

**CONTEXTUALIZING CHRISTIAN HEALING AMONG THE NYAMBO
IN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN TANZANIA, KARAGWE DIOCESE**

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ABSTRACT

This missiological study discusses the involvement of the Lutheran church in contextualizing Christian healing among the Nyambo in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Karagwe diocese. It focuses mainly on the relationship between Christian healing and the Nyambo-African indigenous understanding on healing. The study applies synthetic and translational models to argue that Christian healing cannot succeed to have strong roots among the Nyambo unless it appreciates, adapts, and assimilates Nyambo-African contextual elements in conjunction with scientific practices of healing that enhance life. Therefore, the study encourages the Lutheran church in Karagwe to respond to Christian healing in a way that respects and values indigenous cultural heritage on healing, taking into consideration the fact that the biblical message on healing has to be translated and contextualized into every receiving context.

While there are similarities between Christian healing and indigenous understanding on healing, the study affirms that the meeting of Christian healing and indigenous healing quests involvement of cultural elements and practices of healing that are socially acceptable in terms of spiritual, mental, and physical wholeness. Four dimensions are identified as important paths of interconnecting Christian healing and Nyambo indigenous understanding on healing, namely spiritual, natural and environmental, socio-cultural and economic, and physical and biological dimensions.

However, the study offers four guidelines in practicing contextual Christian healing among the Nyambo: miraculous healing as a way of healing among many other paths of healing, traditional medicine as another important path of healing, medical science as a

valuable path of examining and curing diseases, and social services as another way of improving people's health and maintenance of wholeness.

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TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	AIDS Control Program
AGE	Adolescent Girls Empowerment
IAC	Indigenous African Churches
AIC	African Initiated Churches
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AIR	African Indigenous Religions
B.C.	Before Christ
CMC	Christian Medical Commission
CSM	Church of Sweden Mission
CWA	Children with Albinism
DDH	Designated District Hospital
ELCT	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
FGFC	Full Gospel Bible Fellowship Church
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
KAD	Karagwe Diocese
KARUCo	Karagwe University College
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PGDE	Postgraduate Diploma in Education
PWA	People with Albinism
PWD	People with Disability
UN	United Nations
UEM	United Evangelical Mission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UREC	University Research Ethics
WCC	World Council of Churches
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Contextualizing Christian healing concerns the involvement of the church in God's mission of healing that values and takes people's context seriously. This involvement is important because it is in the context where the church meets and ministers to various groups of people: the poor, the rich, women and men, orphans, widows and widowers, politicians, farmers, business makers, Christians as well as indigenous practitioners. All of these groups sometimes face illnesses and seek healing from traditional, clinical, or faith healers.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) report of 2016, of the 59.9 million deaths worldwide, more than half (54%) resulted from the top ten causes with ischaemic heart diseases and stroke as the biggest killers, accounting for 15.2 million deaths. Other causes were chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (3 million deaths), lung cancer (1.7 million deaths), diabetes (1.6 million deaths), dementias (1.4 million deaths), tuberculosis (1.3 million deaths), and road injuries (1.4 million deaths).¹ However, in November 2019, the world witnessed the outbreak of a deadly pandemic that started in China and later spread globally. According to world data, 1,270,056 people have died so far from the coronavirus (COVID-19), and there are 51,286,197 confirmed cases in 216 countries.²

¹ "The Top 10 Causes of Death," accessed July 30, 2019, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/the-top-10-causes-of-death>.

² "Coronavirus Death Toll and Trends - Worldometer," accessed November 10, 2020, <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/coronavirus-death-toll/>.

In Africa, Musimbi Kanyoro, a Lutheran theologian from Kenya, asserts that every minute some people die, some suffer from malaria, children die simply from dehydration, HIV/AIDS remains a deadly killer, war erupts in various places, and majority of the people experience poor economic situations that fail to provide even the essential basic needs.³ In such a situation, spiritual, physical, mental, and socio-economic healing becomes a necessity.

However, in Tanzania, a country in which the Nyambo lives, statistical findings (2016/17) reveal the fact that age under five mortality rate was 39.9 deaths per 1,000 live births (2017), whereby malaria was the leading killer. Adults infected with HIV/AIDS were estimated at 4.7% (2016) while 1.4 million people were estimated living with HIV/AIDS, and 33,000 deaths estimated due to HIV/AIDS (2016).⁴ All of these illnesses and deaths challenge the way the church plans and involves contextually in healing processes.

This research concentrates mainly on Karagwe governmental district, one of seven districts that make up the Kagera region (Appendix A: Map showing location of Karagwe). The region covers an area of 4500Km².⁵ The area is located in the North Western part of Tanzania, bordered by Uganda in the North and Rwanda in the West. The Kagera River separates it from Rwanda in the West. To the North the river also separates Karagwe from Miseny⁶ which is today one of the districts that make up the Kagera Region. In the South it borders the district of Ngara and Biharamulo with Muleba and Bukoba districts in the East.⁷

³ Musimbi Kanyoro, "Thinking Mission in Africa," *International Review of Mission* 87, no. 345 (April 1998): 224–25, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0001002336&site=ehost-live>.

⁴ "Tanzania Demographics Profile 2018," accessed October 1, 2018, https://www.indexmundi.com/tanzania/demographics_profile.html.

⁵ "History | KARAGWE DISTRICT COUNCIL," accessed May 28, 2020, <http://karagwedc.go.tz/history>.

⁶ Israel K Katoke, *The Making of the Karagwe Kingdom* (Dar es Salaam: East African Publishing House, 1970), 7.

⁷ "History | KARAGWE DISTRICT COUNCIL."

The district is mountainous ranging between 1500 meters and 1800 meters above the sea level. The average annual rainfall totals are at 1049 mm to 1200 mm per year, while the average temperature is 26° C. There are two demarcated rain seasons—September to January and between March to May.⁸ Based on the 2012 Tanzania National Census, the total population of Karagwe District was 332,020 and the population growth was estimated at 2.9% per annum.⁹

The Nyambo as an ethnic group is part of a larger group known as “Western Lacustrine Bantu.”¹⁰ They have been in Karagwe since time immemorial. Anthropologists trace their origin in Ankole, Toro, and Bunyoro in Uganda.¹¹ There are other ethnic groups in the area, such as Wakiga, Wanyarwanda, Warundi, and Wahima from neighbouring countries of Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. These are people who migrate in search of pasture, agriculture, and labour. Upon their stay in Karagwe, they mix with the inhabitants and share in life. Despite this intermingling, the dominant ethnic group remains the Nyambo. Nevertheless, there is also a significant number of the Wahaya from Bukoba and Wasubi from Ngara. As Kibira (1974) notes, the Wanyambo and Wahaya share a lot in

⁸ “History | KARAGWE DISTRICT COUNCIL.”

⁹ “Karagwe (District, Tanzania) - Population Statistics, Charts, Map and Location,” accessed May 28, 2020, <https://www.citypopulation.de/php/tanzania-admin.php?adm2id=1801>.

¹⁰ D. (ed) Forde, London (United Kingdom) eng International African Inst., and B. K. Taylor, “Ethnographic Survey of Africa: East Central Africa. v. 13: The Western Lacustrine Bantu: Nyoro, Toro, Nyankore, Kiga, Haya, and Zinza, with Sections on the Amba and Konjo,” 1962, <http://agris.fao.org/agris-search/search.do?recordID=XF2015032828>. According to Kibira, “The Western Lacustrine Bantu” relate in terms of having similar segmentary societies of a feudal type, have common history of the immediate period prior to the colonial era where the Nilotic Lwoo-speaking group called Babito ruled most of the kingdom of Bunyoro, Toro, Koki, and Kiziba; had a magic-religious system, but with belief in a vague, distant moral creator; were totemic and exogamous, had similar marriage and kinship systems, almost all patrilineal in inheritance. See, Josiah Kibira, *Church, Clan, and the World* (Uppsala: Gleerup, 1974), 11-12.

¹¹ The first idea is that the Nyambo have been in Karagwe since creation. The second idea asserts that the Nyambo are a group of earliest Bantu -speaking who immigrated from Bunyoro in Uganda to Karagwe between the fifth and tenth centuries A.D. See Israel K. Katoke. *The Making of the Karagwe Kingdom* (Dar es Salaam: East African Publishing House, 1970), 7. Elsewhere, it is indicated that the first group stayed for the short time in Karagwe, then went back to Ankole, Toro and Bunyoro. They later returned to Karagwe and settled there. Upon their return, they had mingled with the Bachwezi and some of the Nilotes of Bunyoro- See Gidion S.Were & Wilson A.Derek. *East Africa through a Thousand Years: A.D.1000 to the Present Day* (London: Evans Brothers Limited, 1972), 55-56.

terms of language, customs, political history, and marriage.¹² Sometimes it is very difficult to differentiate them because they live together as one people and share a lot in life. Hence, in most places of this study, they will be regarded as the same people.

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to examine the relationship between Christian healing and Nyambo indigenous understanding of healing. The quest rose from the experience that most Christians in the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of Karagwe seem to live a life of religio-cultural conflict or syncretism. Tensions exist in their life whether they adhere to Lutheran Missionary teaching on healing, charismatic emphasis, biomedicine, or follow aspects of their traditional healing. This tension is manifested when church members seem to embrace their traditional healing secretly behind the gaze of the church officials. They do this secretly because the church prohibits her members to be involved in indigenous healing. The church advises those who get sick to pray to God and seek further healing through biomedicine. Many Nyambo Christians want to maintain the teachings of the church, but eventually they find themselves in the middle between Christian teaching and indigenous practices, especially when it comes to seeking healing from serious illnesses that disturb their lives. Further, the current influence of faith healing creates more confusion as most of Christian faith healers require their followers to depend on faith healing neglecting both indigenous and clinical treatments. This begs a question: how should Christianity relate with Nyambo indigenous understanding of healing in the contemporary context of mission?

To answer the main problem, the following sub-questions were investigated:

¹² Josiah M. Kibira, *Church, Clan, and the World* (Uppsala: Gleerup, 1974), 11.

1. What is the Biblico-Theological basis of the church's involvement in healing?
2. What is the Nyambo indigenous understanding of healing?
3. What was the Western philosophical view of the missionaries regarding Nyambo-African indigenous understanding on healing?
4. Why do the Nyambo continually patronize indigenous healing?
5. How can Christian healing be contextualized in the contemporary context of the Nyambo?

Significance of the Study

This study focused on issues related to healing ministry. It particularly dealt with contextualizing Christian healing among Nyambo in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania-Karagwe diocese. From the viewpoint of the researcher, this study will benefit the following:

The Church. This study can offer to the church a contextual approach for being involved in Christian healing, particularly among the Nyambo in the ELCT-Karagwe diocese. As contextualization values people's culture, the findings will help the ELCT-Karagwe diocese to have a deeper understanding of accommodating Nyambo traditional aspects of healing that are compatible to the gospel.

Silliman University Divinity School. This study can be used as a source of reference for the next researchers who will embark on the topic of contextualizing Christian healing.

The United Evangelical Mission (UEM). Because the end of this study generates contextual understanding of healing, it can be used by UEM in developing her programs of doing contextual theology in various places regarding contextualizing Christian healing.

Researchers. This study can be a reflection to any person wishing to deepen their understanding about contextualization of the gospel, particularly on Christianity and traditional understanding of healing.

Non-government Organizations (NGOs). This study will also benefit NGOs that aim at deepening their understanding about the encounter between Christianity and indigenous understanding of healing.

Other Churches. This study can be used by any church wishing to make reflection about contextualizing Christian healing in various contexts.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses mainly on and was directed to delve into the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT)-Karagwe diocese. The study is essentially designed to find answers to the question: how should the Lutheran Church in Karagwe engage or discourage Nyambo indigenous aspects of healing? The research was limited within the Lutheran diocese of Karagwe. In this diocese, the Nyambo remains the dominant ethnic group, although intermingled with some other groups from various places. Hence, respondents of the study included various groups such as Lutheran church leaders, lay Christians, adherents to indigenous healing, and indigenous healers. Perceptions of these groups helped the researcher to come to an understanding of healing based on both Christian and Nyambo traditional understanding. The study also critically investigated the early missionaries' approach to the Nyambo-African understanding of healing and its impact on contemporary context. On the other hand, Biblico-theological perspectives revealed the church's involvement in healing ministry based on the Scripture and context.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative strategy in employing empirical and conceptual approaches. Babbie and Mouton (2001) define qualitative research as an attempt “to study human action from the perspective of social actors themselves (also referred by anthropologists as the “emic” perspective).¹³ Its primary goal is to describe and understand human behaviors.¹⁴ Therefore, by describing Nyambo behaviours, one arrives at a point of understanding their perceptions regarding healing.

The study involved interviews as well as investigating, reviewing, and analysing resources pertaining to healing. Interviews were aimed at creating an interaction between the interviewer and the interviewees.¹⁵ In this research, unstructured and online interviews were employed in order to get key information from informants (Appendix B: Interview Guide).

For unstructured interviews, the interviewer had a general topic in mind, but more specific questions were formulated as the interview proceeded.¹⁶ Key informants included three diocesan leaders, nine pastors, three evangelists, three traditional healers, ten older adults aging 70 and above, five Christians who patronized traditional healing, and ten lay Christians. The aim of interviewing these groups was to gain their views on the relationship between Christian healing and traditional healing. Nonetheless, the researcher was aware that traditional healers in the Karagwe context do not want to disclose information relating

¹³ Earl R. Babbie and Johann Mouton, *The Practice of Social Research* (Oxford University Press, 2001), 270.

¹⁴ Babbie and Mouton, 270.

¹⁵ Jody Miller and Barry Glassner, “Interviews,” In *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*, ed. David Silverman (London: SAGE Publications, 2004), 123.

¹⁶ Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (London: SAGE Publications, 2012), 26.

to their treatment procedures. Hence, they were assured that all their personal information would be preserved with confidentiality, and, when necessary, anonymity.

Online interviewing was utilized for persons difficult to reach.¹⁷ They were identified through the snowball sampling¹⁸ method, a research technique recommended for research when the population cannot be strictly detailed. The method seeks out behaviors, perceptions, customs or description regarding typical cases that cannot be generalized for an entire population.¹⁹ Hence, by using this method the researcher managed to gain information about adherences to traditional healing.

On the other hand, the researcher used participant observation method, which sensitized and made the researcher familiar with the environment in which the research was conducted. The researcher always asked permission from interviewees (such as traditional healers) so that he would be able to see and observe how they perform.²⁰

In search of accuracy of interpretation and understanding of healing by the Karagwe diocese, interviews were also done with key informants from the diocesan headquarters. In this case, the top leaders of the diocese: the bishop, the assistant to the bishop, and the general secretary of the diocese were interviewed. Their permission was first sought prior to interview (Appendix C).

Document analysis was also a major source of information. The researcher explored related documents of the Karagwe diocese that dealt with the issue of healing. This was to take into consideration that documents are official or organization records that contain

¹⁷Rubin and Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing*, 30.

¹⁸ Snowball sampling also known as chain referral sampling, is a non-probability method of survey sample selection that is commonly used to locate rare or difficult to find population; see- Timothy Johnson, "Snowball Sampling: Introduction," 2014, 2, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118445112.stat05720>.

¹⁹ Alexandru Isaic-Maniu, "Snowball Sampling Completion," 2, 5 (2013): 160-161, <https://infinitypress.info/index.php/jss/article/download/355/207>.

²⁰ Rubin and Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing*, 27-31.

information designed as records of action, activity, or for external and public consumption.²¹

Because the study was about the encounter between Lutheran Christianity in Karagwe and Nyambo traditional understanding of healing, related primary documents included:

1. Minutes of the Diocesan General Synod 2010-2019.
2. A Reports of the KAD Diaconal Program 2010-2019.
3. Haya/Nyambo Liturgical Book for Services.
4. The Constitution of the Lutheran Diocese of Karagwe.

However, secondary sources such as books, journals, articles, textbooks, research papers and other online sources were read, analysed and interpreted based on the biblical-theological understanding of healing.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher secured clearance from the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) (Appendix D). The researcher further wrote to the office of the Karagwe Diocese (KAD) for permission to have access to official documents and records (Appendix E). The letter explained the purpose of the study, strict observance of confidentiality, and assurance that the study would not cause harm to anyone. Regarding the key informants, their informed consent was obtained (Appendix F). The informants (Appendix G) were asked if they wanted to remain anonymous or not.

In the conduct of the study, full confidentiality of the informants was assured. No information that discloses informant's identity was released or published without specific consent to the disclosure and only imperatively necessary.

²¹ Paul Atkinson and Amanda Coffey, "Analysing Documentary Realities," In *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*, ed. David Silverman (London: SAGE Publications, 1997), 57.

Definition of Terms

Mission. The term “mission” comes from the Latin word “*mittere*” meaning to send out, or the act of being sent out with authority to perform a special service. The term denotes a task that a person or group has been assigned and sent out to perform. In Christian usage, the term refers to God’s mission or mission Dei: God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit sending the church into the world.²² In this study, the term refers to the work of the church in expressing the redemptive work of God in all creation.²³ This means that Christian mission does not only refer to the task of converting the unbelievers to Christianity and establishing mission fields or stations, but also other works of the church including nurturing, caring and serving the community of believers and society as a whole.²⁴

Context. The term “context” refers to the whole environment in which the people of God live, including the social, economic, educational, religious, philosophical, and political; in brief, the human being’s culture.²⁵

Contextualization. Literally, the term contextualization means a *weaving together*.²⁶ In Christian usage, it can mean a context where the gospel and culture meet. Also, it can mean the understanding, presentation, and concrete interpretation of Christianity in accordance with people’s aspirations, needs, thought patterns and mentality.²⁷ Bias (2013) says that it is “the whole process of translating and communicating a concept in such a way

²² David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Orbis Books, 1991), 390.

²³ Bruce Bradshaw, *Bridging the Gap: Evangelism, Development and Shalom* (Monrovia: Mission Advanced Research and Communication Center (MARC), 1993), 2.

²⁴ Bradshaw, 2.

²⁵ Richar J Gehman, *Doing African Christian Theology: An Evangelical Perspective* (Nairobi, Kenya: Evangel Publishing House, 1987), 80.

²⁶ Leonard A Mtaita, *The Wandering Shepherds and the Good Shepherd: Contextualization as the Way of Doing Mission with the Maasai in the ELCT-Pare Diocese* (Erlangen: Erlanger Verlag für Mission und Ökumene, 1995), 73.

²⁷ Mtaita, 73.

that the recipient understands the message and finds this meaningful in his own context.”²⁸

This study adopts this definition, specifically emphasizing on the involvement of the Lutheran church in translating and practicing Christian healing among the Nyambo.

Healing. The term comes from the verb *heal* meaning to make sound, well, healthy again, or restore a health condition.²⁹ It seeks interventions on failed or impaired wellbeing. From a Christian point of view, the term can mean restoration of physical, mental, or spiritual health.³⁰

Traditional Healing. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines traditional healing/medicine as “the sum total of the knowledge, skill, and practices based on the theories, beliefs, and experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in the maintenance of health as well as in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illness.”³¹ This maintenance of health incorporates plants, animals and/or mineral-based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques and exercises applied singularly or in combination to maintain well-being.³² Richter (2003) in her paper on “Traditional Medicines and Traditional Healers in South Africa,” differentiates between traditional healing and traditional medicine. She refers to traditional medicine as the practices associated with the use of herbs to cure various diseases. But, traditional healing, which is delivered by traditional healers is divided into two groups: those healers

²⁸ Mona P. Bias, “Contextualization in An Ethnic Culture,” in *The Gospel in Culture: Contextualization Issues through Asian Eyes*, ed. Melba Padilla Maggay (Manila, Philippines: OMF Literature Inc, 2013), 274.

²⁹ Michael Agnes, “Heal,” in *Webster’s New World College Dictionary* (Webster’s New World, 2000).

³⁰ “Towards a Philosophy of Christian Healing in Africa: EBSCOhost,” 149, accessed July 15, 2019, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=25&sid=9e70f3aa-62c0-45a1-8d24-f011294dadd%40sdc-v-sessmgr03>.

³¹ “Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine,” accessed August 13, 2020, <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/health-topics/traditional-complementary-and-integrative-medicine>.

³² Ossy M. J. Kasilo and Jean-Baptiste Nikiema, “World Health Organization Perspective for Traditional Medicine,” in *Novel Plant Bioresources* (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2014), 23–42, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118460566.ch2>.

who serve the role of divination (diviners, mediums) and those who are only healers (herbalists). She further maintains that while diviners provide diagnosis usually through spiritual means, herbalists choose and apply relevant remedies.³³ Richter's understanding of traditional medicine and healing relates to that of the Nyambo in Tanzania. Hence, this study employs this understanding when talking about traditional healing. However, from the Nyambo Lutheran understanding, church members are prohibited to associate with both diviners and herbalists.

As pointed out before, the central point of this study will be thinking deeply about the relationship between Christian healing and Nyambo understanding on healing. Concepts, criticisms, and propositions regarding healing will be pointed out and discussed in the next chapters.

³³ Marlise Richter, "Traditional medicines and Traditional Healers in South Africa: A Paper Prepared for the Treatment of Action Campaign and AIDS Law Project," (27 November, 2003) 7-8. Accessed August 6, 2019, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/8359/89878408b67007fa60bc844300a67a91317c.pdf>.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND BIBLICAL-MISSIOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF HEALING

This chapter deals with review of literature, based on the understanding of healing as described from many facets. The review seeks to discover a relevant contextual and theological approach that is applicable in the contemporary context of the Nyambo. Because people are both natural and social beings, the chapter addresses the issue of healing insisting on physical, spiritual, social and mental wellness.

The Concept of Healing

The concept of healing originates from the fact that people face illness and seek healing. It means that healing is a response to illness, whether preventive or restoration of health. This process seeks to heal or restore the physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual parts of the human being. In fact, this understanding supports the idea of the World Health Organization (WHO) that, “Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”³⁴ It also relates with the World Council of Churches (WCC) definition of health as “a dynamic state of well-being of the individual and society, of physical, mental, spiritual, economic, political, and social well-being—of being in harmony with each other, with the material environment and with God.”³⁵ In this case,

³⁴ “Who_constitution_en.Pdf,” accessed August 3, 2019, https://www.who.int/governance/eb/who_constitution_en.pdf.

³⁵ Jacques Matthey, ed., *You Are the Light of the World: Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980-2005* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005), 139.

Concepts of healing and health refer to the bringing of wholeness and soundness to any or every aspect of human life. We talk of *natural healing* (through the body's intrinsic and environmental resources), *medical healing* (through preventive and therapeutic action) and *miraculous healing* (through spectacular divine intervention which sets aside or speeds up natural and medical processes). In all these phenomena, God is the source of healing).³⁶

As this study concerns contextualizing Christian healing, the review of literature starts with biblical-missiological perspectives on healing ministry as a contextual endeavour. With regard to the research topic, the researcher found no adequate research conducted so far regarding contextualizing healing among the Nyambo. A few scholars from the Nyambo context as well as others from within and outside Tanzania have discussed the relationship between Christianity and healing in a general way, but none of them, to my knowledge, have engaged in contextualizing Christian healing, particularly in relation to the Lutheran Church in Karagwe. However, there is a similar understanding of healing from other African ethnic groups as the Nyambo are part of the African-Bantu. Hence, resources from other African contexts will serve as the understanding of healing from Nyambo perspectives.

Healing from Biblical, Theological, and Missiological Perspectives

Christian understanding of healing centres on the Bible. For Christians, the Bible is taken as the source that reveals the way God has been dealing with his people both in the Old and in the New Testaments. However, from a Christian point of view, healing is not limited to cure of diseases only, but rather a restoration of a person to purposeful living in society. In the Christian sense, "A man is not healed until he is reconciled with God, with his fellow man, with himself, and with nature. The reconciliation is possible through the

³⁶ David John Atkinson et al., *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology* (InterVarsity Press, 1995), 431.

redemptive death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.”³⁷ Therefore, healing becomes Christian when it is done in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:6), when it is accompanied by preaching of the gospel (Matthew 10: 7-8), and when its motive is in Christian love.³⁸ In other words, Christian healing has a direct connection with faith in the Triune God.

Basing on the Bible, some theologians associate sickness and sins committed by human beings. For example, Cathbert K. Omari a Tanzania theologian in his article, “Health and Healing in Theology,” indicates the view that there is a close relationship between “sin”³⁹ and sickness, as well as healing and forgiveness of sins (John 5: 2-16).⁴⁰ According to Omari, sickness that mankind encounters is associated with man’s fall into sin because of one’s disobedience to God’s laws. Omari contends:

The personality of man has been invaded by a foreign thing, i.e., sin. Sin is foreign to human personality for it is not a part of creation. It is a parasite which has so become a part of human life that it cannot be wiped off again. It is in this situation where we all find ourselves involved. Man carries it day by day until he pays his last toll-death. Evidently every one of us carries this foreign thing. This is our sickness. This sickness brought many results which affect us very much. One of them is death (Romans 6:23). There is no way of escaping from this tragedy. Whether we like it or not, we must all die sooner or later. Death is one of the results of curse (Genesis 3:16-19). Another one is sickness. Death and sickness were not intended to be in the creation. Theologically, the source of all the problems whether physical, spiritual or mental is in that state of defection which resulted through the misuse of the free will which was created in man by God himself.⁴¹

Omari continually asserts that,

³⁷ Yedo Brandenburg, “Sickness and Healing as Challenges of the Christian Faith,” in *Lutheran Theologians Face Old Traditions and New Challenges*, ed. Klaus C. Waltz (Neuendettelsau: Institute for Studies of World Mission, 1989), 170.

³⁸ Brandenburg, 172.

³⁹ Sinclair B. Ferguson, J. I. Packer, and David F. Wright, *New Dictionary of Theology* (InterVarsity Press, 1988).” From biblical point of view, “sin” is a state of our being that separates us from the holy God. The term can also mean the missing of a mark or goal, the breach of relationship, the ungodliness, perversion or rebellion. It follows that the original sin as Augustine defined it is the inherited fallen nature of Adam which was transmitted biologically through sexual procreation (Genesis 3; Psalms 51:5). Martin Luther and Calvin understood original sin as the internal necessity which is rooted in the perversity of human nature.

⁴⁰ Cuthbert K.Omari, “Health and Healing in Theology,” in *Health and Healing: The Report of the Makumira Consultation on the Healing Ministry of the Church* (Arusha: The Medical Board of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, 1974), 34.

⁴¹ Omari, 31.

The sickness which appears physically is the expression of the inner state. These expressions could be mental, spiritual or physical, but the source of all these is the whole trouble. It is not for us to relate any physical sickness with a specific sin. Jesus refused to do so (John 1-5). The important thing is the principle which we have that man can rightly say that sin is not only the violation of the moral law, breaking of the relationship between man and his Creator, but also the violation of the harmony and unity of human personality.⁴²

In African context, any breach of harmony and unity in the community alienates a person and leads him/her to being excommunicated or being punished by the community. Therefore, the restrictions about maintenance of conviviality in the community are stressed in African philosophy of life. As it will be shown later, for the Africans, alienation is the worst kind of suffering, which originates from an individual's weakness of self desires and disobedience.

Nevertheless, from the biblical perspective, after the fall, mankind became sick and changed the original meaning of creation (Romans 1:18-32).⁴³ From these biblical verses, Paul discloses that the disobedience of people made God to give them dishonourable passions. He gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct. Therefore, they were full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, and ruthless. Because of the fall, man was no longer able to recognise the love which he was created for; rather he changed into self-centred (1Corinthians 13:5). Hence, man's days are numbered (Romans 6:23).⁴⁴

The beginning of sin is related to the story of eating the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3). This is the sin of disobeying God; the sin of acting independently of God; or the sin of

⁴² Omari, 31.

⁴³ Omari, 32.

⁴⁴ Omari, 32.

trying to be God.⁴⁵ It means that both moral and physical evils are linked with human disobedience to God's laws, which eventually results in sickness (Numbers 12:1-15; 2Kings 5:20-27; 2Chronicles 21: 12-15).⁴⁶ Therefore, the only way to healing or restoration of the relationship between man and God is to first recognize the original sin, then understand the love of God that God himself sought the way to make man achieve his original status of being man (Genesis 3: 9, 15).⁴⁷ Basing on this assertion, man's transgressions hasten God's hunger upon human beings.

In fact, the community of the Old Testament was different from that of the New Testament. The way God dealt with his people in the Old Testament has similarities and differences when compared with the way He did in New Testament. Further, the context of the Bible is in one way or another different from the contemporary context. Because of that, a contextual involvement in Christian healing requires a careful look at the relationship between Biblical healing and the contemporary context of mission.

Healing in the Old Testament. The Old Testament exposes God as the great healer who loves and cares for his people. He is the God who is always on the side of the faithful sufferers. Those who are not faithful, He punishes. Henga (2015) contends that from its beginning the Bible portrays God as the creator, and through his Spirit and the power of his creative Word, He fights against the disorders and all its variations (Gen.1, 2), such as those related to sin, hatred, sufferings, diseases, cure (Gen.3:19), and possession (1Sam.16:14-23).⁴⁸ That is to say that healing is a component of God's nature. He heals his people

⁴⁵ John Schwarz, *An Introduction to the Christian Faith* (Minneapolis, Minesota: tabgha foundation, 1995), 27.

⁴⁶ Wilkinson, "Health and Healing in the Old Testament," 13.

⁴⁷ Omari, "Health and Healing in Creation," 32.

⁴⁸ Isaac Batome Henga, "Eglise Evangelique du Cameroun: The Ministry of Healing and Deliverance in the EEC," in *Witchcraft, Demons and Deliverance: A Global Conversation on an Intercultural Challenge* (Zweigniederlassung Zürich: Lit Verlag GmbH& Co.KG Wien, 2015), 285.

spiritually, mentally, and physically (Exodus 15:26; 21:19; 2Kings 20:15; 20:18; Proverbs 3:8; 4:22; 12:8; 13:17; 16:24).⁴⁹ In these texts, God promises to protect and heal those who keep his statutes, who turn away from evil, who do righteous, and who maintain faithfulness in their doings.

In other places of the Bible, God is portrayed as the one who is not only the healer, but also *capable of causing illness*. The Old Testament indicates that God would send sickness to an individual as a punishment for transgressions or an expression of his wrath over those who break his laws (Gen.12:17; Ex. 4:11; Numb.12:9-12; 14:11-12; 17: 12-13; 1Kings.14:10-14; 2King.6:18-20; 1Chron.21:7-14). The bitterness of sin was tied to physical illness (Jer. 8:14-15; 20-22). Sometimes God would diminish resources, make land barren, or send enemies to attack in order to punish or discipline his people. While health and wealth are presented as rewards from God, sickness, misery, misfortune, and even death are seen as punishments over evil doers (Deuteronomy 32:39; Psalms 6, 38, 78, 88,102,106).⁵⁰

The WCC in its Preparatory Paper No.12 insists that, when sickness is perceived as the brokenness of the relationship with God; the recovery will be found in the restoration of the right relationship with God.⁵¹ Repentance and keeping God's commandments would lead a person to healing and to receiving blessings from God (2Kings 20:1-7; 2Chron.32:24-26; Deuteronomy 28). For example, in the book of Jonah we find a narration about the people of Nin'veh who proclaimed a fast and prayed to God for forgiveness (Jonah 3:5-10).

⁴⁹ Kingsley Weerasinghe, "Healing in Relation to Ministry and Evangelism," in *Mission Continues: Global Impulses for the 21st Century*, eds. Claudia Währisch-Oblau and Fidon Mwombeki (Great Britain: Regnum Books, 2010), 107.

⁵⁰ "Healing in the Old Testament," accessed August 5, 2019, <http://www.voiceofhealing.info/02history/oldtestament.html>.

⁵¹ "Preparatory Paper N° 12: Healing — World Council of Churches," Document, accessed July 12, 2019, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/other-meetings/mission-and-evangelism/preparatory-paper-12-healing>.

The king of Nin'veh made proclamation to all people in Nin'veh to turn from their evil ways and direct their cry to the mighty God asking Him to turn from his fierce anger and forgive them. It is stated that God heard their cry and decided to forgive them (Jonah 3:10).

In other places, it is indicated that God decided to punish his people because of their impatience. For example, from Mout Hor, the Israelites became impatient, spoke against God and against Moses, then God decided to punish them by sending them snakes (Numbers 21:4-9). Deducing from these texts we learn that the people of God then confessed their sins, they asked Moses to pray for them, Moses prayed for them, and God told him to elect a bronze snake and anyone who was bitten when he looked at it lived. This is one of the many narrations that show God's miraculous healing to his people.

While complete obedience to God's law led to good health, the consequence of disobedience would be disease and suffering (Exodus 23: 20-26; 28:58-62). As a way of restoration, the passage from the book of Proverbs 3:1-8 reveals the idea that living in complete obedience to God's law leads to a state of wholeness: physical strength, long life, and spiritual health. In the Old Testament, the word for such state of wholeness is *shalom*.⁵²

However, there are exceptions whereby sickness was not related with disobedience or sin. A good example is found in the book of Job where we read about Job as the upright man who experienced sickness without any blame. Nonetheless, Job's suffering was seen as a challenge among the Israelites. From philosophical understanding of life, the Israelites firmly believed and maintained the retribution principle that "the righteous will prosper and

⁵² Wilkson, "Healing in the Old Testament," 10. The term *Shalom* is commonly translated in English as peace. It comes from a Hebrew root which means to be complete, or to be sound. In the Old Testament, the terms is used to denote physical health (Gen.43:27; social harmony (Psalm 28:3; political peace (Joshua 9:15), and spiritual wholeness (Isaiah 32:17). From the Haya/Nyambo language, the word *Shalom* can be compared with "Emilembe" (a state of being peaceful in mind, body and intellect).

the wicked will suffer.”⁵³ Thus, it would be difficult for them to understand how a wise and just God who was in control of everything could allow good people to suffer. Based on this understanding, Job’s friends treated him as though he had committed some great wickedness. To them, Job’s suffering was evidence of his wickedness.⁵⁴ Despite this understanding, following Job’s righteousness and repentant spirit (Job 41: 1-6), at last God decided to heal him and blessed him with abundance of wealth (Job 42: 1-17).

More texts in the Old Testament reveal God as the one who heals. He wounds, but also binds up; He strikes, but his hands heal (Job.5:18). Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech as well as his wife and female slaves so that they bore children (Gen.20:17-18). Hannah received healing from barrenness in response to her personal prayers and Eli the priest’s declaration (1Sam.1:9-20); Elijah raised a widow’s son from death (1King.17:17-24); the Shunnamite’s son died and Elisha raised him from the dead; Naaman, commander of the King of Aram’s army, was healed of leprosy after following Elisha’s counsel (2King.13:21); the patient and trusting Job prayed for his critical friends and was personally healed (Job.42:10-17); Nebuchadnezzar looked to heaven and was healed of insanity (Dan.4:34,36); God promised to heal Sara’s barrenness (Gen.17:18-19) and this was fulfilled (Gen.21:1-7); the leprosy of Miriam and Aaron was healed (Num.16:41-50; 21:5-9).⁵⁵ The question in today’s context is whether such miracles, especially unnatural (such as healing insanity, barrenness, leprosy, and raising the dead) can continually happen or not? What will be the impact upon believers if the miracles do not happen? These questions will be discussed in succeeding chapters.

⁵³ John H. Walton, “Unpacking the Old Testament,” in *The Bible User’s Manual: The Complete Do-It-Yourself Guide*, eds. John F. Balchin, David H. Field and Tremper Longman III (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991), 38.

⁵⁴ Walton 38.

⁵⁵ “Healing in the Old Testament.” accessed August 5, 2019, <http://www.voiceofhealing.info/02history/oldtestament.html>.

The Old Testament also presents other healing powers than God's. These are powers that produce signs and wonders, but such miracles are seen as inferior (Ex.7:10-12).⁵⁶ For example,

The Egyptian magicians were able to perform miracles similar to those produced by Moses by the power of God up to a certain point (Ex.7:11, 22; 8:7, 18, 19). God did not dismiss Egyptian magic as superstition. Rather, the greater power of the Lord was demonstrated defeating the Egyptian magicians. Though the power of the Babylonian magicians was demonstrated to be inferior to that of God's power, yet the reality of their power is assumed (Dan.1:20; 2:2, 27; 4: 7, 9; 5:11).⁵⁷

In Hebrew-Palestinian times the medical profession was known in Egypt (Genesis 50:2), in Palestine (2Chron.16:12), as well as in Israel (Jer.8:22; Exodus 21:19). Different medicine (Isa.1:6; Jer.8:22; 2Kings 20:7) and rituals (2Kings 5:11; 1:2-3; 18:4) were also used in search of healing.

Further, God is indicated as capable of expelling evil powers, and He counselled His people not to associate with witchcraft practices (Deuteronomy 18:10-14; Micah 5:12-15; Isaiah 47:9-13; 2King. 23:24; 1Sam.6). In some cases, a witch or sorcerer had to be killed (Ex.22:18). According to Gehman, "The witch of the Bible is really a sorceress, for she used magical words, incantations and occult medicines. The Hebrew word *mekassepa* (Ex.22:18) and the Greek word *phamakeia* (Gal.5:20), refer to the use of drugs, charms, and magical incantations."⁵⁸ Witchcraft is in this text connected with the sin of the flesh. It is viewed as the extension of the activities of the devil.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Atkinson et al., *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology*, 431.

⁵⁷ Richar J Gehman, *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective* (Nairobi: East African Educational publishers, 1989), 111.

⁵⁸ Gehman, 111.

⁵⁹ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "African Pentecostalism, Deliverance and Healing: Recent Developments and New Challenges," in *Witchcraft, Demons and Deliverance: A Global Conversation on an Intercultural Challenge*, eds. Claudia Währish-Oblau and Henning Wrogemann (Zweigniederlassung Zürich: LIT VERLAG GmbH& KG Wien 2015), 18,19.

Elsewhere, the art of medicine is also mentioned somewhat incidentally (Gen.50:2; Jb.13:4; Jer.8:22).⁶⁰ “This implies that there are competent physicians with effective medicine in the land of Gilead to which God would expect His people to apply for healing.”⁶¹ Elsewhere, in the Apocrypha it is clearly indicated how physicians and their medicines should be treated:

Honour physicians for their services, for the Lord created them; for their gift of healing comes from the Most High, and they are rewarded by the king. The skill of physicians makes them distinguished, and in the presence of the great they are admired. The Lord has created medicines out of the earth, and the sensible will not disparage them. Was not water made sweet with a tree in order that its power might be known? And he gave skill to human beings that he might be glorified in his marvellous works. By them the physician heals and takes away pain; the pharmacist makes a mixture from them. God’s works will never be finished; and from him health spreads over all the earth. My children, when you are ill, do not delay, but pray to the Lord, and he will heal you. Give up your faults and direct your hands rightly and cleanse your heart from all sin...Then give the physician his place, for the Lord created him; do not let him leave you, for you need him. There may come a time when recovery lies in the hands of physicians, for they too pray to the Lord that he grant them success in diagnosis and healing, for the sake of preserving life (Ecclesiasticus 38: 1-15)⁶²

Further, after the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, God showed to Moses a tree that could heal their diseases (Ex. 4:1-7). However, seeking healing from physicians without crediting it to God would lead to failure. For example, Asa slept because he only sought healing from physicians (2Chronicles 16: 12-14).

Along this line, it can be said that healing in the Old Testament depended on people’s relationship with God and nature. God is seen closer to his people and ready to heal them from various ailments. Questions which rise include: to which extent should various sicknesses be associated with sin or man’s disobedience to God? What can we say about

⁶⁰ Atkinson et al., *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology*, 431.

⁶¹ Wilkinson, “Health and Healing in the Old Testament,” 14.

⁶² Wayne A. Meeks, *The HarperCollins Study Bible Black Leather: New Revised Standard Version (with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books)* (HarperCollins, 1993).

diseases such as those caused by bacteria, microscopic organisms, viruses or malaria caused by mosquitos? Does God send mosquitos to inflict malaria? How about natural catastrophes that happen each year in various places of the world? Should we continually hold on to beliefs that those catastrophes are part of God's punishment or signs of end time? These questions will be discussed deeply in chapter five.

Healing in the New Testament. Practices of healing in the New Testament refer mostly to the healing ministry of Jesus Christ and His apostles. It is important to first briefly see the context in which Christianity emerged before moving to healing practices. This is because healing was practiced among the people who lived in certain contexts, in a certain time, and with certain health needs. This understanding will help readers to comprehend the context that influenced the way healing was performed. In fact, the New Testament is the period that gives an account about the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, as well as His contemporaneous followers.

It is important to point out here that the foundation of Christian faith is based on the belief that in Jesus Christ the kingdom of God “is present in the life of the world and this presence is continued—under the sign of the cross—in the community that confesses Jesus as Lord and belongs to him as his body.”⁶³ If the kingdom of God is present on earth, and God heals ailments, it means that those who believe in Him experience His power of healing. This belief is very important for anyone wishing to become a Christian. It affirms the Christian concept that Jesus Christ died for all so that those who believe in Him may have salvation. This is the contextual message of God's incarnation into the world (2Cor. 5:19).

⁶³ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: Sketches for a Missionary Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Publishing Company, 1978), 135.

Parratt (1987), in *A Reader in African Christian Theology*, gives a more contextual emphasis: “The event of Jesus Christ has absolute primacy in the Christian message. The event of Jesus Christ, and nothing else, must be preached (1Cor.1:23). And when it is preached it must be presented that it finds a ready response in the hearers, that is, it must be comprehensible, using the ideas, symbols, conceptual values of the hearers; in short, it must be in their language.”⁶⁴ Therefore, for Christians, Jesus Christ is above any earthly powers, but His message must be translated into every culture so that it will have healing impact in the lives of the indigenous. It is for this reason that Christian contextualization is a process of translating the Gospel message into receiving contexts.

Let us first have a look at the context in which Jesus was born. The lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea were under the political control of the Roman Empire. This empire embraced not only the coastal territories but their hinterlands as well.⁶⁵

In the century and a half before the appearance of Christianity, the sways of the Senate and People of Rome was extended from Italy to include not merely Gaul, Spain, and North in the West, but also, in the East, the Hellenistic monarchies which had succeeded to the empire of Alexander the Great. This time of expansion coincided with an era of growing conflict and instability in the social and political life of the Roman republic.⁶⁶

Jesus was born and brought up in Nazareth of Galilee. This was the land despised by the more purely Jewish inhabitants of Judaea. Its people were of mixed racial stock, loyal to the Jewish religion and traditions, the home of a hardy, self-respecting population, and particularly pervaded by the messianic hope. In this context Jesus grew to manhood through years of unrecorded experience.⁶⁷ From this life Jesus was apparently drawn by the

⁶⁴ Marc Ntetem, “Initiation, Traditional and Christian,” in *A Reader in African Christian Theology*, ed. John Parratt (London: SPCK, 1987), 107.

⁶⁵ Williston Walker, Richard et al., *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th ed. (Edinburg: T&T Clark Ltd, 1986), 5.

⁶⁶ Walker et al, 5.

⁶⁷ Walker et al., 20.

preaching of John the Baptist. He went to John and was baptized by the prophet in the Jordan River. After his baptism there came the conviction that Jesus was appointed by God to fulfil a special role in proclaiming the kingdom soon to be inaugurated by the heavenly Son of Man. In his ministry, Jesus rejected popular conception of his messianic office and anticipated not political triumph but suffering as his own lot, even while believing that in his ministry the power of the coming kingdom was already at work.⁶⁸ Jesus' main missionary work comprised of teaching, preaching, and curing every disease and every infirmity (Matthew 9: 35).

The understanding of healing in this period of the New Testament has not much difference when compared to that of the Old Testament. Similar to the Old Testament where God is the healer, the New Testament also reveals Jesus Christ as the great healer. The New Testament starts by presenting Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah (Isa.61:1-3), the one ready to be involved in healing ministry. This ministry aimed at liberating mankind from all enslaving and oppressive powers (Lk.4: 18-19; Matthew 11:2-5). It is the same ministry in which the church is called to participate in this world.

The Bible reveals that Jesus Christ chose to launch his public ministry in his home province of Galilee (Matthew 9: 35). He performed many miracles that healed people and revealed God's power which was in Him. The Bible exposes various kinds of miracles performed by Jesus Christ during His earthly life. "The majority are *healing* miracles, such as exorcising demons, healing lepers, and giving sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf. The others are *nature* miracles, such as stilling the wind, walking on water, feeding the multitudes, and raising people from the dead."⁶⁹ Because of this ministry of healing, Jesus'

⁶⁸ Walker et al., 20-21.

⁶⁹ Schwarz, *An Introduction to the Christian Faith*, 89.

news spread among the people and many people sought healing from him. The gospel according to Matthew reports that

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them.⁷⁰

Many other healing miracles are indicated in the New Testament. In the gospel according to Mark, the first miracle is recorded when Jesus Christ performed in Capernaum the healing of a man with an unclean spirit. The unclean spirit recognized Jesus as the man of Nazareth, powerful, and Holy One of God. Jesus rebuked it, and it came out of the man. Because of this healing miracle, Jesus' fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding of Galilee (Mk. 1:23-28).

The second miracle was the healing of Simon's mother-in-law who was troubled with fever. After recovery, the woman served the people who were there. Jesus further healed many people who were troubled with various diseases and casted out demons (Mk.1:29-34). Hence, healing became "an essential dimension of Christ's mission and a concrete manifestation of His redemptive work. It is a sign and anticipation of the eschatological breaking in of the Kingdom of God (Lk. 10: 9) and participation in God's Kingdom, which will reach its consummation in *parousia*."⁷¹

Inevitably, the New Testament exposes healing as an integral part of Christ's mission to a needy world. He was a person possessing extraordinary personal authority and charisma, one who in his encounters with the sick had the ability to heal. He healed physical ailments such as fever (Mk.1:30-31), gave sight to the blind (Mk.8: 22-26), restored

⁷⁰ Matthew 4: 23-25.

⁷¹ "Preparatory Paper N° 12."

paralyzed and withered limbs (Mk.3:1-6), and cleansed skin diseases (Lk.5:12-16).⁷² Other ailments that Jesus healed included spinal deformity (Matt.13:13), paralysis (Mk.2:12; 3:5), chronic skin disease (Mk.1:42; Lk.17:14), menorrhagia (Matt.9:22), fluid retention (Lk.14:4), and complicated mental and spiritual disorders (Mk.1:34; Lk.4:41). Furthermore, Jesus seemed to have power over death (Lk.7:15; 8:55; Jn.11:44). He performed all of these healing miracles because the power of God was in him (Lk.5:17; Mk.1:31, 41; Lk.13:13).⁷³

It must be noted that anyone reading the New Testament will discover that most of Jesus' healing concerned expelling evil spirits. In his context, the evil spirits were the widespread cause for illness. They possessed people and disturbed their lives. They seemed to represent the powers of Satan against God's good will. Hence, casting them out was a sign of God's power over Satan. This might be the reason why Jesus related his healing and exorcism to the kingdom of God. According to Him, casting out demons meant the presence of God's power and the coming of His kingdom upon people (Mt.12:22-30; Mark 9:21-29; 3: 22-27).

Jesus' motive for healing was full of love and compassion. He was always moved by people's needs, especially the suffering, the sick, and the disabled (Lk.14:13-14).⁷⁴ His love and mercy towards the needy made him influential in this world. From his compassion, Jesus responded to the cry of the sick, healed them as a reward for their faith (Matthew 8:10-13; Luke 7:9-10; Mark 2:5), and as a demonstration of the presence of God's power over sickness and evil.⁷⁵

⁷² Donald Senior & Carroll Stuhlmueller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1983), 149.

⁷³ Atkinson et al., *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology*, 431.

⁷⁴ Cuthbert K. Omari, *The Church in Contemporary Africa: Issues, Problems and Challenges in the Eighties and Nineties* (Neuendettelsau: Erlanger Verlag für Mission und Ökumene, 2006), 103.

