²⁵ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 400.

⁴²⁶ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 526.

mission. Because the world is full of evils, then the church is called to resist all evils of this world. For this reason, mission can furthermore, mean struggling and resisting all evils.

Mission as Struggle and Resistance to the Evil of Life-Destroying in this World

Fighting against evils is one of the tasks of *missio Dei*. As the church participates in God's mission, she requires a commitment to struggle and resist powers that obstruct the fullness of life that God wills for all.⁴²⁷ Jesus Christ, our model in this mission, relates to and embraces those who are most marginalized in society in order to confront and transform all that denies life. This includes cultures and systems that generate and sustain discrimination and dehumanization and that exploits or destroys people. This approach of understanding "mission as struggle and resistance to the evil of life-destroying in this world" awakens the church to reject all values and practices that lead to the destruction of the community. It invites the church to acknowledge the sinful nature of all forms of inequities and transforms unjust structures. Furthermore, "mission as struggle and resistance" motivates the church to act as a counter-cultural community.⁴²⁸

One example here is the belief rooted in some African customs and traditions that result in killing people with albinism. Consequently, Jochemsen (2010), a general director of Prisma, in his paper "In His Image: 'Prisma Vision on People with Disabilities in Development'" revealed that people with disabilities is a forgotten group in society.⁴²⁹ Then again, Swedberg and Bledsoe (2014), in their work entitled *Leader's Guide: The Church and People with Disabilities: Awareness, Accessibility, and Advocacy*, intended to understand the biblical and historical background for the negative perceptions of persons with disabilities. Additionally, they wanted

⁴²⁷ World Council Of Churches, "Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscape," 2012, 7.

⁴²⁸ WCC, Together Towards Life, 2012, 8.

⁴²⁹ H. Jochemsen, "People with Disabilities in Development Cooperation," accessed February 22, 2019, <http://www.prismapaper-people-with-disabilities-in-development-cooperation-august-2010.pdf>.

to identify collective and individual attitudes about disability that divide the body of Christ and to consider attitudes that bind us together.⁴³⁰ From their findings, they discovered that employment opportunities are limited for persons with disabilities.⁴³¹ All these are in fact evils that need resistance from the church.

Also, Crisp (2012), in his dissertation submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree PhD in Urban Theology, researched about “People with a Learning Disability in Society and in the Church: Theological Reflections on the Consequences of Contemporary Social Welfare Policies as Seen Through the Lens of Social Capital Theory.” The results of his research prove that throughout the broad scope of historical evidence we have considered, it is clear that poverty and disability that was hidden within it, continued to be understood in religious terms.⁴³² These destroying forces also need to be resisted by the church in any society.

To end these beliefs, the ELCT has to struggle in resisting these customs and traditions and mission has to be in the form of struggle and resistance. This is because the mission of the church has sometimes failed to consider people who have been pushed out by the community. This argument has also been approved by the WCC that “sometimes Christian mission has sometimes been understood and practiced in ways which failed to recognize God’s alignment with those consistently pushed to the margins.”⁴³³ From that argument, therefore, in resisting various evils in this world, the church has to understand the complexities of local contextual

⁴³⁰ Lynn Swedberg and Leslie Bledsoe, *Leader’s Guide: The Church and People with Disabilities: Awareness, Accessibility, and Advocacy* (New York: United Methodist Women, 2014), 9.

⁴³¹ Lynn., Swedberg and Leslie Bledsoe, *Leader’s Guide: The Church and People with Disabilities: Awareness, Accessibility, and Advocacy* (New York: United Methodist Women, 2014), 22.

⁴³² Anthon Gerard Crisp, “People with a Learning Disability in Society and in the Church: Theological Reflections on the Consequences of Contemporary Social Welfare Policies as Seen through the Lens of Social Capital Theory”(PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 2012), Department of Theology and Religion.

⁴³³ WCC, “Together Towards Life,” 6.

realities, especially the context where people with albinism are dehumanized and their dignity being spoiled. For this reason, mission as action in hope invites the church to re-imagine mission as a vocation from God's Spirit who works for a world where the fullness of life is available for all including people with albinism.

Aiming at bringing hope to people with albinism, the church's hope has to be rooted in the promised fulfillment of the reign of God. This hope entails the restoration of right relationships between God and humanity today and now. In its essence, as it has been previously theologized in this study, this hope does not direct us only to the eschatological reality, but it deeply energizes and informs our current participation in God's salvific work in this penultimate period.⁴³⁴ This way of understanding concurs with a number of the missiologists who argue that:

Missio Dei points to the conviction in God as One who acts in history and in creation, in concrete realities of time and contexts, who seeks the fullness of life for the whole earth... We affirm that marginalized people are agents of mission and exercise a prophetic role which emphasizes that fullness of life is for all.⁴³⁵

From this perception therefore, the meaningful *missio Dei* that could also be understood by people with albinism must be the message of resisting all beliefs that ruin their dignity. In order for the church to commit herself to God's life-giving mission, the church must listen to the voices from the margins to hear what is life-affirming and what is life-destroying. The church must turn her direction of mission to the actions that the marginalized are taking. Struggling and resisting against evils are also key expressions of mission in the context where people with

⁴³⁴ WCC, "Together Towards Life," 7.

⁴³⁵ WCC, "Together Towards Life," 7, 17.

albinism are suffering.⁴³⁶ In this way, the sense that God intended for all humanity will also be faithfully and equally communicated even to people with albinism today and now. Otherwise, this Good News will remain just texts separating them because it would have very little or totally have no connection to their real situation and it does not conform to the theology of this dissertation that insists on mission in action.

It is important to be reminded in this dissertation that ‘resistance’ does not mean revolt, but rather it is to challenge and refuse to accept evils. It is a resistance that develops sensitivity and makes societies to discover their wrongdoing and invites them to act against it. In that way, resistance becomes life enhancing power as it seeks to deconstruct wrong beliefs and construct community’s well-being and preserves and safeguards the dignity of persons with albinism. Therefore, the church to fully participate in this *missio Dei* has to practically discern and unmask demons that abuse life of people with albinism. This involves challenging and deconstructing erroneous beliefs surrounding people with albinism in Tanzania and Africa, in general. In so doing, the ELCT will be resisting evils. In addition to mission mode that resists all evils in this world, the ELCT has to further heal those who have been for a long time affected by those systemic evils. Therefore, mission approach in form of healing and wholeness of the broken heart is crucial.

Mission as Healing and Wholeness of the Broken Heart

Reflecting on the real situation and conditions facing people with albinism in African societies, one may truly admit that they live in fear with uncertain life and they are really affected psychologically. As a result, they have lost their hope; their hearts have really broken.

⁴³⁶ WCC, “Together Towards Life,” 17.

They are traumatized because of various ruthless actions such as exclusion, mutilation, and some sort of inhumane action directed to them and how societies depict them. They really need psychological healing. Thus, mission in the form of healing and wholeness becomes compatible with the theology of this dissertation—mission as action in hope.

In commissioning this task to the church, a new WCC Affirmation on ‘Mission and Evangelism’ held in Crete, Greece on 5th of September 2012, seeking a broad understanding of mission in changing landscape, affirmed that:

We (the church) discern the Spirit of God wherever life in its fullness is affirmed and in all its dimensions, including liberation of the oppressed, healing and reconciliation of broken communities and the restoration of the creation. We (the church) also discern evil spirits wherever forces of death and destruction of life prevail.⁴³⁷

This affirmation calls the church to heal all groups of people that are injured, rejected, neglected, tortured, and dehumanized in one way or another because of either their appearance, status, age, sex and the like. Emphasizing on that assertion, WCC Affirmation maintains that:

Action towards healing and wholeness of life of persons and communities are an important mission. Healing was not only a central feature of Jesus’ ministry but also a feature of his call to his followers to continue his work (Matthew 10:1). Healing is also one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1Corinthians 12:9, Acts 3). The Spirit empowers the church for a life-nurturing mission, which includes prayer, pastoral care, and professional health care on the one hand, and prophetic denunciation of the root causes of suffering,

⁴³⁷ WCC, “Together Towards Life,” 1.

transforming structures that dispense injustice and pursuit of scientific research on the other.⁴³⁸

For this reason, therefore, the church is commissioned to heal and bring wholeness to the broken heart especially of persons with albinism in Tanzania. The church has to take into consideration that health is more than physical or mental well-being and healing is not primarily medical. This understanding of health goes together with the biblical-theological tradition of the church that sees a human being as the body, soul, and mind as interrelated and interdependent. Moreover, healing in a wide perspective includes also the social, political, and ecological dimensions of personhood and wholeness. In addition, social healing includes transforming societal worldviews from wrong beliefs especially the erroneous beliefs on albinism. However, it must be noted that social healing is more about the restoration of wholeness than about correcting something perceived by society as defective.

According to the New Affirmation of WCC, health in the sense of wholeness is a condition related to God's promise for the end of time, as well as a real possibility in the present.⁴³⁹ This entails that wholeness is not a static balance of harmony but rather involves living-in-community with God, people, and creation. Individualism and injustice are barriers to community building, and therefore, to wholeness. When the groups of people with albinism and others downtrodden who have been left out for a long time are included and whenever the neglected or marginalized are brought together in love such that wholeness is experienced, we

⁴³⁸ WCC, "Together Towards Life," 8.

⁴³⁹ WCC, "Together Towards Life," 8.

may discern signs of God's reign on earth.⁴⁴⁰ Then, mission will be grasped as healing and wholeness of the broken heart.

Centering on this understanding of mission, persons with albinism could feel the sense of wholeness intended by God to all of His creation. In view of the fact that albinism is a problem of skin colour and it cannot be cured or changed by any means, it has to be accepted as it is. Likewise, in order to fully restore their wholeness, the medical model that looks at disabilities from the perspective of cure, has to be challenged by promoting the theological focus of this dissertation.

Furthermore, with the mounting violence and injustice in the world, the church is called upon to embrace, engage, and continue the task of voicing for the voiceless and being an agent for societal transformation. Therefore, the church has to furthermore, approaching mission in the form of inclusion and societal transformation.

Mission as Inclusion and Societal Transformation

Societal transformation and inclusion are the cry for people with albinism in Tanzania. This is because the society has for a long time regarded them as less human and excluded them. Therefore, what they really need is long overdue societal transformation from beliefs that have tortured them. Therefore, one of the tasks of the church is that of transforming society as Jesus did in his ministry. Jesus in his compassionate outreach to outcasts insisted on society transformation and inclusion. This argument was pointed out by McCabe (2009) while addressing the conference to JPIC Commission, in Rome:

⁴⁴⁰*Ibid.*

...Jesus concretely embodied God's kingly rule as good news for them; God's rule signaled the end of their misery and the introduction of a new order of social relationships based on the principle of inclusion. No one is excluded from the love of God "who causes his sun to rise on bad as well as good, and sends down rain to fall on the upright and the wicked alike" (Mt. 5:45). What amazes one again and again is the inclusiveness of Jesus' Kingdom mission.⁴⁴¹

As Sthmueller put it, it embraces both poor and rich, the oppressed and oppressor, both the sinners and the devout.⁴⁴² Jesus' model of mission is one of dissolving alienation and breaking down walls of hostility, of crossing boundaries. When this argument is viewed in the light of children with albinism being kept in different shelters in Tanzania as a way of protecting them from being killed, one finds the necessity of these shelters not becoming permanent homes for children with albinism. They must be temporal homes while society prepares itself (by changing its attitudes) to include them in society. Jesus' model of mission summons all of us to think beyond the narrow limits of greed and fear, to cross national, cultural, and social boundaries and build authentic human community in the light of God's ultimate rule of the universe.⁴⁴³

It is true that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania has been for a long time engaging in both spiritual and physical nurturing and caring of human beings in her missionary obligations, but we need to bear in mind that changing people's attitudes takes a long time; it is not an overnight issue. Therefore, the church as the body of Christ and being missionary by its

⁴⁴¹P. Michael McCabe, *Mission as Action in Hope: A Theological Reflection on our Commitment to the Promotion of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) in our World Today*, 2009, 2, accessed August 26, 2019, <https://lasalette.info/366-mission-as-action-in-hope-p-michael-mccabe-sma>.

⁴⁴²D. Senior & C. Sthmueller, *The Biblical Foundations of Mission*, Orbis, New York, 148-149.

⁴⁴³McCabe, "Mission as Action in Hope," 2-3.

very nature has all the time to abide by Christ's model of doing mission, rebuking evil and changing people's attitudes. It is irrefutable and unquestionable that while Jesus in his mission rebuked violence, he nevertheless expected a radical change in the existing social and political order. Jesus' words and actions represented a consistent challenge to the attitudes, practices, and structures that tended illogically to restrict or exclude potential members of the Israelite community.⁴⁴⁴ In his ministry, Jesus wanted to bring God's kingly rule to bear on the present world. For instance, when his disciples asked him to teach them how to pray, Jesus taught them what we call the Lord's Prayer: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This proves that Jesus' words, works, and prayers had immense social and political implications. He was not proclaiming a private or personal reign of God's spirit in the souls of individuals; rather, he was launching a revolutionary movement that would establish God's reign of justice, peace, truth, and love among all nations on earth.⁴⁴⁵

As observed in Jesus' words and deeds, the kingdom of God meant good news for the poor, healing for the sick, and liberation for the enslaved and oppressed and today people with albinism. For instance, to insist on his intention of his mission, Jesus launched his mission by citing one of the Jubilee texts from the prophet Isaiah by saying:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord (Luke 4:18-19).

⁴⁴⁴ D. Senior & C. Sthmueller, *The Biblical Foundations of Mission*, Orbis, New York, 147.

⁴⁴⁵ N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, SPCK, London, 1996, pp. 564-565; cf. also, *The Challenge of Jesus*, SPCK, London, 2000, p. 61.

However, it has to be historically noted that during Jesus' time, the afflictions of the poor were in large amount caused by repression, discrimination, and exploitation by the rich and powerful, the upholders of the *status quo*. That is why just as in his ministry Jesus turned deliberately to those who have been pushed aside: to the sick who were segregated on cultic grounds; to tax-collectors who were excluded on political and religious grounds; and to prostitutes and public sinners who were excluded on moral grounds,⁴⁴⁶ likewise, in today's reality, Jesus Christ is turning his ministry to people with albinism in Tanzania and Africa, in general, in order that he can set them free.

Along the same lines, the Albino Foundation envisions a society with equal opportunity for people with albinism by advocating and empowering them and educating society about albinism in Nigeria and the world. The Foundation's plea is that:

All persons are born free and equal in rights and dignity. People with albinism are human beings and they deserve inclusion, participation, and freedoms enjoyed by every other person. They are part of the human society and the diversities that make it. When they suffer discrimination, violations, and abuses, the human race suffers, too. Their genetic condition requires that the society treats them as a special minority. Special rights to safety, health, education, meaningful employment, and non-discrimination should be ensured.⁴⁴⁷

They also urge governments, faith oriented organizations, medical professions, and civil society groups, the media, and individuals to help people with albinism to achieve their aspirations in

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. A. Nolan, *Jesus Before Christianity*, Orbis, New York, 1989, pp. 21-25.

⁴⁴⁷ The Albino Foundation, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://albinofoundation.org/living-with-albinism/>.

consideration of their challenges in terms of health (skin and vision) as well as the general stigma that they experience.⁴⁴⁸

In theologizing the Lord's Prayer "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," one may however, conclude that Jesus has nothing to do with human optimism (the belief that good things will happen in the future) or any form of utopian thinking. His hope meant the realization of God's reign in the midst of violence and death.⁴⁴⁹ Basing on that point, McCabe reminds us that all Bible readers must be aware that the words of Jesus to Pilate in John 18:36, often mistranslated as: "My kingdom is not of this world" have sometimes been used to support the view that God's kingdom is not concerned with this present world. However, Jesus did not mean that. What he really means is "My kingdom is not from this world." This means that His kingdom did not start with this world. It started from God, but it is meant for this world. Therefore, the task of the church is to announce in word and deed that God's Kingdom has indeed come.⁴⁵⁰ From that understanding therefore, mission as inclusion and societal transformation expects people with albinism to experience God's Kingdom here on earth today and now, as it is emphasized in the theology of hope of this dissertation.

Viewing mission in the light of including people with albinism in God's reign demands that the scope of the church's mission become more comprehensive than has traditionally been the case; e.g., the traditional understanding of mission as diaconic works. By using McCabe's language, mission as inclusion and societal transformation will bring together evangelization and humanization, gospel and social concern, faith and political action, religious worship and secular

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁹ McCabe, "Mission as Action in Hope," 3.

⁴⁵⁰ McCabe, "Mission as Action in Hope," 4.

work.⁴⁵¹ Thinking on the same line with McCabe, this work insists that missions of the church have to be directed towards the integral transformation of this world in which we live. Our mission, directed towards *inclusion and societal transformation* will be concerned with the conversion of individuals to the mind and heart of Christ, but it will not confine itself to this activity.⁴⁵²

However, this dissertation is theologically aware that mission has also to be viewed in the light of our ultimate future in God. This is because the kingdom of God is ultimately not something we can establish on earth as a final point. We Christians (of course, and some other religions) believe also in life after death. This point does not contradict the whole notion of understanding mission as action in hope, but it affirms the absolute knowledge of God that transcends all human knowledge. It does not imply a conservative glorification of the present situation while forgetting life after death. But it theologically emphasizes ‘mission as in actions in hope’ in the light of ‘your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.’ Then again, this dissertation argues that the kingdom of God for which Christians hope is the absolute future which is God himself.

