

The calling of the church in contemporary society: How the church communicates the gospel in Tanzania in a context of religious pluralism

GR Chisaye

 orcid.org/0000-0003-3057-6919

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Supervisor: Prof CFC Coetzee

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DECLARATION

I, GODWIN ROBERT CHISAYE, declare that this study: **“The calling of the Church in contemporary society: How the church communicates the gospel in Tanzania in a context of religious pluralism”** is my own work and that all sources used and quoted have been accurately reported and acknowledged. And thus, this dissertation has not been previously submitted by me or any other person for degree purposes at this, or any other University.



.....
GR Chisaye

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ABSTRACT

Pluralism is a term used in diverse societies denoting a system of beliefs in which people believe all kinds of different things yet tolerate each other's beliefs even when they don't match their own. It is the doctrine of duality and unity; it is a system of beliefs holding that there is not just one consistent means of approaching the truth about the world, but rather many. However, pluralism has different meaning in metaphysics, ontology, epistemology, logic, and theology. In metaphysics, pluralism entails that there are many different substances in nature that constitute reality. In ontology, pluralism refers to different ways/modes of the genesis of things such as that of human beings and everything else that exists on earth. For epistemology, pluralism holds the point of view that there not one consistent means of approaching the truth about the world, but many. In logic, pluralism holds the view that there is not just one correct logic, so therefore there is more than one correct logic, and in theology, pluralism is an ideology that entails that Salvation can be obtained/found in any religion.

In the society of Tanzania, there are three main religions: these are (1) Indigenous African Religion(s) (2) Christianity, and (3) Islam. According to a census conducted in 1967, Indigenous African Religion (s) constitute 37 percent, Christians were 32 percent, while, Muslims were 30 percent, and 1 percent, indicated those who adhered to other religions (Ndaluka 2012:2; Foster 1997:65). Currently, the Indigenous African Religion(s) are declining even though there is a tendency towards syncretism. Thus some people negotiate between Christianity or Islam with Indigenous African Religion(s). According to Kilaini (1995), it is estimated that by 2025 there will be a decline of approximately 9.2 percent of the Indigenous African Religion(s) (Kilaini 1995:1). However, since independence in 1961, the state of Tanzania declared itself to be a secular government and consequently it guaranteed freedom of worship. In its constitution, it states: "Every person has the right to freedom, to have a conscience, or faith, and a choice in matters of religion, including the freedom to change his religion or faith" (URT Constitution Cap. 2 of 2005: Article 19 (1) (Forster 1997:35; Ndaluka 2012:2).

Therefore, due to religious differences and freedom of worship the church in Tanzania exists in a religious pluralist context where tolerance, love, respect, and accepting one another's ideas, beliefs, and faith are significant for maintaining peace and the well-being of society. This phenomenon has raised the question of whether the church at some point might have compromised the gospel. In regard to the church in this research, it includes only three denominations that are regarded as the oldest in Tanzania: these are - the Catholics, Lutherans, and the Anglicans which are investigated to find out about the situation of the church. However, the history may be different in other denominations that are not included in

this research; those findings may then also be dissimilar to that of these denominations which have been investigated and included in this research. Therefore, the denominations that are not included in this study are open for further research.

Key words:

Religious pluralism, church, Tanzania, syncretism, Christianity, Islam, African Traditional religion, salvation, scripture, gospel

OPSOMMING

Pluralisme is 'n term wat by verskillende samelewings voorkom en 'n verskynsel aandui waarin mense allerhande verskillende dinge glo, maar mekaar se oortuigings verdra, selfs al stem hulle nie ooreen met hul eie nie. Dit is die leer van dualiteit en eenheid; dit is 'n oortuiging dat daar nie net een konsekwente manier is om die waarheid oor die wêreld te benader nie, maar baie. Die begrip 'pluralisme' het egter 'n ander betekenis in die metafisika, ontologie, epistemologie, logika en teologie. In die metafisika behels pluralisme dat daar baie verskillende stowwe in die natuur is wat die werklikheid uitmaak. In ontologie verwys pluralisme na verskillende maniere/modusse van die ontstaan van dinge soos dié van mense en alles wat op aarde bestaan. Vir epistemologie is pluraliste van mening dat daar nie een konsekwente manier is om die waarheid oor die wêreld te benader nie, maar eerder baie. In logika is pluraliste van mening dat daar nie net een korrekte logika is nie, maar meer as een korrekte logika, en in die teologie is pluralisme 'n ideologie wat behels dat Verlossing in enige godsdiens verkry/gevind kan word.

In die samelewing van Tanzanië is daar drie hoofgodsdiens(e): dit is (1) Inheemse Afrika-godsdiens(e) (2) die Christendom, en (3) Islam. Volgens 'n sensus wat in 1967 gedoen is, het inheemse Afrika-godsdiens (s) 37 persent uitgemaak, Christene was 32 persent, terwyl Moslems 30 persent was en 1 persent het diegene aangedui wat ander godsdiens(e) aanhang (Ndaluka 2012:2; Foster 1997:65). Tans is die inheemse Afrika-godsdiens(e) besig om af te neem en daar is 'n neiging tot sinkretisme. Sommige mense onderhandel dus tussen die Christendom of Islam met inheemse Afrika -godsdiens (-te). Volgens Kilaini (1995) word beraam dat daar teen 2025 'n afname van ongeveer 9,2 persent van die inheemse Afrika-godsdiens(-te) sal wees (Kilaini 1995:1). Sedert onafhanklikheid in 1961 het die staat Tanzanië homself egter tot 'n sekulêre regering verklaar en gevolglik het dit vryheid van aanbidding gewaarborg. In sy grondwet staan daar: "Elke persoon het die reg op vryheid, om 'n gewete of geloof te hê, en 'n keuse in sake van godsdiens, insluitend die vryheid om sy godsdiens of geloof te verander" (URT Constitution Cap. 2 van 2005: Article 19 (1) (Forster 1997:35; Ndaluka 2012:2).

As gevolg van godsdienstige verskille en vryheid van aanbidding bestaan die kerk in Tanzanië dus in 'n godsdienstige pluralistiese konteks waar verdraagsaamheid, liefde, respek en aanvaarding van 'n ander se idees, oortuigings en geloof belangrik is vir die handhawing van vrede en die welstand van die samelewing. Hierdie verskynsel het die vraag laat ontstaan of die kerk op 'n stadium die evangelie in die gedrang kon bring of kompromiteer. Wat die kerk in hierdie navorsing betref, behandel dit slegs drie denominasies wat as die oudste in Tanzanië beskou word: dit is - die Katolieke, Lutherane en die Anglikane wat ondersoek sal word om uit te vind oor die situasie van die kerk. Die geskiedenis kan egter anders wees in ander

denominasies wat nie by hierdie navorsing ingesluit is nie; hierdie bevindings kan dan ook verskil van dié van hierdie denominasies wat ondersoek en by hierdie navorsing ingesluit is. Daarom is die denominasies wat nie by hierdie studie ingesluit is nie, oop vir verdere navorsing

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Historical background and the statement of the problem

History says that, except for Ethiopia and Egypt, the rest of Africa was evangelized in less than two hundred years. The first missionary group to evangelize East Africa, particularly Tanzania, was the Portuguese accompanying Vasco da Gama who first visited the coasts of East Africa in 1498. Unfortunately, the Portuguese mission to East Africa was not successful. The Augustinian Catholic missionaries who arrived with Vasco da Gama in 1499 established the first Catholic Church in Zanzibar. Yet, due to Muslim opposition, the Portuguese mission did not last long. In Mombasa (Kenya) and Kilwa (Tanzania), the Portuguese built forts since they regarded these towns as bases for their ships to India. Between 1500 and 1700 Portuguese missionaries were visiting East Africa regularly but they did not convert many Africans to Christianity (Muhsin1976:439). The Augustinians built some Catholic churches in Mombasa and the Brethren of Mercy worked at helping freed or liberated slaves who were converted to Christianity. In 1698 when the Muslim Arabs from Omani conquered Zanzibar it was the end of the Portuguese missions on the Island of Zanzibar (Kilaini 1995:3). However, until the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was no Catholic left along the coasts except a few foreign traders (Hilderbrandt 1996:65).

A successful evangelization effort in East Africa and particularly in Tanzania, was one in the eighteenth century, around 1863 onwards when missionary agents from Europe, America, and other western countries came (Ndaluka 2012:11). At the arrival of missionaries, slavery and slave trading were very brutal and much practiced by the Arabs and the Swahili people of East Africa. Ever since the ninth century, the Arabs had settled among the Swahili people and engaged in trading with slaves and other commodities such as ivory, minerals, and others (Vernet 2009:39). The first task missionaries encountered was taking care of the freed or ransomed slaves. That was the genesis of the church's participation in combating social injustice and addressing disturbing issues of their time and it was the-opening opportunity to share the gospel. However, before, during, and post-colonialism time up to the present date, the church in one way or another had been attending to propagating the gospel. More than that, the history of Tanzania indicates that the church engaged fully in the provision of health and education facilities, purposely with the aim of opening up the doors to communicate the gospel. However, due to the freedom of worship that the state of Tanzania guaranteed to its citizens since its independence in 1961, many ideologies about Salvation from different perspectives which were not biblically-founded abounded. Thus it is unknown whether the gospel that was

proclaimed by missionaries from western countries and indigenous missionaries before, during colonialism, and up to the present time was relevant and even sufficient so that it could stand alone to challenge other religions' ideologies regarding Salvation. It is not quite clear how the Catholics, Lutherans, and Anglican Christians integrated and communicated the concept of the gospel of Salvation from biblical perspectives. The propagation of the gospel can determine what the people were hearing about the gospel of Salvation and whether the church was compromising its message with the pluralist ideology that was/ is popular in the contemporary society of Tanzania. Then, one may ask in what way the calling is, significant as well as the role of the church from a biblical and theological point of view? Is it well-integrated or being consumed (?) by the pluralist idea which is common to the community? These are the problems this research intends to investigate throughout the historical timeline and by consulting biblical, philosophical, and theological arguments to contribute to the academic arena, the church, and the community of Tanzania.

1.2 Research questions

From the statement of the problem, the following questions-arose regarding the calling and the role of the church in the pluralist society of Tanzania, thus, to what extent has the church integrated the gospel of Salvation into the community where it exists? To answer the main question, the following specific questions are addressed.

- What is religious pluralism from a biblical, theological, and philosophical point of view?
- What does the Bible teach about the gospel of Salvation?
- How the church proclaimed the gospel of Salvation over the following periods: missionary, colonial, post-colonial and the modern era in Tanzania?
- What have people been hearing and are now hearing about the gospel of Salvation?
- Did the church at some point compromise the gospel of Salvation with the pluralist ideology?
- What is the biblical and theological calling significant, especially regarding to the role of the church in a pluralist society in Tanzania?

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 The aim

This research aims to study the calling and the role of the church in a society in a pluralist context, from the biblical and theological perspectives; it also intends to evaluate the participation of the church in propagating the gospel in Tanzania throughout its history; thus to see whether the church in some regards was perhaps compromising its message of Salvation with the religious pluralist ideology which is popular in the contemporary society of Tanzani

1.3.2 The objectives

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- Define what is religious pluralism from a biblical, theological and philosophical point of view
- Study historically how the church proclaimed the gospel of Salvation over the following periods: missionary, colonial, post-colonial, and the modern era in Tanzania
- Find out what the Bible teaches about the gospel of Salvation
- Evaluate what people have been hearing and are now still hearing about the gospel of Salvation
- Find out if the church at some point ever compromised the gospel of Salvation with pluralist ideology
- Study the biblical and theological calling, significance, and the role of the church in a pluralist society in Tanzania

1.4 Central theoretical argument

From the historical background and the statement of the problem, the following central theoretical argument is made:

The church in Tanzania should highly extend the gospel and reflect upon its biblical nature, calling, and duties from a biblical and theological perspective when propagating the gospel in a religious pluralist society where it exists.

1.5 Methodological approach

Theological discipline is the study of God or the knowledge of God. According to Porter and Studebaker (2018), theology is knowing God through His Word. Even though there is no term "theology" in the Bible, we do in Scripture, find a term similar to the word "theology". In 2 Peter 1:2-3 it is written "Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his glory and goodness" (NIV) (Porter and Studebaker 2018:35-36). The word "knowledge" is similar to the term "theology". This entails that we cannot study about God or knows Him without consulting the Word of God. The Reformed evangelical theology, emphasizes that the Scripture is the authoritative Word of God that can stand above all other theories and philosophies. The sixty-six canonical books of the Bible are inspired by the Holy Spirit; thus the author of the Bible is Triune God which means that the Word is God's infallible revelation to mankind. The Word of God is the rule for faith and life; an example of this is the teaching of Jesus Christ that we find in His sermon on the mountain which is recorded in Matthew 5-7 (Porter and Studebaker 2018:31). Therefore, the nature of the theological task undertaken in the second, third, and seventh chapters of this study is a theological methodology that entails to defining, codifying, and systematizing the Word of God according to the codes and themes of the study. Among the theologians who contributed to the theological method of codifying and systematizing the Word of God are Erickson (2015); Grudem (1994); Van Genderen & Velema (2008); Frame (2013); and Thiselton (2015). These are the primary writers of the literature which systematically and biblically provides theological perspectives to be used throughout this study; also to discuss and evaluate the role and the calling of the church in the contemporary religious pluralist society of Tanzania. However, other primary and secondary literature will also evaluate and define in depth what the contemporary pluralist society in Tanzania entails.

Apart from the second, third, and seventh chapters of this study which are theological and biblical, the rest of the chapters are historical which requires historical criticism methodology. However, the reliability and validity of the data used require careful analysis. The processes which are used to describe the trustworthiness and usability of data are known as those of historical criticism. This methodology involves internal and external criticism: external or lower criticism seeks to examine the authenticity of data which helps a researcher not waste time on biased and untrustworthy data. After finding a useful historical document, the second process to follow is internal criticism which aims to find out whether the documents contain facts, that are honest and competitive (Toland 2013:12). This methodology and its processes are followed when gathering and analyzing both primary and secondary sources that are used throughout

this study. Regarding the method in which the church participated in propagating the gospel of Salvation through the historical timeline, this study examined how the church survived during (1) the missionary era (2) the colonial era (3) the post-colonial era and, (4) in modern times. Various primary sources have been consulted in the historical analysis such as that from Mbiku (1985:53); Knox (1991:1); Blight (2010:186); Posnansky (1978:498); Alpers (2009:29); Omulokoli (2006:140), Vernet (2009:46-47), Mndolwa (2016); Bakari (2007); Mhina (2007) and Tumaini-Mungu (2007). However, other secondary sources will be consulted throughout this research. This study will only use literature methodology.

1.6 Table 1: Schematic presentation correlating questions, aim, objectives, and methods

Research Questions	Aim and Objectives	Methodology
What is religious pluralism from a biblical, theological, and philosophical point of view?	To define religious pluralism from a biblical, theological and philosophical point of view	Therefore, the nature of the theological task undertaken in the second chapter of this study is a theological methodology that entails defining, codifying, and systematizing the Word of God according to codes and themes of the study. Among the theologians who contributed to the theological method of codifying and systematizing the Word of God are Erickson (2015); Grudem (1994); Van Genderen & Velema (2008); Frame (2013); and Thiselton (2015). These are the primary writers of the literature which systematically and biblically provides theological perspectives to be used throughout this study; also to discuss and evaluate the role and the calling of the church in the contemporary religious pluralist society of Tanzania. However, other secondary literature will also evaluate and define in depth what the contemporary pluralist society in Tanzania entails.
What does the Bible teach about the gospel of Salvation?	To find out what the Bible teaches about the gospel of Salvation	The nature of the theological task undertaken in the third chapter of this study follows a theological methodology that entails codifying and systematizing the Word of God according to codes and themes of the study as discussed by various scholars such as Feinberg (1981); House (1994); and Piper (2005). However, more secondary literature will be used to find out what the Bible teaches about the gospel of Salvation.

Research Questions	Aim and Objectives	Methodology
How did the church proclaim the gospel of Salvation over the following periods: missionary, colonial, post-colonial, and the modern era in Tanzania?	To study through history the method followed by the church in proclaiming the gospel during the missionary, colonial, post-colonial, and the modern era in Tanzania	Regarding how the church participated in propagating the gospel through the historical timeline, this study examined the way the church persisted. Therefore, historical criticism methodology is used and various primary sources have been consulted in the historical analysis, such as that Mbiku (1985); Knox (1991); Posnansky (1978); Alpers (2009:29); Omulokoli (2006); Vernet (2009); Mndolwa (2016); Bakari (2007); Mhina (2007);Tumaini-Mungu (2007); Beidelman (1981); and Jennings (2008). However, other secondary sources will be consulted as well.
What have people been hearing and now hearing about the gospel of Salvation?	To evaluate what people have been hearing and are now hearing about the gospel of Salvation	Historical criticism and analysis will be undertaken to study the history of Tanzania, at the time of the arrival of the missionaries when slavery and slave-trading were brutal. Therefore, Christian missionary agencies such as the Holy Ghost Fathers for the Catholics, the Hersbrucks and Leipzigs for the Lutherans, and the CMS, and UMCA for the Anglicans propagated the gospel to the freed or ransomed slaves: these were accommodated at the missionary centres as is narrated by scholars such as Chisaye (2019); Alpers (2009); Awino <i>et al</i> (2017); Knox (1991). Regarding the continuation of the evangelization after the missionary departure, the history records that the early native evangelists took over the mission work as is analyzed in literature by Burner (2015); Cantreall II (2014); Stambach (2000), Murray (1979); Gabbert (2001); Burger (2013); and Bruner (2015). Primary and secondary sources will be used throughout this chapter to conclude the matter.
Did the church at any point compromise the gospel of Salvation with pluralist ideology?	To find out if the church at any point compromised the gospel of Salvation with pluralist ideology	The analysis and evaluation throughout the history of this period are undertaken to find out whether the church at any point compromised the gospel as seen in the previous and current Christian-Muslim relations as discussed by Poncian (2015); Heilman, E. B & Kaiser, J. P. (2002); Kaiser, J. P. (2001); Green, M. <i>at al</i> , (2012); Frederiks, Th. M. (2010); Dilger, H. & Schulz, D. (2013); Dilger, H. (2013); Brennan, R. J. (2014); and Olsson, H. (2020). More secondary sources will be used as well.

Research Questions	Aim and Objectives	Methodology
What are the biblical and theological calling, significance, as well as role of the church in the religious pluralist society of Tanzania?	To study in what way the biblical and theological calling is significant, as well as the role of the church in a religious pluralist society of Tanzania	The nature of the theological task undertaken in the seventh chapter of this study follows a theological methodology that entails codifying and systematizing the Word of God according to the codes and themes of the study. Among the theologians who contributed to the theological method of codifying and systematizing the Word of God are Erickson (2015); Grudem (1994); Van Genderen & Velema (2008); Frame (2013); and Thiselton (2015). These outline the primary literature which systematically and biblically provides theological perspectives which will be used throughout this study: to discuss and evaluate the role and the calling of the church in the contemporary religious pluralist society of Tanzania. However, other secondary literature on the theme of theology, calling, and role of the church will be consulted as well.

1.7 Ethical considerations

The risk level from an ethical point of view is minimal in this literature study. The research will comply with the regulations and the policy of the State Department as well as those of the North-West University in this regard.

1.8 Chapter division

Chapter 1: Introduction.

Chapter 2: Religious pluralism seen from a biblical, theological, and philosophical point of view

Chapter 3: The Bible teachings about the gospel of Salvation versus other ideologies

Chapter 4: The gospel of Salvation proclaimed by the church over the following periods: missionary, colonial, post-colonial, and the modern era in Tanzania.

Chapter 5: The evaluation of what people have been hearing and now hearing about the gospel of Salvation in Tanzania.

Chapter 6: An evaluation of the question of whether the Church at some point or other compromised the gospel of Salvation with the religious pluralist ideology.

- Chapter 7: The biblical and theological calling that is significant, to the role of the church in a religious pluralist society in Tanzania
- Chapter 8: Summary, conclusion, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2 RELIGIOUS PLURALISM SEEN FROM A BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND A PHILOSOPHICAL POINT OF VIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter intends to define religious pluralism from a biblical, theological, and philosophical point of view. Moreover, it explores the effects of religious pluralism in the society of Tanzania and specifically that of the church. It seeks to find out and evaluate the position of the imposed, law, and Constitution of the state concerning religious issues. The intention of this chapter is also to evaluate and investigate in depth the reality of religious pluralism and its effects in the contemporary society of Tanzania.

2.2 Defining religious pluralism

Pluralism is a term denoting diverse societies in which people believe all kinds of different things yet tolerate each other's beliefs even when they don't match their own. It is the doctrine of duality and unity; it is a belief that there is not only one consistent means of approaching the truth about the world, but many. However, pluralism has different meanings in metaphysics, ontology, epistemology, logic, and theology (Richardson 1975:259-260)

2.3 The metaphysical point of view

Oldmeadow (1998) defines metaphysics as the “science of the Real, of the origin and end of things, of the absolute and in this light, the relative...”, “metaphysical concerning universal realities considered objectively”. However metaphysics cannot properly and strictly be defined, for to define is to limit, while the domain of metaphysics is the Real and thus is limitless. Consequently, metaphysics “is truly an unlimited and cannot be confined to any formula or any system”. Its subject is “that pure knowledge that knows no form or creaturely way” This means that any definition of metaphysics that is provisional and incomplete should be avoided (Oldmeadow 1998:3, Price 1992:387).

Richardson (1975) defines metaphysics as part of philosophy that neglects the limit of reasoning. It describes the construction of the science of being that ranges from appearance to reality. Metaphysics has the claim that all things can be proven from a scientific point of view. Richardson wrote: “science, and science only, can give information about the world, about what exists. The only instrument for extending knowledge is disciplined observation’ (Richardson 1975:212); however, there are two metaphysical schools of thoughts: (1) the transcendent type of metaphysics and (2) the immanent type – the transcendent belief that it is possible to argue

to what lies, and must lie beyond experience, to Platonic forms and immortal soul-substance, to God as first or final cause. Immanent or descriptive metaphysics goes beyond reasoning and experience: it is scientifically and realistically explicable. Metaphysics claims that every event has a cause, but since this claim can neither be verified nor falsified, it is not an empirical or scientific statement (Richardson 1975:213).

Due to the metaphysical point of view, Richardson (1975) asks: "Does a Christian theologian need metaphysics?" Many have answered "No", for the reason that Christianity is not a worldview. In Metaphysics natural theology is discredited and its arguments lead to a god of philosophers, not the living God of Christianity. More than that, metaphysics works on reason and reasoning but the works of Christian theologians work on faith as well. Metaphysics is concerned with abstract rational insights into the timeless truth. Christian theology in contrast deals with concretely historical and revelation (Richardson 1975:213). Tillich (1956) argues that the understanding and expression of metaphysics and the understanding of theology, remain problematic. Because there is no court to decide over them, the definition of the two concepts (metaphysics and theology) and their relationship, therefore, remain an ongoing discussion (Tillich 1956:57). Theology has two components: 1 – theology involves inquiry about the events such as the resurrection of Jesus and the meaning of claims like "God created man in his image". These inquiries are part of hermeneutic theology, the interpretations of which involve historical events, various revelations, texts, and signs in general, and 2- Theology involves inquiry into God's nature and God's purpose. These inquiries are the metaphysical part of theology (Johes 2008:580). Kaufman (1978) maintains that there is an inescapable natural rivalry between metaphysics and theology. These disciplines each have different interests in ultimate issues and ultimate claims. From religious points of view, theology claims that the author and designer of the cosmology is God, to whom everything that exists needs to be referred and metaphysics is in the position to explain how things are. Therefore, each is to be understood and explained differently. Metaphysics and theology each have to be given integrity and a domain that could not be decisively determined or dominated by the other. But these compromises have never really worked, -for metaphysics with its search for rational criteria for assessing all claims about reality and truth, has, always gained the upper hand (Kaufman 1978:325).

2.4 Ontological point of view

Ontology is part of metaphysics - it is the science of being that deals with the philosophy of existentialism (Richardson 1975:241). When we attempt to answer the question of God and the question of being, it remains a mystery. Any attempt to answer these two mysteries remains

conjecture and so these two should meet and intertwine with each other. Spinks (2017) is of the opinion that science and theology are to be clearly defined regarding their boundaries and differences. Thus it would seem better to free them from each other's influence rather than to bring them together into cooperation—for Theology is a positive ontic science—as the study of specific being, the Christian—and philosophy a wholly independent, ontological one—the study of being itself. Theology is to be defined separately not in an ontological phenomenal way because theology is revelation and science works on experiments and findings (Spinks 2017:2-4).

Bentley (2020) argues about the presence of God in a cosmological setting, referring to Psalm 139, for he talks about the omnipresence of God after a theological and scientific discussion on the issue of God being present in a Black Hole. The author argues that God is present in a cosmological theory of understanding (Bentley 2020:185-186). The omnipresence of God during creation as recorded in Genesis 1, from a biblical point of view with philosophical traditions, is closely tied to the idea of God's omnipotence and omniscience. This however, entails that, since God is everywhere he is active throughout creation and can know all things. The rhetorical question that God asked Job in Job 38:4 "where were you...?" indicates that human beings live within the confines of space and time while God had no limit in time or space, He is eternal God (Bentley 2020:188).

There is always a challenge regarding the relationship between science and religion. The struggle exists between reason and faith, secular and religious, old or new, atheism versus any age of theology, realism, and fantasy, and so on. This conversation of religion and science has been an ongoing issue that in some cases created a pluralist ideology. Due to the continued debate on religion and science from medieval times and even back to the third century, negative theology was applied in literature such as that of the mystical reading of Moses' encounter with God "in the dark cloud". This was the theology of not knowing. It is the state where knowledge fades out and the darkness begins. This was in the early Renaissance period. Keller (2016) is in the position of seeing theology and science as not opposing each other or vice-versa but each should be explained and understood in its ways (Keller 2016:810).

Work (2008) holds that ecclesiastical divisions hinder and distort the development of Christian dialogue between Christian theology and the natural and social sciences—the author provides an example of the understanding that Pentecostals and Charismatics when they emphasize the "Spirit upon us" and "speaking through Prophets"—this tends to lend some privilege to personal narrative and testimony. The closest cognate science is cultural anthropology which deals with the issues of the social construction of reality, relativism, and cultural imperialism, which means that engagement and disengagement with other disciplines of learning are driven part by

theology. This entails that fuller engagement with theology-scientific dialogue remains the task of the ecumenical entity and not just a denominational unity. However, some theologians argue that theology and science fit together without providing concrete information on how they fits together. Moreover, throughout history, there has been some scientific engagement with theologian dialogue (Work 2008:897-898). Spinks (2017) separates theology and ontology, as the earlier is fundamental to the latter and thus these two philosophical points of view have to be distinguishable, understood, and explained separately. In addition, the author pinpoints that enough attention was not given to phenomenological and theological aspects, and therefore, little is known- thus giving room for assumed thoughts (Sprinks 2017:1;3).

2.5 Epistemological point of view

The word epistemology comes from the Greek words “episteme” and “logos” “Episteme can be translated in English as “knowledge” or “understanding” or “acquaintance” while “logos” means “account” or “argument” or “reason”—each translation captures a different facet of epistemology itself. However, in the history of epistemology different forms of epistemology have attracted attention; for example, Plato’s epistemology attempted to understand what there was to know and how that knowledge was good to the “knower”. So many other forms of epistemological philosophy were developed (Zalta 2020). The contemporary debate on the epistemology of religion is whether evidentialism applies to religious beliefs or whether it should adopt a more permissive epistemology. Evidentialism implies that belief is justified only if it is proportioned to the evidence. Religious beliefs hold that God exists and that God is not just good in a utilitarian fashion but He is love or that there is an afterlife or the beliefs that say Krishna is divine or that Mohammed is the last and most authoritative of the prophets. These and other claims in contemporary epistemology of religion need to be presented with evidence (Zalta 2020:17).

Moreover, Richardson (1975) and Gomez (2002) define epistemology as a branch of philosophy that is concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge; it is a study of the nature, origin, and limits of human knowledge, and has a great impact on theology, for it deals with the problems of believing, knowing, doubting, improving, of the probable, and the improbable. It seeks to justify the claims of knowing, being sure, and having the common/good ground of a certain philosophy. Epistemology entails inclusiveness and the over-generality theory that distorts the map of knowledge and belief, for it seeks the testimony of incontrovertible experience and the demonstration of pure reason: for example, a theologian could say ‘men encounter God’ in a relationship. From the epistemological point of view this claim will be compared very carefully and finely with obscure-claims of less problematic kinds including face-to-face meetings with seeing and hearing persons (Richardson 1975:112; Gomez 2002:2).

Today epistemology is flourishing, as researchers are working on finding and analyzing how to explain the knowledge we see through nature: – Skeptical arguments are evaluated and the nature of epistemic justification is discussed (Kuenzle 2017:2). Griffiths (1999) explains that epistemology has mattered a great deal to theology in a wrong way since the seventeenth century. However, theology has been taking epistemology out of its proper station and this phenomenon has been largely negative. Theology has been taken away from proper epistemology which causes theology to become a worshiper of alien epistemological gods. It is not that epistemology is irrelevant to theology, but its role is that of a servant and not a master (Griffiths 1999:1). Both epistemology and theology are constructive and normative in that they intend to say what their respective objects are like, which involves distinguishing true from false claims about them. Both also tend toward the systematic, which is to say that they typically pay attention to how their deliverances/outcomes are given and ought to be related to those of the intellectual disciplines. The central and constitutive question of theology is: “What is God like?” “While on the other hand, the central and constitutive question of epistemology by contrast is: “What is knowledge?” (Griffiths 1999:2). The epistemic concepts are about norms and sources of theology that deal with questions such as reason, experience, revelation, scripture, and tradition, and also some epistemic concepts that are related to theology such as wisdom, evidence, understanding, testimony, virtue, disagreement, and skepticism. However, there is no uniform approach to epistemology or theology. The concepts and questions can be similar and dissimilar due to foundational philosophical concepts (Abraham and Aquino 2017:1) On the other hand Munchin (2011) argue that natural science or philosophy and Christian theology are two dynamic disciplines each with their trajectories of development and evolution. This means that there can be no normative moment at which Christian theology can once and for all state its assessment of and relation to natural science, because, particularly in today’s context, that could only amount to passing judgment on the natural science of yesterday. Theology needs to be updated according to the development of natural science so that it can respond to discoveries within its discipline (Munchin 2011:3).

In Garton’s work, he holds that the only epistemology concept that can work between God and revelation is Creation. Therefore, theological apologetics and conceptions apply along with narratological metaphysics to combine natural science and revelation theology. Thus any gap allowed between God and revelation would inevitably correlate to an epistemologically unattainable truer reality of God that threatens to reduce everything built upon this source, including the most fundamental Christian doctrines, to statements merely about the form of God’s revelation to Creation (Garton 2020:240). According to Friedrich *et al* (2020) theology that is collaborative and exploratory in the digital age relies not only on testimonial forms of doing

theology but is taking cues from participatory research conceptions which are exploratory. The world we live in today is influenced by technological development; therefore, the epistemological approach to theology is dramatically changed, and thus, the theology of the cross needs to be collaborative, participatory, and explorative according to epistemological conceptions (Friedrich *et al* 2020:224).

In Murray's work (2002) he proposes that since God created both the world which is accessible to philosophers, and revealed His Word which is accessible to theologians, the claim yielded by one cannot conflict with the claim yielded by another unless the philosopher or theologian has made the same previous error. Philosophy can be put to the service of theology or (vice-versa) so that theology proves its claims by providing evidence as information in the claims such as that of Jesus as a single person with two natures, one human and one divine, as well as providing exact textual information on how this relationship between divine and human natures, is to be understood (Murray 2002:2).

The ontological and epistemological idea encompasses that abstract system of thought concerning reality that must continuously be challenged and expanded by developments in concrete reality. However, the introduction of a univocal epistemological limit of human qualities between finite human knowledge and the incomprehensible God might ironically claim too much knowledge about God. The relationships between abstract thought and concrete reality in systematic theology indicate that there is a lack of attention to concrete historical mediations of God in the merely abstract systematic theology of Neo-Scholasticism. Such systematization has not been exhaustively explored particularly in looking at and understanding the relationship between abstract thinking and concrete reality. Systematization theology relies on the understanding of doctrinal truth that, coupled with a historical understanding of empirical facts, suggested that purely supernatural reality could be separated from an equally pure natural realism (Alpers 2017:513-514). Scientists contend that it is impossible to access and assess concrete reality in any other way than metaphysically. Thus the understanding of a concrete is depending on interpreting ontology (Alpers 2017:516). Therefore, the systematization of contemporary theology that is explanatory and participatory remains a gap that needs to be filled to answer the scientific arguments of any era.

2.6 The logical point of view

Logic is the most technical branch of philosophy and the most influential of any other – discipline and more so even than any other part of philosophy. It can essentially be noticed in the construction of arguments. It is part of the reasoning that deals with the valid and invalid and distinguishes correct from incorrect. Logic is interested in the reliability or unreliability of such

and such a conclusion of a certain argument or premise. Moreover modal logic investigates arguments that turn upon words such as "must, may, cannot" etc. - arguments about what is possible, impossible, or necessary. It is a study of deduction alone and not induction. The philosophy of logic is the study of higher-order questions such as 'what do we mean by truth, validity, probability, and logical necessity'. However, it includes the study of meaning in general. We may ask a question here, e.g. How can logic conduct an assessment of theological arguments? Since the fact holds that logic deals with the condition for any consistent discourse and correct argumentation, it bears with it every point ranging from whichever contradiction. An example, from a theological point of view, leads that whenever any proposition, whether absurd or false arises, theologians need to develop a logical argumentation that would give a satisfactory account to combat any contradiction that was caused by any false ideology (Richardson 1975:198-199).

We may ask questions such as -"What is the role of logic in theology, or what principle of logic is useful in theological considerations?" Whatever, the role of logic in theology, it is the same as that in every other theoretical enterprise, and the human limit of reasoning has been influencing theological methodology in the contemporary context of analytic theology for ages. The debate between exceptionalism and anti-exceptionalism has been an issue in analytical theology. The modern theologian needs to work on the contradictory issues in analytical theology, issues such as Christology, -the theory of incarnation (which seems to be a closed debate), etc. This and other issues need explanatory probes through, - texts, revelation, and history (Cotnoir 2019:508-509)

Westerholm (2019) maintains that contemporary theology is a transitional stage to search form of thought that can support theologies in on ongoing work. Regarding this process of formation of ideology to fit contemporary debates, analytic theology has emerged with the most concerted attempt to develop a new form of theological inquiry (Westerholm 2019:230).