⁷⁵ Wilkinson, "Health and Healing in the New Testament," 23.

From His compassion, Jesus further associated with members that Jewish society considered outside the law. He shared table fellowship with people who were regarded as outcast, sinners, and tax collectors (Mt.9:10; 11:19; Mk.2:15-17; Lk.7:31-35; 15:1-2); sided with the oppressed against the exploiters (Lk.6:20-26), and freely associated himself with women (Lk.7: 36-50; 8:1-3; Jn.4:27).⁷⁶ This way he became popular and many people sought healing and reconciliation from him.

Jesus' methods of healing the sick as pointed out by Wilkinson, included healing from a distance, by a command and touching, or by combining touching and using material means such as saliva.⁷⁷ Further, in the case of casting out demons and raising the dead, He only gave a word of command and miracles happened.⁷⁸

However, Jesus' ministry never went without criticism. Wilkinson points out the presence of some people who criticised and associated the method of Jesus' healing the sick by a word of command as a kind of curing hysteria cases, hence comparing Him with a modern psychiatrist.⁷⁹ Despite that, Wilkinson sees no way the psychiatrist could cure a person with withered hand or atrophied, or a paralyzed person for forty-eight years.⁸⁰ For Schwarz, if we believe that Jesus Christ was the incarnate Son of God, then there is no reason to be hesitant about His performing numerous and very spectacular miracles.⁸¹ From the biblical perspective, it means that a kind of supernatural power or transcending power was within Jesus Christ. The gospels reveal that Jesus Christ gave the same power and authority of healing to his disciples (Mt. 10:1; Lk.10:9; Mk.6:7). Furthermore, before His

⁷⁶ Donald Senior & Carroll Stuhlmueller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission*, 147.

⁷⁷ Wilkinson, "Health and Healing in the New Testament," 24.

⁷⁸ Wilkinson, 24.

⁷⁹ Wilkinson, 24.

⁸⁰ Wilkinson, 24.

⁸¹ Schwarz, *An Introduction to the Christian Faith*, 90.

ascension, he commissioned his disciples to continue the ministry of healing in the world. He even gave them authority of raising the dead (Mk.16:14-18; Matt.28:18-20). As we read in Matthew 10: 5-8, the twelve are commissioned to do the following six things: to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; to preach about the immediate coming kingdom of heaven; to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to cleanse lepers, and to cast out demons.⁸²

Healing and the Early Church. This period concerns the early Christian community formed after Jesus' resurrection. The founding members of this community were the 12 disciples of Jesus. The community was composed of the Palestinian Jews who on the basis of Jesus' resurrection, proclaimed his imminent return as the fulfiller of God's kingdom, and who lived in anticipation of that event. They called themselves "the poor" (Galatian 2:10), or "the church" (Romans 15:25). They regarded themselves as simply Jews, as a renewed Israel, practiced baptism, gathered regularly, had mutual exhortation, and shared the Eucharist as well as communal fellowship meal.⁸³ Besides sharing the Good news about the resurrected Jesus Christ, the disciples were also involved in healing ministry.

A few days after the Pentecost, healings were performed by Jesus' disciples (Acts 2:43; 5:12; 8:7).⁸⁴ They healed the sick such as those possessed with unclean spirits, the paralyzed, and the lame. Conversely, more texts expose various healing miracles that were performed by the early church (Acts 3: 1-10, 9:12, 17, 18, 32-35; 14: 19-20; 20: 7-12). All miracles were performed in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Citing an example of Paul's healing, Amanda (2005) brings to light the point that Paul was both recipient of healing from Jesus Christ and became himself exorcist and healer

⁸² Wilkinson, "Health and Healing in the Practice of the Church in the Past," 47.

⁸³ Walker et al., *A History of the Christian Church*, 23-24.

⁸⁴ R.K. Harrison, "Healing," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, Vol.4, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 548.

after his conversion (Acts 14:10-15). As Hellenist, Paul conceptualized healing as a spiritual salvation (Rom. 6:4). As a Jew, he conceptualized healing as a communal as well as individual process, and one that involved moral behaviour, sexual purity, and genuine vitality. Being a Jew, Paul viewed illness, sufferings and death as a punishment for sin. Thus, repentance could rescue the sufferer from illnesses.⁸⁵ On the other hand, he viewed wholeness, happiness, and spiritual healing as a new creation that restored the well-being Adam and Eva had enjoyed in paradise.⁸⁶

As one reads from the New Testament, one discovers that healing miracles in the early church were exercised in connection with faith (Acts 3:16; 14:9), command by word in the name of Jesus Christ and touch by hands, body (Acts 19:14-16; 5: 15; 19:12), or prayers (Acts 9: 40; 28:8; 3:12).⁸⁷ This style of healing became an important component of doing mission in the early church. St. Paul was convinced that healing ministry is one of the gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:9).⁸⁸ This divine healing power is above evil spirits and witchcraft. For example, in the book of Acts 8:9-11 we read about Simon (the witch), the man who influenced many people because of his witchcraft practices, but upon being confronted by the heavenly power, he was later baptized and attracted to buy the power of the Spirit. Unfortunately, his request got negative response. With authority, Peter told Simon that there was no way one could buy God's power. From Peter's emphasis, the gift of God is only available to those who believe in Him and do what is right before Him (Acts 8:18-24), that is to say that from the Christian point of view, those who hold on firm faith in Jesus Christ will pray over the sick and the sick people will receive healing.

⁸⁵ Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 57.

⁸⁶ Porterfield, 57.

⁸⁷ Wilkinson, "Health and Healing in the New Testament," 26-27.

⁸⁸ Wilkinson, 28.

The New Testament also recognizes the presence of deceitful nature of many magicians. For instance, Paul encountered a certain magician (Acts 13:6) who opposed Paul's preaching, but Paul full of the Holy Spirit announced to him as the full of all deceit and fraud, son of the devil, enemy of all righteousness (Acts 13:10) as well as the agent of the Satan (Acts 13:6-9).⁸⁹ By the mighty power of Jesus Christ, magicians failed and on some occasions surrendered their magical tools (Acts 19:17-20).

Elsewhere, calling of the elders and praying over the sick and anointing them with oil was also practiced in the early church (James 5: 14-16). The prayer of faith would initiate God's compassion and save the sick. In this case, it can be assumed that the elders acted as representatives of the church community or congregation.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, visiting and caring for the sick, the bereaved, the oppressed, the hospitalized, the handicapped, the lonely, and those suffering from exploitation and injustices in the community revealed God's healing love and actions through the church (Matthew 25:35-36).

However, healing did not take place in some cases. Paul is a good example of people who pleaded for healing, but God's response was negative (2Corinthians 12: 7-10). According to Paul, a thorn was given in his body to keep him elate. God's answer to his prayer was, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2Corinthians 12:9). This reveals the fact that sometimes human beings should accept illnesses that are beyond their control. However, in this context, healing may mean accepting to live peacefully with sickness under changed living conditions. Also, it suggests that there is another answer to the problem of sickness other than its removal.

⁸⁹ Gehman, *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective*, 112.

⁹⁰ Wilkinson, "Health and Healing in the New Testament," 28.

On another occasion, instead of laying on hands and praying for Timothy, Paul advised Timothy with his recurrent dyspepsia to take a little alcohol for his stomach's sake (1Timothy 5:23).⁹¹ This may suggest the concept that not every disease requires mystical healing. Application of material elements is also suggested in the New Testament. However, Paul's advice to Timothy remains a challenge to various Christians especially to churches that restrict its members from taking alcoholic drinks.

Notwithstanding, as time went on, healing miracles got gradual challenges. According to Wilkinson, the history of the church reveals the fact that after the period of apostles we find little reference to healing miracles. The latter were no longer happening in the church as in the period of Jesus Christ and that of the apostles.⁹² Along this line, it would appear therefore that miracles of healing ceased at the end of the apostolic period, although the casting out of demons continued. This does not mean that God may not heal certain people in response to prayers nor use certain people in order to heal the sick, rather it does mean that these activities are extraordinary and no longer to be looked for in the ordinary life of the church. This cessation of healing miracles caused a paradigm shift in the church's attitude toward healing and curing the sick. There was a change from healing the sick to caring for them, eventually leading to the establishment of hospitals, where the emphasis corresponded with care for the sick as was foreseen by Jesus Christ (Matthew 25: 31-46).⁹³ Deducing from Jesus' words, it means that those who feed the hungry, those who welcome strangers, those who cloth the naked, those who visit the sick, and those who visit prisoners are promised blessings in the kingdom of God.

⁹¹ Wilkinson, 28.

⁹² Wilkinson, 49.

⁹³ Wilkinson, 49.

Love (2008), in writing about medicine in the early Church, disposes the early church period as the period which took note from the Greek, Roman, and Jewish cultures. He asserts that, Christians from the first days of the apostles associated healing as a sign of God's favour and grace. They recognized Jesus as the divine physician who heals people from various diseases.⁹⁴ As a way of emulating the healing ministry of Jesus Christ, the early Christians nursed the sick to express faith in the on-going healing power of Christ and to distinguish Christians heroic in the face of sickness and death from pagan fear. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna in the early second century, identified care of the sick as one of the chief tasks for which church elders were responsible. In urban areas, Christians banded together for worship services that incorporated exorcism and healing along with other practices that strengthened individuals through union with Christ and with one another as members of collective body of the world. Urban Christians exercised their faith through missionary outreach, often to the sick and the poor. Further, the church in this period regarded medicine as one of God's gifts for mankind.⁹⁵

Healing and the Medieval Period. This is the period dominated by Roman Catholic teachings.⁹⁶ It lasted from the fifth to the 16th centuries.⁹⁷ According to Wilkinson, this period witnessed healing in three significant developments: the rise of the monasteries, the foundation of hospitals, and the origin of the nursing orders.⁹⁸

Monasticism emphasized man's spiritual salvation and the monasteries endeavored to provide places where men could withdraw from the world of daily life and devote their time to spiritual exercises. Monasteries became centers for learning and concern for the sick. Monks became sick and the monastery had to provide an

⁹⁴ John W. Love, "The Concept of Medicine in the Early Church," *The Linacre Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (August 2008): 232, <https://doi.org/10.1179/002436308803889503>.

⁹⁵ Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, 43–53.

⁹⁶ Porterfield, 69.

⁹⁷ Wilkinson, "Health and Healing in the Practice of the Church in the Past," 51.

⁹⁸ Wilkinson, 51.

infirmary for them where they could be cared for. Also, many pilgrims came to the monastery for accommodation on their pilgrimages and so the monks built guest houses or hospices for them. These hospices also had to accommodate sick people and this became a recognized function of monastery to provide a hospital for the sick poor of its area. So, one of the important functions of the monastery was to keep alive knowledge of healing. They also established herb gardens and used these herbs for treatment of the sick. Eventually medicine benefitted from the knowledge gained by the use of these herbs and was able to isolate the active principles of the herbs in a pure form for use in treating the sick. Many of the famous hospitals of Europe were originally monastic foundations, e.g., the famous St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London.⁹⁹

Hospitals were founded in line with cathedrals that housed relics and were regarded as having healing powers. Some would have the tombs of a saint to which the sick would come hoping for healing, others would have a bone or other precious relic of some holy man that would be used for healing purposes.¹⁰⁰

Amanda maintains the point that many Christians revered the bones and dust of saints because of the healing miracles attributed to them. Apart from desire for cure, Christians had more reasons for venerating saints: victory over battle, revenge, happiness, repentance, goodness and purity, fear of hell, and desire for eternal life in heaven.¹⁰¹ Amanda echoes that in this paradigm, miracles were regarded superior over medicine, though the use of medicine was not expelled. Christ and his saints were regarded superior over medicine, although medical procedures were also regarded as useful models for describing how Christian miracles worked.¹⁰²

In this period, some people patronized magical healing. Such practices were against church dogma. Therefore, Church leaders cautioned the sick against the use of devilish charms, or trees or crossroads; rather they were advised to trust in God's mercy alone and

⁹⁹ Wilkinson, 51-52.

¹⁰⁰ Wilkinson, 52.

¹⁰¹ Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, 69.

¹⁰² Porterfield, 72.

receive the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in faith and reverence. Also, acts of anointing with oil were very common in this period. A sick Christian would ask some oil from his church and have his body anointed in the name of Christ.¹⁰³

Responding further to diseases, the Medieval Roman Catholic church also established hospitals in a number of cities primarily as institutions for the poor. Amanda reiterates that in the mid-sixth century, emperor Justinian assigned the provision of hospitals and physicians to bishops, and strengthened the connection between Christianity and medicine, locating medicine firmly within the ecclesiastical domain.¹⁰⁴

Nonetheless, Monastery centers housed herbs, apothecaries, and infirmaries for the sick elderly residents. Sick people could find herbal medicine from monastery centers.¹⁰⁵ From this paradigm, it is evident that the Roman Catholic Church involved earlier in contextualizing healing as both spiritual and physical task. The employment of both medical and herbal medicine reveals the church's realization of the importance of using God's creation for treatment of various diseases. Notwithstanding, beliefs on healing through saints were later criticized by the reformers.

Healing and the Protestant Reformation. The reformation broke with the medieval Catholic paradigm in the 16th century emphasizing justification by faith (Rom.1:16), seeing all people as primarily lost and in need of forgiveness from God. Reformers further insisted on subjective salvation and centrality of the Scripture.¹⁰⁶

With regards to healing, Amanda contends that there was a sharp critique on venerating saints. The reformers demanded a return to the primitive Christianity as

¹⁰³ Porterfield, 103.

¹⁰⁴ Porterfield, 76.

¹⁰⁵ Porterfield, 80.

¹⁰⁶ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 441–43.

expressed in the New Testament. For instance, from Luther's understanding, the power of the Holy Spirit could possess any person. Hence, he emphasized healing obtained through faith in Jesus Christ rather than venerating saints. Sick persons did not need to direct their healing prayers to saints. Luther's argument is that always God meets people through their humanity, through material forms of worship and piety. John Calvin, another firm reformer, regarded petitions to the saints for healing miracles as misguided and sinful. He condemned it by turning to the New Testament and letters of Paul for judgment of what constituted Christian life and ministry. However, despite condemning prayers directed to saints, the reformers facilitated various ways of healing such as hospitals, care for the sick at home, the use of herbal medicine, and anointing with oil. Given the importance of medicine, Luther emphasized that God created medicine and provided intellect to human beings in order to guide them and take care of their bodies so that they may have good health.¹⁰⁷ Within the framework of illness and suffering, therefore, it is important to conclude that healing in this period incorporated prayers, herbal medicine, and biomedicine. This understanding will help us later when we discuss about exclusive or inclusive of Nyambo traditional healing into Christianity. Now we turn to another important and challenging period in the church history.

Healing, the Enlightenment and Modern Science

The enlightenment is the time characterized by the use of reason. During its wake, which began in the 17th century in Europe, reason and science were given priority over beliefs. Humanity started to derive its existence and validity from "below," no longer from "above." In this wake, science insisted on direct causality as the clue to the understanding of reality. Science became completely deterministic, emphasizing on stable laws that guarantee

¹⁰⁷ Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, 94–111.

desired outcome.¹⁰⁸ In this case, “The human mind becomes the master and initiator which meticulously plans ahead for every eventuality and all processes can be fully comprehended and controlled. Conception, birth, illness and death lost their equality of mystery; they turned into mere biological-sociological processes.”¹⁰⁹ Such thinking inevitably caused a collision between religion and science, particularly on issues pertaining to causes and treatments of illness.

This period of the enlightenment marked a great change in the history of the Christian church. The period witnessed a great movement of thought, which began with the fall of Constantinople by the name of the Renaissance. This movement resulted in the birth of modern science and modern western medicine. Science and medicine began to investigate the world in its own way, and it was inevitable that science and the church had to come into conflict. Many discoveries based on the experimental methods and new discoveries were made and medical professionals emerged.¹¹⁰

Negative Impact of the Enlightenment on Christian Beliefs. Bevans and Schroeder (2004) indicate the separation of the church and state as the significant consequence of the enlightenment.¹¹¹

Religion was relegated to the private sphere of opinion and belief, while secular affairs were concerned with the public arena of facts and knowledge. This separation occurred first rather mildly in England and then a century later on the continent, the most dramatic and violent event being the French Revolution (1789). Furthermore, this separation pointed to the shift from the absolute authority of the monarchy to the authority of the people to participate and shape the emerging nation—Louis XIV’s “L’Etat, c’est moi” (“I am the State”) vs. Abraham Lincoln’s “the government of, by, and for the people.” Also, after the Napoleon wars, Europe would experience a

¹⁰⁸ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 263–65.

¹⁰⁹ Bosch, 265.

¹¹⁰ Wilkinson, “Health and Healing in the Practice of the Church in the Past,” 53.

¹¹¹ Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Orbis Books, 2004), 207.

century of relative peace and stability, during which Europe could and would extend its will and influence into the rest of the world.¹¹²

Sam Oleka, a Nigerian licensed pastor, and former member of Memorial Baptist church who died on Jan.19, 2016¹¹³ reveals in his article (1998) that scientists by their choice placed several limitations on their work. They agreed to deal only with observable phenomenon, excluding supernatural phenomenon from empirical scientific study. Some of them further ignored the possibility of miracles.¹¹⁴ Prominent Enlightenment thinkers “rejected the principle of the rule of dogma and, with it, a range of ideas both formal (such as revelation, where it provided exclusive, necessary knowledge) and material (such as the accepted doctrinal sin).”¹¹⁵

Positive Impact of the Enlightenment. Despite its critiques to religion, various scholars reveal several positive results of the enlightenment concerning health and healing issues. According to Amanda, the enlightenment contributed to new impetus for secular medicine, improved social welfare services for the sick, enhanced theories about causes of diseases, enhanced approach to public health care, and creation of new hospitals.¹¹⁶

On another level of analysis, Oleka argues that the presence of modern science and experiments have helped mankind to gain influence over environment, hence making life more comfortable.¹¹⁷ He sees developments in medical science as a contribution to life expectancy. This is evident through medical control of deadly diseases that have threatened

¹¹² Bevans and Schroeder, 207.

¹¹³ “Dr. Samuel Onyejindu Oleka Obituary - Frankfort, KY | ObitTree™,” accessed May 26, 2020, <https://obitree.com/obituary/us/kentucky/frankfort/sunset-memorial-gardens--mausoleum/dr-samuel-oleka/2365459/>.

¹¹⁴ Sam Oleka, “Interpreting and Applying the Bible in an African Context,” in *Issues in African Christian Theology*, eds. Samuel Ngewa, Mark Shaw and Tite Tienou (Kampala: East Educational Publishers Ltd, 1998), 113.

¹¹⁵ Ferguson, Packer, and Wright, *New Dictionary of Theology*.”

¹¹⁶ Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, 118.

¹¹⁷ Oleka, “Interpreting and Applying the Bible in an African Context,” 112.

human life for a long time—e.g., smallpox, polio, tuberculosis, leprosy, and yellow fever.¹¹⁸ Further, Oleka sees the invention of artificial organs: heart, eyes, hands, legs, teeth, and breasts as a way of making life a little more comfortable for those who have lost their natural ones to disease.¹¹⁹

Another important mark of the enlightenment is that the church later employed modern medicine in her healing ministry. This was the beginning of modern medical missionary movement, usually reckoned as beginning with Count Zinzendorf and the Moravian Church.¹²⁰ Wilkinson asserts that this movement started in August, 1732 when the first two Moravian missionaries left Zinzendorf's estate at Herrnhut to become the pioneers of the modern missionary movement. The real remarkable launch of the movement is referred in 1792 by the work of William Carey, the Baptist cobbler of Nottingham. Other missionary movements were started, such as the Scottish Missionary Movement (1796) and the Anglican Church Missionary Society (1799), which began to send missionaries to Sierra Leone in West Africa. The missionaries who went out sometimes got sick and needed doctors to look after their health. Doctors who went to mission fields were recognized as medical officers to the missionaries. Because of the great need of the indigenous, the doctors asked their missionary colleagues to allow them to practice medicine amongst them. Because of that need, the societies started to appoint some of them and recognized them as medical missionaries.¹²¹ "The doctors who became medical missionaries were trained in modern medicine and they went out to practice such medicine in the name of the Church,

¹¹⁸ Oleka, 112.

¹¹⁹ Oleka, 112.

¹²⁰ Wilkinson, "Health and Healing in the Practice of the Church in the Past," 54.

¹²¹ Wilkinson, 54.

and so the practice of Western medicine came to be accepted as part of the healing ministry of the Church in a way that it had never been before.”¹²²

As it will be shown in chapter four, the association of medical healing as part of missionary work was emphasized by most missionaries who introduced Christian faith to various places in Africa. The spread of Christianity went together with introducing modern ways of dealing with various ailments that disturbed people in various contexts.

However, despite its influence and insistence on reason, the enlightenment did not stop people from depending on faith healing. Some believers continued to seek healing from the church, such as coping with melancholy and emotional and intellectual stresses of life.¹²³ This became one of the reasons behind the continual emerging of shrines of the Blessed Mary, and faith healing seekers.¹²⁴

Christian Healing in Ecumenical and Contemporary Context

A search for contextual Christian healing as part of contextualizing the gospel has been an impetus issue for the church’s participation in God’s mission. This involvement seeks to reveal the incarnational mission of God which meets and ministers to God’s people in their own contexts.

During various Christian missionary meetings, issues about contextualization of the gospel were raised and deeply discussed. For example, the WCC conference on “World Mission and Evangelism” in Athens, Greece 12-19 May 2005, argued that God’s mission has been revealed as incarnational. Because of this, mission in the way of Christ has to be rooted in a certain context, concretely addressing the challenges in that specific context.

¹²² Wilkinson, 55.

¹²³ Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, 116.

¹²⁴ Porterfield, 116–18.

When the gospel interacts authentically with a culture, it becomes rooted in that culture and opens up biblical and theological meaning for its time and place. The gospel will affirm some aspects of a culture, while challenging, critiquing, and transforming others. Through such processes, cultures may be transfigured and become bearers of the gospel. At the same time, cultures nourish, illuminate, enrich, and challenge the understanding and articulation of the gospel. The gospel challenges aspects of cultures that produce or perpetuate injustice, suppress human rights or hinder a sustainable relationship towards creation.¹²⁵ In this manner, the gospel and culture enrich each other, and challenge the way we approach other people's understanding of life, in this case healing. It means that healing as a contextual issue remains a continuous missionary concern of the church. The church continually involves herself in the ministry of restoring and transforming people's lives.

Healing as Restoration and Transformation. López (2009) in "Transformative Spirituality and Mission as Healing and Reconciliation," emphasizes restoration where "in the changing conditions of reality, God's readiness to heal the wounds of humanity and restore broken relationships, starting with the victims, leads to living a liberating and saving experience of God which, taking root inside, manifests itself in new forms of humanity."¹²⁶ When the church hears the sufferings of humanity, reveals the powers that oppress and kill, and restores people's lives through mercy, that participation in God's mission becomes an essential part of the offering of salvation of Jesus Christ, which is lived and performed through his healing activities.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ "Preparatory Paper N° 1: Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today — World Council of Churches," Document, accessed December 5, 2018, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/other-meetings/mission-and-evangelism/preparatory-paper-01-mission-and-evangelism-in-unity-today>.

¹²⁶ Elisa Estévez López, "Transformative Spirituality and Mission as Healing and Reconciliation," *International Review of Mission* 98, no. 2 (November 2009): 284, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-6631.2009.00023.x>.

¹²⁷ Estévez López, 384.

Nevertheless, healing as transformation implies the beginning of a new life in Christ (Col. 1: 20; 3:19-10; Jn.10:10; Rev.21:5); restores brokenness of life; recovers life's wholeness (Gen.2:7; 1Thes.5:23; Rom.12:1-2; Jn.5:1-15); and returns life to its original source (Mk.1:15).¹²⁸

During the WCC international symposium on “Christian Responses to Global Health and Development” (2014), the participants emphasized the church’s involvement in healing ministry.

Actions towards healing and wholeness of life of persons and communities are an important expression of 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 (1 Corinthians 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, transforming structures that dispense injustice and the pursuit of scientific research on the other.¹²⁹

When the church reaches out to people and heals their wounds, it is automatically involved in God’s holistic mission that restores and transforms people’s health. In another WCC Consultation on “Mission, Health and Healing,” which took place in Accra, Ghana 4-8 December 2002, Dietrich Werner (a pastor of the Lutheran Church in Northelbia, Germany) pointed to diseases as a global problem that requires the church to be involved in healing ministry.¹³⁰ For Werner (2004), the worldwide rapidly spreading of various diseases such as HIV/AIDS, psychic diseases, depression, and mental disturbances requires the church to understand the issue of healing in a wider sense that includes social, political, psychic, spiritual, and intercultural dimensions of restoring wholeness. He further

¹²⁸ “Preparatory Paper N° 12.”

¹²⁹ “The Healing Ministry of The Churches Today — World Council of Churches,” Document, accessed February 22, 2019, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/other-meetings/the-healing-ministry-of-the-churches-today>.

¹³⁰ Dietrich Werner, “WCC Consultation on Mission, Health and Healing, Accra, Ghana 4-8 December 2002: Reflector’s Report,” *International Review of Mission* 93, no. 370–371 (July 2004): 381, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001455549&site=ehost-live>.

emphasized on the quest for a paradigm shift in missiology, which seeks restoration of health in a holistic manner.¹³¹ Werner called upon the church in the 21st century to participate in God's mission that takes into consideration proclamation, healing, and education as her core dimensions, insisting:

As was the case in the early church, the three dimensions of proclamation, healing and education need to be kept together in the understanding of the one missionary task of the church. Wherever a church emphasizes only one of these dimensions while neglecting the others, there is a growing danger of distorting the integrity and holistic nature of Christian mission. A church that focuses only on proclamation and education can easily lose wide sectors of its members because it does not address their inner and outer needs for healing, and turn into a dry, highly institutional established church without much vibrant worship life. On the other hand, a church that neglects education at the expense of healing and proclamation can lose touch with an important segment of its members as well, and turn into a breathless, event-centred church without much depth and apostolic continuity.¹³²

Further, the WCC (2005) pointed out profound remarks on the church's missionary involvement in healing ministry, stating that healing was an ecumenical concern.

Healing has been a permanent missionary priority. The history of mission has been enriched by the many initiatives taken by missionaries in their attempt to take the Gospel to all corners of the globe. Healing has also been integral to the ecumenical agenda from the very inception of the modern ecumenical movement. The Edinburgh Conference (1910), the following missionary conferences, as well as the WCC assemblies and several major ecumenical consultations have raised the issue on a larger or smaller scale. It must be noted that in the ecumenical movement healing was mainly considered as part of the churches' "medical missions", in a perspective linked to western cultures. In the Tübingen consultation (1964) the issues of community and "primary health care" came to the forefront and were linked to mission. Tübingen also emphasized the holistic nature and global scope of the church's healing ministry. It was followed by Tübingen II (1967), which established the Christian Medical Commission (CMC) within the programmatic structure of the WCC. For more than two decades, the CMC played a significant role in reminding the churches of the crucial importance of healing for the mission of the church and by challenging them to take it more seriously.¹³³

¹³¹ Werner, 380.

¹³² Werner, 381.

¹³³ "Preparatory Paper N° 12."

From this emphasis, Christian healing becomes restorative and transformative in the sense that it serves humankind holistically. It is well understood in today's context that not all illnesses are caused by germs or natural calamities. Even psychological factors such as anger, hostility, fear, resentment, anxiety, guilt, and egoism can cause emotional problems that may finally result in physical impairment. This means that the church should be very sensitive and aware when advising or applying different kinds of healing to its members. It should make thorough examination regarding causes of illnesses before advising or applying any healing method. Neglecting this awareness may lead to treating unknown illness using improper remedies.

Healing and Sacraments. Through sacraments the church exercises spiritual healing to the community of believers. The WCC preparatory paper emphasizes that

The Eucharist is a sacrament of healing. Through it, Christ is proclaimed as the Healer of the world, and the church, the living body of Christ, becomes a healing community and incorporates the whole creation into communion with God. Diakonia is the healing action of the Eucharistic community. The therapy that the church experiences and proclaims in the Eucharist must result in a therapy for the whole world. Through its missionary engagement, the church's healing diakonia (the sharing of God's healing and life-giving love) reaches out for the entire humanity and creation. The diakonia of the church in this comprehensive sense goes beyond the activities of "diaconal" institutions. The church fulfils its being and vocation when it becomes a healing community—a loving, praying, sharing, serving, proclaiming, empowering and reconciling community (Lk. 22: 27). Each of these dimensions and forms of the church's mission, along with spirituality, have a profound role in healing. It sustains and articulates the healing act of the church. Prayer has a therapeutic impact. God's healing power is revealed as a response to prayer.¹³⁴

Daniel Day Williams states that life experiences of church members are surrounded with sacramental expression of forgiveness and eternal life.¹³⁵ While Protestant churches

¹³⁴ "Preparatory Paper N° 12."

¹³⁵ "Chapter 6: Life in the Church and the Healing of the Human Spirit – Religion Online," accessed August 13, 2019, <http://www.religion-online.org/book-chapter/chapter-6-life-in-the-church-and-the-healing-of-the-human-spirit/>.

emphasize on two sacraments—baptism and Eucharist—the Roman Catholic Church has seven sacraments: baptism, Eucharist, confirmation, penance, marriage, extreme unction, and for the priests, ordination. All of these sacraments nurture human spirit.¹³⁶

Healing as Koinonia. “*Koinonia*” is a Greek term meaning simply “fellowship.” The term can also mean “sharing,” or “participation.” In the church usage, the term has a broader meaning beyond institution or organization. It takes the meaning that implies a fellowship of those who are called together by the Holy Spirit and in baptism confess Christ as Lord and saviour. These are truly committed community to Christ and to one another.¹³⁷

The church as both community and therapeutic body has a call to participate in God’s mission through sharing the spiritual and physical concerns of people. It is also called to heal wounds of its members and reach out to those in need of healing. This may be done through sacramental life, evangelistic witness and diaconal actions. As the community of believers, the church participates in enabling people to overcome their alienation from God and to each other. In this case, healing implies creation of harmony, peace and unity, as opposed to conflict and division (Jn. 5: 6-8, 14).¹³⁸

Healing and Christian Spirituality. Spirituality remains an important component to both Christians and non-Christians. The term can mean “a connection to something transcendent; seemingly small act having enormous personal meaning if it is indeed perceived to have such connection. This process is mostly individual’s struggle for holism, harmony of the self, and development of the self.”¹³⁹

¹³⁶ “Chapter 6.”

¹³⁷ Michael Kinnamon, “Koinonia and Philoxenia Toward an Expanded Ecumenical Ecclesiology,” 2015, 1, https://geii.org/ecumenical_trends/Koinonia_and_Philoxenia_Toward_an_Expanded_Ecumenical_Ecclesiology.pdf.

¹³⁸ “Preparatory Paper N° 12.”

¹³⁹ “ResearchGate,” 94, accessed February 5, 2019, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286459319_Institutionalized_spirituality_An_oxymoron/download.

When the term “spirituality” is defined exclusively in Christian usage, it may simply mean “living as a Christian.” In this manner, it describes the whole of the lives of those who have responded to God’s gracious call to live in fellowship with him.¹⁴⁰ The Latin root of the word “spirituality” (*spiritualitas*), attempts to translate the Greek noun for Spirit (*pneuma*), and its adjective (*pneumatikos*) as they appear in the New Testament Pauline letters. St. Paul used the adjective spiritual (*pneumatikos*) to refer to actions or attitudes derived from the work of the Holy Spirit in all Christians (1Cor.6:17; 2:10ff).¹⁴¹ In other words, spirituality concerns the way Christians live their Christian faith.¹⁴²

From a Christian point of view, spirituality calls believers to walk and live in the footsteps of Jesus Christ who was always closer to the suffering and the neglected (Luke 17: 11-19). Jesus Christ welcomed the outcast, fed the hungry, healed the sick, casted out demons, and even raised the dead. This way, as part of his spirituality, Jesus Christ involved himself in healing broken hearts. His involvement in healing was holistic: remedying physical diseases as well as liberating people from spiritual, physical and mental sufferings.

Writing from Asian context and emphasizing on women’s spirituality, Chung Hyung Kyung indicates important views from Asian women who gathered together at Singapore in 1987 and came out with their understanding of spirituality. According to them, spirituality is

faith experience based on convictions and beliefs which motivate our thought processes and behavior patterns in our relationships to God and neighbor. Spirituality is the integral wholeness of a person concretizing his/her faith through their daily life experience. Asian women’s spirituality is the awakening of the Asian women’s soul to her concrete historical reality—poverty, oppression and suffering. It

¹⁴⁰ Atkinson et al., *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology*, 807.

¹⁴¹ Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History: Questions of Interpretation and Method* (Orbis Books, 1998), 34.

¹⁴² Michael Amaladoss SJ. “Spirituality and Theology,” in *Spirituality of the Universal Church: Rediscovering Faith* (Vol.4), ed. Klaus Krämer and Klaus Vellguth (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian Publication, 2014), 71.

is a response and commitment of a soul infused by the Spirit, to the challenge for humanity dignity and freedom, and a new life of love.¹⁴³

On the other hand, the Third General Assembly of the Ecumenical Association of the Third World Theologians, meeting in Nairobi, Kenya on January 5-16, 1992, pointed out important statements that reveal the connection between healing and spirituality:

Spirituality spells our connectedness with God, to our human roots, to the rest of nature, to one another and to ourselves. Our spirituality is our experience of the Holy Spirit moving us and our communities to be life-giving and life-affirming. The Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered (Rom.8:26). We live our spirituality in a creative response to the cry for life, the cry for God. We celebrate our spirituality in songs, rituals and symbols which show energizing Spirit animating the community to move together in response to God. All existence is spiritual, our way of life as third-world people's is spiritual. The spiritual traditions of indigenous peoples-Native Americans, Aborigines, Maori's, Dalits, Tribal peoples of India and Black Africans in Africa-are a powerful reminder of this fact.¹⁴⁴

In this statement, the Holy Spirit is presented as the intercessor between God and human beings. In this case, people are encouraged to approach God, not through ancestors or other spirits, rather through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit becomes the healer and comforter of people. The question of how the idea of Holy Spirit can be reconciled with African beliefs in ancestors and spirits remains unanswered.

Healing, Exorcism and Deliverance. This is the kind of healing putting emphasis mainly in faith as a path to healing. Believers hold on to faith that God works his miracles of healing through prayer. In this context, faith healing can simply mean “a way of treating diseases by using prayer and religious faith.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Hyun Kyung Chung, *Struggle to Be the Sun Again: Introducing Asian Women's Theology* (SCM Press, 1991), 85–87.

¹⁴⁴ “A Cry for Life: The Spirituality of the Third World,” Third General Assembly of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, January 5-16, 1992, Nairobi, Kenya, http://disa.ukzn.ac.za/sites/default/files/pdf_files/BtMay93.1015.2296.007.001.May1993.7.pdf

¹⁴⁵ “Definition of FAITH HEALING,” accessed August 11, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/faith+healing>.

Prayers, which are sometimes accompanied by laying on of hands and the use of blessed materials provided by the healer to sufferers, are used in search of divine intervention against illnesses. These spiritual practices are common in most African contexts. Charismatic-Pentecostal churches are good examples of churches that practice exorcism and deliverance.

Writing from Tanzanian context, Katabaro (2013) reveals the idea that the Tanzanian Charismatic-Pentecostals believe that a born again Christian is enabled to overcome the powers of the invisible world including demonic or evil powers that cause misfortunes such as early death, illness, infertility, poverty or lack of prosperity.¹⁴⁶ According to Katabaro, healing prayers and miracle performance appeal to many people in Tanzania especially those having fear of witchcraft, demons or other evil powers. Charismatic-Pentecostal churches are much involved in healing and deliverance ministries and attract many people, including those from established churches such as the Catholics and the Lutherans. Their influences succeed because they deal with spiritual and psychological realities,¹⁴⁷ which are sometimes left behind by established churches.

Wrogemann (2015) relates his experience of African healing and exorcism after visiting a Lutheran parish (Kimara) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. In this visit, Wrogemann managed to attend and experience healing ministry and exorcism done by Pastor Willy Samuel Mastai in Kimara parish. According to Wrogemann, the pastor claims to cast out demons in the name of Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁸ Many people attend Mastai's ministry, especially women. During conversations, Mastai explained that many women attend his ministry

¹⁴⁶ Brighton Juel Katabaro, *Hunger for Success: An Investigation of Neo-Charismatic-Pentecostal Teachings on Prosperity and Their Challenges in Tanzania* (Germany: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2013), 13.

¹⁴⁷ Katabaro, 13.

¹⁴⁸ Henning Wrogemann, *Intercultural Theology: Intercultural Hermeneutics* (InterVarsity Press, 2015), 5.

because they are under stress due to patrimonial system in Tanzania, which tends to oppress women. The strains that women face impose sufferings on them and this suffering in turn makes them vulnerable and therefore receptive to the activity of evil spirits.¹⁴⁹

However, Wrogemann wondered at Mastai's ministry of exorcism and had many questions. He said that, from European thinking of the Enlightenment, issues regarding physical sufferings may be explained by means of examination and be treated with surgery and medication. Nevertheless, cases regarding mental illnesses may be examined by means of anamnesia and be treated with correspondence with psychological or medicinal therapy. This kind of approach to illness includes life in the church—in worship services, congregation activities and diaconal institutions. Wrogemann concludes that, from a Western understanding, Mastai's ministry may be judged as pre-modern, prescience, irrational, syncretic or disingenuous.¹⁵⁰

Writing from Asian-Filipino context, Genaro D. Diesto, Jr, a Baptist pastor and evangelist, reiterates that Filipinos believe that illnesses can originate from supernatural, physical causes or biological causes. Diesto (2015) asserts that,

For those believed to have physical or biological origins, western allopathic medicine is applied. But illnesses caused by the spirits can only be handled by spirit world practitioners of the spirit world, since neither western medicine nor the church are equipped to deal with them. Such a situation is lamentable since most Christian churches in the Philippines believe, theologically, in divine healing. The Roman Catholic Church, for instance, has a ritual for healing called the Rite of Anointing, while Evangelical Protestants feature prayers for healing in both mid-week prayer meetings and Sunday services. Filipino churches, with the notable exception of charismatics and Pentecostals, do not take healing seriously.¹⁵¹

Diesto suggests that in helping church members, the church should take the business of healing seriously. For him, the church should not only develop theology of healing, but also

¹⁴⁹ Wrogemann, 5.

¹⁵⁰ Wrogemann, 5–6.

¹⁵¹ Genaro D Diesto, Jr., *The Contextualization: An Agenda for the Churches* (CPU Press, 2014), 271.

be involved in practicing healing as an integral part of its ministry.¹⁵² This issue will be discussed more in chapter five.

Healing from African Ontological Perspectives

Before the wake of Christianity in Africa, Africans had their own ways of dealing with health and treatment of diseases. Amos L. Gimbi, a Lutheran-Tanzanian theologian, raises an important observation:

Treatment of diseases was known in Africa long before the coming of modern scientific medicine. The Africans had their own traditional folk healers who treated both organic and functional diseases. When original societies were injured or had infections, they instinctly resorted to materials available to them to treat the injuries or infections. Through observations as well as trial and error, they learned that certain plants, minerals, and animal products were of medical value. Most of the time diseases were known to be caused either by witches and the spirits of deceased, or by permission of Mulungu (God).¹⁵³

Aigbadumah (2013) affirms that in African context, healing entails spiritual, social, communal and material wellbeing. When Africans get sick, they generally seek solutions within social and religious realms, mostly associating healing with divine intervention in human crises.¹⁵⁴ On the other hand, Richard J. Gehman contends that in traditional African culture, people who got ill turned to traditional medicine man for assistance.¹⁵⁵ “Illness was never explained solely through natural means. There were reasons behind every illness that were rooted in their religious world view. The cure required more than natural herbs. Treatment included help from the spiritual world dealing with the causes of illness.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Diesto, Jr., 272.

¹⁵³ Amos L. Gimbi, “Healers and Healing,” in *Essential Essays on Theology in Africa*, eds. L. Kalugila and N. Stevenson (Usa River: The Research Institute of Makumira Theological College, 1987), 94.

¹⁵⁴ Christopher Aigbadumah, “Healing and the Emergence of African Indigenous Churches in Nigeria,” *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* 18, no. 3 (2013): 21, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0001998632&site=ehost-live>.

¹⁵⁵ Gehman, *Doing African Christian Theology: An Evangelical Perspective*, 33.

¹⁵⁶ Gehman, 33.

Gimbi retains that in Africa, “the practice of folk medicine is intricately interwoven with cultural patterns of the people. Most families believe in household gods and ancestral spirits which act as watchdogs for their physical, social, economic, and spiritual well-being. These impose upon such families regular sacrifices and taboos and contravention of these practices is supposed to cause ill health and in some cases sudden death.”¹⁵⁷

From the African point of view, the coming of missionaries, which was also accompanied by western medicine created uncertainty or interrupted the understanding of causes and treatments of various diseases and sufferings. Referring to Christianity in Africa, Gehman indicates that missionaries in Africa created a shift in the understanding of illness and healing, arguing that,

With the coming of the missionaries two developments took place. Western medicine was introduced in dispensaries and hospitals with a natural explanation for all sickness and healing. Secondly, many missionaries treated former diagnoses of sickness, as superstition, unworthy of belief. Whether these messengers of the Christian Faith were conscious of the problem or not, they were presenting a western approach to the sickness and healing which minimizes the centrality of the supernatural in all healing. Sickness is caused by microscopic organisms and the sick will become well through natural medications—yes, and through prayers.¹⁵⁸

The quest for balancing scientific medication and healing through prayers remains a challenge to majority of African Christians, especially those who regard Christianity as a replacement or fulfiller of their cultures. This is evident, particularly in the contemporary context of the Nyambo where majority of Christians regard Christian teaching on healing as a replacement of traditional beliefs and understanding of diseases and sufferings. The question here is, what should be the genuine indigenous way of doing Christian healing that allows Africans to celebrate the divine self-communication and healing of their spiritual, mental, and physical illness?

¹⁵⁷ Gimbi, “Healers and Healing,”95.

¹⁵⁸ Gehman, *Doing African Christian Theology: An Evangelical Perspective*, 33.

Aigbadumah contends that, for the Africans, health practices and attention are not given to the process of healing alone, but also to protection from everything that creates disequilibrium in life and against perceived enemies.¹⁵⁹ It means that from African perspectives, healing does not only mean cure or recovery, but also building confidence to fight against illnesses. Africans value life and understand it as God given gift that needs to be protected. Their understanding of healing originates from their worldview which places God at the top of the hierarchy.

Healing in Relation to the Omnipotent God. Kenyan theologian J.N.K. Mugambi (1989) indicates that Africans believe that God pervades the whole universe and he is in full control of various human experiences: good and bad.¹⁶⁰ Additionally, Sebastian K. Lutahoire, a Nyambo theologian, pastor and counselor asserts that, in the “African mind, God is holy, numinous, the Lord and controller of the universe. He is the Most High, Righteous One whose eyes are luminous and see every living visible and invisible organism.”¹⁶¹ These experiences, Niwagila (1991) said, are visible through human common experiences of life and includes one’s spirituality as expressed in prayers, music and rhythm, marriage, sacrifices, birth and death.¹⁶² Through these practices, Africans meet the Supreme Being, deities, ancestors and mediators.¹⁶³ As long as God is in full control of human experience, a search for healing and protection is always associated with belief in Him.

¹⁵⁹ Aigbadumah, “Healing and the Emergence of African Indigenous Churches in Nigeria,” 23.

¹⁶⁰ Jesse Ndwiga Kanyua Mugambi, *African Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Nairobi: East African Educational publishers, 1989), 10.

¹⁶¹ Sebastian K. Lutahoire, *The Human Life Cycle Among the Bantu* (Arusha: Makumira Publication, 1974), 9.

¹⁶² Wilson B Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church: A Case Study of the African Initiative and the Participation of the Foreign Missions in the Mission History of the North-Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania 1890-1965* (Hamburg: Verlag an de Lottbek, 1991), 417.

¹⁶³ Niwagila, 417.

Similar to what Mugambi has pointed out, Mbiti (1975) contended that for Africans, the basic belief is that God created the universe and sustains it.¹⁶⁴ The people do not see God physically, but they believe that He is always present with them. Their idea on the existence of God emerged after realizing their limitation and weaknesses. They realized that they are powerless against events such as death, calamity, and forces of nature. These weaknesses led them to believe that there must be someone who is more powerful, with full control over creation. Because of such belief, humankind started to depend on the Supreme Being and directed to him their prayers regarding experiences that were above their understanding.¹⁶⁵

Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917), a self-educated Englishman, also considered a search for answering existential questions as a starting point of beliefs in a god, gods and spirits.¹⁶⁶ He regarded such beliefs as a kind of childlike chain of learning of early human beings that helped them to arrive at their first religious beliefs.¹⁶⁷ Tylor argued that primitive people had a lot of questions that needed answers. What is the difference between the living and the dead? What causes movements, disease, death, dreams, and vision? From their encounter between death and dreams, primitive people came out with the idea that a human being is animated with a spirit or a spiritual being. From such empirical reasoning, primitive people came to believe that other creatures are also animated by souls. Such understanding developed more beliefs that as long as souls animate in humans, there can also be such powerful beings such as demons and angels that have no necessary attachment to normal physical objects although they certainly can enter and possess them if they wish. From that

¹⁶⁴ John Mbiti S, *Introduction to African Religion* (Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya Limited, 1975), 45.

¹⁶⁵ Mbiti S, 45–46.

¹⁶⁶ Daniel L. Pals, *Seven Theories of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 24.

¹⁶⁷ Pals, 24–25.

level, they developed further beliefs on the existence of the supreme spirits, the beings we call gods.¹⁶⁸

According to Mbiti, when Africans faced difficulties, they directed their cry to God in search of healing and protection of their lives. They believed that God blesses those who live according to his will and punishes wrongdoers. They also believed that God's punishment can come in the form of sickness, disease, accident, famine, drought, storm, war, calamity or even death. In order to get away from God's punishment, people had to pray to God, asking for forgiveness.¹⁶⁹

Because of God's supremacy, Africans approached Him through worship, which included prayers, performing rituals and making sacrifices. The purpose of worship is to keep their relationship with God and the entire visible and invisible world. In this way they created harmony in the world of humankind. Through worship they presented their requests to God: good health, healing, protection from danger, safe traveling, security, prosperity, and preservation of life, peace and various benefits for individuals. From their beliefs, Africans fear that if they do not communicate with God, things might get worse.¹⁷⁰ These beliefs have sufficed in minds of many Africans and it reveals itself in their daily lives.

Magesa (1997) states that when Africans encounter difficulties that they cannot escape, they always direct their trust in God.¹⁷¹ They really know that things such as

¹⁶⁸ Pals, 24–25.

¹⁶⁹ Mbiti S, *Introduction to African Religion*, 52.

¹⁷⁰ Mbiti S, 61–62.

¹⁷¹ Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1997), 12. Sebastian Lutahoire writes down that the Bantu of Tanzania did not know the cause of good or bad fortunes. They just ascribed their fate to mysterious forces and beings which existed in nature, See Lutahoire, *The Human Life Cycle Among the Bantu*, 12.

misfortune do happen, but they believe that it is always with the knowledge or permission of God.¹⁷² They associate this with God because for them,

God's care and concern for humanity are demonstrated particularly when human faces such "limit" experiences as drought, lack of food, illness, premature death and other calamities. Even though human beings and spirits may be the immediate causes of these disasters, God has the final say in what does or does not happen because God stands as Creator, Molder, Begetter, Bearer of the World, Potter, Fashioner, Builder, and originator of all. But God is also Helper in Trouble, Healer, Guardian along the Path, Ruler, Water Giver, Distributor of Goodness, Sustainer of all.¹⁷³

Following the logic of Magesa, one can see the point that Africans believe that God has a final say regarding healing. Magesa emphasizes this by saying that when God refuses to intervene, it indicates that it is time for sufferers to examine themselves, to see what they have done wrong, and then correct their behavior and repair the damage.¹⁷⁴ The challenge here is to what extent people's sufferings should be associated with God. This question will be dealt with in chapter five.