From that reason therefore, this dissertation puts equal emphasis on both the world and heaven as Jesus taught us in the Lords Prayer, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” In this expression, ‘as it is’ means ‘fairly and in the same way’ or in other words, in equal amount/s to the same degree. For this reason, both the world and heaven carry the same intensity in this work because they are both missiologically places of living before and after

⁴⁵¹ McCabe, “Mission as Action in Hope,” 3.

⁴⁵² McCabe, “Mission as Action in Hope,” 4.

death respectively. It further argues that God is bringing about this transformed world now, far beyond the frontiers of the church. Therefore, it is the task of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania to get in tune with what God is doing. This is why this work urges that church's hope is grounded in the experience of God's power made perfect in releasing people with albinism from despair to live new purposeful lives, lives that are compassionate, joyful and free. Therefore, the church is the fundamental instrument of God's mission in societal transformation.

Before embarking upon the theology of hope in action with regard to people with albinism, it is important to analytically expound on the ELCT's traditional biblical perspectives and interpretations on disabilities in general, in both Old and New Testaments.

Theological Analysis on Biblical Interpretations on Albinism in Relation to the Understanding of Mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

This part deals with Biblico-theological basis of mission as action in hope for people with albinism in Tanzania. Taking into consideration that the term 'albinism' is not directly pointed out in the bible, this part deals on it under the general term of disabilities. Hence, it is in this section where the salvation-history model of eschatological hope develops the theology of hope which conforms to people with albinism. Moreover, this part evaluates ELCT's traditional biblical and theological perspectives and interpretations on disabilities in general and on albinism in particular in both Old and New Testaments.

The Issue of Disability is a Challenge from Creation

The issue of disabilities has been a challenge from creation. It has to be generally noted that human beings are religious beings in the sense that they try to interpret and give meaning to

their life and experiences by relating them to what they consider to be the ultimate determining reality. In most cultures, that determining reality is a spiritual world.⁴⁵³ Hence, the occurrence of disabilities and the experience of a disability provoke questions that people try to deal with and seek answers to in the light of their religion. This pertains to existential questions like such as, Why me, or, my child, husband, wife, and the like. But also questions regarding causes of disabilities, the role of God, gods, sin and guilt, fate, doom and predestination become main issues in regard to disabilities.⁴⁵⁴

In discussing these questions, Amanze argues that biblical scholars have characterized God's work of creation in Genesis 1:1-31 as the establishment of order out of chaos that ended with the biblical declaration in Genesis 1:31 that "God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good."⁴⁵⁵ He further argues that the goodness of God inherent in the orderliness of the universe experienced its first challenge with the fall of Adam and Eve, which began a chain of evil that affected all of humanity and required undoing through the atoning work of Christ.⁴⁵⁶ This tradition traces disabilities to the creation story and it is one of the major influencing factors on how people perceive people with disabilities.

The creation story in the Bible states that man was created in the image and the likeness of God (*imago Dei*). This implies that humanity was created as perfect beings. This notion brings

⁴⁵³ H. Jochemsen, In His Image: Prisma Vision on People with Disabilities in Development Cooperation, accessed June 10, 2018, <https://www.people-with-disabilities-in-development-cooperation>. 12.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁵ James N. Amanze, "An International Review of Mission, The Mission of the Church to People with Disabilities in Southern and Central Africa: An Appraisal, (WCC, 2019)," accessed August 8, 2019, <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxdqfDKcRtbCbqxlZkpxlZkptZpDsTIZ?projector=1&messageParId=0>

⁴⁵⁶ James N. Amanze, "An International Review of Mission, The Mission of the Church to People with Disabilities in Southern and Central Africa: An Appraisal, (WCC, 2019)," accessed August 8, 2019, <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxdqfDKcRtbCbqxlZkpxlZkptZpDsTIZ?projector=1&messageParId=0>

into mind that disability is imperfect. Funny enough, in other traditions the issue of disability in the human race is connected to the disobedience to God. Moreover, the Bible informs us that disability could also be caused by demonic afflictions and accident (1 Sam. 16:14-20; Luke 13:11; Mark 5; 2 Sam. 9).⁴⁵⁷ On the other hand, when Moses wanted to explain to God why he was incapable of serving Him, due to some inability in his speech, the Lord said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?”⁴⁵⁸

What do these words of God imply? In point of fact, this verse did not only address God’s role in disabilities, it also set the stage for His provision, should one become disabled. But looking at the issue scientifically, we find many reasons that may cause disabilities. Patel in his research on the causes of disability in India portrays different causes of disability as follows:

Most often international agencies, governmental and non-governmental sources, mentioned the causes of disability are heredity, birth defects, lack of care during pregnancy and child birth, insalubrious housing, natural disasters, illiteracy and the resulting lack of information available on health services, poor sanitation and hygiene, congenital diseases, malnutrition, traffic accidents, work-related accidents and illness, sports accidents, the so-called diseases of ‘civilization’ (cardiovascular disease, mental and nervous disorders, the use of certain chemicals, change of diet and life style etc.), marriage between close relatives, accidents at home, respiratory diseases, metabolic diseases (diabetes, kidney failure etc.), drugs, alcohol, smoking, high blood pressure, old age, poliomyelitis, measles etc. Non-governmental sources also place particular emphasis

⁴⁵⁷ P. White, “The Biblical View of Humanity and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: The Call and Mission of the Church,” accessed August 8, 2019, <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxwDqfDKcpfNlknRsxkhKkpHVplb>.

⁴⁵⁸ Exodus 4: 11

on factors related to the environment, air and water pollution, scientific experiments conducted without the informed consent of the victims, terrorist violence, wars, intentional physical mutilations carried out by the authorities and other attacks on the physical and mental integrity of persons, as well as violations of human rights and humanitarian law in general.⁴⁵⁹

He further explains that mental problems are highest among working age population and visual and hearing disability are highest among older adults. Mental disability occurs mainly due to serious illness during childhood, head injury in childhood, and pregnancy and birth related causes. Old age, cataract, glaucoma and other eye disease are the main causes for having visual problems while polio, injury other than burns, other illness, stroke, arthritis, cerebral palsy are the main causes of disability.⁴⁶⁰ In his research, Patel did not openly mention albinism in particular, but if it was in his mind it could be included in the hereditary causes. It is also important to be noted that causes of disability differ according to the type of disability, region, and other background characteristics a person belongs to. In fact, Patel's approach on disabilities is mainly influenced by medical and economic models; this is why he insists on health policies and remedies when he says:

It is very important to understand the causes of disability among children, youth, working age population and also ageing population to frame a better health policy, programmes and related measures which can provide remedy to reduce the burden of disease, because very little is known about the causes of disability dynamics in India.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁹ S. Patel, "An Empirical Studies of Causes of Disability in India," *The Internet Journal of Epidemiology* Volume 8, no. 2 (2008): <https://ispub.com/IJE/6/2/4308>.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*

These are some of the scientific causes of different kinds of disabilities. Moreover, Bunch sampled Jewish tradition where people with disabilities were totally excluded even from religious assignments. One of the texts that exclude people with disabilities from religious matters is Leviticus 21:16-24.

16 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 17 "Speak to Aaron, saying, None of your offspring throughout their generations who has a blemish may approach to offer the bread of his God. 18 For no one who has a blemish shall draw near, a man blind or lame, or one who has a mutilated face or a limb too long, 19 or a man who has an injured foot or an injured hand, 20 or a hunchback or a dwarf or a man with a defect in his sight or an itching disease or scabs or crushed testicles. 21 No man of the offspring of Aaron the priest who has a blemish shall come near to offer the LORD's food offerings; since he has a blemish, he shall not come near to offer the bread of his God. 22 He may eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy and of the holy things, 23 but he shall not go through the veil or approach the altar, because he has a blemish, that he may not profane my sanctuaries, for I am the LORD who sanctifies them." 24 So Moses spoke to Aaron and to his sons and to all the people of Israel.⁴⁶²

By reading this particular text superficially, one could be convinced to interpret that God supports discrimination against people with disabilities. As a matter of fact, literary meaning of that text displays God speaking to His people through Moses. It expresses God's command of not allowing people with disabilities to offer the Lord food offerings. Truly, the interpretation of

⁴⁶² Leviticus 21:16-24 (English Standard Version).

this text brings many questions such as why God excludes people with disabilities from participating in priestly office, how people with disabilities perceive that particular text, and is this text really the word of God? In analyzing this text in contemporary times, one would be convinced to say that this scripture is characterized by spiritual abuse and disrespectful to the fundamental rights of people with disabilities. How does the church read and interpret that text and similar others in today's context?

Going back to Leviticus 19-20, one could also be tempted to ask the following question: Could the God, who said, "You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the Lord" (Lev. 19:14) really have meant that disabled people were inferior to others and unworthy to offer worship? Relating Leviticus 19:14 to Leviticus 21:16-23, saying that God's judgment awaits anyone who will mislead a blind person on the road (Deut. 27:18), makes it very difficult to state that people with a disability were discriminated against by God in Leviticus 21:16-23. Of course, many Old Testament scholars are still reflecting on this.⁴⁶³ However, this dissertation argues that in order to do justice in analyzing Leviticus 21:16-23, the broader framework of Jewish worldviews must be put into consideration. Therefore, to analyze these texts, one needs to go back and examine different factors that could have forced and shaped the community of that specific place and time. From that analysis, one could faithfully interpret the text in today's context.

In interpreting that text traditionally, it is obvious that only Jews, particularly the descendants of Aaron who, by family ties would be qualified to offer sacrifices to God in the

⁴⁶³ P. White, *The Biblical View of Humanity and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: The Call and Mission of the Church*, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxwDqfDKcpfNIknRsxkhKkpHVplb>.

Temple, could not be blind, lame, deformed, crippled in foot or hand, have scoliosis, eye defects or damaged testicles.⁴⁶⁴ While this was a special group with a particular mission and the priestly requirements were strict, the presence of physical deformities excluded them from the community into which they were born. Moreover, Randall argues that this passage restricts those in Aaron's line from functioning as priests if they have any kind of defect physically. The reason that might have made sense to the Israelites or their interpretation was that, like the sacrifices they offered that had to be perfect, so the priests who offered them had to be perfect so to speak in order to please God. They would certainly have also had some idea that a perfect sacrifice was representative of the need for a blameless substitute for their sin and guilt. When they offered the animal in their place it was the just for the unjust that was being offered. Likewise, the priest who offered it could not be unjust symbolically speaking, but needed to be perfect to get the desired result—forgiveness from God.⁴⁶⁵ Even if none of us is perfect, to them disabilities were connected to sin either of an individual, parents, family, clan etc. Therefore, their perception to any kind of disability was totally negative.

Randall connects this way of understanding to the New Testament that “we know that God was also preparing His people to receive the real and ultimate sacrifice for our sins and high priest to offer the sacrifice—Jesus Christ. The symbols of the Old Testament rituals were symbols of Jesus and how his sacrifice was of a truly sinless substitute for our truly sinful selves.”⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶⁴ Wilton H. Bunch, “Toward a Theology of Inclusion,” *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health*, <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/KtbxLthpxWgxMdkdkZtCtrKwWQLRSB?project=1&messagePartId=0.1>

⁴⁶⁵ Johnson Randall, “What Does Leviticus 21:16-23 Mean as Far as Disabled People are Concerned,?” accessed June 01, 2020, <https://askthepastors.wordpress.com/2010/12/10/what-does-leviticus-2116-23-mean-for-those-who-are-disabled/>.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

This kind of interpretation is what we call religious model of disability that regards all kind of disabilities including albinism as God's will. When analyzing the religious model of disability, one obviously discovers that the main problem of religious model is the concept of letting things stay the way they are because it believes that God has ordered them to be so. And those who are suffering today, let them tolerate and endure suffering and pain while hoping for the everlasting and happier life in the coming kingdom, and that their tears will be wiped out in the coming life. This attitude is very dangerous to people with albinism who are suffering because of their appearance. This conception demands people with albinism to accept all discrimination and torture resulting from erroneous beliefs. It does not encourage any kind of society transformation but rather endurance in looking forward to a better life in the second coming of Jesus Christ. Basing on these interpretations, this dissertation argues that this spiritual emphasis is separating the essence of human being. Human being is psychosomatic kind of creature. Human being has both flesh and soul. Therefore, this emphasis of religious model of disability does not help people with albinism, it does not conform to them but it oppresses them. That is why salvation-history model of eschatological hope which emphasis human dignity and advocates for better life today as well as the life to come, is used as the lens of this dissertation with the aim of challenging and correcting wrong ideas emphasized by religious model for a long time. The salvation-history model balances both periods of life—that life before death and life after death are both lives therefore, they both deserve equal value.

In fact, the emphasis of religious model of disability has largely influenced the church to the extent of excluding people with disabilities in general and with albinism in particular not only from religious matters but also from participating in different aspects of life. Here the

problem lies on disabling theology that functionally denies inclusion and justice for many of God's children particularly people with albinism. From this point, as Bunch argues, much of church theology and practice including interpretations of the Bible itself has often been dangerous for people with disabilities, who encounter prejudice, hostility, and suspicion;⁴⁶⁷ and so it does to people with albinism. Based on biblical interpretations, Retief and Letsosa claim that Christians today continue to interpret and spin theologies in ways that reinforce negative stereotypes, support social and environmental segregation, and mask the lived realities of people with disabilities.⁴⁶⁸

Although many interpretations of the Old Testament views of disability have led to a discriminatory and exclusive approach when viewing people with disabilities, it is important to point out that the issue took a different approach in the New Testament (as well as Jesus' healing ministry) where there are examples of disabled people portrayed in a positive way (John 9:1-7; Acts 3:1-9). Also, Jesus Christ provided evidence that it is not always true that disabilities are caused by sin, but for the sake that the glory of God will be manifested (John 9:1-3). The gospels show Jesus Christ as sensitive and caring towards people with disabilities. In the New Testament, people with disabilities are the main focus of his healing ministry (Mark 8:22-26; 10:46-52).⁴⁶⁹

Insisting on the ministry of Jesus Christ, White maintains that the Parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14) defines the place of people with disabilities in the life of the Kingdom of

⁴⁶⁷ Wilton H. Bunch, "Toward a Theology of Inclusion," *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health*, <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/KtbxLthpxWgxMdkdkZtCtrKwWQLRSB?project=1&messagePartId=0.1>

⁴⁶⁸ M. Retief, & Letsosa, R., *Models of Disability: A Brief Overview*, HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies 74(1), a4738, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4738> and <https://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hts/v74n1/06.pdf>.

⁴⁶⁹ P. White, "The Biblical View of Humanity and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: The Call and Mission of the Church," accessed August 8, 2019, <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxdqfDKcpfNIknRsxkhKkpHVplb>.

God. The parable shows that Jesus Christ, in both word and action, sets people with disability within the circle of unity of the Christian church. The Acts of Apostles also gives evidence of how the early church had compassion and concern for people with disabilities. All this evidence shows that people with disabilities are part of the mission agenda of God. Furthermore, countless healings in the Old and New Testaments provide proof of the compassionate nature of God.⁴⁷⁰ Despite the fact that not all illnesses, diseases, or disabilities were removed, the kingdom of God is not complete without people with disabilities.⁴⁷¹

For this reason therefore, Eiesland insists on the need to critically examine the biblical foundation of disabling theology, and subsequently the production of a theology of disability, emerging from the lives and even the bodies of those with disabilities—the liberating theology of disability.⁴⁷²

Biblico-Theological Basis of Mission as Action in Hope to People with Albinism

The theology of hope of this work, ‘mission as action in hope’ emphasizes that the interpretation of eschatological hope should not be its end, but its beginning. It is a theology that interprets an old hope for the end of time now becomes hope in the present reality, a hope opposed to the way things are. It conforms to the understanding of Moltmann, that in human beings, knowledge of the ‘living God’ awakens a thirst and hunger for life; it makes them dissatisfied with what they are and impels them to look for a future in which more life will enter the lives they already have.⁴⁷³ Therefore, as per this dissertation, this interpretation on the

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷¹ N. Rayan, “Prepare the Bride,” Bombay: Self-Publication 1991, 29, accessed June 15, 2019, <http://www.crossroadsfellowship.org.au/bride/bride/pdf>.

⁴⁷² N. Eiesland, “Encountering the Disabled God, The Other Side,” 38(5), 10-15, accessed 01 June 01, 2020, <http://www.dsfnetwork.org/assets/Uploads/DisabilitySunday/21206.Eiesland-Disabled-God.pdf>.

⁴⁷³ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and Implications of Christian Eschatology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 21-22. But also from Jürgen Moltmann, *The Living God and the Fullness of Life* (Geneva: WCC

theology of hope becomes Biblico-theological basis of mission as action in hope to people with albinism.