Balcemrowicz (2018) defines religion in a different way that distinguishes the phenomenon of religion from other world views. The author describes religious and non-religious belief systems differently and makes suggestions on the role that logic can play in it. Religious belief systems theorized by dogmas can thus use logic in different ways compared to that of other worldview theories. However, not every religion admits that it accepts logic as an instrument of inquiry into truth, but some do. In Christianity, for instance, the Catholic theologians accept logic more than the Protestants who deny that a person can develop and strengthen faith through reason, argument, and disputation. This means that faith is not necessarily against reason, but it is certainly beyond it. However, many religions do not accept logic as an inquiry into revealed

truths - they accept, the use of logic in practice in their arguments and debates (Balcerowicz 2018:114)

The proper definition of religion should include three essential components: these are (1) doctrine, this is the formulation of religious worldview and intuitions (2) religious cult or practice, which is a practical expression of the doctrine and belief, which includes actions undertaken communally and individually, (3) community, this entails that religion involves the community-it means that no religion is a personal affair but it exists as a social phenomenon (Balcerowicz 2018:115). Roy (2002) argues that science and religion are incomparable, one cannot use centimeters to measure volume. Both are human activities that are conceptual frameworks for explaining experience. There is so much confusion in the science-religion conversation. However, between religion- theology, and science-technology some relationship does exist. Religion may be based on empirical adopted practices of people who accept structural myths, but, faith remains a method to measure the substance of things (Roy 2002:669).

2.7 Theological point of view

Theology in classical Greek is defined as an account of the gods (or God). In Christianity, or biblically, it refers to God's dealings with men and in particular, referring to Christ. Theology is the knowledge of God and his creatures and is about the responsibility of men to God and fellow creatures. It is about hope in the present and future state; theology comprises all other knowledge. This statement even today remains true to Christians. Moreover, in the twelfth century, Greek and Latin writers/scholars developed a philosophy of Christian doctrines, and theology became an academic study of Scripture. During the time of Thomas Aquinas, theology, the natural and the revealed, was regarded as the climax and coordinating study of all that is, in fact, 'the Queen of Science'. This ideology continued until the Enlightenment (Richardson 1975:335).

Peters (2018) argues that today science and theology are engaged in a hopelessly" unwinnable" war. The author is of the opinion that, this statement is misleading. The author points out that, science and religion interact in so many different ways. The history of (this war for the understanding of good reason regarding science and theology) goes back to before the late nineteenth century, perhaps partly due to the influence of two notorious books: the one written by John William Draper entitled "History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science (1875) and the other written by A.D. White entitled "A History of Warfare of Science with Theology (1896). However, currently, in the twenty-first century, the interaction between theological thinking and natural science is increasing the debate so consequently, theology and science are in a revolutionary era. Moreover, Peters (2018) argues that this ongoing war may

end up in peace and not necessarily grow toward increased conflicts between science and theology (Peters 2018:3-4).

Christians, for many centuries, have been aware of the existence of other religions such as African Tradition Religions, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Jews, and others. Christians perceived that these people of other religions were frequently uncivilized, ignorant and wicked, so therefore Christian missionaries were sent across the seas to civilize, enlighten and purify them. But, today due to the spread of ideas and people, it is common for Christians to meet co-workers, relatives, or friends who are faithful members of their religion. Because of this phenomenon, Christians are left wondering about not only the faith of others but their own as well (Rittgers 2008:1). Moreover, Rittgers (2008:2) surmises that today, more and more Christians ask themselves questions such as “Do I have the correct faith?” “Is faith in Christ the only means to Salvation?” “Will my peer, co-workers, friend, or family members be going to hell?” These are the questions that require new theological discussions, not only with the religious elite but with the laypeople as well.

2.8 The reality of religious pluralism

When Christianity came to Africa specifically in Tanzania, the African people had their own beliefs; people, though, accepted the Christian faith, however they never neglected their African traditional religion (s). Therefore, syncretism continued as part of life among most Christian believers. Moreover, in contemporary society, there emerged another form of religious philosophy which is known as religious pluralism: this encompasses and accommodates all beliefs and faiths in line with the ideology that salvation can be found or obtained from any other belief or faith and that there is no one thought only which is correct and another which is wrong. Now, the church is facing the ideas of atheism, secularism, and universalism (Daniel 2012:10).

The history of religious pluralism can be traced back to colonial time. The colonial economical systems encouraged people to move from rural settings into urban areas and big cities. From then up to the present people are still moving from villages into big cities, and towns, and some even go overseas. Therefore, lives that were associated with geographical location and ethnicity are of no significance and people are everywhere. This phenomenon resulted in the creation of a new culture and ways of life. People are no longer observing old rules of ritual behavior and regulations but are rather led by the global economic market and technological inventions (Mani 2012:150; Kumar 2006:273). Due to national and international immigration, people not only share ideas and information but religious beliefs and convictions as well (Rittgers 2008:1). In South Africa, for example, as Kumar (2006) states, Christian majorities are now called to a single faith approach. This is because the issue of religion in South Africa is not only an issue of

human rights but also a moral issue, by which it has to accommodate all races and ethnicity, which is all about nationality and citizenship. However, in South Africa, there is a rapid growth of secularization societies. People are no longer faithful members of their churches, mosques, or temples, as more and more people are becoming pluralistic and secular in ways of life. According to Kumar (2006), religion is the fundamental source of value that guides human behavior but people are creating another way of life that will not be under the influence of a single religion but rather a secular or pluralistic one. Furthermore, for a Christian to neglect Christian biblical teachings and to promote religious pluralism boils down to automatically accommodating secularism and these two (religious pluralism and secularism) go hand-in-hand (Kumar 2006:274).

In Africa, whether one decides to adhere to the world religion category or to follow African Traditional Religion (s) there is still a problem. Another issue is that religious pluralism can be conceived from within a religion. Whereas plurality can emerge from any religion, in the case of our study we are dealing with religious pluralism within a Christian context (Kumar 2006:275). Another problem with religious pluralism for instance, in South Africa, is the relationship between religion, race, nationality, and ethnic groups and the fact that people realize/experience their identity from the context of others. With the pluralist ideology, the other religion is not merely another religion but rather it is something that distinguishes people (Nicolson 1991:71; Kumar 2006:282).

Concerning religious pluralism, Madan (2014) has made a statement that all religions are true and imperfect since they have been formulated by human beings regardless of having been divinely inspired or revealed. The institution of religion is a human ideology that has limitations. Why should one, therefore, fight in the name of God or of religion? Anyone who is truly religious is multi-religious – this is not a show of opposite religious differences but is to affirm the value of these while recognizing personal identity (Madan 2014:154; 156).

There is a difference between religious diversity and religious pluralism the world has been diverse for many centuries but that does not mean it has been pluralist. Pluralism is a shift away from what was thought to be diversity. Pluralism is therefore different from plurality or diversity for the choice has to be made intentionally – Pluralism is also political as it implies and involves polity, a civic context that has rules and requires responsibility it is a theology of understanding other religions (Alam 2014:47). Indian Muslims, for instance, have lived in religious diversity for centuries and this has helped them to develop and share their culture and social tradition with the Hindus and people of other religions. Alam (2014) gives the example that Hindus and Muslims have lived multi-religious lives territorially and Indian Muslims have fought alongside

the Hindus to overthrow their (then) enemy, the British. One Muslim theologian developed a theory regarding the Muslims to differentiate between religious diversity and culture which made them share the same territory. This theory assisted them to unite and seeing themselves through a political and territorial lens and not notice religious differences. This theologian referred to Prophet Mohammad who made a covenant with Jews at Medina to fight against the unbelievers of Mecca (Alam 2014:50).

The Hindus and Muslims in this sense had territorial unity. This unity did not mean they shared religious values and teachings nor did it not mean a religious pluralism, for both recognized their religious diversity. This unity was political, for a Muslim scholar was aware of his religious value and insisted that even Hindus must be converted to Islam. Therefore, Muslims in India have cooperated and tolerated non-Muslims in political and civic issues but not in religious matters (Alam 2014:51). However, other Muslim scholars did not see the cooperation through the lens of political value but rather more in religious terms and they insisted that it was not permissible for a Muslim to associate and cooperate in any way with a (Kaffir) a non-Muslim-this included Hindus, Christians, and others. These two ideologies separated Muslim theologians into two groups which meant that Indian theologians had failed to develop the theology of religious pluralism (Alam 2014:54).

Silk (2007) analyzed the reality of religious pluralism and its situation in the state of California, in that, today, people can talk more about their family's religious history and their past religious commitment even more than they can affirm what they believe in at the present moment. This means that they have combined all their beliefs and doubts, convictions, and curiosities. Religious boundaries no longer exist, and people match and mix religious teachings and practices. For instance, Christians incorporate yoga classes, observe New Age Teachings, and blend notions of reincarnation with the doctrine of eternal life. Churches are adopting neo evangelism using consumer culture with popular music and drama during worship services (Silk 2007:71).

The impact of the degree of religious pluralism on religious participation has been the subject of debate. Pluralism leads to more participation in religious activities as it offers a wider choice for a religiously diverse public to meet their religious needs (Fox & Tabory 2008:245)

2.9 Christian/Muslim relations in Tanzania and the call for religious pluralism and tolerance

The history of Islam in Tanzania can be traced back to the 9th century and by the 14th century Islam was widespread, especially along the coast of East Africa. Islam came to Tanzania

through traders from Asia who traded with the people of the Tanzanian coasts. The spread to the mainland was also through traders. On the other hand, Christianity entered Tanzania in the 16th century when the Portuguese invaded the coastal area of East Africa. However, Christianity spread greatly in the 19th century through missionaries from European countries and other Western countries. The relationship between Muslims and Christians during those days remained good, for some missionary agencies built their headquarters in Muslim-dominated areas such as the Holy Ghost Fathers in 1863 who settled in Zanzibar, and the Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA); they also settled in Zanzibar in 1864 before they extended their work in the mainland. However, the only conflict that existed during this time was the missionary campaign against the slave trade that was practiced by Arab Muslim traders (Chisaye 2019:1, Poncian 2015:55).

During German rule in Tanganyika, both Islam and Christianity grew rapidly. The major tool that Christians used to attract Africans was education: they built many schools and opened them to Africans on the condition that they accepted Christianity. This side-lined Muslims in education development for they couldn't enroll in mission schools unless they denied Islam and accepted Christianity (Poncian 2015:55-56).

Nkoko (2017) mentions that Tanzanian society, is characterized by four social diversities namely ethnic, racial, religious, and economic. The society of Tanzania is composed of more than 120 ethnic groups that live in different geographical areas which differ in cultural and linguistic features. Regarding racial quality, Tanzania has three groups that are indigenously Tanzanian forming the majority of the population. The second group is the Tanzanians of Asian origin-and-the third is the Tanzanians of other origins. Regarding religion, Tanzania has three major religions, namely Christians, Muslims, and Traditional Religions (Nkoko 2017:3)

During the British rule, secular education was important and qualification for employment so Christians who had received education from missionary schools, were privileged. This marked the beginning of Christian-Muslim division along the line of education and achievement; this problem was carried over during the time of independence. Despite this gap in education and employment opportunities, Christian-Muslim relations remained harmonious. Muslims and Christians came together to struggle for independence through a non-religious political party, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) of which the majority members were Muslims but they elected a Christian leader-Julius Nyerere (Poncian 2015:56). Since independence, the first Tanzanian president, Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, emphasized the building of national unity: this included equal education and employment for both Muslims and Christians (Tetti 2014:504). Thus in 1967 president, Nyerere nationalized all schools that were owned by

Christians so that equal education opportunities for non-Christians were increased, even though some Muslims had been enrolled at Christian schools even before the nationalization (Galabawa 1990:12).

However, religious pluralism in Tanzania is accepted both by the government and the broader society. To encourage national unity the Tanzanian government, since 1967, is no longer conducting censuses on religious groups, even though the government claims that there are an equal number of members of Muslims and Christians in Tanzania (Heilman and Kaiser 2002:691). Thus, since independence, religion and ethnicity have never occupied a prominent role in politics. During the one-party era, the emphasis was to build national unity, and identity, so, therefore, religious and ethnic differences in politics were avoided. However, the situation changed in 1990 during the introduction of multi-party politics, where, now, it is common for religion and ethnicity to be voiced by some politicians in the country. Moreover, ethnicity has never influenced politics in Tanzania in any way, but it is assumed rather that from time to time religiously speaking it has influenced Tanzanian politics due to severe tension between Muslims and Christians (Gahnstrom 2012:1, Poncian 2015:54, Campbell 1999:107).

From 1990 – to 2013 conflicts between some Muslims and Christians for instance, occurred at different times and in different places in Tanzania. The conflicts that caused violence, involved the burning of houses of worship, the destruction of property, and the desecration of holy books. During the violence some people lost their lives and others were injured; the places where conflict erupted were Kigoma, Geita, Mwanza, and Dar Es Salaam. Arusha and Zanzibar also experienced bombings and shootings where several people died and others were injured too. It was said that the cause of the conflict was the interaction of different people who opposed different cultures, interests, and values. Furthermore, the cause of inter-religion conflict in Tanzania was said to be due to the equal-population size of Muslims and Christians as well as differences between their doctrines and their needs to access resources. The conflicts began when some Muslim public preachers appeared who criticized the Bible and Christianity from Islamic perspectives (Nkoko 2017:2). In June 1994 forty-three students at a Catholic Girls' Secondary School died from a fire that broke out in the dormitories; then another attack in the same year followed at a Christian boarding school. In the town of Morogoro, there was ongoing intolerance of Muslim preaching, and the police had to use teargas to disperse the fundamental Muslims. Consequently, in 1994 the public allegation held that the relationship between Christians and Muslims was soured and that Muslim fundamentalists were involved in these attacks. The Christians alleged that Muslims had burned down church buildings in Kibaha and claimed that the government and the (then) Muslim president, Ali Hassan Mwinyi were accused

of turning a blind eye to such activities and that this had encouraged fundamentalists (Campbell 1998:114).

Christian-Muslim conflict can be traced in history as far back as before independence. Mohamed (1998) recalls an event that occurred at one of the political meetings that Nyerere held with TANU (Tanganyika National Union) members in 1958 where a Muslim leader, Sheikh Suleiman Takadir stood up before the meeting while holding his walking stick: he pointed it at Mwalimu Nyerere and said 'This man will never come to favor us, for he would come to favor his brethren! A stitch in time saves nine.' Then Nyerere broke out in tears and asked, 'Did Sheikh Suleiman speak those words on your behalf?' the members replied negatively and then the meeting broke up (Mohamed 1998:2). However, a Muslim leader such as Sheikh Suleiman Takadir was one among the leaders of TANU that facilitated the process for independence. Since Nyerere had heard the words from Sheikh Suleiman, the theme in his speeches was the unity of the people which was important for their struggle for independence (Mohamed 1998:3).

Mohamed (1998) points out that, Muslims had contributed to the liberating of the country from British colonization, and thus from 1970 the church/Christianity took full control of the government, and the Muslims were marginalized in all spheres of life; - the author, now further maintains that Muslims there are in the majority in Tanzania. The statistics of 1967 indicated that Muslims were 30%, Christians 32%, and those practicing African Traditional beliefs were 37% of the population. Mohamed argued that the government had fiddled (doctored) the numbers for the census of 1957 that had indicated that Muslims as the majority outnumbered the Christians. Therefore the marginalization of Muslims would seem to be the source of unrest and the cause of conflict between Muslims and the government. In 1983 the Buzuruga Muslim Sungusungu conflict arose, and in 1993 the demolition of pork butchery in Dar Es Salaam and the Mwembechai upheaval occurred 1998 (Mohamed 1998:3, Campbell 1999:113, Poncian 2015:55, Ali-Koor 2016:3).

The Muslim denominations in Tanzania are the Sunni, who are mostly of African origin; the Ibadhi from Arab groups and the Shia from the Asian population – the division is racial which aggravated economic differences. In 1960 at the Africanization of the civil service and the indigenization of the economy, the government created, a Supreme Council of Tanzanian Muslims (BAKWATA) that could unify Asian, African and Arab Muslims. The creation of the council gave rise to two perceptions: that (1) the government intended to control the large population of Muslims, and (2) the government intended to cooperate with the council leaders on political agendas (Campbell 1999:112; World Faith Development Dialogue 2019:47).

Moreover, due to the occasional Muslim- Christian conflicts, the government insists on religious tolerance. This tolerance is significant, according to Ramadhani (2016) who states that religious tolerance relates to the diversity of faith and if there were only one religion in the world, tolerance would lose its importance. Religious tolerance exists even though other religions do not approve of the practice of another religion. The 1977 Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania provides the fundamental principles of religious tolerance. Article 3(1) it states that “the United Republic is a democratic secular and socialist state which adheres to multi-party politics.” Then article 10(1) provides freedom to practice any religion and includes the option of changing one’s religion or faith. This is the effort of the state to give protection to its people against a conflict that could be caused by religious diversity (Ramadhani 2016:86).

Due to conflict and time-to-time unrest between Christians and Muslims in Tanzania, civil society groups continue to promote peace through dialogue, interaction, and religious tolerance. Therefore, the Inter-Religious Council for Peace in Tanzania was established: it is a non-governmental entity that brings together Christians, Muslims, Bahais, Hindus, and Buddhists. However, even though all major and minor religions cherish peace and justice in their Scriptures, in theory, and reality they foment conflict and injustice. Thus, in contemporary societies, there are plenty of religious conflict studies, more than those in peace-building ones (Mani 2012:151).

2.10 The government and religious pluralism

Recently in many African countries, constitutional reform and new constitutions have been proposed. Kenya, for instance, produced a new constitution in 2010, and countries like Tanzania and Zambia are in the process of producing new constitutions. The constitutional process has raised among other issues, the question of legal pluralism, religious freedom, and the relationship between the Christian majority and Muslim minority (Green 2012:402). In Tanzania, in this regard, constitutional reform has been influenced, amongst others, by democratic issues, the demand for the sovereignty of the Muslim region of Zanzibar, and the call for introducing Kadhi’s Court in Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania (Green 2012:404)

Tanzania differs from Kenya and Somalia in the fight against terrorism due to the Tanzanian state not sending military troops into those areas to combat terrorist groups. In Tanzania, there is no presence of al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab. However, the issue of concern in Tanzania is Extremism (Dang 2019:3).

The introduction of Kadhi’s court in Tanzania seems to be a burning issue. The same situation can be witnessed in Europe in the future due to the presence of immigrants in European

countries from different places in the World. The culture and religious profile have been changing in recent years and there will be a need for religious dialogue. Recent research has estimated that by 2050 the Muslims will make out about ten percent of the allover European population (Minnucci 2015:146).

Tanzania, like many African countries, is a secular state that consists of more than 120 ethnic groups. Religious demography is regarded to be a sensitive matter, so therefore since 1967, the Tanzanian state does not conduct census on religious-affiliated groups. Due to this, recent census reports on religious groups are not available. It is estimated that 98 percent of the Zanzibaris are Muslims. On the mainland, the religious landscape is more heterogeneous with Christians, Muslims, as well as followers of African Traditional Religion (s), Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs. In this pluralist society that is characterized by different cultural identities, the religious question has been at the center of conflicts, especially between Christians and Muslims; these conflicts began in the Eighties and Nineties (as discussed in previous paragraphs) (Minnucci 2015:147, Abbink 2014:84). The last census that was conducted by the government in 1967 indicated that 32 percent were Christians, Muslims were 30 percent, and those who practiced Indigenous African Religion (s) made up 37 percent. Census on religious-affiliated groups is regarded as politically biased which could undermine the unity of the nation (Chisaye 2019:9). However, during the census of 2012, some radical Muslims demanded that the state should include a census on religion otherwise they could not take part, but the government rejected this step (Poncian 2015:55). The current constitution of Tanzania was formulated in 1977 and the reform process began in 2011 after the Constitutional Reform Act was passed. The first proposal was passed in 2013 and the second in 2014. Issues of reform, among others, contain the suggested structure of union between Tanzania Mainland (formally Tanganyika) and Zanzibar, regarding human rights, the supremacy of the constitution and separation of power, the status of international and regional law, citizenship, and the electoral process (Masabo and Wanitzek 2015:329).

Since Tanzania is a secular state it seems that there will be no room for Kadhi's court in its new constitution reform (Minnucci 2015:155; Chisaye 2019:9). In the process of producing a new constitution in Kenya, Muslims requested that Kadhi's Court be included in the constitution. Christian leaders responded saying that the inclusion of Kadhi's Court in the constitution would discriminate against Kenyans of other religions: it would violate the principle of separation between religion and state. More than that, it would go against the status of the country as a multi-religion and multi-culture state. Christian leaders' claims were presented in Court and the Court declared "We believe and pray that the Republic of Kenya, from East to West and from North to South shall remain a country under God's protection where all faiths, Judeo-Christian,

Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Bohras, Indigenous spiritualists, and non-believers alike, will live and practice their faith or lack of it in harmony without interference from all or any of them” (Green 2012:415).

In Tanzania, the Bill for constitution reform was passed on February 10, 2012, to clear the way, and a Constitutional review committee was appointed to draft and propose a new Tanzanian Constitution. While the process was taking place in the National Assembly, Muslim leaders, in the middle of February 2012, were discussing the need to educate Muslim communities about their rights or lack thereof and the Constitution; also about the Tanzanian Constitution to recognize Kadhi’s Court so that the Muslims could fulfill their religious obligations in matters of family law and inheritance. Due to the Muslim mobilization on the issue of Zanzibar, sovereignty, and religious pluralism in the Tanzanian Constitution, the issue of Constitutional reform, became a hot debate (Green 2012:417). However, the 1977 Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania in an opening section, of its policy, declares that “the State is to provide equal opportunities to all citizens, men and women alike without regard to their color, tribe, religion, or state of life.” The State-provision on the equality-law on religion was mentioned under the category of identity that needs to be protected from discrimination (Green 2012:418).

More than that, the Tanzania 1977 Constitution which comprises four articles (among other issues in article 19) expresses the issue of freedom of religion, which protects the rights of a person as follows: “right to the freedom of thought or conscience, belief or faith, and choice in matters of religion, including the right to change his religion or faith.” The same article also made it clear that worship and propagation of religion shall be part of the free and private affairs of an individual; also that the affairs of religion and its management shall not be part of the activities of the State authority. These are the issues that the Tanzanian Constitution of 1977 describes concerning religious matters and they are echoed in the 1984 Zanzibar constitution (Green 2012:418; Forster 1997:35; Ndaluka 2012:2). Therefore, the Tanzania government is a non-religious state, but it guarantees the freedom of worship to its citizens even though there are challenges between Christian-Muslim relationships in Tanzania, but that is not the concern of this study.

In the case of South Africa, some scholars are of the opinion that South Africa is not a Christian country. Even during the apartheid government, it was not a Christian state since religious freedom existed in that era. Yet Christianity throughout the history of the country enjoyed a powerful position. Some scholars have pointed out that the idea that South Africa is a Christian country is based on statistical data produced by the government. However, recently, few Christian theologians have been content with the call for religious tolerance. Some have

concern about the lack of equal treatment in religious matters (Mhango 2012:25; Kumar 2006:275).

Moreover, the constitution of South Africa states that the Republic of South Africa is founded on the principles of human dignity, equality, advancement of human rights and freedom, non-racialism, and non-sexism, among other noble goals (South African Constitution, chapter 1:1). On the clause of equality, the Bill of Rights states that either the state or any person may not unfairly be discriminated against based on religion, among other grounds. Under the clause of religion, it provided the freedom of conscience, religions, thought, belief, and opinion, and it also provides for religious observance at state-or state-aided institutions subject to rules set by appropriate public authorities; these observances are to be conducted on an equality basis; attendance at these observances is free and voluntary (South Africa Constitution chapter 2:15:1-2).

However, according to Silk (2007), religious pluralism is understood as a social norm that enables the government to bring together people of different faiths without conflicts or persecutions of religious minorities. Moreover, religious pluralism, in reality, goes beyond not just bringing people together, but it constructs a culture that brings together in practice different religious aspects that help society to change (Silk 2007:64).

2.11 Conclusion

Religious pluralism as defined from metaphysical, ontological, epistemological, logical, and theological points of view indicates that - in each philosophical aspect it collaborates and at some point disagrees with theology in some respects. However, as seen from the above discussions, religious pluralism in the world and particularly in Tanzania is a reality. The government in Tanzania and other countries has been trying to unite its people by promoting religious pluralism through the constitution and by imposing the law on this. By doing so, religious pluralism, secularism, and the emergence of new cultures have become quite invasive and/or prominent. We may ask whether religious pluralism can be a threat to Christians in propagating the Gospel. The answer can be "Yes" or "No" this is because Christians can continue testifying for Christ peacefully even amid in religious pluralism which is becoming quite strong and formidable in contemporary society.

CHAPTER 3 THE BIBLE TEACHINGS ABOUT THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION VERSUS OTHER IDEOLOGIES

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter of this study, I devoted myself to defining religious pluralism from a biblical and philosophical perspective. I however found that due to national and international immigration, people have adopted a new type of culture. Therefore, in the situation of Tanzania where Christians and Muslims are nearly equal in population, inter-religion conflicts emerged from time to time; this thesis found that the government emphasizes and cherishes religious pluralism and tolerance. Moreover, chapter two of this study found in the ideology of metaphysics, ontology, epistemology, and logic that science is mandated to prove any fact and that, thus, in philosophical thinking there is no one consistent means of approaching the truth about the world but many. In chapter three, this study will attempt to find whether Christianity agrees or disagrees with other religions on the concept of Salvation; this chapter also seeks to find out what Salvation is exactly in a biblical context and whether Salvation can be obtained from any other religion or belief.

3.2 History of salvation

According to Christian Scripture, the church is described as a separate and special group of people who have been called by God through His grace. They form a visible and physical group of communities living on earth but they are described as “not of this world. In the Old Testament, the Israelites were called the people of God (Exodus 6:7; Geisler 2011:1077; Andreas 2020:528). This identity distinguished them from other people of other nations for they carried the name of God and represented Him on earth (Vinson, Jr. 2012:19). God dwelled among them, He was their God and they were His people (Exodus 29:45). However, whereas God, in the Old Testament, called only one nation, the people of Israel, in the New Testament, God calls people of all nations, languages, and tongues to be in His family (Revelation 5:9). Therefore, the Scripture emphasizes that the New Testament church is the continuation of the people of God that began in a time of the Old Covenant. It entails that Jesus through His life, death, and resurrection bought the church and, He is commissioning His church to take the gospel/Good News of Salvation to all the people of the earth (Matthew 28:16-20). Not only that but in Matthew 5:13-16 Jesus says “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for...” These Bible verses indicate that Jesus was challenging His followers to make a change in the societies where they lived: in other words, this community, according to Christ, where He had founded the church, is

separated from others-they are special people who carry the name of God. This then also implies that the universal and local church of Tanzania was straining to fulfil its task of propagating the Gospel of Salvation to the community where it existed. It is seen that the church, according to the Word of God, is summoned to not compromise with the religious pluralist world but to rather share the Gospel lovingly; not in a way that can offend or cause violence against people of other faiths. Moreover, the Bible employs several metaphors to describe the church, such as- “the people of God- the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:27; 1 Peter 2:9-10). The Church is also visible and invisible: visible, regarding the fact that the church is institutional and is organized like any other institution in the community but it is not to be defined as a social phenomenon. It is invisible in the sense that in the visible church, there is the invisible, true church that only God can discern. This means that there is only one church that is seen at once, visible and invisible. The church has its attributes according to Scripture: it is One-, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic (Frame 2013:1019).

3.3 Salvation in Christianity

The message preached in almost all books of the Bible is Salvation, the original word which is used in the New Testament: “*soteria*” it means to preserve, heal, save, or save from death and keep alive. In other words, Salvation is freedom from the bondage of a certain bond/tie. In the Old Testament, Salvation is seen as an act of God to deliver the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and which shows how He continued to protect and provide for them throughout their way in the wilderness until the time when they reached the promised land of Canaan (Richardson 1975:301-302; Deut 6:21-23). In the book of Esther, for example, Salvation is seen as an act of releasing a person or group of people from some kind of damage or danger. Moreover, Salvation as a biblical concept can mean/ be understood as being more of a deliverance from a dangerous situation to a safer place but it reflects on the fullness of life John 10:10 (Shabangu 2005:82-83). However, in the New Testament, God and Jesus Christ are seen as an agent of Salvation in (Jn. 3:16) God gave His Son Jesus Christ to lose His life to redeem sinners. Salvation in the New Testament is presented as redemption from sin and the dominion of Satan and embodies the freedom to love God, to love oneself, to love one another, and to serve God.

Salvation is the fundamental concern in every religion:-for Christians it is the conviction that God has decisively wrought Salvation for all, in and through Jesus Christ and it remains at the very center of their lives. Thus the name Jesus means “savior”. This stands fixed and remains the central message of missionaries and Christian believers today. Moreover in the Bible the word and understanding of “Salvation” differed for instance, in New Testament, Luke uses Salvation-language in respect of a very wide spectrum of human circumstances e.g. to be free from

illness, poverty, discrimination, demon possession, and sin. In his writings, Luke sees Salvation in respect of political, economical, physical, spiritual, and psychological sufferings. More than that, these meanings and explanation of salvation in the Bible are not contradicting each other, but rather they all aim to tell about Salvation (Shabangu 2005:184; Barreto 2017:17-18).

In Pauline's writings, Paul emphasizes the nature of Salvation: for Paul, Salvation begins in this life when one encounters the living Christ. Salvation is a process and complete Salvation is outstanding. Paul refers to Salvation in the future tense (Rom 5:10) ".....much more now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life". In this way, Paul thinks in an apocalyptic way so that the complete Salvation will be at the triumphant coming of Christ. The emphasis made by Paul does not deny the reality of radical renewal in both personal and social values which believers may experience here and now. The reconciliation with God and the new birth in Christ includes social and political aspects (Andreas 2020:532). However, Salvation in its biblical concept has similarities and differences when compared to the African Traditional understanding of Salvation. In African Traditional beliefs, the ancestors bear the status of the divine and they are the instruments of Salvation, even though, the African people have never really thought of ancestors as competitors of Christ (Shabangu 2005:184-185).

3.4 Salvation in the Old Testament

Salvation is one of the most important themes in the Bible. Yet more confusion exists over the meaning of the word "save" or "Salvation" than almost any other term in the Bible. In the Old Testament, cultural and contextual context conditions influenced the meaning of the term Salvation. The term Salvation changed its translation from Hebrew to Greek. We may ask a question such as "Did the Hebrew term for "save" and "Salvation" in the Old Testament ever mean "saved from eternal condemnation/damnation?" The verb-term "save" originally meant "to be roomy, broad" or seems to be the "rescue" that one needs by "moving out into the open." This was the basic meaning of the term "save" and Salvation in the Old Testament (Lopez 2003:49). Because sin, enemies, and calamities are restrictions that hinder, therefore, rescue is needed to release one from these restrictions. In the Old Testament, the Israelites needed to be saved from external evils in general, such as natural disasters, enemies, saved from pestilence, or famine (Hab. 1:2; 2 Chr. 20:9. They also needed to be saved in battle (Ps. 33:16), Salvation from moral troubles (Proverbs 28:18), from dominion by other nations (Judges 13:5), and individuals saved from enemies (Job 13:16), etc. Job declares that God "shall be my Salvation" in Psalms 86:2 and David begs in a petition to God to show His might and mercy.

Moreover, in Isaiah (52:7) Salvation in this text contains two ideas: -First, God's people and His city will be restored now and once and for all on that day (Isa.52:6), and secondly, to be part of

Christ's future Kingdom known in the Old Testament and the Gospel as "entering" the Kingdom (Isa. 53:1-5; Matt. 19:16, 25; Mark10:17, 26) one must be eternally saved. The one who brings good news and proclaims peace and Salvation in Isaiah 52:1-53:12 has spiritual "Salvation" and Israel's national restoration in view. However, even if the terms "save" and "Salvation" carry a sense of eternal Salvation in some Old Testament passages, there is no explicit place where the term appears solely with spiritual meaning. The "Salvation" in the Old Testament always has a broader meaning. "Salvation" here comes by physically restoring national Israel to the land of promise, placing them in a position of blessing (Lopez 2003: 52-56).

Feinberg (1981) believes that "Salvation" in the Old Testament is not clearly understood by many people. However, "Salvation" in the Old Testament is physical deliverance from some kind of bondage or evil. "Salvation" in the Old Testament can also mean the spiritual "Salvation" of an individual (Psalms 149:4; 27:1; 13:5). Moreover, the Old Testament says nothing different than the New Testament on the matter of personal "Salvation". In the Old Testament Salvation was conditioned through observing laws. Obedience to them was a condition of Salvation, whereas during the age of grace Salvation comes simply through faith in Christ. However, the Scripture tells about God's unity in His redemptive plan for mankind. Then too, the Scripture indicates only one method of Salvation which is described in the different periods in the Old and New Covenant (Feinberg 1981:39; 42).

In the Old Testament, the history of the Israelites narrates all God's activities of saving His people from all their enemies, material, and spiritual. Every saving act in the history of the Israelites was executed by God, not by men. Any act of Salvation that was performed by men was considered idolatry. The saving act by God of His people was experienced by His people in a well-known place, from a known danger, at a known time under leadership of a known man of God (Ps. 44:1; 44:26). God called Abraham out from his land to a new land (Gen.12:1). God who had come to deliver His people has called Moses (Ex. 3:7 f.). God led His people out from captivity to an independent and free land as the people of God. However, Salvation by the Lord of His people was so special. He delivered them from bondage without war. The Israelites passed through the Red Sea without any boat. God provided them with food and water where there was no source of food and water in the desert. The people of God overcame their enemies without armed forces. Therefore, the history of Salvation in the Old Testament magnifies the mighty acts of God. The history of Salvation that is narrated in the Bible is to convince men that Salvation comes only from the Lord who can save many or few. When the Israelites had settled as a nation, and as a church, they remembered the saving acts of God in their great festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of the Tabernacles. They remembered how God had delivered them from captivity and renewed them spiritually with His

law. As a nation, the Israelites maintained and realized that their God is a redemptive God. That's why the day of Atonement took the most prominent place in their calendar. They were aware of sin and that their nation had survived by the grace that was known to them throughout the time of Exodus. The sacrificial rituals/customs continued while they were settling as the people of God. More important was that, the sacrifice that was made was for forgiveness and deliverance from- sin that act was entirely God's work, not man's (Richardson 1975:301).