Healing and Spirituality from African Perspective. Spirituality remains the most important component regarding African understanding of life and healing. Shao-Tan (2018) sees it as a humanity essence that permeates human beings and gives meaning to all of life. Although it is difficult to define it, it is in essence, the integral and interconnected relationships with God, oneself, the community, and the environment. These varied relationships are what provide meaning and purpose in life and thus show a person's spirituality.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Magesa, 12.

¹⁷³ Magesa, 44–45.

¹⁷⁴ Magesa, 45.

¹⁷⁵ Amanda Shao Tan, "Spirituality for the Shamed Tsinoys with Disabilities: The Shamed Jesus in the Book of Hebrews," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 21, no. 1 (February 2018): 7–8, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLAI FZK180827001831&site=ehost-live>.

Du Toit (1989) asserted that, for most Africans, spirituality is closely linked to the existential needs of a people struggling to overcome oppression, poverty, exploitation, and dehumanization. One's spirituality can come to the full only when one is linked in the causal chain that binds the living, the ancestors, nature, and God together in one holistic field of force. He adds that African spirituality respects the personhood of all things in creation and therefore deeply respects nature. People are rooted in nature and therefore live a life of reciprocal dependence with nature.¹⁷⁶

Insisting on the importance of the inter-connectedness between human beings and nature, Du Toit quotes from Bediako and concedes that, "African spirituality is a spirituality of belonging. People belong to the soil. People belong to one another. People and ancestors belong together. Without this sense of belonging a human is more than half dead."¹⁷⁷

Healing and Mystical Powers. The mystical powers are always hidden and mysterious. Africans believe that there is a mystical order that govern the universe. Their belief in this order is shown clearly in the practice of traditional medicine, magic, witchcraft, and sorcery. Africans believe that these powers are available to spirits and certain human beings. People who have access to these powers are sometimes able to see the departed, hear certain voices, see certain sights, have visions, communicate at a distance without using physical means, receive premonitions of coming events, foretell certain things before they happen, communicate with the invisible world, and perform wonders and miracles that other people may not ordinarily be able to do. Further, Africans believe that the knowledge of mystical powers help them, especially in healing, rain-making, finding the cause of

¹⁷⁶ Cornel W Du Toit, "African Spirituality and the Poverty of Western Religious Experience," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 100 (March 1998): 43–45, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000999576&site=ehost-live>.

¹⁷⁷ Du Toit, 48.

misfortunes, troubles, and even detecting thieves. In some cases, the ability to use mystical power is simply inherited or passed on without the conscious intention of those concerned. Once a person has discovered that they have some of this power, they may then proceed to undertake further training in using it, or they may just neglect it.¹⁷⁸

Mystical powers are divided into two categories: good mystical powers and harmful mystical powers. While good mystical powers are those that enhance life, harmful powers are those that harm life. Such powers are mostly associated with witchcraft, sorcery, and bad magic. In various African communities, people fear and struggle to overcome harmful mystical powers. Owdernburg Mdegella (2005), a Lutheran theologian from among the *Hehe* in Iringa, Tanzania writes that the *Hehe* in Tanzania fear malevolent spirits that attack and kill people. According to him, these spirits arose from Arabic culture and have been commonly known as *jins* (killer spirits). They cause diseases, deliria and hysteria. In the New Testament term, the *jins* may be equated with demons or evil spirits.¹⁷⁹

Mdegella further indicates that diviners have accused sorcerers that they are the ones who attract or domesticate evil spirits. According to him, sorcerers use malevolent spirits in many ways including forced love, torture, transfigured depredation, translocation, and many more other evils. The malevolent spirits are therefore directly associated with sorcery or witchcraft. These spirits create fear and discomfort. They are basically the opposition of ancestral spirits.¹⁸⁰ Consequently, diviners come in and play a role of detecting malevolent forces in order that they can be exposed and destroyed.¹⁸¹ A critique

¹⁷⁸ Mbiti S, *Introduction to African Religion*, 41–43.

¹⁷⁹ Owdernburg Moses Mdegella, “Authenticity of Christian Conversion in the African Context: An Investigation on the Rationale for the Hehe to Convert to Christianity with Special Reference to Iringa Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (1899-1999)” (University of Kwazulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 2005), 91.

¹⁸⁰ Mdegella, 91–92.

¹⁸¹ Mdegella, 74.

rises against Mudegella's assertion because his understanding about malevolent spirits seems to be one sided. It may be true that *jinn*s are associated with Arabic context, but not all malevolent spirits can be traced in Arabia. The understanding of evil spirits prevails in African worldview.

Nonetheless, diviners will always be consulted in search for healing from illness that people believe are caused by evil mystical powers: witchcraft, sorcery, and magic. From African point of view, people believe that medical services cannot examine or treat sickness caused by evil powers. Only traditional specialists can deal with such sickness.

Mbiti concedes that witchcraft, magic and sorcery may be the most disturbing element in African life. People regard witches and sorcerers as the greatest enemies of any society.¹⁸² Writing from Sudanise Azande context, English anthropologist E.E. Evans-Pritchard (1976) revealed the fact that witches have to be fought because they cause illness and deaths to people.¹⁸³ In spite of the influence of modern education and religions such as Christianity and Islam, it has been difficult to eradicate witchcraft beliefs among the Africans. A good number of Africans, including Christians struggle to find charms that can heal and protect them from ailments associated with witchcraft. Nonetheless, some committed Christians consult Christian faith healers in search of prayers that they believe can heal and protect them from witchcraft practices. Because of the fear of witchcraft, some Christians, in this case from the context of the Nyambo, demonize most diseases that they face in life. Eventually, faith healers come in and are sometimes involved in healing diseases that might be cured in hospitals or by using herbal remedies, or through counselling.

¹⁸² Mbiti S, *Introduction to African Religion*, 166.

¹⁸³ E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande* (United States, New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 5.

Magic. Richard J. Gehman in his book, *African Traditional Religion: In Biblical Perspective*, reiterates that magic is the alternative in a fight against evil forces.¹⁸⁴ According to him, there are both good magic and bad magic. People use “good magic” for protecting themselves from evil forces that are found everywhere. Magic is accompanied by charms, amulets, herbs, seeds, powder, skins, feathers, chanting of magical formula, cuts on the body, and many other magical practices. Uses of good magic include healing (medicine empowered by magic), attracting lovers, gaining employment, productivity of gardens, accumulation of wealth, and protection from sickness.¹⁸⁵ From Gehman’s experience, “good magic” is openly favoured by societies and it is mainly used by people in favour of their benefits.

Evans-Pritchard asserts that both good magic and bad magic are usually performed secretly. A magic performer does not like other people to know the medicines he possesses because they will pester him to make magic on their behalf. He also fears that other people may recognize the root or leaves he uses and thenceforth be able to perform magic independently.¹⁸⁶

Contrary to “good magic,” “bad magic” is feared by people, practiced in hiding, mostly during the night, and without approval. This kind of magic is always associated with sorcery and witchcraft which is hated in African context.¹⁸⁷ Some people use these magical powers in search of harming their enemies or people they hate. For example, greedy people may use a spell or other poisonous elements associated with magic in order to harm

¹⁸⁴ Gehman, *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective*, 69.

¹⁸⁵ Gehman, 69.

¹⁸⁶ E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande* (United States: Oxford University Press, 1976), 182.

¹⁸⁷ Gehman, *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective*, 69.

successful individuals. Among the Nyambo, such people are called people *aba echiisho* (people with “evil eye”).

In African context, people with “evil eye” are also placed in the group of enemies of life. Among the Kipsigis in Kenya, the community regards persons with “evil eye” as people who are greedy and grumpy. They always feel bad when other people succeed in life and will find every means to destroy their success. The community believes that these people are incapable of not feeling envious. They may want not to destroy other people, but they automatically find themselves involved in harming successful people. People with “evil eye” will always cast a spell on every person they find successful. Because of the destructive practices, it is regarded as another type of witchcraft.¹⁸⁸

Healing and protection from illnesses caused by people with “evil eye” involves consulting diviners who are believed to have knowledge of herbs and magical powers against ailments caused by people with “evil eye.” Thus, a good number of Africans who patronize magic use protective charms in their houses, in offices, in fields, in business, and sometimes in their bodies.

While most traditional communities in Africa favour good magic, Christianity discourages it and regards it as part of satanic practices. For example, the Lutheran church in Karagwe seriously prohibits her members from associating with any magical practices. Nevertheless, a good number of church members continually seek and use magical powers secretly. Families in Karagwe use magical materials or formulas to protect their children, houses, business, fields, belongings, work places, traveling, and so on. The fact is that Christianity has not succeeded to uproot magical beliefs and practices among most Africans. Some Christians in the Karagwe Diocese attend churches on Sundays and hear the gospel

¹⁸⁸ Magesa, *African Religion*, 165–67.

preached, but go back to their magical practices after church services. They hold on to a belief that faith in Christ is insufficient to protect them and heal them from sufferings caused by “evil eye” powers or witchcraft and sorcery.

The researcher’s concern here is that as long as people continually use magical powers, it means that those powers have some impact on their lives. Hence, these practices cannot simply be neglected, but rather involves searching out about its realities.

Healing and Ancestral Spirits. The issue of ancestral relationship with the living is a complicated one. Some people think that Africans worship ancestors while others insist that Africans do not worship ancestors, but rather venerate, respect, or honor them. According to Mtaita, African communities unite all living and dead members of the society in their religions. They believe that the dead live somewhere in the realm between God and human beings. These living-dead associate with the living through acts such as in dreams, in offerings, in rites performed, and oracles consulted.¹⁸⁹

Mtaita argues that it is a wrong interpretation to think that Africans worship ancestors. Despite holding on to a belief that ancestors have a better chance to meet God as living spirits, Africans do not regard ancestors as divine. They believe that from their closeness to God, ancestors deserve veneration and respect during worship. They remain mediators between God and the living.¹⁹⁰ From the attention drawn by Mbiti, when African people face sickness and misfortune in their families, the cause may be attributed to the living dead, unless magic or sorcery and witchcraft are held responsible. In this case, spirits serve as an explanation of what has caused things to go wrong. In order to put them right, the spirits have to be satisfied by the performance of rituals, by following their requests, or

¹⁸⁹ Mtaita, *The Wandering Shepherds and the Good Shepherd: Contextualization as the Way of Doing Mission with the Maasai in the ELCT-Pare Diocese*, 42.

¹⁹⁰ Mtaita, 42.

by correcting any breaches of the proper conduct towards them. Generally, the diviner or medicine man is consulted in order to find out exactly what the alleged recently are benevolent towards their families as long as they are remembered and properly treated.¹⁹¹

Further, in times of crisis ancestors are invoked and solicited for the welfare of the living relatives. Such practices are evident in various African ethnic groups, in this case among the Nyambo. Christian ministers have been struggling to replace these beliefs with faith in Jesus Christ without success. Lutahoire points out that, because of the influence of Christianity, pastors and bishops of Christian religion are regarded as a replacement of traditional spirit priests who have gained the science of spiritism through training and ordination. For this reason, many Christians believe that prayers made by pastors and bishops weigh in the life of the afflicted. In their trust, Christians believe that church ministers have special gifts from the Spirit of God which is powerful over ancestral spirits.¹⁹²

From my experience, a good number of the so called “*Abarokokile*” (the Born Again Christians) consult their religious leaders when they feel to have been troubled by their ancestral spirits. From their belief, charismatic pastors, evangelists, and committed lay Christians have power from God that enables them to stop the intervention of ancestral spirits in their families. However, the challenge remains as there is a continual consultation to traditional diviners and healers, especially by Christians who believe that there are some cases that bishops, pastors, evangelists, and lay charismatics cannot tackle. For example, some church members in the Evangelical Lutheran diocese in Karagwe believe that traditional healers have special medicine associated with special rituals that are capable of

¹⁹¹ Mbiti S, *Introduction to African Religion*, 78–79.

¹⁹² Lutahoire, *The Human Life Cycle Among the Bantu*, 9.

stopping the intervention of ancestral spirits in their families. Such members will secretly apply traditional remedy associated with traditional rituals so that they stop the intervention of their ancestral spirits in their lives. A more detailed discussion about these beliefs among the Nyambo will be done in chapter three.

Healing and Belonging. An individual in African context exists because others exist. There is no “I” without the “We.” It is in the community where the individual feels loved and protected against enemies of life. Mbiti puts it rightly when he insisted on the African concept of life that “I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.”¹⁹³ It means that every individual is regarded as part of the whole community in times of happiness and sorrows. On one hand, Africans participate together in events of happiness such as marriage, naming, harvesting, success in life, and so on. On the other hand, they lament together in times of sorrow such as funerals, illness, drought, flood, and so on.

Special people play a role of maintaining communal immunity. Lutahoire argues that “the Bantu people of Tanzania are so conditioned by their culture, taboos and totems and they do not think of themselves as individuals, but as links in a big chain. Specialists—the so-called witchdoctors and medicine persons—play an important role in the protection and immunity of the people.”¹⁹⁴ For the Africans, the moral order, customs, and institutions safeguard the life of the individual and the community at large. Societies formulate moral values in order to deal with relationships among people, between people and God, people and other spiritual beings, and human beings’ relationship with the world of nature. Any breach of community morals is an offence against the departed members of the family,

¹⁹³ J.S Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya Limited, 1969), 108.

¹⁹⁴ Lutahoire, *The Human Life Cycle Among the Bantu*, 12.

against God or spirits.¹⁹⁵ Hence, any breach of community morals follows punishment to the offender. The offender may face misfortune and even death. If it happens that the community does not punish the offender, then the invisible world that includes God and other invisible beings will punish him.¹⁹⁶

As long as the African vital force includes God, the ancestors, and diverse spirits, eventually African ethical life must answer to religious demands. In this case, whatever a person thinks or does has a religious implication.¹⁹⁷ Magesa contends:

From the perspective of African religion, then, illness, poverty and other calamities point to a moral disorder in relationships, from the most elementary in the family to the most complex in the society. If the family, lineage, and clan enjoy good health and relative prosperity, particularly when the birth rate is good and the children survive to adulthood, it is believed that there is a good rapport in the network of relationships. The ancestors are happy, the vital force is strong, and there is harmony in the land and in creation. Such abundance of life is a clear indication that the population is upright with regard to the ancestors. Abundance of life indicates in clear terms that the norms essential for its preservation have not been disregarded or broken.¹⁹⁸

Mndeme (2008) sees a close relationship between illness and community belonging. He claims that within African culture, concepts of illness and health are far more social and cultural than biological.¹⁹⁹ He argues that most physical and emotional diseases are thought of being caused either by breaking social taboos and rules, or by the effects of evil forces, bewitchment or through the effect of a bad word or a curse. For example, a curse may affect a person, especially those who ignore the advice of their parents, elders, or ancestors. In search of healing, traditional healers come in and succeed to win the majority because their healing processes depend on socially accepted concepts of causation. Their healing process

¹⁹⁵ Mbiti S, *Introduction to African Religion*, 40.

¹⁹⁶ Mbiti S, 41.

¹⁹⁷ Magesa, *African Religion*, 57–58.

¹⁹⁸ Magesa, 81.

¹⁹⁹ Mathias Madafa Mndeme, “The Importance of a Sensitive Cultural Approach,” in *Restoring Life in Christ: Dialogue of Care in Christian Communities in African perspective*, ed. Oyvind M. Eide et al, (Arusha: Makumira Publication, 2008), 47.

usually aims at establishing hope, confidence, and restoration of relationships between the patient and significant member of the community.²⁰⁰

Mndeme's assertion is important for Africans understanding of healing, although some questions remain unanswered. How can one come to the understanding that certain illnesses are a result of breach of customary rules, not biological causes? How can evil forces be determined or proved as the causes of illness? How do curses result in illness? These thus imply that there is a need for deeper research in order to discover a broader perspective on illness and healing.

Healing and Natural Diseases. Natural diseases are those diseases that are naturally caused. Africans may be aware of the natural disease, but still the question "why me" remains in the minds of most people. Mugambi asserts that for Africans, natural causes are always very obvious, but when a problem gets serious people will start associating it with other powers such as spirits, people with evil eye, or witchcraft and sorcery. He gives an example of someone who trips on a stone while walking who immediately realizes and accepts the fact that he has tripped on a stone, yet asks, "why me?" At this level, belief of misfortune begins to make its way in African perceptions.²⁰¹ This is from the African belief that God, nature spirits, ancestors, witches, and magical practitioners are capable of inflicting disease through natural disasters. That being the case, it is always very difficult to differentiate between the real natural disease and natural disease initiated by mystical powers or magic.

Andrew F. Walls, former missionary to Sierra Leone and Professor Emeritus of the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World at the University of Edinburgh, contends in

²⁰⁰ Mndeme, 47.

²⁰¹ Mugambi, *African Christian Theology*, 173–74.

his book (1996)²⁰² that Africans regularly associate illness with spiritual power, moral, social offenses, conscious and unconscious. For them the question, “Who caused it?” is taken more seriously than “What is the illness?” Walls adds that in the process of searching out healing, traditional medicine supplied by traditional healers will be applied.²⁰³

Walls (1996) indicates further that Africans who become Christians are prohibited from associating with traditional healers and participating in magical practices. Those who become Christians are always advised to find answers for their illness by taking pills from hospitals. Despite this emphasis, Walls finally insists that some African Christians visit diviners secretly, especially during the night.²⁰⁴ Walls’ exposition confers the concept to this research topic that from a traditional dimension, when it comes to existential questions, Africans will turn to their traditional way of understanding life. African indigenous beliefs, in this case African religion, suffices in the minds of most Africans.

Du Toit claims that, while Westerners take a rational path, primal persons personalize and internalize the forces of evil and look outside the self to discover “who” has caused the illness, “how” it has been caused, and for “what reason.” He concedes that Africans believe that disease is not just a physical or mental condition, but also a religious matter. For them, sickness implies an imbalance between the metaphysical and the human world, disturbing the flow of life force.²⁰⁵ To turn this into Christian understanding requires contextual models that will reveal the presence and concern of the incarnate Christ in every culture. The idea is constructed from the reality that mission takes place in the context, not in the vacuum.

²⁰² Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, 1st edition (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 98.

²⁰³ Walls, 98.

²⁰⁴ Walls, 98.

²⁰⁵ Du Toit, “African Spirituality and the Poverty of Western Religious Experience,” 54.

A Quest for Contextualization Models

As contextualizing Christian healing is part of the church's missional call, various models can serve for an understanding of healing in cross-cultural contexts. The fact is that the act of being involved in God's mission as contextual has been in practice since the beginning of the church. Flemming (2002) asserts:

In fact, we can unearth the roots of contextualization in the New Testament itself as the church wrestled with how the gospel could be freed from an exclusive identification with Jewish culture and incarnated afresh into a predominantly Gentile environment or with how to work out the ramifications of the Christian message in light of the concrete needs of the various mission communities in the Greco-Roman world. In important ways, these New Testament patterns are analogous to those necessary for the effective contextualization of the gospel in every generation. Such scriptural precedents invite us to discover paradigms that might inform, guide, and suggest parameters for the on-going task of enabling the gospel to come to life in new settings.²⁰⁶

The term "contextualization" was introduced to the theological world in 1972 by Theological Education Fund of the WCC. Shoki Coe (a Taiwanese ecumenist) coined this term building on the assumption that all theologies are born out of social conditions and needs of particular context.²⁰⁷ Its emphasis "starts by studying the context and its historical, socioeconomic, political, cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious dimensions."²⁰⁸

Emphasizing the importance of context in mission, David Bosch cites two major types of contextual theology: indigenization model, which presents itself as translation or inculturation model; and, socio-economic model, which can be evolutionary (political theology and theology of development) or revolutionary in terms of liberation theology.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ Dean Flemming, "Contextualizing the Gospel in Athens: Paul's Areopagus Address as a Paradigm for Missionary Communication," *Missiology* 30, no. 2 (April 2002): 199, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001339718&site=ehost-live>.

²⁰⁷ Damayanthi M.A. Niles, "Contextualization," in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity*, edited by Daniel Patte (Cambridge: Cambridge university), 277.

²⁰⁸ Niles, "Contextualization," 277.

²⁰⁹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 420.

However, Kahakwa (2010) highlights seven models as important tools for understanding the way Christianity underwent paradigm shifts as it moved from Jewish context to other contexts. The seven models are historical transmission model, indigenous model, translation model, adaptation model, contextual model, cultural model, and intercultural model.²¹⁰ In this study, I clarify four models: historical transmission model, indigenous model, translation model, and adaptation model. Clarification of these models can provide the lens to examine mission as contextualization in relationship to Christianity and traditional understanding on healing among the Nyambo.

Historical Transmission. Kahakwa points out that historical transmission was the model used by missionaries as a major strategic instrument for presenting and transmitting their experiences of the gospel.²¹¹ Through this model, we learn the way Christianity expanded from its initial cultural base to other contexts. In this transmission, Christianity was regarded as a cultural dominant religion over receiving cultures.²¹²

Sanneh (2009) also speaks about the early church approach of mission as “mission through diffusion.” This can be equated with transmission. According to Sanneh, this method emphasized Mosaic code as the carrier and arbiter of the message.²¹³ By employing this method, religion expands by means of its founding cultural warrant and is implemented in other societies primarily as a matter of cultural adoption.²¹⁴ Writing from African context, Sanneh gives an example that, historically, most missionaries who came to Africa “assumed

²¹⁰ Sylvester B. Kahakwa, *A Haya African Interpretation of the Christian Concept of God: A Study of an Invocation of the Deity in a Threefold Form for Indigenising and Understanding the Christian Trinitarian Model* (Münster: Lit Verlag Dr. W. Hopf, 2010), 36–52.

²¹¹ Kahakwa, 36.

²¹² Kahakwa, 36–37.

²¹³ Lamin O. Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009), 33.

²¹⁴ Sanneh, 33.

that Africans had not heard of God and that it was their task to remedy that defect.”²¹⁵ He further states that through inquiring among the people, missionaries came to the realization later that there were already not only names of God among the Africans, but also the Africans revered, worshipped, and made sacrifices to God. Hence, some missionaries decided to engage the method of adopting local vocabularies and used it in their propagation of the gospel in African context.²¹⁶ Sanneh asserts,

Christianity is remarkable for the relative ease with which it encounters living cultures. It renders itself as a translatable religion, compatible with all cultures. It may be imposed or resisted in its Western form, yet it is not uncongenial in any garb. Christianity broke free from its exclusive Judaic frame and, taking a radical turn, it adopted Hellenist culture to the point of complete assimilation. Christian thought was Greek thought. In the expansion of mission beyond Rome and Byzantium, however, we find evidence of how that cultural captivity was challenged.²¹⁷

According to Sanneh, translation of the Bible (which will be the next model) facilitated resistance against forces of cultural chauvinism by interposing the barrier of Gentile inclusion.²¹⁸

In relation to Sanneh’s point, Kahakwa said that “mission by translating” enabled Africans not to become only hearers and receivers, but also interpreters, propagators and transformers of the gospel message.²¹⁹ In this case, transmission model became a tool for finding out whether the presentation of the gospel through historical and cultural transmission reached the intended goal or not.²²⁰

Indigenous Assimilation Model. Oyemomi (2005) defines indigenization as “a principle of adapting a foreign idea or culture to a native culture, norms and practices. This

²¹⁵ Sanneh, 192.

²¹⁶ Sanneh, 192.

²¹⁷ Sanneh, 56.

²¹⁸ Sanneh, 56.

²¹⁹ Kahakwa, *A Haya African Interpretation of the Christian Concept of God: A Study of an Invocation of the Deity in a Threefold Form for Indigenising and Understanding the Christian Trinitarian Model*, 37.

²²⁰ Kahakwa, 37.

is multi-dimensional in the sense that the local Christian culture has a free hand to develop the culture based on biblical orientation.”²²¹ This model emphasizes the point that *culture* is the main factor for indigenous assimilation, and it involves the process of relating and comparing two concepts: Christianity and indigenous point of view.²²² Kahakwa sees the importance of this model, as it can enable receiving cultures to assimilate the gospel message in their context. The model further helps receivers of the gospel message to receive the message in their contexts without any need of changing or transferring from their original context. In fact, the model uses contextual channels in interpreting the message.²²³

Emphasizing the “indigenizing” principle, Walls discloses that it is impossible to separate individuals from their social relationships.²²⁴ Walls insists, “We are conditioned by a particular time and place, by our family and group and society, by ‘culture’ in fact. In Christ God accepts us together with our group relations with that cultural conditioning that makes us feel at home in one part of human society and less at home in another.”²²⁵ Because of this, the desire to “indigenize” becomes a necessity so that a person who becomes a Christian can live as a Christian and at the same time as members of their society.

For Walls, to become a new creature in Christ does not mean starting life in a vacuum, or having mind as a blank table, rather it entails becoming new in Christ without losing one’s own culture and history.²²⁶ From such a point of view, Walls argues that conversion is not about “substitution, the replacement of something old by something new,

²²¹ Emmanuel O Oyemomi, “Globalization and Its Implications for Indigenization of Christian Worship,” *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* 10 (December 2005): 136,

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001767442&site=ehost-live>.

²²² Kahakwa, *A Haya African Interpretation of the Christian Concept of God: A Study of an Invocation of the Deity in a Threefold Form for Indigenising and Understanding the Christian Trinitarian Model*, 38.

²²³ Kahakwa, 39.

²²⁴ Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 7.

²²⁵ Walls, 7.

²²⁶ Walls, 8.

but about transformation, the turning of the already existing to new account.”²²⁷ In relation to Christian healing, it can be argued that Christian healing is not about substituting or replacing existing traditional beliefs and knowledge, rather transforming existing knowledge to new contextual account.

Translation Model. Kahakwa regards translation model as the main path of transmitting Christianity into and across cultures.²²⁸ The term “translation” does not mean a literal word-to- word translation. It means translation of meanings, idiomatic, functional or dynamic equivalence. It is translating the meaning of the gospel and doctrine into cultural context.²²⁹ In African context, it invites theologians to not only indigenize Christian concepts, but also allow the gospel to be shaped or painted in the African experience.²³⁰ Sanneh pointed out that when the message is translated, it avoids stigmatization of culture and allows the gospel message to have its place in new contexts.²³¹

Sanneh sees translation model as another way of instituting the recipient culture as valid and necessary path for proclamation of the gospel. This model allows differences of the original culture. It insists on indigenous theological enquiry, which arises as a necessary stage in the process of reception and adaptation.²³² However, the model insists on the message of the gospel as an unchanging message. The values and thought forms of culture and structures of social change are understood not as much as good in themselves, but as

²²⁷ Walls, 28.

²²⁸ Kahakwa, *A Haya African Interpretation of the Christian Concept of God: A Study of an Invocation of the Deity in a Threefold Form for Indigenising and Understanding the Christian Trinitarian Model*, 40.

²²⁹ Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Manila, Philippines: Orbis Books, 2002), 5.

²³⁰ Kahakwa, *A Haya African Interpretation of the Christian Concept of God: A Study of an Invocation of the Deity in a Threefold Form for Indigenising and Understanding the Christian Trinitarian Model*, 40.

²³¹ Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 1.

²³² Sanneh, 34.

convenient vehicles for this essential, unchanging deposit truth.²³³ From this approach, “The gospel demands frontier crossing for its wider transmission, and it is contradictory to its spirit to invoke cultural hegemony as the prerequisite of conveying God’s truth. Cultural hegemony violates the gospel by giving primacy to conveyance over the message.”²³⁴

Sanneh maintains that the apostles affirmed the message as irrevocable in its insistence (Acts 10: 34-35; Rom. 2:11) and that no culture is in itself unclean (Rom. 14:14). Further emphasis here is that all people are equal before God (1 Peter 2:4), all things are pure (Rom. 14:20), and no culture is God’s exclusive favourite.²³⁵ In relation to the understanding of healing, it can mean that any church wishing to participate in contextualizing healing in a new context should first take time to learn and understand the factors influencing certain people to adhere to certain kind of healing. In other words, this theory resists cultural superiority.

Adaption model. The adaption model involves two roles. The first role is transporting the gospel being clothed in alien culture to a given local culture and being imposed or adapted by respective people. The second role is adapting local culture and its models and theology for a better understanding of a newly delivered Christian theology or any religious theology. In African context, it implies indigenous people’s capacity to incorporate the gospel message in their lives. On the other hand, it implies to Christian theology adapting African cultural religious theology and concepts in a way that contributes

²³³ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 36.

²³⁴ Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 34.

²³⁵ Sanneh, 34.

to the formulation of local theology. Because of this, adaptation model becomes important for encounters between Christianity and culture. The model takes local culture seriously.²³⁶

In connection to mission as contextualization, in relation to Christianity and traditional understanding of healing, with consideration to these four models, I highlight one more model appropriate in the contemporary context of mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Karagwe Diocese. This is the incarnational model.

Mission and Incarnation. Andrew Walls sees translation as the art of the impossible. For him “God chose translation as his mode of action for the salvation of humanity.”²³⁷ The Bible states, “and the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory. The glory as of the father’s only son, full of grace and truth” (John.1:14). In this case, Christian faith rests on the divine act of translation. However, because of that, all translations of the Bible have its base in the translation of the incarnation of Christ.²³⁸

For Walls, “When God in Christ became man, Divinity was translated into humanity, as though humanity were a receptor language.”²³⁹ What does this mean in relation to healing? When Jesus Christ incarnates into people’s cultures, he becomes not only above their culture, not only against their culture, but also, of their culture, transformer, and fulfiller of all people’s cultures. The gospel message may reject some cultural elements, but also transforms others. On the other hand, because the gospel is clothed with certain cultural norms, it then can learn and sometimes be transformed by the receiving culture.

Citing Richard Niebuhr on the connection between Christ and culture, Mesa (2003) highlights important points that Christ becomes against culture in the sense that the gospel

²³⁶ Kahakwa, *A Haya African Interpretation of the Christian Concept of God: A Study of an Invocation of the Deity in a Threefold Form for Indigenising and Understanding the Christian Trinitarian Model*, 44.

²³⁷ Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 26.

²³⁸ Walls, 26.

²³⁹ Walls, 27.

opposes cultures that are against it. Only the gospel matters.²⁴⁰ Secondly, “Christ is of culture” in the sense that the gospel is understood with resources of the culture and the culture is interpreted through the gospel. Jesus Christ is regarded as the great moral teacher above any philosopher.²⁴¹ Thirdly, “Christ is above culture” in the sense that, the gospel is both in continuity and discontinuity with culture. The gospel completes whatever is positive in the culture. It is far above culture and guiding stick.²⁴² Fourth, “Christ the transformer of culture” regards human nature as fallen or perverted and this corruption appears in culture and is transmitted by it; human nature and culture have been corrupted and so pervasive. Only the gospel is capable of redeeming and transforming it without replacing it. Anything contrary to the gospel should not merely be rejected or eliminated, but transformed.²⁴³

I see incarnational model as helpful because it allows adaptation, adoption, and above all, contextualization of Christian healing that transforms and preserves receiving cultures. It means that in a search for an understanding of the relationship between Christianity and traditional ways of healing, the gospel message remains not only the guiding principle over cultural transmission, but also something to be contextualized.

Stephen B. Bevans, in *Models of Contextual Theology*, points to *incarnation* as one among the internal factors of involvement in contextual theology. According to him, there are two important factors to be taken into consideration as one engages in contextual theology: external factors and internal factors. External factors, according to Bevans, include historical events, intellectual currents, cultural shifts, and political forces.²⁴⁴ These

²⁴⁰ Jose M Mesa, *Why Theology Is Never Far from Home* (Manila, Philippines: De la Salle university Press, Inc., 2003), 35.

²⁴¹ Mesa, 37.

²⁴² Mesa, 37–38.

²⁴³ Mesa, 39.

²⁴⁴ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 9.

factors are important because they help a person become involved in contextualization to understand the way concerned people live, think, relate, and participate in leading their communities.

The external factors lead to internal factors to Christian faith, which reveals contextualization as a theological imperative. The internal factors include the *incarnational nature* of Christianity (John 3: 16), sacramental nature of reality, the nature of divine revelation, catholicity of the church, and church doctrine of the Trinity.²⁴⁵ All of these factors influence and contribute to the shifts in understanding mission as contextualization. When this is taken from African point of view, understanding of healing will start from the understanding of God as the creator and sustainer of all people.

All of the previously mentioned scholars presented good ideas and insights regarding mission as contextualization in relation to healing. However, the church's approach in addressing the Nyambo traditional understanding of healing as part of her missionary undertaking has not been studied. There are still unanswered questions. How can one reconcile Christianity and Nyambo traditional understanding of healing? Basing on the biblico-theological approach, what should be the continuity or discontinuity of the Nyambo understanding of healing?

Biblical-Theological Framework of the Study

To synthesize the literature review, the researcher formulates the biblico-theological framework in regard to contextualizing Christian healing among the Nyambo. The issue of healing has been discussed broadly by various theological and non-theological scholars. Findings revealed that spirituality, belonging, and the use of traditional medicine as well as biomedicine are among the means for people in search of healing. Because this study is

²⁴⁵ Bevans, 11–15.

about contextualizing Christian healing among the Nyambo, four themes have been identified, namely Healing as God's Own Activity, Healing as Restoration and Transformation, Healing as *Koinonia*, and Healing as Spirituality. Dealing with these themes requires the application of contextual approach that seeks to uncover cultural elements that can be appropriated into Christianity. Hence, historical transmission and indigenous assimilation models as applied by Kahakwa, Sanneh, and Walls are used as methods for gaining and realizing the relationship between Lutheran Christianity and Nyambo traditional understanding of healing.

Healing as God's Own Activity. From the biblical basis, God presented himself as the healer—both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. He became incarnate in Jesus Christ, healed many people, and sent his followers to continue his ministry of healing on earth. Sanneh asserted that the main reason for missionaries' preaching was based on the reality of God as the creator, sustainer, judge, and redeemer.²⁴⁶ This understanding was further expressed in the understanding of Jesus Christ as the historical and personal manifestation of God's power.²⁴⁷ As the personal manifestation of God's power, Jesus was involved in healing hence becoming the true healer expressing God's power and love towards the sick. In this sense, the understanding of Christian healing includes believing and depending on God as the healer and main source of life.

Restoration and Transformation. Healing is not only physical but holistic. When healing is done holistically, it restores people's health and becomes a transformative tool for

²⁴⁶ Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 192.

²⁴⁷ Sanneh, 192.

liberating God's people from sin and enslaving powers. The observation made by the WCC is important—that the world is broken and is in need of healing.²⁴⁸

For Nkansah-Obrempong, the church exists to minister to people and their needs. In order for its mission to be transformative, its proclamation must be seen in the context of service and serving humanity. Jesus Christ reflected this kind of ministry when he participated in caring about people's needs and suffering. Jesus healed the sick and fed the hungry. From this base, the church's mission must be holistic (Lk.10: 25-27; Matt. 25: 31-46; Deut.10: 17-19), addressing spiritual, material, and physical needs of the people (James 3: 18).²⁴⁹ That way the church plays a transformative, participatory role in God's mission of healing.

Spirituality. Christian spirituality puts emphasis on connectedness with God, nature and fellow human beings. Being in spiritual relationship with Christ facilitates healing to believers. The Holy Spirit works in believers who direct their dependence in God. Through being spiritual, Christians are able experience God's power of healing.

Koinonia. As a community of believers, the church shares with its members and other people the spiritual and physical blessings of God's gifts in their lives. Through living in fellowship, the church heals the wounds of its members and reaches out to those in need of healing.

²⁴⁸ "Preparatory Paper N° 12." According to this paper, the dawn of the 21st century is marked by growing uncertainty and anxiety. The world in which we live is broken, a world dominated by evil forces that are generating a culture of violence and hopelessness. Few examples pointed out are the AIDS pandemic, the genocide in Sudan, and the tsunami disaster in Southeast Asia. In addition, conflict, poverty and injustice have deepened the anguish and despair of many societies. Therefore, the world is in desperate need of healing in almost all spheres of human life.

²⁴⁹ James Nkansah-Obrempong, "Africa's Contextual Realities: Foundation for the Church's Holistic Mission: Africa's Contextual Realities," *International Review of Mission* 106 (December 1, 2017): 291–92, <https://doi.org/10.1111/irom.12186>.

From the literature review and biblical basis, the biblico-theological framework (Figure 1) serves as a method for analysing the encounter between Lutheran Christianity and Nyambo understanding of healing in terms of faith in the healing God, spirituality, belonging, and medication.

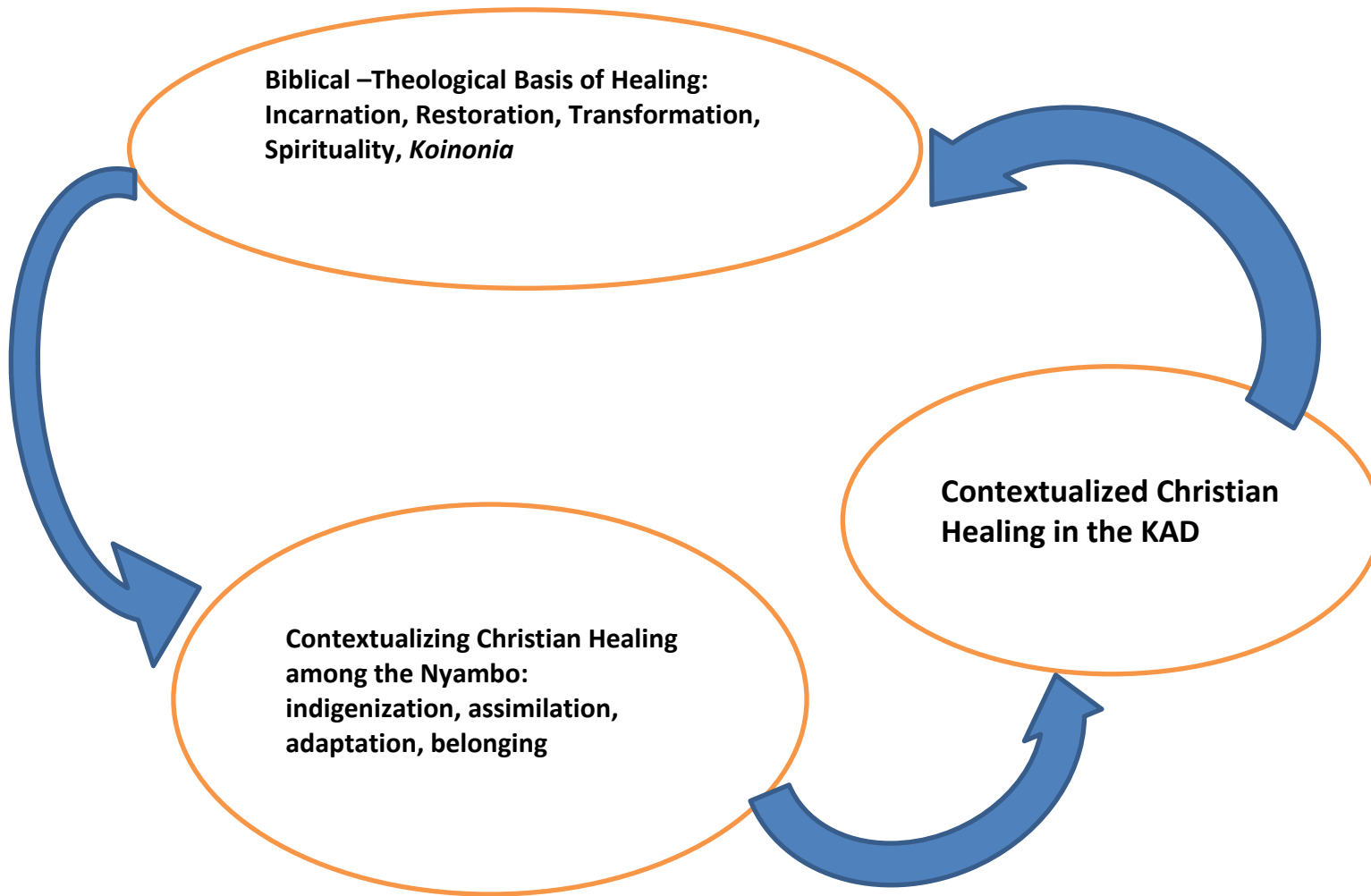


Figure 1. Biblico-Theological Framework.

CHAPTER III

HEALING FROM NYAMBO INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES

The preceding chapter provided general perspectives on healing as presented by various scholars. In this chapter I specifically present and concentrate on the ways the Nyambo understood and dealt with illness before and after the coming of alien religions, particularly Christianity. In all cases the pertinence of healing discussed in chapter two are incorporated and related to the understanding of healing among the Nyambo. When doing this, the cultural, social, religious and economic pre-mission situations of the Nyambo are presented as a way of understanding the Nyambo and their lives. This chapter argues that, like any other Africans, before the coming of Christianity and other alien religions among the Nyambo, life and its complicities continued in the way they understood it basing on their cosmological experiences and relationships. In this case, the chapter starts by giving brief information on the necessity of understanding Nyambo perspectives on healing, then goes on to explain about the Nyambo understanding of life and its relationship with healing.

The Necessity of Understanding Nyambo Perspectives on Healing

Issues of health and healing dominate among the Nyambo since time immemorial. Like any other people in the world, the Nyambo get sick and seek healing. In addition, similar to other tribes in Africa, the Nyambo hold in their mind that every sickness must have its cause. This cause may be natural, spiritual, social, or miraculous. In most cases, causes of illnesses are detected through experience before attending to medical treatments.

It is worthwhile to mention that nowadays, a number of the Nyambo are eager to go to hospital if the illness is not associated with witchcraft or spiritual causative. However, many people, especially those living in villages, do not have enough money to pay a physician when they are sick. Therefore, they seek help outside modern medicine, e.g., through herbal medicine, faith healers, spiritism, or diviners. This indicates the reality that indigenous healers remain strong as majority of the Nyambo continually trust and depend on them as a complementary way of healing. Nyambo indigenous healing and western healing complement each other. Thus, it will be an enormous mistake if the church rejects such a reality.

Therefore, for the sake of practicing contextual Christian healing, the church has to explore the relationship between Christian healing and Nyambo indigenous understanding of healing. This can be done by first hearing and learning about the Nyambo experience of life. It implies that one cannot talk about contextualizing Christian healing among the Nyambo without first gaining their perspective on health and healing. Further, because indigenous healing is part of people's culture, an understanding of the concerned culture becomes a necessity.

Schreiter (1985) insisted on this point by stating that "in ideal circumstances the process of constructing local theologies begins with a study of the culture, rather than with possible translations of the larger church tradition into local circumstance."²⁵⁰ Doing this will first and foremost avoid "the continuance of paternalistic history in which outsiders, barely familiar with a culture, would make decisions about adaptation and what would be 'best' for local culture."²⁵¹ Secondly, an understanding of people's culture leads to

²⁵⁰ Robert J Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1985), 39.

²⁵¹ Schreiter, 39.

maintaining openness and sensitivity to local situations and eventually leads to finding Christ in situation rather than concentrating on bringing Christ into the situation.²⁵²

On this basis, it is important to take note of the argument raised by Mtaita that, “missionaries need a minimum of basic cultural knowledge before starting their work within a foreign context. This formal knowledge allows the missionaries to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings and hardships and sometimes makes their work slightly easier and themselves more acceptable to their subjects, i.e. the people whom they are dealing with.”²⁵³

This point is more elaborated by Gunnar Ljungman, a Swedish missionary who was sent by the Church of Sweden Mission (CMS) to do missionary work in Bukoba and Karagwe, Tanzania. Ljungman sees the importance of missionaries to learn people’s culture before engaging in their missionary work.²⁵⁴ Such learning enables missionaries to understand better the people, hence serve them easily.

Ljungman and his family stayed in Bukoba from 1948-1962 and in Karagwe from 1970-1985. The first period mainly coincided with the colonial era and as a newcomer in Africa, Ljungman often felt lost and made many mistakes due to encountering new culture.²⁵⁵ Despite this, Ljungman asserts that the people in Buhaya were very patient and collaborative. The friendly spirit of the Haya, enabled him to learn a lot about their lives, hence managing to carry out the missionary work that was mainly focused on church, school, and health care.²⁵⁶ In his words, Ljungman testifies that his time in Tanzania helped him a lot. Ljungman says, “My encounter with the Church in Buhaya has strengthened my

²⁵² Schreiter, 39.

²⁵³ Mtaita, *The Wandering Shepherds and the Good Shepherd: Contextualization as the Way of Doing Mission with the Maasai in the ELCT-Pare Diocese*, 19.

²⁵⁴ Gunnar Ljungman, *Buhaya X 2* (Recito Forlag AB, 2010), 7.

²⁵⁵ Ljungman, 7.

²⁵⁶ Ljungman, 7.

Christian faith, and my life as a missionary has taught me to respect other people's faith. The most important experiences from my time in Africa are linked to the liberation of the country and church alike."²⁵⁷

The testimony from Ljungman reveals the fact that not all missionaries despised African culture. Some missionaries, particularly in Tanzania, respected the culture of their subjects and spent time to learn and to get to know their subjects before engaging in evangelization. According to Mtaita, missionaries who familiarized themselves with the culture of their subjects achieved better results than those who directly started with evangelization.²⁵⁸ Mtaita gives an example of Bruno Gutmann who was a missionary among the Chagga in Tanzania. Gutmann first spent time to comprehend the lifestyle and culture of the Chagga people before he started his missionary work.²⁵⁹ Emphasizing on this point, Bishop Dr. Sebastian Kolowa (1991) notes:

If there is any single person who has known the Chagga people of Kilimanjaro, despite being a foreigner, it is Dr. Bruno Gutmann, a missionary of the Leipzig Mission. As a pioneer missionary in the Moshi area, he learnt the Chagga language with genuine seriousness. He listened very carefully to every word. When he found out the deeper meaning of a word, he reserved that word for further dialogue, in order to find out its religious meaning. So in the course of time he got the knowledge of not only the language of the Chagga people, but also their religious practices.²⁶⁰

Consequently, Gutmann's work revealed great achievement among the Chagga. Gutmann himself "emphasized that the African traditions and existing social orders had to be regarded as an expression of God's creative will."²⁶¹ This was a very important contextual statement showing the importance of adapting indigenous cultural elements when translating the

²⁵⁷ Ljungman, 7.

²⁵⁸ Mtaita, *The Wandering Shepherds and the Good Shepherd: Contextualization as the Way of Doing Mission with the Maasai in the ELCT-Pare Diocese*, 19.

²⁵⁹ Mtaita, 19.

²⁶⁰ Sebastian Ignatius Kolowa, *The Impact of the Christian Church in Tanzania: 1885-1985* (Arusha: Makumira publication Six, 1991), 18.

²⁶¹ Joseph Wilson Parsalaw, *A History of the Lutheran Church, Diocese in the Arusha from 1904-1958* (Usa River, Arusha: Makumira Publications, 1999), 197.

gospel message into a new and foreign context. It additionally proves the idea that God preceded the missionaries. He related with the Africans in a way only known to Him. From such point of view, therefore, it is incumbent for one who tries to contextualize Christian healing to have a thorough understanding of the culture in which the gospel is to be set.

The Nyambo Life

The historical background of the Nyambo was explained in the introductory chapter. It is of paramount importance here to have a general overview of the Nyambo cultural, economic, and religious understanding of life that leads to their understanding of health and healing issues. This understanding starts from a family level where we find parents, children, and other relatives living together and sharing life as one unit of people. Indeed, it is important to emphasize the point made by Magesa (2003) that, “A people’s cosmology, their understanding of their own particular world, shapes the way they act in relation to themselves and to each other, and how they interpret the consequences of their actions.”²⁶² From such a point of view, the Nyambo understanding of health and healing depends on their relationships in the community, relationship with the Supreme Being, mystical powers, spirits, ancestors, other creatures, and nature in general.