Evaluating Biblical Basis of Disabling Theology and the Production of the Liberating Theology on the Understanding of Albinism

It has been widely discussed in this chapter that religious model of disability and other various models have to a great extent influenced people on how they perceive people with albinism. Moreover, several verses from the bible have been used to legitimize exclusion of people with disabilities from society and church activities as well. One of the texts is Leviticus 21:16-24. Basing on liberating theology of disability and through the lens of salvation-history model of eschatological hope, one evaluating Leviticus 21:16-24 for example, will realize that the text says nothing about the way God views people with disabilities in any personal sense.⁴⁷⁴ God did not intend to exclude people with disabilities from participating in priestly office. This text carries the worldviews of the specific community in a particular time and place. It portrays more on Jewish tradition and their perceptions on disability. The text exposes how the society understood people with disabilities; it reveals how Jewish people were entirely influenced by religious model of disability. Oddly enough, this perception brings to light that disability is only physical defect which shows a narrow and restricted understanding of disability. Randall challenges the idea of understanding disability as the only physical defect. He says, “We are all disabled in many ways; spiritually, emotionally and physically...”⁴⁷⁵ Yet, God uses the

Publications, 2016), 23.

⁴⁷⁴ Johnson Randall, “What Does Leviticus 21:16-23 Mean as Far as Disabled People are Concerned?,” accessed June 01, 2020, <https://askthepastors.wordpress.com/2010/12/10/what-does-leviticus-2116-23-mean-for-those-who-are-disabled/>.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

disabilities in our lives and the comfort He teaches us to find in the midst of our disabilities to give us something to share with others in their disability. He adds that our disabilities become one source of our ministry in the lives of others.⁴⁷⁶

Besides, it is true that according to the Bible (Lev.21:16-24) God spoke to Moses. But Moses had to speak within the confines of the society of his time. The society could have been influenced and shaped by many models of disability for a long time while they were either in Egypt, or even during the 40 years of wilderness. Therefore, this work argues that this text (Leviticus 21:16-24) portrays people's perception rather than God's intention. This interpretation conforms to the purpose and norms of the theology of mission as action in hope with respect to people with albinism. This way of understanding goes hand in hand with the understanding of Amba-Oduyoye on her insistence that theology has to deal with the community in its manifestations of empowerment as well as its organized limitations on the individual.⁴⁷⁷

From this discussion, the current work found the necessity of expounding ideological analysis in biblical interpretations especially in interpreting texts like Leviticus 21:16-24 and other similar texts. One understanding the way ideological criticism works will therefore introduce fair and nondiscriminatory interpretations. The understanding of ideological analysis goes hand in hand with the emphasis of the lens used in this dissertation, the salvation-history model of eschatological hope, especially when both theories focus on challenging the particular social arrangements and their justification being presented as if they were governed by social laws as unchangeable. Therefore, because this dissertation deals with beliefs associated with

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ Mercy Amba-Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women's Theology* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 2001), 17-19.

albinism, it is important in biblical analysis to employ ideological criticism for fair interpretation of some biblical texts.

Importance of Ideological Analysis Method in Biblical Interpretations

It has been discussed in this work especially under religious model of disability that disability is the act of God and, therefore, nothing could be changed. It was ascertained that the main problem of religious model is the concept of letting things stay the way they are because it believes that God has ordered them to be so. And those who are suffering today, let them tolerate and endure suffering and pain while hoping for the everlasting and happier life in the coming kingdom, and that their tears will be wiped out in the coming life. Therefore, as per this work, these ideas and beliefs need to be rectified. Because the study of ideology is to see how ideas and systems of thinking and beliefs function in a society, therefore, this dissertation has found the importance of deploying ideological analysis in biblical interpretation in order to rectify wrong ideas in regard to the nature of albinism and disabilities, in general.

But the term ‘ideology’ is a word that is widely used and whose meaning in its different contexts always needs to be monitored. In this work, it is used in a general sense as a way of describing a system of ideas and beliefs.⁴⁷⁸ Christopher Rowland in his work on social, political, and ideological criticism, declares that the pioneering works of Weber, Durkheim, and Marx on the ways in which texts and ideas relate to their social context slowly infiltrated the world of biblical studies.⁴⁷⁹ Therefore, ideological criticism focuses on challenging the particular social arrangements and their justification being presented as if they were governed by social laws as

⁴⁷⁸ Christopher Rowland, *Radical Christianity: A Reading Recovery* (Cambridge: Polity, 1988), 165-657.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

unchangeable as the laws of physics and so impossible to change. Rowland says clearly that the study of ideology is to see how ideas and systems of thinking and beliefs function in a society in such a manner that the way people think and the ruling groups appear to be natural and just.⁴⁸⁰ He agrees with other scholars such as Hall (1985) and McLellan (1987) that through ideological criticism, the interests are not always compatible with the interests of the rest of the community, as the powerful groups are sectional in their interests. But the way in which the language and system of ideas function is to make it appear that they are in fact in the interests of all.⁴⁸¹

Also, in analyzing ideologies one has to involve the exposure not only of overt (obvious) ways but especially of the covert (hidden) ways in which dominant interests are served. It is to evaluate ideas and find the hidden agenda rather than what something appears to be. It involves making bare the contradictions in society and the habit that dominant groups have of neutralizing their potential for resistance and change.⁴⁸² This is why ideological analysis is very important in understanding the hidden agenda of the dominant groups. For instance, what is the hidden agenda when the community believe that “people with albinism never die, but when the time of dying comes near, they just go and disappear in the big jungle, and this is why it is not easy to find an albino tomb/grave.”⁴⁸³ Therefore, ideological analysis does not just become contented with the statement that people with albinism never die a natural death, but it goes further to find the hidden agenda of that statement. Obviously, the hidden agenda of the statement is that the community used to kill people with albinism secretly either at the time immediately after birth or at any time. And if it appears that an albino person of any age in a certain village/society was

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*

⁴⁸³ This is one of the erroneous beliefs surrounding people with Albinism.

secretly killed and they no longer appear in the community, no one would bother to ask about them because all people would have already been indoctrinated that they disappeared in the jungle because their time for dying was at hand. That is how ideological analysis works. For this reason, this dissertation found the necessity of tackling ideological analysis in interpreting biblical texts like that of Leviticus 21:16-24. This way of analyzing texts does not only deal with what is written but also the hidden agenda behind the written text.

Furthermore, according to Byron, ideological criticism determines the types of social, political, and economic power structures operative at the time a text was written and the types of power discourses employed by particular authors. It determines the ways in which text itself assimilates and embodies socioeconomic conditions to generate particular ideologies in its rhetoric, noting the gaps, inconsistencies, and silenced voices. It seeks to unmask biases, injustices, privileges, and the other oppressive worldviews or structures that are embedded in biblical texts and that similarly circumscribe the interpretation of biblical texts. It intersects with different forms of biblical criticism such as reader-response, feminist, disabilities to expose racialized discourses, marginalized perspective, and hidden hegemonic social and cultural assumptions. It is a valuable tool for dealing with the inherent struggles, dilemmas, and tensions that are operative in biblical texts and contexts, traditions of interpretation, and the interpreters themselves. It also discerns the liberating message of Biblical texts.⁴⁸⁴

Thus, ideological critics take seriously the revolutionary nature of the kingdom of God and the radical changes in social, political, and economic relationships it entails. Therefore, when well applied by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania in the context of discriminating

⁴⁸⁴ Gay L. Byron, *Ideological Criticism*, in NIDB; David Tombs, *The Hermeneutic of Liberation*, in *Approaches to New Testament Study*, 310-355, and also from "Interpretive Methods"- Notes from Dr. Solon on 04.10.2017.

people with albinism it could bring fair interpretations of any text, especially by challenging some wrong interpretation imposed by religious model of disability. Therefore, the emphasis of ideological analysis and the salvation-history model of eschatological hope as the lens used in this work, formulate the theology of hope to people with albinism.

Furthermore, centering on the contradictions of some biblical texts such as that of Leviticus 21:16-24, it is important to be aware that biblical books are made up of contradictory themes that reflect something of the competing ideas and interests in the society of the time when it was given its final form rather than when the message was originally uttered.⁴⁸⁵ For this reason, these contradictions of the text, under ideological analysis, must be interpreted politically, economically, religiously, and sociologically rather than merely in terms of ideas.⁴⁸⁶ For instance, through ideological interpretation, biblical scholars have resorted to significant amount of imaginative reconstruction in order to offer answers to the question: in what kind of situation and as part of what sort of social struggle did people write this kind of text in this way and why?⁴⁸⁷ The recognition of the process and systems of the oppressors and the way in which those who refuse to accept the dominant understanding of the way world is, forms a central part of the investigation of ideology.

Rowland is of the opinion that a text must be interpreted as part of a struggle between different class interests in which a ruling class ideology seeks to offer itself as ‘common sense’ or ‘normality,’ and all else as deviant and irrational. A ruling class ideology will offer strategies of legitimation, while an oppositional culture or ideology will often in covert ways seek to

⁴⁸⁵ Rowland, *Radical Christianity*, 659.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁷ Rowland, *Radical Christianity*, 165-657.

contest and to undermine the dominant value system. In the latter, there is a process of re-appropriation and neutralization by the dominant ideology.⁴⁸⁸ In order to understand the text fully, it is necessary to enquire into the nature of the context, for instance, the constellation of groups and their different ideas and interests.

It has to be noted that every text is created within particular context. According to Ricoeur (1974), at least three developmental stages of a text must be considered in the interpretive process. First there is the event, second the recording of the event in a text, and third the reading of the text.⁴⁸⁹ Each stage is separated by a time gap. In the case of the biblical text, the gap between the recording of the event in the text and the reading of the text is centuries. During this time the text does not change, but languages and cultures do.⁴⁹⁰ Leonard Boff also in commenting on this idea believes that theologians do not live in clouds; they are social actors with a particular place in society. They produce knowledge, dates, and meanings by using instruments that the situation offers them and permits them to utilize.⁴⁹¹

Grounded on these arguments, this work argues that there are many and different interpretations for a single text and these interpretations depend on the interpreters' aims. But the reader has the power to interpret the text the way they want. In emphasizing on the power of the one interpreting the text, Tate argues that decisive interpretation must be the aim of the interpreter.⁴⁹² However, it is true that a text has no rights except those allowed by the interpreter. The text exercises controls over interpretation, but this is true only to the degree that the

⁴⁸⁸ Rowland, *Radical Christianity*, 659.

⁴⁸⁹ Paul Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretation* (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1974), (see also Tate 2008), 27.

⁴⁹⁰ Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretation*, 29.

⁴⁹¹ Leonard Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator* (London: SPCK), 265.

⁴⁹² Tate W. Randolph, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach* (Baker Books, 2008), 173.

interpreter chooses to permit such controls. There is obviously the case where the interpreter is not even aware of the text's literary repertoire.⁴⁹³ We find most cases especially in charismatic and Pentecostal churches where the interpreters use text to fulfill their aims. The interpreter's aims always dictate interpretive methods. These methods in turn influence the way in which interpreters perceive and use the data of the text. For this reason, Tate states that the distinct possibility exists; therefore, the interpreter will impose the understanding of their contemporary world upon the text.⁴⁹⁴

Centered on this discussion, this work argues that for any biblical interpretation, 'contemporary context' is the best consideration. Therefore, mission as action in hope is in opinion that, in all of our life history, 'today' is more important. In supporting this idea, Tate concurs with Mannheim (1931: 193-213) that "the present moment is one of utmost significance within the whole gamut of history."⁴⁹⁵ This perception is what the theology of hope in this work insists on. It refutes the theology of withdrawing from the present realities—theologies that focus only on the future while forgetting the current situation. For this reason, this study maintains that the future we expect has to be realized in today's reality. Therefore, theology is a matter not just of abstract reflection, but of exposition of understandings that are based on an active engagement to see another kind of order at work in this world—the realization of God's kingdom on earth today. In that way the coming reign of God is not merely an article of faith for the future, but is in some sense already present in the life of the text-readers.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁴ Randolph, *Biblical Interpretation*, 27.

⁴⁹⁵ Rowland, *Radical Christianity*, 669.

This point makes us aware that in biblical interpretations we need to read the signs of the times and put much emphasis on the text-reader's context. Therefore, Leviticus 21:16-24 and other similar texts must be interpreted in a way that people with albinism can really find the love of God to them regardless of their appearance. From that understanding *mission as action in hope* contends that any interpretation of the Bible is unacceptable if it does harm to any human being and any theology must be society sensitive, given that all human beings regardless of their physical appearance were created in the image of God (*imago Dei*). However, the theology of *imago Dei* brings another challenge: Do people with albinism portray the image of God? What does *imago Dei* mean in relation to people with albinism?

The Theology of *Imago Dei* in Relation to People with Albinism

The Image of God in Latin, *Imago Dei*, is a concept and theological doctrine in Judaism and Christianity that asserts that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God. However, philosophers and theologians have debated the exact meaning of the phrase.⁴⁹⁶ The term 'Image of God' is a theological term applied exceptionally to human beings denoting the symbolic relation between God and humanity. The phrase 'Image of God' is found in three passages in the Bible, all in the book of Genesis chapters 1–11.

Gen 1:26–28- And God said: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him, male and

⁴⁹⁶ Faith and Reason, accessed August 6, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/faithandreason/theogloss/imago-body.html>.

female created He them. And God blessed them; and God said to them: 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that creepeth upon the earth.

Gen 5:1–3- This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him. Male and female created He them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth.

Gen 9:6- One who spills the blood of man, through man, his blood will be spilled, for in God's image He made man.

There have been many interpretations of the idea of God's image from ancient times until today and Biblical scholars still have no consensus about the meaning of the term.⁴⁹⁷ For example, theologians have examined the difference between the concepts 'Image of God' and the 'likeness of God' in human nature. Origen viewed the image of God as something given at creation, while the likeness of God is something bestowed upon a person at a later time.⁴⁹⁸ This is why the medieval distinction between the 'image' and 'likeness' of God has largely been abandoned by most modern interpreters. Collins argues that since the time of the Reformation, scholars have recognized that this 'image/likeness' distinction does not suit the text itself. First, there is no 'and' joining 'in our image' with 'after our likeness.' Second, in Genesis 1:27 we find simply 'in God's image' and finally, in Genesis 5:1, God made man 'in the likeness of God.'

⁴⁹⁷Faith and Reason, accessed August 6, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/faithandreason/theogloss/imago-body.html>.

⁴⁹⁸*Ibid.*

Therefore, according to Collins, the best explanation is to say that ‘in the image’ and ‘in the likenesses’ refer to the same thing, with each clarifying the other.⁴⁹⁹

Moreover, reformation theologians such as Martin Luther focused their reflections on the dominant role mankind had over all creation in the Garden of Eden before the fall of man. The *Imago Dei*, according to Luther, was the perfect existence of man and woman in the garden: all knowledge, wisdom, and justice, and with peaceful and authoritative dominion over all created things in time without end. Furthermore, in the modern era, the ‘Image of God’ was often related to the concept of ‘freedom’ or ‘free will.’⁵⁰⁰ Emil Bruner, a 20th century Swiss Reformed theologian, wrote that the formal aspect of human nature, as being ‘made in the image of God,’ denotes being as subject, or freedom; it is this which differentiates humanity from the lower creation. He also sees the relationship between God and humanity as a defining part of what it means to be made in God’s image.⁵⁰¹

Additionally, the 20th and early 21st centuries saw the image of God being applied to various causes and ideas including disabilities and gender. Often these were reactions against prevailing misunderstandings of the *Imago Dei*, or situations in which the Biblical text was being misused in the opinion of some interpreters.⁵⁰² In Christian thought, one may theologially argue that the ‘Image of God’ that was present in Adam at creation was partially lost with the Fall of human being, and that through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, human beings can be reunited with God.⁵⁰³

⁴⁹⁹*Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁰ Faith and Reason, accessed August 6, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/faithandreason/theogloss/imago-body.html>.

⁵⁰¹*Ibid.*

⁵⁰²*Ibid.*

⁵⁰³*Ibid.*

In relating the concept of *imago Dei* and disabilities, Beverly Mitchell, professor of Historical Theology at Wesley Theological Seminary, while focusing on mission from the margins in relation to the image of God asserts that a common concern of people from the margins is the failure of our societies, the church, cultures, and nations to honour the dignity and worth of people with disabilities. In addition, this dignity is grounded in the biblical affirmation that humans were created in the *imago Dei*.⁵⁰⁴ In defending this contention, he further clarifies that this glory is not predicated on our abilities, capabilities, or disabilities; it is not something that we have earned, and it is quite distinct from common notions of being “dignified.” He extends his argument that the Incarnation—the Word made flesh (John 1:1)—reaffirms God’s intention to sustain and safeguard this dignity in spite of the profound threat of sin in all its forms and expressions.⁵⁰⁵ He furthermore insists that in our affirmation of human dignity as granted individually to everyone, we do not understand this sacred worth only in individualistic terms. He emphasized on social dimension to human dignity that calls each one of us to affirm and safeguard the dignity of all other human beings. This social dimension of dignity affirms that all human beings indeed are the keepers of sisters and brothers. Therefore, our common gift of the image of God is the foundation for our obedience to the commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves (Lev. 19:18a; Matt.19:19b).⁵⁰⁶

In analyzing these texts Gen.1:26-28, Gen.5:1-3 and Gen.9:6, one may however, argue that these scriptural passages do not mean that God is in human form, but rather that human beings are in the image of God in their moral, spiritual, and intellectual nature. Thus, human

⁵⁰⁴ Beverly Mitchell, “Mission from the Margins: Toward a Just World,” in *International Review of Mission: World Council of Churches*, Volume 101.Number 1 (April 2012): 163-169.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

beings mirror God's divinity in their ability to actualize the unique qualities with which they have been endowed, and which make them different from all other creatures: rational structure, creative freedom, a possibility for self-actualization, and the ability for self-transcendence.⁵⁰⁷ Based on this argument, this work argues that God's image is portrayed through people with albinism because they also have all qualities associated with *imago-Dei*.