Lopez (2003) defines Salvation in the Old Testament as the fact of "being saved from eternal condemnation". In the Old Testament, the covenant people were heaven-bound by their trust in God's promise of a Messiah who still needed to come so that they could be delivered and saved from sickness, enemies, pre-mature death, and other situations that were caused by sin as described in Deuteronomy (20-30). The word "Salvation" or "save" means to rescue one who might need to be moved out from a certain trouble/dangerous place. Since calamities, sin and enemies are hindrances or obstacles, rescue is therefore needed to release/liberate one from these restrictions/impediments (Lopez 2003:50). The covenant people cried out to God to be saved from these external evils (Hab. 1:2) Habakkuk questions the Lord's delay in saving Judah from the violence that was surrounding them-that was physical Salvation. Salvation from external calamities or natural disasters can also be placed in this category (2 Chr. 20:9). In the Old Testament Salvation is generally deliverance from external evils that comes as a result of sinful actions or natural calamities (Lopez 2003:52).

The Israelite people increased their sacrificial efforts for they were aware of sin: for a Jew's sacrifice was not a means to attain God's grace but to do penitence and to retain their faith and avert its withdrawal. In penitence, the Israelites sought to recover the relationship with God that had been lost because of sin. The Israelites were aware that sin would result in drawing the wrath of God and death! The purpose of sacrificial systems was to acquire forgiveness and deliverance-thus forgiveness and deliverance were God's work, not man's. The worship of the Israelites in their liturgy was a collective display of all that God had done in the history of redeeming His people. Since God had shown Himself to His people as a redeeming and saving God, His people now gave thanks to the Lord and prayed that He would be always their helper in their present and their future. However, what destroyed this truth was man's idolatry. Man scaled God down to his size. In the Old Testament when this happened so many times the result was always intense lamentation. In the Old Testament through the sacrificial systems, God would always be dealing with and handling man's sin, and that would be the end of the story, but the beginning of another story was when Jesus came and His mission was to save His people from their sins (Matt 1:21)

The enemy of a man is sin and thus man needs a Savior who can save him from the consequences of his sin and cure him of various ills and deliver him from all evil. But it is difficult for a man to accept this diagnosis. Sin appears in different forms in the Bible for example, in Jer.17:9 “the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately corrupt” and in Jer. 17:15 “our sin is written with a pen of iron.” In the first book of the Bible, God had good communion with man: Gen. 3:8; 5:22-24; but in, 6:9- sin broke this relationship and that’s why a man now needs a Savior (Richardson 1975:301).

3.5 Salvation in the New Testament

Christian texts insist that all mankind needs help from God to attain Salvation from sin. God’s help in Christianity is studied in the atonement doctrine. Atonement in Christian texts is explained in words such as ransom, moral exemplar, debt cancellation, and general divine mercy (Asadi 2019:19). In the sacred texts of Christianity, there is the history of the sin of Adam and Eve. The Scripture speaks that Adam and Eve were tempted by a satanic scheme and ate the fruit from a forbidden tree. This event caused God to cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden and it was the beginning of man’s-misery and road of sin. Since then Satan has continued taking mankind away from God’s order, i.e. from good deeds, and spiritual life. Man’s disobedience before God draws him into the field of eternal punishment and suffering. However, God loves His creations and thus He did not like to see a man facing eternal punishment as in Romans 9:16: there God is merciful and beneficent (Asadi 1019:19).

In Christian theology sin as well as how to get rid of it, and to obtain or receive Salvation is described very clearly in the Scripture. In the Bible, Salvation is the ultimate goal of Revelation. Salvation is also the key in all other religions (Asadi 2019:20). According to the Bible, human beings are sinners and subject to divine damnation, wrath, and severe punishment forever. Therefore, all mankind needs Salvation. In Christianity, the most general and acceptable means to save mankind is divine grace Ephesians (2:8-9). The Bible in Isaiah (64:6) says that man’s good deeds are like filthy rags they are not sufficient, and cannot help one to obtain Salvation. Even following the rules of God’s law will not work without the mercy of God, as written in Galatians 2:15-16. Another important means to obtain Salvation is faith-it is human willingness to receive divine mercy by faith: it is man’s free-will to embrace the grace God is giving to mankind. In the Bible in John (3:18); Act (16:31) faith is mentioned as an act by the will which is an essential factor to obtaining Salvation, though good deeds were mentioned also as another means to factor in obtaining Salvation in Christian texts, this fact, however has been very heavily debated among Christian scholars, as some think that Salvation has occurred before the doing of good deeds. According to this concept, it means that doing righteous deeds is a

sign/symptom of Salvation not necessary de facto to be salvaged (Philippians 2:12-13). According to this approach, it means that doing good deeds is a sign like a tree that bears fruit which is a sign of its being alive. Therefore, doing righteous deeds according to Christian texts is a sign of faithful living but not the only means to obtain Salvation (Asadi 2019:21-22).

In Christianity, the notion has developed that on Judgment Day eternal bliss would be granted to whoever truly accepts Jesus as his/her personal Savior, for Jesus' death on the cross was a redemptive act, by which God offered mankind the possibility of Salvation from the consequences of sin. This form of Salvation is often described as God's unmerited gift (Khalil 2007:6). In the Old Testament, Salvation (for the Israelites) meant liberation from political and social factors. But in Christianity when Christ came, Salvation is regarded as the saving of the individual soul from destruction or damnation from sin. The illustration or description of the connection between Salvation and the Christian afterlife is found in 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; Revelation 21:1-5 (Khalil 2007:7).

3.6 Salvation in Islam

In both religions, Christianity and Islam, man needs God's help to obtain Salvation. In Islam man needs God's help to attain Salvation because of ignorance. In Islam, intercession texts are introduced as one of the ways of receiving God's help to obtain Salvation (Asadi 2019:19). In the Quran, no verse describes the creation of Eve as it is given in Christian Scripture, the Bible Genesis (2:21), even though the story of Adam and Eve appears in the Quran. According to Islam texts, Satan deluded both Adam and Eve to eat of the tree (Quran 2:36). Moreover, according to the Quran, after Adam and Eve had eaten from the tree, God taught them some words that could renew their relationship with God: they apologized to God and God accepted their repentance. In Quran 2:37 it is written that God is merciful. Adam and Eve were deported from heaven for they and their children (mankind) had to inhabit the earth. However, the Quran indicates that man who follows the prophets will not be sorrowful or face punishment. In the Quran, it does not say anything about the Tree of Life which caused a man's deportation. Moreover, the acceptance of God of repentance of Adam and Eve in the Quran does not mean that man in nature is not corrupt. Satan, however has been allowed to persuade a man to commit sin except only those who purify themselves through the help of God. In the Quran 38:82-83, it says that Satan has sworn to tempt mankind and to lead him into hell (Asadi 2019:20). For Islam, doing good deeds is an important factor to obtain Salvation (Quran 22:77) this includes worship and prayers, helping others, and displaying good moral behavior. The Quran frequently mentions this (Quran 103:1-3).

In Islam, God forgives sin while in Christianity sin requires payment or compensation for sin. Therefore, in Christianity, Christ through his life, and-death on the cross, and resurrection, paid the penalty for sin, while the Quran only mentions that God forgives sin. According to Christian ideology, if God forgives sin, God would not be just (Ali 2019:407).

Salvation is the vital breath of religion and its necessary foundation. Without it, is not a religion at all, while the knowledge that all men are sinners before God, and that they cannot save themselves from sin, implies that man cannot escape from accountability and punishment. According to Paul (1996) to obtain Salvation in Islam depends upon his good works. Many verses talk-about doing good deeds in the Quran, such as here in two verses.

“But for those who believe and do good works, for them are the Gardens of Retreat a welcome (in reward) for what they used to do. And as for those, who do evil their retreat is Fire. Whenever they desire to issue forth from thence, they are brought back thither. Unto them it is said: Test the torments of the Fire which ye used to deny,” (Q. 32:19.20).

“And those does good, and atom’s weight will see it then (Q.99:7, 8)”. These verses are beautiful and consoling according to Paul (1996) but arise questions such as: Is it possible for a man to do only good and no evil? Does a man possess the power to do only good? However, man can’t remain sinless. And thus man has no power/doesn’t have the integrity to continually do good and only good, because the mind of man sees only what is on the surface and cares only for the present; he pays more attention to worldly things and becomes careless of the things about the Spirit and God. Thus Adam did those things which God had forbidden him to do and the result of his act was that his descendants inherited this sin up to the present time (Paul 1996:200).

For Muslims, Jesus is a person who lived in Roman Judea in the first century. Islam and Christianity share the most basic history about Jesus but there are some differences: for instance, in Islam and Christianity, Jesus was born to the Virgin Mary and was without a father. But for the Muslims Jesus is neither God nor the Son of God. In Islam Jesus seems to be just like all other messengers of God, Jesus came to his people with a message called the *Injil* or the gospel. As it is in Christian Scripture in Islam also Jesus is a miracle worker and a healer, he gave light to the blind and brought the dead back to life. More than that Quran has additional miracles ascribed to Jesus for example Jesus speaks from his cradle and makes a bird out of clay and breathes into it to turn it into a real bird (Zain 2019:400). Jesus in the Quran is described as one of the five elite messengers of God and it is believed that he will return to bring justice to the world. Muslim theologians call this return “the descent of Jesus” to earth; the eschatological return of Jesus is unique among the prophets of God in Islam. Regarding the

return of Christ to the earth some Muslim scholars say that Jesus will literally and physically descend from the sky and wage war against all of the antichrists while other scholars understand the eschatological return of Christ allegorically (Sanitoprak 2017:32)

Why is the mother of Jesus so important to the Quran? Chapter 19 of the Quran is named after Mary and she is the only woman mentioned by name in the Quran. Her mother and father are described as virtuous people. The Quran says that her mother was a worshipper and had asked God to give her a son whom she could dedicate to the temple. God accepted her prayer but did not give her a son instead he gave her Mary who would be the mother of Jesus. The Quran considers the birth of Jesus miraculous in human history. Furthermore, Muslims consider Mary and Jesus as Prophets, or Apostles perhaps more than Christians do in their Bible practice (Sichone 2020:105; Sanitoprak 2017:32)

Christians ask whether the God of Islam is the God of Christianity. Should the Muslims be counted by Christians as fellow believers like Jews? Or is Allah a different God, the creation of Mohammad and fundamentally unlike the God of the Bible? However, the answer to these questions can be “Yes” and “No”. Moreover, Muslims disagree with Christians on several things, including the Trinity, the nature of Christ, and the authority of the Bible. Despite these disagreements/differences, many Christians are even eager to emphasize that there are certain things that Christians hold which are common with Muslims (Reynolds 2020:1)

Accordingly, Tisdell (2020) argues that nowadays there is a common suggestion among Evangelical Christians that the name “Allah” should be used for “God”. Moreover, in many translations produced for the Islamic context, many translational organizations frequently use “Allah” for “God”. Then too, the use of the name “Allah” in the Islamic Christian context can make sense because in the Arabic language the word is used to describe a divine being. More than that too, there is still an ongoing academic debate among Christians as to whether Allah is the same God of the Bible or not. However, according to the translation of the Christian Scripture Elohim, the God of the Bible comes from a different root than Allah (Tisdell 2020:1).

Moreover, Islam opposes the doctrine of the Trinity on the grounds that it makes Christianity guilty of polytheism or tri-theism for worshiping three deities namely, Father, Isa (Jesus), and Mary (Quran 5:116 and 4:171) (Sichone 2020:105). Besides, Muslims consider the Islamic religion as ultimate and correct. They also assert that God is one, a unity, indivisible, and without associates, and therefore, the concept of God in Islam is strictly monotheistic and this denies the concept of the Trinity. Therefore, it is hardly surprising to hear claims from Muslim-loyal that Christians and Muslims are sister religions (Sichone 2020:104). Hoover (2009) contributes that Christianity and Islam both believe that there is one God and in their doctrine,

they share important structural similarities. However, the difference between Muslims and Christians lies in how this God is one as it is described in Christian doctrine (Hoover 2009:57).

The Quran asserts in several places (such as in Q. 16:51; 112:1-4; 44:8) that God is one and so monotheism is the foundational doctrine of Islam. The Islam criticism of the Trinity flows from the conviction that the Trinity compromises God's unity and entails tri-theism. Since Christian doctrine is not monotheistic, therefore, Islam perceives Christians as committing the unforgivable sin of associating partners with God (*shirk*). For Muslims, Christians wrongly give Jesus, the Son, and the Holy Spirit a share in God's rule of the world and they believe that the worship of Jesus is due only to God. The Muslims justify their conviction that Trinity idea violates God's unity (Hoover 2009:57). Then also, Muslims deny that the crucifixion of Christ took place. Therefore, Muslim scholars have interpreted the Quran as a denial of the crucifixion of Jesus. This is a historical error in the Quran so that many Muslim scholars have adopted one of the two views regarding the crucifixion of Jesus: (1) they claim that another person was crucified in the place of Jesus (a person who was made to look like Jesus) and (2) the event itself was a mirage produced by God. All these views aim to deny the crucifixion of Jesus (Zain 2019:398; Johnson 2016:59). Lanier (2016) points out that the crucifixion denial for Muslims is one of the difficult issues for Christians to share within an Islamic tradition. The verse that denies the crucifixion of Christ is found in only one part of the difficult verse in the Quran (Q. 4:157) so this verse for many scholars within Islam alleges that Jesus did not die on the cross and that God raised him to Godhood. The denial of the crucifixion of Christ presents a challenge for Muslim-Christian engagement (Lanier 2016:1).

3.7 Salvation in African Traditional Beliefs

In African Traditional beliefs, Salvation entails finding answers to every problem in life and overcoming the agents of evil and all bad situations in real life. In this sense Salvation in African Traditional beliefs does not just mean enjoyment in this life which implies prosperity and health while neglecting moral conscience. Africans also value moral conscience. In the African context, it is believed that God is all-knowing, hates evil, and punishes evil-doers. In this context it acknowledges that evil is an obstacle to attaining Salvation; for Africans evil is defined as deprivation, that is the absence of good that should be present. Where the causes of evil-doing in the African societies involve dabbling in spiritual matters, evil can also be seen in the practice of witchcraft and the malevolence of the spirit world. Witchcraft in African Traditional beliefs is the supernatural power that is believed to be possessed by a certain individual who uses it to harm others, particularly those of his/her own family. In the practice of witchcraft, one can kill his

or her children. Witches in Africa are regarded as evil and in some African societies they banish those who are believed to practice it (Banda and Masengwe 2018:3; Shabangu 2005:186)

However, the African worldview concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ is to find in the gospel the elements that can correspond to the need felt by the traditional African. In the African context they need a Saviour who has the power to deliver them and transform the lives of the bewitched and dehumanized and to help them to live safely in society- and not only a Saviour who delivers a believer from evil power (Shabangu 2005:186-187).

Sin in the African context has a spiritual connection- it is defined as an act that offends God and the ancestors who provide and sustain a good life. Therefore, Salvation in the African Traditional beliefs must address the concept of evil and sin. Thus Salvation relies on and is controlled by a certain spiritual force, for African Salvation is to be sure that evil forces which cause sickness are being taken care of. In this concept of Salvation, means to make an adjustment in economical, spiritual, social, and psychological areas that a person faces in his/her everyday life (Shabangu 2005:186).

For many centuries African people have been encountering plagues such as diseases, hunger, and wars—these phenomena have caused the African people to fail to interpret and embrace the gospel message. In the Bible, African people see Jesus who healed people from diseases, who made the lame walk and the blind see—they found Jesus who dealt not only with the spiritual needs of the people but also with the physical needs as well. In the same way, traditional healers in Africa play a significant role in African Salvation which means saving someone from the burden of sickness and other physical and spiritual needs. Traditional healers usually are the first to be contacted when problems occur in the community. In dealing with African health problems traditional medicine is used alongside western medicines and this is done for someone to attain Salvation (Shabangu 2005:188-189; Lekgothoane and Ross 2020:3).

African Christians perceive that they are not eligible for suffering for they believe that they bear the status of being children of God. However, in reality, life is full of unexpected and many crises, and therefore, Christians cannot be exempted from this reality. Moreover, when Christians encounter any kind of suffering, they at this time are expected to express their commitment and conviction to their Saviour. Some African Christians when encountering suffering or hardship of any kind often neglect their faith in Christ and go to ask for help and answers from traditional healers. In this case, Onongha (2013), proposes that Christian theology should develop biblical meaning and understanding of suffering that could be sufficient to answer questions and problems which a believer may encounter (Onongha 2013:126).

According to Onongha (2013) suffering is a subject that has been discussed by scholars for many years yet it has remained difficult to define and understand. The author, however, defines suffering as “bearing something (burden)”; moreover, when one experiences suffering it often leads one to ask oneself questions such as ‘why me’?. In many ways, suffering is associated with evil, which could be evil in many forms such as metaphysical, physical, and/or moral. To many people suffering may be caused by other people. However, even though suffering has been discussed by many scholars it remains a mysterious and inexplicable phenomenon (Onongha 2013:127).

In the African context, the spirit world is often almost more real than the physical world. Even though Africa has millions of inhabitants with diverse ethnic and cultural groupings among them, there are commonly-shared beliefs that include the belief in God, divinities, the existence of powerful entities, the practice of magic, medicine, etc. In African, the world view holds that the effect of what transpires in the spirit world is what becomes evident in the physical world. There are spiritual beings in the African context that need to be taken into account... these include God-the supreme spirit, the ancestors or the living dead, deities or divinities, and spirits or spiritual forces. There are mediators/traditional healers who maintain and communicate between the human community and the non-human world by seeking to understand, predict, control, and reinvent their world (Onongha 2013:128).

In the African context, nothing happens without cause-the cause of suffering may be by spiritual powers, sorcery, an enemy, a person’s destiny, a spell-either ancestral or contemporary, or power object, or a curse. However, these objects in one way or another are interrelated (Onongha 2013:128). Therefore, Salvation in African Traditional Religions means to be free and to overcome suffering or crises of any kind.

Hinga (1980) points out that all religions were formulated by a man who has human limitations. It is the way people would have formulated these so that it could help them to deal with their problems. Therefore, Salvation is the main theme in religious activities. Salvation is a central theme as well in Christian scriptures (Hinga 1980:17).

3.8 Suffering from a Christian perspective

In the African context and the world in general, people ask questions such as “why does God allow suffering...? (or some may ask) “What is the cause of suffering in the world? This has been the question for many centuries and it is still a question today. However, in the Old Testament, human suffering and God’s blessings are right next to each other. In the Pentateuch, Proverbs, and some parts of the Prophets, God blesses those who live obedient

lives and those who follow Him, for them and their children were promised a better life with plenty of resources. Yet in the Old Testament, there were people such as Job and Joseph who encountered suffering despite being faithful to God. However, the suffering that was caused by unjustness which we read in Ecclesiastes and Job was resolved in the New Testament where Christ suffered to redeem mankind. Moreover, the New Testament advanced the Old Testament idea that the reward for obedience is earthly and extended it to the fact that the righteous would suffer greatly in this life. This suffering is not only for Job and Joseph but all Christians can expect suffering (Matt. 10:16-25; Meek 2016:151-152).

However, there may be various causes of suffering: this can be because of sin, God's discipline to individuals or punishment as a result of living in a fallen world, or the righteous that have to suffer. Job's friends were familiar with the suffering that was caused by sin. Their theology taught that the wicked would receive their just deserts Job 8:20 'God will not reject a guiltless person'. This sentiment is common throughout the Bible and human experience, and specifically, in the African contexts it bears this out. This means, wrong-doing or bad choices result in suffering and it is also common knowledge that bad things can happen to good people. Suffering can also be caused as a result of human conditions and the fact that we live in fallen world as is written in Romans 8:22 "the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth"...people can experience suffering because of their faith in Jesus Christ and the proclamation of the Gospel. The New Testament promises that suffering will be part of the life of those who follow Christ (Meek 2016:152).

Suffering in the Old Testament-specifically in the first passage of the Pentateuch-describes a good world, a good creation with no sin, no suffering, and no death. God, Adam, and Eve enjoyed a good relationship-God gave Adam and Eve a simple command: to obey Him and not to eat the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden-God gave them a choice. To obey Him so that their relationship with God may continue, or to disobey Him and destroy their relationship! This indicates that God wanted His relationship with a man and that He entered into it freely. The first two chapters of Genesis describe what a good world it was until chapter three where Adam and Eve chose to disobey God: - then sin and suffering entered the world (Meek 2016:153). Similar to the issue of Adam and Eve, God/Yahweh in Deuteronomy set conditions for the Israelites that if they obeyed Him they would live a prosperous life in the land they were going to occupy, and if they disobeyed Him punishment and suffering would befall them. In the Old and New Testaments, it is also evident that suffering is caused by sin. Yet in the case of Job and Joseph, it is different for it describes that the righteous can suffer as well. However, the principle of suffering holds that it is the result of sin even though Job demonstrates that it does not hold in every particular instance (Meek 2016:154).

The Old and New Testaments both teach that suffering is not the direct result of sin. The righteous and sinner can both suffer God's mysterious plans can remain mysterious-thus suffering will be the norm for followers of Christ. However, the Bible-according to retribution-theology reminds Christians that they must remain steadfastly obedient to the Lord in all circumstances. However, a sinful life will result in negative consequences whether in this life or the next. When Christians experience suffering they are advised to search their hearts to see if there is any sin committed for which God is punishing them or disciplining them. The purpose of God's discipline is to restore or bring back His children into the right relationship with Him. Moreover, Christians are advised not to misinterpret the theology which guarantees that righteous people will not face any suffering. The work of Christ and the book of Job demonstrate that suffering may not be the result of sin. The reward for Christian's obedience to Christ and the faithful proclamation of the gospel will (may come) in the next life, not necessarily in this life (Meek 2016:162).

Suffering in the African context is perceived to be a natural phenomenon that leads the sufferer to earnestly seek God. The major cause of suffering according to the African belief is due to spiritual forces, divinities, or ancestors who are displeased with the living when they are dishonoring them, and then, as a result, misfortune and suffering occurs for the community or an individual (Onongha 2013:128).

According to Onongha (2013), there is an ongoing conflict in the cosmic world that involves all creatures. It is the struggle between right and wrong, evil and good, and also a conflict between God and Satan as is narrated in the book of Job. According to Christian Scripture, in this battle, however Christ/God is always triumphant. Therefore, Christians are encouraged to acknowledge Christ's victory over Satan and exercise authority over evil forces, and experience freedom from the fear of evil spirits and death. Moreover, Christian theologians need to develop a Christian theology that can respond to African Christian problems. This theological paradigm needs to harmonize a biblical response to the problem of suffering, which is to tell the story of Jesus and to reveal his presence in every situation of suffering (Onongha 2013:133)

In history, religious tradition has been interested in the study of suffering. However, suffering may not be considered a problem that needs to be alleviated. Rather, it may be understood as something of value which makes spiritual connection and transformation possible. Suffering is an important element of human existence. We may ask questions such as-is there value in suffering? Or is something lost in the prevention and/or relief of suffering? Let us look at Jewish perspectives on the issue of suffering: In the Jewish perspective pain, grief, illness, and disaster are understood as disorders without spiritual value, and not linked to any spiritual journey or

transformation. A Jew prays three times daily to be healed, to avoid suffering, and to have the strength to endure disaster when it inevitably occurs. In Jewish tradition, it is understood that the world has been created in such a way that tragic events will happen. Therefore, suffering in Jewish texts is not a problem of being/existence, but it is a problem of ethics and response (Fitzpatrick 2016:161).

3.9 The African understanding of the Bible

According to Gampiot (2017) the western missionaries who first came into Africa, translated the Bible into African vernacular languages so that it could facilitate their understanding and grasp of the message of the Bible in their dialect. However, the African version of the Bible sometimes led the readers to diverge from the original meaning that was given and this was targeted by missionaries. The African recipient of the Bible read the Scripture and understood it from the prism of their pre-existing worldview that was sharpened/ sharpened by their traditions. As a result of doing so, syncretism was and is still normal to most African Christians-this means the cooperation between Christianity and African beliefs. In doing so, African people believes that there are protecting African values and belief systems from western invasion (Gampiot 2017:34).

The other thing that influenced African understanding of the Bible was the African encounter with the White people's God. In the Congo, for instance, Gampiot (2017) gives an account of the Bakongo meeting the White people for the first time and thinking that the White people were ancestors: this perception according to Gampiot was positive because the ancestors in the African context bears the status of a protector, a messenger of good news, a benefactor and protector. The Congolese believed that the ancestors came to change their lives so that they could become rich and free from other troubles that they faced. This understanding remained as such to the Bakongo for a long period and as a result, they failed to clearly understand the God of the White people who had revealed Himself from/in the Scripture (Gampiot 2017:35).

Shabangu (2005) is of the opinion that theology in the African traditional Religion must be the one that responds to African cosmology and its worldview the most for it is centered on being concerned with survival. Any theology that does not respond and provide insurance for surviving then is not applicable in the African context (Shabangu 2005:187). In the Congolese worldview, for instance, they believe that the world is divided into two the world of the living and the world of the dead. These two worlds are separated by water and when the living die they travel to the dead world where their skin-color changes and becomes white. The Congolese when they first time encountered the Whites believed that the Europeans were non-human beings who would not stay permanently in their territory for they would depart to where they had come from. When

they (White people) stayed, and due to the behavior of the Portuguese who had at first come to the Congo through the mouth of the Congo River, slowly began to change and lose their spiritual status as the ancestors. Then the Congolese started to judge them by their deeds and ranked them as those among the evil and dangerous people. This phenomenon remained with the Congolese for so long, and during colonization, the White people were regarded as both God and the devil as benefactors and malefactors liberators and oppressors. The first perception that the Whites were liberators opened the doors for the missionaries to evangelize the Bakongo; yet due to the bad impression that was brought by colonization- especially when the missionaries began to spread the biblical myth of the curse of Ham, as the instrument to justify the White domination over Black people, things changed. The missionaries taught that the curse of Ham or Canaan stands for all his descendants... this myth is taken from Genesis 9:25-27 when Noah cursed Ham in favor of his brothers Japheth and Shem. However, the Bible remains silent about who exactly the descendants of Ham are. The concept and ideology of racism attached to this myth did not appear until 1555. During the Augustinian period the ideology of the curse of Ham was regarded as an explanation of slavery but not of Blacks because by that time slavery was without color/colorless. The association of slavery and the curse of Ham or Canaan with the Black people arose during the medieval age. In the sixteenth century, it became a Christian theme and in the seventeenth century it was widely accepted that the explanation of slavery and the curse of Ham was represented by black skin-color. The circulation of this ideology from culture to culture was timeless. However, European Christianity that was rooted in Mediterranean culture gave the Bible to the African people as the only history book for man-kind in which Blacks also have to find their interpretation. The spread of this ideology built upon racial superiority led some missionaries and Western defenders of imperialism to believe that theirs was a God-chosen race and that they had been entrusted by Him to evangelize and civilize the African people! This myth of the curse of Blacks persisted for so long in European Christianity throughout world history (Gampiot 2017:36-37) Not only that but also, children in mission schools in Africa were taught to accept their inferior status, for instance, they were taught about the origin of their races by tracing them to the three sons of Noah: according to which the children of Shem went to Asia, the children of Japheth went to Europe and the children of Ham or Canaan went to Africa (Sanders 1969:521; Gampiot 2017:37; Braude 1997:103).

Zachernuk (1994) agreed with Sanders (1969), and Gampiot (2017) that the Hamitic hypothesis was developed by the European Christians who argued that the three children of Noah, Ham, Shem, and Japheth scattered into the World and that Ham had founded the Black race of Africans and thus his descendants were divinely cursed to a life of servitude. This tradition was

reworked in the early nineteenth century. This theory was found in the Bible and classical Egyptian history and Western Asia. The Hamitic hypothesis was developed during colonial time and accordingly, the Black Africans were explicitly seen as an inferior race. During the colonial period in Africa, this idea was generally imposed upon the world that the improvement and progress of Africans were due to the influence of the foreigner, and not the indigenous Africans. However, African historians of the 1950s and 1960s asserted that Africans had their history back before even the coming of the Hamitic line. This assertion, however, does not reject the Hamitic inspiration (Zachernuk 1994:428-429).

The propaganda about the curse of Ham is distinctly misleading because it caused standard justification and degradation of enslavement of the African Black in South Africa and the America South. The myth of Ham has been cited as the origin and evidence of the deep roots of racism in western civilization and a causal link between racism and slavery (Braude 1997:103; Haynes 1997:126). However, the origin and roots of Ham and the association between slavery and racism are not the concern of this study. It is cited here just to indicate how this myth influenced Africans in understanding and accepting the Bible in their context, specifically about Salvation which is discussed in this chapter.

3.10 The translation of the Bible into vernacular languages and its contribution to the understanding of the Bible for African Christians

As a contribution to African Christianity, the understanding of the Bible was enhanced when missionaries translated the Scripture into African languages. In East Africa, and particularly Tanzania, Johann Ludwig Krapf a German Lutheran missionary, working under the Anglican Church Missionary Society, translated the Bible into the Swahili language. Later on, Bishop Edward Steer and Father Sacleux 1891 translated the entire Bible into Swahili. This translation of the Bible laid the foundation for the translation of the Scripture into many other vernacular languages (Vilhanova 2006:80). Johann Krapf first came to Africa in 1837 and settled in Tigre Ethiopia where he translated some parts of the Bible into the Oromo language. He was unable to work there and moved to the Shao Kingdom where he was welcomed by King Sahle Selassie. Later in (1842) Krapf was expelled due to political reasons. He regarded the Oromo language as the key to communicating the Gospel in North East Africa: he believed that unless the Oromo were converted to the Christian faith they would fall into the Islamic faith. Due to his controversial attitude of asking British politicians to become involved in supporting the Protestant mission, the Ethiopian government refused to allow him back into the country; so he moved to Zanzibar. After meeting Seyyid Said, a Sultan of Zanzibar, Krapf decided to stay in East Africa. However, in Mombasa, Johann Krapf continued the work of translating the Bible

into the Oromo language which he had started when he first settled in Ethiopia. In 1846 after the arrival of Johann Rebmann they moved to Rabai a town located not far from Mombasa where they translated the Gospel into Swahili and some Mijikenda languages. For twenty-five years seven missionary societies arrived in East Africa, first settling in Zanzibar, purposely to evangelize and serve/administer slaves who were liberated or ransomed. Consequently, the first Christians in East Africa were former slaves (Vilhanova 2006:80-81).

3.11 Can Salvation be obtained or be made available from any other religion?

Catholic theologian, Karl Rahner, and Muslim theologian, Ismail Raj al-Faruqi, all believe that every human being is metaphysically open to God's revelation. These two theologians also accept the faith of every human being as genuine. Christians and Muslims make up half the religious population of the world, so dialogue between Christians and Muslims in a contemporary pluralist world, is essential (Bjoernaas 2018:45). About the issue of universal Salvation, James Carroll, cited by Bjoernaas in 2018 states that Salvation is available outside the Catholic Church and thus Christ through His sacrifices on the cross offers Salvation to all people. Thus, Salvation includes all those who acknowledge the Creator, including the Muslims. The motivation for universal Salvation for Christians comes from the church's belief in God's love for all mankind (Bjoernaas 2018:49). Another issue of universal Salvation is based on respect for the other's freedom and integrity to maintain unity and peace among the human race because this one God is everybody's creator. Moreover, Salvation is something God has initiated for the whole of creation. Therefore, Roman Catholicism no longer understands itself as the only way to God. Interfaith dialogue is another factor that contributes to the ideology of pluralism and universal Salvation (Bjoernaas 2018: 50-51).

The theme of Salvation leads one into the center/hub of Biblical faith and to the main difference between Islam and the Christian faith. The different understanding of Salvation in Islam and Biblical revelation leads Christians to acknowledge that the Bible and Quran bear witness to a very different understanding of God. The Muslims agree that the God of the Quran is different from the Biblical testimony of God. However, more often than not we hear from Christians that the Bible teaching about God is similar to the Quranic teaching, the only differences being only about Christ's death and resurrection. This understanding can be wrong from the Biblical perspective because the Old Testament bears witness to God as Saviour and Redeemer. The Bible testifies that after the fall of Adam and Eve God, started to take care of them in order to save their lives on earth (Gen. 3:20ff). Then thereafter, God chose Abraham to start a long history of Salvation which leads to Christ. The Bible (in Heb. 9) teaches that Salvation through

Christ's cross is anticipated in the Old Testament by the sacrifices of animals. In the Old and New Covenant, God acts visibly as the Redeemer (Traoeger 1994:18).

The topic of dying, death, and Salvation in the afterlife is essential in Islam. Some radical Muslim groups which are named 'Salafi' or 'Jihadi' have developed this meaning according to their specific convictions. In Islam, the topic of dying, death, and Salvation is important because it is related to the issues of forgiveness, and Salvation-even more than that is answering the question of whether a believer during his lifetime on earth is assured of entering into paradise after death. In the Koran, Islam is regarded as the only true religion superseding religions like Judaism or Christianity, and Islam/Koran is commissioned to correct Christianity or Judaism since its Scriptures are regarded as straying/drifting (Schirmache 2012:50).

The concept of Salvation in the Quran can be found in the use of the verb *naja* ("to save") and noun *Najat* ("Salvation"). The word *Najat* appears only once in the Quran (in 40:41) the verb *naja* occurs 62 times in various forms in the Quran with the meaning to save or to escape". The incidence of the word *naja* in the first part of the Pentateuch is eleven times; at the deliverance of Moses and the Israelites from Pharaoh, eight times when Noah and his family are saved from the flood, and eight times when Lot escapes from the town which practiced abominable atrocities, eight times to various Pentateuch characters, and five times to the Apostles in general, and to those who believed with them. Furthermore, it occurs seven times at the deliverance from dangers of sea and land and one time from ways of the evil people (7:89). Moreover, the word *naja* is used about the future to the Day of Judgment (19:72; 39:61; 61:10-14; 70:14). However, despite the use of the word *naja* in the Quran and its relation to the Old Testament history of Salvation, the verb *naja* in the Islamic mind conveys the meaning of "escaping from future punishment in hell". Allah will deliver the righteous to their place of Salvation (Nickel 1994:4; Nakata 2006:58).

The Quran uses the concept of Salvation, not the language of Salvation but the language of achievement and success. To acquire success, or possessions, to prosper, to be happy, and obtain Salvation, the Quran promises those who obey Allah and His Apostles that they will be admitted to a garden with rivers flowing beneath it, but those who disobey will be admitted to a fire to abide therein (Nickel 1994:5).