Social-Cultural Life. Traditionally, the Nyambo had their own way of living, interacting, producing goods, and taking care of each other. Their life was constructed in the concept of “togetherness.”²⁶³ For them, life is meant to be shared. It is true, as Niwagila pointed out, that the Haya/Nyambo family is made up of husband and wife, parents and

²⁶² Laurent Magesa, Aids and Survival in Africa: A Tentative Reflection,” in *Morals and Ethical Issues in African Christianity: A Challenge for African Christianity*, eds. J.N.K.Mugambi and A.Nasimiyu-Wasike (Nairobi,Kenya: Acton Publishers, 2003), 198.

²⁶³ The term as used by the Nyambo insisted on living together and sharing in life as one people from birth to death. No one lacked in the society as long as the neighbors and other people in the society had something to share together.

grandparents, uncles and aunts and relatives, both the living and dead persons.²⁶⁴ Maintenance of convivial unity in this life was a necessity.

Indeed, the Nyambo are grouped in clans and family groups. Each family lives in a homestead and a group of these families form a village.²⁶⁵ It is in the community where the Nyambo took care of each other. It must be noted, as the then president of Tanzania, Julius K. Nyerere pointed out, that in African traditional communities, people lived together, worked together, and shared together from what they produced.²⁶⁶ It was the duty of society to take care of people who had difficulties in life, such as the old, the orphans, the sick and the widowed.²⁶⁷

Similar to other Africans, the Nyambo regarded every individual as part of the whole community in times of happiness and sorrow. Here is where the Nyambo saying, *Oruganda nkoju* (“belonging into a certain clan is a permanent mark”) gets its emphasis. A person who does not take seriously their belonging as part of the larger community is regarded as *Chintu busha* (just a thing). People regard them as a burden to the community.²⁶⁸ For example, during funerals, relatives and neighbours are required to accompany the bereaved for a duration of four days. During these days, close relatives and neighbours show their sorrow and pay respect and comfort to the bereaved. No one is supposed to work during the four

²⁶⁴ Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church: A Case Study of the African Initiative and the Participation of the Foreign Missions in the Mission History of the North-Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania 1890-1965*, 32.

²⁶⁵ Katoke, Israel K. *The making of the Karagwe Kingdom* (East African Publishing House), 9.

²⁶⁶ Julius K. Nyerere, *Freedom and Development/ Uhuru na Maendeleo: A Selection from Writings and Speeches* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1973), 10.

²⁶⁷ Julius K. Nyerere, “Socialism and Rural Development,” in *Rural Cooperation in Tanzania*, ed. Cliffe Lionel, Peter Lawrence, William Luttrell, Shem Migot-Adholl & S. Saul, 1-26 (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1975), 15.

²⁶⁸ Emmanuel Upendo Ngambeki, “Participation of the ELCT-Karagwe Diocese in the Mission of God to the Poor: With Special Reference to the Karagwe District-Kagera Region of the United Republic of Tanzania.” The Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Theology of Makumira University College of Tumaini University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of master of Theology in Missiology. Makumira, Tanzania, 2009, 23.

days of lamentation. Neighbours contribute food and money in order to assist the bereaved so that they are able to provide services to people who come to solace them. Those who neglect this obligation may undergo a period of separation until they reconcile, usually by paying fines. The important thing here is that no one is neglected, rejected, or isolated during difficult times of grieving.

Along the phenomena of globalisation, urbanization, and modernity, the Nyambo emphasis on communal life has been changed if not destroyed. In today's context, there is a misconception of regarding and measuring life exclusively in terms of money and material possession. An individual is valued and respected depending on what they have, rather than on how they share what they have with others. Consequently, individualism and materialism are slowly replacing the Nyambo concept of togetherness. This misconception gives birth to an alien understanding of life and its complexities. As such, those who face suffering such as disease, hunger, or extreme poverty have to struggle on their own in order to overcome those sufferings.

Nyerere (1975) related individualistic paradigm with colonialism.²⁶⁹ He argued that colonialists introduced the individualistic concept in Africa, emphasizing that “the way to the comfort and prosperity which everyone wants is through selfishness and individual advancement.”²⁷⁰ Because of being affected by colonial ideas and monetary economy, people started to value money over humanness. Such kind of life was against African traditional communal life.²⁷¹ The traditional communal life that Nyerere called “traditional

²⁶⁹ Julius K. Nyerere, “Socialism and Rural Development,” in *Rural Cooperation in Tanzania*, eds. Cliffe Lionel, Peter Lawrence, William Luttrell, Shem Migot-Adholl & S. Saul (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1975), 4.

²⁷⁰ Nyerere 1975, 4.

²⁷¹ Goran Hyden, *Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry*. (London: Heinemann Kenya Limited, 1980), 98.

*ujamaa*²⁷² living,” was built on three assumptions of life, namely respect, common property, and obligation to work. Every member of the family had the right to be respected, to share from what others possessed, and to be involved in the communal work.²⁷³

Things changed after the coming of Christianity and colonialism in Africa. Norlén (2003), a professor from Sweden who spent some years teaching at Makumira University in Tanzania, thought of Christianity and urbanization as other components of life that affected African culture.²⁷⁴ For Norlén, the process of Christianisation caused changes from tribal living to new Christian patterns of life among Tanzanians.²⁷⁵ For example, the Maasai people who used to be polygamous had to adapt to a new situation of monogamy when they decided to become Christians.²⁷⁶ Such imported Christian custom could not easily be accepted by the Maasai and other Tanzanians because it was not contextual to their situation of life.

Conversely, due to urbanization, most of the old ethical norms tend to disappear. In this new situation, individuals are adopting to the norms and values of the larger society, not those of their tribe or family. The basis of making decisions is shifting from tribe to the institutions or cooperative groups in the new society. People are no longer related to each

²⁷² *Ujamaa*, is a Swahili word for extended family, a social and economic policy developed and implemented in Tanzania by president Julius Kambarage Nyerere (1922-1999) between 1964 and 1985. Based on the idea of collective farming and the “villagization” of the countryside, *ujamaa* also called for the nationalization of banks and industry and an increased level of self-reliance at both an individual and national level. Nyerere argued that urbanization, which had been brought about by European colonialism and was economically driven by wage labor, had disrupted the traditional pre-colonial rural African society. He believed that it was possible for his government to recreate pre-colonial traditions in Tanzania, and, in turn, re-establish a traditional level of mutual respect and return the people to settled, moral ways of life. See- University College London Postgraduate Certificate in Education, Imperial College London M. S., and Heriot-Watt University B. S., “What Was Ujamaa and How Did It Affect Tanzania?,” ThoughtCo, accessed June 8, 2020, <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-was-ujamaa-44589>.

²⁷³ Hyden, *Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry.*, 98.

²⁷⁴ Gunnar Norlen, *The Christian and the Ethical Life: On Being a Christian in a Multicultural World* (Usa River, Arusha: The Research Institute of Makumira University College, 2003), 188–89.

²⁷⁵ Norlen, 189.

²⁷⁶ Norlen, 188–89.

other, but are more or less strangers to each other.²⁷⁷ Due to such changes, Norlén thinks that there is a need for a new and different paradigm of ethics that will be inclusive, allowing in all members of the society irrespective of tribe or family, a society where everybody will have opportunity to contribute to the well-being of its members.²⁷⁸ It means that there should be a dialogue between Christian message and receiving cultures. This dialogue will allow the gospel to enter into new cultures, not with the aim of destroying it, but rather learning and adapting cultural elements that are compatible with the gospel message.

Although this study does not intend to be sociological, still the understanding of socio-cultural and economic life of the Nyambo is of great importance as a step towards an understanding of contextualizing Christian healing among the Nyambo. It then follows that people's lives are always immersed in culture, and it is always difficult to separate the two. In this view, an understanding of the world and belief in God has its basis in culture.

The term culture may refer to “the way of thinking and behaviour shared by a substantial social grouping.”²⁷⁹ The Willowbank Report (1978) defines it as

an integrated system of beliefs (about God or reality or ultimate meaning), of values (about what is true, good, beautiful and normative), of customs (how to behave, relate to others, talk, pray, dress, work, play, trade, farm, eat, etc.), and of institutions which express these beliefs, values, and customs (government, law courts, temples or churches, family, schools, shops, unions, clubs, etc.), which binds a society together and give it a sense of identity, dignity, and continuity.²⁸⁰

Writing from Haya/Nyambo context, Niwagila asserts that African culture includes religious contents such as family, clan and society, marriage, birth, death, music, art,

²⁷⁷ Norlen, 189.

²⁷⁸ Norlen, 189.

²⁷⁹ Ferguson, Packer, and Wright, *New Dictionary of Theology*.”

²⁸⁰ Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, “Willowbank Report: Report of a Consultation on Gospel and Culture, Ja 6-13, 1978,” *International Review of Mission* 67, no. 266 (April 1978): 212, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdah&AN=ATLA0000766828&site=ehost-live>.

education, and language.²⁸¹ In his opinion, these elements should not be taken for granted when doing mission. Along the same line of thought, the Willowbank Consultation insisted that, “The process of communicating the gospel cannot be isolated from the human culture from which it is to be proclaimed.”²⁸² Therefore, it is important, as Bevans emphasized, that “our cultural and historical contexts play a part in the construction of the reality in which we live, so our context influences the understanding of God and the expression of our faith.”²⁸³

However, one should take into consideration that culture is not static, rather it is dynamic. Norlén (2003) states rightly that “culture is nothing absolute, nothing fixed, but rather a pattern of life, a learned behaviour.”²⁸⁴ From this understanding, one can conclude that any society’s culture is open for change and for learning from others. Nonetheless, Norlén gives an important note:

In the process of change it is important to look back at the roots and the identity of the culture in which we live. It might not be possible to preserve the whole cultural heritage, but it might at least be possible to preserve as much of that heritage that gives us an identity or a feeling of belonging to certain society or culture. Without such an identity or such relationships we will become poor in our souls and in the long run ever endanger the most important pattern in human life, which is life in close communion with other human beings, and with nature and all the other species around us.²⁸⁵

In light of this description, it follows that while affirming Christian healing in our contexts, it is also important to search out the continuity of our cultural heritage regarding healing.

Division of labour. Division of labour among the Nyambo was set according to age, gender and status. Until today most families are patriarchal. The father is the head of the

²⁸¹ Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church: A Case Study of the African Initiative and the Participation of the Foreign Missions in the Mission History of the North-Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania 1890-1965*, 404.

²⁸² Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, “Willowbank Report,” 222.

²⁸³ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 4.

²⁸⁴ Norlén, *The Christian and the Ethical Life: On Being a Christian in a Multicultural World*, 187.

²⁸⁵ Norlén, 190.

family. He is recognized as the legitimate controller of the homestead, family members, and economy. However, due to modernity, there are some gradual changes in the contemporary context that emphasize mutual participation in development between males and females.

In today's context, a good number of women have gained chances of participating in planning, caring, and maintaining their families. The liberation of women through education and advocacy on women's rights has enabled women to gain opportunities for involvement in controlling their families, running of business, holding leadership positions in church and in secular spheres, and participating in the politics of their country. This participation, in one way or another, has enabled women to feel respected and valued as co-partners with men. What is of interest here is that the creation of peaceful environment that allows mutual cooperation of men and women in maintaining family life enhances psyche healing—from the rationale that women feel happy as they participate in maintaining their families, leadership and development of society.

Economic life. Due to the good and favourable climate, the Karagwe district is blessed with many riches found through agriculture and animal rearing. Agriculture remains the cornerstone of the Karagwe inhabitants. About 96% of the inhabitants are peasants who depend on subsistence agriculture.²⁸⁶ They produce various kinds of crops ranging from food crops to cash crops. The crops grown in the area include bananas, coffee, beans, maize, cassava, sweet potatoes, corn, millet, sorghum, yams, and vegetables. In most cases the production is for local consumption.

Economically, the Nyambo depend on coffee as the major cash crop. Due to poor national and international trade policies, the coffee price has been fluctuating for many

²⁸⁶ Five Year Strategic Plan for the Karagwe Diocese: June 2008-May 2012, 4.

years, discouraging farmers' income and development.²⁸⁷ Nevertheless, some of the Nyambo involve themselves in both agriculture and livestock—e.g., cattle, goats, and sheep. Poultry breeding is also practiced in the area. Through these activities the Nyambo get food and income for their families. Nonetheless, the availability of food and income enhances peace, hence healing of people's lives.

Religious Life of the Nyambo. From a cosmological point of view, the Nyambo understanding of life is based on the concept that life-force flows from the Supreme Being to all creatures. The idea about the existence of the Supreme Being or God existed in the minds of the Nyambo since time immemorial. Their understanding of life encompasses inter-connectedness with God, the physical world, and spiritual world. In this worldview, the Supreme Being remains the source and controller of all living and non-living creatures.

Commenting on the relationship between spiritual world and the physical world, Rweyemamu (2014) reveals the concept that, from African point of view the spiritual world in which God, ancestors, and gods inhabit controls the physical world. The solution to any life problems should be traced in the spiritual world that influences what takes place in the physical world.²⁸⁸

Basing on cosmological order, the Nyambo like any other Africans believe in the Supreme Being (God) who transcends the limits of nature. They believe that elements of nature (rain, wind, hurricane, and thunder) are under God's control. Because of this concept, God is attributed with various names portraying his supremacy in terms of intrinsic attributes (omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, transcendent, and immanent), eternal

²⁸⁷ Five Year Strategic Plan for the Karagwe Diocese June 2008-May 2012, 4

²⁸⁸ Josephat Alphonse Rweyemamu, *Conversion Discourse in African Perspective: A Social-Missiological Study Among the Haya in the Lutheran Church, Northwest Tanzania* (Kamen: Verlag Hatmut Spenner, 2014), 120.

attribute (the one who exists forever, invisible and infinite), and moral attributes (love, mercy, justice, and righteousness). These attributes embrace God's power over illness and suffering. The Nyambo believe that, from His overall power, God may bless or act aggressively if disturbed. Thus, various names describe His qualities.

Katonda, "the worker of creation."²⁸⁹ This name is claimed to have its origins in Uganda referring to the creator, protector, and helper of the helpless.²⁹⁰ It is derived from the verb *kutonda*, meaning "to create." The Nyambo believe that *Katonda* created everything we see and those we do not see. For them the creator did not create and disappear, instead he continually possesses and governs that which He created. He protects, blesses and helps his people in times of happiness and difficulty. Hence, the Nyambo hold onto the belief that *Katonda* is the great healer who never fails (*Katonda Mutambi atalemwa*). This belief is depicted in their saying, "*Katonda talemwa*" (God never fails). Translators of the Bible into "Ruhaya" used the same verb *kutonda*, meaning "to create."²⁹¹

Ruhanga, "to bring into existence." This name comes from the verb, *hanga*, meaning "cause to exist by speaking or uttering words." The Nyambo believe that God created by uttering words. God spoke and things happened. Hence, they invoke and address *Ruhanga: Nitwenda Ruhanga, Ruhanga ayahangire abantu* (We love God, the God who created people by a word).

According to Kahakwa, *Ruhanga* or *Nyamuhanga* denotes double concepts: the Creator in the first place and God in the second place.²⁹² *Ruhanga* cares for and continually

²⁸⁹ Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 96.

²⁹⁰ Oleka, "The Authority of the Bible in the African Context," 76.

²⁹¹ Genesis 1: 1-Ebibulia, "Translation of the Bible in Ruhaya," Dodoma (The Bible Society of Tanzania), 2001. This translation started in January, 1982 in collaboration with the Lutherans, the Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, Anglicans, and Anabaptists.

²⁹² Kahakwa, *A Haya African Interpretation of the Christian Concept of God: A Study of an Invocation of the Deity in a Threefold Form for Indigenising and Understanding the Christian Trinitarian Model*, vii.

provides daily needs for his people and admonishes them in all situations. He is further the source and giver of all life.²⁹³ This name *Ruhanga* is used by other ethnic groups such as the Haya in Western Tanzania, and Nyoro, Toro, Nkole and Kiga in Uganda.²⁹⁴ Translators of the Bible into *Ruhaya* use the same term *Ruhanga* to mean “God the creator, who created by word.”²⁹⁵

Lugaba, “the giver or provider.”²⁹⁶ This is the high God, creator, and the one who possesses power over life and death.²⁹⁷ It is another name of God among the Interlacustrine people, especially the Shi of Zaire and the Rwandise of Rwanda.²⁹⁸ *Lugaba* is regarded as the possessor of all things and freely gives all that humankind needs, and He has authority to withdraw his gifts as He wills.²⁹⁹ The Nyambo believe that everything comes from *Lugaba*. For them, *Lugaba* blesses and curses, punishes and forgives, gives both fortunes and misfortunes. In this case, they hold on to the concept that God blesses his people by giving them abundance of life, and punishes those who act against his will through affliction, such as diseases, natural calamities, and other kinds of disaster. Because of this concept, the Nyambo thank God when they experience success in their lives and cry and lament to Him when they encounter sufferings.

Rubaho or Nyakubaho, “the existing one or the one who has been there, who is there, and who will be there forever.”³⁰⁰ The name is derived from the verb, *okubaho*

²⁹³ Kahakwa, 86.

²⁹⁴ Kahakwa, 93.

²⁹⁵ Genesis 1:1,3,6,9,14,20, “Ebiblia.”

²⁹⁶ Bengt Sundkler, *The World of Mission* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1963), 185.

²⁹⁷ Sundkler, 185.

²⁹⁸ Kahakwa, *A Haya African Interpretation of the Christian Concept of God: A Study of an Invocation of the Deity in a Threefold Form for Indigenising and Understanding the Christian Trinitarian Model*, 94.

²⁹⁹ Kahakwa, 94.

³⁰⁰ Kahakwa, 95.

meaning to exist or to be present with unlimited time.³⁰¹ When the Haya/Nyambo uses the name *Rubaho*, they mean the endless active initiatives and involvement of God in the universe. It implies the God who is omnipresent and omniscient, the one who existed before everything that exists. He is the God who deserves worship.³⁰²

Because God is *Rubaho*, he enables his creatures to exist forever. The Nyambo believe that an individual never dies, instead rests (*okuhumura*) or moves from the visible world to spiritual world. From spiritual world, resting people (*abantu abahumwire*) may intervene with those living in physical world. Kahakwa calls parents who die, “*Abazaile abahumwire*” (parents who are resting).³⁰³ This is so because Africans believe in the life after death. They hold on to a belief that death is not the end of living. For them a person dies in the sense that they depart, leave, or graduate from belonging to only the visible world into belonging to both visible and invisible universe.³⁰⁴ From the invisible world, the *Omuzaille ahumwire* (the resting parent) communicates with family members. However, not everyone who dies can be called *Omuzaille ahumwire* (resting parent). One qualifies to be called *Omuzaille ahumwire* if one lived a moral life while on earth, particularly by playing a role that benefited the community.³⁰⁵

Similar to other Africans, the Nyambo maintain a belief that, *Abazaile abahumwire* maintain relationship with their family members and may communicate with them through dreams, or through direct voices uttered through a certain member of their family. Nonetheless, *Abazaile abahumwire* are capable of blessing family members when treated rightly or may cause misfortune if mistreated. “They bring accidents, illness, death and

³⁰¹ Kahakwa, 95.

³⁰² Kahakwa, 95.

³⁰³ Kahakwa, 141.

³⁰⁴ Kahakwa, 141.

³⁰⁵ Kahakwa, 147.

material losses as a means of complaining that they have been neglected and that they require a sacrifice in order to be propitiated.”³⁰⁶ From this relationship, some Nyambo associate certain ailments with *Enchweke* (spirits of *Abazaile abahumwire*). This concept will be developed extensively later.

Omukama, “king.” The Nyambo use this name to mean both human king and God as the supreme king. When they use it referring to God, they mean the God who is powerful over any other king. He is the God who commands and things happen. He is the God who protects his people physically, spiritually, and mentally. He is the God who is capable of intervening in human life in terms of social, economic, and political arrangements. He is the *Omukama wabakama* (King of all kings), above all other worldly kings and the one that all other worldly kings bow before. Because of God’s supremacy, the Nyambo always associate religious, social, economic, and political success or failures with Him. For example, some people write on their doorposts, *Omukama niwe Mulinzi W’enju eji* (God is the protector of this house). When they struggle in life and end up failing, they always say, *Omukama tiyagoza* (God did not wish my success). When they suffer from a difficult illness, they say *Katonda alesile endwala egi niwe alagitwara* (The God who brought this disease will one day remove it from us). Even if they use or take medicine, they will always believe that the medicine cannot work without receiving blessings from God. When they wish a goodbye to each other, they always say, *Omukama kalagonza tulabonangana orundi* (We will meet again if God wishes). During conflicts or war with life enemies, the Nyambo say, *Omukama natulwanilira* (God fights on our behalf). It means that in whatever struggles, the Nyambo believe that God is always on the side of the righteous sufferer.

³⁰⁶ Sundkler, *The World of Mission*, 186–87.

Translators of the Bible into *Ruhaya* used the name *Omukama* to mean “the LORD.” This is the LORD who reveals his kingship, such as the good shepherd who cares and heals his people (Psalm 23), the one who owns the whole creation (Psalm 24:1), the one to whom people trust and direct their prayers (Psalm 25:1), and the one who protects his people against enemies (Psalm 27: 1-2).

Divinities. Divinities are gods or goddesses.³⁰⁷ From the Nyambo cosmological hierarchy, next to the Supreme Being are nature spirits (divinities) such as *Mugasha* and *Irungu*. According to Kahakwa, the Haya “believe that divinities have been created by God and that they belong to the category of spiritual beings similar to, but different from, spirits or ancestors.”³⁰⁸ Others hold on to the belief that divinities are “ghosts or superior persons or remote ancestors of whom later were believed to have changed into another status and thus became a divinity or remained in their former status.”³⁰⁹ They insist that some of the divinities had lived a human life on earth, had human local names, and were even involved in marital life. From the view of their names, each divinity was in charge of a given ministry on behalf of *Ruhanga* (the Deity).³¹⁰

There are different deities, each charged with a particular obligation such as over land, weather, water, animals, planting, and harvesting. The Haya/Nyambo believed that these divinities were empowered by God and functioned as intermediaries and intercessors between God and human beings.³¹¹

³⁰⁷ *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, “divinity.”

³⁰⁸ Kahakwa, *A Haya African Interpretation of the Christian Concept of God: A Study of an Invocation of the Deity in a Threefold Form for Indigenising and Understanding the Christian Trinitarian Model*, 130.

³⁰⁹ Kahakwa, 130.

³¹⁰ Kahakwa, 130.

³¹¹ Kahakwa, 130.

“Having been empowered by God, divinities are believed to bring good fortune to earth, as well as harmful events such as heavy rain, wind, thunder, disease and death. In some families or clans, divinities have been given shrines.”³¹² The Nyambo believed that divinities had sufficient power to affect the daily life of individuals. For them, when nature spirits got upset, people would experience troubles and sufferings.

There are a number of deities among the Haya/Nyambo, each charged with certain obligations. For example, the Haya/Nyambo believed that *Mugasha* was the nature spirit of seas and rivers. From their belief, *Mugasha* possessed power over rivers, winds, hurricanes, storms, weather, and plants.³¹³ When *Mugasha* became angry, great wind, destructive torrential rain, lightening, and thunder would come and cause destruction.³¹⁴ Due to this belief, the Haya/Nyambo had to consult *Mugasha* before doing anything associated with water or rainfall. For example, fishermen could not do anything before they consulted *Mugasha*.³¹⁵ On the other hand, when banana plants grew badly, people believed that *Mugasha* was angry, hence intervening against certain bad behaviours of the people. The only way to please *Mugasha* was through practising rituals or incantations needed in order to appease him or make him not to come back and destroy their field plants.³¹⁶

The other nature spirit was *Irungu* whom people believed possessed power over the land or soil and forests and was the leader of travellers.³¹⁷ The term *Irungu* means forest. The Nyambo held beliefs that *Irungu* led hunters and without him hunting could not be

³¹² Kahakwa, 130.

³¹³ Mutembei, *KRISTO AU WAMARA?* (Bukoba: North Western Publishers, 1993), 28.

³¹⁴ Kahakwa, *A Haya African Interpretation of the Christian Concept of God: A Study of an Invocation of the Deity in a Threefold Form for Indigenising and Understanding the Christian Trinitarian Model*, 131.

³¹⁵ Ngambeki, “The Nyambo Traditional Belief about Illness and Its Impact on Christian Faith,” 8.

³¹⁶ Mutembei, *KRISTO AU WAMARA?*, 30.

³¹⁷ Mutembei, 28.

successful. Even a person who embarked on a long journey through the jungle or forest usually invoked *Irungu*. Without invoking *Irungu*, anything bad could happen on the way.³¹⁸

Abachwezi. Next to divinities are spirits called *Abachwezi*. According to Mutembei, *Abachwezi* came from Sudan around 500 B.C. It was an ethnic group called *Abachwezi* and their spirit was called *Omuchwezi*. The *Abachwezi (oracles)* spread into Toro, Nkole, Bunyoro, and Kigezi Kivu.³¹⁹ The Nyambo beliefs of *Abachwezi* came into existence as a result of interacting with people who emigrated from Uganda. Among the spirits *Abachwezi*, *Wamara* was regarded as the head of all other spirits.³²⁰ The Haya/Nyambo believed that *Wamara* acted on behalf of God. He could bring the message of the Supreme Being to the people through possessing (*okubanda*) special people in the community. Their special task was to present people's requests to God through *Wamara*. Nonetheless, on some occasions, individuals or groups of people could directly pray to *Wamara*. Mutembei points out one example of a prayer which his family used to pray at home and this prayer was directed to *Wamara*.

*Mukama wange Wamara Milindi ya Lugaju. Habuka habuka, Enju egi eba yawe, Ontunge amani, ndole, nkule mbondebonde nk'oruti rw'omulyango. Ndye enyama nkonge eigufa nka kiino ekya Muganga. Nchume ebisige nka nyina mbona. Ntakanenwa mugongo. Enju yange egume. Omwana n'omwijukuru, Omwihwa n'omwihwakazi, Omukazi wange ashohore nataha. Waitu olinde eitunga lyange, N'eminya yange, n'enjoka yange; Bitakuhugera. Kyonkai waitu Wamara osingire. Majula akaiba emyendo yange, Mara wamuleka yameler, abana nazara kanyia-bufura (My Lord Wamara, the greatest voice, welcome, welcome. My house belongs to you. Grant me strength so that I may grow well and become old like poles of a thatched house. Enable me to feast meat and grow well. Protect me from headache and spinal suffering. Let my house remain strong as well as my child and grand-child. Let my wife go out and come back safely. Protect my wealth, my lizard, my rat, my snake. Oh! Lord Wamara, Majula stole my clothes but you did not punish him. He bears children like fish).*³²¹

³¹⁸ Ngambeki, "The Nyambo Traditional Belief about Illness and Its Impact on Christian Faith," 8.

³¹⁹ Mutembei, *KRISTO AU WAMARA?*, 28.

³²⁰ Mutembei, 28.

³²¹ Mutembei, *KRISTO AU WAMARA?*, 26–27.

This prayer expresses and represents the highest trust that people had in Wamara. From their belief, nothing would happen or succeed without assistance from Wamara.

Nyabingi. The Nyambo also believed in the spirit called *Nyabingi* (the one who owns great possession). *Nyabingi* was assisted by *Ryangombe*. This spirit was believed to come into Karagwe from Rwanda with people who emigrated from there. *Nyabingi* was believed to possess great power over people's life and was greatly feared.³²²

Ancestors (emizimu, enchweke). Similar to other African ethnic groups, beliefs in ancestors are common among the Nyambo. A connection with ancestors is not a myth but a reality in everyday life of some of the Nyambo. It is not astonishing to hear someone saying, “*mbaile nkwasilwe enchweke/omuzimu gwa swenkulu*” (I was possessed by grandfather's spirit). Both Christians and non-Christians are affected by beliefs in ancestors. The church has been trying hard to restrict her members from involving themselves in ancestral beliefs and practices but she has not been successful. Some of the church members practice ancestral rituals in hiding due to fear of being seen, punished or put under church discipline by their church leaders.

While some of the Nyambo claim to only respect their ancestors, others venerate them and direct their requests to them. There are some cases when some people claim to have been visited by their ancestors requiring them to perform certain rituals in search of life security or healing from diseases associated with unhappy or annoyed ancestors. Nonetheless, some rituals have to be done in search of peace in the family. For example, when a child is born, it has to be presented before the ancestors so that it receives blessings, and that way avoiding misfortunes that may happen due to disrespect to ancestors. Lutahoire indicates that the Nyambo hold a sense that people who die change into spiritual beings.

³²² Ngambeki, “The Nyambo Traditional Belief about Illness and Its Impact on Christian Faith,” 8.

These spiritual beings remain closely related with their living families and may grant help in times of crisis. They may intervene in the behaviours of the living families for better or bad depending on the situation.³²³ Traditional Nyambo believe that ancestors look after the welfare of the family's safety, prosperity and fertility. Hence, the maintenance of good relationship with them is a necessity.

A good number of the Nyambo fear ancestors because in their belief, if the ancestor is not pleased they will directly destabilize family life through sending them unknown or undiscoverable illness or death of a family member. A father or a mother, aunt or uncle may take revenge after physical death if they were not cared well during their earthly life. Therefore, people struggle to respect and please their parents while alive so that they will avoid revenge after physical death.³²⁴ Questions here are, is ancestral intervention a reality or just psychological problems? How can the church reconcile Christianity with these Nyambo beliefs that have persisted for a long time? Chapter five will try to suggest some answer for these questions.

Along the same line of thought and writing from a Filipino-Asian context, Lim (2013) pointed out an important missiological question regarding contextualizing the Gospel in ancestor-venerating cultures, by asking: "How can we contextualize the Gospel in

³²³ Lutahoire, *The Human Life Cycle Among the Bantu*, 8.

³²⁴ During my ministry I happened to experience an occasion on what people believe about ancestral spirits. On 24 of July, 2004 I went to visit a congregant in my home village. As we were talking, suddenly his wife fell down shaking and trembling. She could not respond anything he tried to ask her. Then he said, "She is now possessed by her grandfather's spirit. Pastor, fear not for it sometimes catches her, convulsing her but after few minutes she becomes well." After few minutes the woman started talking with a strange voice. The voice said, "*Nkabagambila kwombeka ekabuli yange mwayanga. Kileki tinkushubayo mpaka mungambile nimugyombeka maki. Kandi timulikukunirangana omumaka gaanyu. Kamulagendelera mutyo ndaija ntwale omwijukulu wange mbali ndi*" (I told you to build my grave but you did not build it. Today I will not leave until you assure me when are you going to build it. However, you are not respecting each other. If you continue misbehaving like that, I will come and take away my granddaughter to where I am." The husband responded positively to the voice by assuring it that they would build the grave. Then the woman returned into her normal mood as if nothing had happened).

cultures that venerate ancestors?”³²⁵ According to him, ancestor veneration is practiced in many cultures in Asia. For him, this remains the biggest problem in evangelization because Christian churches have been critical of these practices. The Roman Catholic Church has tried to contextualize these practices, but Protestant churches have taken a radical approach. He asserts that, in many societies in Asia, families respect, honour, and venerate their ancestors as a way of keeping their relationship with them. People visit graves of their parents, place flowers on it and make prayers to them aiming at honouring and asking them to continue looking after them.³²⁶

Nonetheless, Lim suggests to the churches to adopt some practices of ancestor veneration and incorporate these in the church practices. He insists that Christian families can continually have memorial services whereby they gather to remember their departed, sing Christian songs together, and share texts from the Bible.³²⁷ This may be a good approach of remembering ancestors even though it does not provide answers to the question of whether or not the existence of ancestors is a reality. If the intervention is the reality, then remembering them cannot be the only alternative solution. This issue will be discussed more in chapter five.

Diviners (Abafumu or Abaraguzi). From the Nyambo traditional point of view, most misfortunes and mishaps that people encounter in their lives are caused by spirits, witchcraft, vengeance, or bad people. The remedy of these causalities has to include diviners—special people who play the role of performing special indigenous functions of healing and reconciliation in the society. They heal and reconcile between people and

³²⁵ David S. Lim, “Contextualizing the Gospel in Ancestor-Venerating Cultures,” In *The Gospel in Cultures: Contextualization Issues through Asian Eyes*,” ed. Melba Padilla Maggay (Manila, Philippines: OMF Literature Inc., 2013), 377.

³²⁶ Lim, “Contextualizing the Gospel in Ancestor-Venerating Cultures,” 377-387.

³²⁷ Lim, “Contextualizing the Gospel in Ancestor-Venerating Cultures,” 391.

people, and between people and the world of spirits. The Nyambo regard them as benevolent healers. They do so because their work is for the betterment of the society. There are two categories of diviners: *Abafumu* and *Embandwa*.

From a traditional point of view, the Nyambo believe that *abafumu* have abilities to purge witches and sorcerers or send mystical powers that can harm enemies. They further believe that *abafumu* have abilities to cast out evil spirits or remove bewitchment in a person by using magic. They possess knowledge of charms that are used to increase wealth, protect individuals and families against life enemies and disease, protect one's wealth, attract lovers, catch thieves, return stolen things, and resolve conflict in families and among lovers. For this reason, a good number of the Nyambo use *engisha* (charm for good fortune) as well as protective charms against evil forces. Some people place protective charms over the roofs or doorposts of their houses.³²⁸

According to Haji Haruna Mbaraka³²⁹ (a diviner and herbalist), a number of the Nyambo consult him in search of healing and protection of life. Mbaraka gave witness that

Watu wengi wanakuja kwangu wakiwa na shida za kulogwa, wenye magonvi katika familia, wanaokosa mafanikio katika maisha, au kupata mikosi. Tena ninapokea wakristo wengi wenye matatizo wanaopenda niwakinge na uchawi na kuwanyooshea nyota zao. Matibabu yangu yanafuata njia mbalimbali baada ya kuwasikiliza wateja. Mfano, wanaokosa mapenzi katika ndoa zao nawasikiliza kwanza, katika kujieleza nagundua matatizo yao, kisha nawapa mazindiko yanayoambatana na masharti. Wateja walio wengi ni wanawake ambao wananyanyaswa na waume zao. Katika mazungumzo huwa nagundua mara moja kwamba tiba ya matatizo yao lazima iambatane na masharti ya upendo. Wale wanaodai kupigwa na waume zao nawapa dawa na mazindiko ya kuwatuliza waume yanayoambatana na masharti ya kutojibizana na waume zao, kuandaa chakula kwa wakati, kusafisha nyumba na chumba cha kualala, na kuhakikisha wakati wote wanawafanyia waume zao matendo ya kuwafurahisha. Uzoefu wangu unaonesha kwamba dawa na mazindiko yenye mashauri ninayotoa vinawasaidia sana wanawake kurudisha upendo wa waume zao. Wale wenye matatizo ya mikosi ninawapa mafuta toka Uarabuni

³²⁸ Ngambeki, "The Nyambo Traditional Belief about Illness and Its Impact on Christian Faith," 18.

³²⁹ Haji Haruna Mbaraka lives in Kibimba-Kyerwa-Karagwe-Tanzania. He is a Muslim who uses Arabic jinns, Nyambo indigenous remedies, and technical words when healing clients.

ambayo yanasaidia kufukuza mikosi. Hawa pia nawapa mashariti ya kufanya kazi kwa bidii na kuhakikisha hawatukani watu au kuwadhulumu. Ushahidi unaonesha pia kwamba wateja wangu wengi wanafanikiwa katika shughuli zao (Many people come to me seeking help from troubles caused by witches, conflicts in their families, lacking success in life, or experiencing misfortunes. Astonishingly, I receive a number of Christians who seek protection from witchcraft and misfortunes. My healing ministry follow different approaches depending on the way the customers express themselves. For example, those who lack love in their marriages, I attentively listen to them, immediately discover their problems and assign them medicines and charms accompanied by certain conditions. In most cases the clients are women who experience tortures from their husbands. While conversing with them, I immediately discover that solutions to their problems must be accompanied by conditions of love. Those who claim to have been beaten by their husbands; I give them special charms and medicines that will change their husbands' behaviours. These charms are accompanied by conditions that require them to be respectful to their husbands, prepare food for their husbands in time, maintain their houses clean, and behave nicely before their husbands. My experience reveals that the charms and medicines accompanied by conditions of love have helped many wives to retain peace in their families. Those who experience misfortune, I give them blessed oil from Arabia, but also accompanied by conditions: they have to work hard and make sure that they do not steal or abuse people in their communities. Also, the experience reveals that, those customers are later succeeding in their businesses.³³⁰

While I do not negate manipulation of charms, my observation is that a number of people who follow conditions of maintaining peace and working hard, eventually succeed in their lives. It means that some diviners have technical approaches that facilitate their clients to work hard and avoid themselves from plunder and violent behaviours. In this case, such diviners secretly play a role of counselling in their communities.

However, some of the *abafumu* are feared by the community. These are special diviners whose divination is to act against people's success by causing them illness, or death depending on the requests made by the accuser. For example, if someone hates a friend, they will just consult *omufumu* in search of harmful charms. That charm will be spelled to the hunted person, hence causing suffering or death. Because of that, most traditionalists wear amulets (*engisha*) that they believe protects them against witchcraft and sorcery. Sundkler

³³⁰ Mbaraka, Divination, Face to Face, Kibimba, 12 November, 2020.

presents rightly that the Haya/Nyambo keeps firm belief that amulets keep the powers of destruction at a distance, and thus preserves a person's fortune.³³¹

The second type of diviners is called *Embandwa*. These could be possessed by ancestral spirits or nature spirits which in people's beliefs represented God on earth. The noun *embandwa* comes from the verb *okubandwa*, which means to be possessed by a spirit.³³² Mutembei asserts,

*Embandwa iliaminiwa kuwa ni mjumbe wa nguvu za pekee, nguvu za roho, nguvu zenye uwezo juu ya matokeo na matukio katika maisha ya mwanadamu. Embandwa ni mjumbe wa utawala juu ya maisha na kifo, lazima atishe na lugha yake ijulikane tu kwa walioteuliwa kiroho, waliojifunza. Embandwa wenye busara walitunga maneno ya pekee na kuyatumia walipoingia hali ya kufanya kazi. Mtu kabla ya kuingia kazi hii kwanza ni lazima atengwe katika jamii na kufundishwa kwa muda usiopungua miezi mitatu, anafanya mihani wa kutumia lugha hii kisha anasimikwa na embandwa mwenzake. Anatengenezewa mavazi na kujulishwa miiko. Embandwa hata kama angelizungumza lugha ya kawaida ya watu wa jamii yake, ilikuwa ni ya juu zaidi na yenye mamlaka na kutisha (Embandwa was believed as the strong messenger with great power, spiritually powerful, possessing powers that had impact in people's lives. Wise Embandwa used special words when performing their work. Before any person was called Embandwa, he/she had to be separated from the community for at least three months, undertook embandwa teachings, did an exam on using Embandwa's special language, then being installed by a fellow Embandwa into work. Special clothes were prepared for a new Embandwa and the New Embandwa were insisted on observing ethical behaviours of living as a Embandwa. Embandwa was strictly required to use special language, the language with authority and tremendous).*³³³

The Nyambo believed that nature spirits which possessed *embandwa* resided in special holy places such as special traditional houses set apart for people to present their requests to spirits and God, special big trees (*emitoma*), caves, and so on. These places were regarded holy, very much protected and respected. Only special people, mostly *embandwa*, could enter there in order to make communication with spirits or present people's requests to spirits. No one was allowed to enter these holy places without permission from its

³³¹ Sundkler, *The World of Mission*, 188.

³³² Mutembei, *KRISTO AU WAMARA?*, 32.

³³³ Mutembei, 32.

keepers. Those who disrespected these holy places or dared to go there without permission could face dangerous snakes or misfortune in their lives: sicknesses, being hated in the community, theft, even death.

In the contemporary context, beliefs in *Embandwa* have almost disappeared. It is seldom to hear about them or meet individuals who associate themselves with *Embandwa*. The presence of Christianity and other alien religions such as Islam have influenced most of the Nyambo to make a shift from beliefs in *Wamara* to directly pray to God depending on their religious affiliation. While Muslims direct their prayers to Allah, following what Muhammad taught them regarding God's revelation through him, Christians pray to God in Jesus' name through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is interesting to note that, while traditional Nyambo associate some sickness with witches, nature spirits, ancestors, or someone with evil eye, Christians, especially charismatics, put it on Satan and evil spirits (1John 3: 8; John 9:2-3). For Christians, Jesus the son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. Among the devil's works is to cause disease and suffering to believers. Those who hold on firm faith in Jesus Christ will overcome the devil, hence live a peaceful life. The danger of this approach relies on neglecting natural causes of diseases as well as traditional and medical remedies.

However, in the contemporary Christian context of the Nyambo, there is a new type of divination that uses the Bible, though very much connected with *Okubandwa*. A good example is the so called *Abarungi* (the holy, the clean). This is a sect that claims to possess power from God which blesses, heals, controls ancestral spirits, removes curses, and expels evil spirits. They use the Bible, prayers, and cultural elements in their healing practices. The Evangelical church in Karagwe regards this sect as unchristian. The church equates their

worship and healing practices to traditional divination clothed with Christianity. Also, the Karagwe governmental district leadership denies this sect. Despite that, the sect constantly performs healing practices, sometimes in hiding places. Some church members who consult *Abarungi* healers claim to have received healing from diseases and other psychological and social offerings. A Lutheran congregant in Rwanyango said the following words; *Kanisa letu wanatuzuia kwenda kwa Abarungi lakini mimi sioni tatizo lao. Wanatuelekeza kuomba katika jina la Mungu, wanatusaidia kuondokana na nguvu ya mizimu, wanatupa madawa yaliyoombewa, wanatukataza kujihusisha na tabia mbaya, na kwa kweli tunapona magonjwa yetu* (Our church advises us not to consult *Abarungi* healers, but for me I do not find any wrong from them. They direct us to pray in the name of God, expels disturbing ancestral powers in our lives, pray and bless the medicine that they give us, they advices us not to involve in evil acts, and in fact we receive healing from various diseases that disturb our lives).³³⁴ Despite lacking scientific proof of their healing practices, *Abarungi* healers attract many people. They directly touch people's suffering and address it. This remains a challenge to the contemporary church.

On the other hand, some of the so called "Christian faith healers" who identify themselves as *embandwa za Yesu* or *embandwa za Mwoyo Alikwera* (servants possessed by Jesus or servants possessed by the Holy Spirit) also create a challenge to the church's involvement in the ministry of healing. These are mostly found among Pentecostal churches, Protestant charismatic pastors, evangelists, and some lay Christians from established churches: the Lutherans, Roman Catholic Church, Anglicans, Methodists, Moravians, and so on. They claim to have received special gifts from the Holy Spirit that enables them to perform miracles of healing, blessing people, increasing wealth, providing protective

³³⁴ Face to Face interview with a Lutheran Christian, "Abarungi," January 19, 2020.

elements and prayers against life enemies, and purging evil's powers. Church members who trust "Christian faith healers" or the so called "prophets," consult them privately or during prayer meetings in search of remedy from various physical and spiritual ailments.

Herbalists (Abatambi b'emibazi Yecharo): Herbalists remain an important medium of healing among the Nyambo. They provide various treatments to disease that disturb people's lives in the community. They are much concerned with curing and controlling natural diseases. Although their healing practices are not scientific, still a good number of the Nyambo, especially those living in the villages, use herbal remedies and will go to hospitals when herbs fail to cure them. In such a situation, herbalists remain like primary health care providers in the villages.

The Nyambo believe that herbalists are blessed with special knowledge of herbs. They have knowledge of many names of plants, roots, and trees that are used to cure different diseases or protect people from various ailments. The community hold on to a belief that herbalists gain knowledge of healing through dreams, visions, stories told by their grandparents or parents, and through practical experiences of nature. In the past, parents could choose one of their children and show them various herbs that could heal various diseases. Men always showed herbs to their sons and women to their daughters.

Victor Kamugasha (born in 1966), a Lutheran church employee of the Karagwe diocese, church music teacher at the Nkwenda Bible school, and herbalist, believes that herbal remedies are sometimes powerful over biomedicine. Kamugasha acquired healing knowledge from his grandparents and friends. His grandparents showed him different herbs and told him the related diseases they heal. Kamugasha admits that he has for a long time been treating various illnesses by using herbs/medical plants accompanied by prayers. He

says that while a number of people give testimonies of recovering from their illnesses, others do not recover. For him, this is a usual situation because it is not a must that all illnesses should be remedied. His healing modality involves accepting sick people, listening to them, prescribing medicines, praying for them, and praying over the medicines so that God would bless it before being taken by sick persons. Kamugasha believes that the knowledge of herbal remedies is a gift bestowed by God on a few people for the betterment of the community. He gives witness that many people including church leaders have consulted him in search of herbal medicine.³³⁵

Another herbalist, Rozaria Katana (born in 1938), Lutheran church member at Katembe congregation in Karagwe, claims to deal with various diseases that disturb children and women.

*Nyawe nimaanya emibazi mingi y'echo. Abantu bangi nibatekeleza ngu ndi omufumu, chonka omulimo gwange nokutambira abantu ba Ruhanga. Ninyesiiga Mukama akansomoboza kumanya emibazi eji ili abantube bachile. Mukama akatonda ebikamba katubikozesha; echibi nokubikozesha kubi. Nyawe nintambisa Yesu Omurokozi. Omukama Katonda akansurulila emibazi mingi mara abantu beingi nibanyijaho, nimbatambira nibachira. Abana abalikurwala endwara za ahansi, amabunda, na abakazi nimbatambira muno. Nangu nabaseija abandi nimbatambira, chonka okukiraho nintambira abakazi. Chonka emibazi eyondikukozesha tinakujikugambira, ne'esiri yange (I have got a wide knowledge of various indigenous medicines. Many people think that I am a diviner, but my work is only to heal God's people by using herbs. I believe that God enabled me to discover many herbs so that His people could be healed from various diseases. God created various medical plants so that mankind could use it and be cured. It will be wrong if we use indigenous remedies to harm people. In fact I heal people in the name of Jesus Christ. God revealed to me many kinds of herbs, many people consult me and they regain their health. I specifically deal with diseases that disturb children and women. However, I sometimes cure men. But, I cannot tell you the kind of herbs that I use to cure people; that remain my secret).*³³⁶

³³⁵ Victor Kamugasha, Herbal Medicine, Face to Face, February 21, 2020.

³³⁶ Rozaria Katana, Herbal Remedies, Face to Face, Katembe, October 2019.

On the other hand, some people who avail of indigenous healing witness to what happened in their life after consulting indigenous healers. A Lutheran woman who wanted her name to remain anonymous gave the following testimony;

Mimi nilipata mimba lakini nilikumbana na matatizo makubwa ya tumbo. Nilikwenda hospitali ikashindikana. Baadaye nilienda kuombewa kanisani lakini hali iliendelea hivyo hivyo kwa kipindi cha miezi miwili. Watu walinishauri niende kwa mganga wa kienyeji ambaye ni mtaalam wa mambo ya mimba. Nilimwendea Yule mtaalam, nilimueleza matatizo yangu, alinisikiliza kasha akanipa dawa ya kunywa. Baada ya wiki mbili tumbo lilitulia na nikaendela vizuri na shughuli zangu. Sasa mtoto huyo ana umri wa mwaka mmoja (I became pregnant, but with a lot of complications in my stomach. I sought treatments in hospital but did not recover. Then, I asked my pastor to pray for me, he prayed over me but there was no recovery. Some people in my village directed me to an indigenous healer who is expert on issues of pregnancy. I went there, I explained to him about the complications in my stomach, he listened to me, and eventually gave me medicine. I took that medicine and after two weeks there were no more problems in my stomach. As I speak my boy child is one year old).