In addition, most theologians agree that the term *Imago Dei* refers most fundamentally to two things: first, God's own self-actualization through humankind; and second, God's care for humankind. To declare that human beings are in the image of God is to recognize the special qualities of human nature that allow God to be made manifest in human beings. In other words, for humans to have the conscious recognition of their being in the image of God means that they are the creature through whom God's plans and purposes can be made known and actualized; that is to say, human beings can be seen as co-creators with God. The moral implications of the doctrine of *Imago Dei* are apparent in the fact that if human beings are to love God, then they must love other fellow human beings as each is an expression of God.⁵⁰⁸ Therefore, *Imago Dei* has nothing to do with physical appearance of human beings.

Theologically speaking, *mission as action in hope* emphasizes that every human being is created in the image of God and to the glory of God. The uniqueness of every human being is revealed in their different qualities. These different qualities, however, do not lead to differences in dignity. Like anybody else, people with albinism are created in the image of God. Everyone is created with a variety of gifts and talents. It is true that people with disabilities in general often

⁵⁰⁷ Faith and Reason, accessed August 6, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/faithandreason/theogloss/imago-body.html>.

⁵⁰⁸ Faith and Reason, accessed August 6, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/faithandreason/theogloss/imago-body.html>.

need specific help from others, but at the same time everyone else needs other people. We are not created to live in isolated independence, but to support each other and offer help in relationships. To need help is not a sin but is part of human existence that is characterized by mutual dependence and care, a kind of lifestyle that is one of the cardinal elements of living in the African community. However, as a creation of God with gifts and talents this work has the same opinion with Jochemsen in approaching people with disabilities particularly with albinism as people with capacities to be used, rather than as being totally dependent on the charity interventions of others.⁵⁰⁹ This implies that despite the fact that the image of God having been theologically partially lost because of the fall, each person fundamentally has value regardless of class, race, gender, disability, or appearance. In reflecting on the theology of hope of this work, mission as action in hope, asserts that all human beings were created in the image of God; therefore, people with albinism express the image of God because physical appearance has nothing to do with *Imago Dei*. It is important to note furthermore that *Imago Dei* does not mean the functional views or appearance of our physical bodies. Rather, human beings are in the image of God in their moral, spiritual, and intellectual nature. From that point therefore, this dissertation argues that the image of God cannot be interpreted through the lens of functioning.

Challenges on Functional Interpretation of the term ‘Image of God’

It has already been explained under religious model of disability that in the Old Testament, sickness and other problems were/are often seen as a punishment for sin. Blessing is connected to keeping God’s commandments and listening to his voice, and curse is connected to disobedience to the Lord. Therefore, because of that influence, the image of God was also

⁵⁰⁹ H. Jochemsen, “In His Image: Prisma Vision on People with Disabilities in Development Cooperation,” accessed June 10, 2018, <https://www.people-with-disabilities-in-development-cooperation>, 2010, 12-13.

connected to the function of human body and appearance. This perception of functional interpretation of human body has created negative attitudes to people with albinism and disabilities, in general. The New Testament reveals that we must be very careful to consider personal sin as the cause of disability. We must, therefore, oppose the stigma and discrimination against people with physical limitations as to be caused by the usual terminology of sin and punishment.⁵¹⁰

Furthermore, one of the strongest criticisms of the functional interpretation of the *imago Dei* is the negative message that it conveys about people with disabilities and with albinism, in particular. Within the functional view, it is often thought that disabilities that interfere with one's capacity to 'rule,' whether physical, intellectual, or psychological, are a distortion of the image of God.⁵¹¹

Grounded on these arguments, this work conforms to the 20th and early 21st centuries' interpretation of the term (*imago Dei*) that sees the image of God being applied to various groups of people including people with disabilities. Thus, it has to be noted that people with albinism are created in the image of God just like every human being, and hence are full members of the human family with equal dignity and rights.⁵¹² Therefore, as Mitchell put it, mission needs to be redefined in a manner that is informed by the ways that respect full humanity of others including people with albinism in Africa.⁵¹³ From that reason, this work maintains that all human beings

⁵¹⁰ H. Jochemsen, "In His Image: Prisma Vision Paper on People with Disabilities in Development Cooperation," 2010, 14, accessed June 10, 2018, <https://www.people-with-disabilities-in-development-cooperation>. 2010,14.

⁵¹¹ Faith and Reason, accessed August 6, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/faithandreason/theogloss/imago-body.html>.

⁵¹² H. Jochemsen, "In His Image: Prisma Vision Paper on People with Disabilities in Development Cooperation," 2010, 29, accessed June 10, 2018, <https://www.people-with-disabilities-in-development-cooperation>.

⁵¹³ Beverly Mitchell, "Mission from the Margins: Toward a Just World," in *International Review of Mission: World Council of Churches*, Volume 101.Number 1 (April 2012): 164-169.

have the imprint of the image of God and this imprint of the image of God is the basis upon which dignity, equality, the right to flourish, and inclusion are justified for all human beings.⁵¹⁴

In defending human dignity, Jesus Christ summarized the laws of Moses as follows: “Love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The second is equal: love thy neighbour as thyself.”⁵¹⁵ Furthermore, Jesus insists loving each other in John 13:34 that “...as I have loved you, so you must love one another.”⁵¹⁶ That is why Jesus in disobedience to the Law of Moses, touched the person with leprosy, but instead of Him becoming unclean, His purity cleansed that person. In different ways, Jesus shows God’s attitude towards people with disabilities. Jesus himself became part of the community of people with disabilities, eating, befriending, teaching, and drawing them into the circle of his followers. He cut across the social norms of his day by putting people considered as outcasts at the heart of the kingdom of God. Jesus healed people as a sign of hope for all, but also as an act of renewal and transformation. And this attitude is what the theology of hope insists on in this dissertation. By healing people, Jesus restored them to family and community.⁵¹⁷ For instance, Luke 4:18 reveals the mission of God through Christ.

The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed (Luke 4:18).⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁵ Matthew 22:39 and Kk 12:31.

⁵¹⁶ John 13:34.

⁵¹⁷ H. Jochemsen, “In His Image: Prisma Vision Paper on People with Disabilities in Development Cooperation,” 2010, 29, accessed June 10, 2018, <https://www.people-with-disabilities-in-development-cooperation>.

⁵¹⁸ Luke 4:18.

Furthermore, in John 10:10, Jesus says, "... I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."⁵¹⁹ Through this way, the Incarnated God in Christ wanted to challenge and transform societies' worldviews and perceptions on disabilities and the outcast groups. This intention is plainly shown in Jesus' willingness to touch and heal many who had severe disabilities and illnesses, a proof that God loves all people equally. He became our Immanuel (God with us) when He humbled and identified Himself with the fallen humanity in their shame and rejection. His ministry was characterized by mercy and compassion, such that He also accompanied them in their journey of pain and suffering until he paid for their debts by hanging shamefully on the Cross (Philippians 2:5-11).

Therefore, the life and ministry of Jesus establish the approach for the Church to follow. Jesus was revolutionary in many of his actions. He did not allow the religious and racial prejudices known to some Jews to hinder him from free movement among various classes of people. He gave hope and confidence to men and women alike, to the outcasts, and those declared religiously and ritually unclean. He gave equal attention to people of all races who needed his help. He denounced the religious and social structures that supported the oppression of the poor. For this reason, the church is the custodian of this royal message of redemption which has become its greatest heritage. If Jesus is the life of the world, it follows that he is life for all people of races regardless of their disabilities or appearance; in our case, Jesus is the life of people with albinism.

From this understanding therefore, the theology of hope is based on the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. It is grounded in the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. It is therefore a

⁵¹⁹ John 10:10.

theology that seeks to affirm life of God's people in the midst of suffering and death based on Jesus Christ who not only identified with God's people in their shame and rejection but also accompanied them in their journey of life in pain and suffering.⁵²⁰For this reason, the theology of hope of this dissertation asserts that the prophetic tasks of the Church is expressing hope in a society of people that lives in despair and exercising hope in thought and action in the world today. It is a theology that does not encourage the spirit of withdrawal from the present world and its problems, but it encourages Christians to participate in a meaningful way in the fight against evil and suffering in this world. This encourages the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, out of compassion and mercy, to identify and accompany those in pain in their journey in life particularly people with albinism. As a result, at the end of the day, the hope for the end of time becomes the realized hope in the present reality. This understanding is what mission as action in hope signifies in this dissertation.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania in Encountering the Spiritual Needs for People with Albinism with Regard to the Misleading Theology of Miraculous Healing

The church has a missional call to encounter the spiritual needs of people with albinism. The issue of encountering the spiritual needs for people with albinism challenges the mission of the ELCT, especially in the area of miraculous healing. As it was previously explained, many charismatic and Pentecostal churches are insisting on miraculous healing. Every kind of weakness and disabilities is associated with faith and can be miraculously healed. This work finds that way of theologizing as one of the misleading theologies. For this reason, misleading

⁵²⁰ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (New York and Evanston: SCM Press Ltd, 1967), 338.

theology is challenged by the theology of hope employed in this dissertation. One reason is that the nature of albinism cannot be cured or changed by any means, even if the New Testament records many miracles and healing done by Jesus Christ. Jesus did not remove every disease and disability in His community. Furthermore, Scripture records that upon returning to His hometown, “Jesus did not do many miracles...”⁵²¹ although people with disabilities were there. Also, in John 5, Jesus Christ healed only one of the many disabled people who had gathered at the pool of Bethesda to seek a supernatural expectation of physical healing.⁵²² In addition, we must be aware that if prayer for healing is not immediately answered, it does not change one’s theology to say that God no longer heals. Based on these contradictions, this dissertation contends that the ELCT needs to encounter the spiritual needs of people with albinism, rather than insisting on miraculous healing. For instance, Mashau and Mangoedi, in insisting on the necessity of the spiritual need for people with disabilities submit that,

In reading Acts 3:1-10, it is clear, without a doubt, that worshippers in the temple in Jerusalem were either ignorant or insensitive to the lame man’s spiritual need to belong, to be part of their community and to be able to call the church his home. His longing to belong could only be satisfied when he was healed. Once he was healed, the man entered the temple walking, jumping, and worshipping. This demonstrates how important it is to see the spiritual longing of persons with disabilities. The argument, in this instance, is not only to seek their miraculous healing, but also to see them as part of the community of believers and participate in the *missio Dei* without any sense of discrimination.⁵²³

⁵²¹ Matt. 13:58.

⁵²² John 5: 1-18.

⁵²³ T.D. Mashau & L. Mangoedi, “Faith Communities, Social Exclusion, Homelessness and Disability: Transforming the Margins in the City of Tshwane,” 2015, 5. HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies 71(3),

In addition, according to White, inclusivity in addressing the spiritual needs of people with disabilities gives the church the opportunity to share the healing and restorative power of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, as Peter did in Acts 3. Whether the church is involved in the provision of care, rehabilitation, chaplaincy or ministry to, or with disabled people, it must recognize the central assumptions of equality and dignity within the Christian message and promote it on its mission agenda.⁵²⁴ The church is, by definition, a place and a process of communion, open to and inviting all people without discrimination.⁵²⁵

Thus, the theology of hope in this dissertation conceives the church as not only the sending body for mission work but also as the locus for the *missio Dei*. The church is the place where the gospel is incarnated as well as the agent of the gospel. The churches should model God's holy and life-affirming plan for the world modeled on the life of Jesus Christ. Therefore, churches are called to reject those values and behaviours that lead to the destruction of the community.⁵²⁶ For instance; traditionally, the ELCT's attitudes towards people with disability in general have been one of compassion and charity which is good but it is not enough. This attitude does not conform to God's intention to human beings. The ELCT has to think further beyond compassion and charity. Charity and compassion fit better during disasters and other situations of that nature. This kind of mission approach is not appropriate for people with albinism who have much to do for themselves provided that the society accepts them as full members of the community. Mitchell in his advice to church and her mission suggests that

<http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i33088>

⁵²⁴ P. White, "The Biblical View of Humanity and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: The Call and Mission of the Church," accessed August 8, 2019, <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxdqfDKcpfNlknRskhKkpHVplb>.

⁵²⁵ World Council of Churches 2003:16.

⁵²⁶ Beverly Mitchell, "Mission from the Margins: Toward a Just World," in *International Review of Mission: World Council of Churches*, Volume 101.Number 1 (April 2012): 167.

people with disabilities should not just be viewed as “needy” but as participants in the life of the church for they have much to contribute. They can be a unique witness to the grace and glory of God. They need to be in a “user friendly” atmosphere whereby they can realize their full potential and purpose that God has for them.⁵²⁷ Therefore, missions of the ELCT particularly the charity model needs to be redefined in a manner that is informed by the ways in which people with albinism in the society can freely objectify their hope. This user friendly atmosphere as one of the spiritual needs for people with albinism can also be interpreted within the framework of humanness theology or ‘Ubuntu.’

The Theology of Hope Conforms to Humanness Theology ‘Ubuntu’
and African Philosophy ‘I am because we are’

The theology of hope applied in this dissertation conforms to the theology of ‘Ubuntu’ which insists on humanness. The theology of humanness—Ubuntu—acknowledges the norms of African culture where communal life in the community is given the first priority rather than individual goals. In insisting on the theology of ‘Ubuntu’, Mbiti, the professor of theology at Makerere University for many years and the former director of the Ecumenical Institute of the WCC in Geneva, in his work *African Religions and Philosophy*, clearly explains the relationship between an individual and the community at large, particularly in African context. He has systematically studied the attitudes and beliefs that have evolved in many societies of Africa and

⁵²⁷ Barbara Watt, “The Inclusion of People with Disabilities in the Church,” accessed February 22, 2019, <https://www.the-inclusion-of-people-with-disabilities-in-the-church>. Pdf.

argues that in African community an individual is understood within the community. Africans have the philosophy of “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am.”⁵²⁸

This African philosophy is a cardinal point in the understanding of human being in African society where the notion ‘we are because I am’ is not applicable. What then is the individual and where is their place in the community? In African traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. An individual owes their existence to other people. An individual is simply a part of the whole community. The community must therefore make, create, or produce an individual, for the individual depends on the corporate group. Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of their own being, their own duties, and their privileges and responsibilities towards themselves and towards other people. When an individual suffers, they do not suffer alone but with the corporate group. When an individual rejoices, they rejoice not alone but with others.⁵²⁹ This African philosophy of understanding an individual through the community is what is called ‘Ubuntu.’”

In African philosophy, ‘Ubuntu’ is inclusive in nature; it does not exclude anybody on the basis of appearance. In Africa, an individual’s desires must understand and respect the rights of other human beings in the community. From that point therefore, this study argues that the high rates of killing people with albinism is contra to the core values of African life. And it was strongly argued in this work that these desires of personal gain resulting into a high rate of killing people with albinism are the consequences of globalization. It is undeniable that the plague of killing people with albinism is mainly rooted in African context but African core values have to fight against it. Those who kill people with albinism are egoistic individuals who

⁵²⁸ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1969), 108-109.

⁵²⁹ Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 108.

aim at an individual goal mainly escalated from the impact of globalization of free trade and free market instead of fair trade. That is why the high rate of killings was from the year 2000/2009 onwards. These killings are inhumane, illegal, ruthless, and heartless acts. They are misconduct actions driven by personal desire and they are totally against African core values, national, and international laws. These acts do not conform to ‘Ubuntu’ philosophy which is the cardinal heart of African life. One may ask, if ‘Ubuntu’ philosophy is the cardinal heart of African life, why are these actions of killing people with albinism predominantly reported in African countries? As has been discussed, due to the effects of globalization in the midst of abject poverty within the context where people are ignorant about the nature of albinism, it is obvious that people could be wrongly deceived and misled.

Looking at the philosophy of ‘Ubuntu’ outside Africa, we also find such slogans as “Stand-up for Human Dignity,” a theme of an ecumenical organization, the Fellowship of the Least Coin (2017).⁵³⁰ The Fellowship of the Least Coin is a world-wide ecumenical movement of prayer for peace, justice, and reconciliation. Through this movement, Christian women around the world seek fellowship with each other and are reminded to live a reconciled and forgiving life with others. This Fellowship argues that in our world today, human beings have used their diversity to divide, rather than to unite. There is a lack of respect for human dignity and value for human life.⁵³¹ Therefore, the call to ‘Stand-up for Human Dignity’ is a call to respect human dignity and the image of God present in every human being regardless of human differences.