In the Quran the word *naja* means "to save" appears 62 times while the noun *Najat* which means "Salvation" occurs only once; this indicates that it is challenging for a Christian to share in the concept of Salvation with Muslims. This is because the meaning of "Salvation" in Islamic scripture is different from that of the Christian revelation. Nickel (1994) in the introductory part of his article titled "Islam and Salvation: Some on-site observation" found that when an ordinary

Muslim asked about the matter of Salvation the answer always starts with “Islam is the true religion, and the best religion or the religion that contains everything that Allah has revealed to the world- “Or may answer that”, Salvation is not the topic that Islam concerns itself with. This means that the concept of Salvation for Islam and Christianity is regarded as totally different and is described differently for each one (Nickel 1994:5).

The search for Salvation in any religion is based on the belief that human souls continue to live after death. For example, ancient Egyptian religion, teaches that in the afterlife certain individuals would enjoy life far superior to the present one (Khalil 2007:4). According to Khalil (2007), there is a variety of Salvation beliefs: those which depend on and require pure faith, those which keep and maintain ethical orders, those which are based on a rejection of this world, those which require religious practices, and so on. However, the purpose of all these Salvation beliefs is to solve the problems and to be liberated from the problems of this world. The liberation is based on escaping from the famous afterlife namely hell (Khalil 2007:3).

In Islam the picture of Heaven and Hell is also described in the Quran: Khalil (2007) explains that the Quran speaks of Salvation in both this world and the one to come but the emphasis is on the later world. Khalil’s statement (2007) contradicts that of Nickel (1994) who states that in the Quran the verb ‘*naja*’ which means ‘to save’ appears 62 times. While the noun ‘*Najat*’ which means “Salvation” occurs only once in the Quran (Q. 40:41), Nickel (1994) argues that the meaning of “Salvation” is not analyzed and it is therefore very challenging for a Christian to talk about Salvation with a Muslim from a Biblical point of view (Nickel 1994:4). Moreover, Khalil explains that the Quran is also speaking about the Day of Judgment, the day of resurrection, and the day of reckoning. On that day all human beings will be judged according to their faith and deeds. In the Quran heaven or paradise is described as a Garden-it is the reward for those who believe and are righteous. Hell is described by names such as Gehenna (*Jahannam*) which is a fireplace with a blazing fire that is prepared for unbelievers/sinners. In the Quran, the one who will be judged to be deserving of heaven/paradise or hell is then shown how the outcomes have been determined by decisions made in this life. The Quran gives a lot of attention to describing the torments of hell and the delights of paradise (Q.99:6-8) (Khalil 2007:9).

3.12 Conclusion

The Bible in many ways testifies that all men are sinners since they inherited sin from Adam and Eve when Adam chose to disobey God (Genesis 6:12; 1 Kings 8:46; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:10. In Christian Scripture, Jesus is the only person who appears to be of no sin (John 8:46; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrew 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5). Jesus Christ in Matthew 11:28 invite people who labor and are heavy laden to come to Him so that they may have rest. It indicates

that since Jesus is sinless Salvation depends on Him. In the Gospel, Christ is not directing people onto another path towards Salvation but He is pointing to Himself when He says: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but by me" (John 14:6). In the process of providing Salvation to mankind, Christ offers/sacrifices His life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28) – Jesus would have been able to offer Salvation without giving up His life (death on the cross) because of His mercy, but since God is merciful and just, Christ paid the ransom through letting His precious blood be spilled. In this way, God manifests His love for mankind (1 John 4:10). In the Gospel, many verses and parables devote much to insisting that Salvation is available only through faith in Jesus Christ (Paul 1996:202-203).

CHAPTER 4 THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION AS PROCLAIMED BY THE CHURCH OVER THE FOLLOWING PERIODS: MISSIONARY, COLONIAL, POST-COLONIAL, AND THE MODERN ERA IN TANZANIA

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter of this thesis discussed Salvation perspectives from three religions, namely, Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion. However, we find that Salvation is the core of every religion that attempt to explain/encourage people about their eschatological destination. More than that, in every religion there are different ways of explaining the procedure of and how to obtain Salvation: Christianity for instance, denies that Salvation can be attained from any other religion. In Christianity, it emphasizes that Salvation is found in Jesus Christ only, and it is available to everybody who believes in Christ. In Islam Salvation is obtained through doing good deeds and observing prophets' teachings. In African Traditional beliefs, Salvation is acquired by getting rid of all the troubles in this life and maintaining a good relationship with the ancestors who are seen as the mediators between man and God. In this chapter (4) of study, we are trying to find out what the message of missionaries was who first came to preach the gospel in Tanzania. By tracing it through history we are trying to discover what the religious situation was before the arrival of Islam and the Western missionaries, up to the modern era of evangelization.

4.2 The short history of Tanganyika (modern Tanzania)

4.2.1 The Arabs in Tanganyika

From 700 to 1500 A.D., the Arabs were present on the coast of East Africa where they traded with the African people. The Arabs exported many things, from dried fish, and rock crystal, to high-grade iron ore, from East Africa, to India, exchanging these for the manufacture of sword blades and exotic animal skins (Martin 1974:369). The Arabs continued to immigrate to East Africa from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries. Many Arabs immigrated to East Africa not to colonize African people of the East, but they came because of demographic pressures at home, a bad climate, famine, and floods, or political upheavals. The study about Arab immigration also illuminates not only these movements themselves but other problems as well. Some of these matters were the spread of Islam, the origins/rise of certain states, and the problems of trade and trade routes (Martin 1974:367-368).

The presence of the Arabs in Tanganyika can also be traced back to the time of the rise of the town of Kilwa. During the medieval period, the town of Kilwa in Tanganyika (presently Tanzania) was very rich and famous due to the harbour that had been built by the Arabs who settled in Kilwa around about 800 AD. This town of Arab Muslims under the rule of the Sultan rose to prominence on the coast of East Africa in the eleventh century and emerged in power and wealth in the early fourteenth Century. The wealth of Kilwa was acquired from not only trading and shipping along the coast of East Africa but from the wider Indian Ocean network. The Swahili harbour provided the transport for timber, ivory, mangrove, gold, and slaves to be exported to southern Arabia, and the Persian Gulf as far as Gujerat in India and this then connected with the roots leading to China in the east and to Egypt and the Mediterranean countries in the west. Cloth, glass, beads, and incense were imported into Africa (Sutton 1998:114, Pollard and Bates 2016:2, Martin 974:368)

Moreover, the territory of Kilwa extends/stretches 3000 km from Somalia through Kenya and Tanzania to Mozambique in the south. The East African coast is popularly known as the Swahili coast. It also includes the Islands of Comoro and northern Madagascar. From Mogadishu (Somalia) Lamu (Kenya) Zanzibar, Kilwa (Tanzania), and Sofala (Mozambique), these ports were important in linking Arabia, the Indian subcontinent, and Africa. Kilwa was an important old town and as an inter-tidal site on the limestone fringing reef on the approaches to Kilwa Kisiwani Harbour it had an underwater site within the harbour which has been dated from associated pottery to between the 8th–10th century and the 13th-16th century. This evidence indicates that the town of Kilwa was a trading centre between Indian Ocean maritime commercial centres and Africa. (Pollard and Bates 2016:1-2

Zanzibar was another important town in East Africa where the Sultan of Oman moved his leadership from Oman to Zanzibar and settled there. The Arab traders occupied the town and settled there. Zanzibar was a trading town in East Africa which since the nineteenth century, was a leading producer of cloves in the world which earned it the nickname of Spice Island (Elkholy 2016:1; Aboh *et al* 2019:25)

The purpose of the Arab traders in maintaining and developing the town of Kilwa was to control the south side of the East African coast. The harbour of Sofara in the south was the channel to the mining in Zimbabwe so that it could facilitate the transportation of gold with other commodities to Kilwa and then on to the world trading market. The gold mining in Zimbabwe was known by the Arab traders since the eighth century and each time when the demand for gold increased-Kilwa profited further as a middleman supplying the metal, and ivory, together with other merchandise of the region to the international network. Thus the architectural work

that was recognized in the Great Zimbabwe and Kilwa are dated at the same time in the fourteenth century (Sutton 1998:115)

Bagamoyo was one of the major caravan ports of entry into the country which emerged during the nineteenth century on the east coast of Africa (Tanzania). The town of Bagamoyo developed after the decline of other towns such as Kaole which is located four miles to the south on the same bay. The attraction of Bagamoyo was its fine anchorage for sailing vessels, good water, fertile hinterland, and closeness to the rice-producing Ruvu River region. The town of Bagamoyo by the end of the eighteenth century up to the middle of the nineteenth was controlled by Shomvi diwans (a wealthy ruling class of businessmen), and then the rule of Sultan Majid of Zanzibar (1856-70) took over. The Arabs came to the coast of East Africa quietly but purposefully for trade and to spread the Islamic religion to the people of Africa—they were not colonizers such as the Portuguese, the Germans, and the British (Chisaye 2019:9-10).

4.2.2 The Portuguese in Tanganyika

In 1498 Vasco Da Gama sailed along the coast of Africa on his way to India; he intended to stop at Kilwa, but he was prevented by ocean currents. He stopped at Mombasa and Malindi before proceeding to India (Msaky 1964:7). Since 1500 after the arrival of Pedro Avares Cabral—the Portuguese had tried to control the coast of East Africa. Pedro sailed into the harbour with six ships on July 16, 1500. Between 1500 and 1509, the Portuguese subdued the entire coast of East Africa and established a colonial empire. However, throughout the sixteenth century, the Portuguese exercised control over the coast of East Africa. Slowly, the Portuguese rule over East Africa started to deteriorate due to resistance they were receiving from the indigenous people and the Arabs. From 1652 to 1698 almost all important towns that were controlled by the Portuguese were taken back by the Arabs, and it was the end of Portuguese control of the coast of East Africa (Omulokoli 2006:140; Msaky 1964:7-8, Chisaye 2019:12).

4.2.3 The Germans in Tanganyika

The colonization of Africa began around 1870-1960; the German conquest, occupation, and administration in the Pangani valley of mainland Tanzania began between 1885-1914. This area was important for German settlements and economic enterprises (Iliff 1969:23, Ekemode 1973:1). The city of Dar es Salaam was the capital of German East Africa (Schmidt 2008:25). In 1885-1891 the Germans occupied the Pangani valley, and before the arrival of the Germans the Arabs had been controlling trade for several decades so that Sayyid Said the Sultan of Oman transferred his court from Muscat to Zanzibar in 1840 (Hulten 1974:7). The arrival of the Europeans brought about a commercial revolution in the region which attracted European

merchants and consuls to Zanzibar. Then later they explored commerce in the East African interior. Consequently, German soldiers and settlers travelled along the caravan route to the Pangani valley; this route had previously been opened by Arabs/ Swahili, who for several decades had controlled trade in this region (Ekemode 1973:9)

The people of the Pangani valley were made up of two main cultural types-the Bantu cultivators and the Nilo-Hamitic pastoralists. The Germans were the first Europeans to undertake the task of exploration from the Pangani valley region extending to Kilimanjaro. The missionary J. Rebmann of the Church Missionary Society and Johann Ludwig Krapf were the first Europeans to see Mt. Kilimanjaro on 11 May 1848 and were the first to express the desire/plan for European settlement in Uchaga (Ekemode 1973:24, Wisnick 2008:108).

The German rule was extended in Usukuma in 1890 after the diplomats' agreement about the boundary being shifted one degree south between their respective spheres in the Victoria Nyanza region. The Anglo-German Treaty is known as "the Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty. However, the coastal traders and European explorers and missionaries entered Usukuma peacefully, but the German colonizers entered it militarily (Buluda 1992:4). The German conquest of Tanzania brought social change and at the same time created political and economic conflicts. Consequently, the African people reacted against these German colonizers (Ekemode 1973:3)

The north-east was to be developed as an area of European settlements where the African populations were to exist mainly as wage-earners on the plantations (Ekemode 1973:239). The German army occupied Mpwapwa in 1890 and from there moved north towards the lake and fought the Watuta in Urambo and other nearby places in the northwest. On their way to Victoria, Nyanza Emin passed through Buyubi where he made a treaty with the Buyubi chief; he did the same when passing Busongo and he made a treaty with chief Ntinginya. On 27 September, 1890 Emin Pasha arrived at Lake Victoria (Buluda 1992:5).

The German colonialists wished to make German East Africa a country for settlement by immigrants from Europe. The German colonists managed to rule part of the territory between 1885 and 1890 under the authority granted to a chartered company. The unsound company policies and the political issues/ineptitude of German officials brought about the Bushiri Revolt of 1888 and the direct intervention by Germany's armed forces and Government. Since the arrival of the Germans in Tanganyika, political and economic issues brought conflicts between African and German colonizers. The economic potential of the country was officially considered to lie more with the African sector than with the small European settlement (Wright 1965:511)

During World War I, a lot of fighting between the Germans and the British took place on Tanganyika soil. The long duel between German and British forces disrupted German administration and economic development and caused large scale dislocation of the people (Wright 1965:511)

4.2.4 The British in Tanganyika

After World War I, the British began to govern the occupied territory of Tanganyika (from 1916). They carried on German practices. Geographically, Tanganyika was defined as the former German colony that excluded Ruanda-Urundi which Belgians had gained as a reward for their share in the war effort (Wright 1965:511). Tanganyika was a colonial territory in East Africa that was administered by the United Kingdom from 1916 to 1961. The British took over after the First World War, and they imposed their colonial laws and practices on Tanganyika. Among the laws were those pertaining to land administration and other legal issues (Ndjovu 2015:10). Rashid (2013) defines colonialism as the establishment of exploitation, maintenance, and expansion of colonies in the territory by people from another territory. It is a set of unequal relationships between the colonial power and the colony and often between the colonists and the indigenous population. This idea came from the west. Asia and Africa had colonized even America, and the British championed colonialism to an intense degree. After colonialism, the colonized nations gained independence. Tanzania was colonized by the British who had interests in Tanganyika territory (Rashid 2013:22). Apart from the British colonizing east African countries, other European countries too had their colonies. Colonialism in East Africa, in this case, Tanganyika was very important for economic causes like the slave-trade, the trade in various spices etc. It was also the time of the industrial revolution where the British needed a wide market for trade. When the Portuguese and the Arabs had control over East Africa in the eighteenth Century, the British thought of Africa as a source of slaves for America and an obstacle on the route to India (Rashid 2013:24). Only much later, Tanganyika gained its independence (in 1961).

4.3 Slave trade

The town of Bagamoyo was an important town on the coast of Tanzania during the peak of the Arab-run slave and ivory trade. The town of Bagamoyo functioned as the terminus of the trade routes on the east African coast. The town connected Zanzibar and the interior on the mainland of Tanzania. For about 2000 years traders had visited the East African coast and connected it with the wider world of the Indian Ocean. Those traders were from Arab nations (Salyers 2009:5). The town of Bagamoyo started during the 12th Century when traders built the Kaole settlements. Slowly trade between the Arabs and Africans began to grow. The relationships between the African and Arabs contributed to the growth of the Swahili language and culture.

Trade involved things like beads, porcelain, cloth, glass, copper, African Ivory, and slaves. Apart from trade, though, the Arabs also brought their religion, Islam, so that even today Islam is the dominant religion in Bagamoyo (Salyers 2009:6).

During the Portuguese control over the coast of East Africa, slavery and the slave trade were very slow. Their presence on the coast slowed the African slave trade as they were not interested in the slave trade. From around 1540 AD–1750 AD, the Portuguese controlled the east African coast but later on in 1750 AD the Sultan of Oman took back control of the East African coast (Salyers 2009:6).

The Arabs on the coasts of East Africa were more interested in the slave trade and slavery along with the trade in other commodities. After obtaining slaves, they made them Muslims and assigned them to special duties such as that of sailors, soldiers, servants, guardians, and craftsmen. Slaves were also working on agricultural tasks such as maintaining irrigation systems and working in palm groves (Chisaye 2019:12)

The sovereignty of Oman (Imams) was manifested to a large extent in the maritime and economic development of Oman. This is illustrated in the example where, from 1692 to 1711, Imam Seif bin Sultan developed agriculture, since he owned one-third of the Oman plantations. The Imam had 3,000 date palms and 6,000 coconut trees, and consequently, he ordered the renovation of the irrigation system. It was reported that Seif had 17000 slaves both male and female. It is estimated that the importation of slaves to Oman was around 500 to 1,000 slaves annually (Vernet 2009:55). The development in agriculture was not only based on the growth of palm and coconut plantations, but also due to great expansion of the sugar-cane plantations in Arabia resulting in great demand for manpower mostly based on slave labour. There were numerous uses for slaves on plantations, and the chronicle also tells us that there was a huge monopoly in slave soldiers of African origin (Vernet 2009:55).

Most of the research done on slavery and the slave trade on the Swahili coasts covers the period from the eighteenth century. This is because, from 1810 onward, there was a great demand for manpower. Very few publications dealing with the slave trade from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century are available. Most of the study and reports were done on the second period of slavery and slave trade from 1770 onwards, where, by this time, the French people from the Mascarene Islands had developed a slave trade with the Swahili people of East Africa, particularly with those from Tanzania in the towns of Kilwa and Zanzibar. The French people gave new momentum to the slave trade, but in the same period Oman imposed their sovereignty over Zanzibar, gradually taking over and controlling the entire Swahili coasts (Vernet 2009:1). Arab traders settled on the coasts and began trading in the interior.

Slave trade and slavery were commonly practised on the coasts of East Africa from Cape Delgado in southern Mozambique, through Kilwa, Bagamoyo, and Zanzibar in Tanzania, to the Lamu archipelago of Kenya in the north. This area is regarded to be the heart of Swahili culture and civilization.

The caravan routes ran from the East African coast inland as far as the Congo during the 18th and 19th centuries. These routes were used for the trading of captive Africans from inland areas to the Indian coast. When they arrived on the coast, slaves were either kept to work with local Arabs who ran plantations or were traded out across the Indian Ocean. The Slave trade routes in Tanzania stretched from the towns along the railway from Bagamoyo to Ujiji in Kigoma through Tabora (Croucher and Wynne-Jones 2006:1). The missionary map marks a series of African-Arab trade routes, running from various points on Lake Tanganyika to Pangani, Bagamoyo, and Kilwa on the east coast (Wisnicki 2008:110). Fortunately, the slave trade and slavery were abolished in Tanganyika (Tanzania) in 1922 (Salyers 2009:5; Alpers 2009:27)

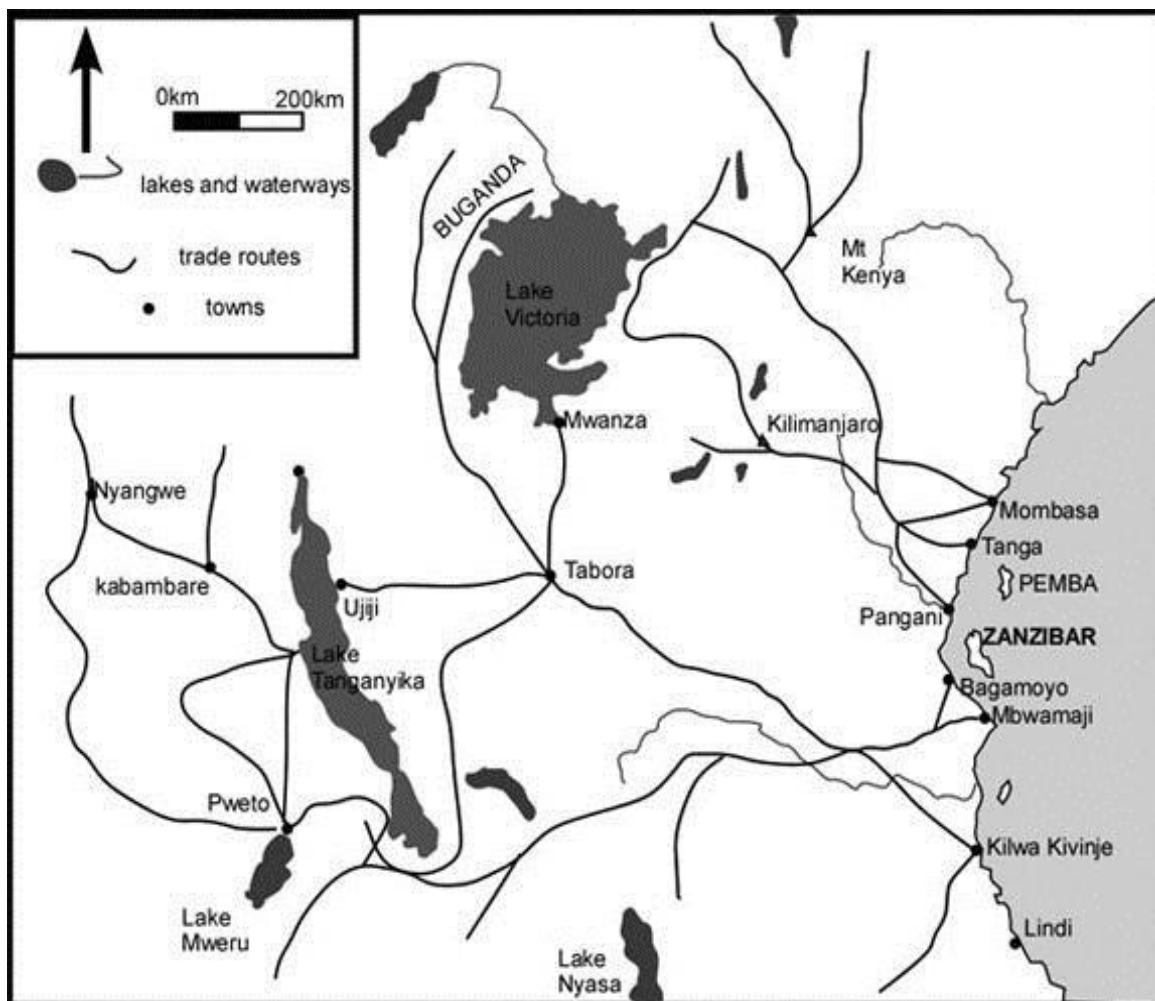


Figure 1: Indicates the slave trade routes on the coast and the interior of the land in East Africa

4.4 The religious situation before the arrival of Islam and Christianity in Tanzania (African Traditional Religion (s))

The African indigenous religion is the chosen religious way of Africans, and in this particular case, of the way that Tanzanians, understand and worship their god. This religion has no literature, yet it is everywhere for it is found through people's myths and folklores, in songs and dances, in their liturgies and shrines, in proverbs and pithy sayings. African traditional religion has no founder/inventor/creator which is why it is called an indigenous religion. It is a religion that is full of life and activities through ceremonies, festivals, etc. It emphasizes virtues, values, and morals. African traditional religion is found in almost all activities of the African people. By saying that African Tradition religion it has no founder we mean that unlike Christianity, which was found by Jesus Christ, and later on his followers/disciples spread Christianity. Islam too was founded by Prophet Mohammad and other religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism also have their founders. The African indigenous beliefs are regarded as a culture which expresses the ways of life of the African people (Nweke 2020:43).

According to Rushohora and Silayo (2019), African religion is contradictory; it is associated with agreeable human qualities, such as ethnicity, morality, spirituality, and superstition, and even more than that: it rejects scientific knowledge and human progress in general. Religion has great power and impact over minds and bodies; it helps people to solve many problems yet it can ruin people if it is not clearly understood. In Africa, one is born into the faith of a family cult, culture-in essence, and religion-that permeate a person's entire life to inform the material, moral, and spiritual aspects (Rushohora and Silayo 2019:1).

Before the arrival of Islam and Christianity in Tanzania, African people in this context, in particular the Tanzanians, believed in spiritual beings, spirits, and the living dead. African people believed that there is a Supreme Being who is the creator of the universe and everything within. More than that, African people believed in other spiritual forces that have powers, often for, specific purposes and among these forces is the belief in ancestors. However, some scholars of the African Traditional Religion, classified the belief into four categories (1) The Supreme God (2) The sky god (3) The mother earth, and (4) other divinities (Onyedinman 2009:1)

Onyedinman (2009) reiterated that African people recognize the presence of God who is the Supreme Being and the Creator of the universe. However, besides Him, there are other divinities and spiritual beings, some of which are closely associated with Him. When the African people pray, they invoke the Supreme Being (God) spirits, the sky god, and other divinities (Onyedinman 2009:2; Oborji 2002:15)

4.5 The Supreme Being in African Traditional religion

The concept of a Supreme Being is common in African societies. God is the Supreme Being in African Traditional Religions and is regarded to be (responsible for) the origin of everything in the universe. In African beliefs, God is seen/ understood as immanent and transcendent. However, there are no written texts or sacred books in African Traditional beliefs, but the concept of the Oneness of God is normally taken from myths, proverbs, short statements, songs, prayers, stories, rituals, etc. More importantly the concept of One Supreme Being is the core value for the followers of this belief. According to African belief the knowledge about God (knowing about God) comes during the birth of a newborn baby; this knowledge is given to an individual at the time of birth. Consequently, African beliefs take their inspiration and encouragement from Christianity and Islam morality and belief systems: they have their original ways of exploring and expressing their religion (Islam and Islam 2015:1; Oborji 2002:16). Taking one example of the Zulu of Southern Africa, most of them reside in Natal, are somewhat primitive and have not yet been influenced by Christianity so extensively. Even though some have been contacted by Christians, they have refused to abandon their culture and tradition. The traditional religion of the Zulu, like many communities in Africa, such as Wagogo, Nyakyusa, Sukuma and most of the tribes in Tanzania, has been passed from generation to generation and is still practised today. However, the problem in dealing with African traditional religion is that traditional people have not yet written anything about their religion but some scholars from the outside have written some. In Zulu, and many tribes in Tanzania, the concept of the Deity is understood as the one, the other, the divine, and the many. The one and the other in African traditional religion represent the Supreme Being (God) who is greater and cannot compare with any other. Yet, this God is related to other divinities, the divine and the many. In many African communities they maintain relationships with human nature and natural phenomena, of the living with the dead, of the past and present (Doda 1992:79-80).

4.6 Ancestors in African communities

Death in African beliefs is perceived as the beginning of a person's deeper relationship with all of creation. In this manner, death is a complement to life and the beginning of the communication between the visible and the invisible world. Therefore, the purpose of life in African traditional beliefs is to become an ancestor after death. This is why every person who dies must be given a correct and respectful funeral; if this is not done, the dead person may become a wandering ghost, unable to live properly after death and may become a danger to those who remain alive. It is believed that the dead have power over the living. In African communities, they usually maintain and cherish the good relationships with their ancestors in

order to be protected and forgiven. In most cases, they care for their tombs and give gifts and offerings such as honey, and fruits, pour out alcoholic beverages, etc. Ancestor cult worship is commonly practised by many people in sub-Saharan Africa (Onyedinman 2009:5-6, Pobee 1976:2).

Kane (2018) mentions that, in some African communities, for example, in Cameroon many people keep a jar in the household representing their ancestors. It is the indication of a continuing life of those who have departed from this life. The deceased members of the family have their lives expressed through the living. When one is converted to Christianity in Cameroon, the clergy calls that person in order to cut off the relationship with his/her ancestors to express his/her new faith in Christ. Yet, some Cameroonian Christians ask themselves questions such as.. “could they be Christians without their ancestors?” (Kane 2018:30). Moreover, Kane (2018) is of the opinion that, there is a difference between showing reverence to the ancestors and worshipping the ancestors. To give an example: within Christianity there is communion with saints and the commemoration of the body and blood of Christ during Christian worship. However, Kane argues that the ancestors from the Christian perspective are no longer mediators between mankind and God-but they can be revered by the members of their families who lives and not to be worshipped or regarded as mediators (Kane 2018:31). Moreover, Oborji (2002) indicates that, in African traditional religion there is no written book or set of dogmas, no founder or institution but each tribal group has leaders who pass their traditions and culture from one generation to the other. African people are divided into many different groups: each has its tribal religion and culture even though some of their practices can be the same as that of another ethnic group. Also, there is no conversion in African Traditional religion; one cannot leave his/her tribal culture and religion to join another ethnic group. Each group in Africa prays according to their needs for survival, for example, farmers who depend on the fertility of the soil for cultivation would pray to the Deities who provide that to enhance their farming activities while the nomads would cherish the veneration of sky Deities (Oborji 2002:14)

For the Aguaa people of Ghana, the ancestors are those who were morally upright while living and who fulfilled their mission in the community, and died a natural and peaceful death. They were members of their families and part of the clan and had completed their course or journey on the earth and had gone ahead to live in the other world. They are referred, to be honoured, and regarded as the custodians and guardians of the land. This belief is common to all African indigenous religious practitioners (Korsah and Kuwornu-Adjaottor 2019:280).

4.7 The mother earth

The earth in the Oguuaa tradition is believed to be a goddess by the name *AsaaseAfua*. She was created by God and is regarded as His wife. She was put in charge of farming by God. Even though the Oguuaa have other deities, this does not make them polytheistic in fact their religion is classified as henotheistic. However, in African Traditional beliefs, God is the Supreme Being but not the object of direct worship. The recipients of worship are the other deities that may dwell in rocks, mountains, trees, rivers, and so on. Although the Supreme God is not the direct recipient of worship, the ancestors and spirits in African Traditional religions are the mediators between the Supreme Being and men, so God is the ultimate recipient whether or not the worshippers are aware of that (Korsah and Kuwornu-Adjaottor 2019:281)

4.8 Other divinities

The concept of God to the Oguuaa people of Ghana, is to believe in the Supreme God as the creator, yet they have three distinct names for God, and these names show their understanding of who God is. These names are Onyame, Onyankorpon, and Odomankoma. Besides the Supreme God, there are seventy-seven deities that are recognized and accepted in the Oguuaa traditional area. These deities are believed to be the children of God, the Supreme Being and He has assigned them to the people for the protection and other assistance. These smaller deities draw their powers from their Father, the Supreme Being, for special duties that He assigns to them. All these seventy-seven deities that are recognized in Oguuaa are spirits that have personal names and dwell in stones, rocks, trees, groves, and so on. They all have their specific shrines where rituals are performed in their honour (Korsah and Kuwornu-Adjaottor 2019:280-281).

4.9 Islam

The Africans, and in this particular instance, the Tanzanians were practised African Traditional religions, when Islam was the first imported religion to come to Tanzania; Chesworth (2014) points out that Islam and Muslims were present on the coast of east Africa through the aid of interpreters and traders within a few years of Muhammad's death (Chesworth 2014:131). Evidence of the presence of Islam and Muslims in East Africa are the remains of the mosque foundation in Lamu where gold, silver, and copper coins dated AD 830 was found. Another piece of evidence is the functioning mosque of Kizimkazi in southern Zanzibar which was built in AD 1007. It appears that by AD 1300 Islam and Muslims were present on the coasts of East Africa. Islamic religion arrived quite early in East Africa through Arab traders. However, it did not spread to the interior of the country but remained an urban and coastal phenomenon for quite a

long time. Later, in 1729 it spread out further after the Portuguese had been pushed beyond the Ruvuma River (presently the border between Tanzania-Mozambique). Islam is the old foreign religion in Tanzania particularly on the coastal areas and along the old trade/caravan routes from Bagamoyo to Kigoma and along the rest of East Africa (Lodhi 1994:88, Vilhanova 2010:134).

Vittori and Bremer (2009) hold that, the influence of Islam in Eastern Africa came from areas surrounding the Indian Ocean, and the Arabian Peninsula. It was due to the role of trade via the sea-routes. Muslim history in east Africa is divided into three distinct historical periods: the first was the early settlement of Muslims on the coast where some Bantu tribes had adopted Islam mainly in larger urban settings. The second period is known as Shirazi or (Shirazian) which established small settlements along the eastern coast of the continent and on the Comoros Island. This period reached its peak between the 13th and the 15th Century. The intermarriage of the Arab and Persian settlers with local Bantu women created a group of people called the Swahili (people of the coast) whose language later developed to become a lingua franca for the coast and later for most of Eastern Africa. Through these interactions Islam's religion spread on the coastal areas and little conversion took place inland. The Shirazi settled in Kilwa and traded with inhabitant of the Arab and Persian Gulf. This period ended after the Portuguese conquered this area. The third period was the rise of Zanzibar, currently Tanzania, which was influenced by Hadranic Shafi Islam. Yemen settled in Zanzibar and was later followed by the Omanis. At the beginning of 1813, Sayyid Said bin Sultan of Oman controlled the islands of eastern Arica which includes Lamu and Pate. Later in 1828, he conquered Mombasa (modern Kenya) and in 1840 he moved his administration from Oman to Zanzibar. Then the island of Zanzibar became the centre of trade along the Indian Ocean. Apart from other commodities, slavery and the slave-trade were practiced extensively. Zanzibar developed into the leading port for running the slave trade in Eastern Africa as well as for spices and other goods (Vittori and Bremer 2009:2-3).

Kilwa in Tanzania was a very important town, and settlers from Persia reached Kilwa in about 945 A.D. However, the Island of Mafia which is part of Zanzibar, was also dominated during this period. Kilwa became the business centre stretching along the various trade routes to the Indian Ocean. Fleets of trading vessels came from India and Southern Arabia, bringing with them cloth and other commodities and taking back gold, ivory, tortoiseshell, and slaves (Posnansky 1978:496; Msaky 1964:7).