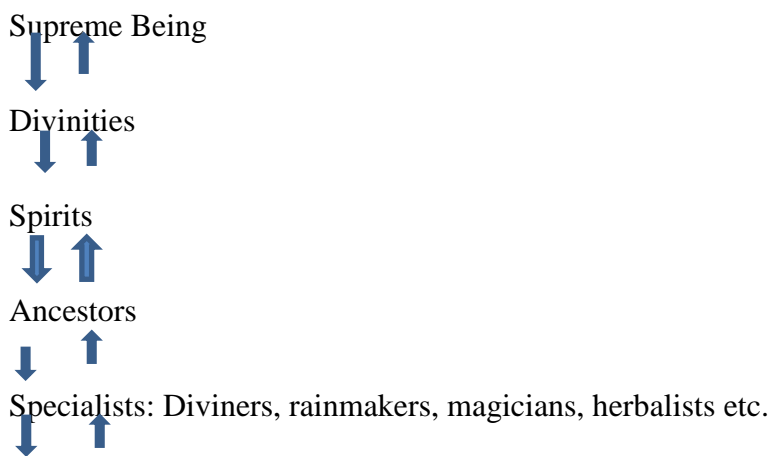
A Lutheran pastor in the Karagwe diocese who also wanted to remain anonymous gave the following testimony:

Ukipatwa na shida ni rahisi kujikuta unawaendea waganga wa kienyeji. Mwanangu aliugua sana akiwa sekondari. Siku moja alikuta nyoka amejikunja kwenye kiatu chake. Baada ya wiki kadhaa alipata kichaa. Mara moja tulihisi kwamba mtoto wetu amelogwa. Tulienda hospitali ilishindikana. Tulienda kwa wachungaji na walokole ili wamuombe lakini ilishindikana. Mwisho tulielekezwa kwa mganga wa kienyeji huko Nyaishozi ambaye ni maarufu katika kufukuza nguvu za kishetani. Tulilazimika kumpeleka mtoto wetu huko, mganga alitupokea, alitusikiliza, alitupa dawa na masharti. Mganga huyo alitumbia kwamba mtoto wetu alikuwa ametumiwa uchawi na baba yake mdogo. Alitupa dawa ya kunywa na masharti kwamba mtoto wetu asikanyage kwa baba yake mdogo, na kwamba tusimkubalie baba huyo kufika nyumbani kwetu, ila tusimdhulu. La ajabu baada ya wiki kadhaa mtoto huyu alipona na mwaka huu amemaliza masomo na kutunukiwa cheti katika kilimo. (It is very easy to consult diviners when we face serious illnesses in our lives. My daughter got seriously sick when she was in secondary school. One day she found a snake in her shoes. After few weeks she run mental and could not proceed with her studies. When she informed us about the incident, we immediately believed that someone had bewitched her. We took her to hospital, but she did not recover. Then, we took her to the church, pastors and other charismatic healers prayed over her, but still she did not recover. Finally, we were directed to a diviner in Nyaishozi. This diviner was popular at expelling evil spirits. We decided to take our daughter there, the diviners welcomed us, listened to us, gave us medicine and some conditions regarding our

daughter's recovery. The diviner told us that our child had been bewitched by her uncle. He gave us medicine and required our daughter to restrict herself from visiting her uncle, and that the uncle should not be welcomed at our home. Suprisingly, within a few weeks our daughter was recovered.)

These examples reveal the fact that indigenous healers have knowledge of healing that are sometimes profitable to the community. Thence, there is a need to search out the validity of such knowledge so that it may be accommodated into Christianity. In fact from the Nyambo traditional understanding, there are natural diseases not associated with mystical powers or bewitchment, unless a sick person got more serious. Herbalists came in and helped society cure natural diseases, such as *Ebinyoro* (Bilharzia), *Akaho* (Gonorrhoea), *Ebibembe* (Leprosy), *Ezabo* (Epilepsy), *Omusana* (Maralia), *Orusherwe* (Measles), *Ebishoona* (Syphilis), and *Kahigi* (Tuberculosis).³³⁷ A good number of the Nyambo constantly consult herbalists in search of remedies from various diseases.

Witches and Sorcerers. Similar to other African societies, witches and sorcerers are hated by the Nyambo. Because of their harmful acts, the Nyambo regard them as enemies of life. They are not even included in the cosmological hierarchy which reveals their understanding of life in connection to healing. The Nyambo cosmological hierarchy may be illustrated as follows



³³⁷ Ngambeki, "The Nyambo Traditional Beliefs about Illness and Its Impact on Christian Faith," 12.

Parents



Nature: Animals, plants, living and non-living things

This cosmological hierarchy to a great extent affected the way the Nyambo understood and reacted against illnesses and maintenance of wholeness. When diseases or suffering affected a person or a society, the relationship between the victim and the cosmological order had to be checked before any further step of treatment or healing could be applied. Always the healing process sought physical, spiritual, mental, social, and economic wellness. This means that the maintenance of wholeness and soundness of an individual and a community at large was given emphasis basing on cosmological order.

Healing in Relation to Life Style

From a Nyambo-African point of view, individuals exist peacefully if they maintain good relationship with others. Community ethos is always given priority over an individual. The individual's relationship, which results into wholeness, includes maintenance of community morals, which comprises elements such as respect to parents, respect to elders, respect to spiritual world, respect to the entire community, and respect to the environment. In other words, an individual is expected to be trustful, honest, and just in whatever they do. On this basis, the Nyambo believe that anyone who neglects to observe moral order will end up with an absence of peace in their soul, hence illness.

Kimilike (2006) relates belonging and poverty. He argues that lack of belonging in the community is the worst kind of poverty. Being secluded, alienated, isolated or ostracized from the family or community does not only imply a state of being poor, but also a loss of

one's identity in the sense that one remains a human being in isolation. This is because the concept of existence in African context values community support over individualism.³³⁸

Referring to Nyambo context, Lutahoire emphasizes good constructive character and conduct in family, clan and community at large as very important for the Nyambo. In regard to youth age, he stresses that from Nyambo point of view, "Any young man or woman who does not observe the moral and ethical code of the community is self-destructive and self-denying because his future will bring pains, despair, stagnation and discontinuity."³³⁹ In this case, the community always reminds young people about the difficulties they may face if they act against ethical codes. For example, young boys and girls are always told that if they live unethical and antisocial life, they simultaneously will be condemned by the community and their conscience.³⁴⁰

Nelson Kazoba, a retired bishop of the ELCT-Karagwe Diocese emphasizes this point referring to the importance of *Ubuntu*.³⁴¹ According to Kazoba, the Nyambo understanding of belonging is built on the African concept of humanness (*Ubuntu*). This is the concept that values humanness over anything else. In order for individuals to remain healthy and whole, they are expected to live a kind of life that values their life, the life of others, and of nature.³⁴²

³³⁸ Kimilike 2006, 84.

³³⁹ Lutahoire, *The Human Life Cycle Among the Bantu*, 22.

³⁴⁰ Lutahoire, 22.

³⁴¹ From Nyambo understanding of life, the term "Ubuntu" originates from a noun "Muntu" and means the essence of being human. A person with Ubuntu is always available to help others and is ready to provide care to others without counting benefits. The word can directly be translated in English language as "humanness." This Haya/Nyambo term is also parallel to other African languages. For example, the Zulu (a Bantu ethnic group in South Africa) use the word "Ubuntu" derived from a Nguni (isiZulu) aphorism, which can directly be translated as "a person is a person because of or through others." It describes as the capacity in African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity, and mutuality in the interests of building and maintaining communities with justice and mutual caring. See-" The African Ubuntu Philosophy," "04chapter4.Pdf," accessed May 29, 2020, <https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/28706/04chapter4.pdf?sequence=5>.

³⁴² Nelson Kazoba, *The Meaning of Life among the Nyambo*, Face to Face, December 19, 2020.

The philosophy of *Ubuntu* encourages sharing in life during happiness and sorrow. The Nyambo maintains an understanding of life that it is a shame to fail to assist someone who is experiencing suffering or illness or someone who is a stranger. Every individual in the community is expected to take part in sharing work, land, ethos, leadership, community security, birth, nurturing of children, deaths, care for the elderly, care for the sick, care for strangers, marriage, and every other occasion that are pro to community ethos. In most cases, those who misbehave will undergo community punishment such as being neglected, being cursed by parents, or announced betrayal of community unity. In order to restore the relationship, hence receiving healing and peace of mind, an individual or a group of people have to repent, reconcile with the family or community, and promise to keep all of the community rules. From my experience and understanding, this is a kind of approach to life that aims at keeping community members aware of the importance of taking care of their life and the lives of others through ethical tolerance. Those who manage to live according to community ethical guidelines will enjoy life, feel safe, and protected by the community.

Healing in Relation to Spiritual Life

Writing from Haya/Nyambo-African context, Joeseplat Rweyemamu, a Haya missiologist in his book, *Conversion Discourse in African Perspectives: A Social-Missiological Study Among the Haya in the Lutheran Church, Northwest Tanzania*, lays down that for the Africans, “the solution to any life problems should be traced in the spiritual world where God, ancestors and other good or bad spirits operate from, as it is strongly believed that spiritual world influences what takes place in the physical world.”³⁴³ In agreement with this argument, Niwagila claims that African spirituality of life is “the

³⁴³ Rweyemamu, *Conversion Discourse in African Perspective*, 120.

interwoven relationship between the Divine, man and nature. Man, animals, plants and inanimate objects together make up a harmonious whole in the universe.”³⁴⁴

For Niwagila, nature plays a great role in maintenance of life. Because of this importance, African understanding of life does not allow destruction, manipulation, or exploitation of nature. They view nature as a partner that needs to be protected. They further believe that anyone who destroys natural life, destroys human community. In this sense, for them, the salvation of humankind is the salvation of the cosmos.³⁴⁵ Importantly, Niwagila notes,

A tree whose branches supply a resting-place for the traveller burnt by the heat of mid-sun, or a river which contains fish for man’s use, or a cow which provides milk for the family, or a banana plant which produces its fruit to feed empty stomachs, or herbs whose leaves fight against the symptoms of malaria, is meant for coexistence with human beings. This challenges man to develop an ethic of nature which will protect it from destruction.³⁴⁶

In this case, Niwagila argues that, in order to understand the Haya/Nyambo-Africans, one has to take into consideration both social life and religious life as one entity.³⁴⁷ He further emphasizes that, “The *Haya* believes that when God created *Omuntu*, He gave him life as a vital force, *Amagala*, which is also used to indicate good health and bodily strength and spiritual fitness. This gives man power to be unique creation among all creation.”³⁴⁸

Like any other African, the *Haya/Nyambo* also believe that, “*Amagala* and true humanhood exists only when there is a true relationship with the Supreme Being and the

³⁴⁴ Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church: A Case Study of the African Initiative and the Participation of the Foreign Missions in the Mission History of the North-Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania 1890-1965*, 415–16.

³⁴⁵ Niwagila, 416.

³⁴⁶ Niwagila, 416–17. See also Cornel W Du Toit, “African Spirituality and the Poverty of Western Religious Experience,” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 100 (March 1998): 47. Toit resonates with Niwagila that, all existence in Africa is spiritual: human life including all things in the creation is approached spirituality. For him, this is the reason why Africans respect nature, for they know for sure that their life is rooted in nature and therefore they live depending on it.

³⁴⁷ Niwagila, 34.

³⁴⁸ Niwagila, 35.

living/dead people. Blessings come when this true relationship prevails, but curses and calamities dominate when man tries to break this relationship.”³⁴⁹ In this case, a struggle to keep the relationship with God, ancestors, community, and nature remains vital for the Nyambo-Africans. It is through keeping such harmony; people feel protected and healed from various dangers of life. Contrary to this, any breach of the relationship with spiritual world, community, or destruction of nature will lead to suffering.

The community or an individual may bring the case of the wrongdoer to family elders, ancestors or directly to God. For example, Rweyemamu points out *omuteego* (an action of reporting evil things done by someone to God or god) as a very serious traditional act used to discipline people among the Haya/Nyambo. According to Rweyemamu, the fear of *omuteego* helped people to live a sanctified life.³⁵⁰ It means that, from a fearing spirit, people maintained social norms, hence security of life.

Gabriel Kimirei, a Lutheran pastor in Arusha, Tanzania sees fear or guilt as another source of sickness among Africans.³⁵¹ Referring to theft, Kimirei gives an example from the Maasai people.

If theft occurs in a village and the thief goes to hide himself, “a pot” must be broken to find the culprit. (Emoti: To break the pot is the euphemism for the strong worded curse usually pronounced on wrong doers). It is expected that the thief should show up upon hearing the curse. But if he does not, it is believed that sickness will attack not only the thief but also all those who knew about the theft and refused to report...The same is true of broken relationships. Fighting and quarrelling, gossip, and lack of love for one another create an atmosphere of hatred where people live in suspicion and fear. Under such conditions, sufferings and sickness find accommodation.³⁵²

³⁴⁹ Niwagila, 35.

³⁵⁰ Rweyemamu, *Conversion Discourse in African Perspective*, 122.

³⁵¹ Gabriel Kimirei, “Sickness and Healing,” in *Lutheran Theologians Face Old Traditions and New Challenges*, ed. Klaus C. Waltz (Neuendettelsau: Institute for Studies of World Mission, 1989), 179.

³⁵² Kimirehi, 179-180.

This view of Kimirei corresponds to the Nyambo belief on *omuteego*. Most of the Nyambo believe in the active impact of *omuteego*. In most cases, words of *omuteego* are particularly powerful if there is reality of the crime in the life of a person to which the *omuteego* is directed. The words uttered activate the destructive forces that are inherent in the evil deed.

Despite the influence of Christianity and Islam, some Nyambo continually use *omuteego* as a way of punishing wrongdoers. If you walk through the villages you will hear words such as “*Aibile bamutegelera mbwenu nayandara*” (He stole things, they have cursed him and now he is suffering), or *Aibile bamutegelera yafa* (he stole things, they have cursed him and he is now dead). *Omuteego* words are mostly uttered against serious acts that damage or destabilize individual or community harmony such as theft, adultery, and intentional and serious quarrels between a husband and wife.

In addition to *omuteego*, the Nyambo also use *omuraamo* (a curse uttered by parent/s to their child or children) as a way of punishing evil doers in their family. A good example of *omuraamo* is when a child beats or utters very bad words to a mother or a father. The parent may come out before them naked and utter cursing words against their child. The Nyambo believes that such a child will never prosper in whatever they do until they reconcile with the parent/s. They believe that spirits of offended people are actively fighting an invisible war with offenders. Sometimes the case may be reported to ancestors whom the Nyambo believe are all the time connected to their families, listening and ready to act against wrong doers.

Kyomo (1997) echoes this view point when he points out that in African context, a good number of people maintained ethical and spiritual life because they had strong beliefs in curses. Any misfortune in life was a sign of misbehavior against family or community

rules. When leaders of any ethnic group cursed an individual, or when a parent cursed a child because of misbehaviour, that child faced misfortunes in life.³⁵³ Cursing acts among the Nyambo can be compared with that of the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 27-29; Joshua 9; Numbers 22-24; Genesis 3:14; 15; Leviticus 23: 29-30). According to the Old Testament, those who disobey God's law are under God's wrath. They cannot succeed in life.

The Lutheran church in Karagwe sees cursing as bad behaviour for Christians, discouraging cursing by instead encouraging those who become Christians to learn from Jesus' emphasis when he said, "Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matthew 7:1). The church advises Christians to have a spirit of forgiving, reconciling, and even blessing evil doers (Matthew 5: 43-48; Luke 6: 27-38). In spite of this emphasis, some people believe that cultural approach to evil doers is more strong and useful for correcting people's bad behaviours. Some claim that Christian emphasis frees evil doers, hence encouraging them to continually repeat same mistakes hoping to be forgiven.

While not encouraging evil acts, I see the importance of insisting love towards evil doers and encouraging them to confess, repent, and reconcile rather than cursing them. My experience of belonging in the Nyambo society reveals that people who receive cursing words will never forget it even after reconciliation has taken place. Therefore, the best way of maintaining unity and peace in the community could be creating a spirit of patience and forgiveness towards those who do wrong.

³⁵³ Andrew A. Kyomo, *Ushauri wa Kichungaji katika Mazingira ya Kiafrika* (Dodoma: Central Tanganyika Press, 1997), 3.

Healing in Relation to Wellness and Prosperity in the Family

The term “wellness” can be defined as “the active process of becoming aware of and making choices towards a healthy and fulfilling life.”³⁵⁴ When the term is applied to the Nyambo context, it generally refers to *emilembe* (being stable and calm in terms of physical, spiritual and mental states, or the absence of suffering in one’s life). The term *emilembe* can also mean a state of being peaceful.

Basing on the Bible, the Old Testament word for peace, “*shalom*” means completeness, soundness, or well-being.³⁵⁵ It is used when one asks of or prays for the welfare of another (Gn.43:27; Ex.4:18; Jdg.19:20), when one is in harmony or concord with another (Jos.9:15; 1Ki. 5:12), when one seeks the good of a city or country (Ps. 122:6; Je.29:7). It may also mean material prosperity (Ps.73:3) or physical safety (Ps.4:8).³⁵⁶ From the Nyambo perspective, the fulfilment of wellness depends on overall physical, mental, spiritual, and social well-being. The attaining of this fulfilment leads to prosperity, or success in life.

Spelling the importance of wellness, Wheeler (1989) saw “a prevention-oriented attitude treatment” in health care as an important attitude embodied in wellness movement.³⁵⁷ For him, “leading away from illness and injury should also lead towards a life that is more enjoyable, productive, energetic, relaxing, fulfilling, and spiritual.”³⁵⁸ Wheeler

³⁵⁴ “What Is Wellness? | Student Health and Counseling Services,” accessed May 29, 2020, <https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/wellness/what-is-wellness>.

³⁵⁵ *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. s. v. “Peace.”

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁷ Steve Wheeler, “Wellness in the Family,” *Review & Expositor* 86, no. 2 (1989): 175, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdah&AN=ATLA0000814547&site=ehost-live>.

³⁵⁸ Wheeler, 175.

adds, through an active on-going process of wellness, we become aware of the factors that influence health and well-being.³⁵⁹

For the Nyambo, wellness and prosperity depend on the way an individual or a family respects and values life. The maintenance of life relies on living an ethical life as well as hard work. From a traditional point of view, the Nyambo live on a philosophy of life depicted by their saying, *Emali Bantu* (Having people is having wealth).³⁶⁰ This entails that from and by the people, one gets everything essential in their life: food, shelter, clothes and many other essentials of life.³⁶¹ The lack of these essentials may lead to physical, spiritual, or mental illness.

Insisting on African traditional understanding of successful life, Getui (2003) writes that for the Africans, good life does not mean becoming a millionaire or billionaire, rather it entails having good life as meaning having food, shelter, clothing, access to medical care, and all other necessities of life.³⁶² In the contemporary context, these basic needs can be attained through availability of health people, land, houses, means of production and payment. Factors that contribute to availability and accessibility of these resources will include education, adequate health facilities and services, employment, and a healthy state of the economy.³⁶³ When people are healthy with enough food, income, and material possession, life becomes better and enjoyable. For the Nyambo, such people have attained the highest level of wellness and prosperity.

³⁵⁹ Wheeler, 175.

³⁶⁰ Ngambeki, "Participation of the ELCT-Karagwe Diocese in the Mission of God to the Poor: With Special Reference to the Karagwe District-Kagera Region of the United Republic of Tanzania," 2.

³⁶¹ Ngambeki, 2.

³⁶² M.N. Getui, "Material Things in Contemporary African Society," in *Moral and Ethical Issues in African Christianity: A Challenge for African Christianity*, eds. J.N.K. Mugambi and A. Nasimiyu-Wasike (Nairobi, Kenya: Acton Publishers, 2003), 59.

³⁶³ Getui, 59.

Nonetheless, when life becomes better, meaningful, successful, and enjoyable, people with “bad eye” become envious and start to hunt successful people. From Nyambo traditional understanding of life, once a person succeeds, their life becomes susceptible. This is from the understanding that witches and people with “evil eye” are always against people’s wellness and prosperity in terms of progress and promotion. They feel envy when their relatives or some people in the community succeed. Because of their envious spirit, they will inflict successful people through misfortune such as disease, unexpected accidents, mystical destruction of material wealth, loss of a job or employment, failure of children in school, destruction of business, causing mental disease, causing barrenness, and sometimes death. The Nyambo call envious people *Abalogo* (witches), *Abanyaitima* (people with envy spirit), or *Aba echiisho* (people with evil eye).

Because of the fear of witches and people with “evil eye,” people who succeed in life struggle to find protective charms from diviners or witch-doctors. Many individuals wear charms on their clothes, hang charms on doorposts, and put charms in their business, office, house, car, fields, and so on. For example, some parents who send their children to school give them protective charms against people with “evil eye” and witches. Individuals who hold high positions of leadership in the community find and use protective charms against people with “evil eye.”

Following the influence of Christianity in the contemporary context of the Nyambo, the so called ‘born again Christians’ consult the so called prophets/oracles or charismatic church ministers who provide them biblical verses for meditations, prayers, and blessed materials (oil, water, salt, and so on) for protecting them against misfortune and healing them of ailments caused by people with “bad eye” or witches. A good number of church

members flock to these ministers in search of safety for their life. This point will be explained more in the next chapter.

From these explanations, it is evident that before the coming of Christianity and other alien religions among the Nyambo, the indigenous practiced social-economic, religious thought, and healing depending on how such systems of life were cherished and adored at the family and community level. Their understanding of illness and healing was based on the interconnectedness among people, mystical forces, and nature. For them, the solution to any life problem had to be traced to the spiritual world that formed their beliefs and influenced whatever took place in the visible world. With this in mind, we now turn to the next chapter where I will explore in detail the intervention of western philosophical view of the missionaries on Nyambo-African understanding of healing.

CHAPTER V

WESTERN PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS OF THE MISSIONARIES OF AFRICAN AND NYAMBO UNDERSTANDING OF HEALING

Having seen in the previous chapters that in African context the understanding of health and healing was based on the African worldview, this chapter deals with the way Western philosophical views of the missionaries impacted or affected the African approach to illness and maintenance of wholeness. The chapter presents the most important phase in the history of Christian mission in Africa, particularly among the Nyambo in Tanzania. It starts by investigating the interaction between African perceptions of healing and the Western-Christian missionaries' views, interpretations, and presentations of their respective concepts of Christian healing and civilization. It is argued that the coming of Christianity to most areas in Africa, particularly among the Nyambo in Tanzania, created a shift from traditional understanding of life to Western Christian understanding, which eventually affected the way the Nyambo-Africans understood issues of health and healing.

The Influence of Christianity and Western Civilization

Needless to say, Western missionaries not only brought the Gospel to Africa, but they also brought western technology, medicine, schools, and other modern amenities.³⁶⁴ These services resulted in positive and negative impacts upon African understanding of life. Kobia (1978) traces the earliest encounter between the Africans and the missionaries mainly in the period prior to the 1880s, when the colonial administration was introduced in most of

³⁶⁴ Norlen, *The Christian and the Ethical Life: On Being a Christian in a Multicultural World*, 194.

the African countries.³⁶⁵ Kolowa displays the formation and development of Christian communities in Tanzania, in particular, as originating from the strenuous work done by pioneer missionaries of various denominations from Europe and America, whom were inspired by reports of missionary explorers such as David Livingstone, Henry M. Stanley, John Ludwig Krapf, and Johannes Rebmann.³⁶⁶ To a certain extent, mission work by their government was encouraged after the Berlin Conference of 1885, whereby the continent of Africa was partitioned among strong European nations.³⁶⁷ Nonetheless, the Evangelical Lutheran Missions landed in Tanzania as follows: The Bethel Mission landed in Dar es Salaam in 1887, in Tanga in 1890, in Manow-South Tanzania in 1891, and the Leipzig Mission in Kilimanjaro in 1893.³⁶⁸ After the experience he had in Tanga, the missionary Ernst Johanssen from Bethel Mission landed in Buhaya/Bukoba in 1910 with the aim of teaching the word of Jesus Christ.³⁶⁹

Bengt Sundkler, a former professor of theology at the University of Uppsala, Sweden, and a Lutheran bishop in Bukoba in 1961-1964 maintains the argument that the first African generation of Christianity found itself between two epochs: the old beliefs and the new faith. The new faith came with both the Bible and Western civilization. Becoming members of the new faith, one had to become new such as in terms of receiving new clothes,

³⁶⁵ Sam M. Kobia, "The Christian Mission and the African Peoples in the 19th Century," in *Separation Without Hope? Essays on the Church and the Poor During the Industrial Revolution and the Western Colonial Expansion*, by World Council of churches, Geneva, 1978, 156.

³⁶⁶ Kolowa, *The Impact of the Christian Church in Tanzania: 1885-1985*, 1.

³⁶⁷ Kolowa, 1.

³⁶⁸ Kolowa, 2.

³⁶⁹ Kolowa, 15. See also, Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church: A Case Study of the African Initiative and the Participation of the Foreign Missions in the Mission History of the North-Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania 1890-1965*, 1991, pages 106-108. According to Niwagila, the presence of the Bethel Mission in Bukoba opened up a new possibility for partnership in the fulfillment of God's mission. It was seen by the indigenous Church not as an old Church helping a young Church, but as two bodies being given a task and working together as one body in Christ for the salvation of the Haya/Nyambo people. But, unfortunately the Bethel Mission missionaries understood their presence as their duty to help the poor Africans know and worship the right God.

new education, new names and new image of God.³⁷⁰ It means that, becoming a Christian was equated with obtaining a new identity, one that negated most African identities.

Referring to ideas of William Carey, Shaw (2010) pointed out that most Protestant churches in the 20th century approached mission as a matter of conveying the Gospel defined as a product from Christendom to poor benighted heathen.³⁷¹ He said,

This approach to mission was coincided with expansive Western colonization as well as with burgeoning Western business enterprise around the globe. As a result, a Western understanding of God became hegemonic, one that had been developed over centuries by wedding Hellenistic logic to the scholastic method. As Westerners, missionaries assumed a realist perspective that held truth (God's truth) to be timeless and culture-free. Any contextualization attempted was culturally conditioned to fit Western categories and was relevant to the colonial powers rather than being connected to local cultures.³⁷²

Meantime, Tanzanian theological scholar Israel-Peter Mwakyolile (2000) wrote,

When the European missionaries started the mission work in Africa in the 19th century, many of them were radical in their approach. Being somewhat influenced by the European racism and popular philosophical literature of their time, and their sending mission societies being the result of the pietistic movements also of their time, the missionaries wanted to change the traditional cultural heritage the Africans had, into a Christian heritage but via their own European culture, which went together with European Christianity, i.e., they preached the gospel in the garment of western culture. The result was to disregard many of the cultural values of the Africans. Polygamy was unquestionably rejected; drinking of alcohol was prohibited; giving bride-price by the marrying husbands was also rejected.³⁷³

In the mid-20th century, receptors of the Gospel message were required to follow the missionary's way of God. The model was to present the Gospel properly, as understood in the West in a new context and thereby enable people to have God's Word in their environment so that they could be enriched by knowledge that those in the West had already

³⁷⁰ Bengt Sundkler, *Bara Bukoba: Church and Community in Tanzania* (C. Hurst, 1980), 71–97.

³⁷¹ R. Daniel Shaw. "Beyond Contextualization: Toward a Twenty-first-century Model for Enabling Mission," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 34, no.4 (2010): 209.

³⁷² Shaw, 209.

³⁷³ Israel-Peter Mwakyolile. "African Identity Within the Christian Church: A Quest for Reconstructing Our Theology," *African Theological Journal* 23, no.2 (2000): 69.

acquired. Mission became a matter of knowledge transfer, and it remained embedded in an essentially colonial approach to communicating God's truth.³⁷⁴ Colonial expansion was linked with church mission. Bevans and Schroeder emphasize that, "Whatever their explicit intentions, missionaries became agents of the Western imperialistic enterprise as the three "Cs" of colonialism became Christianity, commerce and civilization."³⁷⁵

In other places, Bosch points out that during the time of the Enlightenment, there was a spirit of superiority from the powerful and dominant nations over the weak dominated nations. According to him, scientific and technological advances made Westerners feel superior over the rest of the world. Because of this, Westerners had feelings of dominion over Third world countries in terms of culture, military, and political issues. This feeling went as far as the religions, particularly Christianity. In most cases it was difficult to distinguish between religious and cultural supremacy.³⁷⁶ Bosch asserts, "Just as the West's religion was presupposed to spread around the globe, the West's culture was to be victorious over all others."³⁷⁷ "The 'civilized' however, not only felt superior to the 'uncivilized,' but also responsible for them."³⁷⁸

Bosch maintained the fact that in the period followed by the First World War; one of the most popular missionary texts were the words of Jesus in John 10:10, "I came so that they may have life, and have it abundantly." Abundant life was interpreted as the abundance of the good things that modern education, healing, and agriculture would provide for the deprived people of the world. Western writers and speakers of the 19th century and the 20th

³⁷⁴ Mwakyolile, 69.

³⁷⁵ Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 207.

³⁷⁶ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 291.

³⁷⁷ Bosch, 292.

³⁷⁸ Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 208.

regarded Non-Western societies as deprived pagan people who needed to be rescued by “Christian civilization.”³⁷⁹

Already in the 15th to the 17th century, both Catholic and Protestant rulers took it for granted that the overseas possessions or conquered nations would also have to submit to the Western ruler’s religion.³⁸⁰ “The king missionized as he colonized.”³⁸¹ Missionaries had closely associated with their colonies: British missionaries labored in British colonies, French missionaries in French colonies, and German missionaries in Germany colonies. In such a situation, missionaries became pioneers of Western imperialistic expansion.³⁸²

Fidon Mwombeki, a theologian and pastor from North-western part of Tanzania, notes that “nobody needs to repeat the known facts of the connections between the colonialists and missionaries. They both believed these native people were stupid and primitive who needed to be rescued from both by being taught civilization and its accompanying religion—Christianity.”³⁸³ A good number of Tanzanians were convinced and accepted Christianity and western civilization as a tool for liberating them from sin (through evangelism), ignorance (through secular education), poverty (through civilized economy) and disease (through biomedicine and Christian faith healing). Eventually, Christianity and western civilization dominated and still dominates in the contemporary context of Tanzania. Demographic data (2018) reveals this fact that in Tanzania, Christians are 61.4%, Muslims 35.2%, Unaffiliated 1.4%, Folk religion 1.8% and others 0.2%.³⁸⁴

³⁷⁹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 293.

³⁸⁰ Bosch, 303.

³⁸¹ Bosch, 303.

³⁸² Bosch, 304.

³⁸³ “2005_11_Mwombeki.Pdf,” accessed March 7, 2018, http://www.tanzania-network.de/upload/PDF/MajiMaji/Initiativen/2005_11_Mwombeki.pdf.

³⁸⁴ “Tanzania Demographics Profile 2018.”

Despite these explanations which in most cases blamed missionaries and colonialists against African culture, other scholars revealed some positive approaches of missionaries and colonialists, especially from those who appreciated and translated African culture in their missions. Nkemnkia (1999) insists, “Although colonizers tried to suffocate the development of African thought by introducing their own culture, some of them attempted to penetrate African traditions, rites, myths, religion and proverbs and have mostly studied African language and dialects as a means for a better understanding of the African soul.”³⁸⁵

He further appreciates the good work done by some missionaries when he points out that

the experiences and the works of missionaries are of a special importance. As evangelisers they did not hesitate to seek out those positive elements and values of the African being, notwithstanding their biased position. As these missionaries studied deeply the local languages, they became more and more aware of how complex African culture is, and how difficult it is to understand the African way of thinking. Quite soon they became conscious of the fact that there could be a multitude of African thoughts and philosophies, due to the many existing languages. Such complexities made the understanding of the structure of the *mens Africana* even more difficult. Above all it was a question of knowing how an African mind conceives humanity, the world, God, morality, life and death.³⁸⁶

Nevertheless, the missionaries’ efforts to introduce a new way of understanding and approaching God led to a danger of rejecting most African cultural elements into Christianity and in secular life.

Rejection Mentality

The term “rejection” can simply mean “the act of refusing to accept, use, or believe someone or something.”³⁸⁷ The rejection affects people and may result in increased aggression, distress, and trauma. For Waliggo (2005), rejection mentality is one among

³⁸⁵ Martin Nkafu Nkemnkia, *African Vitalogy: A Step Foward in African Thinking* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999), 29.

³⁸⁶ Nkemnkia, 38–39.

³⁸⁷ “Rejection,” accessed May, 11, 2020, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org>.

various causes of suffering in Africa.³⁸⁸ In his opinion, the *rejection* originates from both powerful outsiders and powerful insiders. From practices of rejection come all attitudes that continue to oppress Africa and intensify suffering. Eventually the rejection results in attitudes of inferiority and failure to seriously think of lasting solutions to unnecessary suffering on the continent.³⁸⁹

Referring to Christianity, Waliggo (2005) insists that “when Christianity came to Africa towards the end of the fifteenth century, its theology soon sanctioned Africa’s rejection by giving support to the enslavement of Africans. This created a situation which was progressively to sanction rejection of Africans in many other instances.”³⁹⁰ Further, the 19th century theology of the missionary movement rejected any values in the African traditional religions, despised many of the people’s cultural values, and would not use them as a basis for Christian evangelization.³⁹¹ As scholar Kobia asserts,

The early missionaries did not regard African religions as religions. Hence the popular use of words like “paganism” and “heathenism” to describe African ways of life. What they did not understand is that while in Africa religion dominated all aspects in life, by the end of feudalism in Europe religion had ceased to dominate politics, medicine, dances, etc. This had been done through a process of secularization where life was dichotomized between the religious sphere and the secular sphere (In Europe, this had happened so as to free up development of capitalism). It was easy for the missionaries, therefore, to condemn things like African dances, African ways of marriage, and many other aspects of life. These aspects of life were invariably linked with a religious world outlook. So, declaring them evil was to deprive the African of a vital part of himself, and this was by no means a comfortable thing for Africans to put up with.³⁹²

Gimbi holds a similar view in regard to healing services in Tanzania;

³⁸⁸ John M. Waliggo, “African Christology in a Situation of Suffering,” in *Faces of Jesus in Africa*, ed. Robert J. Schreiter (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Book, 2005), 171.

³⁸⁹ Waliggo, 171.

³⁹⁰ Waliggo, 171.

³⁹¹ Waliggo, “African Christology in a Situation of Suffering,” 172.

³⁹² Kobia, “The Christian Mission and the African Peoples in the 19th Century,” 160.

With the entry of modern medicine with the first missionaries into Tanzania, and the use of these skills amongst the different ethnic groupings, some sort of relationship could not be entirely avoided. Unfortunately, acknowledgement of African folk healing by the missionary medical establishment was often of negative kind. Folk healing was disparaged in a number of ways. It was simply discarded as unimportant because it seemingly lacked a scientific basis, and didn't use ideas accepted by western canons of medicine. In addition, folk healers were regarded as basically ignorant because they did not know of or accord with western medical practice. Related to this was the fact that folk healing was passed on through oral transmission. It lacked the dignity of the written word, and was, therefore, obviously an "uncivilized business" and "primitive." Due to these attitudes and due to the material difference in level of technology, folk healers themselves felt inferior to doctors practicing western medicine.³⁹³

Besides healing, African theologies were also rejected. According to Waliggo, in the 1960s when African theologies were emerging, they were rejected and considered as unorthodox and opposed to the one universal theology for all. Western Christianity was equated to Christianity itself, and was presented as equivalent to Christ himself.³⁹⁴ Some missionaries rejected Africans and their continent on the basis of a biblical interpretation that in their mind represented Africans as the condemned children of Ham, who were to be slaves forever to the descendants of Shem. Still, some rejected Africa because of the many myths told and written about the Africans and their land. There was a misconception that the Euro-American world is the center of the universe. The Euro-American world was further regarded as the model of what is good, just, joy, and center of God's love and presence. As a consequence, the Euro-American world seemed as possessing superior knowledge and wisdom, culture and civilization, dignity and holy. Such misconception was entertained for centuries and promoted in several ways, hence became the heritage of the Euro-Americans. On the basis of such heritage, African religions and culture looked strange.³⁹⁵

³⁹³ Gimbi, "Healers and Healing," 99.

³⁹⁴ Waliggo, "African Christology in a Situation of Suffering," 172.

³⁹⁵ Waliggo, "African Christology in a Situation of Suffering," 172.

In post-independence history of Africa, it is vivid that Africans have often been rejected by their own political, economic, and social rulers. Bad government in Africa has caused many deaths, forced many into refugee life, and created suffering for many people. Because of fear, self-interest, self-preservation, and sometimes ignorance, many of Africa's social, intellectual, and religious leaders have often overlooked the sufferings of their own people, allied with rejecters, and supported the *status quo* in situations of suffering. To many ordinary African Christians, even the majority of African theologians are included among the "rejecters" of their own people. They appear to perceive that they have a monopoly of knowledge in religious and ethical matters. Instead of doing theology from and with the people and on issues of primary importance for the people, they concentrate on theological and academic gimmicks that are at the periphery of people's living experience of suffering and hoping.³⁹⁶

For Kyomo (1997), the coming of Western missionaries to Africa created a shift in the understanding of life as most missionaries struggled to displace indigenous religious life with Christianity. Most missionaries disqualified traditional religions: the Word of God was to be understood in alien forms and cultures. Funny enough, most of the indigenous that joined Christianity viewed Western culture as superior over theirs. Hence, they also tended to reject their own cultures.³⁹⁷ Kyomo regards this as a bad mentality that persists in the hearts of majority of African Christians.³⁹⁸

Kyomo (1997) constantly asserts that some African Christians who valued their culture were not given a chance to contextualize their Christian faith. For this reason,

³⁹⁶ Waliggo, 173.

³⁹⁷ Andrew A. Kyomo, *Ushauri wa Kichungaji katika Mazingira ya Kiafrika* (Dodoma: Central Tanganyika Press, 1997), 5.

³⁹⁸ Kyomo, 5.

Christianity was seen as a divisive religion before the eyes of traditional religion adherences. This divisive view was equated with the practice of uprooting a tree and its roots, and planting it in new soil without taking any kind of soil with it. Such a practice could not enable a tree to grow well.³⁹⁹ It means that the replacement mentality of uprooting African culture in order to implant Christianity cannot produce good fruits, unless contextualization takes place. “The process of contextualization takes place when these two components, i.e. Gospel and culture, interact in an acceptable way.”⁴⁰⁰ Talking from African perspective, Kyomo called upon African churches to live Christianity which contains “a color of African soil,” contains African ‘aroma,’ in its worship, songs, and so on.⁴⁰¹ Such kind of Christianity will not only have roots in Africa, but also present the Christ who incarnates in all people’s cultures, hence allowing them to celebrate the incarnation event using their cultural elements.

A Shift in Perspectives

Two shifts are explained in this section. The first is the historical shift which was against the exclusive western approach of Christianity, which was claiming to be the dominant religion. According to Bosch, from the middle ages to the 18th century, there was the unshaken, massive, and collective certitude that perceived the task of Christian mission as that of conquest and displacement. Christianity was understood to be unique, exclusive, superior, definite, normative and absolute, the only religion that had the divine right to exist and extend itself.⁴⁰² This hegemonic mentality lost its priority with the collapse of Western colonialism. Thus, Christianity had to compete for allegiance on the open market of

³⁹⁹ Kyomo, 5.

⁴⁰⁰ Mtaita, *The Wandering Shepherds and the Good Shepherd: Contextualization as the Way of Doing Mission with the Maasai in the ELCT-Pare Diocese*, 73.

⁴⁰¹ Kyomo, *Ushauri wa Kichungaji katika Mazingira ya Kiafrika*, 19.

⁴⁰² Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 475.

religions and ideologies. At this stage, Christianity was prone to be questioned, repudiated or condescendingly ignored. The Enlightenment that was the main challenge of Christianity adopted a relativistic attitude. There were no longer oceans separating Christians from other religionists.⁴⁰³ It means that the exclusivist approach of Christianity against other religions and cultures could no longer dominate the globe. This shift exhaled Christianity to learn from other religions, including indigenous religions and philosophy.

The second shift in perspective concerns the African theologians who criticized western dominance of religion. This resulted in a struggle to contextualize Christianity in African context. Good examples are the establishment and reactions from African Initiated Churches (AICs) or Indigenous African Churches (IACs), Charismatic Movements, and other schools of thought.

African Initiated Churches (AICs) or Indigenous African Churches (IACs). “African indigenous churches represent a compelling African response to Christianity. The development of these churches is a ringing affirmation of the selfhood of the church within African continent.”⁴⁰⁴ According to Niwagila, the Independent Churches originated from the lack of African spirituality in the “mission churches.”⁴⁰⁵ “They saw that Christianity in Africa was in danger if the churches continued to import theology from Europe and America without taking into account its own theology based on the African philosophy of life. The

⁴⁰³ Bosch, 475.

⁴⁰⁴ Akintunde E Akinade, “African Initiatives in Christianity: The Growth, Gifts and Diversities of Indigenous African Churches: A Challenge to the Ecumenical Movement,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 23, no. 4 (October 1999): 187,

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdah&AN=ATLA0000363451&site=ehost-live>.

⁴⁰⁵ Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church: A Case Study of the African Initiative and the Participation of the Foreign Missions in the Mission History of the North-Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania 1890-1965*, 411.

main concern of these indigenous churches was to make their experiences with Christ become a living reality in their cultural environment.”⁴⁰⁶

As a way of contextualizing Christian healing, African Initiated Churches struggled to incorporate traditional elements of healing into their services. For example, apart from historical churches such as the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant Churches, African indigenous religions, and African Independent/Initiated Churches (AICs) have for a long time included both the Bible message and African contextual elements in their healing services. They have tried to contextualize Christian healing in a way they think meets their people’s needs. “Common characteristics of the AICs include revelation through prophecy, trances and dreams, the importance of healing within a holistic context, and some identification with Levitical law.”⁴⁰⁷

Asamoah-Gyadu (2015) sees the rise of AICs as a result of the inability of Western missions to address the reality of supernatural evils, especially witchcraft.⁴⁰⁸ He insists that many African Christians maintain their baptism names and confirmation in church records, but when faced with a crunch and misfortunes they turn to traditional witchdoctors, medicine cults, charismatic prophets, or sometimes combined healing mediums.⁴⁰⁹ In favor of this idea, Katabaro says,

The founding of the AICs was an attempt to resist the discrimination of colonial rule. The churches were also a response to those spiritual needs of African Christians, which European theology and missionaries did not address. Many European missionaries were criticized for not taking African issues, traditions and customs seriously when they brought Christianity in Africa. Africans were estranged from their own roots and identity. As a consequence, the Christian faith did not have

⁴⁰⁶ Niwagila, 411–12.

⁴⁰⁷ Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 266.

⁴⁰⁸ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “African Pentecostalism, Deliverance and Healing: Recent Development and New Challenges,” in *Witchcraft, Demons and Deliverance: A Global Conversation on an Intercultural Challenge*, eds. Claudia Währisch-Oblau and Henning Wrogeman (Zweigniederlassung Zürich: Lit Verlag GmbH & Co.,2015), 20.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

strong foundation; it failed to take the real lives and the dispositions of the Africans into account.⁴¹⁰

For example, Kleinhempel (2017) indicates that majority of black people in South Africa belong to African Independent churches or Pentecostal churches. He contends that South Africans experience at a high level the presence and practices of the so called “prophets” or “seers” (i.e., play a role of prayer healing and believed to have a natural gift of clairvoyance), herbalists (believed to have been shown through dreams various kinds of herbs that are needed for curing various diseases), and *Sangomas* or diviners (working with combination of oracles and intuition, consulted for issues regarding health and crises). The *Sangomas* may be understood as Bantu shamans.⁴¹¹ The “word *Sangoma* comes from the Zulu word for a drum; it is the sound of the drum that brings forth the spirit.”⁴¹² Nyundu and Naidoo (2017) point out that many people consult *Sangomas* for various reasons: protection from witchcraft, improving health, treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, unexpected pain in the body, arthritis, rheumatism, stroke, headaches, ancestral, supernatural, and psychological problems, unemployment, unsettled dreams, and spiritual guidance.⁴¹³ Such practices are common among African people who hold on to African spirituality.

Adamo (2011) reiterates the sentiment that African Indigenous Religions (AIR) hold strong influence in Africa, especially in moments of crisis. According to him, many Christians still patronize priests of AIR. For example, during the period of Apartheid in South Africa, AIR was secretly practiced because missionaries were against traditional

⁴¹⁰ Katabaro, *Hunger for Success: An Investigation of Neo-Charismatic-Pentecostal Teachings on Prosperity and Their Challenges in Tanzania*, 15–16.

⁴¹¹ Ullrich Relebogilwe Kleinhempel, “Covert Syncretism: The Reception of South Africa’s Sangoma Practise and Spirituality by ‘Double Faith’ in the Contexts of Christianity and of Esotericism,” *Open Theology* 3, no. 1 (December 20, 2017): 143–45, <https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2017-0050>.

⁴¹² Tony Nyundu and Kammila Naidoo, “Traditional Healers, Their Services and The Ambivalence Of South African Youth,” *Commonwealth Youth and Development* 14 (March 7, 2017): 2, <https://doi.org/10.25159/1727-7140/1799>.

⁴¹³ Nyundu and Naidoo, 2.

African practices.⁴¹⁴ He insists that “missionaries by the 19th century, whether Congregational, Methodist, Anglican, Lutheran or Catholic were aggressively opposed to traditional African practices that they considered barbaric and based on superstition.”⁴¹⁵ Despite that, there was an increase in record of those who engaged in the practice of AIR in South Africa. However, in Nigeria after independence, AIR became an essential element of indigenous knowledge systems. For this reason, several steps were taken by health workers and in Parliament to give recognition to African indigenous healers.⁴¹⁶ In view of the fact that the concepts of traditional healing could be discussed and recognized at a national level, it can be argued that traditional healers could not simply be denied.

In Tanzania, traditional healers have been recognized by the community since time immemorial, but their practices were discouraged during the colonial era. Colonialists discouraged traditional healing and associated it with witchcraft and uncivilization. This negative attitude towards traditional medicine and her practitioners allowed penetration of foreign culture, marking the beginning of mismatch between African traditional medicine and the western-style medical care system. Nonetheless, some of the Christian missionaries accepted using traditional remedies from traditional health practitioners in their medical services and showed interest in studying them. For example, recognizing the importance of herbal remedies, in 1895, German military doctors were officially advised to collect plant specimens and send them to Germany for scientific investigation.⁴¹⁷ By 1907, traditional medicine was incorporated into the health care system of the then “German East Africa.”

⁴¹⁴ D.T. Adamo, “Christianity and African Traditional Religions): The Postcolonial Round of Engagement,” *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 32 (1), 2011, 1, <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=url>.

⁴¹⁵ Adamo, 2.

⁴¹⁶ Adamo, 2.

⁴¹⁷ Mbwanbo Z.H, R.L.A. Mahunnah and E.J. Kayombo, “Tanzania Health Research Bulletin,” 2, 9 (May 2007): 115–17, <http://www.bioline.org.br/pdf?rb07019>.

Traditional healers in Tanganyika were given certificates indicating their locations of practice and illnesses they managed. However, the practice of traditional medicine was not recognized by the government of Tanzania since independence until when the Ministry of Health issued the new Medical Practitioners and Dentists Ordinance of 1968.⁴¹⁸

In 2007, it was estimated that at least 60% of Tanzanians who lived in urban areas and 80% of those who lived in rural areas relied on traditional medicine for their health treatments.⁴¹⁹ However, in the contemporary context, a good number of people who live in both rural and urban areas consult both indigenous health practitioners and faith healers. Faith healers are gaining popularity in various places in Tanzania because they directly address people's sufferings and promise them miracles of healing which for them could not be obtained through medical treatments.