⁵³⁰ The Fellowship of the Least Coin is a world-wide ecumenical movement of prayer for peace, justice and reconciliation. Through this movement Christian women around the world seek fellowship with each other and are reminded to live a reconciled and forgiving life with others.

⁵³¹ Sunday Service CWA Sunday at Silliman University Church by A. M Margarita R. Poblete, on September 24, 2017.

In the context of Tanzania and Africa in general, the theology of hope with the enthusiasm of the cardinal heart of ‘Ubuntu’ philosophy must create moral agency to all Africans so that they themselves get transformed from false attitudes to people with albinism and thus, abstain from ruthless acts. In other words, the theology of hope in this dissertation is created in the manner that an individual’s consciousness and the society as well feel the sense of responsibility in safeguarding and protecting people with albinism—a sense from within, the moral agency of protecting lives of people with albinism. That is why this work trails in the same mind with Mitchell who asserts that all human beings have the imprint of the image of God.⁵³² Therefore, the theology of hope perceives the church, particularly the ELCT, as the locus for the *missio Dei* where dignity and equality for people with albinism flourish and are defended.

Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was to evaluate the understanding of mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania in relation to people with albinism. In view of the fact that the term ‘mission’ is broad in essence and implications, this part limited itself to the ELCT’s understanding of mission pertaining to people with albinism in order to avoid broader understanding of its meaning. For that reason, this section involved testing three sets of research questions: Does mission in the ELCT mean something more than saving souls and church planting? Does mission in the ELCT mean something more than emergency relief and charitable works? Does mission in the ELCT touch people with albinism? To accomplish the task of answering these questions, *mission as action in hope* employed the salvation-history model of eschatological hope as the lens.

⁵³² Beverly Mitchell, “Mission from the Margins: Toward a Just World,” in *International Review of Mission: World Council of Churches*, Volume 101.Number 1 (April 2012): 164.

Based on the research findings, it was affirmed that the ELCT has understood and translated mission as serving humanity in its fullness. It was verified that the ELCT has really interpreted her mission in action through participating in various activities including education, health care, income-generating projects, advocacy for human rights and social justice, and in making bold decisions amidst national challenges. In evaluating all these ELCT mission activities, it was substantiated that the ELCT has indeed translated the theology of hope in a realized and actualized form of present realities. This argument was further verified by the 2014 ELCT guideline as the general opinion of church authorities in Tanzania about people with albinism, which focused on fighting against violence in the community including the issue of albinism in particular. This official statement of the church proved the concern, moral agency and willingness of the ELCT to fight against all problems facing people with albinism.

Based on the results of this research, it was ascertained that even if some influences and repercussions of different models of disability particularly religious model have highly affected the ELCT to immorally perceive people with albinism, nonetheless, the ELCT by and large, has understood mission as action in hope. Mission in the ELCT meant and denotes something more than saving souls and church planting. With the support of this argument, one may find that mission in the ELCT has either in general terms or specifically touched people with albinism.

Yet, this dissertation found some ELCT's shortcomings that need to be resolved in her missions. One of the deficiencies is the ELCT's understanding of mission on the section of diaconic ministry with regard to people with albinism. The ELCT has almost all the time translated mission as something of emergency relief and charitable works even to people with albinism. This dissertation claims that this perception is not appropriate to people with albinism

because it depicts them as helpless, depressed, and dependent on other people, the so called “normal ones” for care and protection. Therefore, this work, *mission as action in hope* asserts that people with albinism, the so called ‘disabled’, are able to perform almost all duties being performed by the so called ‘normal people.’ Thus, it has to be taken into account that people with albinism do not need help in the form of emergency relief and charitable work but rather, they need society acceptance, respecting their humanity and dignity, and on top of that becoming full members of the community (inclusion) so that they can freely run and actualize their dreams by themselves as other human beings do.

Another problem identified from the findings of this dissertation is the weak monitoring of ELCT plans and goals. As it is widely explained in chapter five of this dissertation, the main problem of the ELCT lies in the monitoring and implementation of her objectives, particularly at the grassroots level in the ELCT member dioceses. The results of the findings of this dissertation confirmed that there is no common approach in the ELCT on how the member dioceses implement the Church’s goals. The duty of implementation is left to individual member dioceses to decide either to fully engage on fulfilling some of the ELCT goals or not. One vivid example cited in this work is the implementation of the 2014 ELCT guideline, the general opinion of church authorities in Tanzania about people with albinism. Based on the results, it was observed that only five dioceses among 26 dioceses of the ELCT were active on the issue of albinism. Therefore, to rectify this shortcoming, the ELCT should set her plans and arrange how she can strategically manage to monitor her goals from topmost to the grass root levels in all ELCT member dioceses.

CHAPTER FIVE

MISSION PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN TANZANIA WITH REGARD TO PEOPLE WITH ALBINISM

This chapter examines the mission programs and projects of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania dealing categorically with the issue of albinism. In so doing, strategies and mission approaches deployed by the church in implementing these programs and projects were studied as well as some of the achievements attained by the church in different programs and projects. Several hindrances in implementing these programs and projects in encountering the problem of albinism have likewise to be identified. In identifying and analyzing these mission programs and projects of the church with regard to people with albinism and albinism itself, it is argued that in order for these programs to yield significant results with regards to the total eradication of killings and stigmatization, deliberate efforts from top to grassroots plans should be employed.

Programs and Projects of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania is committed to the provision of spiritual and socio-economic services to the community through evangelism, education, economic empowerment, cooperation, health, and diaconal work.⁵³³ The ELCT has headquarters in Arusha region where different programs and projects are coordinated. As it has been pointed out in this work, the focus of the ELCT is to propagate the holistic Gospel serving human beings through spiritual, social, economic, and environmental programs in order to have a God loving community hence fulfilling God's mission in Tanzania.⁵³⁴ Moreover, the intent of the ELCT is 'to see a transformed society through God's mission.'⁵³⁵ This is because the authentic Christian mission is not only in what Christians do in mission but also how they live out their mission. This commitment also demands personal transformation. Basing on the conditions and situations facing people with albinism in Africa, it is without doubt that the church has to embrace, engage, and continue with her task of being an agent for transformation and change. This emphasis is as well insisted on by Jerry Pillay, a professor at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. While discussing the topic of "The Church as a Transformation and Change Agent," Pillay emphasized:

...the Christian church has always been involved in the transformation of societies, especially as it took sides with the poor and oppressed. At times it seemed to have lost this focus, but somehow, throughout the ages, it has managed to sustain this mission

⁵³³ The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, accessed March 19,2020, <http://www.elct.org/#popularlinks> and <http://www.elct.org/>.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁵ Interview with Bishop Abednego Nkamuhabwa Keshomshahara-Bishop of the North Western Diocese on 3rd January, 2020.

responsibility. Today, more than ever, given the increasing poverty, violence and injustices in the world, the Christian church is called upon to embrace, engage and continue with its task of being an agent for transformation and change. It has to fulfill the gospel imperative of making the world a better place for all to live with justice, peace and harmony.⁵³⁶

In this context therefore, the church if she has to be authentic Christian church, must inevitably and ultimately opt for the voiceless groups and much more to people with albinism. That is what it means to be a Christian church in the context of powerlessness and vulnerability.⁵³⁷ This commitment reminds the ELCT to embrace, engage, and continue with her task of being an agent for transformation and change through her programs.

These are the programs and projects being coordinated by the ELCT:

- The church has a coordination office responsible for financial reports on church activities.
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania produces literature for Christian nurturing.
- The central office of the ELCT has a function of capacity building, advocacy, and facilitation (CAF) of the dioceses.

⁵³⁶Pillay, J., 2017, "The church as a transformation and change agent," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 73(3), 4352, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i3.4352>.

⁵³⁷ Danilo-Azuela Borlado & Wan Chai, "An Ecclesiological Reflection in the Context of Powerlessness and Vulnerability in Afe Adogame," in *Engaging the World: Christian Communities in Contemporary Global Societies*, eds. Janice McLean & Anderson Jeremiah (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books International, 2014), 30-37.

- The ELCT has common work institutions including The Tumaini University Makumira that has six constituent colleges, Morogoro Lutheran Junior Seminary (LJS), and three schools for children who are hearing-impaired.
- The ELCT has 23 Hospitals and more than 140 health centres and dispensaries spread across Tanzania.
- The ELCT is engaging in Primary Health Care (PHC), diakonia, HIV counseling, treatment and palliative care (PC) at national and diocesan levels.
- The ELCT has a number of water projects as well as poverty alleviation and environment protection projects.⁵³⁸

In fact, the focus of the ELCT is clear on how the church can set her sights on people with albinism. But the findings of this research ascertain that the problem arises when this duty is left to an individual diocese to decide either to fully engage the issue of albinism or not. This problem was also in general terms pointed out by the ‘All African Conference of Churches’ that the issue of people with disabilities in general is not on the agenda of many churches, especially churches in Africa.⁵³⁹ It was thought that this could be a result of financial constraints or lack of people with the right training. The same problem was noted by White at the World Council of Churches’ workshop on disabilities held in Kenya. It was reported that theological colleges and

⁵³⁸The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, accessed March 19, 2020, <http://www.elct.org/#popularlinks> and <http://www.elct.org/>.

⁵³⁹ All African Conference Churches. Workshop on Disability Discourse for Theological Colleges, Kenya, 1991, accessed June 18, 2020, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/unity-mission-evangelism-and-spirituality/just-and-inclusive-communities/people-with-disabilities/reports/workshops-on-disability-discourse-for-theological-colleges-kenya>.

seminaries in Africa do not seem to be offering any focused programs in disability.⁵⁴⁰ For that reason, church ministers are unprepared to deal with disability issues.

To overcome this problem, the ELCT in 2014 introduced a guideline as the general opinion of the church authorities in Tanzania about people with albinism that could be used by all 26 dioceses of the ELCT in dealing with the issue of violence in general but also fighting against the problem of albinism in particular. The ELCT expected that through this guideline, a number of people could be educated to eventually change their worldviews in regard to customs and traditions that lead to violence.⁵⁴¹ In fact, this guideline openly explains the ELCT's focus in fighting against the problem of albinism in the society. For instance, guideline number 2:2 under the title "Human Rights Advocacy" insists that "everyone is granted equal human rights as human beings. But every so often it has been violated. Therefore, it is our duty to defend it."⁵⁴² And the guideline cited its focus by including advocacy to people with albinism.⁵⁴³ Therefore, the focus of the ELCT is very clear in her plans of fighting against the problem of albinism. But the results of this research ascertained that not all 26 dioceses of the ELCT implemented this plan. This duty was left to an individual diocese to decide either to fully engage the issue of albinism or not. That is why only some dioceses including North Western Diocese, Karagwe Diocese, East of Lake Victoria Diocese, South East of Lake Victoria Diocese, and Diocese in Mara Region have tackled the problem of albinism.⁵⁴⁴ The plea of *mission as action in hope* is that

⁵⁴⁰ P. White, The Biblical View of Humanity and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: The Call and Mission of the Church, accessed August 8, 2019. <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxwDqfDKcpfNlknRsxkhKkpHVplb>.

⁵⁴¹ Mwongozo-Elimu ya Kuondoa Ukatili katika Jamii- A document from ELCT headquarter in Arusha on September 25, 2020.

⁵⁴² Mwongozo-Elimu ya Kuondoa Ukatili katika Jamii, 5-6.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁴ Interview with Bishop Abednego Nkamuhabwa Keshomshahara, Bishop of the North Western Diocese on 3rd January, 2020; Also interview with Naomi Kahigi, Program Coordinator at the Human Rights Desk of ELCT/NWD on

churches should have a well-defined programme to reach out to people with disabilities. However, some of the dioceses have set their goals including specifically the issue of albinism.

Identifiable Mission Programs Dealing Specifically with the Issue of Albinism

Some of the individual dioceses are specifically advocating for people with albinism within their dioceses.

ShauKu Program: A Program Advocating for People with Albinism, Women, Children, and Human Rights

ShauKu Program is one of the programs in some of the ELCT dioceses dealing specifically with the problem of albinism at the diocesan level. This program advocates for people with albinism, women, children, and human rights.⁵⁴⁵ The overall goal of ShauKu Program is to ensure that people with albinism, women, and children are living in an environment of peace and good governance, secured by effective laws and policies.⁵⁴⁶ ShauKu Program works in five dioceses of the ELCT, namely the North Western Diocese, Karagwe Diocese, East of Lake Victoria Diocese, South East of Lake Victoria Diocese, and Diocese in Mara Region.⁵⁴⁷ All these five dioceses are situated along Lake Victoria area which has been the

⁹th January, 2020; and Interview with Modest Pasha, ShauKu Program Coordinator of ELCT/NWD on 13th January, 2020.

⁵⁴⁵ The word 'ShauKu' is a Swahili name/word translated from an English word 'EAGER' which means Ready, Willing, Impatient, Excited, or Enthusiastic which motivates people to be ready in fighting against problems. The word 'EAGER' has also expanded to mean-Empowerment, Advocacy, Gender and Rights.

⁵⁴⁶ Interview with Modest Pasha, ShauKu Program Coordinator of ELCT/NWD on 13th January, 2020.

⁵⁴⁷ Interview with Bishop Abednego Nkamuhabwa Keshomshahara, Bishop of the North Western Diocese on 3rd January, 2020. Also interview with Naomi Kahigi, Program Coordinator at the Human Rights Desk of ELCT/NWD on 9th January, 2020; and Interview with Modest Pasha, ShauKu Program Coordinator of the ELCT/NWD on 13th January, 2020.

central point of atrocities of people with albinism in Tanzania.⁵⁴⁸ To support the efforts of these five dioceses, Danmission from Denmark joined in this struggle in order to increase efforts of advocacy for people with albinism, women, and children.⁵⁴⁹

Strategies and Mission Approaches Deployed by Five Dioceses under ShauKu Program.

As pointed out by Pasha (the ELCT/NWD ShauKu Program Coordinator), the engagement of Danmission in the ELCT ShauKu Program made possible partnership with other actors working at the community level. These actors include the Community Advocacy Committees (CACs), Children Rights Clubs (CRCs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community based organizations (CBOs), faith based organizations (FBOs), inter-faith forums (IFF), and lobbying community-based local government actors such as ward tribunals, and others.⁵⁵⁰ This made the church through ShauKu Program reach the targeted groups at the grassroots level.

In addition, in implementing its objective of ensuring people with albinism are living in the absence of fear and with enjoyment and liberty of movement and security, the program has been sensitizing the community about albinism through various groups such as women, politicians, children clubs, advocacy committees, and human rights assistants, to mention a few. These groups have been sensitized on their roles, responsibilities and rights in regard to people with albinism.⁵⁵¹ In so doing, the church under ShauKu Program and in collaboration with Community Advocacy Committees (CACs), has managed to create community awareness relating to the problem of albinism.

⁵⁴⁸ Interview with Bishop Abednego Nkamuhabwa Keshomshahara, Bishop of the North Western Diocese on 3rd January, 2020.

⁵⁴⁹ Danmission is an independent organization rooted in the Danish National Church focusing on capacity building of civil society and religious institutions, accessed June 17, 2020. <https://sk.linkedin.com>.

⁵⁵⁰ Interview with Modest Pasha, ShauKu Program Coordinator of the ELCT/NWD on 13th January, 2020.

⁵⁵¹ Interview with Modest Pasha, ShauKu Program Coordinator of the ELCT/NWD on 13th January, 2020.

The program has furthermore, used the interfaith approach as part of advocacy strategy in program implementation. This is because interfaith community in Tanzania has unique structures from national to village levels that can be deployed for various advocacy activities. Interfaith community is also trusted by the community, government, and other partners in Tanzania. The program has also worked very closely with government entities to ensure effective performance and clear social accountability.⁵⁵²

To maintain sustainability, the program has established and/or joined existing multi-stakeholders networks of NGOs, FBOs, and CBOs. These organizations have been sensitizing the community consistently on the negative impact in regard to people with albinism. Also, capacity building of ward tribunal and other duty bearers on their roles and responsibilities and the advocacy for the rights of people with albinism have been insisted. Furthermore, the establishment and the use of the existing advocacy committees in all five dioceses for training/advocating for the rights of people with albinism have been the focal point of the program.

In addition, the program has been sensitising the community through schools, churches (Sunday services, fellowships, bible studies, Sunday schools, meetings, and so on) and community meetings. For example, on ‘rights promotion,’ the program has established children rights clubs especially in schools where children with albinism continue with their studies in order to nurture early attitudinal change for advocacy of their rights and respect of peer rights. Besides, the program has formulated ‘Community Based Advocacy Committees’ that have been the key actors in implementing program activities in more sustainable ways.

⁵⁵²*ibid.*

In order to abandon the practices of stigmatizing, isolating, killings, violence and injury, the program has furthermore sensitized children with albinism on their rights and responsibilities. Advocacy Committees, Wards Executive Committees, Human Rights Committees, and policy makers have been sensitized as well on the issue of negative perspective on albinism. Also, the program has worked together with duty bearers at Regional level, National Executive, and Parliamentary level especially in policy making. These policy makers have been sensitizing people in different levels on the problem of albinism and they have actively worked towards the processes of having effective policy making on that issue.