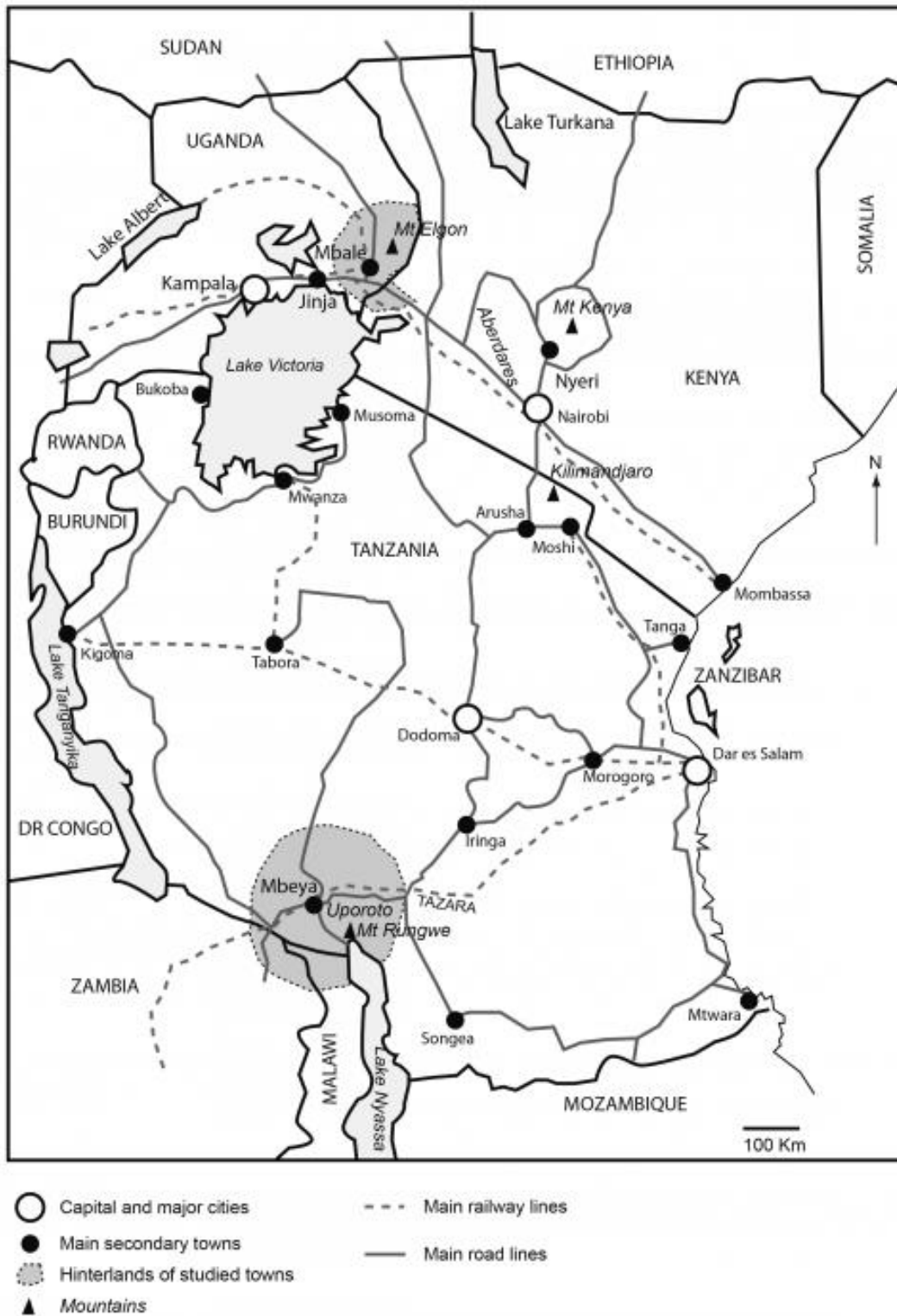


Figure 2: The map indicates how Islam spread from the coast with the help of the railways and into major towns along the rail-way

4.10 The Swahili people and culture

The Swahili are a mixture of people from all around the Indian Ocean, mostly of black African Bantu and Cushitic origin. The Swahili culture is a blend both urban maritime, and mix of agricultural with fishing communities. From early on the Swahili embraced Islam after interaction with Arab traders. Their material culture that involved their arts, architecture, music, dress, etc. continues to resemble something more of the oriental and oceanic rather than continental Africa. An example, is the female dress “Kurta”- the material element from northern India, while the male dress is a long white dress “Kanzu” from the Emirates and Oman in the Gulf etc. (Lodhi 1994:89)

4.11 Christianity

Christianity arrived with Vasco da Gama in the fifteenth century but during this period it did not spread until the middle of the nineteenth century when the Church Missionary Society (CMS) arrived in 1844 followed by the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) in 1864. The Protestant and Catholic missionary agents came to east Africa to combat the slave trade and to evangelize the inhabitants (Chesworth 2014:131). The works of UMCA are narrated in history by Chesworth (2014) that tells about the work of evangelization amongst Muslims in east Africa. Yet by 1920 most missions had a very limited presence on the predominantly Muslim coast as they had moved inland to work amongst followers of traditional religions. The UMCA remained on the coast working in the Diocese of Zanzibar, acting as a Christian presence and engaging with the Muslim population (Chesworth 2014:132). The early Catholic missions to work in east Africa included Missionary of Africa (White Fathers), Holy Ghost Fathers, and the Benedictines (Chesworth 2014:132). Missionary agents from Germany England and other parts of the world arrived in Tanzania for evangelization in the nineteenth century (Chisaye 2019:11).

4.12 The gospel was preached by missionaries

This thesis (especially chapter 4) focuses on the history of the evangelization of the gospel in Tanzania. The denominations consulted were the Catholics, the Lutherans, and the Anglicans. These denominations are regarded as the oldest in Tanzania and they all have a large numbers of members. As narrated in the previous paragraphs of this study, it is to be noted that from the time of the Portuguese invasion in the thirteen Century, and during the Germans’ control over East Africa from 1870 to 1916 after the end of World War 1, until the time of British rule, Christian missionary agents from European countries were busy on the coast and as well as in the interior of the land in East Africa.

4.13 The Catholic missionaries

The Catholic missionary movement began to evangelize Tanzania at the end of the eighteenth century through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. The first step that missionaries of all denominations took was to open schools and disseminate education. However, it was not easy for Christian missionaries to settle and evangelize the people in Tanzania. This was due to the crisis they faced due to opposition from the Arab Muslims who at that time occupied the whole coastal area of Tanzania and East Africa as discussed in the previous paragraphs. The Christian missionaries focused on not evangelizing Muslims but the African traditional believers in the interior (Kafumu 2017:224).

The first Catholic missionaries to arrive in Tanzania were the Augustinians who arrived in Zanzibar with Vasco da Gama in 1499; another missionary agent, the Dominican, landed in Mombasa, Faza, Pate, and in Zanzibar in the 1560s. They did not stay long because of the opposition, and after Oman's Arab conquest they left and ended their mission in 1698. From that moment onward missionary work to Tanzania entered a dark period until the 19th century when it picked up new momentum (Kafumu 2017:225)

In 1863 the Catholic missionaries of the Holy Ghost Fathers entered Zanzibar, the White Fathers entered Tanganyika in 1887, and the Benedictine Monks came and settled in the city of Dar Es Salaam in 1887. These Catholic missionaries were very successful in their work of evangelization in Tanzania (Kafumu 2017:226)

In 1860 several Catholic priests and sisters settled in Zanzibar. The Sultan of Zanzibar approved their stay. These missionaries worked as health and education specialists. Their kind hearts of caregiving to the sick people, helping slaves, and teaching them to read and write was accepted by the community they served and by the Sultan as well. From Zanzibar, the missionary work was extended to Bagamoyo on mainland Tanganyika in 1868. There, they found the first Catholic Mission on the mainland, not only in Tanzania but in East Africa. In Bagamoyo, the missionaries established a centre for freed slaves. The main focus of the missionaries was to evangelize the freed slaves at the slave village that they had established. During those days, slavery and the slave trade were at their peak. The word 'Bagamoyo' is of Swahili origin that has slavery/captive undertones for it means "a place to leave one's heart behind", therefore, Christian missionaries gave hope to some of the slaves who managed to escape and settle at the slave village. More than that, other centres were established near Bagamoyo such as that of Kurasini and Kisarawe specifically for education and agricultural training (Kafumu 2017:227).

The Catholic mission movement extended from Bagamoyo to Uchagga on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro in 1890. The missionaries arrived at Kilema and Chief Pfumba accepted them. The people of this area accepted Christianity easily because they worshipped one God known as Ruwa. When missionaries introduced the one God of the Bible they accepted it. Kilema was the first mission centre in Kilimanjaro. The Kilimanjaro mission centre expanded to Tanga and Arusha (Kafumu 2017:228).

Furthermore, the White Fathers who were known as Missionaries of Africa, at their arrival in Tanganyika in 1878 were divided into two groups. One settled on the shore of Lake Tanganyika and the other on the shore of Lake Victoria. Therefore, in such away, they evangelized the entire Great Lakes region. This also opened the door of evangelization into neighbouring countries such as Burundi, Rwanda, and the Republic of the Congo. The mission centres of Kabanga, Kalema, Mpala, Unyanyembe, Tabora, Bukubi, Kala, Mkulwe, and Kigoma were established in the period between 1879-1914 (Kafumu 2017:229)

The Catholic mission in Tanganyika went further into the southern area. This occurred when the Benedictine German Missionary arrived in Dar Es Salaam in 1887 and settled in Pugu near the city of Dar Es Salaam, and from there, they expanded southward to the Ruvuma River bordering Mozambique. Their missionary work in the southern part of Tanganyika has remained until today where their monasteries of Ndanda and Peramiho still stand as the centre of modern civilization and development in Tanzania...there, schools and a referral hospital are still working today (Kafumu 2017:233). However, after the first World War had ended in 1914, the Germans were forced to leave the country and submit their authority to the British Protectorate. From there on, Catholic missionaries from various European countries began to come to Tanganyika to take over the work of German missionaries. These missionaries, the Consolata Fathers, the Capuchin Friars, the Salvatorian Missionaries, and the Passionists Missionaries worked in different places in Tanganyika (Kafumu 2017:236).

4.14 The Lutheran missionaries

The Lutheran church in Tanzania was established by missionary agents from Europe and America. These missionary agents were the Berlin Mission, Bethel Mission, Leipzig Mission, Augustana Mission, Church of Sweden Mission, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, and Norwegian Lutheran Mission(Maanga 2014:179)

The interest in German Protestant missions began at the beginning of the 19TH Century. There were reasons for the desire for missionary establishment amongst which reasons being changes that had entered the religion sector after the French revolution and the Napoleonic

wars, as well as the enlightenment and strong German nationalism. Another reason for the zeal for the mission-work was a pietistic movement that emerged at the beginning of the century also caused by the political situation. During this time, most of the missionary societies were founded and most of them today have roots in this movement (Groop 2006:30, Vilhanova 2007:249)

During the time of the pietistic movement in Germany, the *Evangelisch-Lutherrische Missionsgesellschaft zu Dresden* was founded in 1836. Later, it moved to the University town of Leipzig and changed its name to Leipzig Mission (Groop 2006:32). After the founding of the Leipzig Mission it undertook missionary work in many countries among which were Australia and India. The first country in East Africa to be reached by the Leipzig missionaries was Kenya where they established a mission station amidst the Kamba tribe. The Leipzig Mission also had a talk with the British Church Missionary Society (CMS) which since 1885 had had a mission centre at the foot of the slope of Mount Kilimanjaro in the town of Moshi. Due to the relationship between the British missionaries and the German colonial authority the CMS only had one option: to sell its mission station to the Leipzig Mission. Ironically, later, the Chagga people burned the Mission Centre down after the CMS had left. Later, on 30 September 1893 the first four Leipzig missionaries arrived in Moshi station and re-opened the Moshi Mission Centre and opened others as well in Machame and Mamba (Groop 2006:40). The Lutheran church today is one of the largest denominations in Tanzania with more than 6 million members which comprises 13% of the Tanzanian population. The church is led by a presiding bishop with 26 dioceses.

The Lutheran Church in Tanzania provided health and education facilities; they built schools such as the Ilboru Boys Secondary School and Ashira Girls Secondary School, and Morogogo Junior Seminary. In 1947 the Lutheran church established Lwandai Theological School which later moved to Makumira in 1954. The Makumira Theological College birthed the Tumaini University with six constituent colleges these are Makumira University College, Sebastian Kolowa University College, Tumaini University Dar Es Salaam College, Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University College, Stefano Moshi Memorial University College and Iringa University College (Maanga 2014:182-183)

Regarding health matters, Lutheran churches in Tanzania contribute a lot to building and running hospitals such as the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre in Moshi, Seliani Lutheran Hospital in Arusha, Kiomboi Lutheran Hospital in Singida, Ilembula Lutheran Hospital in Njombe, Bunda Lutheran Hospital in Mara, Ndolage and Izimbya Hospitals in Bukoba, the Lutheran Hospital in Arusha Town and Bumbuli Lutheran Hospital in Tanga (Maaga 2014:184).

The Lutheran church in Tanzania also has been working at generating income by owning and running guest houses, restaurants, and hotels such as the New Safari Hotel in Arusha and the Kunduchi Hotel in Dar es Salaam. In the Northern Diocese, it owns the Lutheran Uhuru Hotel in Moshi while the North-Central Diocese owns Corridor Springs Hotel in Arusha and the North-Western Diocese owns Bukoba Lutheran Hotel. Further there are too the Luther Guesthouse and Restaurant in Dar es Salaam, Umoja Lutheran Hotel in Moshi, Karatu Lutheran Hotel in Karatu, Njombe Lutheran Centre in Njombe, and Tumaini Lutheran Restaurant in Lushoto. These facilities were established to provide service, generate income, and as a tool for evangelism (Maanga 2014:185).

4.15 The Anglican missionaries

The Anglican Church in Tanzania started when the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) arrived in Tanganyika. These missionary societies were sent to Tanganyika by the established Church of England under the Archbishop of Canterbury (Mndolwa 2012:32).

The history of the Anglican Church in Tanzania can be traced back to 1878 when the Church Mission Society (CMS) missionaries from England visited Tanganyika and built the Mpwapwa Mission Centre. Even though missionaries John Ludwig Krapf and John Rebmann visited Tanganyika for the first time in 1848 they couldn't start missionary work until 1878 (Mbogo 2015:170). The target of CMS missionaries was to reach Uganda so they used Tanganyika as the way through to Uganda for the CMS mission interest was in Uganda not in Tanganyika. Even though the Anglican Church had its administration in a regional area of east Africa, which included Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika, little attention was given to Tanganyika in those days. In Mombasa Kenya, there was a big Mission Centre and there was a Training Centre to train African ministers; the Uganda Mission Center was also well established (Knox 1991:1, Reed 2007:83; Beidelman 1981:73).

The Mission Centre in Mpwapwa Tanganyika was established by western missionaries and African ministers from Mombasa. During those days Tanganyika was part of the Mombasa Mission Centre and therefore, ministers from Uganda and Kenya, especially bishops, occasionally visited Mpwapwa Mission Centre for ministries (Knox 1991:5). The first missionary who settled and was well-established at the Mission Centre in Mpwapwa, was Joseph Last. Later, Dr. Baxter joined Last. Baxter served for a very long time in east Africa, in particular in Mpwapwa, and is regarded to have been the real founder of the Mpwapwa Mission (Knox 1991:35). Baxter came into Mpwapwa with other African ministers from Mombasa who had been educated by (CMS) Missionary Society and others from Zanzibar educated by the

University Mission for Central Africa (UMCA) Missionary Societies (Reed 2007:83). Similar to the situation in the Mission Centres in Zanzibar, Bagamoyo, and Kilwa, the freed slaves were transported to the coastal area from the interior, freed into the care of the Mpwapwa Mission Center and were taught there and became Christians (Reed 2007:84, Lodhi 1994:89, Knox 1991:1). Due to slave conversion to Christianity, the Christian religion was not well-accepted by the people of the coast, for they regarded Christianity as a religion for slaves (Knox 1991:2 Vernet 2009:50).

Mpwapwa functioned as the first missionary target for the Anglican Church in Tanganyika. The mission target at first focused on children and freed slaves. Missionaries during those days encouraged the use of Cigogo, the language of the people in this area for learning and evangelization (Knox 1991:36). From Mpwapwa, missionaries went further near the Wagogo area to Ukaguru, where they planted many churches and other centres such as those for primary health-care and schools. In Ukaguru after discussion and agreement with the Wakaguru chief, he agreed that the Mission Centre had to be built in the Village of Mamboya and Berega Village. They also opened another Mission Centre in Kisokwe (now Chamuhawi) near Mpwapwa where missionary, Cole and his wife, Henrietta, and missionary, Charles Stoke and his wife, Nellie were the first missionaries to work there (Reed 2007:85).

The momentum of Anglican evangelization in Tanganyika changed and was distorted during colonialism in 1884 when Tanganyika became a German colony, while Kenya and Uganda were still under British colonial rule. Due to this situation, the CMS missionaries who had come from Britain had to work under the German government, and this was a challenge for the British missionaries. Furthermore, German colonization did not favour or give support to other denominations that had not originated from Germany, such as the Anglicans and others. Therefore, the Anglican missionary centres and Anglican denomination, in general, suffered during German rule in Tanganyika (Reed 2007:86). Another challenge in Tanganyika was the outbreak of the Bushiri war where the Swahili and Arabs of the coasts fought against the German government. Bushiri organized this war and many people, especially the Swahili and Arabs, joined him to fight against German rule. Another war erupted in the southern highlands of Tanganyika where chief Mkwawa fought against German rule for a period of seven years from 1891 to 1898. When Mkwawa realized that he couldn't defeat the Germans, he committed suicide. People in the southeast of Tanganyika also opposed German rule and fought the "Maji Maji" war, under the leadership of Kinjekitile (Mbiku 1985:55).

Wars in Uhehe and "Maji Maji" affected UMCA missionaries who were working in the southern area of Tanganyika. The Bushiri War reached Mpwapwa, and Bushiri soldiers burned all the

mission houses in Mpwapwa but people managed to escape safely and free to Usokwe about 15 kilometers from Mpwapwa. The Germans later defeated Bushiri and calmed/settled the situation (Reed 2007:86). Thus, the outbreak of war slowed the work of the spreading of the gospel. Not only the Anglican missionaries but other denominations were affected as well. Another obstacle against the spreading of the gospel in Tanganyika was the outbreak of the First World War: the fight was between Germany and the British in which other European nations joined, either to support the British or the Germans. Because Tanganyika was a German colony and the neighboring countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, and Zambia were under British rule the First World War also was fought on Tanganyika soil, and many African soldiers died. The CMS missionaries and UMCA in Tanganyika from Britain suffered persecution under the Germans. In general, the spread of the gospel in Tanganyika faced a lot of challenges during those days (Reed 2007:86-87).

4.16 The role of early missionaries in Tanganyika

The movement of Christian missionaries in Africa which started at the end of the eighteenth and continued throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, contributed towards the expansion of Christianity in Africa. The missionaries of all denominations devoted a lot of time to winning converts and transforming African societies by opening schools. More than that, Christian missionaries were pioneers in African languages by producing grammar manuals, dictionaries, textbooks, and translations of religious texts (Vilhanova 2007:249).

The task of missionaries to care for and emancipate slaves was not practised in Tanzania mission centres only but in Kenya as well where Rabai, the first mission centre, was established in 1846 by Krapf and Rebmann. Then also near Rabai, there was the Freretown, a centre for freed and liberated slaves - the centre was named after Bartle Frere who had freed the slaves (Sundkler & Steed 2000:553). We may ask why the first work of the European missionaries was concerned with slaves. Maxwell (2013) explains that “freed slaves were significant agents of social, cultural and religious change in Africa” (Maxwell 2013:79).

The first converts to Christianity in east Africa were the freed and liberated slaves at the mission centres (Owino *et al* 2017:3756). At each mission centre formal education was launched and freed slaves were taught to read and write. The slaves at the centre learned the three R's (reading, writing, and arithmetic) which were the core of the curriculum. The missionaries concentrated on the three R's because they intended to make people able to read the Bible by themselves. Apart from the three R's other subjects such as those about environmental sanitation and personal hygiene were also taught at the mission centre (Awino *et al* 2017:3759).

The missionaries used schools as rehabilitation centres for freed slaves. Those who were converted to Christianity played an important role in the society in Tanzania and Kenya and they contributed positively towards the work of missionaries. Africans contributed to the expansion of Christianity specifically in Tanzania and Kenya for several reasons: (1) they provided land for building churches and other facilities such as schools, etc. and (2) they organized where/how to find building materials and (3) they became the first African teachers and evangelists. It was easier for an African to preach to a fellow African than for a European to preach to an African for several reasons. This was why the missionaries used the converted Africans to preach to their fellow Africans (Owino *et al* 2017:3756).

Both the Catholic mission agents (the White Fathers and others), as well as the Protestants (University Mission for Central Africa and the Church Missionary Society), targeted ransomed and freed slaves to create a Christian community in Africa. More importantly, evangelizing former slaves entailed mass conversion, so that for example in West Africa 70,000 slaves were freed by the British Navy in Sierra Leone and settled in a Christian Village near Freetown. Most of them became Christians and some managed to return home to their communities where they continued to bear witness of their new faith in Christ. Another factor for the missionaries to concentrate on evangelizing former slaves was that the message of salvation was relevant to them since they had been in physical bondage and now were redeemed! This factor was significant for them to understand the spiritual captivity from which salvation through faith in Christ had set them free (Maxwell 2013:80).

The former slaves who had adopted Christianity became the source of social change in their communities (Maxwell 2013:79). Examples of these were the returnees from Freetown and Rabai and also from other centres in Kenya, as well as the returnees from Zanzibar, Bagamoyo, Kilwa and Tanga mission centres in Tanzania. Those in West Africa, from Sierra Leone to Yoruba in Nigeria returned with literacy in construction and cultivation and some modern ideas that were useful in their communities (Maxwell 2013:89).

4.17 The gospel message preached by missionaries in Tanzania

It would seem that missionaries did not invest much time in teaching the Word of God to the people of Tanzania, but they provided physical services to the people, and when a person decided to follow Christ they taught him/her some important Christian doctrines or the Word of God and baptized that person. It is noted that, people did not come to Christ after hearing and being touched by the Word of God, but rather, they decided to follow Christ after receiving services such as being ransomed/rescued from slavery or during the education process. The method of delivering the gospel during the missionary and colonial times in Tanzania was

indirect: the Christian missionaries used services as a means to communicate to the people the love of Christ. Furthermore, apart from Zanzibar and Bagamoyo mission stations, missionaries avoided establishing mission centres in areas where Islam was prevalent-so they went into the interior of the country and established their mission stations there. During those days the method of delivering the gospel was not as it is nowadays. They did not have open air meetings, or do house-to-house evangelism or distribute short passages of Christian literatures, such as the Bible etc.

In some areas such as Ilboru in Arusha, the Lepzig missionaries invited people for the first time to attend church and listen to the Word of God in their vernacular language. Missionary Fokken of the Lepzig Missionary Society held a short sermon based on John 3:16 with the aim of explaining to the people of Arusha why the missionary movement had to come to Arusha. The preaching and sharing of the Word of God during missionary era was a gradual process. People came on Sundays to listen to everything about the new faith but some were more attracted by the physical provision that the missionaries provided than being touched by the Word of God (Groop 2006:51). In the Maasai area in the north of Tanzania, the Lutheran Lepzig missionaries encountered certain challenges when sharing /communicating the gospel. The method of persuasion of missionaries before sharing the gospel was to provide medical care to the Maasai people. But the Maasai did not want any foreign elements on their land if they felt that their own ways of living would be jeopardized. Therefore, the process of sharing the gospel continued very slowly during this time. The missionaries encountered conflict with the Maasai people whenever attempting to communicate the gospel. Most people in the Maasai area needed time to become acquainted with the Christian messengers and to accept/adapt to the idea that they had been visited by missionaries and evangelists (Groop 2006:148). However, according to the schooling systems during the missionary time, pupils were the only ones who had the opportunity to learn about the Word of God while they were at school. So it was clear that they first followed Christianity without being touched/known about the Word of God but during the process of baptism and after they have been baptized, they identified themselves as Christians. Through the work of teachers, evangelists and missionaries, pupils slowly learned about the Word of God (Groop 2006).

The evangelization in Tanzania during the missionary era started like the story of the mustard seed, just as Jesus taught in the parable of the mustard seed in Matt 13:31-32; Mark 4:31-32; Luke 13:19. In 2018 the church in Tanzania celebrated the 150 years anniversary of evangelization, in other words it was from 1868-2018. So since the time when missionaries came for the first time, the church (this means the three denominations (1) the Catholic (2) the

Lutherans and (3) the Anglicans which are our concern in this study) went through different stages and different developments (Ligomeke 2018:184).

However, my personal observation about evangelization in Tanzania during the missionary, and colonial era is that, according to the Great Commission: “Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey all the commands I gave you, and know that I am with you up to the end of time” (Matt 28:19-20). The missionaries did a great job to pave the way for evangelization in Tanzania but according to the history records, missionaries spent a lot of time providing in the physical needs of the people and spent less time in teaching people to obey all the commands as Jesus had instructed his disciples before his Ascension. It is evident that according to literature quoted in this thesis, missionaries produced many Christians who joined the Christian faith through the education systems without knowing exactly what it meant to be a Christian. More than that, conversion to Christianity continued to be a routine that parents transmitted to their children. If you ask one why he/she is a Christian he/she would reply ‘I was born in a Christian family’. In African history, Christianity came while African beliefs and culture persisted for generation after generation. Due to a lack of true conversion to the Christian faith, syncretism has remained a major threat to the Christian faith to this day.

Throughout the history of evangelization, missionaries invested much time and resources in emancipating/ransoming slaves, establishing and facilitating farming programs, opening schools and hospitals to provide education, health and economical facilities, and built many churches. Unfortunately, we do not have enough literature recorded through history that can testify how much missionaries invested in teaching those who were willing/ready to follow Christ. Ligomeke (2018:187) kept records that indicated that in 1914 around 61,000 people were baptized and joined the Catholic Church and 23,000 others were baptized to join Protestant denominations. However it is not indicated how many of these people were taught enough and equipped to discontinue the practices of their African beliefs so as to totally commit themselves to following their new faith in Christ.

The mission strategies of missionaries of the three denominations (the Catholic, Lutherans and Anglicans) focused a lot on providing in the physical needs of the people at that particular period of time. The main focus was to liberate slaves, and then they would use that situation to tell people about the work of Christ who had come to set people free who had been kept in captivity and in the bondage of sin and physical-trauma. However, there’s a lot of debate today on the issues of priorities and the emphasis between evangelism and social services. Moreover,

the early missionaries and some denominations and churches today still prioritize the provision of social needs and put less effort and emphasis on evangelism (Ahn 2008:21;22;29)

The history of evangelization in Tanzania during missionary and colonial times is the same. Yet when Tanzania became independent in 1961, most of the missionary agents and societies were preparing to leave the country and hand over leadership to the indigenous leaders. It was at this time that the history of evangelization took on a different momentum. The church had to maintain its natural policy of propagating the gospel and still had to meet its needs and annual budgets. At this time most of the donors and supporters from Europe and other western countries had cut off their support, so therefore, the church had to remain self-supportive, self-governing and self-propagating. The church had no other option than to maintain and keep running the infrastructure that was left by the missionaries and to establish their own income-generating entities so as to support and meet their annual budget. It is common knowledge and true that the Sunday and other services offerings were not enough to support the church budget. Therefore, the church during this era functioned as a business venture. The emphasis and priority remained in establishing and maintaining income-generating activities and less effort and time were put into evangelism. For example the Catholic Church established secondary schools such as Kitundu, Pugu, Mkwitini, Yombo and Lukuledi. In Uhehe area they established eight schools in Madiba. In the northwest of Tanzania in Buhaya they (still) own and run schools, colleges and hospitals. The church also owns radio and television stations, magazines, and news-papers. The Catholic Church owns several Universities and colleges throughout the country. On the other hand the Lutheran church owns and runs many primary schools, secondary schools, vocation training centres, as well as nursing and teachers colleges in many places in the country. They also own hospitals, and hotels in many places in their dioceses. The Anglican church too owns the literary organization, the Central Tanganyika Press (located in Dodoma), and then too vocation training centres, primary and secondary schools, hospitals and nursing schools, colleges and the university of St John's which is located in Dodoma (Chisaye 2019:32, 34-35).

My observation is that in Tanzania, the Lutheran church, apart from the Catholic and Anglicans who also have a lot of income-generating activities has put more effort into establishing and running income-generating activities than any other denominations. As a result, people outside and within the church perceive the church as a business venture, instead of seeing Christ and his redemptive work on the cross through the message of the church. Consequently, from time to time witnesses conflict in the church which is mostly caused by ethnicity, a struggle for power/leadership, and the control of church wealth and property (Chisaye 2019:41-42).

Therefore, the church loses its quality of being the salt and light to the world. Too much emphasis on income-generating activities deteriorates the nature and origin of the church.

The evangelization in contemporary society in Tanzania has taken a new direction that started during the east African revival which commenced between the 1930s and 1950s. The revival brought new ways of propagating the gospel to the neo-Pentecostalism. Christians of all evangelical denominations including the Catholic Church adopted this new way of conversion which would identify themselves as born-again Christians. It is through this revival that Christians who have taken this identification devoting themselves a lot to studying and learning the Word of God and remaining persistent in prayers. In this way of conversion, the emphasis falls a lot upon discontinuity in all spheres of life after conversion in Jesus Christ. This kind of evangelism and the message preached in contemporary societies has been more readily accepted by many Christians even though it has encountered a lot of challenges because there are emerged prophets, apostles, pastors, and bishops who come in the name of Christianity but their teachings and application of the Bible have raised many questions.

4.18 Conclusion

Throughout the time of the missionaries of the three denominations namely, the Catholic, Lutheran, and Anglican Churches, a lot of attention was devoted to providing education, health facilities, and caring for the slaves (Jennings 2008:27). It has been revealed that the missionaries did not preach the gospel directly to the people of Tanganyika but that they rather used services as the method to deliver the message of the love of Christ to the people. Later, those who were converted to Christianity were taught important doctrines and were the ambassadors to take the gospel to their fellow Africans. During the time of colonial power (as the previous paragraphs explained), Tanzania went through different experiences in terms of political and economic situations, because it was ruled by the Germans, and later the British, but the Arabs' presence in Tanganyika also had an influence on cultural, economic, and religious spheres. However, the three major denominations in Tanganyika have to date remained an agent of development and they keep propagating the gospel of Christ in many ways (Mhina 2007:17; Bakari 2007:20; Tumaini-Mungu 2007:11). The church during the missionary era was very small and only had a few members, but today, Tanzania holds the majority in Christianity compared to Islam.

The Catholic Church in Tanzania today, is composed of seven ecclesiastical provinces and twenty-seven Suffragan Dioceses. It is estimated that nearly 30 million Tanzanians are Catholics. Meanwhile the Lutheran Church is divided into twenty-six Dioceses, and has nearly 7 million members all over the country; on the other hand, the Anglican Church is governed and

composed of twenty-seven Dioceses on the mainland, and one Diocese in Zanzibar. The Anglican Church in Tanzania includes the mainland and the Island of Zanzibar and collectively has nearly 2.5 million members.

CHAPTER 5 AN EVALUTION OF WHAT PEOPLE HAVE BEEN HEARING AND WHAT THEY STILL HEAR ABOUT THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION IN TANZANIA

5.1 Introduction

In chapter four of this study, the history of evangelization in Tanzania during the missionary, colonial, post-colonial, and modern eras was narrated. In these it found that, the missionaries from western countries, America, and other parts of the world did not preach the gospel directly to the people but they rather used services they had provided such as those on education and health facilities to enable them to show the love of Christ. In this chapter (five) of this study, the author evaluates what people have been hearing and are still hearing about the gospel of salvation in Tanzania. This chapter will try to establish whether the gospel preached by missionaries, was sufficient for the people and whether they converted to Christianity after being touched by the Word of God, or only by the services they received from missionaries. It is this evaluation that will find out whether people decided to follow a new faith or whether they understood the gospel and just joined a new faith because of the love and care they received from the missionaries. This chapter is also going to evaluate the modern way of conveying the gospel in contemporary societies of Tanzania.

5.2 Slaves - the first Christians in Tanzania!

The runaway slaves experienced social, economic, and political challenges in the society they lived in. Over whole of the entire Swahili coasts there were ex-slaves who had escaped from their masters for example, the Gosha region received between 20,000 and 40,000 escaped slaves. The area of the history of runaway slaves covers the whole of Somalia to Mozambique. This area forms the crossroads from the Indian Ocean over the East African continent (Coret 2021:275)

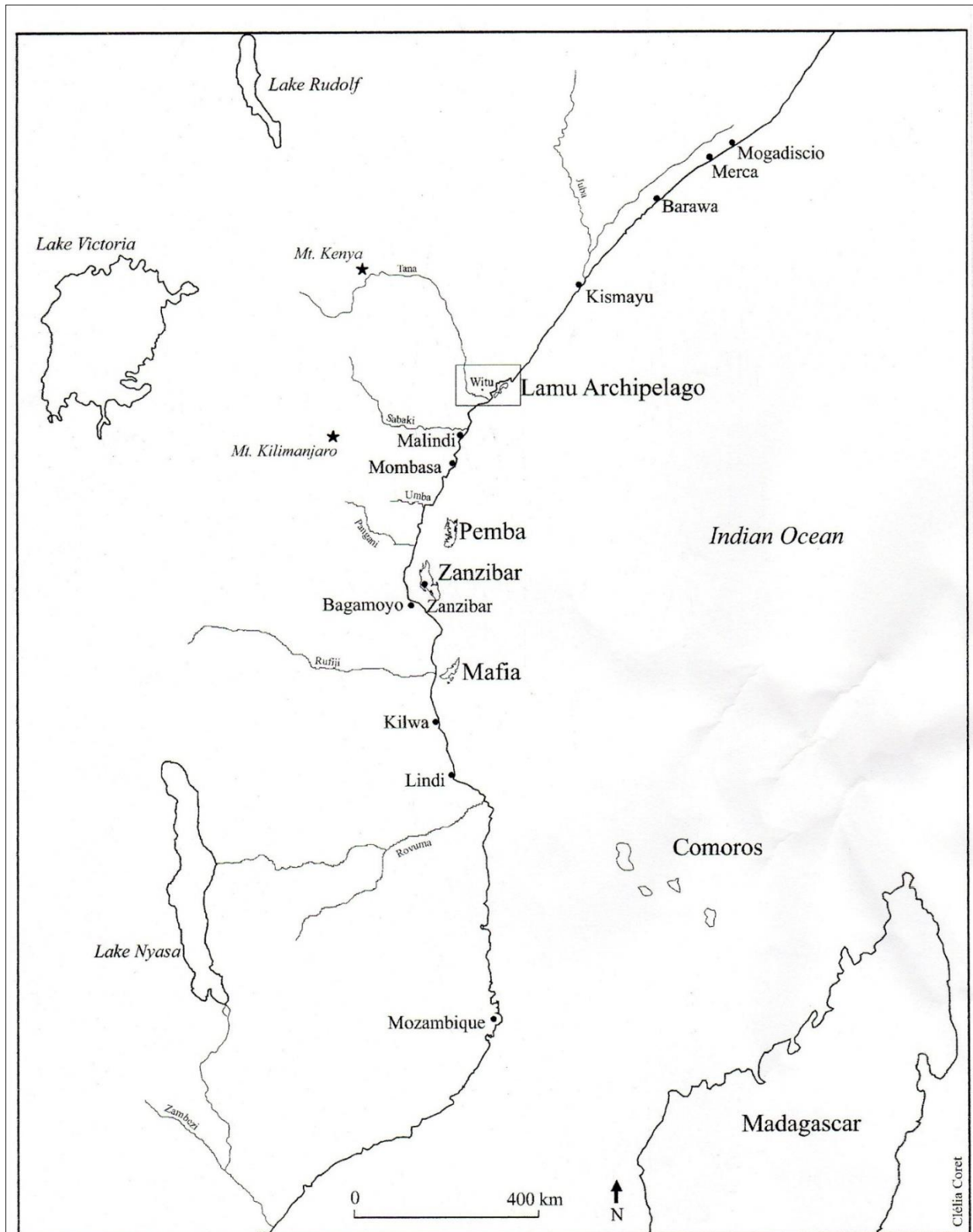


Figure 3: Indicates the East African coast

As discussed in the previous chapter of this study, the first African Christians in Tanzania were former slaves, whether escaped or ransomed. At the arrival and during the stay of Christian missionaries on the coast of East Africa, slavery and slave trading were commonly practised by

the Arabs who had since the seventh Century had contact with the East African people. However, in other parts of Africa such as the Gold Coast, Christians also owned slaves whom they had enslaved but had later set free. There were some of the Christian scholars such as Cocceius, a professor of theology at Leiden University, who even justified slavery by quoting the Word of God, but also indicated that there were some scholars who opposed slavery and the slave trade (Amponsah 2013:435)

Ex-slaves who were converted to Christianity also suffered social and culture trauma-for some of them were engaged into homosexual behaviour or alcohol abuse. The UMCA missions in Zanzibar had to counsel and monitor their relationship and walk in their new faith in Christ. The missions' involvement with ex-slaves in Zanzibar began in 1865 when the Sultan gave Bishop Tozer a gift of five children who were slaves and Bishop Tozer declared them free where they remained under his patronage (Greenfield-Liebst 2017:1). The British navy patrols saw their efforts being the abolition of slave trading. They took slaves and distributed them between mission stations, government, and the Sultan's ex-slave settlements. However, many slaves ran away from their slave masters to Christian mission centres. The missionaries concentrated on ransoming runaway slaves. Apart from this situation in the UMCA missions in Zanzibar, this was also the situation in other mission centres such as those of the CMS in Rabai near Mombasa (Kenya), and the Holy Ghost in Bagamoyo (Tanzania). Missionaries regarded ex-slaves as bad material for conversion due to their past behaviour that had been caused by treatment that might have experienced from their masters. Missionaries believed that ex-slaves were predisposed to immoral behaviour and that this behaviour was contagious (Greenfield-Liebst2017:2).