Charismatic Movements. Charismatic groups are common among Protestant churches, in this case the Lutheran Church. In Tanzania, these groups have become common even though sometimes the emphasis has been contrary to what the Lutheran doctrines and practice require. Fihavango (2007) sees the emergence of these groups as the result of inadequate involvement of Protestant churches in addressing social issues that disturb people's lives.⁴²⁰ According to him, most of the people who join charismatic groups come from some oppressive conditions where they experience difficulties such as in their marriages, suffering from chronic diseases, and others especially women feeling the threat of HIV/AIDS because of the bad behaviors of their husbands.⁴²¹ When they join charismatic

⁴¹⁸ Mbwambo Z.H, R.L.A. Mahunnah and E.J. Kayombo, 115–17.

⁴¹⁹ Mbwambo Z.H, R.L.A. Mahunnah and E.J. Kayombo, 117.

⁴²⁰ George mark Fihavango, *Jesus and Leadership: Analysis of Rank, Status, Power and Authority as Reflected in the Synoptic Gospels from a Perspective of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT)* (Usa River, Arusha: Makumira Publication Sixteen, 2007), 98.

⁴²¹ Fihavango, 98.

groups, they feel happy and protected because these groups operate as a close social system, whereby members consider themselves as single family, brothers and sisters in Christ. The group members are always socially active, helping each other in times of need.⁴²² Such conviviality has the African aroma of belonging and sharing in life.

Charismatic pastors and lay preachers insist on faith healing through miraculous divine intervention over illnesses and socio-psyche problems. These ministers take a Christological model of miraculous healing as indicated in the Bible. They insist that God's miraculous power of healing is always there to heal. According to them, those who have firm faith in Jesus Christ cannot miss miracles of success and healing from various ailments. For them, having firm faith in Jesus Christ enables believers to be free from demons and every kind of suffering. They claim to possess power from the Holy Spirit that enables them to pray over the sick and, through faith, sick persons recover from their sicknesses. Most of these ministers refer to biblical texts such as Mark.16: 17.

From my experience of living and working in Karagwe, I have seen a number of Christians and non-Christians consulting Christian faith healers. They only believe that God is able to heal them through prayers made by gifted ministers. A Lutheran and trained evangelist who believes that God uses him to heal people from various ailments said:

Huwezi amini, lakini Mungu anatenda miujiza ya ajabu. Watu wengi wanaletwa kwangu, wanaosumbuliwa na maradhi mbalimbali na nikiwaombea wanapona na wanarudi nyumbani wakichangamka. Wapo watu wengi na hasa wanawake wanaosumbuliwa sana na mapepo ya uchawi. Hawa wote wanaombewa na wanapona. Watu wengine walikuwa na maradhi magumu, mfano yupo mwanamke ambaye tumbo lake lilikuwa halipati mimba kwa kipindi cha miaka saba, huyu nilimuomba na sasa ana watoto. Ninachotaka kusema ni kwamba Yesu anatenda miujiza hadi leo (You may not believe, but I want to tell you that God performs miracles of healing. Many people are brought to me, suffering from various illnesses, I pray over them and they receive healing and return home healed and happy. Many people who come to me are troubled by demonic powers and

⁴²² Fihavango, 98.

witchcraft. I always cast out those demonic powers and the sick go home healed. Other people suffer from difficult illnesses, I pray over them and they receive healing. For example, one woman could not conceive for a period of seven years. She was brought to me, I prayed over her, and today she has children. What I want to tell you is that, Jesus Christ performs miracles till today).⁴²³

Another faith healer (Rozimery Athanael) who happened to influence and attract many people in just a very short time asserted that no one can stop God when he decides to heal his people. Rozimery, narrated about her faith and experience of God's miraculous acts of healing that it was in the year 1987 when God appeared to her in a dream and instructed her to go and heal the sick through prayers.⁴²⁴ According to her, after a few days, many people from Karagwe, from different parts of Tanzania, and others from abroad flocked to her place seeking healing. A good number of people who attended to her received healing. Only a few people were not healed and some were sick again after returning home. For her, those who were healed yet got sick again lacked faith and commitment in their lives.⁴²⁵

The information about Rozimery's healing ministry is narrated in written form by Finn Allan Ellebeck from Denmark who was once a missionary in Karagwe. Ellebeck was an eye witness to Rozimery's healing ministry. According to him, it was in January 1987 when Rosemary heard a voice calling her for healing service. By then Rozimery was 23 years of age, married to Athanael Byosi, and their family was blessed with two children. She was seriously ill, and was brought to the nearest hospital for treatment, and there she was dying. But on the critical day did Jesus Christ in body revealed himself to her. He told

⁴²³ Peleus Sevelian. *Miraculous Healing*. Face to Face, December, 2019.

⁴²⁴ Rozimery Athanael. *Miraculous Healing*. Face to Face, February 21, 2020. According to Rozimery, many people received healing from natural and spiritual diseases. During prayers, she could immediately discover diseases caused by bewitchment or the use of charms. Such people were required to go back home, destroy all charms and come back for healing. Kashaija, a church elder in Songambebe-Kaisho witnessed to me that he received healing from complicated stomach-disease after attending Rozimery's healing prayers in 1987. According to him, Rozimery placed hands on his stomach, prayed over him, since then he never experienced any problem in his stomach.

⁴²⁵ Rozimery Athanael. *Healing Miracles*. Face to Face, February 21, 2020.

Rozimery that she was chosen for a healing service that would last for 13 years. She was told that all sickness shall be healed in the name of God. When she regained consciousness, she was well and could immediately leave the hospital.⁴²⁶

Rozimery was told in the vision that she should go to her church, talk with the minister and get a Bible. By then, she was a Catholic member and did therefore look up her Catholic priest. But the priest refused to take her seriously and had absolutely no wish to give her the Bible. “She had not been practicing, and she had never read in the Bible or attended church,” the priest said. Rozimery was unhappy, as she was convinced that she should practice a healing service, and that she should not have the church’s help to do it. When she was in prayer over the subject, Jesus once again revealed Himself to her, saying, that she had to go to a pastor, who was willing to receive her. When she had gotten the Bible, she should do what the pastor commanded her to do and not what he warned her against.

Therefore, Rozimery went to pastor Lameck Kalibwami, a Lutheran pastor at Kituntu parish. She did immediately get the Bible from pastor Kalibwami, and then the road for healing services was opened. She began her healing service by praying over a child of 3-4 years, who was paralyzed from birth and had never been able to sit up. She preached and prayed over the sick. Then she asked the child to rise up in the name of Jesus. The astonished spectators saw the child rise up and run to its mother. From there, the news spread and many people started to come to her place for healing. The family’s own soil turned into market streets, preaching place and healing center. During the healing service she asked everyone wanting to be healed to come forward. They kneeled, and she told them all to confess their sins to God. She also showed how pointless it is to come forward if you

⁴²⁶ Finn Allan Ellerbeck, “Report from Tanzania,” *Dennebro Magazine, Postblad 12*, November 1996, 9.

do not have confidence in the power of Jesus Christ. She had the command from Him, and her post builds on mutual trust in the living Savior. In especially hard cases there were lying on of hands or other kinds of touching. Some 5-10 healings happened a day, but it was difficult to survey, for no one kept the records. Karagwe buzzed with eye witness reports of healings.⁴²⁷

On another occasion, Mika Vähäkangas (a Finish theologian) who happened to stay in Tanzania and taught at Makumira University College narrates about another healing associated with faith. This is the healing performed by a Tanzanian retired Lutheran pastor who happened to attract many people because of his claim that God revealed to him through dreams and provided him herbal medicine that would heal all maladies. According to Vähäkangas, while Mwasapile's healing ministry was approved by the Lutheran bishops in Tanzania, charismatic churches remained divided on this ministry. However, the national research hospital also endorsed the ministry as one among other several traditional medicines found in several ethnic groups.⁴²⁸ For him, "The fact that hundreds of thousand patients, Tanzanians as well as foreign, were willing to make the tedious journey to the remote village of *Samunge* to be healed by Rev. Mwasapile, points on the one hand the failure of biomedical services in Africa, but on the other hand it also reflects some deeper cultural longing that biomedicine is not able to address."⁴²⁹

Vähäkangas (2015) criticizes colonial authorities and missionaries for introducing biomedicine that created a situation of medical pluralism in Tanzania in which the

⁴²⁷ Ellerbeck, "Report from Tanzania,"10.

⁴²⁸ Mika Vähäkangas, "Ba-Bu Wa Loliondo--Healing the Tensions between Tanzanian Worlds," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 45, no. 1 (2015): 4, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700666-12340029>.

⁴²⁹ Vähäkangas, 4–5.

traditional way of healing became measured against the yardstick of Western medicine.⁴³⁰ The colonial approach, according to him, depicted traditional healers as either charlatans or witches.⁴³¹ Despite this yardstick, people continued to practice their traditional way of healing. In this case, for Vähäkangas, one way of overcoming exclusion of traditional healing is to combine traditional herbal elements and Christian faith healing. He sees Mwasapile's ministry as a kind of reintroducing the material herbal element into Christian faith healing.⁴³²

These healing examples reveal the reality that when people face illnesses, the remedy may be spiritual, natural or clinical. The challenge faced by the church relies on the way it balances her involvement in healing that is both Christian and indigenous. In-depth discussion on this issue is presented next.

Critiques on Western Missionary Views of African and Nyambo Understanding of Healing

Criticising the western methodical approaches to African cultures, Mugambi (2003) argued that,

The modern Christian missionary has assumed, in general, that the culture and ethics of the missionary is "Christian" and "good," whereas that of the prospective converts is "non-Christian" and "evil." Missionary expansion has been rationalized in terms of going out to convert those of different cultures and religions so that they might become like the missionary. From a secular perspective this is typical of imperial expansionism...Paul distinguishes clearly between theological principles and their practical application in specific situations. That was his method in his epistles to various local churches in the Mediterranean region. The modern missionary enterprise in Africa, in contrast, has tended to expect one norm to be applied uniformly according to the teaching of each denomination which also conformed to the cultures where the denomination was dominant. Thus it was difficult for a prospective African convert to tell the difference between Scottish Presbyterianism and Scottish culture, English Anglicanism and English culture, Consolata

⁴³⁰ Vähäkangas, 5.

⁴³¹ Vähäkangas, 5.

⁴³² Vähäkangas, 4–5.

Catholicism and Italian culture, Baptist Christianity and the norms of the southern United States, Quakerism and the norms of the United States, German Lutheranism and German culture, and so on.⁴³³

What Mugambi pointed out is also evident among the Nyambo. The same emphasis was made by the missionaries that their ethics were good and Christian, and that of the Nyambo were bad and heathen. The Nyambo who became Christians had to behave according to guidelines provided by the respective denominations. For example, those who became Lutherans had to behave and worship in the manner of Lutheranism. Church elements such as worship buildings, songs, worship liturgies, Christian ethics, and the understanding of health and healing issues had to follow the Lutheran missionaries' guidelines. Such insistence seemed to foster Western philosophy, civilization, and Christian understanding of life. Whether it was good or not, it could not survive in African context without some criticism.

Writing from Haya/Nyambo context, scholars such as Kibira, Rweyemamu, Lutahoire, and Kagaruki argued that the missionaries endeavoured to replace and undermine Haya/Nyambo-African cultures. In this process, they disregarded African traditional practices by calling it evil, superstitious, underdeveloped, primitive, heathen, or irreligious.⁴³⁴ For Kibira, such misconception was wrong because not everything African is evil.⁴³⁵ Kibira pointed, for example, that it was not right for the missionaries to associate witch-doctors with witchcraft, hence denying their healing practices simply because the

⁴³³ J.N.K. Mugambi, "The Problems of Teaching Ethics in African Christianity," in *Morals and Ethical Issues in African Christianity*, Eds. J.N.K. Mugambi and A. Nasimiyu-Wasike (Nairobi, Kenya: Acton Publishers, 2003), 14-15.

⁴³⁴ Kibira, *Church, Clan, and the World*, 53.; Rweyemamu, *Conversion Discourse in African Perspective*, 170.; Lutahoire, *The Human Life Cycle Among the Bantu*, 6.; Anatory N. Kagaruki, "The Nyambo Traditional Healing and Its Impact on Modern and Christian Healing: A Case Study in the Ihembe and Lukajange Districts of the ELCT Karagwe Diocese," A Research Paper Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Bachelor of divinity of Tumaini University. Usa-River, Tanzania, June 2009, 26.

⁴³⁵ Kibira, *Church, Clan, and the World*, 15.

missionaries did not know what the witch-doctors really did and how they did it. Kibira insisted,

The so called “witch-doctor” may have nothing to do with witchcraft as such, and may, to our astonishment, show a medical sensitivity comparable to that of a Western doctor of medicine. The fact that we do not know what he really does and how he does it, does not give us the right to rule it out as evil and therefore destined to disappear. After all we are astonished to see that despite blaming and banning all the African medicines they still continue. Such an inquiry may lead to a future generation to study his art more seriously than now, for paganism seems not to be confined to Africa alone.⁴³⁶

Kibira’s emphasis about “witch-doctors”⁴³⁷ remains a challenge in today’s context of mission among the Nyambo. The Lutheran church in Karagwe maintains a denial of practices performed by witch-doctors, but still a number of the Nyambo respect and use medicines and charms provided by the witch-doctors. They hold on to a belief that witch-doctors have abilities, for example to catch witches, to prevent people from bewitchment, to heal illnesses caused by witches, and to prevent people from misfortune that may be associated with witchcraft practices. My experience of living in Karagwe reveals the fact that not everything done by witch-doctors is bad. Sometimes they help people to cope with difficult situations that they face in life.

For Kagaruki, any traditional healing that enhances life is not evil; rather it is a God given gift to the Nyambo. It might lack scientific proof, but that cannot be the reason to purge it out.⁴³⁸ In fact this is the current debatable issue among the pastors and other church ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Karagwe. Some pastors think that it is

⁴³⁶ Kibira, 15.

⁴³⁷ Among the Haya/Nyambo, a witch-doctor is a diviner and magician who people believe that he/she catches witches or provides charms and medicine that protect people from being bewitched. This idea corresponds with that of Evans-Pritchard when he referred to the Azande in Sudan that “The Zande witch-doctor is both diviner and magician. As diviners, the witch-doctor exposes witches; as magician he thwarts them. See, Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande*, 66.

⁴³⁸ Kagaruki, “The Nyambo Traditional Healing and Its Impact on Modern and Christian Healing: A Case Study in the Ihembe and Lukajange Districts of the ELCT Karagwe Diocese,” 41.

socially, medically, and theologically right to use and encourage congregants to use herbal remedies, regardless if it is miraculous or not. Some think and believe that Christians should use only herbal remedies that are not associated with magical or miraculous healing. Still others think and believe that Christians should not use any herbal or traditional remedies when they get sick; rather they should pray for miraculous healing from God in Jesus's name or attend clinics. Basing on the biblical, missiological, and contextual understanding of healing, I support the idea of Kagaruki that if the traditional remedy heals the sick and it does not cause any harm to the community and to nature, then that healing should be advocated and appreciated as God's blessing to the community. However, it is important to do research before applying it.

Arguing further against missionary methodical approaches to African cultures, Kahakwa was of the opinion that, because most of the missionaries in Africa developed a negative attitude to indigenous cultures and its key elements, they just held an attitude and assumed that it was their duty to command the Africans to start life from a bare beginning.⁴³⁹ More ominously, Lutahoire (1974) emphasized that most Africans who converted to Christianity were told to direct their hope and faith to the life that has to come after the present life on earth. People were told to direct their hearts to heaven where there apparently is no lust. Because of such emphasis, many people who joined Christianity lost touch with the real issues that affected them daily.⁴⁴⁰ Such real issues include diseases, misfortunes, curses, witchcraft and sorcery, and poverty. In such a shift, prayers and dependence on God's mercy and miracles are emphasized over finding out the real causalities and solutions. Patrons of this view mostly use biblical texts such as Matthew 6:

⁴³⁹ Kahakwa, *A Haya African Interpretation of the Christian Concept of God: A Study of an Invocation of the Deity in a Threefold Form for Indigenising and Understanding the Christian Trinitarian Model*, 78.

⁴⁴⁰ Lutahoire 1974, 6-7.

25-34; 6: 20-21 in order to assure people who are captured in sufferings. Those who suffer are always told to accept their sufferings as part of God's will (Romans 9).

Until today, there is a good number of Christians among the Nyambo who believe that diseases, natural catastrophes, and deaths are part of God's punishment over evil, or a means of God to take away His people. They view life on earth as threatened by evil, troubles, and sufferings. Therefore, their desire is to leave the earth and go to heaven where there is no mourning (Revelation 21). When a person dies, the mourners say, *Katonda yagonza kumutwala owawenene mbali hatari bushasi* (God has decided to take them to their dwelling where there is no suffering). These words are mostly used as a way of comforting the bereaved and creating hope for the relatives that those who die return to their creator.

Reflecting on these views, I personally see some misconceptions regarding the emphasis made by the missionaries. On one hand, Lutahoire was right when he emphasized that missionaries in Africa stressed the life to come over the present life on earth, but it will be unfair if we do not appreciate the good work done by the missionaries. My argument is that, in spite of telling people to direct their hope to heaven, still the missionaries did not completely discourage the natives to lose touch of the real issues that affected them daily. For example, from its inception in Karagwe, the Lutheran church insisted on evangelism, education, health services, and developmental services. If the missionaries' aim was to make people stop working and direct their hope in heaven, they would not have encouraged the Nyambo to go to school, to protect and improve their health statuses, and to be involved in developmental activities. This does not deny the point that, from a Christian point of view, the present life is the preparation for the coming life or the life after. The biblical emphasis

remains that those who are ethical in the present life are promised blessed resting in the coming life (Revelation 21).

However, according to Rweyemamu, the missionaries who came among the Haya/Nyambo tried their level best to bring in social-cultural change even though the Haya/Nyambo were not empty boxes to receive whatever was brought to them.⁴⁴¹ Rweyemamu's perspective is developed in depth in an important book, *African Cry*, written by Jean-Marc Ela when he articulates the relationship between the missionizing church in the West and African context, where Africa was viewed as the context of mission that needed to die in order to come to Christian faith.⁴⁴² Ela (1980) wrote,

Africa must die to come to the faith, and the struggle with African "superstitions" and the enterprise of opening that continent to European culture were indissolubly united in the church's undertaking. Indeed, absorbed as it was by a gigantic sacramentalization process, mission became identified with a struggle against sorcery and polygamy-both being looked upon as typical traits of inferior, pagan societies.⁴⁴³

This negative view of the missionaries of African ways of living quested for contextual Christianity in African context. The transmission approaches applied by missionaries face criticisms and need reforms.⁴⁴⁴ Ideally, Rweyemamu firmly criticises the methods that missionaries used to convert the Haya/Nyambo into Christianity. He reveals that the missionary Christianity's methodical approaches failed to meet both spiritual and physical needs.⁴⁴⁵ According to him, missionaries failed to address issues such as barrenness, prayer for the sick, curses, and bewitchment. Such issues have contributed to the Haya converts and converts from mainland churches to move and join revival movements because of their

⁴⁴¹ Rweyemamu, *Conversion Discourse in African Perspective*, 170.

⁴⁴² Jean-Marc Ela, *African Cry* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986), 43.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁴ See page 72.

⁴⁴⁵ Rweyemamu, *Conversion Discourse in African Perspective*, 249.

dissatisfaction.⁴⁴⁶ He further emphasizes that, “Missionaries among the Haya tried hard to convert them into western Christianity, but little was done to convert them to Christ. People were incorporated in the church through baptismal liturgy without necessarily touching their hearts.”⁴⁴⁷ The indigenous assimilation approach of accommodating the native culture into Christianity was lacking in this approach.

Following the logic of Rweyemamu, all converts were compelled to embrace European culture because this culture seemed closely associated with the missionary Christianity. Haya traditional practices such as traditional dress, music, and dances were considered to be devilish and unworthy for anyone entering into the kingdom of God. Hence, they had to be renounced before baptism.⁴⁴⁸ It means that the meeting between African indigenous cultures and western Christianity created a tension on the understanding of life and its complexities. For example, African beliefs in mystical powers and witchcraft collided with that of Christianity.

Commenting on the missionaries’ approach to African understanding on witchcraft and sorcery, Asamoah-Gyadu indicates the failure of mission Christianity to engage constructively with primal imagination, especially on traditional notions of spiritual causality.⁴⁴⁹ According to him, witchcraft, sorcery, and the reality of demons were ignored by missionaries on account of deeply westernized and intellectualized dispositions towards such matters.⁴⁵⁰ “The failure to engage constructively with the phenomenon of witchcraft

⁴⁴⁶ Rweyemamu, 249.

⁴⁴⁷ Rweyemamu, 248.

⁴⁴⁸ Rweyemamu, 17.

⁴⁴⁹ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “*African Pentecostalism, Deliverance and Healing: Recent Developments and New Challenges*,” 28.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

meant an implied inability to incorporate into mission work a proper response to the anxieties, fears and insecurities that witchcraft brought to African converts.”⁴⁵¹

Gehman shows with reason that the gospel did not penetrate the soul of Africa.⁴⁵² This is “because the heart of Africa was not seriously reflected upon from the Christian point of view. What does God have to say to people immersed in the African traditional world view where sickness is always the result of malignant personal agents?”⁴⁵³ For Gehman, this required a biblical theology of divine healing compatible with the African context.⁴⁵⁴ As long as the Bible includes contextual spirituality of healing, it means that a contextual approach to mystical forces is needed in every context. This view is developed in the following section.

This explanation showed the western philosophical views of the missionaries of African understanding of health and healing as well as some critiques and challenges raised by various scholars. Unfortunately most of the missionaries’ views were biased because they tended to regard their home culture as superior and Christian over that of the Africans. This alien way of understanding God and life in general struggled to influence and replace indigenous cultures with western cultures. Conversely, a number of Africans reacted and criticized these alien methodical ways of understanding health and healing. The following sub-section delves specifically on the presence of the Lutheran church in Karagwe—a presence that displays a more modified contextual approach to the Lutheran western philosophical views of the Nyambo-African understanding of healing.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵² Gehman, *Doing African Christian Theology: An Evangelical Perspective*, 33.

⁴⁵³ Gehman, 33.

⁴⁵⁴ Gehman, 33.

The Lutheran Missionary Encounter with the Nyambo

This section begins by showing brief historical information of the Lutheran Church in Karagwe, followed by an explanation of its involvement in translating the gospel in terms of the spiritual, physical, mental, and socio-economic spheres. It will be shown that despite being influenced by Western philosophical views of doing mission, the Lutheran Church in Karagwe has been actively involved in more modified contextual approaches to delivering holistic ministry among the Nyambo.

History reveals that it was in the 19th century when the Nyambo received both Islam and Christianity. Muslims were very much interested in commerce and slave trade. In addition, they introduced belief in One God and the five pillars of Islam. However, this religion did not gain many members as from Islamic point of view, a Muslim cannot become a slave. Hence, in order to get many slaves, the Arabs discouraged the Nyambo to become Muslims.⁴⁵⁵

The news about Christianity entered for the first time among Nyambo through the Lutheran Church followed by the Roman Catholic Church. Historically, Finn Allan Ellberk, a Lutheran missionary and a pastor from Denmark who served in Karagwe for several years, revealed the fact that the Lutheran missionary work was officially started in Karagwe in the year 1914 (by the Bethel mission from Germany), four years after it was started in Bukoba in 1910.⁴⁵⁶ Ellberk (1997) affirmed that the Karagwe diocese was part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, North-Western Diocese (Bukoba) until January 7, 1979 when

⁴⁵⁵ Finn Allan Ellberk, *Dayosisi Ya Karagwe: Historia Ya Kanisa La Kiinjili La Kilutheri Tanzania* (Bukoba: North Western Publishers, 1997), 26.

⁴⁵⁶ Ellberk, 85.

it became an independent diocese.⁴⁵⁷ Because of being formerly part of the North-Western Diocese, in 2010, the diocese celebrated centenary of 100 years of the Lutheran missionary work in Karagwe. This centenary marked an important achievement of holistic participation in the mission of God.

When Christianity was proclaimed, the inhabitants discovered that a large part of the gospel message was equated with the Nyambo cultural understanding of life. Kibira says that “the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ did not bring anything new to the Bayaha-Banyambo as far as human fellowship and unity is concerned. It only fulfilled what was already incorporated in the culture itself and gave it Christian meaning based on his love to all men.”⁴⁵⁸ Kibira stressed that for the Bahaya-Banyambo, Christ became more meaningful and stronger, the binding bridge between the clans and clusters of people who believed in him. He used his own blood to create a new *OMUKAGO* (New Blood Brotherhood) that embraces all (contrary to the cultural one that is selective) and this goes beyond color and nationality. Jesus Christ shed his blood to mean such a brotherhood.⁴⁵⁹

From Kibira’s observation, “Unless the blood of Jesus Christ is taken as *Omukago* among his followers, and this with all that underlies the ‘ritual,’ i.e. with taboos, pledges, services and worship, it will never take its real and meaningful rooting in the African soil.”⁴⁶⁰ Kibira believed that Jesus’s blood brotherhood is stronger than the clan and its uniting effect beyond clan boundaries should be the foundation on which we base the Christological thinking.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁷ Ellberk, 87.

⁴⁵⁸ Kibira, *Church, Clan, and the World*, 46.

⁴⁵⁹ Kibira, 46.

⁴⁶⁰ Kibira, 46.

⁴⁶¹ Kibira, 47.

Basically, from its inception in Karagwe, the Lutheran Church involved itself in three main missionary activities as uniting effects beyond clan and color. These missionary activities were preaching of the gospel, education, and health services. Ellberk affirms this—that the first thing that the first Lutheran missionary (Karl Ranke from Bethel) did in Karagwe was to build a mission centre, a school and a clinic.⁴⁶² He adds that in the beginning, clinical services faced opposition because the Nyambo believed that diseases were caused by breach of community customary rules or witchcraft. Therefore, it took some time before the indigenous could accept clinical treatments.⁴⁶³ Additionally, Niwagila points out another important remark that the Haya/Nyambo believed—that diseases were inflicted upon human beings because of man's disobedience to his creator or nature.⁴⁶⁴ Therefore, the cure of the disease involved not only the individual but the whole family and the whole clan. This was from the fact that although the sickness had attacked a single person, the entire family was involved under the same condemnation. The remedies involved rituals and sacrifices to God, nature spirits, or ancestors depending on the cause of the diseases. In this process, the cure of diseases was both physical and spiritual.⁴⁶⁵

Following the influence of Christianity and Western understanding of health and healing, most of the Nyambo later accepted clinical treatments, although a good number of them continued to adhere to indigenous healing. The indigenous perceptions of causes and treatments of illnesses remained in their hearts. At this point, I concur with Magezi (2006) who emphasized that a person's worldview provides reasons and interpretation, assigns

⁴⁶² Ellberk, *Dayosisi Ya Karagwe: Historia Ya Kanisa La Kiinjili La Kilutheri Tanzania*, 85.

⁴⁶³ Ellberk, 47–49.

⁴⁶⁴ Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church: A Case Study of the African Initiative and the Participation of the Foreign Missions in the Mission History of the North-Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania 1890-1965*, 221.

⁴⁶⁵ Niwagila, 221.

meaning and gives explanations, and determines relations to others, adaptation to or decisions on life's issues such as illness, HIV/AIDS, nature, death, God, and every-thing else in life.⁴⁶⁶ This does not mean opposing Christian healing and clinical consultation when people have health problems; rather it quests for appropriate approaches that might be used to reconcile indigenous understanding of healing, Christian healing, and clinical treatment of disease. It further quests dialogue and translational methods of Christian healing in a way that complements African and western understanding of life.

As a way of practicing contextual Christian healing, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Karagwe has been active in delivering clinical services among the Nyambo. This church regards clinical services as one of its missionary undertakings. The report from the ELCT, Karagwe diocese "Strategic Plan 2014-2018," reveals that the diocese currently owns and administers one hospital and four dispensaries. However, within the area, there are two more hospitals and 44 dispensaries belonging to the government and others being owned by other private owners.⁴⁶⁷ Even so, a good number of the Nyambo turn to traditional ways of healing when confronted with illness that for them biomedicine and Christian faith healing cannot cure. From the diocesan point of view, seeking healing from indigenous healers is against the Lutheran church doctrines and ethics. For Niwagila, such kind of a conclusion is not only a sign of ignorance but a rejection of God's omnipotence and omniscience.⁴⁶⁸ Niwagila who was once treated by the herbalist without an operation when he suffered from hernia, believes that God's abundant love has never left the Africans to act

⁴⁶⁶ V.Magezi, "Community Healing and the Role of Pastoral Care of the Ill and Suffering in Africa," in *die Skriflig* 40 (3) 2006: 509.

⁴⁶⁷ "Strategic-Plan-201420181384462569.Pdf," 4, accessed July 27, 2019, <http://www.karagwe-diocese.org/admins/kgwFiles/strategic-plan-201420181384462569.pdf>.

⁴⁶⁸ Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church: A Case Study of the African Initiative and the Participation of the Foreign Missions in the Mission History of the North-Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania 1890-1965*, 223.

in their own ignorance.⁴⁶⁹ He further insists that using African medicine is not going back to paganism, rather appreciating a good treasure of healing knowledge bestowed by God to Africa.⁴⁷⁰

Despite Niwagila's appreciation of indigenous medicine, the Karagwe diocese has for a long time ignored traditional medicine and healing as unchristian, unscientific, and sometimes associating it with traditional religious beliefs (*imani za jadi*) regarded as against Christianity. Those who become Christians are required to deny their traditional beliefs and practices. Ellerbek notes that, according to the Lutheran church in Karagwe, denial of African traditional religious beliefs has been one of the conditions for those who seek Christian baptism. Those who practice African traditional religious beliefs (*imani za dini za kiafrika*) after baptism will be put under church discipline, hence cannot be allowed to partake Holy Communion.⁴⁷¹

In most cases, the Holy Communion is used as a tool to punish and discipline those who disobey church ethics. Kibira makes a list of some events that would formally exclude a Christian from partaking at the Lord's Table: any consultation of diviners tantamount to having other god, adultery, fornication, laziness in attending church and working at church compound, attending unchristian weddings, attending Muslim festivals, dancing for the twins, ordination of traditional priests, and a Christian woman in her menstrual period.⁴⁷² Kolowa adds other reasons why Christians are excommunicated: circumcision of male children, giving birth outside marriage or before marriage, becoming alcoholic, insulting

⁴⁶⁹ Niwagila, 223.

⁴⁷⁰ Niwagila, 223.

⁴⁷¹ Ellerbek, *Dayosisi Ya Karagwe: Historia Ya Kanisa La Kiinjili La Kilutheri Tanzania*, 69.

⁴⁷² Kibira, *Church, Clan, and the World*, 51–52.

other people, practicing witchcraft or becoming polygamist.⁴⁷³ While other practices are regarded as unethical, circumcision of male children is no longer a reason for one to be denied Holy Communion by the Lutheran Church in Karagwe. Persons may still be excommunicated from partaking of Holy Communion if, for example, they live together without being legally married and solemnized their marriage in the church, give birth outside marriage or before marriage, are caught in acts of witchcraft, or become polygamists.

Along the same lines, the Haya/Nyambo liturgy for baptism requires those who come for Christian baptism to publicly deny Satan in this way: “*Ninyanga obushengi, obutiini bw'emizimu, n'okutiina emiziro, eby'okusirika n'okwegomba kwezibwa emiti n'engisha za abakaikuru, n'ebyo bahanulira abantu, n'okutiina eby'oburogi*” (I deny rebellion, fear of spirits, fear of totems, fear of charms, and fear of witchcraft practices)⁴⁷⁴ The word “fear” as used in this liturgy does not only mean “to be afraid,” rather to “revere” or “adore.”

The Lutheran Church in Karagwe is serious on issues of baptism and partaking in the Eucharist. For example, polygamous men who come for baptism have to decide to stay with only one wife and let others go their own way. Those who marry more than one woman after becoming Christians will not be allowed to partake in the Holy Communion until they leave other wives and stay with only the first wife. This is clearly stated in the diocesan constitution.

Mwanaume ambaye alioa zaidi ya mwanamke mmoja alipokuwa ni mmataifa na anataka kubatizwa, lazima awaache wake zake wengine ila mmoja. Lazima ashauliane na mchungaji ni mke gani atakayebatizwa pamoja naye...Mkristo aliyeona zaidi ya mke mmoja akitaka kushiriki meza ya Bwana lazima kwanza atubu

⁴⁷³ Kolowa, *The Impact of the Christian Church in Tanzania: 1885-1985*, 57.

⁴⁷⁴ EMPOYA: *Liturgia-Ekiragilira Abakristo* (Bukoba: North Western Publishers, 1992), 243.

dhambi Kanisani na kuwaacha wake zake wengine na kubakia na yule wa kwanza (A man who married many wives before becoming a Christian will be allowed Christian baptism, but he must be ready to leave other wives and remain with only one wife. He should consult his pastor and share with him about the wife he decides to remain with...If a man married more than one wife after becoming a Christian, he will not be allowed to partake the Holy Communion until he leaves other wives and remains with only the first wife).⁴⁷⁵

In fact, the Lutheran Church in Karagwe regards church discipline as not a punishment, but rather a way of helping church members to live according to church ethics. Writing from North Eastern Diocese in Tanga-Tanzania, Kolowa indicates the same emphasis that church discipline has for a certain extent helped congregations to control the moral standards of being Christians.⁴⁷⁶ However, due to modernity and an increase in number of church members who attend church services, it has become difficult to identify and control church members who misbehave. In most cases, church leaders encourage congregants to make self-examination and excommunicate themselves when they discover their misbehaviour. Later, they may consult their pastors for reconciliation with God and the congregations. Therefore, pastors' offices are always open for providing care and counselling to those who seek reconciliation.

However, considering the importance of providing holistic healing in the society, the diocese set four important departments: Mission and Evangelism, Health Care Services, Planning and Development, and *Diakonia*. Through these departments, the diocese plans and reaches people at the grassroots. Pastors, evangelists, and lay leaders of the church participate in this task.

Mission and Evangelism. The Evangelical Lutheran church in Karagwe regards mission and evangelism as its core task of bringing the Good News of healing, liberating,

⁴⁷⁵ Katiba ya Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri-Tanzania: Dayosisi ya Karagwe, "Kuoza zaidi ya Mke mmoja," 2014, 51-52.

⁴⁷⁶ Kolowa, *The Impact of the Christian Church in Tanzania: 1885-1985*, 57.

and preparing people for the salvation of their soul. A holistic approach to mission is always insisted, taking into consideration spiritual, mental and physical needs of the people. This participation is well stipulated in the diocesan constitution, where it is emphasized that the aim or purpose of having the diocese is to participate in God's mission by worshiping God through sharing the Word, Sacraments, Praises, prayers and thanksgiving, witnessing and serving the community by word and deed, strengthening the community through education and development projects, and providing health services and advocacy that promotes peace, love, and justice.⁴⁷⁷

Through the Word and sacraments, Christians experience the presence of the healing God in their lives. The department plans and supervises worship services, open air preaching, and stewardship seminars.⁴⁷⁸ According to the department head, each year they plan and conduct open-air preaching in the parishes, in collaboration with parish pastors and some lay Christians who are knowledgeable and talented in preaching.⁴⁷⁹ The head of the department further explained that most of the people who attend open-air preaching take a therapeutic message from the preachers. They do not care much or concentrate on exegesis or textual criticism. In most cases, the hearers appreciate preachers if they touch and heal wounds that disturb their lives. Their spiritual and mental thirst is always to receive healing against various sources of suffering such as ailments, poverty, family and social conflicts, witchcraft beliefs, and many other issues that endanger their life. Due to such thirst, a good number of people who attend preaching meetings seek miraculous healing.

⁴⁷⁷ Katiba ya Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri-Tanzania: Dayosisi ya Karagwe, "*Msingi wa Imani*," (2014), 1.

⁴⁷⁸ Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania, Dayosisi ya Karagwe: Ripoti ya askofu, Sinode (Mkutano) ya 20 Shule ya Sekondari Karagwe 13-16 December 2016), "*Idara ya Mission, Uinjilisti na Uwakili*," 66-67.

⁴⁷⁹ Elnathan Rubanga. Mission and Evangelism. Via Phone, June 2, 2020.

On the basis of this explanation, it is unblemished that in most cases, ordinary hearers of the gospel and readers of the Bible in the Karagwe diocese apply the biblical message directly addressing the pressing problems in their lives. At this point, I concur with Wielenga (2010) who pointed out the idea from Mbiti that ordinary readers of the Bible in Africa take a “therapeutic reading of the Bible.”⁴⁸⁰ Wielenga writes, “One reads the Bible with a view of protection of life, threatened by illness or evil. Reading Psalm 1 and 2, or 20 and 40 against stomach ailments, in conjugation with the use of specially prepared holy water or herbal medicine, is an example of contextual, existential Bible reading.”⁴⁸¹

A good number of the Lutheran church members in Karagwe, read the Bible and recite verses that give them solace and promise them miraculous healing and protection from God. Some preachers direct their followers to place Bibles on their beds believing that it will miraculously protect them against satanic traps. From Rubanga’s evaluation, most charismatic preachers use people’s problems in order to fulfill their spiritual and mental ambitions of gaining money and material. He asserts that, some pastors, evangelists and lay preachers emphasize on the literal interpretation of the Bible, hence advocating miraculous healing, accompanied by thanksgiving in terms of money and material.⁴⁸² Some of the preachers and the so called prophets require their followers to bring money and materials to the church so that they will receive abundant blessings in whatever they do. Some pastors, including the Lutheran pastors in Karagwe advise parishioners to place secret offering (money) in the envelopes and give it to the pastor who will pray over it, hence initiating

⁴⁸⁰ Bob Wielenga, “Bible Reading in Africa: The Shaping of a Reformed Perspective,” *In Die Skriflig* 44, no. 3–4 (December 2010): 704.

⁴⁸¹ Wielenga, 704.

⁴⁸² Elnathan Rubanga. Christian Healing. Via Phone, June 2, 2020.

God's blessings and healing to the giver. In fact, most of the preachers use the money and material for gaining personal wealth and economy.

In the contemporary context full of the mushrooming of charismatic and Pentecostal movements, some of the Lutheran pastors and lay preachers are becoming more charismatic, sometimes denying Lutheran doctrines and ethics. These ministers call upon people to depend on miraculous healing through fasting and praying in Jesus' name. They quote biblical passages that favor their healing ministries. Their emphasis is that God's miraculous power of healing is always there to heal any ailment the same way as it was during the time of Jesus Christ. According to them, those who experience illness and those who lack success in life need deliverance from their corrupt lives (Deuteronomy 28: 1ff). They emphasize that people who suffer need the intervention of the Holy Spirit who empowers and loosens the powers of the devil that enslaves God's people through ailments and poverty.

Writing on the heritage of the Lutheran Christianity in Tanzania, Katabaro (2017) sees a danger of biblical misinterpretations as some ministers emphasize faith healing and prosperity gospel rather than faith in Jesus Christ. Katabaro points to church *doctrine* as one of the challenges faced by the Lutheran church in Tanzania.⁴⁸³ According to him, there are many Lutheran pastors, evangelists, and lay members who nowadays imitate and propagate Pentecostal-charismatic teachings and practices emphasizing prosperity gospel, tithes, and faith healing that endanger the theology and the Lutheran heritage in the ELCT.⁴⁸⁴ They claim to have the gift of healing, leading to material blessings and healing miracles. According to them, Christians by virtue of their faith in Jesus and by paying tithes and

⁴⁸³ Brighton Juel Katabaro, "The Lutheran Heritage in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania," in *Reformatorisk Kristendom i et globalt-missionalt perspektiv*, ed. Andreas Østerlund Nielson (Denmark: Dansk Missionsråd, 2017), 29.

⁴⁸⁴ Katabaro, "The Lutheran Heritage in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania," 32-33.

offerings must receive material blessings from God and have lifelong success. The blessings include, for example, getting rich, passing exams, fertility, and getting healed from various diseases.⁴⁸⁵ For Katabaro, such teachings are in contradiction to Luther's doctrine of justification. The salvation of sinners according to Luther's doctrine of justification is a pure act of God towards the human being, without any contribution from the human being.⁴⁸⁶

Katabaro (2017) further refers to a Tanzanian prominent preacher Zachary Kakobe, leader of the Full Gospel Bible Fellowship Church (FGBFC) in Tanzania, as an example of the influential preachers in Tanzania who emphasize giving tithes as a necessity for receiving God's blessings.⁴⁸⁷ According to Kakobe, giving tithes is not voluntary, but obligatory of every member of the FGBFC. Kakobe argues mostly based on Old Testament texts such as 2Chr.24:9-21; Num.31: 37-39 and Malachi 3:10.⁴⁸⁸ He emphasizes that whoever wants to acquire abundant blessings must bring tithes to the Lord. "Therefore, God's blessing to people is conditional. God blesses those who pay tithes to the church and those who do not pay tithes forfeit the opportunity of receiving wealth or material blessings from God."⁴⁸⁹

It is true that the Bible speaks about paying tithes, but the emphasis on it may mislead listeners, especially when the tithes are regarded as a way of gaining God's blessings. To me, it is important to contribute money and material to the church, but the emphasis should not be put on convincing God to bless the giver, rather on supporting and continuing His mission on earth. When we recognize the position of God in our lives and

⁴⁸⁵ Katabaro, 33.

⁴⁸⁶ Katabaro 34.

⁴⁸⁷ Katabaro, *Hunger for Success: An Investigation of Neo-Charismatic-Pentecostal Teachings on Prosperity and Their Challenges in Tanzania*, 63.

⁴⁸⁸ Katabaro, 64–65.

⁴⁸⁹ Katabaro, 65.

support His mission on earth, we automatically receive blessings from Him. But, when the emphasis is put on gaining God's blessing, then giving turns into buying or exchanging money with God's blessings. My belief is that God's blessings are there freely for those who believe in him. We do not need to pay anything in order to gain it

Health and Wellness Ministry. The Karagwe diocese is involved in improving people's health and wellness through social services. The phrase "social services" can simply mean activities designed to promote social well-being, specifically organized philanthropic assistance.⁴⁹⁰ When social services are implemented properly in society, it improves the wellbeing of people through preventing and solving social problems. Two terms need more stress: *prevention* and *solving*. While I agree on solving social problems, I insist more on prevention measures, arguing that social services should first and foremost aim at preventing anything in the community that can destabilize its equilibrium in life. There is an important saying in English, that "prevention is better than cure." For example: We eat nutritious food and do exercise in order to make our bodies healthy, hence avoiding some diseases related to diet. We seek education in order to fight ignorance that may cause suffering due to lack of knowledge. We keep community ethical rules in order to avoid being alienated by the community.

Working in the Karagwe Diocese as a pastor, I have witnessed the real situation in which many people struggle to seek healing or cure from various diseases than they struggle to prevent themselves from sufferings. This has led to majority of people spending money and time struggling to seek healing and cure from various illnesses. There are examples of the dangers of neglecting preventive measures.

⁴⁹⁰ "Definition of SOCIAL SERVICE," accessed June 11, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social+service>.

- i. People living in areas where there are mosquitos are advised to use mosquito nets when they sleep in order to protect themselves against malaria, but some neglect using it, eventually they get sick and struggle to seek healing. Extreme believers will not go to hospital or use traditional medicine; rather they confront malaria through fasting and praying. They believe that God's miraculous healing can never fail to heal any disease. Despite such extreme faith, some of the sufferers continually suffer or die from malaria. This is one among the causes of suffering and death resulting from negligence.
- ii. People are advised to take care of their health through having balanced diet, sanitation, physical exercises, and acceptable pleasures, but some people neglect the advice; eventually they get sick and struggle to seek healing.
- iii. People are advised to avoid bad behaviour that may endanger their lives, but some neglect the advice; eventually they fall into suffering or suffer from ailments associated with unfaithful living. For example, both church and the traditional community advise people to avoid doing theft. Because of poverty and great desires, some people neglect to take precaution and steal. When they are caught, they end up being punished or put in jail. As a result they suffer and struggle to seek rescue.
- iv. In the context of witchcraft and sorcery beliefs, Christians are advised to hold on to firm faith in Jesus Christ in order to overcome those evil powers. Some Christians neglect the advice, but when they feel troubled by evil powers they run to church ministers in search of prayer and deliverance.

- v. The contemporary context is troubled and challenged by the deadly global disease called Covid-19.⁴⁹¹ The church, non-government organizations and government leaders are struggling to rescue people's lives through various social and medical actions. Some people are suffering from the disease and others have lost lives due to this disease. Medical experts require people to take measures against this pandemic. Some people follow the measures, but others neglect it. Those who neglect the measures are very likely to be infected and to infect others. Eventually there occurs a lot more suffering and death.

The understanding, beliefs, and reactions of church leaders and congregants against Covid-19 differ. For example, I managed to attend the meeting with pastors in Kituntu church district of the Karagwe diocese whereby the issue of Covid-19 was raised and discussed. These pastors had different views regarding the disease. Some accept the fact that the disease is there, and insist that besides prayer, medical or scientific measures should be taken seriously. For them, scientific discoveries regarding protection of health are part of God's imparted gift of knowledge from creation. Others insist on prayer over medical discoveries. They hold a view that only God is capable of overcoming the disease. They are

⁴⁹¹ "Coronavirus," accessed June 16, 2020, <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/health-topics/coronavirus>. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness. The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by washing your hands or using an alcohol based rub frequently and not touching your face. The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets generated when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or exhales. These droplets are too heavy to hang in the air, and quickly fall on floors or surfaces. You can be infected by breathing in the virus if you are within close proximity of someone who has COVID-19, or by touching a contaminated surface and then your eyes, nose or mouth. So it's important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow). At this time, there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19. However, there are many ongoing clinical trials evaluating potential treatments.

against church leaders who postponed church services by avoiding gatherings in church buildings due to Corona pandemic. For them, there was no need to close church buildings in a fight against Covid-19.

One pastor said, *“Katika kipindi hiki cha Covid-19 tunamuhitaji Mungu aingilie hali tuliyonayo kuliko kipindi chochote kilichopita. Wakristo wanapaswa kukutanika makanisani ili wamlilie Mungu, wamuombe, na kumuuta ili awaokoe na janga hili. Kufunga makanisa ni sawa na kumruhusu Shetani ashinde vita hii na hivyo kuutawala ulimwengu”* (In the current time of Covid-19, we need God’s intervention more than ever. Christians should gather in churches so that they will lament, pray, and call upon God to rescue them. To close church buildings is like allowing Satan to win the battle and dominate the world.)⁴⁹²

To my view, we cannot limit God’s miraculous ways of healing, but it will also be a great mistake if we neglect scientific advice that aim at protecting our lives. I do not agree on the point of gathering in churches while we know that the disease spreads between people through direct contact and secretion droplets released from the mouth or nose when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or speaks. To me, scientific, medical, or social measures should be regarded as God’s given gifts to help people to maintain their wellbeing. While trusting in God, we should also appreciate the good work done by scientists.