The program has also linked with the best practices of leading organisations such as Under the Same Sun. Together they have identified and advocated with coalition of multi-stakeholders and media on making policies with regard to people with albinism. For instance, the program has advocated for a clear policy on institutionalisation and de-institutionalisation of hosting centres for children with albinism. Still, the program has provided strategic empowerment of key actors such as Villages and Ward Tribunals in enforcement of a legal framework for people with albinism. Ward Tribunals were purposely selected because in Tanzania they have the biggest mandate to insure justice at the grassroots. The program has also worked very closely with government entities to ensure effective performance and clearly addressing various advocacy and social accountability issues. Furthermore, the program has sensitised the community on the rights of people with albinism and on some of the negative traditions and perceptions on albinism in general.⁵⁵³ Through this approach, the community has to some extent been transformed.

⁵⁵³ Interview with Modest Pesha, ShauKu Program Coordinator of the ELCT/NWD on 13th January, 2020.

Some of the achievements of the Church under the ShauKu Program are

- The community reports fewer cases of violence against people with albinism.
- Some people with albinism are returning to communities from centers; i.e., integration in the community is increasing even if centers for people and children with albinism are not yet closed down because a number of children with albinism still live in these centres.
- Stigmatisation of people with albinism has somehow reduced and the community has restored its responsibility to care for and integrate children with albinism in social life.
- People with albinism are at least feeling protected even though the problem is not completely eradicated.
- People with albinism are actively engaging in promoting and protecting their rights.
- Victims are getting psychological healing and some are recovering from trauma.

Therefore, one may find that through the Program's strategies and the linkage to legal aid service providers, the Program (the Church) has to some extent ensured that victims have access to justice and have their rights respected and protected, even though the problem of albinism in African community is not an overnight issue to overcome. It needs sustainable efforts. In spite of the mentioned achievements, the church has met some obstacles in implementing her plans. Some of the hindrances in implementing the focused goals of ShauKu Program are the following.

- Some of the traditional practices and beliefs hinder community progressive work in advocating for people with albinism in Tanzania and Africa, in general. For example, it is not easy to find an albino person in a Maasai community, one of the Tanzanian tribes that is very strong in preserving their traditional ideals, because it is believed that an albino child is instantly killed at birth due to erroneous beliefs. This way of killing is done at the family level and it is not easily detected or reported.
- No clear and common approach in the ELCT on how to engage in advocacy. This duty is left to an individual diocese to decide either to fully engage the issue of albinism or not.
- Some dioceses of the ELCT do not yet have (well) established programs in regard to the problem of albinism within their dioceses.
- Some dioceses of the ELCT are also missing the advocacy strategies and approaches on which ShauKu program facilitates. The only five dioceses have already jointly agreed and united to advocate for the issue of albinism in the lake zone, although the problem is widespread all over Tanzania and Africa as a whole.
- Most families are using the created and set apart albino institutional homes/centers, as dumping areas of their children. Some parents have not visited their children for more than three years.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵⁴ Interview with Hemed M. Mussa, an assistant head teacher at Mugeza Mseto Primary School on January 21, 2020. Mugeza Mseto Primary school is one of the centres where children with Albinism lives while taking their studies of primary education.

Generally, the church in her missions under ShauKu Program has been predominantly focusing on sensitizing community members and building capacity of the community level duty bearers to fulfill their roles. Through this approach, the church has managed to motivate and engage volunteers who have worked to establish children clubs and engaged as mediators to the community. Under these methodologies, awareness-raising and sensitization have thus been to some extent successful, but worldviews and perceptions of the African community on the issue of albinism need sustainable efforts in order to bring total transformation from the long overdue mindset.

The Program of Human Rights and Conflicts Resolution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania North Western Diocese

The Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Desk was established in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, North Western Diocese in 2004 with the aim of ending violence, advocating for the weak, and bringing about reconciliation among the people.⁵⁵⁵ Basing on the aim of this program, it automatically advocates and fights against erroneous beliefs upsetting people with albinism. The program has the network and structure that enable fair implementation at the grassroots level. This program works through the structure of the church where it has two human rights assistants in every Parish. In each district of the diocese, there is one district coordinator and at the level of the diocese, there is one program coordinator. Therefore, 120 Human Rights/Field Assistants and nine coordinators attend to victims of violence at the

⁵⁵⁵ Interview with Naomi K. Kahigi, Program Coordinator of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania North Western Diocese on 9th January, 2020.

grassroots level.⁵⁵⁶ These committees normally include not only field assistants and coordinators, but also other members from the government such as heads of the village council, ward council, Police in Charge of the police stations, Chairman of the Tribunals, councilors, Parish and District pastors, evangelists, and other stakeholders. Each District or parish committee has its own date to conduct its meetings and seminars.

In these seminars, the ELCT, North Western Diocese, through Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Desk, provides legal assistance and concentrates itself in solving conflicts related or which originate from the misunderstanding of the legal position of matters that arise in the society. This is a multilateral approach. In addition, the program conducts seminars at the congregational level in regard to the effects of witchcraft and superstitions. In order to access the targeted groups, the program uses sports and games competitions (e.g., football, netball, singing, etc.) through which the program educates the community on different issues in regard to albinism including the effects of witchcraft and superstitions as mentioned above. The program focuses on the effects of witchcraft and superstition within the community because different researchers have suggested that witchcraft and ignorance are among the main reasons why people with albinism have been hunted and killed in the African community.⁵⁵⁷ For this reason, some of the objectives of this program include:

- To raise an awareness to the community on albinism and other issues and enable the community and people with albinism to start claiming their rights. (Naomi, the Diocesan

Program Coordinator affirmed that a belief in superstition and witchcraft has led to the

⁵⁵⁶ Interview with Naomi K. Kahigi, Program Coordinator of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania North Western Diocese on 9th January, 2020.

⁵⁵⁷ Interview with Naomi K. Kahigi, Program Coordinator of Human Rights and Conflicts Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania North Western Diocese on 9th January, 2020.

high rank of Human Rights violations such as the killing of people with albinism believing that using their body organs could lead them to political and economic success.)⁵⁵⁸

- To resolve conflicts peacefully through interventions, seminars, and promoting peace through sports and games.
- To start Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) in order to raise the community's financial standard. This is because poverty sometimes leads people to engage in illegal actions like that of killing people with albinism with the belief that by using their body parts they would become rich.

Moreover, the ELCT, North Western Diocese through the program of Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Desk, has been conducting seminars at the grassroots level with the following themes:

- Effects of Beliefs in Witchcraft and Superstitions in the African Community.
- Legal Position of the Country in regard to Witchcraft and Superstitions.
- What does the Bible Says in regard to Witchcraft and Superstitions?
- Promotion and Protection of all Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including the Rights to People with Albinism.

⁵⁵⁸*ibid.*

- Rights to Life and Security of People with Albinism.⁵⁵⁹

Furthermore, the ELCT, North Western Diocese through the Program of Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Desk, has dedicated herself to protecting the rights of the weak and the oppressed by devoting one Sunday in February every year as the “Week of Fighting against Cruelty.” The program selects the theme of the year and prepares the sermon/speech to be delivered at the grassroots level (at the congregation level), where the selected expert conveys a message to the community. This is one of the ways that the ELCT, North Western Dioceses participates in God’s mission of voicing for the voiceless groups including people with albinism.

In addition, in response to the call of Jesus Christ of voicing for the voiceless, the ELCT, North Western Diocese, through the program of Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Desk, has been caring and working to save the life of defenseless people. Looking particularly at the case of people with albinism, the program has been caring and striving to save them from vulnerable environments. For example, one family in Geita region, Chato district had two children who were both albino. One child was killed and both arms and legs were chopped and taken away.⁵⁶⁰ Oddly enough, the father of these two children was one of the suspects in the conspiracy and now that father is in jail.⁵⁶¹ After the death of the child, the social welfare at Chato district consulted the ELCT, North Western Diocese for help. The church through Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Program decided to shift the second child, Masumbuko, aged two

⁵⁵⁹ Interview with Naomi K. Kahigi, Program Coordinator of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania North Western Diocese on 9th January, 2020.

⁵⁶⁰ 1-Year-Old Albino Killed For Limbs in Tanzania, accessed July 9, 2020. <https://face2faceafrica.com/article/yohana-bahati-albino-tanzania>.

⁵⁶¹ Interview with Naomi K. Kahigi, Program Coordinator of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania North Western Diocese on 9th January, 2020.

years and six months at that time, from her family to Kemondo Orphanage Center, one of the private boarding schools in Tanzania. The child is currently in grade five at the Center and supported by the ELCT, North Western Diocese. (The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, North Western Diocese through Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Program have been visiting some centers where children with albinism live, providing some clothes that protect them from being affected by the direct sun and special oil that reduces the infection rate of skin cancer.)

One might ask why the parents named their child ‘Masumbuko’, Swahili for ‘Troubles.’ The name/word denotes sufferings, misfortunes, problems, difficulties, dilemma, anxieties, burdens, and the like. This implies that this particular family could not accept that a child with albinism is also a human being like them. They saw an albino child as a misfortune in their family. They had many questions, especially as both parents did not have albinism. This is why their perceptions and worldviews led them to misfortunes and they regarded their children as burdens.

As it has been widely explained in chapter four of this dissertation, this negative perception is found not only in this particular family, but also in the entire African community. Even Naomi K. Kahigi, the ELCT/NWD coordinator of Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Desk, admitted that because of the ignorance about albinism, she used to fear people with albinism. But after understanding the reality about albinism, she is now teaching others by creating community awareness about albinism.⁵⁶² Naomi added that another point to be considered in black African community is the issue of colour. Because people with albinism are

⁵⁶² Interview with Naomi K. Kahigi, Program Coordinator of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania North Western Diocese on 9th January, 2020.

the minority group in black African community, it is easier to be identified as different group and be distinguished. But also, because of their peculiarity in appearance, the community believes that they have supernatural powers. That is why most ‘predators’ of people with albinism are miners, fishermen, but also politicians who seek high positions. They normally use a motto, ‘*Utang’aa kama albino,*’ meaning ‘you will shine like albino’ (translation mine); i.e., ‘shine’ in prosperity, high rank in leadership, by becoming rich etc. This perception is very dangerous; it needs to be strongly challenged and transformed.

But however, in the African communities, the perception of looking at things that deviate from normal or popular appearance is common even in African spirituality. These exceptional features have been regarded as having supernatural powers. For instance, many sanctuary palaces in Africa were/are found either at the big and extraordinary rocks or trees. The community believed that the extraordinary place automatically has supernatural powers. From that perception even people with albinism are seen to be extraordinary people in the black African community that is why they are linked to having supernatural powers.

In fact, ignorance about albinism in African society is the main problem. Therefore, teaching the community by creating awareness about the nature of albinism is the best way of eradicating negative perception of it. And this task of teaching is one of the basic missions of the church in this world. Even Jesus Christ himself dedicated much of his time in teaching his audiences. Therefore, by imitating Jesus’ model of mission, the church in general, must all the time focus on community transformation through teaching. That is why as it has been explained, in trying to transform the mindset of the community from a negative perspective in regard to albinism, the ELCT, North Western Diocese has been arranging various seminars and teaching

the community on the reality about albinism. Some changes have been detected, though it is difficult to measure people's attitudes and thinking. But some results of community awareness about albinism have been noticed in some families. For instance, those parents who named their child 'Masumbuko,' church leaders advised that family to change the name from 'Masumbuko' and renamed her 'Happy.'⁵⁶³ Bishop Keshomshahara in his assessment on the current understanding of albinism especially in African community affirms that belief in witchcraft and superstition is personal and immeasurable. He however added that actions of killing people with albinism and digging up their tombs/graves have decreased though not finished.⁵⁶⁴

Mission Strategies used by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania East of Lake Victoria Diocese and South East of Lake Victoria Diocese in Encountering the Problem of Albinism

Mutungi (2013), in her research entitled *The Killing of Albinos in Sukumaland Tanzania: A Challenge to the Church's Mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania - East of Lake Victoria Diocese* (but also currently in South East of Lake Victoria Diocese), sought to understand *what* were the mission strategies used by the church in Sukumaland in encountering the killing of albinos and *how* were these strategies implemented.⁵⁶⁵ The results of her research showed that strategies of the church in Sukumaland in encountering the problem of killing

⁵⁶³ Masumbuko is the Swahili name meaning 'Troubles' and denoting sufferings, misfortunes, problems, difficulties, dilemma, anxieties, burdens, and the like. That is why the church decided to change the mindset of the family from negative perspective into positive one- 'Happy.' The child is no longer Masumbuko but she is Happy.

⁵⁶⁴ Interview with Abednego Nkamuhabwa Keshomshahara, Bishop of the North Western Diocese on 3rd January, 2020.

⁵⁶⁵ Julia Gabriel Mutungi, *The Killing of Albinos in Sukumaland, Tanzania: A Challenge to the Churches' Mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania-East of Lake Victoria Diocese* (School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger 2013), ii.

people with albinism were evangelism (or in other words preaching/teaching the Word of God), advocacy and diakonia work. She affirms that:

The findings from the interview show that the church as one of the institutions serving among the Sukuma society did not keep quiet since the beginning of albino killings tragedy in the area. As it is shown from the interviews presented in this chapter, evangelism is a major strategy which the church is using in encountering this problem. The implementation was and is through sharing of the word of God to the entire society of Sukumaland, empowering her people with different skills like human rights etc. and also through providing diakonia services to those who in one way or another, was affected by this practice.⁵⁶⁶

This means that the church in these two dioceses has energized much efforts on preaching or teaching the Word of God, advocacy and diakonia but the problem still persisted as Mutungi continues:

From the findings, it is revealed that the mission strategies used by the church in encountering this problem in Sukumaland seems to have not been successful in eliminating this problem. Despite the use of those approaches, the problem is still persisting. This shows a demand of revising the church mission strategies in Sukumaland that of preaching and teaching of the Word of God, diakonia services and advocacy.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁶Julia Gabriel Mutungi, "The Killing of Albinos in Sukumaland, Tanzania: A Challenge to the Churches' Mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania-East of Lake Victoria Diocese"(Master's thesis, School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger 2013), 45.

⁵⁶⁷ Julia Gabriel Mutungi, "The Killing of Albinos in Sukumaland, Tanzania: A Challenge to the Churches' Mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania-East of Lake Victoria Diocese" (Master's thesis, School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger 2013), 68.

However, her recommendations on the new mission approaches of the church particularly in Sukumaland were as follows:

The church in her mission in being successful in finishing the whole practice of the killing(s) of people with albinism has to consider mission through empowerment, mission as development, mission through dialogue and community conversation groups. These methods are more conducive depending on the nature of the problem, and it is because were also suggested by many of the informants. These methods demand the church in Sukumaland to discern her environment by learning the context and learn to sit together with other activists against this practice of killing people with albinism and together find the solution.⁵⁶⁸

Apart from mission strategies used by the church in Sukumaland as pointed out by Mutungi nevertheless, the problem regarding the erroneous beliefs on albinism is still a challenge in Tanzania and Africa, in general. Therefore, this situation demands every diocese in the Evangelical Lutheran church in Tanzania and other denominations to draw more attention to fighting against the problem of albinism in Tanzania.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed at examining mission programs and projects of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania dealing specifically with the issue of albinism. The study found that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania is committed to the provision of programs that are fighting against the problem of albinism in Tanzania. It is also verified in this dissertation that proper implementation of the programs and projects significantly impact the targeted group

⁵⁶⁸ Mutungi, "The Killing of Albinos in Sukumaland, Tanzania," 69.

and the communities in general. But, focusing on the actual implementation of the ELCT's goals and plans, it was discovered that the main task of the ELCT headquarters is to only set plans and goals of the church whereas implementation of those plans and goals are being executed by ELCT member dioceses without an effective monitoring. Therefore, it was observed that weak monitoring of some of the ELCT plans and goals have affected the efficiency of the intended projects particularly at the grassroots level within the ELCT member dioceses. In addition, this study discovered that there is no clear and common approach in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania on how all member dioceses could engage the problem of albinism in particular. It was realized that this duty of implementation is left to the individual diocese to decide either to fully engage on the issue of albinism or not. Nevertheless, it was found that some of the dioceses especially those located around Lake Victoria zone had set their missions focusing on the problem of albinism, but several of them had not yet shown any initiatives. Furthermore, the results of this study identified those areas around Lake Victoria zone where fishing and mining (gold and diamond) take place, were the most affected places and therefore, it could be one of the reasons why only five dioceses around Lake Victoria zone are the ones that appear to have programs on the problem of albinism. Therefore, it was strongly suggested that ELCT should set her plans and arrange on how she can strategically manage to monitor her goals from topmost to the grass root levels in all ELCT member dioceses.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The study revealed that in Tanzania and Africa in general, the nature of albinism is not well understood to the extent that there were several myths about people with albinism. These myths include the belief that people with albinism never die but disappear in a big jungle at the time of dying; that they are not human beings but ghosts; and, that their body parts can bring wealth and good luck when ground into witchcraft potions. For this reason, persons with albinism have been hunted, attacked, and killed particularly from the year 2000 when economic globalization insisted on free trade and free market. During that time desires for personal gain and profit were the main agenda of the world. Witchdoctors used that gap to teach misconceptions that body parts of people with albinism could increase chances of gaining political power, but also wealth especially for miners and fishermen. Because of those misconceptions, in the year 2009, Tanzania disproportionally represented over half of 310 recorded attacks on people with albinism in 23 countries of the African region. From 2007 to 2013, 72 documented deaths of people with albinism and 49 survivals including victims of mutilation were recorded in Tanzania.