Alpers and Hopper (2017) record testimonies of slaves who were captured in East Africa and sold around Indian Ocean; one of the testimonies is that of Yusuf who had been enslaved for two years. Yusuf was a slave of Mohammad bin Juma an Arab who lived at Sur Kirimani. Yusuf had been kidnapped near Bagamoyo at Simboranga, at the mouth of the Rufiji River (Tanzania), and was put into a Dhow with many others; they travelled on the Sea and did not see any land until they arrived at Sur where they were sold. He ran away from his master because he was given a task to work in the fishing-boat but his master gave him nothing for his work; when he asked for anything his master beat him. Another testimony is of a woman named Rasiki who was enslaved by Ali bin Juma living at Sur. Rasiki had been a slave for 18 months before she escaped from her master, she was brought from Chooni close to Pangani in the north-east of mainland Tanzania. She was captured on the beach where she had gone to wash her clothes; there a man took her into a Dhow to Zanzibar, and from Zanzibar she was destined for Sur where she was sold (Alpers and Hopper 2017:70).

Children also were victims of slavery and the slave-trade, boys and girls of six years old and above were kidnapped while playing, and sold to traders. Chisaye (2019) records that, missionary Mackay on his way to Pangani saw seven slave caravans which contained many young children (Chisaye 2019:14). Christian missionaries were very involved in the care of and rescue of slaves. Chisaye (2019) quotes the case of the boy who was rescued by missionaries and who stated “others tied us up and starved us; you cut our ropes and tell us to eat. What sort of people are you? Where did you come from?” Another testimony is about a young slave girl from Yao tribe in southern Tanzania. She was sold by her mother’s creditors after her mother failed to repay her debt. The girl was probably ten years old when she was sold to the Arab traders who were on their way to Kilwa then Zanzibar. The mother was allowed to accompany her daughter but sadly due to the long walk the mother fell sick and could not continue with the journey, so the Arabs left her to die by the road. The girl, at her arrival in Kilwa, was tired and sick and she could no longer be transported to Zanzibar due to her severe health condition. She was left in a shallow grave outside the town to die by herself. Later she was discovered by a young boy, and she was taken to the mission centre where she was taken care of, treated until she recovered and was introduced to the Christian faith (Chisaye 2019:16)

More than that, in 1887 the book entitled “Histories” was edited, and translated in Swahili by Madan who was a teacher in Tanzania. This book was published by University Mission to Central Africa. It contained a collection of stories written in Swahili by a boy who had studied at the UMCA schools in East Africa. The book consists of thirteen autobiographies of such boys about their home-lives and wanderings, for most of them were either freed or ransomed slaves. Almost all the boys wrote about how they had been captured and sold to the Arab traders. The stories describe the march from the interior to the coast and about the disposal of the slaves, then the story ended on how the boys were handled and taken care of by the British missionaries of UMCA (Chisaye 2019:17).

Henschel (2016) indicates that the ransomed or freed slaves were not in any-way forced to become Christians, but they themselves decided to accept the Christian faith. Because of this phenomenon many people in the coastal area of Tanganyika, regarded Christianity as a religion of slaves (Henschel 2016:46). However, Gooding (2019) argues that slaves in East Africa possessed different status, for some of them were slaves on occasion but on other occasions they were free. Their status was liable to change over time. For example, other slaves improved their social status to the extent that they could be considered free in the mosque while they remained bonded to their masters or patrons in some form. Some slaves like the Nyamwezi ‘pagazi’ (porters) were free and paid labourers. This form means that coastal traders had their associates, followers, and labourers. Slavery was one of many forms of servitude that existed

between traders and their interior associates on the shores of Lake Tanganyika (Gooding 2019:148-149; Mckinnon 2017:69).

5.3 Education systems in Tanzania: pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial

The education system in Tanzania before colonialism was conducted according to the society, so therefore it was tribal based. It emphasized this by providing the individuals with life-skills and by making them good citizens in the community. This education system passed from one generation to another. There was not only one institution which was responsible for education but rather every clan and tribe organized this for themselves and according to their needs. Moreover, almost all tribes in Tanzania shared a common education philosophy-thus their focus was to live a harmonious life with nature and among one another. There was a division of labour between children, and adults, men and women who worked together but each according to the work assigned according to the group. The communities in Africa, in this particular case in Tanzania, lived in small communities (this was before the partition of Africa in 1884-1885) some were ruled by chiefs, others by kings, and other communities by the empire. However, each group had its own religious, education, political and economic systems (Wandela 2014:21-22; Jeremiah 2018:25-26).

Colonial education in Tanzania was first introduced by Christian missionaries of different denominations from western countries. The aim of Christian missionaries was to spread Christianity and introduce western economic systems. Missionaries introduced crops such as coffee, and tea which were very successful in regions of Mbeya, Kilimanjaro, and Kagera. These areas have fertile soil, good weather and are suitable for farming. When the German colonizers came, some chiefs were already converted to Christianity (because the missionaries came before the colonizers), so the German government also established a few schools as well. It is not mentioned in history if the German language was taught in Tanzanian schools but it is evident that when the British took over, that the English language was taught in schools. During the British rule education was provided mainly by missionaries and the government. The purpose was to produce manpower especially in the teaching sector, as well as secretaries and those who would work in agriculture sectors. The colonial schools were segregated: there were schools for white, Asian, and African children. The curriculum for African children emphasized agriculture, gardening, general science, and rural studies (Wandela 2014:24-25; Jeremiah 2018:26).

As discussed in a previous chapter of this thesis, - missionaries (apart from other services) were the major providers of education to the indigenous people in the colonial world. They hoped to convert their pupils to Christianity and in some places missionaries established schools before

churches-this indicates that missionaries first targeted the provision of education to the indigenous people before evangelizing or introducing them to the new faith in Christ. Through schooling, missionaries themselves hoped to implement a transformative process from a 'heathen' and 'uncivilized' native to 'civilized ' and Christian convert. For the evangelical Protestants the reading of the Bible was a very essential skill needed by the indigenous people so that the Word of God could be open to them. Therefore, in the 19th century missionaries believed that schooling the African people in western Christian knowledge would raise the so-called 'heathen' and bring the African people into the folds of civilization (Jensz 2012:307). The aim of missionary education was to bring pupils to Christ, but the process encountered some challenges-thus missionaries needed to respond dynamically to specific geographical, political, and social situations. The missionary way of thinking held that if children were instructed in western missionary education from a young age, they could be raised as Christians and could learn western forms of knowledge. Missionaries engaged in schooling indigenous people with the belief that education would help raise them to the level of working class whites. The missionary education system was embarked on along specific ideologies of race and class (Jensz 2012:307).

The African people in this particular case the Tanzanians, during the missionary era were also changed and influenced by this missionary education and culture-thus the descendants of the ethnic groups that had experienced greater missionary contact, today, still identify themselves as Christians. The missionaries left their mark on the African people and beliefs in Christianity still persist and these are still being passed on from parents to children. The provision of education became the main reward used by missionaries to lure Africans into the Christian sphere, and so much so that even by the late colonial period, nearly all education was still provided by missionaries (Nunn 2010:147). However, in much of Africa the widespread adoption of Christian religious affiliation was a direct consequence of mission over schooling. Adults rarely chose to become members of Christian churches. The conversion to Christianity during the missionary era was not the result of being so much touched by the Word of God. As we have discussed in previous paragraphs, the freed or ransomed slaves first found refuge at the mission centres/villages. They became Christians because of the compassionate heart and care of the missionaries. Furthermore, the Pogoro people in the southern part of Tanzania, chose to define themselves as Catholics and thought of themselves as Christian due to the historical establishment of the Catholic Church among them (Green 1995:29). Moreover, the situation in Tanzania as in other African colonial countries the widespread and conversion to Christianity was not the result of individuals attracted by the message of Christ, but rather, as a direct consequence of colonial education policy, and specifically the British government's policy of

grants in aid to missions. In Ulanga in the Pogoro area in Tanzania, all schools surrounding the district were under the control of the Catholic Capuchin fathers. Baptism was a routine part of a child's progression through primary school and for the children of non-Christians, was performed when a child reached the third standard. Baptism was practiced but the true faith was not required and Biblical meaning of baptism was not taught. The only adults who were baptized were those who were on their deathbeds or those who were suffering from certain diseases and who were under the missions' care. Conversion in the schooling systems was routine throughout the missionary era. Church control over education in Tanzania ended in 1969 after the independent government adopted the policy of nationalizing all schools that were under the church/mission. After the church had lost control over schools, it still had some access to continue teaching pupils important doctrine: the catechists still visited school to teach pupils for two to four hours per week. Being a Catholic in Tanzania was associated with schooling (Green 1995:30). Baptism of an individual was performed upon infants or pupils who attended mission schools. The baptism involved giving a new name, for the Pogoro people if you asked one what baptism meant or why it was necessary they replied 'it is just giving a name. Furthermore, religion to the Pogoro people is regarded as an institution that is associated with schooling. It is something that occurs externally in domestic life and one's ordinary existence. This is because 1) the church is involved with contributions (offerings), 2) demands full membership, and 3) is associated with rules and regulations where it also it has schedules and deadlines (Green 1995:33).

After independence in 1961 the new Tanzanian government under the leadership of Julius Kambarage Nyerere, reformed the education systems. Accordingly, the emphasis was to build and unite the nation, to train workers, and to abolish discrimination in education and to promote the Swahili language as a national language and the language of instruction for primary schools. The education philosophy which President Nyerere developed was "Education for Self-Reliance": it emphasized that the pupils were to learn life-skills, to develop critical thinking and to promote self-confidence (Wandela 2014:26).

5.4 The location and function of the Christian mission stations

The location of where to locate foreign mission stations was an important factor determined by missionaries. A number of factors played a role in determining a mission location of which among the most important was (1) access to clean water, (2) a place where it could be easy to import supplies from Europe and (3) an abundance of fertile soil that could be used to grow crops. From out of these strategic mission stations, they created networks that could enable missionaries to penetrate into the interior while maintaining access to supplies from Europe. The

colonial railway also assisted in the connection of supplies from Europe to the mission stations. Another aim of the Christian missionaries sent to Africa, was to bring an end to slavery and slave trading and to that end they built mission stations in areas where slavery was prevalent (Nunn 2010:148). More than that, throughout the colonial period, Christian mission stations were important socio-economic centres, where they functioned as banks, post offices, medical dispensaries, markets and employers. For example, at the mission station which was run by the Capuchin fathers from Switzerland near Mahenge town in (Tanzania, during the 1930's) over a thousand men were employed (Green 1995:28).

5.5 The problem of syncretism in Tanzanian Christianity

In the competitive world however, every-one and every systems wants to create a sense of relevance. Everything that was done through the years now has to be modified and emulate what the other is doing. Religion also is not free from this tendency. In African Christianity and in this particular in Tanzania, there is a tendency of including some elements of ideas from Traditional Religion which is copied and fused in Christian faith and worships (Adega 2022:119). Since the coming of the gospel in Africa, the African people have not considered it very significant in their lives. The beliefs in the occult, superstition, and demonic possession, still lives among many Christians in Africa and in particular in Tanzania. While the western churches are struggling with the contemporary doctrines of universalism, secularism, and existentialism, the African church is fighting against magic, witchcraft, and spirit-possession and the like. Therefore, most African people who have accepted the Christian faith still adhere to the African beliefs (Kasomo 2012:10). Syncretism within Christianity is another form of religious pluralism, for most Christians in Africa do not have one religious identity: one can be baptized as a member of a certain church, yet continue to practice African traditional religion beliefs at times when he/she encounters some problems in life. Syncretism and religious pluralism is defined as a process of combining religious elements of diverse origins in a new sect or movement. As a result it may create some confusion and bring about other negative qualities for a religious group (Dadoo 2004:103)

It has been argued that, missionaries approach to communities in Africa to suppress the African culture and practices was harmful. The claiming of superiority of Christian theology over the theology of African religion missionaries shut the door of dialogue between both religions. This was the genesis of the problem of syncretism and of religious plurality in African Christianity, so thus religious pluralism and syncretism continue to be the threat to Christian faith in the African context (Ike 2022:17). However, the major intention of the first missionaries in Africa was to present the message of Christ to the African people without losing the essence of the gospel

traditions. Yet during the process western missionaries failed to really understand African culture and religion so that to integrate the gospel which would be relevant and sufficient to the African people (Exenweke and Kanu 2012:71).

However, it is argued that the perception that Christianity was superior to African Traditional religion and culture, was due to the failure of the missionaries to negotiate and open dialogue with the African societies. The negligence regarding to understanding and appreciating that African Traditional religion was central to the lives of the African people, made the process of sharing the gospel to encounter challenges which caused syncretism and religious plurality in Africa. Research indicates that, some missionaries at their arrival in East Africa reported that African people had no religion or any form of belief. Other western missionaries however, had acknowledged the presence of African Traditional religions, yet preached that African beliefs were devilish, satanic or demonic. Therefore, the early encounter of Christianity with African beliefs created tension among the African societies which led to the murder of the early Christian converts, such as those of King of Buganda, Mwanga (Tugume 2015:193).

The relationship between Christianity, Traditional Religious practices and culture in Africa result in the religious pluralism phenomenon. Religious plurality is seen in the practice/perspectives of cultural anthropology. Since the arrival of Islam and Christianity in Africa, many Africans became nominal monotheists. According to Ike (2022) more than six-in-ten Africans are Christians (61%), three-in-ten are Muslims (30%), 3% practise Traditional religion beliefs, 3% practise Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and other faiths and another 3% do not adhere to any religious practices. However, the research indicates that many Africans who call themselves Christians or Muslims have not abandoned their indigenous practices. People go to churches on Sunday or in the Mosques on Friday and occupy positions in these religions yet continue to value the rituals of African religionists (native doctors) where they seek solutions to their everyday problems (Ike 2022:16).

Syncretism has continued up to date, and is still a problematic phenomenon in African Christian spheres. For, example the Nyankusa, and Pogoro Christians in Tanzania, in their conversion to Christianity did not prohibit their involvement in ancestor-oriented practices and healing rituals. In Africa, Christianity has a parallel existence to a local religious system, which it has neither replaced nor become enmeshed with, thus people perceive Christianity and non-Christian practice as equivalent systems of the same order. The conversion to Christianity for the African people does not inevitably entail miraculous transformation of the inner state of the person. Thus, the Christian affiliation aspect of a person's identity is an external state, not an internal one (Green 1995:26). The Pogoro Catholic Christians of Tanzania regarded Christianity as the

religion of business. This notion arose from the fact that the mission centre had functioned as a business venture. They had tractors for farming, employed many people from the community, and they had vehicles to rent, etc. More than that, the people in Mahenge do not distinguish the life-style of the priest and of the rich people in their areas such as the life of business men, and politicians as different, they regard them all as rich. In African Tradition beliefs which most of the people in Mahenge adhered to, the ruling as usually as follows: when someone disobeys the rules of the ATR he is punished by the divine powers within the ATR but in Christianity when the priests violate rules of the church there is not any punishment. Therefore, the people in Mahenge who regard themselves as Christians and at the same time adhere to their African Traditional beliefs regard Christianity as an institution (Green 1995:36-37; George and Ike 2022:1).

The Pogoro Catholic Christians in Tanzania distinguish between Christian practice and traditional rites—they perform both Christian practices and their traditional ways. The people in this area regard Christianity as a foreign religion. The Pogoro people define their traditional system as the way things have always been done in their society, and it is a practice which is oriented towards the spirits of the dead and those associated with territory. These spirits associate with the living people, and all their welfare (Green 1995:37; Oduyoye 1995:77).

5.6 The conversion in African Christianity

Gabbert (2001) argues that Christianization in Africa was extremely complex. Christian missionaries differed in their social and culture backgrounds and in the way of interpreting Christianity to the African people. The missionaries also differed in their strategies, methods, and their attitudes toward colonial administration. African converts also differed in their culture, status, gender and social identity (Gabbert 2001:291).

The conversion and change of religion in Africa includes change in religion, culture, and social change. The change is not merely theoretical but it also epistemological and methodological. It is a total shift that includes change in belief, identity, and tradition. This change entails the experience of inner transformation. The change for African Christians means discontinuity which is the contrast between the past and present. The discontinuity in Christian conversion in Sub-Saharan Africa appears in the emphasis of charismatic Christians (Bruner and Hurlbut 2020:1-2; Masondo 2015:87).

The conversion to Christianity for the African people brought about cultural change, which began early during the medieval period, but extended through the colonial, post-colonial eras all the way to the contemporary. There are some reasons that contributed to this change one is

Christian literature that focuses on issues of religious change. In the expression of charismatic and Pentecostal Christianity it gives the distinct characteristics of cultural discontinuity within African communities. Historically, religious conversion or change was intended by early Christians, so that, it is a deliberate turning-away from indifference or from an earlier form of piety to another. It is a change in consciousness that the old was wrong and the new is right. The evangelical conversion entails that the old was wrong, inferior and unhappy and the new is consciously right, superior, and happy. However, these approaches for conversion brought about scholarly discourse (Brune and Hurlbut 2020:5; Nwaogaidu 2020:141)

Today the change of conversion is vividly seen in some people who are born-again Christians, which also referred as Pentecostalism and Pentecostal-inspired charismatic within mainline Protestant churches and the Catholic Church. These movements in Tanzania are led by the younger generation who can then challenge the authority of the elders. Conversion now-days are characterized modernist, identity-challenging, and change/discontinuity. Their theology emphasizes on deliverance and breaking with the past (Lindhardt 2010:241).

5.7 Continuity and discontinuity in religious conversion in Africa

The problem of continuity and discontinuity in conversion has been a dominating factor in recent years. This problem is related to individual elements of life and identity where the decision deals with which elements should be discontinued or continued. This question of discontinuity and continuity began during the missionary era when the realization took hold regarding the sincerity of the Africans' intentions to become Christians. Missionaries of all denominations shared the concern about the mixing of African culture practices with that of Christianity. However, Protestant missionaries attempted to ensure whether a convert had broken sufficiently with paganism so that they truly would become followers of Christ and were new creatures in Christ (Bruner and Hurlbut 2020:6). During the missionary era, conversion to Christianity was not only theological but also social entailed change through modernization, such as new ways of dressing access to western medicine, and obtaining western education. On the other hand African converts, in this case Tanzanians, adopted both Christianity and their traditional culture and religion. However, Christian missionaries insisted that when a person converted to Christianity, that he should discontinue the practices of his traditional religion. This created a distinct conflict/clash and that is why Christianity is facing syncretism even today (Rweyemamu 2012:1).

5.8 The church and indigenous missionaries

The Church Missionary Society (CMS) settled in Mpwapwa in 1870s before they proceeded to Uganda as already discussed in this study. They spread the gospel among the people of Mpwapwa and the stories of the missionaries have been documented in letters and archives. However, the local people of Tanganyika, including their chiefs had been working with missionaries on education and church planting, and this played a significant role. The chiefs welcomed missionaries and some of them built classrooms and encouraged their people to attend school. Most of the chiefs who were responsible for keeping their culture and tradition safe, felt unable themselves to accept baptism. Culturally, the chiefs were polygamists, so therefore, it was not so easy for them to quickly accept the Christian faith, but they contributed in one way or another to the spread of Christianity (Akiri 2020:88).

Akiri (2020) maintains that the Church Missionary Society (CMS) depended much on their hosts, but sadly most of the researchers did not record the contribution of the indigenous people who had first assisted the missionaries in providing education and spreading the gospel (Akiri 2020:88). One vivid example was the mission centre of Mpwapwa, which was established by CMS missionaries and indigenous people from Mombasa, because during that time the Anglican church in Tanganyika was under the diocese of Mombasa (Chisaye 2019:25). The role of the indigenous people was ignored for a long time by historians. During this period of time the church in Ugogo and Ukaguru in central Tanganyika was growing rapidly spiritually as well as in numbers. At this time women also were just as much the pioneers of spreading the gospel as to men. There were also converts to Christianity from Islam in the Ukaguru area. These converts committed themselves in discipleship and leadership of the church which resulted in a church being better equipped than that of in their neighbours as in Kenya and Uganda (Akiri 2020:88; Knox 1991:1; Reed 2007:83).

The Lutheran church today is growing due to the work of indigenous missionaries, bishops, pastors and evangelists. Today, the Lutheran Church in Tanzania is one of the largest Lutheran churches in the world. It is estimated that 6.5 million of the Tanzanians are members of the Lutheran church (Zeiler 2018:18).

In regard to the Catholics in western Tanzania, Nyanto (2022) testifies that the growth of Christianity on that side of the country was the result of the contribution of the African catechists (both men and women) and teachers. These catechists and teachers lived in villages far from mission centres. They participated in the teaching of the youth and adults and their preparation for baptism. They also led Sunday worship services and translated some scripture and religious texts into the indigenous languages (Nyanto 2022:563).

5.9 The East African revival

When the East African revival movement occurred in the mid-1930s and mid-1950s for the first time in Uganda and later spread all over the countries of East Africa, most of the Christians who were touched by this revival, were members of mainline denominations. The revival touched individuals and they repented of their sins in public. The revival meetings took place in open air meetings-places/publicly. The repentance of specific sins made an individual feel spiritually changed and that brought a person from darkness into the light of salvation. The East African revivalists believed that this act of confession affected conversion. After a person had confessed and repented of his sins in public, the revivalists made a follow-up and continued fellowship with that individual for several weeks. The aim was to distinguish between the lives of a person before and after he had an encounter with Christ. This remained the emphasis of the Pentecostals even to-date. The African Christianity encouraged people to break with their past and this meant conversion and discontinuity (Bruner 2019:305).

The east African revival movements that had begun in south- west Uganda in 1930 influenced Tanzania as well, and it was more than an awakening that was considered to be more evangelistic and it had a great impact within the church. Apart from East African revival the mainline churches did not teach/apply the continuity and discontinuity concept after conversion. During the time of this revival the historic churches were astounded to experience the new awakening of the church even though many people had accepted and were experiencing renewal in their lives (Mckinnon 2017:95).

5.10 The Gospel today

Despite the fact that the mainline churches had existed from the nineteenth century, the evangelical Pentecostalism, charismatic, and rival has been much influencing and challenging the mainline denominations. In Tanzania for example, a big number of mainline church members have been influenced by Pentecostalism, charismatic and revival and many of them have moved from their denominations to joining the revivalists (Larbi 2002:87).

The Pentecostal charismatic movement in Tanzania is not seen as denominational but it bears the marks of revival movements. Karl and Marion Wittich were the first Pentecostal charismatic missionaries from the USA to arrive in Tanzania in 1913 and they established its first mission centre in Itigi. This mission centre was the only Pentecostal mission in the colony of Tanzania. Later in 1927 another Pentecostal mission centre was opened in Igale near the modern city of Mbeya. From these mission centres many Pentecostal missionary agents such as the Swedish Free Mission, the British Assemblies of God worked in Tanzania and many people were

attracted to join Pentecostal churches; many of these people who joined came from the mainline denominations (Mckinnon 2017:87-88).

The neo-Pentecostal churches in Tanzania, now attracts people because of its greater involvement in providing social, spiritual, and economic perspectives. Its theology places a lot of emphasis upon healing and community building. The neo-Pentecostal churches teach that Salvation implies being free from spiritual and physical realms, it entails wholeness/completeness healing (Dilger 2007:60). The rise of neo-Pentecostalism in Africa and in this particular case in Tanzania is linked with its role that it plays in dealing with the social, economic, and spiritual spheres that fit globalization and modernism. It offers the moral and spiritual explanations about globalization and modernity. It is also offers an awareness to their members to engage in the global market economy that will change and affect the lives of individuals and groups. This movement preaches the gospel of wealth and health; the neo-Pentecostal urges its members to solve their problems by handling their frustrations by means of only following the teachings of God and the Bible so then no-one can escape from social-economic hardships. The experience of illness and suffering of an individual is indeed the primary reason for that person to convert to a Pentecostal church. Through this movement people find perspective by which they can grasp the changing world (Dilger 2007:62; Freeman 2013:3).

However, my personal opinions regarding the neo-Pentecostalism movements is that, in recent years these movements have brought theological arguments between scholars due to some prophets and apostles of these movements mixing the teaching of the Bible and some sort of African traditional religion aspects when dealing with the issues of the people. The problem of Pentecostalism, African independent churches, and Charismatic movements, and influences/practices present another form of pluralism which is the mixing of African beliefs, Christianity and other philosophies in practice. The independent churches are the fastest growing churches in Africa, and they are having a lot of impact on the missionary-founded churches. Because these churches have impact on the African people, it is necessary to briefly investigate their beliefs as to, what these churches are, why they grow, and what part of their theology makes them acceptable to the African people.

The independent churches in Africa, are mostly formed from within a tribal unit with a distinct name: they are identified as Christians and acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. These independent churches can also be either separated from a mission church, or from another existing African independent church. However, there are several reasons for the rise of independent churches from missionary-founded churches. These can be historical, political, economic, social, ethnic,

and theological (Olowola 1984:21; Lindhardt 2015:253). Adedibu (2018) holds that, the negligence of the western Christian missionaries to address the existentialism of the realities of the Africans and the stigmatization of African Traditional Religions is the major factor which contributed to the rise of African independent churches. The existence of these churches was the response of the African people to the Europeanized Christianity with its imperialistic doctrine and practices that negated expectation of its new context–Africa. The western churches are declining while African independent churches and African Pentecostal churches are flourishing in Africa and South America. The African independent churches had for years been involved in various human and community transformation initiatives (Adedibu 2018:1).

The reason for the fastest growth of the independent churches in Africa is their goal to bring Africa to Christ through the media which makes it easily understandable to Africans and bring more relevantly the message that meets the needs of the African people. The independent churches in Africa, are growing in numbers compared to missionary-founded churches which grow biologically: this is because of the miraculous and healing ministries which they practise (Olowola 1984:26)

The Theology of the African independent churches, Pentecostalism and charismatic movements is characterized by visions, revelations, and the performing of miracles and wonders. The belief in visions and revelations is the central theme/doctrine practised in the independent churches. Most of their leaders claim to have seen visions and revelations from God (Olowola 1984:28). However, African Traditional religion represents a primary view of the African Christians. In the African context every event that happens in life has spiritual causes: the negative events can be resisted/opposed in prayers and in this context sacred and secular realms are inseparable. The Pentecostal, independent churches, and charismatic movements theology, have back-grounds on African worldview which is very close to African culture. This theology is built on the theory that whatsoever is happening in the invisible world is manifested in the visible world. That is why the African Pentecostals are concerned with solving personal and social problems which are interpreted in the African world view (as the responsibility of) authorities, rulers, powers, and spiritual forces. Moreover, the western theological seminaries which were founded in Africa by western missionaries abandoned the belief in malevolent powers. The theological education which provided for these seminaries is purely of a western nature which opposes the reality of demon possession and argues that the theory of demonic possession is the result of individual psychological problems. More than that, western theologians are of the opinion that during the ministry of Jesus when he cast out demons, that that event was symbolic and was not to be taken literally. When compared to the western worldview, and its theology, the Pentecostal, independent churches, and charismatic theology have a huge impact on the global southern

countries which include the continents of Africa, Asia, and South America. The impact is great because it deals with spiritual spheres which are essential to the global southern members (Nel 2019:1-2). Consequently, Pentecostalism with its pneumatic spirituality attracts African people because of its emphasis on deliverance and exorcism theology. Much emphasis on deliverance in Pentecostal movements can be critically judged but there are existential challenges in Africa to which western theology/Christianity has no specific solutions/answers. The independent churches and African Pentecostals were instituted by indigenous Africans and thus it accommodates African traditional beliefs in some instances when interpreting interferences of human destinies such as illness and poverty. This theology, interprets Christianity in African Tradition religion and African worldview in relation to traditional goals. This is where religious plurality is in practice. An example is the cursing of an enemy in order for one to be successful and healthy, to harvest more crops, to find a suitable marriage partner, etc. All these have been part of the spiritual practices of the indigenous African religion. However, Pentecostal, African independent churches, and charismatic movements have changed these practices into biblical perspectives. Also, African Pentecostalism believes that curses of an individual can be connected to ancestors or someone in the bloodline. Therefore, these curses have consequences in the life of that particular person if these are not 'disconnected' through prayers and deliverance. In this ideology if the sin of the ancestors is not dealt with it may cause harm such as chronic diseases, miscarriages, suicidal tendencies, poverty, etc. This belief is justified by African Pentecostalism from the Bible, Exodus 20:5, and Deuteronomy 5:9-10; 28 (Nel 2018:2-3).

The teaching of the Prosperity gospel is another form of religious plurality for it attracts all kinds of people from all types of religious backgrounds because of their promises. The Prosperity gospel is widespread throughout African Christianity within African independent churches, neo-Pentecostal churches, and charismatic movements. This gospel is founded on the biblical promises of an abundantly-provided life but from the viewpoint of African world. As discussed in chapter 3 of this research, Salvation in African belief means finding answers to every problem in life and overcoming the agents of evil and bad situations in real life. Questions may rise as to whether Prosperity gospel teachings are heresy or orthodox but Scripture speaks of wealth as blessings and at times as a danger. However, the teaching of the Prosperity gospel is the integration of Scripture's perspective on wealth possession and the context of the holistic in the African worldview (Barron 2022:103).

Consequently, the theology of the African independent churches, Pentecostal, and charismatic movements has some sort of religious plurality in practice, since they mix some ideologies of African Traditional Religion with biblical theology. For-example in Tanzania, some prophets

such as Boniface Mwamposa emerged, who on February 2020 held a big conference in Moshi town. At this event 20 people died because of the crowd wanting to go first during the attempt to walk into the anointing oil that had been poured on the ground-this so that people could walk bare-foot in order to be free from all their problems and to be prosperous in their lives (especially in regarding to health and wealth). These kinds of conferences have been conducted by prophets like Boniface in many cities and towns in Tanzania. During his meetings he prays for goods such as water, oil, handkerchiefs and salt, etc. These so that people can buy these commodities in order to use them to get rid of any problems they may have/experience (AyoTv, 2020). There are many so called prophets, pastors, and bishops from African, independent churches, neo-Pentecostal churches and in charismatic movements in Tanzania who use water, their photos, and other domestic commodities used at home to bless them and use them as charms in order to get rid of any problems he/she encounters in life. These practices are no different from activities that the traditional healers perform.

The author's opinion is that, the gospel preached in African, should concentrate on the emancipation of Africans from the yoke of sin from biblical point of view without mixing African traditional beliefs or western philosophies and culture. It has been noted that the gospel preached by African initiated churches, new-Pentecostal churches, and charismatic movements are well accepted by Africans; this is because of the nature of dealing with spiritual and physical needs of the African people due to the media which makes it easily understandable by the African people. More than that, it has been found that, missionary ignorance, and stigmatization of the African traditional theology and beliefs when first introduced the gospel in Africa, caused the genesis of the outbreak of syncretism and of religious plurality among African Christianity. It has been established through this research that the sermons of the Prosperity gospel are targeting areas such as those of political and social power, prosperity in economic power, and the overcoming of diseases, and occult forces. This ideology is also very common and is practised in African traditional religions. The gospel of Christ which the church was mandated in the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20) is to seek the lost and to make disciples. The mission church was commissioned to preach crucified Christ, and not to only put emphasis on preaching, healing, miracles and possession of wealth.

5.11 Conclusion

According to the above study materials cited in this study, it is evidence that, the first Christians in Tanzania (former slaves) joined Christianity because of the compassionate heart they encountered from missionaries. The conversion during this era was not so much through the teaching of the Word of God to the people before they themselves would-decide to follow Christ.

The evangelism methodologies/strategies during this period of time were more because of the provision of physical/social facilities than the preaching and teaching of the Word. Therefore, those who converted to Christian faith felt comfortable and secure in the hands of Christian missionaries. Christianity was the religion that had come to set them free physically. This phenomenon is the same as that of the Israelites who expected that the Messiah who would come, would set them free from their political and social traumas which they faced. Thus, due to the situation missionaries encountered at first when they reached the coast of East Africa, they first had to use their environment and situations to communicate the gospel and love of Christ through caring and abolishing slavery and slave trading.