A long list can be made regarding the importance of prevention measures that lead to wellbeing. Negligence and ignorance against health and wellbeing guidelines prove to be among the causes of people’s sufferings in the community. In her desire to respond to people’s sufferings, the Lutheran church in Karagwe involves herself in social service

⁴⁹² “Corona Pandemic,” Conversation with Kituntu Church District Pastors. The Conversation took place at Katembe congregation during a meeting on sharing views about the problem of Covid-19 in Karagwe and elsewhere in the World. 12/6/2020. The pastors who participated are the retired bishop Nelson Kazoba, retired pastor Festo Bwatota, retired pastor Apolo Ntimba, retired pastor Thomas Kadihila, pastor Stewart Karugaba, pastor Sunday Kanwakaita, Pastor Lemigius Costantine, pastor Uzima Tirumanywa, pastor Respina Natson.

activities that foster holistic ministry. The diocese regards provision of social services as a way of participating in God's mission of healing people by improving their physical, social, economic and psychological needs. It does this because it is aware that a person cannot grow spiritually while surrounded by physical problems such as disease, hunger, poverty and insecurity.⁴⁹³ This view corresponds to the Lutheran World Federation social service's vision that aims at seeing "people living in just societies, in peace and with dignity, and empowered to achieve their full potential, claim their universal rights, meet their basic needs, and improve their quality of life."⁴⁹⁴ In order to fulfill these tasks, the Lutheran World Federation responds to and challenges the causes and effects of human suffering and poverty.⁴⁹⁵

Linda Mambo, the Karagwe diocesan deputy general secretary and head of Planning and Management Department believes that through social services, the diocese is involved practically in enhancing people's lives, hence healing.⁴⁹⁶ For her, healing cannot be limited to prayer only or spiritual care. It is worthy to acknowledge that apart from spiritual and psychological problems, some people suffer from sociological, economic, or natural illnesses. Such illnesses need prevention measures before they happen. Therefore, provision of social services in the community is regarded as another hand of God which He uses to protect and heal His people. Nonetheless, when people are enabled to improve their lives, they automatically prevent themselves against various diseases.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹³ Katabaro, Brighton M.J. "A Quest for Autonomy and the Mission of the ELCT Karagwe Diocese from 1962 to 2000," 75.

⁴⁹⁴ Brynjolfur Olason, "LWF World Service 2017," n.d., 3.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁶ Linda Mambo. Social Services. Via Phone, June 4, 2020.

⁴⁹⁷ Linda mambo. Social Services. Via Phone, June 4, 2020.

All of these notwithstanding, I describe here a few projects that the Karagwe diocese and her partners implement among the Nyambo.

Health Services. The Lutheran church in Karagwe is involved in providing health services aimed at maintaining people's physical and psychological health through clinical treatment in the community, training on health issues, and provision of pastoral care and counseling to community members.⁴⁹⁸ The ministry of pastoral care and counseling becomes very important as there are people who suffer from no clinically definable neurosis, but from the emptiness of their lives. So many people are feeling sense of insecurity due to fear of demonic powers and many other difficulties they encounter in life. Therefore, the church has a unique part to play against psychological and spiritual problems that her members face as they journey in life.

As a way of facilitating clinical treatment, the diocese started clinical services at Nyakahanga being assisted by missionaries from Germany in the year 1912.⁴⁹⁹ In 1972, the Nyakahanga hospital became the Designated District Hospital in Karagwe (DDH).⁵⁰⁰ It is currently the biggest hospital in the Karagwe governmental district with 224 beds.⁵⁰¹ The hospital also serves as the referral hospital of other health units in the district. In particular, in 2017, the hospital served 78124 out-patients and 20008 in-patients.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁸ Katiba ya Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri-Tanzania: Dayosisi ya Karagwe, "*Hospitali*," (2014), 58.

⁴⁹⁹ Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania, Dayosisi ya Karagwe: Ripoti ya Askofu: Sinode (Mkutano Mkuu) ya 21, Ihembe, 05-09/01/2019, "*Idara ya Afya na Utabibu*," 45.

⁵⁰⁰ Brighton Juel Katabaro, "A Quest for Autonomy and the Mission of the ELCT Karagwe Diocese from 1962 to 2000," Master of Theology Thesis, Makumira University College of Tumaini University, Makumira, Tanzania, 2003, 80.

⁵⁰¹ Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania: Dayosisi ya Karagwe: Ripoti ya Askofu: Sinode (Mkutano Mkuu) ya 21, Ihembe, 05-09/01/2019, "*Idara ya utabibu*," 45.

⁵⁰² Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania: Dayosisi ya Karagwe, Ripoti ya Askofu, 05-09/01/2019, 46.

Besides the running of the Nyakahanga hospital and various clinics (Ibamba Clinic, Nyakatera clinic, and Karagwe Secondary School clinic),⁵⁰³ the Karagwe diocese also decided to start a special program for assisting people affected by HIV/AIDS.⁵⁰⁴ This program is called AIDS Control Program (ACP). It was started in the year 1991 in collaboration with partners from Denmark. The purpose of this program is to help people affected with HIV/AIDS so that they may cope with the disease through receiving care and counseling from the church.⁵⁰⁵ The program provides education support, HIV/AIDS awareness seminars in the community, treatment, and relief aid to people affected by the disease.⁵⁰⁶ Through this project, the infected people do not only experience care from the church, but also get strength and courage of living in this world.

In her missional work, the diocese does not discuss or encourage the use of traditional medicine or traditional healing. According to Benson Bagonza, the bishop and head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Karagwe,

Suala la matumizi ya madawa ya kienyeji na tiba za kienyeji halimo katika kitabu chetu cha ibada, lakini kiukweli waumini wetu wanayatumia. Hata wapakwa mafuta wanatumia tiba hizi. Tatizo ni kwamba wakati ukristo na ustaarabu wa kigeni ulipoingia kwetu, tiba za jadi zilionekana kutofaa maana mazingira ya kuzitengeneza hayakuwa salama, nyingine zilihusishwa na uaguzi na ushirikina. Katazo lililoko katika vitabu vyetu lilingatia mazingira hayo. Kwa sasa kanisa halina shida na matumizi ya madawa ya kienyeji, ilimradi hayapingani na ukristo au kuhusishwa na ushirikina. Tatizo ni moja tu kwamba hatujaweka mawazo haya katika maandishi (The issue of using traditional medicine and traditional healing is not indicated in our worship book, but in reality the church members, including pastors and other church ministers do use it. The problem is that, when Christianity and alien civilization came in our area, traditional medicine and healing was regarded as unscientific, dirty, and sometimes associated with magic and divination. Because of this, it was necessary to indicate some restrictions of traditional practices in the Haya liturgical book so that Christians could not mix Christianity, folk healing and magic. Despite that, in today's context the Lutheran Church in Karagwe has no

⁵⁰³ Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania: Dayosisi ya Karagwe, Ripoti ya Askofu, 05-09/01/2019, 47-52.

⁵⁰⁴ Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania: Dayosisi ya Karagwe, Ripoti ya Askofu, 05-09/01/2019, 55.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.,

⁵⁰⁶ Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania: Dayosisi ya Karagwe, Ripoti ya Askofu, 05-09/01/2019, 56.

problem with the use of traditional medicine and healing; but those healing should not be against Christian faith or associated with magic. The problem is that we have not put this new paradigm in a written form).⁵⁰⁷

Questions that arise from the bishop's observation is include how and to what extent should the church incorporate traditional medicine and healing practices in her missionary endeavors? How should the biblical emphasis on traditional healing be translated in the contemporary Nyambo context? It is important to note here that healing in this manner does not only mean remedy of diseases, rather the maintenance of human wholeness. Therefore, this understanding quests application of several cultural elements that can be employed in order to make life more meaningful. Such cultural elements include folk medicine, traditional rituals, and ethics. A profound explanation on this issue will be done in chapter five.

Diaconal Ministry. Diaconal work can simply mean, “Reacting to situations of human need and striving to alleviate the immediate suffering.”⁵⁰⁸ It includes services rendered humbly to those in physical and material need.⁵⁰⁹ Ahonen (2000) sees *diakonia* as a very important part of the Church's missionary work.⁵¹⁰ For him, *diakonia* expresses practically the church's faith and love towards the neighbour. Through love, *diakonia* opens eyes to the suffering people and assists them.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁷ Benson Bagonza. The Lutheran Church in Karagwe and Traditional Healing. Via Whatsapp. Dumaguete, August 16, 2019.

⁵⁰⁸ Reinhard Boettcher, ed., *Prophetic Diakonia: “For the Healing of the World”* (Geneva 2, Switzerland: The Lutheran World Federation, 2003), 10.

https://elcic.ca/Documents/documents/PropheticDiakoniaConsultation_Diakonia2002.pdf.

⁵⁰⁹ Reinhard Boettcher, “Towards Lutheran Theological Understanding of the Diaconal Ministry, in *The Diaconal Ministry in the Mission of the Church*, ed. Reinhard Boettcher (Geneva 2, Switzerland: The Lutheran World Federation, 2006), 14.

⁵¹⁰ Risto A Ahonen, *Mission in the New Millennium* (Helsinki: The Finish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, 2000), 234.

⁵¹¹ Ahonen, 234.

In other places, Oftestad (2003) pointed out that “the mission of the church is not to secure man’s room in heaven, but to be a visible sign of the presence of the Lord in the longing for freedom and in the struggle for a more humane and just society. Only in this way is the church able to make its preaching of love credible and active. For the challenge of the church is not primarily the contrast between belief and disbelief, but between humane and nonhumane.”⁵¹² Oftestad articulates this point by emphasizing that the church being present in this world should take an active part in every true and real humane effort to change the society and be constructive and critically obliged to fight for human dignity.⁵¹³ He further notes that the church should aim at establishing “a human life, salvation or deliverance from poverty, distress, war, hunger, illness, slavery, and all kinds of unjust and mainly physical suffering. This is called a total salvation and it is a process.”⁵¹⁴

Based on the importance of diaconal ministry in the church, Boettcher (2006) reveals the fact that “since the founding of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948, many churches have rediscovered and increasingly appreciated *diakonia* as a fundamental and essential component of their mission.”⁵¹⁵ However, in a Letter from the Global Consultation on “Prophetic Diakonia: For the healing of the World,” that took place in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 3-7 November 2002, the participants stressed that, “Diakonia is central

⁵¹² Alf B. Oftestad, *How to Build a Diaconal Church: A Short Introduction to the Biblical Understanding of Diakonia*, 2003, 16–17.

⁵¹³ Oftestad, 18.

⁵¹⁴ Oftestad, 18.

⁵¹⁵ Reinhard Boettcher, “Toward Lutheran Theological Understandings of the Diaconal Ministry,” in *The Diaconal Ministry in the Mission of the Church*, ed. Reinhard Boettcher (Geneva 2, Switzerland: The Lutheran World Federation, 2006), 11.

to what it means to be the church. As a core component of the gospel, diakonia is not an option but an essential part of discipleship.”⁵¹⁶

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Karagwe is not behind on this ministry. It regards diaconal ministry as a way of “putting the healing message of the Gospel into practice.”⁵¹⁷ In her participation, the diocese imitates Jesus Christ as the first and prime servant of God who involved in diaconal ministry.⁵¹⁸ His diaconal ministry is so vivid that, during his earthly life, Jesus Christ felt a great concern with people’s daily needs and welfare. With compassion he fed the hungry (Matt. 14: 13-21; Lk.9:10-17; Mark 10:42-45; John 6:1-140, he healed the sick and those with disabilities (Lk. 5:12-25; Matt.12: 9-14), and he stood on the side of the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized in the society (Lk.4: 18-19). Likewise, his disciples followed his example (Acts 6: 1-7; 28:7-10). In this manner, the ministry of Jesus Christ and his disciples provide the theological base for the church’s involvement with the people’s spiritual, physical, and social needs.

The Karagwe diocese participates in ministering to the needy through the diaconal department in collaboration with parish pastors, evangelists, and diaconal committees in the congregations.⁵¹⁹ *Dhamira ya idara ya diakonia ni kujenga uwezo wa jamii kwa njia ya kutoa huduma kwa wasiojiweza-kijamii, kiuchumi na kiroho. Pia idara inakusudia kuwawezesha wanajamii kutambua na kutumia raslimali zilizopo kwa maisha endelevu* (The diaconal department aims at strengthening the community through providing charitable services to the most needy in terms of social, economic, and spiritual needs. The department

⁵¹⁶ Reinhard Boettcher, ed., *Prophetic Diakonia: “For the Healing of the World”* (Geneva 2, Switzerland: The Lutheran World Federation, 2003), 6.

https://elcic.ca/Documents/documents/PropheticDiakoniaConsultation_Diakonia2002.pdf.

⁵¹⁷ Teqxavier Biita. Diaconal Ministry. Face to Face, Lukajange, March 11, 2020.

⁵¹⁸ Katiba ya kanisa la Kiiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania, Dayosisi ya Karagwe, “Udiakonia,” (2014), 39.

⁵¹⁹ Teqxavier Biita, Diaconal Ministry, Face to Face, Lukajange, March 11, 2020.

also aims at enabling the community to realize and use or utilize resources found in their areas).⁵²⁰ The main external partner in carrying out this ministry is Danish Mission.⁵²¹

Danish Mission decided to be involved in supporting *diakonia* work in Karagwe since the year 1997. The primary aim was to motivate and equip local congregations to provide diaconal services to needy people in the villages especially those who were afflicted by the AIDS epidemic. The needy included the orphans, the handicapped, and elderly people. In the initial stages, the department finances and staff came from Denmark.⁵²²

In the current context, both the diocese and Danish Mission contribute a lot in the running of the department. Each year there is a special day called “Diakonia Day”—a day set on the third Sunday of July—during which members of the church contribute money and material things in order to support the needy. In the biblical text from the Proverbs is always stressed that, “He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed” (Proverbs 19:17). Therefore, the diocese invites and collaborates with sister churches who wish to unite with the diocese in helping the poor and the needy in the community. Through these supports, the diocese manages to cover various diaconal activities such as supplying foodstuff and clothes, building houses for very poor families, paying medical treatment costs for some sufferers who live in absolute poverty, and paying school fees for children coming very poor families.⁵²³

Emphasis on Education. Education, whether informal or formal, has its own importance in human activities and life. Every society in the world has its own way of educating its members. In the biblical and Rabbinic thought, education was understood as

⁵²⁰ Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania, Dayosisi ya Karagwe: Ripoti ya Askofu: Sinode (Mkutano Mkuu) ya 21, Ihembe, 05-09/01/2019, “*Idara ya Diakonia*,” 45.

⁵²¹ Tecxavier Biita, Diaconal Ministry, Face to Face, Lukajange, March 11, 2020.

⁵²² Katabaro, “A Quest for Autonomy and the Mission of the ELCT Karagwe Diocese from 1962 to 2000,” 85.

⁵²³ Tecxavier Biita, Diaconal Ministry, Face to Face, Lukajange, March 11, 2020.

the beginning of wisdom. In Genesis 18: 19 it is written, “Keep the way of God by doing what is right and just.” In the book of Psalms 111: 10 it is read, “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God.”⁵²⁴ For Muslims, the Prophet Muhammad introduced the *madrassa* in order to educate the followers of Islam.⁵²⁵ For the Nyambo as well as most African traditional communities, education about life was passed from one generation to another through informal paths. Now, what is the definition of education? The term can be defined as the act or process of imparting or acquiring knowledge and skills, or developing the powers of reasoning and judgment.⁵²⁶

Plato, Aristotle and Socrates upheld that education is enormous ethical and political importance. To them, people are unified and made into a community by means of education. According to Plato (in the Republic) the goal of ethical education is to train or socialize people’s desires, turning them around from the pursuit of what they falsely believe to be the point of true happiness. In this sense, education frees one from illusion and images of the good and makes one see the good itself.⁵²⁷

During colonial Africa, Africans became more influenced by what was happening elsewhere especially in Europe and the Middle East. The expansion of the educational systems of the industrial nations, in the 20th century, for example, was followed by the emergence of school systems in developing nations in Asia and Africa. In order to improve education at all levels, in the mid-20th century the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) inaugurated literacy campaigns and other educational projects.

⁵²⁴ The Open University of Tanzania (Department of Educational Foundations), Study Material, “OEF 101: Philosophy of Education and Teaching,” 10.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁶ “Definition of Education | Dictionary.Com,” [www.dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com/browse/education), accessed June 18, 2020, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/education>.

⁵²⁷ The Open university of Tanzania (Department of Educational Foundations), Study material, “OEF 101: Philosophy of Education and Teaching,” 10.

The aim of these campaigns and projects was to put every child into school and to eliminate illiteracy.⁵²⁸

In Tanzania, the type of education during colonial Africa created a shift of understanding life. Through social institutions, such as schooling and religion, colonial influence systematically eroded the socio-cultural base of the indigenous people. Thus, under colonialism, indigenous social instructions that aimed at preserving indigenous culture, values and socio-economic relations were deliberately replaced by colonial social institutions. The education provided aimed at socializing the indigenous people into the prevailing dominant cultures of the time. For example, the madrasa were established to teach the Africans literacy in Arabic so that they could read the Koran. These madrasa produced *Akidas* who were later used in colonial administration as interpreters and tax collectors by the Germans. Likewise, the Christian missionaries established literacy classes and later schools where they taught the indigenous people to read the Bible and other religious literature. The areas with great missionary activities were easily assimilated into the colonial system.⁵²⁹ After the establishment of formal colonialism, the religious and state education systems co-existed forming the colonial education system. Despite modifications in the education systems, most elements of colonial education system continually dominated in post-colonial Africa, in this case Tanzania.⁵³⁰ It is not my aim to explain about the history of education systems in Tanzania, rather to show the kind of formal education system the church adopted in educating its members.

⁵²⁸ The Open University of Tanzania (Faculty of Education), Study Material, "OEF History and Sociological Aspects of Education," 20.

⁵²⁹ The Open University of Tanzania (Faculty of Education), Study Material, "OEF History and Sociological Aspects of Education," 21.

⁵³⁰ The Open University of Tanzania (Faculty of Education), Study Material, "OEF History and sociological Aspects of Education," 23.

From its inception in Karagwe, the Evangelical Lutheran Church opted to provide formal education services in the community. The teaching of Christian education, especially in Sunday school and confirmation classes, follow the guidelines and syllabus prepared by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.⁵³¹ Nonetheless, provision of secular education follows the Tanzania education system. The diocese is aware that there are some traditional ethical challenges and erosion due to the education system that is in one way or another influenced by western dominance of culture. In spite of this, the diocese sees a lot of positive strengths resulting from the education provided to the Tanzanians. Hence, it continually provides formal education services in the community so that its members may improve their lives, hence have a better life.

Through provision of educational services, the diocese contributes to the fight against ignorance in the community. In fact, ignorance is regarded as a serious enemy of life in Africa that causes poverty and diseases associated with the lack of sustainable knowledge, information or skills about life. This lack may be on cultural, political, economic or religious terms.

Jennings (2007) reveals Julius Nyerere's concern for people's success where, during his presidential inaugural address in December, 1962, Nyerere outlined and declared a war against poverty, ignorance and disease.⁵³² According to Nyerere, the nation enters into the war when it fights the three enemies because each year thousands of children die needlessly

⁵³¹ The evangelical church in Tanzania has two guide books for Sunday school and confirmation classes. The confirmation class/course takes duration of two years. After two years, students will be confirmed in the church as fully independent church members. Usually the confirmants join classes at the age of 11-12.

⁵³² Michael Jennings, "'A Very Real War': Popular Participation in Development in Tanzania During the 1950s & 1960s," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 40, no. 1 (2007): 71, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40034791>.

for no other reason than a lack of proper care born of ignorance.⁵³³ Quoting the words of Nyerere, Jennings (2007) said,

[Poverty, ignorance and diseases], then, are not mock enemies. They are the true enemies of our people. And anybody who refuses to take part in this war, or who hinders the efforts of his neighbours, is guilty of helping a far more deadly foe than is he who helps an armed invader. So, I repeat, this war is a very real; it is no sham battle in which we are engaged. I look to every citizen of our country to join in the fight. And anyone who interferes in our war effort, I, for my part, shall look upon as a traitor and enemy of our country.⁵³⁴

Since then, the government and churches have been involved in the fight against these enemies of life. One way of fighting these enemies is through formal education.

Understanding and valuing the importance of education in such a fight, the Lutheran Church in Karagwe plans and provides education among the Nyambo. According to the bishop's report during the diocesan general meeting in January 2019, the diocese owns and runs three primary schools (Tegemeo English Medium Primary School, Imani English Medium primary School, Tumushubiire English medium primary School), three secondary schools (Karagwe Secondary School, Imani Secondary School, and Bweranyange Girls Secondary School), one pre-nursing school, one vocational school (Nkwenda Youth and Farmers Training School), and one university college (Karagwe University Collage-KARUCo).⁵³⁵ Through these educational institutions, the diocese participates in healing God's people by providing them knowledge that helps them fight against ignorance, hence improve their lives.

⁵³³ Jennings, 71.

⁵³⁴ Jennings, 71.

⁵³⁵ Kanisa la Kiiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania: Dayosisi ya Karagwe, Ripoti ya Askofu, Sinode (Mkutano Mkuu) ya 21, Ihembe 05-09/01/2019, "Vituo vya Dayosisi,"5.

Advocacy Ministry. Two projects ran by the Karagwe diocese are very important, not only for advocating for rights in the community but also healing broken souls. These projects are AGE (Adolescent Girls Empowerment) and ShauKu.

A. *Adolescent Girl empowerment:* This project aims at advocating for women's rights and against gender based violence.⁵³⁶ It further advocates for gender equity by increased attention focusing on prevention of HIV among adolescent girls and addressing violence against women. Risks of multiple sexual partners, unprotected sex and predisposing factors such as alcohol and substance abuse are addressed at the school and community levels.⁵³⁷ The project receives financial support from the church of Sweden.⁵³⁸

The main target of AGE project is young girls at schools. These are girls aged between 13 and 19. The diocese' experience is that gender based violence is still high in Tanzania. Nearly two in five girls get married below 18 years of age. Many schools have instituted a practice of mandatory pregnancy testing and expel girls who test positive. It is however estimated that between 18-30% of maternal deaths are due to unsafe abortions.⁵³⁹

Poverty, cultural acceptance of abusive practices such as transactional sex, forced girl child marriage, and lack of safe sex education are some of the factors that force many girls to be involved in early and unsafe sexual practices. Some girls, especially those who come from very poor families use sex as a bet to

⁵³⁶ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania-Karagwe Diocese, *Adolescent Girls Empowerment (AGE): Application Document 2018-2020*, 3.

⁵³⁷ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania-Karagwe Diocese, *Adolescent Empowerment (AGE)*, 4.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*,

⁵³⁹ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania-Karagwe Diocese, *Adolescent Girls Empowerment (AGE): Application Document 2018-2020*, 3.

provide them daily needs, such as food, clothes, and money for leisure and pleasure. This situation exposes young girls to more risks of contracting the HIV disease and other sexually transmitted diseases.⁵⁴⁰

Karagwe has lost many people due to the HIV/ AIDS pandemic. High transmissions have been experienced in the adolescent age because girls and boys are more sexually active due to their body changes.⁵⁴¹ However, young girls and boys are not aware of the use of contraceptives including how to use and where they can access these materials.⁵⁴² Furthermore, in Karagwe, like elsewhere in Tanzania, still exists cultural rules that do not allow women to have strong decisions on sexual welfare. This makes women remain weak compared to men. Additionally, lack of materials and knowledge related to girls behavior change at schools and community resource centers place youths at high risk of sexual transmission diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Gonorrhea, and syphilis.⁵⁴³ Therefore, it is the ambition of the church to make sure that young people get education and knowledge that will enable them to protect themselves against acts that endanger their lives. That way, the church contributes to the maintenance of people's wholeness in the society.

B. *SHAUKU*: This program is implemented in collaboration with partners from ELCT North Western Diocese, ELCT Karagwe Diocese, ELCT East of Lake Victoria and Danmission.⁵⁴⁴ The overall goal of the program is that women, their

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*,

⁵⁴¹ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania-Karagwe Diocese, *Adolescent Girls Empowerment (AGE)*: Application Document 2018-2020, 6.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*,

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*,

⁵⁴⁴ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, *SHAUKU Programme-Draft Proposal*, 2018-2021, 8.

children, PWA/CWA are living in an environment of peace and good governance, secured by effective laws and policies.⁵⁴⁵ There four main objectives.

1. To ensure that women, children and PWA (People with Albinism)/CWA (Children with Albinism) are living with absence of fear, and enjoy liberty of movement and security. (UN Article 3 and as domesticated in Tanzania law).
2. To ensure the victims of GBV and the marginalized women and children have access to justice and have their rights respected and protected, through linkage to legal aid service providers and ensure the community sustainably fosters peace, reconciliation and social justice.
3. To ensure peaceful co-existence in the community with sustainable inter religious tolerance
4. To advocate for sub-policy of PWA/CWA, effectively implemented and appended to the national policy of PWD and other policies/laws.⁵⁴⁶

Through this program volunteers and diocesan staff promote the respect of and protection of rights through advocacy committees.⁵⁴⁷ It is also involved in the fight against practices that stigmatize, isolate, kills, violates, or injures people in the community.⁵⁴⁸ All of these activities are done through advocacy committees that provide psychosocial support and referral service and apply the identified gaps from the analysis in advocating duty bearers to improve service delivery (e.g. providing community safety, security, legal enforcement and reduced

⁵⁴⁵ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, SHAUKU Programme-Draft Proposal, 2018-2021, 8.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*,

⁵⁴⁷ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, SHAUKU Programme-Draft Proposal, 2018-2021, 15.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*,

corruption).⁵⁴⁹ The advocacy committee makes sure that it sensitizes children on their rights and responsibility, thence being able to identify child abuses, claim/protect their rights (non-violence in schools, access to education, quality education) and play their roles responsibly (bringing advocacy forward, resolving conflicts, protecting weaker students) in promoting and protecting rights in schools and community.⁵⁵⁰

As a conclusion, this chapter has shown and discussed the western philosophical views of missionaries of African and Nyambo understanding of healing, including the involvement of the Lutheran Church in more contextualized and modern Christian healing among the Nyambo. It has been shown that Western Christianity and understanding of life impacted the African traditional understanding and approaches to illness and healing. Further, it has been cognizant that despite having elements of western Christianity, the presence of the Lutheran Church in Karagwe has contributed a lot in dealing with and improving health services among the Nyambo. At this stage, the adaptation model⁵⁵¹ of conveying the gospel accompanied by Western knowledge of life benefited and still benefits the Nyambo. For this reason, today the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Karagwe contributes a lot to maintaining people's lives in terms of spiritual, physical, and intellectual development. Based on these explanations, chapter five analyses and interprets the data presented in previous chapters.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.,

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.,

⁵⁵¹ See page 76

CHAPTER FIVE

TOWARDS A CONTEXTUALIZED CHRISTIAN HEALING AMONG THE NYAMBO

In the preceding chapters, we have seen the Christian understanding of healing, the African ontological understanding of healing, Nyambo understanding of healing, and the western missionaries' philosophical views of African and Nyambo understanding of healing. In this chapter, I seek to undertake an evaluation of the previous chapters insisting on strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for enhancing the healing ministry among the Nyambo. Where there are strengths, the church can develop them even more. Where there are weaknesses, the church has to correct them in order to avoid the same weaknesses to happen in the future. The goal of this chapter is not to reject Christianity and western science, but how to contextualize Christian healing by integrating science and indigenous elements using a synthetic and translational model.

Therefore, this chapter presents, discusses, and proposes some possible approaches that can be employed in contextualizing Christian healing among the Nyambo. As this chapter serves as a synthesis of the data presented in the previous sections, four dimensions serve as points of departure and are used to support, correct, appreciate, or change some healing approaches in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Karagwe and elsewhere. These dimensions are:

- a. Practicing Christian healing basing on spiritual dimension
- b. Practicing Christian healing basing on natural and environmental dimension

- c. Practicing Christian healing basing on socio-cultural and economic dimension
- d. Practicing Christian healing basing on physical and biological dimension

Justification

The Lutheran Church in Karagwe as an instrument of God's mission responds and participates in her call for involvement in holistic healing by being sent by God who is the owner of mission. This is from the fact that the church does not own mission; rather it plays a participatory role in the mission of God. Responding to this call, the Karagwe diocese is involved in maintaining the wholeness of human existence spiritually, mentally, and physically based on the Bible as the main missionary document of involvement in God's mission. Its effects have been seen in all spheres of human activity all over the diocese. Indeed, the diocese has contributed a lot towards the maintenance of people's health, as shown in the findings, responding to the challenges of human health and healing through evangelism, *diakonia*, education, health services, socio-economic support, and advocacy.

Applicability

This section evaluates the approaches that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Karagwe has been using when participating in healing ministry among the Nyambo. This is important because any meaningful implementation of a given program depends on its applicability. Along these lines, the current research has found that the Karagwe diocese has been delivering healing ministry based on the Gospel and missionary views as dominant bearers of Christianity. This approach has led to a partial involvement in contextual Christian healing.

Deducing from the findings, the presentation of Christian healing based on the Bible and on the missionaries' understanding has tended to replace traditional culture with western Christianity. Nonetheless, most of the western approaches to African cultures have been challenged, as shown in the previous chapter. It was stressed that the involvement of the church in contextualizing Christian healing should take into consideration the African philosophy of life, regardless of whether or not missionaries just took it for granted. Such an approach is more contextual because it applies indigenization and adaptational models of doing mission.

The historical transmission model⁵⁵² that regarded Christianity as a cultural dominant religion over receiving cultures faces criticism because in most cases it denied the genuineness of receiving cultures. This model that stresses on transporting the gospel being clothed in alien cultures to a given local culture does not allow the gospel message to incarnate fully into every culture; it has shown a failure by disrespecting indigenous cultural elements as valid paths of approaching the Triune God. The fact is that the incarnate Christ is the Christ of all cultures who fulfills and transforms all cultures. Therefore, Christianity cannot expand by means of its founding cultural warrant, but rather by adapting and transforming local cultures for a better understanding of contextual theology.

In this case, there should not be any dominance of culture, but rather cross-cultural learning from each other. Therefore, the application of indigenous, translation, assimilation, and incarnational models as were explained by Sylvester Kahakwa, Lamin Sannel, and Andrew Walls⁵⁵³ could be a viable method of presenting Christian healing among the Nyambo and elsewhere in the African context. It means that Christianity is not about

⁵⁵² See page 72

⁵⁵³ See page 73-77

adopting foreign ideas or cultures by receiving native cultures, but rather enabling receiving cultures to assimilate the gospel message in their context. When this method is applied, it avoids cultural hegemony, hence allowing the gospel message to penetrate, transform, and get rooted among receiving cultures.

However, it is evident that formally the planning, implementing, and deciding on the running of the Lutheran Church in Karagwe depended much on missionary partners. In this paradigm, Karagwe was regarded as the field of mission whereby those who became Christians had to receive spiritual and ethical guidelines based on missionary understanding. Thence, traditional worship was discouraged or prohibited in the public stage, encouraging instead Western Christian worship and practices. Because of this, those who associated themselves with traditional worship and practices were viewed as ungodly, uncivilized, or the lost.

As previously shown, among the conditions of belonging to Christianity was to deny traditional cultural elements—deemed to be against Christianity. Following the logic of Rweyemamu, such missionary approach failed to meet both spiritual and physical needs of the indigenous.⁵⁵⁴ Although some missionaries had good intentions in doing mission, still their intention was to a larger extent influenced and affected by their home cultures. It would have been difficult for them to separate themselves from their own culture.

On the basis of the necessity for an inclusive adaptational model, this study acknowledges the emphasis made by the African Independent Churches, stressing on doing theology based on the African philosophy of life, thus making the African experience with Jesus Christ a living reality in their cultural environment.⁵⁵⁵ This does not mean adopting

⁵⁵⁴ See page 152-153

⁵⁵⁵ See page 138

whatever African Independent Churches are doing, but rather seeking and including good traditional cultural elements in church practices. Therefore, as it will be shown below, there is a need for the Karagwe diocese to adapt and incorporate in the church the good cultural elements that are compatible with the gospel message. Good heritages such as those found in traditional medicine, traditional care and counselling, and honour of ancestors should not simply be neglected. As Vähängas suggested, one way of overcoming exclusion of traditional healing is to combine traditional healing and Christian faith healing.⁵⁵⁶

Interestingly, contrary to the past, the contemporary Lutheran Church in Karagwe is led by indigenous leaders: the bishop, the general secretary, pastors, evangelists as well as congregational elders. This means that the indigenous have a chance to evaluate the missionary work, make some changes where needed, and appreciate or strengthen the good work started by the missionaries. It is in this context that the research has come to understand that the church, in order to carry out successfully the role of contextualizing Christian healing among the Nyambo, needs to first and foremost relate Nyambo traditional worldview and Christianity.

Practicing Christian Healing Based on Spiritual Dimension

The current research has revealed that all human beings have spiritual needs. Despite having different approaches on issues of health and healing, the findings disclosed that both Nyambo traditional healing and Christianity seek to heal the human soul and body. This is from the point that when the soul or mind is injured, it results in spiritual and physical strain that then requires healing, not religious belonging.

⁵⁵⁶ See page 148

The point I am trying to make in this part is that it is important to understand the spiritual and physical needs of the people before employing any healing. Christianity helps little if it will not consider people's spiritual experiences that incorporate interconnectedness between people and God, spiritual world, and nature. As shown in the third chapter, the Nyambo interconnectedness with spiritual world and nature involves practices such as prayer, worship, sacrifice, adoration, and belonging. Interestingly, these practices are found in both traditional religions and in Christianity. While traditional adherence relate with God and other mystical forces through special agents—divinities, ancestors, and attachment with nature—Christianity emphasizes on relating and communicating with the Triune God through faith in Jesus Christ. In the Christian approach, the emphasis is made that God is at work on earth through the power of the Holy Spirit. The findings reveal that this approach cannot be fully understood by the Nyambo unless there is a contextual explanation of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and traditional beliefs in mystical powers. Therefore, this relationship is explained first by stressing on the supremacy of God.

God as the Foundation of Spirituality. Deriving from the findings, it is acknowledged that Nyambo-African spirituality is founded on the physical world (people and environment) and spiritual world (God, nature spirits, mystical powers, and ancestors).⁵⁵⁷ As Nkemkia emphasized,

we cannot think without existing and we cannot exist without a principle, we can formulate this postulate: in the beginning there was the creator (God) who created life. Every form of life is manifested and differentiated in many things through the

⁵⁵⁷ See page 96

reality of being, which is an instrument in the hands of God. Each life, thus understood goes on in eternity.⁵⁵⁸

This explanation goes contrary to the naturalistic view that sees the universe as something that created itself or came into being by chance.⁵⁵⁹ In this evaluation, I take the Biblical view as pointed out by Schwarz that God created the heavens and earth; that God created by his Word.⁵⁶⁰ I also acknowledge the biblical story about creation that “the Genesis accounts are not scientific statements about the processes of creation, but faith statements about the One who is behind creation, the One who brought everything into being, the One whom we call God.”⁵⁶¹ This idea relates with that of the Nyambo-Africans that life originates from God who works on earth through his intermediaries.

However, the African worldview differs from that of Christianity in a sense that for the Africans, human and spiritual intermediaries play a great role when it comes to approaching God. The main concern here relies not on the mode of approaching God, but rather on a search for reality whether spirits exist, intermediate between human beings and God, and whether there is reality of God’s intervention in people’s lives.

Writing from the Protestant point of view, Forell (1960) pointed out that “all the Protestant faith asserts is that nothing in this universe, including the causal chain or the law of gravitation is independent of God. In fact, all events depend upon God; without him the ‘miraculous’ as well as the ‘nonmiraculous’ event could not occur.”⁵⁶² Forell adds, “Whether events seem to us ordinary or extraordinary, they happen because of the creative

⁵⁵⁸ Nkemnkia, *African Vitalogy: A Step Foward in African Thinking*, 186.

⁵⁵⁹ Schwarz, *An Introduction to the Christian Faith*, 173.

⁵⁶⁰ Schwarz, 173.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*,

⁵⁶² George W Forell, *The Protestant Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), 121.

and maintenance power of God.”⁵⁶³ This idea corresponds with that of the Nyambo-Africans pointing to the Supreme Being (God) or the primary force as the creator and controller of the entire creation.⁵⁶⁴ It is stressed here that God is the source and giver of all cultures, including healing.

It is clear from the research findings that Africans, particularly the Nyambo, regard God as the author of creation who sustains and controls whatever happens on earth. The Nyambo regard Him as the supernatural reality, Supreme Being, powerful beyond nature, conscious of what happens on earth and in spiritual world, divine, highest reality, eternal life, loving and just, healer, the one who blesses, rewards and punishes, security provider, and above morality.⁵⁶⁵ Hence, according to them nothing happens in life without permission from the creator (God). However, this idea remains a challenge as there is always no rational proof of God’s intervention in daily life. People tell or witness about their spiritual and life experiences making them believe that what they experience are results of God’s intervention in their lives. The same challenge applies to Christianity, that Christians give testimonies about Jesus’ intervention in their lives through spiritual and life experiences. When Christians mention and call upon the name of Jesus Christ, they just believe that He hears them and acts. For example, when Christians pray in the name of Jesus Christ and receive healing, they will just believe that God has responded to their prayers and performed a miracle of healing.

Along similar lines of thought, the research findings have come up with the observation that the Nyambo as well as Christians acknowledge God during happiness and sufferings. The traditional Nyambo and Christians are aware about the existence of God’s

⁵⁶³ Forell, 122.

⁵⁶⁴ See page 96

⁵⁶⁵ See page 96

power over people and nature. For instance, the Nyambo believe that sufferings and illness that people face are part of God's will or punishment that may be manifested to people through spiritual forces or natural catastrophes.⁵⁶⁶ The same applies to Christianity, that God may inflict people with disasters, but eventually rescue them if they make proper repentance.⁵⁶⁷

I personally cannot totally agree with those who see in illness the will of God, or those who associate prayer with Jesus' intervention in healing. I partially believe that as long as God exists, He may intervene in human life, but persons, the society, or the environment around them can be more responsible for their sickness. In this regard, I want to point out that the phenomenon of healing is not meant to be limited to the relationship between human beings and God, but also to ontological, epistemological, biological, and metaphysical realities. My observation is that most Africans hold a total association of God with illness and suffering because they have been nurtured to believe so from childhood. For example, deriving from the chapter dedicated to Nyambo understanding of healing, it was declared that the Nyambo and other Africans associated natural disasters with God's intervention in human life.⁵⁶⁸ In the process of passing on this belief from one generation to another, parents nurtured and taught their children to respect and believe in a God who watches over daily people's deeds and blesses, punishes, curses, and controls the visible and invisible worlds through spiritual and natural forces. In this sense, since childhood, people were made to fear God and regard Him as a watchdog. The negative side of this approach is to make people believe that every problem should be solved based on faith in God, hence neglecting the use of science and other natural means. Some critical questions here are: if it

⁵⁶⁶ See page 98

⁵⁶⁷ See page 18

⁵⁶⁸ See page 98

is a reality that God blesses and inflicts people with illness, how then should one differentiate between luck and fortune caused by God and that caused by nature or people? How should one differentiate between illness or misfortune caused by God/spirits/ancestors and that caused by nature? Is God actively working through nature? How about illness and suffering resulting from human negligence?

In a struggle to answer these questions, various critiques and answers are pointed out by scholars and experienced people. For example, Forell holds on to the idea that if we try to limit God, thinking that events run by themselves and that only occasionally does God enter into the processes of nature and history and perform a miracle, afterwards withdrawing again and letting things run by themselves, we will be in danger of becoming deistic, reducing God to a spectator who only occasionally takes any interest in these processes.⁵⁶⁹ This idea becomes more complicated especially in the contemporary context where various discoveries disclose the fact that some illnesses have direct relationship with natural, biological, sociological or psychological causes. Those who struggle to comprehend healing from an empirical point of view believe that there are various signs that verify illness connected to mystical forces.

Lutheran evangelist and charismatic preacher Johansen Stephen Kakulu believes that illness caused by God's anger or mystical forces cannot be diagnosed in hospitals, but rather through experience and prayer, sometimes accompanied by fasting. He gives as example that when a person is seriously sick and medical experts fail to examine the cause, the disease is automatically assumed to be caused by mystical forces.⁵⁷⁰ The questions that arise from Kakulu's explanation include, is it true that every hospital is able to examine every

⁵⁶⁹ Forell, *The Protestant Faith*, 122.

⁵⁷⁰ Johansen Kakulu, *Miraculous Healing, Face to Face*, Nkwenda, July 12, 2020.

disease caused by nature, physical, or biological germs? Is it right to just believe and make a judgment that whenever the hospital fails to examine a certain disease, that disease will have been caused by mystical forces? Does this justify another concept—that there are illnesses that are not mystically caused?

Kakulu adds that sometimes sick people show direct signs of being possessed by mystical forces. For example, those who are possessed by ancestral spirits convulse and speak in the voices of ancestors. When this happens, people around the sick person will not take him to hospital, but rather apply traditional or spiritual remedies. While traditionalists practice rituals that expel the spirits, committed Christians will cast them out through prayers in Jesus' name. This is based on the phenomenon where, in many cases, clinical examination is not able to discover or heal illnesses caused by mystical forces.

Others emphasizing faith healing believe that if there are unusual events such as too much rainfall, drought, or any difficult calamity, faithful people will direct their prayers to God in search of remedies. God will hear their prayer requests and take away the disasters. For them, God is not visible but He is present and active and He hears people's cry and acts. As previously explained in the third chapter, there is no way to deny the intervention of God and mystical powers in African context because people experience it and associate it with the sufferings or fortunes they face in life even though it is difficult to accept its reality because there is no scientific proof regarding its existence.

Some pastors who believe in the existence and intervention of spirits in people's lives defend their concept, insisting that not everything that happens on earth should be understood, proven or solved scientifically. They emphasize that mystical forces and God's intervention in people's lives are not visible, but spiritual. Those who want to experience it

should do so by faith. For Christians, God intervenes in people's lives through the Holy Spirit, which cannot be seen, touched or smelled. This power cannot be proven by science, but rather through experiencing its effects in life. Therefore, the fact that the existence of spirits is not proven by science cannot be the reason to purge it out. For them, while science is important for health and treatment of various diseases, healing that results from life experience is also important for remedying illnesses that science cannot cure. They emphasize that there are ailments requiring spiritual intervention over medical treatments. For example, some traditional rituals regarding ancestors have helped many people to reconcile and maintain peace in their lives. In the same way, prayer in the name of Jesus Christ and Christian care and counseling have helped many Christians reconcile with God and with each other, hence maintaining peace in their lives.⁵⁷¹ This means that social, spiritual, or psychological problems need social, spiritual, or psychological remedies. These remedies may be done by uttering words or by combining words with certain visible elements. While traditional Nyambo utter certain words associated with herbs and accompanied by certain traditional rituals to expel ancestral spirits, Christianity uses words, prayers, and touching, sometimes accompanied by the Eucharist to expel the same spirits.

While I agree on the presence of people who claim to have been troubled by ancestral spirits and other mystical powers, my observations lie on the concept that spiritual and psychological illness can mostly be cured by intervention through care and counseling. As this ministry seeks to heal emotional hurts, it may be provided by the church ministers, clinical practitioners, or traditional experts. My experience of living among the Nyambo reveals the fact that formally there was a mentality of spiritualizing most diseases and

⁵⁷¹ Uzima Tirumanywa, Lemigius Costantine, and Sunday Kanwakaita, Faith Healing and Science, Face to Face, Katembe, April 1, 2020.

sufferings that people faced in life. As long as illness examination and healing depended on experience, it was easy to always seek healing powers and help from spirits or God.

Experiences in the contemporary context reveal the fact that most committed Christians who attend church and receive pastoral care and counselling get rid of being troubled by mystical powers. It means that pastoral care and counselling helps people to overcome fears over mystical powers that intervene in their lives. This discloses another issue, that if mystical powers exist, then they become powerless to all who restrict themselves from fearing it. Hence, the best way to deal with mystical powers could be building confidence of people over fear of spirits. I hold the view that this task cannot be dedicated only to the church. Yes, the findings revealed that the church is against most traditional rituals and healing, but something can be done to incorporate some of it into Christianity. The church should see the possibility of adapting traditional rites and rituals that heal and make people experience the meaning of life. Rituals that are not harmful to people should be appreciated and included in the Christian liturgy. For instance, the Nyambo have special rituals regarding the birth of a child, naming, marriage, death and burial. It is possible to translate these rituals into Christian meaning so that we can arrive at a Christian rite that is at the same time genuinely African.

Terms such as “diviners,” “herbalists,” “charms,” or “magic” should not only be viewed negatively because they also have positive meaning in life. The words of Niwagila are important: “It is illogical and self-contradicting for the church in Tanzania to accept those who go to the psychiatrist and excommunicate those who go to the diviners. What difference is there, in matters of faith, between a Christian who goes to the diviner and

another one who goes to the psychiatrist (modern diviner)?”⁵⁷² This means that there is a need to differentiate between good diviners and bad diviners. Good diviners who provide wise and good counselling and cure to their clients have to be appreciated. The Lutheran Church in Karagwe can learn something from the contextual steps taken by the African Independent/Initiated Churches, mostly in South Africa. The findings of this study revealed the fact that in a struggle to contextualize Christian healing, African Initiated Churches incorporated herbal treatments, prophet-healers, and good divination into the church.⁵⁷³ These ministries are not new to Christians; they are also mentioned in the Bible, particularly in Leviticus.

Pastor Aina, a leader in the *Aladura* (Independent Prayer Church) movement that arose in Nigeria in the 1920s and 1930s, in 1932 published a pamphlet defending those who exercised a healing ministry in the *Aladura* Church against the accusation that they were false prophets.⁵⁷⁴ Aina used the Bible to argue that God may raise up such prophet-healers in any generation, and that their work is truly of God.⁵⁷⁵ Despite using the Bible to defend his argument, many people did not believe that there could be any true prophet of God in these last days as it was in the time of the old. Many people thought that it is quite impossible to get such true and powerful prophets nowadays because of the world’s corruption, and if any is said to exist, he could not be a Christ (Matt.24:4-5, 11, 23-26). Contrary to this, others thought that due to the lack of understanding of God’s knowledge,

⁵⁷² Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church: A Case Study of the African Initiative and the Participation of the Foreign Missions in the Mission History of the North-Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania 1890-1965*, 424.

⁵⁷³ See page 143-144

⁵⁷⁴ J. Ade Aina, “The Church’s Healing Ministry,” in *A Reader in African Christian Theology*, ed. John Parratt (London: SPCK, 1987), 110. A prominent feature among the Aladura Churches was the use of water which had been blessed.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*,

contemporary people may fall into the mistake of blaspheming against those prophets who are not false.⁵⁷⁶ They argued that true Christians should believe that

it is possible for God to raise up any man (human being) at this last age, irrespective of the waywardness of the age. Of course, there is no an age that has ever existed, which was not as perverse and useless as any in the history of the world. Such time was God's best time to send among the people, a faithful and powerful man as His messenger, or prophet. Therefore, in this last age, God is able and more able to send any man of equal qualifications in all respects with those of old. It is ignorance of God's way to say it is impossible. He promised in His word that in the last days, He shall pour out His spirit upon all flesh, so that many shall prophesy.⁵⁷⁷

Prophecy remains an important part of the church's existence. Some scholars go deeper and relate the teachings of Jesus Christ as prophetic utterances. For example, Bevans and Schroeder wrote, "Jesus' parables and teachings were prophetic utterances that often went against the grain of accepted religious wisdom and practice; his healings and exorcisms were parables in action, and his practice of including those on the margins of society as disciples and in table fellowship was powerful witness to his teaching's validity."⁵⁷⁸ When we use the words of Bevan and Schroeder in this study, therefore, we can come to the conclusion that prophetic ministry of healing encompasses activities that reveal God's power over enslaving forces that oppress human beings. Those powers include spiritual, psychological, sociological, economic, and political. Activities against these powers are delivered into the world through witnessing, proclaiming, praying, caring and counselling, advocating for peace and justice, and reconciling people in the community. In this case, prophet-healers can be included in the healing ministry if their prophecies are not against the Gospel. The words of Jesus Christ are important here—that true prophets will be recognized through their fruits (Matt.7: 15-20).

⁵⁷⁶ Aina, "The Church's Healing Ministry," 111.

⁵⁷⁷ Aina, 111.

⁵⁷⁸ Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 352.

Taking into consideration the issue of yielding “good’ or “bad’ fruits, it can be said that divination that includes magic associated with harmful elements or application of spells are against God’s will, hence should be discouraged by the church. While doing this, the church should search out the reasons behind the continual involvement of people in harmful magical practices. From the findings, it is clear that bad magical practices are in most cases associated with envious spirits. Therefore, the best way to stop such magical practices is to develop a spirit of love among people, encouraging everyone to respect and value each other, work hard for development, and share in life. In this case, it is argued that the church should involve more in a fight against hate and envious acts that eventually facilitate evil and destructive practices in the community. Because of its importance, the church may include teachings on humanness or UBUNTU during confirmation classes.