In this context, where people with albinism experience various sufferings such as discrimination, exclusion, mutilation and death, the mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania is challenged on how to respond to these problems by exploring a kind of hope that can be deployed so that people with albinism can enjoy fullness of life. This study sought to answer five key questions. First, what is the general opinion of church authorities in Tanzania

about people with albinism? Second, what are the conditions or situations of people with albinism in Tanzania? Third, what is the Biblico-Theological basis of *Mission as Action in Hope* for vulnerable groups of people particularly those living with albinism? Fourth, how does the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania understand mission with respect to people with albinism? Fifth, what are the mission programs of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania with regard to vulnerable groups particularly people living with albinism? In answering these five questions, the study managed to find how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania responds to the issue of albinism.

Basically, this final chapter comprises four main parts. The first part introduces the problem of this dissertation and mission calls of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. The second part summarizes the findings and arguments presented in this study. The third one comprises some of the recommendations and the fourth part is the conclusion of the entire dissertation.

Summary of the Research Findings and Arguments

This study has offered the real situation of people with albinism in Tanzania and Africa, in general. Based on the results, it was found that people with albinism face the world's response to their overall appearance, often deemed strange, and consequently, mystified, and stigmatized. They as well, live in a world historically obsessed with skin colour. They live in a world of misunderstanding that has not particularly anticipated their impairment. These situations and conditions are definitely upsetting, distressing, and dehumanizing for people with albinism.

In counteracting these situations and conditions, the research employed a qualitative research method aimed at answering questions concerning the ‘what’, ‘how’, or ‘why’ people in Tanzania and Africa, in general respond to the issue of albinism. The importance of qualitative assessment in this study lies in the fact that it has dealt with attitudes, opinions, and behaviours of individuals and the community at large. What is unique in this dissertation is the methodological approach in addressing the issue of albinism in Tanzania in the mode of *Mission as Action in Hope*. Thus, drawing particularly on Moltmann, Bosch, and Mashau, it has been argued that the theology of hope is the kind of theology most needed in this context where people with albinism have lost their hope due to erroneous beliefs surrounding them.

This dissertation has employed the salvation-history model of eschatological hope in data analysis and evaluation. In this part it has been argued that the moral/religious model of disability has traditionally interpreted some of the biblical texts immorally. The theology of hope through the lens of salvation-history model of eschatological hope has analyzed the religious model of disability and other models and attested that different models of disability have negatively depicted people with disabilities particularly those living with albinism. Furthermore, the theology of hope by means of salvation-history model of eschatological hope argued that different models of disabilities have at large and incorrectly shaped the African community in general and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania in particular to immorally perceive people with albinism.

Therefore, this dissertation has in chapter four particularly under “biblical and theological perspectives on disability in relation to mission as action in hope to people with albinism,” discussed and suggested a missiological model that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

can employ while participating in God's mission in order to rectify negative notions with regard to the nature of albinism. Through the lens of salvation-history model, this dissertation has evaluated and analyzed traditional biblical and theological perspectives and interpretations on disability in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania in both Old and New Testaments. With that analysis, it has been argued that much of church theology and practice, including interpretations of the Bible itself, have often been dangerous for people with disabilities who encounter prejudice, hostility, and suspicion. As a result, its consequences have caused the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania to rely on traditional biblical and theological interpretation on disability in her missions.

Consequently, the theology of *Mission as Action in Hope* with respect to people with albinism suggested in this dissertation disproves the theology of withdrawal from the present realities. Moreover, the salvation-history model of eschatological hope used in this dissertation claims that the future we expect has to be realized in today's reality, insisting further that theology is a matter not just of abstract reflection, but of exposition of understandings based on an active engagement to see another kind of order at work in this world—the realization of God's kingdom on earth today.

Based on that clarification, it was argued that the coming reign of God is not merely an article of faith for the future, but it is in some sense already present in the life of the text-readers. Therefore, this work ascertained that in biblical interpretation, we need to read the signs of the times and put much emphasis on the text-reader's context. Thus, this study strongly argued that any interpretation of the Bible is unacceptable if it does harm to any human being. From that understanding this study has constructed a theology (the theology of action in hope) that is

society sensitive, realizing today's realities and emphasizing the text-reader's context. It is this kind of theology emphasized in this dissertation that would help people with albinism in Tanzania and Africa in general to actualize and objectify their dreams.

Based on the analysis of the findings of this research it was verified that the main cause of all problems facing people with albinism is the lack of knowledge about the nature of albinism. Other causes identified included myths, poverty, effects of globalization/get-rich-quick, burden of albinism in the family, and witchcraft practices. The effects of globalization in escalating the killings of people with albinism becomes more strong because the massive killings were from 2009/2010 onwards when booms in the fishing and mining industries provided for some Tanzanians evidence of its effectiveness and proof of the influence due to the free trade and markets. Before that period of free trade and free market, the killings were in a very lesser extent mostly done at the family level.

It was also observed that the absence of enough knowledge about albinism has led many people especially in the African community to associate albinism to erroneous beliefs mostly grounded on witchcraft and superstition. The belief that the body parts of people with albinism possess magical powers that could be used to gain wealth and prosperity and/or power via winning elections or high positions were some of the reasons for the killing of, and attacks against, people with albinism. This is why it is asserted that most of what was known about albinism in Tanzania and Africa, in general, was socially constructed or originated from ancient myths when beliefs could answer many questions including questions that can today be scientifically answered.

As this dissertation substantiated, albinism is a rare, non-contagious, genetically inherited condition present at birth. It results in a lack of pigmentation in the hair, skin, and eyes, causing vulnerability to the sun and bright light, leaving people with albinism remarkably pale especially when compared to members of their biological family and community. In almost all types of albinism, both parents must carry the gene for it to be passed on, even if they do not have albinism themselves. The condition of albinism is found in both sexes regardless of ethnicity and in all countries of the world although the frequency of occurrence varies by region. It must be noted that there is no cure for the absence of melanin (albinism). As a result, almost all people with albinism are visually impaired and are prone to developing skin cancer.

Based on the numbers affected, it was verified in this work that there are almost 650 million (11% of the world's population) people with disabilities (PWD) in the world. For people with albinism in particular, it was estimated that in North America and Europe 1 in every 17,000 to 20,000 people had some form of albinism. The condition is much more prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa, with estimates of 1 in 1,400 people being affected. In Tanzania, the prevalence is as high as 1 in 1,000, according to the World Health Organization report of 2006. Therefore, in order to accomplish the task of finding out how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania responds to the issue of albinism, this dissertation was divided into six chapters each with its own emphasis.

Chapter one dealt with the background of the study by showing the worldwide problems related to the research problem. It clearly stated the problem of albinism in Tanzania and Africa, in general as well as the aim of the study, research questions, research design and methodology

including scope and limitations. The study is missiological in nature but however, falls in the discipline of social science.

Chapter two provided a conceptual framework for the theology of hope focusing on the mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania to people with albinism. It has described various dimensions of eschatological hope, using social theories to inform biblical and theological reflections. Based on the views of scholars such as Moltmann, Bosch, and Mashau, it was argued that ‘Theology of Hope’ has implications for both the present and future and it does not encourage the spirit of withdrawal from the present world and its problems. In its essence, the theology of hope encourages Christians to participate in a meaningful way in the fight against evils and sufferings in this world. Theology of hope is therefore understood as a theology that seeks to affirm life of God’s people in the midst of suffering and death based on Jesus Christ who not only identified with God’s people in their shame and rejection but also accompanied them in their journey of life in pains and sufferings. For that reason, the study affirmed that an old hope for the end of time now becomes hope in the present reality, a hope opposed to the way things are. In that way, theology of hope impels the ELCT to look for a future in which more life will enter the lives they already have—that we hope because of what we have already experienced. It is the hope not for a distant and unreachable future, but for a future that is breaking into the present and that involves a radical transformation of the world. The theology of hope is therefore, a kind of theology needed mostly in this world of severe pain and suffering particularly in Africa where people with albinism are suffering just because of their appearance. Furthermore, chapter two has explained four major eschatological models, asserting that each model had a significant impact on missionary thinking. These eschatological models are the

dialectical, the existential, the actualized and the salvation-history model. The study has argued that the interpretations of the first three models were leaving people helpless in face of the challenges of the modern world, but the fourth—the salvation-history model of eschatological hope—distinguishes itself from the other three in several respects. Principally, it puts a special emphasis on the reign of God as a hermeneutical key. Equally important it presents the concept of the reign of God as both present and future. This model is the only right one because it takes history seriously and is the model chosen as the lens in this work.

Moreover, it was argued in chapter two that people with disabilities in the church have endured much wrong teaching regarding faith and healing. It was verified that throughout history, people with disabilities and with albinism in particular have been downgraded to the status of second-class citizens and in some instances treated inhumanely. This perception led to a negative attitude toward people with disabilities in the world generally and in Tanzania, in particular where people with disabilities especially those living with albinism suffer because of their appearance. For that reason, this study argued that the church is challenged to respond to needs of people suffering from various economic, socio-cultural stigma and other sufferings in order to bring healing, wholeness, and hope to all kinds of life. It was further maintained that the church has to express herself in contexts of struggles for dignity, justice, and life for those to whom these are denied. Thus, the responsibility of the church is to be involved not only in the alleviation (relief) of human suffering but also in the eradication of their roots/the cause/the source. From that understanding therefore, it was claimed that mission is not acts of charity or compassion of binding the wounds of the victims; rather, it is about exposing and ending the sinfulness of the world.

Chapter three identified multiple situations and conditions facing people with albinism, including stigma and discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes, marginalization and social exclusion, the effects of visual problem, the high risk of developing skin cancer, and the development of psychological disturbances. It was clearly verified that people with albinism face the world's response to their overall appearance, often deemed strange, and consequently, mystified and stigmatized. They as well, live in a world historically obsessed with skin colour. These issues complicated the wellbeing of people with albinism, the worst form of this misunderstanding being physical attacks and killings.

Chapter four focused on how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania understands mission in relation to people with albinism. Based on the research findings, it was affirmed that the ELCT has understood and translated the mission as serving humanity in its fullness. It was further verified that the ELCT has really interpreted her mission in action through participating in various activities including education, health care, income-generating projects, advocacy for human rights and social justice, and in making bold decisions amid national challenges. In evaluating all the these ELCT mission activities, it was confirmed that the ELCT has indeed translated the theology of hope in a realized and actualized form of the present reality, further verified by the 2014 ELCT guideline as the general opinion of the church authorities in Tanzania about people with albinism which focused on fighting against violence in the community. This official statement of the church proved the concern, moral agency, and willingness of the ELCT in fighting against all problems facing people with albinism.

Moreover, it was ascertained that even if some influences and repercussions of different models of disability, particularly religious model highly affected the ELCT to immorally

perceive people with albinism, nonetheless the ELCT by and large, has understood mission as action in hope. For that reason, mission in the ELCT denoted something more than saving souls and church planting. With the support of this argument it was therefore argued that mission in the ELCT has either in general terms or specifically touched people with albinism.

Yet, this dissertation found some shortcomings that need to be resolved in the mission of the ELCT, one deficiency being her understanding of mission on the section of diaconic ministry with regard to people with albinism. The ELCT has almost all the time translated mission on the section of diaconic ministry as something of emergency relief and charitable work. For this reason, it was argued that this perception is not appropriate to people with albinism because it depicts them as helpless, depressed, and dependent on other people for care and protection as if they are not able.

Another problem identified from the findings of this dissertation was the weak monitoring of ELCT plans and goals. There was no common approach in the ELCT on how its member dioceses implemented the ELCT's goals, especially the 2014 guideline. Therefore, to rectify this shortcoming, this dissertation submitted that the ELCT should set her plans and arrange on how she could strategically manage to monitor her goals from topmost to the grass root levels in all ELCT member dioceses.

Chapter five focused on mission programs and projects of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania with regard to people with albinism. It was found that the ELCT was committed to the provision of programs specifically fighting against the problem of albinism in Tanzania. It was admitted in this dissertation that the implementation of the programs and projects bring a significant impact on the targeted group and the communities in general.

However, it was also discovered that there was no common method in the ELCT on how to tackle the problem of albinism. Nevertheless, it was found that some of the dioceses, especially those located around Lake Victoria zone had set their missions focusing on the problem of albinism, even though several of them have not shown any initiative. Areas around Lake Victoria zone where fishing and mining (gold and diamond) take place, were the most affected places. This could be one of the reasons why the dioceses around Lake Victoria zone were the ones that appeared to address the issue of albinism in their programs.

Recommendations

It is not so much about what the church believes, but in what she does that matters most in this day and age. In such contexts, we might wonder if anything we do will make a difference. Our deepest Christian resources of faith, hope, and love provide the answer. The God of Jesus Christ is an ever faithful God, who is to be found even at the heart of human destruction and failure. Human beings are never abandoned by God. In Christ, God has taken unto himself the sufferings of the world. The God who is always with us, continuing to transform death into life and chaos into new creation, calls us to become His co-workers in the re-creation of the world.

The following are some recommendations based on research findings.

1. It is strongly recommended that the ELCT should construct a strategic plan in addressing the problem of people with albinism in Tanzania. The plan should take into consideration the context, time frame, and budget allocation and it has to be implemented at the diocesan level in all ELCT member churches.

2. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania has to set proper monitoring and implementation of her objectives particularly at the grassroots level in the ELCT member dioceses. The coordination could be organized at the head office in Arusha but the implementation of these goals and objectives have to be executed at the congregational level in all 26 dioceses of the ELCT.
3. The Church must invest much of her energy in community awareness about albinism aiming at community transformation. Therefore, there must be public education programs that aim at educating members of the community as a whole on the causes and characteristics of albinism. The key issue here is educating the community to encourage the removal of the social stigma associated with albinism in a society that does not completely understand that albinism is not a curse or a spiritual ghost, but simply a skin condition. This will reduce and eventually end the community's perception of viewing albinism in a negative way. As it has been strongly argued that the main reason for all myths relating to albinism is the lack of enough knowledge about albinism especially in Africa, therefore, education about the reality about albinism is very important.
4. Missions of the ELCT have to be redefined in a manner that is informed by ways that include people with albinism in the society by fighting multiple exclusionary practices that have systematically denied their full humanity.
5. A special focus should be centered on changing people's attitudes about albinism. Although the significant regulatory framework certainly contributes in prosecuting those involved in the trade, community transformation cannot rely only on laws and forces especially when the issues are multidimensional and include personal beliefs. People

have to be transformed from within. This is why the faith oriented approach is more important in fighting against ingrained beliefs of any community. However, laws and government forces are the essential supporting entities in fighting against erroneous beliefs facing people with albinism. Therefore, both government and faith oriented organizations must work together.

6. Missions in terms of services to people with albinism should be more than charitable work and emergency relief. The ELCT should think about empowering people with albinism so that they can recognize and exercise self-esteem. Mission to people with albinism should not only be acts of charity or of binding the wounds of the victims but also, it is about exposing the sinfulness of the community and confronting the forces of evil that deny and abuse their life. Therefore, the ELCT has to take note that first and foremost, the mission of God is to affirm, safeguard, and celebrate life in all its fullness and then to bring healing and wholeness to all forms of life.
7. People with albinism should be protected by their community members and supported by the government in order to create an inclusive society. The public must also be sensitized on what albinism is and how to live in harmony with people with albinism. For this reason, missions of the ELCT need to be redefined in a manner that is informed by the ways in which people with albinism are included.
8. Camps and special schools for children with albinism should not be regarded as the permanent solution of the problem. It was right that the Tanzanian government's initial response to the violence against children with albinism included a policy of evacuating the children from their home families into special schools and camps in order to protect

them. Such forced segregation has indeed resulted in fewer attacks, but it has caused some families to abandon their children to those camps. What should be aimed at and emphasized is community inclusion rather than exclusion.

9. The subject matter in regard to nature and the reality about albinism has to be included in school syllabus/curriculum from elementary school to higher learning institutions. It is therefore recommended that learners in schools have to be taught about this condition in order to counteract prevailing myths and stereotypes. This will promote the ethics of inclusion whereby people with albinism will be fully incorporated in the society without being stigmatized.
10. In order to shed further light on the experiences and nature of albinism in Tanzania and in other African countries, more research is needed.