It has become evident that, the early Christian missionaries to Tanzania preached the gospel by providing care for slaves and education and health facilities. The gospel during this period of time was not direct but was through the provision in the physical needs of the people. This chapter has revealed that, the missionary and colonial education systems produced many Christians: these had joined the church not because of their being touched by the Word of God but through the educational routine where all enrolled pupils had to be baptized and given new names. However, the East African revival and the new-Pentecostal evangelical movements had brought a new direction of conversion and evangelization of the gospel. These movements bear the marks of revival, but though, it is not a denominational affiliation, it has influenced all the mainline churches including the Catholic Church. Besides that, the evangelization in Tanzania, went through different stages and underwent various changes from the time when the first missionaries arrived, until today.

CHAPTER 6 AN EVALUATION OF THE QUESTION: DID THE CHURCH AT SOME OR OTHER STAGE COMPROMISE THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION WITH THE RELIGIOUS PLURALIST IDEOLOGY?

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is tempting to know whether at some or other point the church compromised the gospel of salvation with religious pluralism. It has been indicated in chapter 5 of this study that the early missionaries demonstrated/showed the love of Christ to the people by providing in physical needs such as education, health, and care to the runaway/escaped slaves. During those years, the proclamation of the gospel in Tanzania went through different stages such as that of the East African revival as well as the time of neo-Pentecostalism where the emphasis was on conversion and change-this involved continuity and discontinuity. The proclamation of the gospel in the modern era is not denominational but rather it has the element of revival which has influenced all the denominations, the mainline churches and the Catholic Church as well. The initiator of this modern revival is the neo-Pentecostal movement. Moreover, the theology of independent churches, neo-Pentecostalism and charismatic movements is relaying Bible texts into African Traditional beliefs-perspectives and in an African worldview. That phenomenon creates the tendency towards syncretism and religious plurality in African Christianity. Chapter 6 of this research is trying to evaluate whether at some point the church compromised the gospel with pluralist ideology which is presently very popular in modern Tanzania.

6.2 The Ujamaa (brotherhood/socialism) ideology, the genesis of religious pluralism and Christianity's compromise of the gospel in Tanzania

The origin of Ujamaa in Tanzania can be traced back to the formation of the Tanganyika African Union (TANU), the political party that was founded by Julius Kambarage Nyerere (1922-1999). Ujamaa was not just a theory but it was an ideology. The ideology was developed in order for Tanzania to be free from the yoke of domination. TANU determined that Tanzania should be free to govern herself and to determine her own destiny as a country. Through TANU, Nyerere and the people of Tanzania obtained freedom in 1961. Ujamaa (socialism/brotherhood) became the official policy for the ruling party and remained the governmental ideology for twenty-four years during Nyerere's reign in Tanzania (Cornelli 2012:22; Kessler 2006:45; Boddy-Evans 2019:1; Blommaert 2012:27; Ibanga 2018:47).

The Ujamaa ideology also supports religious plurality and it contributes to the church compromising the gospel in its practices. Tanzania has more than 130 ethnicities with different religious backgrounds so it would be feasible for violence and chaos to erupt within these communities. Yet, these communities still live in harmony and peace despite these religious and ethnic diversities. The Ujamaa theory and perspectives regarding religion and ethnicity brought all Tanzanians together. The first President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, had worked through politics to build a society that had a place for religion but not religion mixed with politics. The political view of religion in Tanzania during the Ujamaa-period up to the present was religious-neutral/uncommitted. However, believers of any religion were not permitted to mix religion with politics. They were supposed to support socialist development and to work on the framework of Ujamaa. Moreover, the religious entities during this era were required to work by following Ujamaa policies. During this period, the church had to compromise its exclusive Salvation message with its fellow Muslims and African traditional beliefs so that they could share resources in brotherhood ideologies (Ortiz 2011:29-30)

The history of religious pluralism and the compromising of the gospel in Tanzania can be justified in the Ujamaa (socialism/brotherhood) ideology that was promoted by the first President of Tanzania, Julius Kambarage Nyerere, who attempted to bring together Tanzanians of all religions. Ujamaa was a social, ethical, and political structure, which was established in 1967 in Arusha, Tanzania, and later followed by ethical and accountable leadership. During the Ujamaa, Tanzanians were supposed to live as one regardless of their religious affiliations or ethical backgrounds. It was an attempt to develop a sense of respect and human dignity and they were required to live a life without discrimination regarding gender, religion, race or tribe. Regarding religion, Nyerere believed and worked on separating religion and the state, and he managed to suppress religious centrism and to maintain a secular government which provided its citizens freedom to worship and choose their own religion (Keya 2022:1-2).

Before the arrival of Islam and Christianity in Tanzania, back in the first century, these religions were suspicious of each other. The early encounter of Islam and Christianity in Tanzania was also very distrustful of each other. When Christian missionaries came to Tanzania, apart from spreading Christianity they also came to abolish slavery and the slave trade. These activities of Christian missionaries were not acceptable to the Arab Muslims who had pioneered-slavery and slave trading in East Africa. However, Muslim-Christian relationships in Tanzania went through three stages: the first one was before independence. At this time Muslims participated a lot in politics and activities to fight against colonialism. The second phase was during post-independence when Nyerere, established a national building project where he abolished any dominance of groups; consequently, he appointed different people from different backgrounds

to form the government. At this point, the dominant Muslims felt rather unhappy. The third phase was in 1992 after the introduction of the multi-party systems. It was a time when politicians and their followers boldly voiced that after independence Nyerere sidelined Muslims in the government and other posts; now the right time had come for the liberation of Muslims through political movements. From this time up to date tension emerged between Christians and Muslims from time to time (Keya 2022:3-4).

The African socialism or (Ujamaa) ideology which was developed by the first President of Tanganyika, Julius Nyerere, concentrated on components such as freedom, unity, equality, and respect for human dignity and human rights. Nyerere's ideology on human rights was based on the UN's Declaration of human rights of 1948, Nyerere was also an advocate of religious tolerance and pluralism. He was a Catholic, yet he developed ties with other religious leaders especially the Muslims who made out approximately 50% of the Tanzanian population (Sanga 2020:16-17; Vahakanga 2016:342). Moreover, the founding forefathers of Tanzania had made an effort to build a nation that would remain strong despite its multi-ethnic and multi-religious nature. The Ujamaa ideology intended to give justice and equality to all people without exception. The whole concept of Ujamaa was based on African traditional culture which emphasized self-reliance and opposed the colonial policy of capitalism. It was easy for the Tanzanian people to understand the concept of Ujamaa because it used the ideology that already existed in society. The concept worked very well. The Ujamaa Villages were formed, and people of different religions and ethnic groups lived together. People worked together and shared resources. At this time, as discussed elsewhere in this thesis, schools that were owned by missionaries were also nationalized so as to give equal opportunities to all people. During the Ujamaa (African socialism) a plurality of religion was recognized by both government and the church (Thazhathukunnel 2011:220). Even though Tanzania comprised of a multi-cultural and multi-religion situation, tolerance and respect were cherished throughout the history of the country despite conflicts between Christians and Muslims sometimes emerging; these societies still occasionally have social interactions on various occasions such as marriage celebrations, and funeral services; there are also intermarriages and these communities live together in harmony and peace (Thazhathukunnel 2011:223; Sakata *et al* 2021:68)

However, the Ujamaa policy began to face challenges and proved a failure during the 1970s. The failure of Ujamaa was caused by both external and internal factors. After the introduction of Ujamaa, problems started to emerge within the country; even though the Ujamaa used the means such as villagization, nationalization, and education for self-reliance to change the society and economic systems, in the end it proved a failure. The internal factor that caused the Ujamaa policy to fail was the emergence of two groups within the governing class. The first

group was the Indian and Pakistani citizens who constituted orthodox capitalists, experts, and people from the commercial class. The second group was that of the Africans which included rich/wealthy farmers, hotel owners, owners of small-scale industries, bureaucrats and the managerial employees of foreign-owned companies. These groups were unhappy with the Ujamaa policy (Keskin and Abdalla 2019:299; Jaimungal 2019:3). Moreover, in 1973-1975, Tanzania faced two seasons of drought and a severe shortage of rain and consequently, food scarcity and famine hit the country. Thus in 1975, the government had to import 25,000 tons of maize and 483,000 tons of grain to combat famine. There were also many other issues related to the rise and failure of the Ujamaa policy (Keskin and Abdalla 2019:300).

However, the Ujamaa policy is not the concern of our research but it was discussed here to indicate the genesis of religious pluralism and how it compromised the spread of the gospel in Tanzania. According to author's opinion, the settings of Ujamaa ideologies and their policies in Tanzania, also affected the church because, at this particular time, religious plurality was recognized and practised by both the church and the state. The propagation of the gospel during Ujamaa also changed, as the compromising of the gospel started and evangelists and missionaries, avoided evangelizing or planting churches in areas where Muslims were highly populated and talked about their exclusive message of Salvation to non-Christians. One of the Ujamaa policies was to nationalize all schools which had previously been owned by Christian missionaries. The church was unhappy about this. The church felt that their chances to share the gospel with school students had been taken away. Missionaries held their meetings in Limuru, Kenya to air their opinions regarding Ujamaa. Some thought that it was Communism, while others thought that it was linked to Christianity (Mndolwa and Denis 2016:209).

The Swahili language also, contributed to promoting religious pluralism and compromise of the gospel in Tanzania. In an attempt to bring Tanzanians together-who are divided into more than 130 ethnicities-Nyerere used the Swahili language to unite the communities and to transmit his political ideas and vision. Even though the Swahili language had originated from the Arab Muslim merchants who used it to spread the Islam religion and for trade purposes, it was also used as a medium to communicate with all Tanzanians (Ortiz 2011:30). Nyerere made a connection between the new nation and its language, Swahili. The Ujamaa ideology used many tools to build an independent nation. Among these tools, the Swahili language was one. The language was used to spread Ujamaa ideas and values, and it facilitated the promotion of democracy in any decision-making activities within Tanzanian societies. Moreover, the Swahili language became a particular mark of the Tanzanian citizens by the fellow Africans in other countries (Blommaert 2012:37). Missionaries also used the Swahili language to communicate

the gospel with the Tanzanian people. More than that, missionaries translated the Scripture into many other vernacular languages in addition to the Swahili translation (Woodward 2014:18).

6.3 The church compromises the gospel of salvation with religious pluralism ideologies

Contemporary Africa is home of all the world's major religions: Buddhism, Hinduism Christianity and Islam. In this context, the philosophy of thoughts such as those on pluralism and post-modernism arises. All these religions and philosophy have been established on the back of African Traditional Religion (s) which has had deep roots for the African people. This phenomenon is debated among Christians, and it needs more theological findings to have a true definition and identity of a biblical Christian convert on the continent. However, the pluralism and modernism philosophical ideologies did affect the development of biblical spirituality of the church (Nwaomah 2017:67).

The view of religious pluralism is that, more than one religion is correct, and that no religion enjoys the status that it is the ultimate/best in comparison to others. The truth is that the world religions appear to be incomparable. In the Christian perspective the salvific efficacy of Jesus extends universally but can only be obtained/attained by those who believe in Christ (the pluralists reject this asymmetry) they maintain that more than one world religion is correct, but there are some which are included in correctness and some are excluded. The issue of 'correct' is a hot debate for those who oppose and support the pluralism ideology. The term 'correct' depends on whose view is being discussed (Ruhmkorff 2013:513).

There is a plurality of religious traditions in the world we live in, each with its own beliefs, spiritual practices, ethical outlook, art forms, and cultural ethos. Each tradition has its own teachings and some are very radical. An example follows: there are different teachings in theories such as whether the world was created or emanated? Or is it eternal? Do human beings live once on this earth or is there another life after this life? And so on and so on. Consequently, salvation the central pivotal point of almost all major religions: therefore, in Christianity salvation is attained only through the atoning death of Christ on the cross. This exclusive message of salvation in Christianity is not acceptable to other beliefs and is debated furiously (Hick 1998:365)

The ruling authorities encourage religious homogeneity in their societies to integrate religion and culture so as to enable them to govern/rule their state/country. The authorities are aware of religious diversity within their societies and that's why they implement laws that provide religious freedom of choice and freedom for one to change and proclaim their religious faith in the

context of mutual tolerance. However, the church has been facing criticism within religious plurality communities due to its message of exclusive Salvation in Christ. Thus the exclusive message of Christ arouses intolerance within religious pluralism societies. The commitment of Christians is to proclaim that Christ is the only Saviour and that there is no way to obtain/receive Salvation other than through Christ (Acts 4:12). The exclusivism of Salvation in Christianity is the central mainstream of their faith. That is where intolerance and social conflicts from people of other faiths begin (Weng 1998:10). When religious pluralism and compromising of the gospel are practised in Christianity it offers faith which is too diluted to meet religious needs. Moreover, religious pluralism entails the abandonment of the central belief which historically defines Christian identity just as much as the historical and theological doctrine of the incarnation of God in Christ does. Christians practise religious pluralism and compromise the gospel when abandoning the exclusive message of salvation in Christ (Weng 1998:11).

Due to the multi-religion and multi-culture in Tanzania as in many countries of the world, the church in Tanzania is aware of and is struggling to keep its identity. But, from time to time, there emerge an attitude of compromising the biblical truth and the gospel of Salvation with religious pluralism ideologies. The government promotes religious freedom and peace to its citizens and the law's implementation is more concerned with respecting differences in religious matters so as to keep the peace. The task remaining here is for the church to continue to keep its identity of proclaiming the truth of the gospel yet in a way that would not offend people of other faiths. As it has been argued elsewhere in this study, Salvation from a Christian perspective cannot be found or obtained elsewhere but only through Christ. This is what Christian Scripture testifies (John 14:6); it insists that Salvation is only available to anybody who will confess and accept Christ (this biblical truth is not acceptable to pluralists). Religious pluralism argues that Christianity needs to discard religious exclusivism since exclusivism intensifies social conflicts (Weng1998:10). According to Christian theology and its beliefs it needs to abandon any talk of the exclusive nature of Christ. Christians also have to look at the Christological image not as literary-definitive but as literary-symbolic, because its doctrine is not about reality or truth but it is about the rules of life. To respond to religious pluralism, Christians also have to follow Christ's preaching example which was kingdom-centered. The Kingdom-centered gospel does not contradict the gospel that Christ is the only Saviour for he is the King of the Kingdom because he is the only Saviour who demolished the kingdom of Satan (Weng 1998:11).

The author's opinion is that, when Christian missionaries arrived in Tanzania, the Islam religion had already spread in the country, especially in the coastal areas and onto the Island of Zanzibar. Mission centres were first established in Zanzibar, and Bagamoyo due to the route which missionaries used to reach Tanzania from Europe, and from other Western countries.

However, the coastal cities were dominated by Muslims, and therefore, missionaries avoided working too much where Islam was dominant and so they moved to the interior of the land. Missionaries compromised the gospel when they were not open to share the information about Salvation in Christ with the Muslims; instead they approached the matter showing/demonstrating the love of Christ through the provision of physical needs to the people. Christian missionaries shared the gospel in-directly with the people, so this phenomenon can be understood as compromising the gospel and yet as a technique to pave the way for evangelization. Missionaries, though still went to people who adhered to Africa traditional religions

However, the elements that indicate that the church in Tanzania was compromising the gospel with religious pluralism can be seen in the saying that Christians, Muslims, and African Traditional Religions worshipped the same God (Mkumbata and Nyangau 2022:70).

6.4 Do Jews, Christians, Muslims, and African Traditional beliefs, worship the same God?

Jews, Christians and Muslims are all in one group, viz. they monotheists, they believe in one God: one God who is sovereign and to whom they are to be obedient and we can find that the attributes of God and his acts are valued and expressed commonly by all three faiths. Thus Jews, Christians, and Muslims believe that God is the creator of all, revealer, Saviour, and judge. The question of whether Jews, Christians, and Muslims worship the same God has raised attention among biblical scholars, theologians, missionaries, and philosophers. To answer, 'yes' to this question rises concerns such as the understanding of Muslims, and Jews about the Trinity, especially the Father-Son or Son-Father relationship. In general, the point of departure/difference between Jews, Christians and Muslims is the understanding and expression of the Trinity, doctrine of the scripture and the doctrine of Christ etc. (Tsoukalas 2020:337,338; Kibble 2018:30).

According to Hick (1993) Jews, Christians and Muslims worship the same God. The author is of the opinion that all of the scripture of these religions speaks about God who revealed himself to mankind. The Quran refers to Jews and Christians as people of the Book and testifies that "We believe what has been sent down to us, and we believe what has been sent down to you. Our God and your God is one, and to Him, we submit" (Quran 28:46). It is also written, "we have sent revelations to you as we sent revelations to Noah and the prophets (who came) after him, and We sent revelations to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and their offspring, and Jesus and Job and Moses to whom God spoke directly" (Quran 4:163-164). These verses claim that Allah of the Quran inspired the Hebrew prophets and spoke to Moses who later inspired

Jesus; this means that to worship the God of these earlier revelations is to worship Allah of the Quran (Hick 1993:146; Newby 2006:2)

The New Testament, refer to many texts from the Torah. The God whose kingdom is coming as Jesus proclaimed, is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jesus was a devoted Jew and his fellow Jews answering him speculated that he was one of their ancient prophets who had returned to life when he asked "Who do people say that I am"? (Mark 8:27). Jesus was also proclaimed as the fulfillment of the expected Messiah- Peter declared this when he was preaching to the Jews (Acts 3:13-14). However, the God whom Jesus called his heavenly Father was also the God that was already spoken of in the Torah. Moreover, the Torah does not speak about Yahweh as a later God of the New Testament or of the later Quran. Therefore, Christianity and Islam continue as monotheistic within the Semitic tradition of worshipping the same God whom Jews have always worshipped. However, within each of the three religions, there are universal aspects relating to God according to their historical and scriptural accounts. This universal aspect of God is common within Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Each of the religions speaks of God who is the creator of everything. Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" and the Quran declares that "Your Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in six spans (Quran 10:3). The one God who is claimed within these traditions has a moral nature which encompasses both the more demanding attributes of justice, righteousness, and wrath (Hick 1993:147).

Ridder and Woudenberg (2014) present the reformed view of whether Christians and non-Christian religions believe and worship the same God. It is plausible that religions which adhere to the Abrahamic refer to the same God but it is however wrong to conclude that all religions which adhere to Abrahamic belief worship the same God; and that in other religions which do not adhere to the Abrahamic line do not refer to this God (Ridder and Woudenberg 2014:1).

To worship God requires the belief in God, and also the belief in God is adequate if there is no reference to God, and there can be no reference to God unless God exists. In the reference to God, we can see whether Christians and non-Christians refer to the same God. This view is according to the Reformed school of thought. Since God revealed himself to all people through creational/general revelation, according to the Reformed view reference to God is shared throughout the world's religions. Even though Jews, Christians and Muslims share some descriptive names of God and attributes such as "God as creator of heaven and earth, omnipotent, omniscient, and perfectly good, righteous, merciful and judge of all people", Christians have gone further on descriptions they use, which are unique and important to their faith. This unique descriptiveness of God is that God is a Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This description of God in Christianity is emphatically rejected by Muslims and Jews. Due to the description of God in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam quite clearly reveals differences and gives some clarity to the question of whether or not Jews, Christians, and Muslims refer to the same God. This is the point of distinct deviation. However, the response as to the general revelation and Abrahamic history of faith that Judaism, Christianity and Islam display may possibly indicate that some are referring to the same God while others are not. This is then depending on how they describe God. Christianity proclaims that God is a Trinity while Judaism and Islam emphasize that God is one in every respect (God is not a Trinity). Due to descriptive theory, the Reformed view does not imply that all religions believe and refer to the same God. This is due to the descriptive theory about God and the reference and response to the general revelation of God to the Jews, Christians, and Islam (Ridder and Woudenberg 2014:23-25).

According to Biesbrouck (2017), since Muslims reject the doctrine of the Trinity and incarnation, the author argues that evangelical Christians have to open a dialogue with the Muslims to share with them the doctrine of the Trinity and incarnation so that they may understand each other. Biesbrouck (2017) agrees that Christians may say that Muslims worship the same God as Christians and continue to stress their mission to evangelize the Muslims. The author adds that the same God affirmation does not mean one has to endorse interreligious worship with Muslims. The idea that Muslims and Christians worship the same God does not entail that their liturgies are irrelevant or exchangeable (Biesbrouck 2017:265). It is rather more debated among scholars and philosophers whether Judaism, Islam, and Christianity worship the same God. These major religions share some broad categories about their supreme deities but this does not justify concluding that they worship the same God. The differences and uniqueness of Christianity are about the worship of God in Trinitarian and Christ-centered regard (Tachin 2017:183).

The doctrine on the divine Messiah whom Christians identify as a personal presentation of Jesus Christ, raises different interpretations within Judaism which rejects Jesus as Messiah. Islam also adopted Judaism's tradition of rejecting Christ as Messiah with an additional interpretive eschatological aspect emphasizing that Muhammad is the final prophet and the greatest prophet yet not considering him as the saviour. However, people believe that these three monotheistic religions worship the same God but in different ways. Moreover, from time to time there emerged conflicts and tensions among these major religions which indicates that there are differences between their beliefs. The tensions and conflicts which arise in these religions may cause persecution and oppression for the people of religious minorities which will affect the economy, politics and social life. Therefore, the authorities encourage religious plurality and emphasizes that all religions worship the same God. We may ask the question:

Does the saying that Jews, Islam, and Christianity worship the same God reduce conflicts? Still even though, these religions may have the same deity in view not all their worship is acceptable to God. This then implies that they do not worship the same God. Only God can determine which worship is acceptable to him, thus all must unite under such worship. Because this unity is not possible, therefore, conflicts within religions will continue until the end of time (Tachin 2017:184).

According to author's opinion, the saying that Christians and Muslims worship the same God is to open up the door to evangelize Muslims as an act of compromising the gospel with religious pluralism ideologies. Then too, the concept of the Trinity and incarnation can be shared clearly with Muslims so that they may understand the God of the Bible. Christians, however, with their message of the exclusivism of Salvation need to share this with Muslims and people of other faiths without compromising its nature context.

6.5 Does African traditional religion then truly refer to the same God of the Bible?

The central themes of African Indigenous Religions (AIR) and their worldview, the problems of African people, their needs, and aspirations are very significant when Christians need to have a dialogue with AIR believers. The first central theme amongst AIR believers is the Supreme God and his relationship with human-beings. In the African belief, the Supreme Being is the creator and head of everything. He is the controller, everlasting, omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, and he is unique and incomparable. In African Indigenous Religions, human-beings/man is also important for it acknowledges that God is the originator of human-being/man. This means that to be a human is to share a sense of community. The relationship of human beings can be extended to the invisible world, the spirit world, and in all the hierarchical orders namely, God, Deity, and Ancestors. When there is any problem between these connections there is a need to pacify and restore the lost relationship (Adamo 2011:3). When Christians worship God the Father, and God the Son, (Jesus) in the presence of the Holy Spirit, the issue of monotheism versus polytheism arises especially concerning the nature and position of Jesus in the Trinity. However, the doctrine of the Trinity is uniquely Christian which includes the belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God who alone mediates between God and men. This doctrine in one way or another is similar to that of African Traditional beliefs which worship one Supreme Being and the ancestors are intermediate to the one Supreme Being (but the two doctrines are different in their context). However, the doctrine of the Trinity is what defines the Christian faith among world religions. Christianity is unique because it claims that God is one yet there are three who are God. This doctrine stands at the heart of the Christian faith. Throughout history, Christianity has maintained that they worship one God yet in three

persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Manganyi and Buitendag 2013:1-3). African beliefs and Christianity do not refer to and worship the same God. In African Indigenous belief, the ancestors stand as an intermediary between Supreme God and human beings. Also, other divinities and spirits are important in AIR. But in Christianity, Christ is the intermediary between God and human-beings. Since Tanzania is a multi-religious society, apart from Christianity and Islam, African traditional religion is also alive and active in many ways. Believers in Christianity or Islam continue with African Traditional beliefs and practices. In African Traditional religions also, God is a Supreme Being and is regarded to be the originator of everything in the universe. Not only that, but in African belief, God is related/works with other divinities-this concept is explained in chapter 4 of this study (Korsah and Kuwornu-Adjaottor 2019:280).

The author's opinion is that, this doctrine indicates that African beliefs and Christianity might share some major understanding and knowledge of God, yet they describe God in different ways and it is not orthodox/ acceptable to conclude that they worship the same God.

6.6 Inter-religious organizations and dialogue are the sources for Christians to employ in order to compromise the gospel

Interfaith involves different religious members being together. The dialogue is a discussion between members of different religion who aim to exchange ideas and opinions for them in order to have a good knowledge about the other religions. This interreligious dialogue is about people of different faiths coming to a mutual understanding and respect that allows them to live and cooperate despite their differences. However, each religion remains true to its faith while allowing other religions to practise their religious activities freely. Interreligious dialogue is concerned with human interactions and relationships and it can take place between individuals as well as a community at large. This dialogue involves the practice in daily life dealing with the encounters regarding religious differences. It does not attempt to break up the walls of division among the communities, since the objective of interreligious dialogue is peace. Moreover, interreligious dialogue has a lot of discussion, but the dialogue is not supposed to be a debate. It aims to seek to know what other religions entail and from that viewpoint each religious member has to remain true to faith while respecting to other faith as well. In other words, the dialogue of interfaith is to accept religious plurality. The aim of interreligious dialogue is not to change the idea of other faiths but it aims to find a common ground to focus on emphasizing peace and harmony in the community. It allows the members of different religions to talk about their faiths and to listen and learn about other faiths. The dialogue is not about convincing other members to accept other beliefs or ideas (Andrabi 2020:265).

Mkumbata and Nyangau (2022) agree that religious dialogue fosters the development of genuine relationships with other people of other faiths. Because the cause of conflicts starts from leaders' perspectives about other people's faith, therefore, dialogue between religious leaders is encouraged in the community to keep unity, peace, and harmony in the societies. This is because the social world is based upon relationships. However, the development in technology has increased the crisis of the relationships between organizations and individuals. The community now realizes the need for dialogue. Religious leaders play a significant role in their societies when they allow and participate in dialogue and peace-building (Mkumbata and Nyangau 2022:70). Lee (2019) points out that peace and unity were always a priority of the forefathers/founders of the Tanzanian nation. Ethnicity and religion were the targeted areas to enhance the political and social stability of the country. However, the Muslim-Christian relationship in Tanzania still exists. Social interactions among the people of these different religions are vivid and still very active, for-example, inter-religious marriages between Christians and Muslims are common among Tanzanians. The relationships between Christian-Muslims in Tanzania are bound in terms of the Swahili word 'undugu' (brotherhood). Even though there were times when violence and conflict erupted between Christians-Muslims in Tanzania, peace and control were possible due to the strong relationship which had been built up by the founders of the nation. Religious differences in Tanzania do not interfere with people's daily lives. Tanzania unlike many Sub-Saharan countries has been at peace since independence from British colonial rule in 1961. This was possible due to the ideology of Ujamaa which was introduced and practised by Julius Nyerere, the first President of Tanzania (Lee 2019:11). Through religious dialogue the aim is to find divergences, similarities, commentaries, and criticism so as to reach mutual respect and understanding with one another. It is an exchange of ideas and opinions; however, dialogue is more than exchanging ideas, it goes further than sharing religious convictions which will result in finding peace amongst world communities of various religious faiths (Adamo 2011:5).

Even though Tanzania is multi-religious and multi-cultural, tension often emerged throughout its history between Christians and Muslims. We discussed Christian Muslim relations and religious tolerance in chapter 3 of this thesis. There are a number of interfaith institutions and organizations such as the Union of Muslims and Christians of Rufiji (UMCR), Global Network of Religions for Children (GNCR), Tanzania Youth Interfaith Network (TYIN), The World Conference of Religion for Peace Tanzania (WCRPTz) and the Program for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROMURA). These organizations are the tools for religious pluralism which makes Christians/the church compromise the gospel in the name of religious diversity, pluralism, tolerance and modernism (Leurs, *et al.*, 2011:32).

The church's compromise of the gospel can be seen in the activities of the institutions that were established for dialogue, tolerance, and religious understanding. Institutions such as Inter-Religious Council for Peace Tanzania (IRCPT) focus on dialogue, conflict management, and capacity building among their members. The institutions initiated projects such as civic education, HIV/AIDS care and protection, and also established the Village Community Banking (VICOBA) for the economic development of society. Each project aims to bring people of different faiths together with the ideology that 'we all worship and believe the same God' (WFDD 2019:51). During the meetings of these organizations, Christians compromise the gospel and do not share their exclusive salvation message with the people of other faiths. The topic is being generalized in the areas where these religions have agreed with one another. That is where the emphasis that all religions worshipping one God is being voiced/proclaimed.

In many parts of the non-Western world, in particular Tanzania, religion is regarded as the cause of violent clashes. In 2007 religious leaders of Africa met in Dakar...these were scholars and experts from 12 countries. The conference ran under the theme "Meeting the Challenges of Religious and Pluralism in Africa." Here it was observed that religious conflicts were often the repackaging of community concerns regarding issues of social, economic, and political injustices, inequities and exclusions (Awusu-Ansah and Akyeampong 2019:1). It is to be considered that this era of Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb, Boko Haram and al-Shabaab terror operation in the continent of Africa, the issue of religious co-existence, peace, and tolerance in the history of Africa should be revisited (Awusu-Ansah and Akyeampong 2019:2). Incidents such as those which occurred simultaneously with the bombings at the American embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in 1998 where two hundred and twenty-four people died, and more than 4,500 people were wounded, these attacks were directly linked to al Qaeda (FBI, 2023).

Concerning religious pluralism in Tanzania, negotiation is presently taking place between the three major religions namely, Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional beliefs. Regarding Christianity it is divided/shared among many denominations and African beliefs is divided according to the ethnic groups but there too common beliefs among all the groups are shared. Regarding the Muslims in Tanzania, they are divided into four denominations such as Sunni, Shia, Sufism, and Ahmadiyya. There are also organizations for religions in Tanzania where Muslims were organized under the East African Muslim Welfare Society (EAMWS) which was founded in Mombasa in 1945. This organization was established intentionally to promote Islam and to raise the standard of Muslims in East Africa. This organization established a few schools and provided scholarships, but due to the situation after the Second World War, it was not so active. The headquarters of the EAMWS was moved from Mombasa to Dar es Salaam in 1961.

Later on, they opened branches all over the country differences emerged among the members of the society: some opposed the socialist (Ujamaa) policies of the government and others supported it. However, the pro-government Muslims urged the ban of EAMWS, and consequently, the growing tension between these two groups led to the banning of the EAMWS organization in 1968 (Thazhathukunnel 2011:34; WFDD 2019:39).

In 1968 the Muslims met in Iringa among whom, were political leaders who supported the government policies of socialism (Ujamaa). They established an organization which would help the national interest. They established the Baraza Kuu la Waislam wa Tanzania (BAKWATA) (The National Muslim Council of Tanzania). However, many Muslims contested the authenticity of the BAKWATA as their true representative body of Islamic interests in Tanzania. In the 1970s BAKWATA was recognized by the government and is now an official organization which is recognized by the government as the representative of Tanzanian Muslims to the government (Thazhathukunnel 2011:36; WFDD 2019:39).

Christians in Tanzania are organized into two different organizations which are officially recognized by the government, these are the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) for Protestant denominations which was founded in 1934; the Catholics are organized under the Tanzanian Episcopal Conference (TEC) which was founded in 1957 (Thazhathukunnel 2011:100; WFDD 2019:39). Concerning the African Traditional beliefs, it has no organization. As was discussed in the previous pages of this research, African Traditional Religions have no founder, yet they are active among the African people and particularly among the Tanzanians. Believers of either Christianity or Islam practise African Traditional beliefs in one way or another (that is how syncretism is observed within religions). Yet, some people being either Muslims, or Christians are still followers of African Traditional beliefs.

Even though Christianity and Islam have converted Tanzanian people to their religions, some groups still practice African Traditional Religion (ATR). However, in most cases Tanzanians practise Traditional Religion alongside Christianity or Islam in their worshipping. More than half the Tanzanians incorporate elements of ATR in their worship. Moreover, African Traditional Religion lacks formal organizational structure such as those of Christianity and Islam. In the Tanzanian context, ATR is associated with the national identity to the extent that sometimes Christianity and Islam are referred to as imported religions (*dini zilizoletwa*). As was indicated elsewhere in this study that, since 1967, the Tanzanian government is no longer conducting any census taking on religiously affiliated groups (Chisaye 2019:9). But other independent organizations conducting censuses records on religious institutions, according to the World Faiths Development Dialogue statistics of 2015, indicated that Catholics were 13,781,692,

Protestants 14,917,200, others including Jehovah's Witness, Mormon, Quaker, and Seventh-day Adventists 1,498,742. Muslims were 17,001,786, Hindus 466,179, and Baha'i 229,324. African Traditional religions were 6, 110,644, while other groups such as Chinese folk religionists, Jain, Buddhist, Sikh, Zoroastrian, and Jewish were 69,084; Agnostics/Atheists were 191, 937. The total population was 54, 266,588 (WFDD 2019:34).

6.7 The relationship between Christian and non-Christian religions

Concerning the relationship between Christian and non-Christian religions, the reformed view on this concept is as follows: (1) God reveals himself to all humans at all times and all places. This saying is seen in the first chapter of the letter Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome. And it is related to the texts in Acts 17 where God makes himself known to humankind. God communicates and speaks to the people; no human-being has been anywhere without God revealing himself to him/her. The revelation of God to humankind doesn't have any limit toward certain people, time or place. God's revelation to humankind is through nature and man's own conscience. God also reveals himself through moral law, by his eternal power and divine majesty (Romans 1:20). Through human conscience humans reflect on what they ought and ought not to do, on what is good and what is bad, and what is valuable and what is not. At first, God makes himself known to humans; this is what he does and the second is which humans respond to is what they are required to do. (2) Human religions are the response to God's creational /general revelation. The world religions such as Animism, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc. are the responses to God's general revelation; they can also be the result of cultural phenomena or the struggle for power, etc. Humans also have a variety of ways to respond to God's creational/general revelation. The response of world religions has been systematized into fixed rituals and explicit creeds. In those systematized communal forms, there is also diversity of response to God's revelation in the world religions. Not only that but also, non-religious people whatever their philosophy, might be responding to God's general revelation. However, the reaction of the response to God's general revelation has failed many people to see or find God through his revelation (Romans 1:20-22). In this inadequate response, humans put God aside and replace him with same idol. (3) God also revealed himself specifically through history and in a particular geographical place. He also revealed himself to individuals such as Moses on Mount Sinai where he gave him the Ten Commandments. God also made himself known to human beings through his holy divine Word. God called great prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. God revealed himself through the virginal birth of Christ, in the ministry and miracles that Christ performed, at the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Christ (Ridder and Woudenberg 2014:1-6).