Christology in the Context of Ancestral Veneration. The findings show that besides encouraging modern education and medical treatment of disease, Christianity also succeeded in making many Africans associate illness and healing with the Triune God. The name of Jesus Christ is given great respect and believed to be powerful in people’s lives. A good number of Christians believe that when they pray in the name of Jesus Christ, every kind of disease and illness goes away. As previously shown in the second chapter, and deriving from the Bible, people in the Old Testament as well as those in the New Testament believed and experienced healing miracles performed through faith in God. The Bible shows it clearly that the God of the Bible is powerful over other gods, including spirits.⁵⁷⁹

Taking into consideration the greatness and importance of translating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in new cultures, some African scholars have tried to maintain and contextualize His supremacy to the point of calling him *the chief* (because His person is in perfect

⁵⁷⁹ See pages 16-26

conformity with the very essence of Bantu power, he is a hero who has put a stop to the evil powers and defied Satan, he has shown that he can protect and defend his community, and above all he is the son of God who is the Chief of the universe), *the master of initiation* (because he himself underwent initiation in an exemplary way, he completed his initiation vicariously for us, he leads us in the initiation as our elder brother, and he evokes a symbolic Christology), *the ancestor* (because He is the source of life and obligatory route to the Supreme Being, he lived a model ethical behaviour, he mediates life between God and human beings, he is present among the living, and he is the eldest Son of God who mediates believers to his Father), and *the greatest healer* (because through his own suffering he is present in human sufferings).⁵⁸⁰

While Benezet Bujo (a Catholic secular priest from Zaire) called Jesus Christ “the proto-ancestor,”⁵⁸¹ Charles Nyamiti (a Catholic secular priest from Tanzania) called Him “brother-ancestor.”⁵⁸² For Nyamiti, Jesus Christ is the brother-ancestor of all human beings and God is the parent-ancestor. In this relationship, Jesus Christ lives eternally and mediates between God and all people adapted to God in the name of Jesus Christ.⁵⁸³ As Nyamiti stresses, “the natural kinship which is characteristic of the African conception of ancestors is *de facto* transcended and done away with at a high level....Christ’s Ancestryship appears as

⁵⁸⁰ Volker Küster, *The Many Faces of Jesus Christ* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 57–65.

⁵⁸¹ Küster, 71. Benezet Bujo is basically a moral theologian. He seeks to ground his African ethics in an ancestor Christology. He designates Jesus Christ as proto-ancestor in search of differentiating Him from the African ancestors. He derived his concept from African context that in the specific case of ancestor theology, only good ancestors can be considered for a Christian veneration. Whereas these are incompatible into the body of Christ, the evil ancestors are conquered through the Logos of the cross and the resurrection and put in chains. No one need fear them any longer. Jesus becomes our proto-ancestor in the sense that life flows from God through Him to those who live now and is handed on by Him to the coming generations. He is further the source of life and happiness, our task is to bring to realization in our lives the memory of his passion, death and resurrection, making of that Saving Event the criterion for judging all human conduct (pages 74-75).

⁵⁸² Küster, 74.

⁵⁸³ Küster, 73.

one with His eternal, immanent Descendancy.”⁵⁸⁴ In my view, this could be a good approach to presenting the incarnate Christ among the Nyambo. Because of his supremacy, Jesus Christ is above any ancestor and He mediates all people with God. However, this idea should not mean neglecting or replacing paying respect to good ancestors who served as ethical models, but rather it calls upon Christians to direct their faith in Jesus Christ as the ransom for all. Good ancestors can continually be remembered through retelling their gestures, rites and words as a living remembrance of them.

The Inclusion of Traditional Elements in Christian Healing Services. In view of the fact that spirituality is contextual, it can be argued that Christian spirituality on healing should accommodate traditional cultural elements that enhance life. Those elements are such as the use of God’s traditional names and its meaning⁵⁸⁵ in worship liturgies, the use of traditional art and melodies in worship, and celebrating traditional ways of respecting and preserving nature.

Writing from the Asian-Filipino context, Mendoza (2012) proposed an important point to the UCCP (United Church of Christ in the Philippines) when she advised the UCCP to include liturgies of healing in its ministries.⁵⁸⁶ For her, the liturgies should include indigenous healing arts and modalities.⁵⁸⁷ For example, she suggested the use of oil, water, medicinal leaves and flowers as part of healing liturgies.⁵⁸⁸ Mendoza believes that such liturgies will help worshippers to unite together and experience God’s power of healing,

⁵⁸⁴ Küster, 73.

⁵⁸⁵ See page 97-100

⁵⁸⁶ Magnolia Nova Villena Mendoza, “Selected Filipino Healing Arts and Modalities: Possibilities for a Liturgy of Healing in the United Church of Christ in the Philippines Southern Tagalog” (2012), 88.

⁵⁸⁷ Mendoza, 88.

⁵⁸⁸ Mendoza, “Selected Filipino Healing Arts and Modalities: Possibilities for a Liturgy of Healing in the United Church of Christ in the Philippines Southern Tagalog,” 86.

further considering healing liturgies as a response to the furtherance of the Gospel and an affirmation of faith within the community of believers.⁵⁸⁹

Mendoza's suggestion can be a good contextual method for including traditional elements in Christian healing practices among the Nyambo. I appreciate Mendoza's suggestion and see it as a helpful response to contextual healing ministry. If these ideas are placed within the context of the Lutheran Church in Tanzania, particularly in the Karagwe diocese, the diocese has to formulate and incorporate contextual healing elements in her liturgical book. In fact, the ELCT liturgical book contains sub-liturgies that indicate prayers for the sick, especially those who require prayers at home, those admitted in hospitals, and those approaching death.⁵⁹⁰ These liturgies do not include the use of natural elements—oil, water, or medical leaves—as part of blessing and healing God's people. In my view, healing liturgies that include indigenous arts and modalities can be helpful for facilitating and strengthening contextual healing ministry. As indicated earlier in this study, Christian healing does not only mean the remedy of diseases, but also reconciling people with God, fellows, self, and nature.⁵⁹¹ This being the case, the inclusion of natural elements in healing liturgies will serve as appreciation and use of God's creation as a path to healing. In this way, the church will be free and able to facilitate traditional healing that enhances people's health. At this point, I concur with bishop Bagonza, when he emphasized that the use of traditional medicine and healing were denied by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

⁵⁸⁹ Mendoza, 88.

⁵⁹⁰ *TUMWABUDU MUNGU WETU: Msifuni Mungu, Mfalme Wa Mbingu Na Nchi!* (Germany: CPI-Ebner & Spiegel, Ulm, 2012), 613–30.

⁵⁹¹ See page 15

Karagwe, not because it did not help people, but rather because it was regarded local, associated with magic, and had no scientific proof.⁵⁹²

In the contemporary context where majority of the Nyambo as well as other Tanzanians use traditional medicine, it could be a better idea for the church to search out, identify and facilitate the use of traditional medicines that heal various diseases. The church can also join with the government in its struggle for advocating scientific research regarding traditional medicines. Besides facilitating clinical treatment, the church can also establish herbal gardens like the monks did during the medieval period.⁵⁹³ These gardens can be established at congregations and parish centres. People from various places can come and learn something on the relationship between natural plants and health. However, these herbs can be developed into biomedicine. That way the church involves in enhancing indigenous heritage of discovering herbs that cure various diseases.

Practicing Christian Healing Based on Natural and Environmental Dimensions

The question regarding God's intervention in people's lives through natural events remains a challenge to both Christians and non-Christians. The Bible as the main guide regarding Christian healing reveals God as the one who is capable of using nature to reward and punish, curse and forgive, strike and miraculously heal.⁵⁹⁴ The Bible is clear that healing will happen if believers keep God's commandments, pray, and totally depend in God. The question here is, how can we term natural calamities as punishment from God?

Referring to the Bible, Ruether (1994) stated that world destruction through floods, drought, and trampling armies were formally regarded as punishment by God due to failure

⁵⁹² See page 172-173

⁵⁹³ See page 35

⁵⁹⁴ See page 19

to obey His laws as the one who controls nature and history from above (Gen.6:7; 7:21; Isa.18-20; 24:1,3-6). God's people were called to repent and turn to the right path, so that God would restore its fortune (Gen.8:22). Despite this, suffering on earth continued to exist.⁵⁹⁵ This may imply a lack of knowledge regarding causes of natural calamities.

In the contemporary world, various events formally regarded as God's intervention and punishment upon people have practical or scientific answers. For example, the issue of too much rainfall, hurricane, typhoon, wind, drought, or thunder takes a natural answer over spiritual. Robin (2011) said that some conservative Christians in the Philippines could interpret disasters such as typhoon Ondoy as signs of the end time.⁵⁹⁶ However, contrary to highly spiritualized approach to environmental catastrophes, environmental and weather experts give practical and ethical answers. They mostly point to human acts.⁵⁹⁷ For them, the climate change that we experience is naturally caused or human-made. It is natural in the sense that there is a release of greenhouse gas that is dangerous to environment. It is also natural in the fact that the earth goes through a cycle of climate change.

On the other hand, climate change is associated with human misuse of creation. In this case, human beings are blamed for pollution through burning fossil fuels resulting in global warming, hence causing harm to nature. Robin indicates that fossil fuels and unabated deforestation around the world are among the main causes of climate change. Quoting from an environmental organization, *Kalikasan*, he gives an example from the Philippines whereby "the country's forest cover has dropped from 270,000 square

⁵⁹⁵ Rosemary R. Ruether, *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (HarperCollins, 1994), 64–65.

⁵⁹⁶ Robin Lope, *A Theology of Creation in the Philippine Context: Towards an Ecological Theology from a Reformed Perspective*, 2011, 2.

⁵⁹⁷ Lope, 3.

kilometres at the end of Spanish colonization in 1898 to only 8,000 square kilometres in 2006.”⁵⁹⁸

Experts on the world’s climate further reveal that the warming of the earth’s atmosphere is precipitated by the burning of fossil fuels that commenced at the kick-off of the industrial revolution in the late 17th and early 18th centuries.⁵⁹⁹ “The burning of petroleum in cars, planes, houses, and factories emits gaseous by-products into the air.”⁶⁰⁰ Rapid industrialization and increased motorized vehicles caused the rise of carbon dioxide volume in the atmosphere, resulting in global warming.⁶⁰¹ This means that human activities endanger nature, affect human life, and eventually cause suffering. Thus, in most cases humans are responsible for finding solutions. There is no way we can continually point every harmful event to God. The point here is that humans should accept their mistake of misusing nature and take action for the sake of healing the earth, hence preserving their life.

This study appreciates the Haya/Nyambo approach to nature. It is important to note that from a traditional point of view, the Haya/Nyambo respected nature and took care of it. They did not allow any exploitation of nature because for them nature is part of life and it provides a lot for the sustenance of life.⁶⁰² Anyone who destroys nature destroys life. Hence, human beings are obliged to preserve and respect the Mother Earth.

It is interesting to learn here that during prayers the Haya/Nyambo prayed for themselves, animals, insects, land, water sources and everything that God created.⁶⁰³ Hence, caring for nature became part of Nyambo’s culture. People were taught from childhood

⁵⁹⁸ Lope, 6.

⁵⁹⁹ Sean McDonagh, *Climate Change: The Challenge to All of Us* (New York: Columba Press, 2006), 7.

⁶⁰⁰ Ruether, *Gaia and God*, 97.

⁶⁰¹ Lope, *A Theology of Creation in the Philippine Context: Towards an Ecological Theology from a Reformed Perspective*, 3–4.

⁶⁰² See page 119

⁶⁰³ See page 103

about the importance of caring for nature such as water sources, forests, and mountains. It means that Christianity and Western experts were not founders of the knowledge about environmental preservation in Africa; rather they brought a new approach that was even more oppressive to nature.

Theologically and biblically, God is the creator, controller and sustainer of the world (Genesis 1). He created humankind, giving them dominion over everything that he created (Genesis 2: 27-30). Considering this, Robin pointed out an important critique, that the Genesis account of creation has provided theological justification for humankind's domination and subjugation of nature. The privilege given to human beings make them exploit nature. This dominion has also given Western civilization religious justification for exploiting the natural environment in a ruthless and brutal manner.⁶⁰⁴

But, on the other hand, the Bible contains insights that can help form the basis of a sound environmental ethic. Although interpretations of particular passages may vary, there is indication that the Bible affirms the goodness and intrinsic value of all living things: it points out commonalities between human beings and other living things and it contains the mandate that we treat the natural world with care and respect. Such insights provide powerful grounds for environmental responsibility. The idea that God is the source of all life, that creation is good, that human beings are connected to the earth, and that God is concerned for all creatures strongly suggest that we are to value and respect the earth and its many forms of life (Psalm 8,104, 148; Rom.8:18-25; Col.1:15-23).⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰⁴ Lope, *A Theology of Creation in the Philippine Context: Towards an Ecological Theology from a Reformed Perspective*, 7.

⁶⁰⁵ “‘Biblical Views of Nature: Foundations for an Environmental Ethic’ by Marcia Bunge,” accessed September 11, 2018, <http://www.webofcreation.org/Articles/bunge.html>.

On the basis of the point of view that both Christianity and Nyambo traditionalists aim at preserving nature, it can be said that Christianity should learn and incorporate positive Nyambo cultural approaches of preserving nature that enhance environment, hence life. While doing this, the Nyambo-African techniques that created fear in search of respecting and preserving nature may be corrected or improved. As indicated in chapter three, the Nyambo believed that anyone who destroyed nature could be punished by God through nature spirits, facing snakes or dangerous animals. Such traditional way of preserving nature cannot apply in the contemporary context of science and technology.

The contemporary context much influenced by modernity and globalization has received a paradigm shift requiring societies to be ready to learn from cross-cultural contexts. It is the period that appreciates that God created the universe, instilled in human beings the ability to reason, and wants His people to follow a moral guideline. In this contemporary context, people are taught and advised to take care of the environment, not because of fear of punishment by God or spirits, but rather because nature is there as a companion that serves human life. It means that people should appreciate God's work of creation, be happy, celebrate it, use it wisely, and preserve it for the betterment of their life. When nature is healed, automatically people will also be healed. When nature is destroyed or exploited, automatically people will get sick, suffer or die. This is because everything people need for life is found in nature. People get food, water, and shelter from the environment and discover medicine from the environment.

Given the importance of African interconnectedness with nature, some African theologians viewed and criticized Christianity as a bad path that discouraged good African approaches to nature. For example, according to Mutembei, Christianity came with a new

approach to belief that destroyed the Haya/Nyambo concept of caring for nature. Missionaries taught people to no longer fear spirits. Christian priests destroyed houses built for spirits and eventually people started to cut down forests that had been preserved for a long time.⁶⁰⁶

My view is that the indigenous approach to nature was important and is still important in today's context, but it needs some reform. I disagree on the idea of fearing nature spirits. Of course, as mentioned earlier, most of the Nyambo who live in the contemporary context no longer fear or associate themselves with beliefs in nature spirits: Mugasha, Nyabingi, and Irungu.⁶⁰⁷ Big trees regarded as residence of spirits are no longer there and life continues as usual. There are no reported deaths due to intervention of angry nature spirits against people who oppress nature. My opinion here is that, instead of insisting on fearing spirits, people should be told and taught about the importance of co-existing together with nature. This campaign should be done with the cooperation of Christianity and traditionalists and the Church can invite the government and NGOs to join this campaign.

It is good to learn from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania that, annually in the third week of March, it directs all dioceses to meditate and advocate for the environment. Texts to be read during worship are always indicated in the yearly liturgical calendar. During this week, all sermons and teachings are about care for the environment. In the Karagwe Diocese, choirs prepare and sing songs regarding environmental care and congregants are encouraged to plant trees and preserve water sources. With this intention, the church is practically involved in healing nature, hence healing people's lives. It is important to stress here that human beings need nature than that nature needs them. The fact

⁶⁰⁶ Mutembei, *KRISTO AU WAMARA?*, 31.

⁶⁰⁷ See page 110

is that nature can survive without people, but people cannot survive without nature. Therefore, preservation of nature is not a request to human beings, but rather a must for people to survive.

Practicing Christian Healing Based on Socio-cultural and Economic Dimensions

This section emphasizes on the importance of maintaining traditional socio-cultural and economic practices that enhance health and wholeness of people in the community. This is based on the fact that the Nyambo-African culture has a value of its own that may contribute to the Christian understanding of healing. It is right as Niwagila pointed out that the suffering of individuals not only affects their body, mind and soul, but it also makes the family and the whole clan participate in this suffering. “Sickness in this sense becomes a social concern. It is therefore the duty of entire community to see to it that the member is cured and set free.”⁶⁰⁸

The main point here is that social setups contribute much to the mode of life that people live in that particular context. Writing in the Brazilian context, Brandenburg (1989) pointed out an important remark in that the root cause of an individual’s sickness cannot only be traced to individuals’ failure, but mainly within the structures of the society in which they live.⁶⁰⁹ Brandenburg said this during a joint study seminar for pastors from Brazil, Bavaria, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, and Tanzania, that took place at Goroka, Papua New Guinea in 1988. For Brandenburg, involvement in healing has to include transforming

⁶⁰⁸ Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church: A Case Study of the African Initiative and the Participation of the Foreign Missions in the Mission History of the North-Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania 1890-1965*, 422.

⁶⁰⁹ Yedo Brandenburg, “Sickness and Healing as Challenges of the Christian Faith,” in *Lutheran Theologians Face Old Testament Challenges*, ed. Klaus C. Waltz (Neuendettlsau: Institute for Studies of World Mission, 1989), 167.

unjust social, political, and economic structures that produce sickness and death.⁶¹⁰ In support of this idea, Nyerere (1987) saw poverty as a result of unjust structures, stressing that “poverty is not the real problem of the modern world. For we have the knowledge and resources which could enable us to overcome poverty. The real problem—the thing which creates misery, wars and hatred among men is the division of mankind into rich and poor.”⁶¹¹ Nyerere pointed out two levels of division within nations: few individuals who have great wealth which gives them great power and the majority of the people who suffer from varying degrees of poverty and deprivation.⁶¹² In such a situation, the church has a call to raise up prophetic voice against oppressive and exploitative structures. When it does this, it participates and continues the good work that was inaugurated by Jesus Christ who was always against oppressive systems.

Jesus’ Incarnation into Culture. As the message of the incarnate Christ encounters new cultures, there must be continuity or discontinuity in receiving cultures. The fact that Jesus Christ was incarnated and translated into Jewish culture, justifies his incarnation and translation into all peoples’ culture. When Christ incarnates in the new culture, he does not wipe it away, but rather transforms it. This is what the missionaries were expected to do when they approached new cultures. The way Bruno Gutmann appreciated and incorporated the Chagga traditions and social orders in the church is a good model of contextualizing Christianity in African context.⁶¹³ This is also what the church is called to do when it confronts new cultures. It has to appreciate good norms and deny or transform those that are evil, suppressive, oppressive and exploitative.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹¹ Julius Nyerere, “The Church in Society,” in *A Reader in African Christianity*, ed. John Parratt (London: SPCK, 1987), 117.

⁶¹² Nyerere, 117.

⁶¹³ See page 87

However, in contrast to this view, by accepting Christianity, most of the Africans, including the Nyambo, tended to reject their own cultural elements, favouring Christianity which in fact was clothed with Western culture.⁶¹⁴ Knowingly or unknowingly, most of the traditional elements were denied and others were absorbed into Western Christianity. At this point, the church is more responsible to find out the valuable lost cultural elements that can be adapted and accommodated into Christianity in order to allow the Gospel to have roots and grow in the soil of the indigenous people. To add to the already mentioned traditional elements, the church can include in her services traditional cultural elements such as those concerning music, art, language, sowing and reaping. These are the elements that enhance happiness, keeping people together, hence allowing them to experience the beauty of the loving God who reveals himself through creation.

The words of Paul G. Hiebert⁶¹⁵ are important: “God saves all people through Christ who is the Lord and Saviour to all nations and in all spheres of life and that we know little of the understanding God has given to those in other faiths.”⁶¹⁶ These words call for a dialogue with people of other religions, as well as receiving cultures so that one can discover common humanity that reveals the fact that all people have equal place in the love of God.⁶¹⁷ Further as Hiebert (1997) put it, “Christians and churches are encouraged to live

⁶¹⁴ See page 133-136

⁶¹⁵ Paul Gordon Hiebert was born in India in 1932 to second generation Mennonite Brethren missionaries, and passed away in 2007 at the age of 74-See, “Trinity Evangelical Divinity School | About Paul G. Hiebert,” accessed December 17, 2018, <https://divinity.tiu.edu/paul-hiebert-project/about-paul-g-hiebert/>. Hiebert was raised in India as a missionary child and served there as a missionary for seven years. Trained as an anthropologist, he has taught at Kansas State University, the University of Washington, and the school of world Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. In his article, “Gospel and Culture: The WCC Project,” he reviews the contents of 15 WCC study pamphlets that discuss how the gospel relates to different cultures.

⁶¹⁶ Paul G Hiebert, “Gospel and Culture: The WCC Project,” *Missiology* 25, no. 2 (April 1997): 201, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdah&AN=ATLA0001005223&site=ehost-live>.

⁶¹⁷ Hiebert, 201.

and to witness authentically in their contexts.”⁶¹⁸ For him, “not all culture is bad; neither is everything good. All cultures have positive factors that hold them together, and all have negative factors that degrade humans.”⁶¹⁹ Therefore, a spirit of readiness to learn from other cultures and allowing the message of the incarnate Christ to penetrate and transform other people’s cultures is a good approach of doing contextual healing.

The Lutheran Church in Karagwe is aware that in Africa, illness has a social dimension whereby an individual becomes ill when he/she alters the equilibrium of human organism or breaks the social fabric.⁶²⁰ Magesa and Mndeme made it clear that, for the Africans, most illnesses, poverty, physical and emotional diseases are results of breaking of social rules that guide individuals in the community.⁶²¹ Hence, a step towards contextualizing Christian healing among the Nyambo has to consider transforming and accommodating neglected socio-cultural issues that relate to cure of soul, body, and mind. In this case, insisting on belonging in the community remains important. If the church is involved in nurturing and teaching children about community rules, it will help them to escape misfortune associated with misbehaviour in the community.

In the Old Testament we find such guidelines that were given to the Israelite depending on their contextual forms of understanding life (Exodus 12; 21-23). That being the case, the Lutheran Church in Karagwe has the duty to write down good community guidelines and pass them on from one generation to the next. This will help missionaries to understand the context in which they wish to do mission. The words of Japanese theologian Kosuke Koyama are important: “Any missionary must practice two kinds of exegesis:

⁶¹⁸ Hiebert, 205.

⁶¹⁹ Hiebert, 205.

⁶²⁰ See page 49

⁶²¹ See page 67-68

‘exegesis of the Word of God’, and exegesis of the life and culture of the people among whom he lives and works.’⁶²² Such exegesis will help to translate and interpret the biblical message to new cultures, hence allowing inclusivity of traditional cultures into Christianity.

Fortunes, Misfortunes, and Curses. Issues of fortunes, misfortunes, and curses remain a big challenge to both Christians and non-Christians among the Nyambo. As indicated in the findings, the Nyambo-Africans insist that anyone who acts or fails to maintain or abide with meaningful relationship with God, spirits, other people, and nature will face misfortune in life. This is the state of defection that people believe results from the misuse of individual free will. The same idea applies to Christianity—that misfortune is a result of disobeying God’s rules (Genesis 3:16-19), including respect of parents (Exodus 20:3-12). Insisting on this issue, the Lutheran Church in Karagwe always refers to the Nyambo traditional teachings of honoring and worshiping God, respecting parents, and other people in the community. It means that a search for the causes of an individual’s suffering is first and foremost traced in the community before referring to the Bible. For example, it is a great fault for the Nyambo to disrespect parents. Anyone who fails on this norm will face misfortunes that may extend to generations. The church always uses the same approach to emphasize Christian respect, care, hospitality, and tolerance towards parents and love of God (Ephesians 6:1-4; Proverbs 4: 23-27).

From this point of view, one can say that the biblical message was not written in a vacuum. It was addressed to certain people who lived in a certain place and time, they had their own problems, and needed direction regarding relationships in the community. Thus, in the process of contextualizing Christian healing, one should not first refer to the bible (as if it is the source of healing), but rather search out the root causes of suffering from the

⁶²² Küster, *The Many Faces of Jesus Christ*, 123.

experience of concerned people. Thereafter, the church can learn something from the Bible that shows the way God dealt with people's sufferings in the Old and New Testaments.

It is argued here that the Bible cannot be the absolute ethical guide to all people, but rather people can learn something good from the Bible. In this case, I would like to lay a missiological template that, while the message of Jesus Christ criticizes and transforms receiving cultures, the receiving cultures can also criticize and transform various texts found in the Bible, in this case healing texts. This is what happened in the history of the church, whereby the church reached a point when it had to accept the idea that not all diseases and illnesses could be dealt with by mystery. Hence, as we have seen, the church decided to grow and use herbal medicine, opened up hospitals, and involved itself in care and counselling of its members. This could be a good contextual involvement in God's healing ministry in the contemporary context.

Practicing Christian Healing Based on Physical and Biological Dimensions of Health

The physical and biological approach to healing is important, though sometimes it contradicts the spiritual dimension. This is based on the fact that the Biblical emphasis on healing is less concerned with the use of herbal and biomedical remedies. But, as Wilkson pointed out⁶²³ the fact is that after the period of the apostles, the church discovered that it was difficult to heal chronic diseases by using only prayer or religious faith. Illnesses such as menorrhagia, mental disorders, paralysis, blindness, dumbness, and withered limbs could no longer be cured through faith. Some of these health problems cannot even be cured by science.

⁶²³ See page 33-34

However, faith healing is more challenged in the contemporary context where people are threatened by diseases such as smallpox, tuberculosis, leprosy, yellow fever, polio, HIV/AIDS, and currently Covid-19. It means that there is no way the church in the current context can avoid itself from learning and applying scientific knowledge such as that which emanated from the Enlightenment period. Therefore, this study appreciates the contribution of the Enlightenment in dealing with health issues through improvement of social welfare services for the sick.⁶²⁴ At this point, the ideas of Dietrich Werner⁶²⁵ and Genaro D. Diesto⁶²⁶ are important—that illnesses believed to have been caused by physical or biological origins, should be treated by using allopathic medicine, including social, political, psychic, and intercultural aspects. In this context, traditional medicine that prove cure of various diseases should not be purged out, but rather be applied and advocated by the church in a struggle to restore human health.

As already pointed out, it is unsound to neglect traditional medicine simply because it is not scientific. These medicines have been in use for many years and have helped many people in dealing with various diseases. In fact, God created plants for food and medicine. This does not mean neglecting spiritual or faith healing, but rather seeks an integrated usage of both natural and spiritual healing. It follows then that while applying traditional medicine and biomedicines, the church should be involved in spiritual healing that serves spiritual, melancholy, emotional, and intellectual stresses of life such as anger, hostility, fear, resentment, anxiety, and guilt. Here the ministry of pastoral care and counselling gets its importance in reconciling people with their own selves, with others, with God, and with nature. It is noted here that counselling is an important tool for healing spiritual and

⁶²⁴ See page 40-41

⁶²⁵ See page 44-45

⁶²⁶ See page 52

psychological illnesses because it is “a process of encouraging growth from within, which in the final analysis is the only true growth.”⁶²⁷

We have seen in the findings that during the Early Church and Medieval periods, the church struggled to cure various diseases, not only through faith healing but also through herbal and biomedicines. This was the reason behind the establishment of herbal centres, nursing centres, and hospitals. The Mediaeval Roman Catholic church regarded herbal and allopathic medicine as a gift of God to human beings.⁶²⁸ By appreciating God’s work of healing through human discoveries in nature, the Roman Catholic Church made an important step by involvement in contextual healing. Although the Protestant Reformers criticized venerating saints, they did not negate or deny the use of herbal remedies. Similar to the Roman Catholic Church, Reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin facilitated the establishment of hospitals and care for the sick.⁶²⁹ Drawing from this explanation, it is clear that clinical and herbal medicine have for a long time been integrated in church ministry. Therefore, the Lutheran Church in Karagwe will not be inventing something new if it incorporates traditional medicine and healing in her participation in God’s mission of maintaining people’s health and wholeness.

In conclusion, it has been shown that the meeting between Christianity and Nyambo-African way of understanding healing looked into contextual models that could enable the Nyambo to experience the healing Christ who does not require them to change from their cultural environment, but rather transforms them according to their culture. In the next chapter, we summarize all that have been discussed in this study and give some

⁶²⁷ Ralph G. Turnbull, ed., *Baker’s Dictionary of Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books House, 1967), 193.

⁶²⁸ See page 37

⁶²⁹ See page 38

recommendations for successful Christian involvement in contextualizing Christian healing among the Nyambo and elsewhere in the world.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter is stated the conclusion of the entire study. It gives the general summary of the background of the study, statement of the problem, methodology, and findings on the research topic. The chapter finally gives some recommendations about the church's involvement in contextualizing Christian healing among the Nyambo that respects and values the Nyambo cultural heritage on healing.

From the beginning, this study wrestled with the main question: How should Christianity relate with Nyambo-African indigenous understanding of healing in the contemporary context of mission? This was based on the fact that a good number of Nyambo Christians remain dualistic when it comes to seeking healing over illnesses that disturb their lives—finding solutions to their life problems in both traditional and Christian spheres. Therefore, the study made investigation on historical, theological, and socio-cultural influences faced by the Lutheran Church in Karagwe when contextualizing Christian healing among the Nyambo. The study investigated whether the Lutheran missionaries and the diocesan approaches to healing are adequate in addressing contextual healing among the Nyambo and elsewhere in the world. In dealing with this problem, the study was divided into six chapters.

After the introductory chapter, the second chapter reviewed related literature based on physical, spiritual, social, and psychological wellness. The chapter started by reviewing the biblical foundation and perspectives of healing. It became evident that Christian healing

was based on the Bible and on the missionary understanding and interpretation of healing. According to the findings, the Triune God is regarded as the great healer who heals through miracles, nature, and medical treatment. This healing is not limited to curing of disease, but also restoring of human wholeness enslaved by sin and corruption. Therefore, the restoration of health includes human beings' reconciliation with God, with the self, with fellow humans, and with nature.

The study has shown that the Christian understanding of healing met and corroded African ways of healing as Christianity emphasized on Western understanding of health and healing that in most cases was against primal healing. This was from the western hegemonic mentality that viewed African ways of healing as evil, pagan, or demonic. For this reason, a contextual understanding of healing became a necessity.

The findings exposed that in search of contextual healing, Christian understanding of health and healing underwent paradigm changes that were evident during the early church period, medieval period, reformation period, enlightenment period, and during different ecumenical meetings. These periods witnessed the association of healing with faith in Jesus Christ, anointing with oil, the use of relics, the use of herbal medicine and other natural elements, foundation of hospitals, the use of modern and secular medicine, and improved social services.

The third chapter was dedicated to the Nyambo-African understanding of healing. The Nyambo traditional worldview, which includes social-cultural, economic life, and spirituality, were extensively researched and discussed. It has been argued that the interconnectedness between the visible and invisible worlds play a great role in the understanding of traditional healing among the Nyambo. As long as the Nyambo believes

that the spiritual world controls the physical world, they continually associate illness with mystical forces such as God, spirits, nature, witchcraft, and sorcery. The study has shown that a search for successful Christian healing among the Nyambo should first and foremost seek out the genuine continuity or discontinuity of the Nyambo cultural heritage on healing.

Chapter four dealt with a critical survey on the Western philosophical views of the missionaries of African and Nyambo understanding of healing. The focus was on the way the missionaries related African culture and Christianity, particularly on issues of health and healing. It was found evident that most missionaries failed to contextualize Christian healing in African context. The rejection mentality affected the African understanding of healing in many faces. As indicated in the findings, most missionaries stood firm against indigenous ways of healing and regarded it as primitive, uncivilized, or unscientific.

Despite the negative impact of Western hegemonic approaches to healing in Africa, it is certain that missionary Christianity among the Nyambo and other areas in Africa also had positive results. For example, the Church's insistence on modern education and modern health services has for a long time enabled many Nyambo and other Tanzanians to fight against ignorance and diseases that were enemies of life. This has importantly helped majority of church ministers and members in communities not to associate every disease and suffering or calamity with mystical powers—i.e., God, spirits, ancestors, witchcraft, and sorcery.

However, the findings disclosed that not all traditional healing were against the gospel message of healing. Thus, in chapter five it was suggested that the contemporary Christian involvement in contextual healing among the Nyambo should consider positive Nyambo elements of healing based on spiritual, natural, socio-cultural, economic, physical,

and biological dimensions. It means that traditional healers and healing practices that enhance life should be appreciated by the church. This suggests that there should be a purposeful balance whereby Christianity and traditional ways of healing will match well in the whole task of improving people's lives in a holistic manner. The Nyambo Christians need to draw from their traditional worldview as they experience healing and transformation found in Christianity.

Nonetheless, the current research has found that from the beginning, the Karagwe diocese had a vision and mission guiding it in her participation in God's mission of healing. This is the reason why the diocese has been involved in evangelism, social services, diakonia, and education services. Despite this, the diocese has not fully succeeded in contextualizing Christian healing. Her contextual involvement in healing God's people has not been enough in dealing with the spiritual, physical and social problems because of the neglect of cultural elements that for the Nyambo were important for healing. Therefore, this research proposes guidance in dealing with contextual challenges of Christian healing among the Nyambo. These directions are developed and grounded on the existing theological basis and the Nyambo traditional understanding of healing. There are at least four proposed guidelines.

1. *Miraculous Acts as Path to Healing*. This has a base in the Bible and the Nyambo traditional worldview. It calls upon the church to be more contextual, respecting and valuing people's experience of spiritual healing. The concept is that the involvement of God in healing his people and His transforming and healing powers in Jesus' name reveals the fact that God's intervention in people's lives is not limited to certain cultures or geographical boundaries.

Thence, based on the Bible, the church is mandated by God to be involved in contextual spiritual healing that includes positive cultural spirituality that reveals healing powers in people's lives.

2. Traditional Medicine as God's divine path of healing. Grounded in the Bible, cure of diseases includes the use of natural elements such as plants, water, animal products, mineral-based medicine, salt, and oil. Natural medicines derived from natural materials were used in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament. Also, the use of herbs has been evident through out the history of the church. The Nyambo have also been using herbal remedies throughout their life history. Therefore, following its importance, the Lutheran Church in Karagwe should acknowledge, encourage, and promote the use of traditional medicine that enhances health. This has to be stated in her liturgical book.

3. Medical Science as one among the many ways of healing. It is evident that illness challenges all people. Its causes are not limited to the spiritual, but also biological, natural, psychological, social and economic areas. However, science has helped a lot in improving people's lives through diagnosing diseases and finding remedies. History reveals that the Christian church has been in the front lines, advocating for clinical healing throughout the world. The Lutheran Church in Karagwe has also contributed a lot in improving people's health through the provision of health services in the community. Therefore, this service should persistently be acknowledged for the betterment of people's health. It is emphasized here that God created creators and gave them intellect for

discovering healing elements so that His people could stay protected and enjoy life on earth.

4. *Social Services as means of healing.* Jesus Christ inaugurated social services when he sided with the needy (Luke 4: 18-19). The church is called and sent into the world to continue this holistic and liberative ministry. The Karagwe diocese responsibly involves in God's mission that aims at improving people's lives through her missional activities that includes developmental projects, diakonia, and advocacy. While doing this, it should always stay in solidarity with the needy and the neglected people in society. However, the church can collaborate with the government, NGOs and other organizations to make sure that people's lives are improved and properly maintained.

Finally, I should point out that this study has given extensive explanation, discussion, and interpretation regarding contextualizing Christian healing among the Nyambo in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. I believe this study which was conducted among the Nyambo will benefit and contribute to the scholarly work on the understanding of contextual Christian healing among the Nyambo and elsewhere in the world. Interestingly enough, this research may provide a new insight for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Karagwe and other churches to develop Christian contextual healing ministry that respects and values people's worldview.

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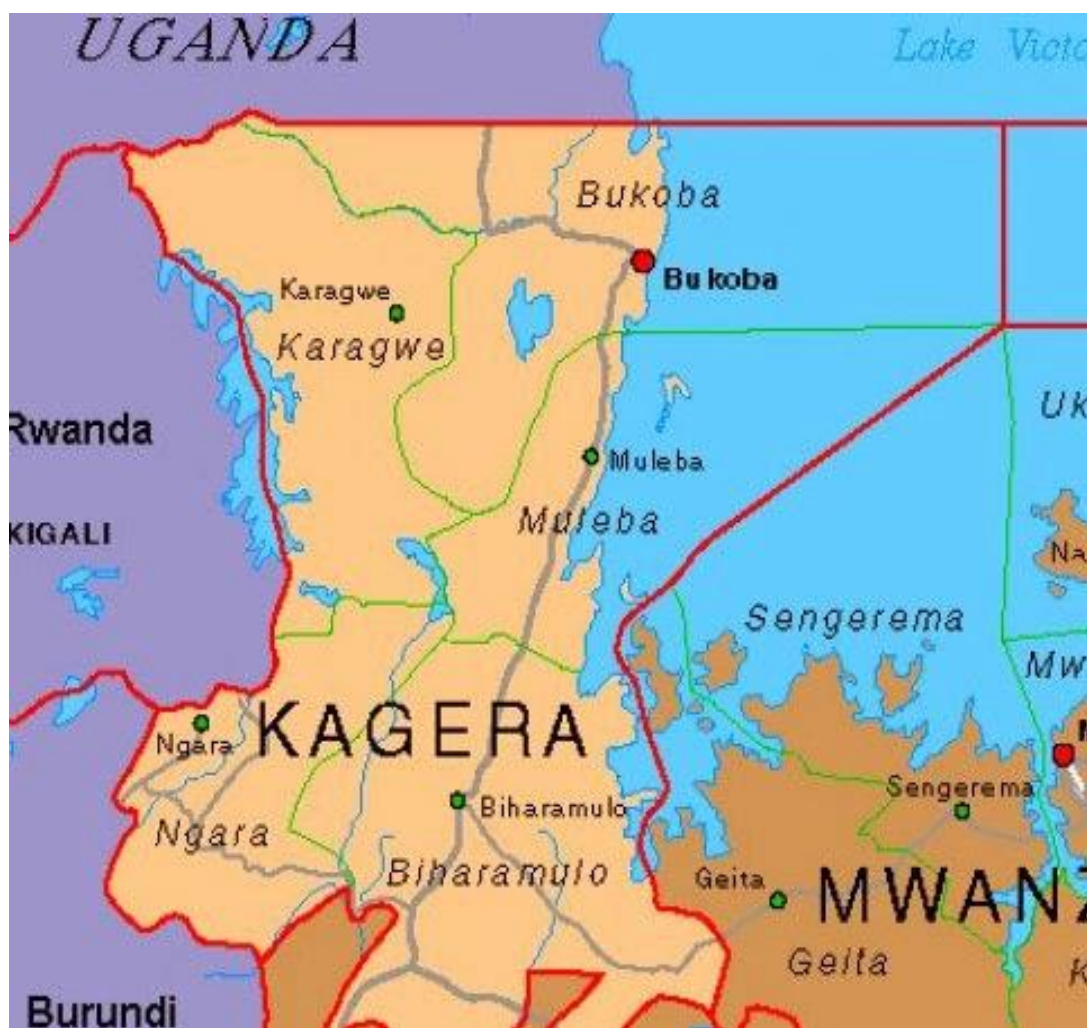
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APPENDIX A

MAP SHOWING LOCATION OF KARAGWE



APPENDIX B

Sample Interview Guide

[For the Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Karagwe Diocese]

The school has given me the approval to commence with dissertation research entitled, “Contextualizing Christian Healing in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Karagwe Diocese.” This study seeks to investigate the relationship between Lutheran Christianity and Nyambo traditional understanding on healing, as well as the involvement of the KAD in contextualizing Christian healing. Therefore, I seek the understanding about the involvement of the Karagwe Diocese in healing ministry taking into consideration the diocesan experience and documents, such as bishop’s letters, centenary of the Lutheran church in Karagwe, and the diocesan general assembly in the years 2010-2018. Hence,

1. What do you think about the relationship between Lutheran Christianity and Nyambo traditional understanding on healing?
2. In the year 2010 the diocese celebrated 100 years of the Lutheran church in Karagwe. How far has the KAD contextualized Christian healing among the Nyambo?
3. There have been two general meetings since the centenary of the Lutheran church in Karagwe. How have these meetings discussed the issue of healing in relation to traditional healers and mushrooming of faith healers in Karagwe?
4. What are the challenges faced by the KAD in her participation in God’s mission of healing?

APPENDIX C**Cover Letter for Research Participant**

August 22, 2019

Rev. Dr. Benson Bagonza,
Bishop of the ELCT, Karagwe Diocese,
Box 7,
Karagwe-Kagera-Tanzania.

Dear Bishop Benson Bagonza,

With deepest respect, I would like to state the purpose of this letter. I am enrolled in Doctor of Theology at Divinity School Silliman University. The school has given me the approval to commence with dissertation research entitled “**Contextualizing Christian Healing Among the Nyambo in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Karagwe Diocese.**” In order to do this research, I am humbly requesting to interview you concerning this research. Herewith I attach a research informed consent form.

In the conduct of the study, full confidentiality will be assured. Thank you very much and looking forward to a positive response.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Emmanuel Upendo Ngambeki

Noted by

Dr. Josephat A. Rweyemamu,
Adviser
Silliman University



UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
SILLIMAN UNIVERSITY
6206 Dumaguete City
Philippines

Sub-Committee Review
November 7, 2019

Principal Investigator	Emmanuel Upendo Ngambeki		
Date Submitted:	September 4, 2019	Department	PhD Theology in Mission Studies
Semester:	1st Semester 2019-2020		
Research Title	CONTEXTUALIZING CHRISTIAN HEALING: THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND NYAMBO TRADITIONAL UNDERSTANDING ON HEALING IN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN TANZANIA, KARAGWE DIOCESE		
Meeting Date	Sep 25, Oct 2 & 14, 2019	Venue: UREC Office	
Sub-Committee Members	Dr. Chuchi S. Montenegro Dr. Ferdinand M. Mangibin Dr. Andrea G. Soluta		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Full Review Sub-committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Coverage
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Expedited Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	Deferred		

SEE ATTACHED

This is to certify that the Ethics Committee has reviewed the proposal.

		November 7, 2019
	Print Name & Signature	Date

/file

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX E**Letter Requesting Access to Documents**

August 22, 2019

Rev. Yoram Karusya
General Secretary of the ELCT, Karagwe Diocese,
Box 7,
Karagwe-Kagera-Tanzania.

Dear Rev. Karusya,

With deepest respect, I would like to state the purpose of this letter. I am enrolled in Doctor of Theology at Divinity School Silliman University. The school has given me the approval to commence with dissertation research entitled “**Contextualizing Christian Healing Among the Nyambo in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Karagwe Diocese.**” In order to do this research, I am humbly requesting to allow me to have access to official documents of the ELCT, Karagwe Diocese concerning this research. Herewith I attach a research informed consent form.

In the conduct of the study, full confidentiality will be assured. Thank you very much and looking forward to a positive response.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Emmanuel Upendo Ngambeki

Noted by

Dr. Josephat A. Rweyemamu

Adviser
Silliman University

Cc: the Bishop, ELCT- Karagwe Diocese

APPENDIX F

University Graduate Programs SILLIMAN UNIVERSITY Dumaguete City

RESEARCH INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title: Contextualizing Christian Healing Among the Nyambo in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Karagwe Diocese

Researcher:

This study is to be conducted by Emmanuel Upendo Ngambeki who is pursuing the degree in Doctor of Theology at the Divinity School, Silliman University, with Dr. Josephat Rweyemamu as the adviser. The researcher can be contacted through this mobile number 09565591854 or email address emmambeki.en@gmail.com

Purposes of the Research

This study aims to find out the following: The relationship between Lutheran Christianity and Nyambo understanding on traditional healing, hence involving in contextualized Christian healing among the Nyambo in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Karagwe Diocese.

Description of the Research

This study is qualitative theological research and an examination of the relationship between the Lutheran church in Karagwe and the Nyambo traditional understanding on healing (non-experimental) and the data will be gathered by collecting documents and using unstructured interview within one year.

Potential Benefits

This study will benefit the following (indicate how):

- a) It can offer a contextual approach of doing mission, particularly on healing issues in the ELCT-Karagwe diocese.
- b) This study can be used as a source of reference at Silliman University, especially Divinity School.
- c) It can be used by the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) in developing her programs of doing contextual theology in various places regarding the ministry of healing.
- d) It can be used by any researcher wishing to deepen his/her understanding about contextualizing Christian healing.
- e) It can be used by NGOs that aim at deepening their understanding about contextualizing Christian healing.
- f) It can be used by other churches in making reflections about contextualizing Christian healing in various contexts.

Confidentiality

In the conduct 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. Benson Bagonza

Printed Name and Signature of the Research Participant

September 2019

Date

APPENDIX G

Key Informants

Benson Bagonza. The Lutheran Church in Karagwe and Traditional Healing. Via Whatsapp, August 16, 2019.

Elnathan Rubanga. Christian Healing. Via Phone, June 2, 2020.

Haji Haruna Mbaraka. Divination. Face to Face, Kibimba, 12 November, 2020.

Johansen Kakulu, Miraculous Healing, face to face, Nkwenda, July 12, 2020.

Linda Mambo. Social Services. Via Phone, June 4, 2020.

Nelson Kazoba, The Meaning of Life among the Nyambo, Face to Face, December 19, 2020.

Peleus Sevelian. Miraculous Healing. Face to Face, December, 2019.

Rozimery Athanael. Miraculous Healing. Face to Face, February 21, 2020.

Rozaria Katana. Herbal Remedies. Face to Face, Katembe, October 2019.

Tecxavier Biita. Diaconal Ministry. Face to Face, March 11, 2020.

Victor Kamugasha. Herbal Medicine. Face to Face, February 21, 2020.

APPENDIX H

Documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Karagwe (Kad)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania-Karagwe Diocese. Adolescent Girls

Empowerment (AGE): Application Document 2018-2020.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, SHAuKU Programme-Draft Proposal, 2018-2021.

Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania: Dayosisi ya Karagwe, Ripoti ya Askofu, Sinode (Mkutano Mkuu) ya 21, Ihembe, 05-09/01/2019.

Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania, Dayosisi ya Karagwe: Ripoti ya askofu, Sinode (Mkutano) ya 20 Shule ya Sekondari Karagwe 13-16 December 2016).

Katiba ya Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania, Dayosisi ya Karagwe, (2014).

APPENDIX I

CURRICULUM VITAE

Personal

Name	Emmanuel Upendo Ngambeki
Sex	Male
Civil Status	Married
Profession	Pastor of the ELCT, Karagwe Diocese
Birthdate	December 20, 1973
Birth Place	Karagwe, Tanzania
Address	Silliman University, D2, Mission Village, Piapi, Dumaguete City
Cellphone Number/email	09565591854, emmambeki.en@gmail.com

Education Attainment

Master of Theology	Tumaini Makumira	2009
PGDE	Open University of Tanzania	2016
Bachelor of Theology	Tumaini Makumira	2005
Diploma in Theology	Tumaini Makumira	1998
Ordinary Level of Ed.	Karagwe Secondary School	1993
Primary School	Katwe Primary School	1989

Work Experience

Parish Pastor of Kyerwa and Nyamilembe Parishes	1998-2001
Kyerwa District Pastor - ELCT Karagwe Diocese	2005-2007
Acting Assistant to the Bishop-ELCT Karagwe Diocese	2009-2011
Principal of the Nkwenda Bible School in ELCT Karagwe Diocese	2011-2017