Conclusions

The nature of albinism in Tanzania and Africa in general is not well understood. Therefore, it was verified in this research that main causes of all problems facing people with albinism include lack of knowledge about the nature of albinism, poverty, effects of globalization, myths and witchcraft practices. Witch doctors used that gap of misunderstanding to teach misconceptions to persons who desired profit and personal gain. Furthermore, globalization led to escalation in the killings of people with albinism when booms in the fishing and mining industries provided for some Tanzanians evidence of its effectiveness and proof of the influence due to the free trade and markets; prior to that period, the killings were of a lesser extent and very rarely performed at the family level.

It is further concluded that most of what was known about albinism in Tanzania and Africa in general were socially constructed or originated from ancient myths when beliefs could answer many questions including questions that can today be scientifically answered.

It is undeniable that the plague of killing people with albinism is mainly rooted in African context but it was strongly argued in this work that killing people with albinism is against the core African values (Ubuntu Philosophy) that enhance life of all human beings. Also, African philosophy 'Ubuntu' is inclusive in nature; it does not discriminate against a person in terms of appearance. African core values conform to 'Ubuntu' philosophy and it is the cardinal heart of African life. This African philosophy 'Ubuntu' respects the community as well as every individual in the community. Greed and desires based on profit and personal gain has no chance at all in African life. That is why it was argued in this work that these desires in personal gain propagated by globalization escalated the high rate of killing people with albinism.

Furthermore, this dissertation found some of the ELCT's shortcomings that need to be resolved in her missions. One of the deficiencies is the ELCT's understanding of mission on the section of diaconic ministry with regard to people with albinism. It was found that the ELCT had almost all the time translated mission on the section of diaconic ministry as something of emergency relief and charitable work even to people with albinism. Based on that argument it was contended that this perception is not appropriate to people with albinism because it depicts them as helpless, depressed, and dependent on other people for care and protection. It was, therefore, strongly claimed in this dissertation that people with albinism, the so called 'disabled ones' are able to perform almost all duties performed by the so called 'normal people.' This implies that people with albinism do not need help in the form of emergency relief and charitable

work but rather, they need community inclusion so that they can freely run and actualize their dreams by themselves. Based on that argument, this dissertation maintained that missions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania need to be redefined in a manner that is informed by ways that include people with albinism in the society.

Another problem identified from the findings of this dissertation was the weak monitoring of ELCT plans and goals. As it was widely explained in chapter five, the main problem of the ELCT lay on the monitoring and implementations of her objectives particularly at the grassroots level within the ELCT member dioceses. There was no common approach in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania on how its member dioceses could implement ELCT's goals. Only five dioceses among 26 were active on the issue of albinism. To rectify this shortcoming it was suggested in this work that the ELCT should not only set her plans but also should arrange on how she can strategically manage to monitor the implementation of her goals from topmost to the grass root levels in all ELCT member dioceses.

Focusing on the Biblico-Theological basis of mission as action in hope, it was highlighted in this work that any biblical interpretation is unacceptable if it harms any human being. Theology is a matter not just of abstract reflection, but of exposition of understandings based on an active engagement to see another kind of order at work in this world—the realization of God's kingdom on earth today. That is why the theology of Mission as Action in Hope with respect to people with albinism suggested in this dissertation negates the theology of withdrawal and despair from the present realities. The main causes of all problems facing people with albinism included lack of knowledge about the nature of albinism, poverty, effects of globalization, myths and witchcraft practices. It is therefore concluded that most of what was

known about albinism in Tanzania and Africa, in general, were socially constructed or originated from ancient myths. For this reason, it was argued that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania is called to be a prophetic sign—a prophetic community through which and by which transformation of the community can take place.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDES

Questions for the Church Leaders

1. Do you know anything relating to People with Albinism here in Tanzania? Can you share your personal experience on this problem?
2. What do you think are the main reasons for these Problems?
3. Do you think that the church is responsible for that issue? **(If Yes)** How has the church encountered the problem? What are the strategies made by the church in creating hope to people with albinism?
4. Is the issue of Albinism often discussed at the church levels from congregational level to diocesan level?
5. As far as the church mission is concerned, is there any specific program in the church dealing specifically with the problem of Albinism? How far is the implementation?
6. Are the planned strategies above sufficient to create hope to people with Albinism? From the strategies planned (if any), what has been done and what is left undone? Is there any challenge that hinders the implementation of these strategies?
7. How do you evaluate the current situation of the problem? As far as the strategies are concerned, do you have any idea about what should be improved or applied to meet this challenge?
8. Do you think these measures (mentioned above) were the appropriate ways to eliminate the said challenges? Is the problem still there or it has finished?
9. If the problem is still there, what are to be improved in order to eliminate this problem?
10. What is your personal comment(s)/do you have anything to share with regard to the problem of Albinism?

Interview Guide for People with Albinism

1. Can you please introduce yourself? (Just in short).
2. Doubtlessly, you are aware about problems relating to People with Albinism - (Yes!)
3. What do you think are the main reasons for this problem?

4. Can you explain how this problem has affected you personally?
5. What do you think about your safety?
6. What do you think should be done in order to stop that problem?
7. Is the society around you doing anything in eliminating this problem? How?
8. Have you observed any reaction from the church in eliminating this problem? How?
9. Is the Government also reacting to this problem? How?
10. How do you see the strategies used by the society, church, NGOS and the government? Are they sufficient or there is something to be improved?
11. Are there any changes after the implementation of the strategies above? What is the situation now?
13. Do you have any suggestions, especially what should be done in order to eliminate this problem?

Interview Guide for Headteachers and Camp Leaders Where Children with Albinism Live

1. Would you please explain in short the background of this school/camp with regard to children with Albinism?
2. What are the conditions/situations affecting them?
3. Where do you get support for caring for all these children?
4. Do you get any support from faith oriented institutions, especially from the ELCT?
5. Do you have any suggestions, especially what should be done in order to eliminate this problem?

Appendix B

Clearance from the University Review Ethics Committee



REVIEW FORM

Research Title: Mission As Action in Hope for People with Albinism in the Evangelical ..

Researcher/s: Paschal Johannes Matungaya Program PhD Theology

Name of Reviewer: CYFLOR E. PUNING Date of Review: 11/13/19

Comments or Suggestions:

> ensure consideration & informed consent are clear.

Name of Reviewer: NADIA ABESAMIS Date of Review: 18 Nov 2019

Comments or Suggestions:

- > Ethical considerations & informed consent are in order
- > Ensure that respondents with albinism are made to sign an informed consent form prior to the interview

Name of Reviewer: FERDINAND M. MANIBAN Date of Review: 11/29/19

Comments or Suggestions:

- ⊙ Ethical consideration are in order.
- ⊙ In the interview, will be using the English language or their own language? Would there be translations if in case?

APPENDIX C

LETTERS

An Endorsement from my Church

October 1, 2019

General Secretary ELCT/NWD,
Box 98,
Bukoba,
Tanzania.

*This undertaking is very crucial
Would you please extend cooperation to him
Affirmative
21st Dec. 2019*

ELCT NORTH WESTERN DIOCESE
P. O. Box 98
BUKOSA

REF: An Endorsement

Dear General Secretary,

Refer to the above heading; I am a Doctoral Student in Mission Studies at Divinity School Silliman University. The University has given me the approval to go ahead with dissertation research entitled "**Mission as Action in Hope for People with Albinism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.**" In order to do this research, I am respectfully requesting you to allow me to have access to official documents of the ELCT/NWD concerning this research and introduce me to other offices where I can officially gather the related data.

Herewith I attach a research informed consent form.

In the conduct of the study, full confidentiality will be assured.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,


Rev. Paschal Johansen Matungwa

Noted by

Dr. Josephat A. Rweyemamu
Adviser
Silliman University

Cc: the Bishop, ELCT- Northwestern Diocese

HALMASHAURI YA MANISPAA BUKOBA

(Barua zote zitumwe kwa Mkurugenzi wa Manispaa)

Simu: 028-2220226, 028-22202231
Fax : 028-2220226
Barua pepe: md@bukobamc.go.tz
Tovuti: www.bukobamc.go.tz



S.L.P 284,
BUKOBA,
TANZANIA.

Kumb. Na. BMC/E/UT/I/152/Vol.I/39

15/01/2020

Mchangaji Paschal Matungwa,
ELCT/NWD,
BUKOBA.

**YAH: KUPEWA RUHUSA YA KUFANYA HOJAJI (INTERVIEW) KATIKA
SHULE YA MUGEZA MSETO KWA WATOTO WENYE ULEMAVU WA
NGOZI (ALBINO)**

Husika na mada tajwa hapo juu.

Barua yako ya tarehe **13/01/2020** iliyohusu kuomba ruhusa ya kufanya hojaji (interview) katika Shule ya Mugeza Mseto kwa watoto wenye ulemavu wa ngozi (Albino) imerejewa.

Kwa barua hii, ruhusa ya kufanya utafiti huo imetolewa.

Hakikisha unashirikiana na uongozi wa shule hiyo kwa karibu ili kuifanya kazi yako iwe rahisi.

Nakutakia utafiti mwema.

Dr. Baganda, Elpidius

**KNY: MKURUGENZI WA MANISPAA
BUKOBA**

MKURUGENZI WA MANISPAA
HALMASHAURI YA MANISPAA
BUKOBA

Nakala kwa: Mwalimu Mkuu,
Shule ya Msingi Mugeza Mseto,
BUKOBA. - Tafadhali mpe ushirikiano wa karibu.



UNIVERSITY GRADUATE PROGRAMS
SILLIMAN UNIVERSITY
Building Competence, Character & Faith

ENDORSEMENT

This is to certify that the research proposal of **Rev. Paschal Johansen Matungwa** entitled **“Mission as Action in Hope for People with Albinism in the Evangelical Lutheran church in Tanzania”** in partial fulfillment for the degree of **Doctor of Theology in Mission Studies** has been reviewed and is found to be technically feasible for implementation and is endorsed for review to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC).

Endorsed by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josephat A. Rweyemamu".

JOSEPHAT A. RWEYEMAMU, PhD.
Adviser

Noted by

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Margaret Helen U. Alvarez".

MARGARET HELEN U. ALVAREZ
Dean

APPENDIX D

Research Informed Consent Form

APPENDIX B

University Graduate programs
SILLIMAN UNIVERSITY
Dumaguete City

UREC FORM #03

RESEARCH INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title

This study is titled "Mission as Action in Hope for People with Albinism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania" in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Theology in Mission Studies.

Researcher

This study is to be conducted by Paschal Johansen Matungwa who is pursuing the degree in Doctor of Theology in Mission Studies at the Divinity School, Silliman University, with Rev. Dr. Josephat A. Rweyemamu as the adviser. The researcher can be contacted through this mobile number 0929 962 8046 or email address matungwajp@gmail.com

Purposes of the Research

This study aims to find out the following: **How the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) responds to issues related to People with Albinism in Tanzania.**

Description of the Research

This study aligns with the research problem and questions with regard to the missiological and theological dimensions of the mission of the church in the context of various problems relating to people with Albinism in Tanzania. Data will be gathered by collecting documents relating to the topic and through interview where a semi-structured interview technique will be employed. In addition to that non-probability sampling especially in selecting informants will also be used. This work will be accomplished within the period of one year.

Potential Benefits

This study will benefit the (indicate who) in terms of the following (indicate how):

- (a) **People with albinism:** The results of the study will explore how big the problem is, and which immediate measures should be taken by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, the states, NGOs and the community at large to respond to that problem.
- (b) **The Church:** The study will propose a missiological model with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania can consider to employ while participating in God's mission with respect to Mission as Action in Hope.
- (c) **Church Leaders:** The study will help church leaders to gain a deeper understanding on Mission as Action in Hope and enabling them develop relevant programs that focusing on helping people with Albinism to fully enjoyment of life.
- (d) **The Government:** The findings of this research will bring attention to the Tanzanian government especially in increasing efforts in security and protection to people with albinism.

- (e) **The Society/Community:** The results of this study will likewise, enlighten and create awareness of the society in regard to people with Albinism.
- (f) **The Society/Community:** The results of this study will likewise, enlighten and create awareness of the society in regard to people with Albinism.
- (g) **Silliman University:** The result of this study will especially benefit Divinity School, by providing a source of reference for the next researchers to develop another theological basis and to identify new guidance that discusses about mission as action in hope.
- (h) **United Evangelical Mission and other Ecumenical Partners:** In view of the fact that the end of this study will produce missiological bases on how Lutheran Church in Tanzania responds to the issue of Albinism therefore, it will be used by the United Evangelical Mission and other Ecumenical Partners to consider it in the implementing programs in the ELCT.
- (i) **NGOS:** The suggestions of this research will also be very helpful to Non Governmental Organizations to implement their programs that aim at dealing with the issue of Albinism in Tanzania.

Confidentiality

In the conducted of the study, full confidentiality will be assured. No information that discloses your identity will be released or published without your specific consent to the disclosure and only imperatively necessary.

Storage and Disposal of Data

The materials that contained the raw information derived from you will be destroyed after data processing within a given period.

Publication

The results of this study may be published in any form for public and scholarly consumption or used in classroom instruction to enrich learning and generate more knowledge for future research.

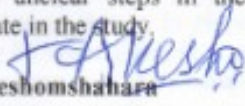
Participation

Your participation in this study must be voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw if you feel uncomfortable in the process of gathering information from you.

Informed Consent

Given the information above, I confirm that the potential harms, benefits, and alternatives have been explained to me. I have read and understood this consent form, and I understand that I am free to withdraw from my involvement in the study any time I deem it to be necessary or to seek clarifications for any unclear steps in the research process. My signature indicates my willingness to participate in the study.

Rev. Dr. Abednego Keshomshahara




Printed Name and Signature of the Research Participant

October 2019
Date

ILLUSTRATIONS

Albinism worldwide



Figure. Albinism Worldwide

Source: Under The Same Sun
February, 2014

Reported Attacks

Country	Cases
Benin	12
Botswana	3
Burkina Faso	9
Burundi	39
Cameroon	11
DRC	67
Egypt	1(Asylum)
Ghana	3
Guinea	15
Ivory Coast	30
Kenya	13
Lesotho	1
Malawi	113
Mali	15
Mozambique	68+
Namibia	3
Niger	1
Nigeria	10
Rwanda	1
Senegal	9 (incl. 2 asylum)

South Africa	8
Swaziland	11
Tanzania	176
Togo: 1	1
Uganda	8
Zambia	9
Zimbabwe	2

Source: Ikponwosa Ero
UN Independent Expert on Enjoyment of Human Rights by Persons with Albinism
26 OCTOBER 2017
NEW YORK, NY

Appendix F

Key Informants

Mtakyamirwa, Adelina. The mother of Nester who damaged the tooth of an Albino pupil in the year 2017. Face to Face, January 22, 2020.

Mutakyamirwa Ajuna Nester. A class five pupil at Mugeza Mseto Primary School who damaged the tooth of an Albino pupil in 2017 because she did not want to sit with her on the same desk. Face to Face, January 22, 2020.

Kahigi, Naomi. Program Coordinator of the Human Rights Desk of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, North Western Diocese. Face to Face, January 9, 2020.

Keshomshahara, Nkamuhabwa Abednego. Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, North Western Diocese. Face to Face, January 3, 2020.

Kigembe, Elmeleck. General Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, North Western Diocese. Face to Face, January 3, 2020.

Lutabingwa, Johansen. The retired General Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, North Western Diocese. Face to Face, January 03, 2020.

Maganya, Aniceth. The ELCT Presiding Bishop's Office Coordinator in Arusha, formerly working as the Head of the Desk of Policy Analysis and Advocacy of the ELCT from 2010-2014. Via emails, September 25, 2020.

Mussa M. Hemed. An assistant Head Teacher at Mugeza Mseto Primary School. Mugeza Mseto Primary school is one of the centres where children with Albinism live while taking their studies of primary education. Face to Face, January 21, 2020.

Pesha Modest. The ShauKu Program Coordinator of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania-North Western Diocese. Face to Face, January 13, 2020.

Children with Albinism at Mugeza Mseto Primary School, one of the Boarding Primary Schools/ Camps for Children with Albinism in Tanzania, January 21, 2020. Face to Face, January 21, 2020.

Appendix G

Church Documents

ELCT 2014 Guidelines for Fighting against Violence in the Society: (“Mwongozo-Elimu ya Kuondoa Ukatili katika Jamii,”2014, 2. A document from ELCT headquarters in Arusha prepared in 2014 by the Desk of Policy Analysis and Advocacy of the ELCT in order to fight against violence in the society including the killings of people with Albinism.

ELCT Calendars from 2014 to 2020

ELCT Constitution

ELCT/NWD-Bajeti, Malengo na Mpango wa Kazi wa kitengo cha Haki za Binadamu na Usuruhishi wa Migogoro katika Jamii kutoka 2015-2020. (ELCT/NWD Plan of Human Rights, Justice and Conflict Resolution Department from 2015-202).

ELCT/NWD Three Years Strategic Plan (2020-2022): ShauKu Program, A Program Advocating for People with Albinism, Women, Children and Human Rights.

ELCT/NWD Minutes of the Meeting of March 4, 2015 led by Bishop Elisa Buberwa, the retired bishop of the ELCT/NWD on the ‘Increased Incidents of Albino and Elderly People Killings.’