6.8 The difference between the Christian faith and other beliefs

Christianity responds to both God's revelation, general/creational and special revelation. Both are similar and are revelations from God. The revelation of God according to the reformed view came to human beings through historical events at specific times and places and then through the testimony of others about those events. These views formed the Christian faith in that it acknowledges the revelation of God that he is the creator of all things, he deserves adoration, and he disapproves of what is bad. Christianity's response to this revelation encompasses both the general and special revelation of God. It has the capacity of seeing (the general revelation) and finding God in creation and hearing and believing testimony (special revelation). In the reformed school of thought, there is ontology maintaining that there is only one God and worshipping any other than the one God, is idolatry (Ridder and Woudenberg 2014:7-10)

6.9 The interrelations of the concepts of worship, belief and reference

The terms worship, belief, and reference are not the same and even their interrelations are complex (1) worshipping in a god or God is the participation in certain individual practices. It includes the performance of actions and activities that can be organized at a special venue, or location and can involve several people, with time set aside for the singing of songs, recitation of words and periods of silence. However, worship may also include attitudes like adoration, awe or delight. Worship may also have an object to worship meaning to worship someone or something or several persons or things. The object of worship refers the worshipping of that object which is believed worthy of being worshipped. Thus worship involves the element of belief. For example, in Christianity participation in the Eucharist is an act of worship that requires a belief that God is worthy of worship and that Christ died on the cross for the sins of the world and that with his death, he brought atonement and newness of life. Also, it entails that Christ is the Son of God and the second person in the Trinity. In the Christian faith, without this belief, the Eucharist would be meaningless. (2) Belief means a propositional attitude, for example, Christ is the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity! this is what Christians believe. To believe is the act of accepting and to hold that a certain proposition is true. (3) to believe in something involves reference to that object in which someone believes. It is the awareness in mind about all the things that the belief is about. To believe for example, that Christ is the second person in the Trinity requires that this should be fixedly held in mind. However, false belief may also involve similar reference (Ridder and Woudenberg 2014:14).

I agree with the reformed analysis and doctrine regarding the major religions' interpretation and response to the general and specific revelation of God to humankind. However, Christianity indicates that general and specific revelation is intended to lead human beings to seeing and

finding God. Moreover, other religions fail to see/find God through general revelation; they see Creation as god but do not see God who is the Creator. This phenomenon is the reality that, Christianity and other world major religions do not refer to, in regarding to worship and belief in the same God. Therefore, to say that, Jews, Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional beliefs are referring to, believing and worshipping the same God is an act of compromising the exclusive Salvation message with religious pluralism ideologies.

6.10 Conclusion

The church in Tanzania throughout its history has been compromising the gospel of Salvation in Christ with world pluralism ideologies. It has indicated that when Christian missionaries came to Tanzania, in the 18th Century, that the Islam religion had already existed and had spread in the coastal areas in the country since the 7th Century. Missionaries avoided directly sharing the message of Salvation through Christ with Muslims and non-Muslims, and instead they just initiated programs such as education, health, and emancipation of slaves and the abolition of slave trading to demonstrate the love of Christ to the people. Slowly, they opened the door to share the gospel through those activities. This was some show of wisdom to which missionaries used to open up the door yet it was an act of compromising the gospel with the Muslims and non-Muslims in the coastal regions of Tanzania. Moreover, missionaries decided to avoid establishing mission centres in the areas where Muslims were highly populated. Instead, they moved into the interior of the land and opened mission centres to evangelize the indigenous African believers. Tanzania after the independence in 1961 when Nyerere took over the leadership, implemented the Ujamaa policy which also affected evangelism and contributed to the acts of syncretism, religious pluralism, and compromising the gospel. This was due to the Ujamaa ideology which required people to live in mutual respect, harmony, and in peace regardless of their ethnicity or religious differences. The proclamation of the gospel during the Ujamaa changed because the sharing of the gospel was done in a way that was not supposed to harm or hurt other people of other religious backgrounds. Moreover, after Nyerere's reign was over, the time came when dialogue between Christians and Muslims was necessary due to the eruption of conflicts which emerged in 1980 up to today. During this time of religious dialogue, the Christian Muslims were required to talk about peace and tolerance in the doctrine so that all these religions would believe and worship the same God. During this time also, the church had to compromise its exclusive Salvation message with other religions and accept that they were all worshipping the same God. Presently, now in contemporary society, the church is compromising the gospel in the name of religious diversity, pluralism, tolerance, and unity. However, the church in Tanzania may continue to preach the gospel of Salvation while keeping

peace and tolerance toward other religions. This is because the state provides freedom of religious expression and freedom to change religions if so desired.

CHAPTER 7 THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CALLING THAT IS SIGNIFICANT, TO THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN A RELIGIOUS PLURALIST SOCIETY IN TANZANIA

7.1 Introduction

In chapter 6, it was noted that the church in Tanzania from time to time had the tendency of compromising the gospel with a religious pluralist society. Throughout its history, the church, from the era when missionaries from Western and other counties arrived in the country up to date grew, but, there emerged times when the church avoided sharing its exclusive salvation message with the people of other faiths. However, this chapter will be devoted to finding the biblical, theological and sound role of the church in the religious pluralist society of Tanzania. It is trying to define what the Church is, and what the message of the church is from a biblical perspective of the Old and the New Testament. Moreover, this chapter will discuss the awareness and response of the church concerning the whole idea of religious pluralism. It will also, investigate the characteristics, marks, and the role of the church. More than that, this chapter intends to discover how the church in Tanzania would respond to the ideology of religious pluralism.

7.2 What is the church?

The church according to Grudem (1994) is the community of all believers of all times. This includes believers of the Old and New Testament. The church is comprised of all those for whom Christ died in order to redeem, namely the people who are saved by the death of Christ (Grudem 1994:853). The church also, is invisible in the sense that it is not easily to see the spiritual heart of true believers. The church is seen in its assembly, and is seen as the members are gathered together, but the true church is one only God can discern. That is why Apostle Paul says: "The Lord knows those who are his" (2 Tim. 2:19) (Grudem 1994:855). However, even though there is confusion and misunderstanding concerning the definition of the church, the Bible provides knowledge which will facilitate the understanding of what the church is. One of the misunderstandings of the concept of the church is the multiple use of the word "church" some use it in reference to as an architectural structure, a building. While at other times it is used to refer to certain particular body of believers such as the Lutheran or Methodist Church. In some other instances, the word "church" is used to describe a certain denomination such as the Presbyterian Church, etc. Due to multiple uses of the word "church", it confuses to come to a biblical understanding of the nature of the church. The reason for missing the biblical

understanding of the term “church” might be because the doctrine of the church has not been given much attention as other doctrines have. The doctrine of Christ and the Trinity had been given much attention within a Christian theological community. The church however, is the community distinct from world which stands to transform the world; it possesses the gospel of Salvation so that the world which is lost and separated from God can be saved when hearing and believing the gospel through the work of the church (Erickson 2013:950-952)

Erickshon (2015) defines a church from a biblical definition that the word “church” is derived from the Greek word (Kuriako) which means ‘belonging to the Lord.’ More than that the church must also be understood from its use in the New Testament from the Greek (Ekklesia) which only appears in Matt. 16:18; 18:7). However, the term “church” does not appear at all in 2 Timothy, Titus, 1 and 2 Peter, 1 and 2 John, and Jude. It appears in 1 Timothy, and 3 John. The term “church” also does not appear in the Synoptic gospels of Mark, Luke and John (Erickson 2013:955).

7.3 The church in the Old Testament

Frame (2013) traces the history of the people worshipping God all the way back to the Garden of Eden. After the Fall, Cain and Abel offered sacrifices to the Lord that formed the genesis of the community that worshipped God, Enoch; was the son of Seth who was the third son of Adam and Eve; Genesis 4:26 tells us that, at the time of Seth and Enoch, people began to call upon the name of the Lord. The Scripture testifies that there was a community which worshipped the true God. Also when Moses led the Israelites from Egypt, they met the Lord at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19-20). The mountain was full of God's-presence there was smoke, thunder, lightning, and thick clouds. People had to wash themselves to be clean in the presence of God. The event at Mount Sinai was the only time in history when God's people assembled in one place to hear words directly from God's own mouth. Those words were God's covenant with his people where God gave his name Yahweh, the Lord who delivers his people from the house of slavery' God set up the Ten Commandments as the fundamental law of the covenant. When the Israelites became aware of God's presence they were afraid and did not want to hear God speak to them so they asked Moses to speak to God on their behalf (Ex. 20:19). The book of Deuteronomy records the gathering between God and the Israelites as “the day of assembly” (Deut. 9:10; 10:4; 18:16; cf. 4:10). The word “assembly” is translated in Hebrew *qahal* or congregation. This gathering of the Israelites when God spoke to them marks the beginning of the church. On that day the Israelites distinguished themselves from other nations, for they made a covenant with God. The nation of Israel bears a unique name as the holy nation, people who belong to God. They are a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:4-5) (Frame 2013:1017-1018).

The Bible contains a wealth of important information which is formulated around a sound doctrine which talks about the church (ecclesia). There are also similarities and differences regarding the description of the church in the Old and New Testament. It is understood that the New Testament speaks more about the church than the Old Testament and this is because Christ is the founder of the church. This does not mean that we have to ignore what the Old Testament says about the church. However, the church in the New Testament is inseparably connected to the congregation of the Israelites in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word **am** (people) is used to refer to the Israelite people and the word **goyyim** referred to people of other nations. The language which was used to distinguish the Israelite people from the people of other nations, is also recognized in the Septuagint. The term ‘people of God’ means that they are the people who are related to God in a special way (Deuteronomy 14:2; Lev. 20:26), thus the Israelites are the people of God whom he predestined and with whom established his covenant. The objective of choosing the people of Israel is that, they will know, serve, and love him. When we read the Old Testament we may think that God intended to save the Israelite people only and reject people of other nations. But through prophecies in the Old Testament other people of other nations were considered in God’s plan of Salvation to humankind (Zech. 2:11; cf. Isa. 45:23; 56:6-8), and were included in the covenant, for-example Rahab and Ruth etc. (Joshua 2:1; Matthew; Ruth 1:16). Moreover, the Old Testament uses the two words **qahal** and **eda** to describe the congregation, especially the assembly which met intentionally for the service of God. The **qahal** gathered at Mount Sinai and during the dedication of the temple (Deut. 5:22; 1 Kings 8:22). Also the word **qahal** was used when men gathered in war or at an administration of justice. It means the “gatherings” and that during those gatherings God was in their midst (Van Genderen and Velema 2008:678-679; Erickson 2013:955).

In the Old Testament the gatherings of God’s people-women and children-were included (Jer. 44:15; Ezra 10:1; Neh. 8:2). The gathering also referred to the troops which were preparing for war and in the book of Ezekiel, for-example, it refers to the gatherings of other nations rather than the Israelites (Ezekiel 17:17 the gathering of the Egyptians, and Ezekiel 32:22 the Assyrians). Other gatherings also were recorded in the Old Testament such as those at the tent of meeting and at a time of celebrating the Passover (Erickson 2013:955).

7.4 The church in the New Testament

In the New Testament, the Greek word **Ekklesia** is used to refer a public assembly (Acts 19:41). The Septuagint translated the Hebrew word **qahal** into Greek word **Ekklesia**. Moreover, this word rarely occurs in the gospel, and is only seen in (Matt. 16:18 and 18:17). Most probably

Jesus did not use this word more frequently either. Jesus might have been more concerned with announcing the coming of the kingdom of God and might not have thought of establishing a church. However, Jesus did not establish a church during his life on earth. The church is the phenomenon which was seen after his resurrection and ascension. Moreover, without Jesus, the church could not be established on earth, for Jesus laid the foundation through his preaching and work on earth. There is a relationship which exists between the kingdom which Christ announced and the church. This means that it is wrong to identify the church without the kingdom, but the kingdom of God comprises more than the church. The church also does not replace the kingdom. However, the kingdom of God is the messianic kingdom, the church of Christ, which however, constitutes the people who belong to him and whom he had come to save them from their sins! Therefore, the church belongs to him for he built his church, (Matt. 16:18) and He guaranteed the future of the church. Thus, the church will be a confessing church. Jesus also claimed to make the nations his disciples/followers, and therefore, the gathering of his people is not limited to the Israelites only (Matt.28:19). This plan of Jesus is the response to what Christ had said in other places such as (Matt.18:11; 21:43; Luke 24:46-47; John 10:16; 11:52 (Van Genderen and Velema 2008:680).

The Israelite people who believe in Christ constitute the Messianic church. The people of God in the Old Testament are the people of the Messiah. Those who confess Jesus as the Messiah are considered to be the new Israel. This is to conclude that the ***Ekklesia*** is composed by the people who are true people of God who receive the gifts of the kingdom of heaven. The book of Acts is an important book which provides the knowledge about the church of the New Testament. This church was gathered by Christ through his Spirit and his Word. However, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit does not mark the birth of the church because by then the church already existed; in fact it was the church which was assembled (Acts 1:14-15). At the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the church was equipped so as to fulfil its calling. Through the power of the Holy Spirit the church was transformed to be a witnessing church. This assured that the task to witness was not only that of the missionaries but also the task of all believers/followers of Christ (Acts 8:4; cf.). The church had to continue in the Apostles' doctrine/teaching of fellowship, breaking bread, and persisting in prayers (Acts 2:42). The church had spiritual and physical needs, and the leadership of the church was undertaken by the apostles, elders, and others. Through the work of the Holy Spirit the church grew, and the Lord added daily to their number (Acts 2:47). The book of Acts describes the reason of the church's existence. The church expanded and spread from Jerusalem to Rome, in Italy and to the rest of the World. The writings of the Apostle Paul in the New Testament refer to the church as "God's people" it is the fulfilment of the Old Testament. The church in the New Testament has other metaphors as

described by Apostle Paul as God's husbandry, God's building, temple of the living God, and the body of Christ (Van Genderen and Velema 2008: 681-682).

The church being the temple of God demonstrates the place of habitation of God in the church (not a building) (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:22; 1 Tim. 3:15). The Apostle Paul describes the church as the body of Christ differently in Ephesians, Colossians, Romans, and 1 Corinthians. Paul concentrated on describing the unity of the church and the relationship between the church and Christ. Christ is the initiator/founder and head of the church. The church is described as the location or habitation of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2:22) the Holy Spirit dwells in the church and he determines everything in the church. It is clear that everything in the church has to be done according to the way of the Spirit. The Apostle Paul focused on the strengthening and building up of the church in areas such as the growing-in-the knowledge of faith and ministry of love and the expectation of the kingdom of God. Within the church, God provided different gifts (charisma) which were supposed to be used in a cooperative way so as to benefit the entire body of Christ. In the book of Hebrew, the church is described as God's people who are on their way so that they need admonition and words of exhortation to continue moving forward (Hebrews 4:1-11; 11:13-16; 12:1-3; 13:14). The church is also the house, in the book of Hebrews and Christ is the high priest (Hebrew 10:21) it is called to perseverance while waiting for the day of the Lord (Heb. 10:23-25). In 1 Peter the church is a building and Christ is the corner-stone. The church is called to praise God He who brought them from darkness into the light. Peter also speaks of believers as strangers and pilgrims in this world who are sharing in Christ's sufferings and who may undergo trials (1 Peter 2:11; 4:12-13). In the book of Revelation Christ is standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (Rev. 1:12-13) symbolizing the seven churches (Rev. 1:20) which represent the entire New Testament church. All the churches belong to the same Lord (Christ) but they all possess different gifts in all diversity. In these churches there are areas which are doing well in faith and love, but there are also areas of danger and warnings, and we see the contrast between the Lord's church and the Synagogue of Satan (Rev. 2:9; 3:9). The church faced opposition from the world and it was warned against false teachers. The church was urged to persevere even to the point of death, because the church is the bride of the Lamb which anticipated the wedding in an eschatological perspective (Van Genderen and Velema 2008:683-684).

In the New Testament, Paul used the word ***Ekkelesia*** more than any other New Testament writer. Since his writings were letters which he addressed to a group of believers in a specific city/town, this meant that a church was the gathering of believers. Paul addressed the church of God in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1), the churches in Thessalonica (Thess. 1:1), and the churches in Galatia (Gal. 1:2). In the book of Revelation it opens by addressing the seven

specific churches (Rev 1-3). The book of Acts however, refers to all Christians who live and meet in particular cities such as Jerusalem (Acts 5:11; 8:1; 11:22; 12:1; 5), and the town of Antioch (Acts 13:1). The Apostle Paul visited churches to appoint leaders and to instruct and encourage (Acts 14:23; 15:41; 16:5). This indicates that the church is local and also universal according to the New Testament concept of the church. Apart from the church in a specific city/town, the New Testament records the churches meeting in individual homes. Paul sent greetings to the church that met at the house of Priscilla and Aquila (Rom.16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19). Paul also sent greetings to sisters and brothers (believers) at Laodicea and he mentioned Nympha at whose house the church also met (Col. 4:15). However, the New Testament gives a broader description of the church. Sometimes the New Testament provides a broader sense of the concept of the church which refers to a large geographical area in view (Acts 9:31) such as, for-example, the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria; those churches encountered a time of peace and were encouraged and strengthened through the power of the Holy Spirit, and consequently, the church increased in numbers. In 1 Cor.16:19 it refers to the churches in the whole province of Asia. The New Testament gives us a bit of insight into the small and big gatherings of believers which both represents the total community of the church/believers. This means that the church is one throughout the whole world, and yet, is at the same time it is fully present in every individual assembly (Erickson 2013:956).

In Ephesians, Paul describes the universal nature of the church. Paul emphasizes that the church is the body of Christ and everything is under him (Eph. 1:22-23) and throughout the church the manifold wisdom of God should be known which will glorify God to all generations (Eph. 3:21). Since there is only one body, therefore, Christ is the head of the church, he is the saviour and the church is subjected to Christ. Because Christ loved the church and gave himself up for the church, Christ and the church constitute a great mystery. The church includes all individuals/believers who are part of his body who live now and who will live in the future. The inclusiveness of the church can be seen in Hebrews 12:23. It includes all those who were saved through the death of Christ (Erickson 2013:957).

The New Testament church is the continuation (in a certain sense) of the Old Testament church. The title of the Israel being a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, appears again in the New Testament in 1 Peter 2:9 where the apostle says "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession." This affirms that the Old Testament church is the continuation of the church in the New Testament. The *qahal* Hebrew word which means "gathering" in Deuteronomy was translated into the Greek *ekklesia* to represent the gathering of God's people in God's presence. The Israelites were the church of the Old covenant and the New Testament church is the Israel of the new covenant. Moreover, Christian

Scripture teaches that people of God of the Old and New Testament are one; however, the old and new covenant differs in some important ways. In the first covenant God gave the Israelites a special title and they lived in one geographical area (Canaan) and he dwelt in the temple. The New Testament church in contrast to that in the Old Testament is scattered all over the world and its temple, where God dwells, is in believers' own bodies. But there is one promise, one salvation and all are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. This is because the New Testament church bears the same title that God had given the Israel in Exodus 19:5-6, in Romans 11:11-24. The people of God are as one olive tree, of which some branches (unbelieving Jews) are broken off while believing Gentiles are grafted in. This is one tree not two. The Apostle Paul also taught that there is no dividing wall in the church between Jews and Gentiles and Gentiles do not need to become Jews in order to be saved (Gal. 3:29) (Frame 2013:1018-1019).

7.5 The characteristics of the church

7.5.1 The people of God

God made a decision to make believers his people (2 Cor. 6:16). The church is the constitution of God's people, whose believers belong to God and God belongs to them. It is God who initiated the church for he chose his people. In the Old Testament God chose Abraham and through him he brought all the Israelites to himself. In the New Testament the concept of God choosing his people was broadened and included the Jews and Gentiles within the Church. That is why Paul wrote to the Thessalonians that they ought to thank God, for he had chosen the Thessalonians as first fruits, and that they were loved by the Lord (2 Thess. 2:13-14' 1 Thess. 1:4). In the Old Testament the Israelites were identified as God's people. After they crossed the Red Sea, Moses acknowledged that they were redeemed by God and they sang to the Lord (Exodus 15:13, 16). In other texts of the Old Testament such as Numbers 14:8; Isaiah 62:4; Deuteronomy 32:9-10; Jeremiah 12:7-10 and Hosea 1:9-10; 2:23, it declares that Israel is the people of God. In Romans 9:24-26 Paul applies the statement from Hosea that God calls the Gentiles his people. As he says in Hosea "I will call them "my people who are not my people; who are not my people; and I will call her "my loved one" who is not my loved one; and in the very place where it was said to them, "You are not my people" they will be called "children of the living God" (Hosea 1:10). The concept of Israel and the church as the people of God contains promises and God's commitments that he is proud of them. He cares and protects his people, and even more than-that he keeps his people as the apple of his eyes (Deut. 32:10). In the Old Testament, circumcision of the flesh was the covenantal sign of his people. In the New Testament where the church includes the Gentiles, the circumcision of the heart is the sign of

the new covenant. God calls his people to be holy, sanctified. Now as Christ's bride, the church must also be holy (Eph. 5:25-27) (Erickson 2013:958-959; Molo 1986:269).

According to Christian Scripture, the church is comprises the people of God through all ages and they are not just that, but they are the people in the covenant of God through Christ Jesus. In a biblical sense the church is not the building, but rather it is the people, even though they have buildings in which they meet. These members in the body of Christ are the elect of God joined in Christ eternally since the past and through eternity into the future. They are the people who sincerely identified themselves with God through conversion and baptism (Frame 2013:1019, Cole 2007:251; Mayer 1962:659).

The church community, according to Grudem (1994) includes all true believers of all times; this means that the church includes those who are truly saved and are the people who were redeemed and saved by the death of Christ. It includes believers in the Old and New Testament. However, the builder of the New Testament church is Jesus Christ for, God had a great plan for the church: therefore, He exalted Christ and made Him head over everything in the church for as he is the head, the church is his body. And the growth of the church is not according to human effort alone but God Himself grows the church (Acts 2: 47) "the Lord added to their number day-by-day those who were being saved" (Grudem 1994: 853; Haroutunian 1956:60, Tibor 2004:12).

Moreover, the church is the assembly of believers among whom the gospel is preached and to whom there is also the administering of the sacraments. This community comprises those who believe in God; it is a faith-oriented community. It is a group of people, the company of believers-in-Christ (Marsh 1971:143; Diocese of Victoria & Cunneen 1967:4; Preston 1987:270). The administration of sacraments and the preaching of the Word of God are the two activities which are important for the existence of the church. The reason for emphasizing these is that, they are essential means of creating faith in Christ. Where the gospel is preached and the sacraments administered, God brings about faith in Christ and thereby the church will exist (Hanson 1997:198). When Scripture speaks about the church as the people of God it means that, it is a group of people separated from others, referred to as a particular group in which they can be identified. In the Old Testament the Israelites were called God's people: they were distinguished from other people of other nations and God was particularly identified. The story of God choosing His own people began with Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 when God called Abraham and established a covenant with him. God promised to give Abraham a land, to bless him and make him a father of many nations and bless the people through him (Abrahamson 2007:12, Clowney 1995:28).

The people of Israel became the people of God through God's free choice and calling. God required His people to be obedient to His law (Exodus 24:7–8). The New Testament church responded to this call of God and through Abraham there is now the continuation of God's blessing and calling to faith through Christ. Furthermore, the unity of the church community is not found in any human communality such as ethnicity, social or personal decision but it is the response to God's call to faith in Christ. The church has a relationship with God and it was founded in response to God's call through Christ. The church is the holy people of God who have faith through Christ and this provides the clear identity and mission of the church. When we observe a church as the assemblies of believers in Christ, we basically see the identity of the church (Hanson 1997:199). Christians are the people who stand in a relationship with God—they are commissioned to serve God and to serve one-another. They are the special people who were called by God to be His people and He is their God. The church is the assemblies of God's holy people within His covenant, in other words a church is a covenantal community for they are the people who live righteously before God (Grenz 2000: 464, 465).

Furthermore, this community has a relationship with Christ. The church and Christ's relationship extend to the people of the covenant: God is Lord and the church is his servants. The Christian Scripture teaches about the Kingdom of God and also about the family of God. Regarding the Kingdom of God the Scripture elaborates on the history of salvation through Christ, where God brought all areas of life on the earth to be subjected to Jesus Christ. In the matter of the family of God, it entails the intimate fellowship or the relationship that God shares with His church through Christ. In this relationship God is the Father and the members of the church are brothers and sisters where Jesus Christ appears to be their brother (Hebrew 2:11-12). The intimacy of the church and Christ goes so far in the expression saying that the church is the bride. In the Old Testament the Israelites bear the image of an unfaithful wife to the Lord, but in the New Testament the church as the bride will be presented to Christ, pure and spotless, at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Frame 2013:1021).

In the Old Testament the Israelites were called the people of God due to His redemptive activities and through these he established the covenant with them. God promised the Israelites protection, deliverance, and salvation (Ex 19:4-5). God promised to walk and to be with them and that He is their God and they are his people (Lev.26:12). In this sense the church of God in the Old Testament was united since they were called to have fellowship with God and to worship Him. The church in the New Testament, including both Jews and Gentiles continues to follow God's promises from the Old Testament that God would walk and dwell among them, for He is their God and they are the people of God (2 Cor. 6:16 cf. Joel 2:17) (Van Genderen & Velema 2008:696).

Believers see themselves as belonging to the fellowship of believers. Those who are outside the church do not fully understand what believers in the church stand for or believe. The outsiders are not able to properly judge the church. The church should not be understood or judged by what it does, but from biblical purposes of its foundation and existence. Therefore, believers themselves are able to judge themselves within the church. Christians believe in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The church is where the Holy Spirit is working and the final act of the Holy Spirit will be at the time of the resurrection of the body (Preston 1987:270). Faith is also bound in love, and does not come from rules or any kind of obligations and observations, but it is self-sacrificing to one-self and to others. As God is love, faith goes hand-in-hand with love: this means that Christianity is love. The church community believes in the Holy Spirit who cleanses the church. Christians also do not only admire or criticize the church but rather, they believe the church. Men and women believe the church and not in the church because they are members of the fellowship of the church. The church is the core of faith - this is why Christians believe the church not in the church. The saying that Christians do not believe in the church implies that they themselves are the church – therefore, there is no difference between the church and themselves. Christians also experience pain and all the chaos of this world and because of that the Christian community depends on the grace of God for survival (Küng 1967:30-33).

The concept of the church in the New Testament for the early church was the fellowship of the persons bound together through Christ and the Holy Spirit. They participated in communion and the togetherness of life which means that they shared everything that was important for their lives. This communion and fellowship, cherished by the early church flowed from the love of Christ and was bound in Him. The church which is described in the New Testament tells about the first community of Christians (Gerrish 2015:215).

Küng (1967) points out that, the church community in the New Testament time was more than any Jewish sects for they had a specific creed and believed in the Messiah. This community was more than the Zealots, who thrived on political revolutions and they were more than the Pharisees who were concerned with moral reformation according to the law; or the Essenes who regarded themselves elected and then withdrew from other groups, claiming to have a special religious identity, yet in other respects they retained the link with Judaism. The book of Acts and the Epistles of Paul give us a historical background of the church community and the synoptic gospels also provide indirect ideas on how this community was different from other religious groups of the time. This community after the day of Pentecost appeared to be totally different from any religious party within the nation of Israel (Küng 1967:107, Vaux 1966:397).

The Nazarenes (Acts 24:5, 14 and 28:22) separated themselves from the synagogue and they were disciples with their own master. The disciples of Jesus did not withdraw as much from life as the other groups such as the Nazarenes, and the Essenes. The disciples of Jesus Christ met in the temple (Acts 2:46), they also approved Jewish sacrificial customs and paid the temple tax (Matthew 5:23 ff; 17:24-27) and they were submissive to the judgment of the synagogue (Mark 13:9; Matthew 10:17). Despite the fact that Jesus from time-to-time criticized the Jewish traditions it still indicates that His community had to comply with the teachings of the Old Testament in a new light through Christ (Matthew 5:17-19). In order to share salvation with both Jews and Christians, observation of the law in the light of Christ's teachings connected them. The disciples could not qualify to be the chosen people of the eschatological fulfilment without observation of the law. At first it seems that the disciples of Jesus saw themselves as the true Israel in this respect but through history and time they knew that they were not only the true Israel but they were part of the new Israel. They came to the realization of this after encountering the risen Christ. The death and resurrection of Christ marked the eschatological event, in contrast to what the Pharisees, Zealots, Essenes and the Nazarenes, believed, since this event (for the disciples of Christ) was the fulfilment of the Old Testament promises for they were given the hope that the Messiah had come to establish the reign of God on earth (Haroutunian 1956:60; Küng 1967:108).

In the light of the salvation- event, the disciples of Christ were still members of the people of Israel, for they shared the same history and kept the law, but their newness was in the fact that they were retaining the Jewish customs in a new way, through Christ Jesus. As the time went by the distinction between the old and the new Israelites began to be revealed within them. The early Christians had certain similarities with that of the Jewish nation but deviated in forms of distinctive development such as that regarding baptism: this was given as a sign of repentance and forgiveness of sin in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:28; 41:8:12; Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 12:13 and Romans 6:1-11). Baptism was the mark to distinguish them from the Jewish tradition of circumcision. Another distinction among the Jewish community was the meeting in small groups in private houses (Acts 2:46; 12:12) where they gathered for prayers and interpreted some texts of the Old Testament in the light of Jesus' teachings. At that time the Christian community was seen as the cult from Judaism which later would be cut off from Judaism, separated from the synagogue and who would begin to meet in their own places (Küng 1967:109)

Also this community began to celebrate a communal meal in remembrance of Christ quite simply: they might probably have started with a simple prayer in the memory of the last meal that they had shared with Jesus (1 Cor. 11:20-29) - it was a joyful meal with the remembrance and expectation of Christ (Alikin 2010:213). These practices continued to separate them from

Jewish religion and it indicated that they were the eschatological people of God who were called to share in the reign of God. The Holy Communion or Lord's Supper came in the place of the Jewish Passover. The Jewish Passover included Jews only. The early church community also had its own leaders (Acts 11:30; 15; 21:18) working in cooperation with the twelve disciples. These biblical characteristics from the Old to the New Testament distinguished God's community from other people and their communities (Küng 1967:110).

7.5.2 The church is the body of Christ

In the New Testament (Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 12:27) the Scripture speaks of the church as the body of Christ and (Col. 1:18) Christ is the head of the church. Therefore the unity between body and head describes a complete organic unity of the true church of Christ. As the church represents the body of Christ it implies that it exists to do the will of Christ. The church bears the image of the human body which consists of many parts but each works to support the other. This means that not all parts of the body have the same function but all have a common goal and all are connected to one another and use their gifts for the benefit of all (Grenz 2000:467; Philip 1980:23).

This image insists upon the relationship and unity that the church has with Christ and the unity of all believers with one another. The physical parts of our bodies depend on other parts; this means that every member of the body of Christ depends on another and we depend on Christ. Therefore, believers have to work together as all the physical parts of the body function and work to support the other and they all depend on one another to function properly. Christians are one body in Christ and have gifts which God has given to every individual so that they have to use those gifts for the benefit of all the members of the body of Christ. This image of the church being one in Christ encourages Christians to be subjected to Christ and to live a submissive life before Him (Frame 2013:1021; Molo 1986:240).

The teaching about the church as the body of Christ is only found in Paul's epistles in Romans 12; 1 Cor. 12; in Ephesians and Colossians. In Romans (12:4-5) and 1 Corinthians (12:12-27) Paul speaks about united members of the body of Christ that possess different kinds of gifts in which they are to benefit one another and there is not one who is exalted above the other. The concept of membership of believers in the body of Christ emphasizes unity and discourages disunity, for the Apostle Paul says "if one member suffers all suffer in sympathy" (1 Cor. 12:26) It encourages unity in Christ where there is no Jew or Greek. The statement that the church is the body of Christ shows the importance of the mutual relationship between Jesus Christ and His church, for Christ is the head of the church. The church belongs to Jesus for He is the founder of the church through the redemptive history of salvation (Van Genderen & Velema

2008:699). In Ephesians and Colossians it clearly elaborates that Christ as the head of the church stands above the church, which means that He is the head, the leader of the church. Therefore, the church is subjected to Christ. Jesus Christ as the head decides for the church and as the head, all members are dependent on Him. From Christ the church receives divine and spiritual growth and being moulded in love, he also has dominion; thus, all things are under His power: God designated him to be over the church-which is His body (Van Genderen & Velema 2008:700).

The church represents the image of the body of Christ on earth. The life, death, and resurrection of Christ are the activities/moments which brought about the birth of the church. The image of the church as the body of Christ is used for both, universal, individual, and local congregations in the representation of the church. This image is also the connection between the church and the group of believers where salvation is attained after the union of the individual with Christ. Christ presents as the head of the body and all believers are members of the body and so they were created for Christ by Christ and through Christ. Because believers are united with Christ they are nourished by Him. Therefore, since Christ is the head of the church, He rules the church. He has the authority and all the power over the church. The church as the body of Christ means that, the members cannot work individually or separately as they are connected to Christ, and therefore also have to function dependently with all other believers. As they possess and have received different gifts of the Spirit they therefore have to use them to benefit one another and for one another's needs (Erickson 2015:395).

Members of the body bear/sustain one another and restore those who fall back into sin, which can be administered by gentle restoration. The body of Christ characterized by genuine fellowship, and the oneness of the body of Christ, is not social interrelationship - it is rather more of an intimate relationship of knowing and understanding each other. In this relationship there is edification and encouragement (1 Cor.12:26) "if one part of the body suffers every part suffers with it, and if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it". In the book of Acts those members of the body of Christ, shared material possessions with one another. The members of the body of Christ include all believers who are gone before us and will also accommodate all those who are to come after us. Therefore the body of Christ and its members are the great crowds of witnesses (Erickson 2015:396).

The body of Christ has to be a unified body; the challenge in the church of Corinth was division among themselves, and the members were wondering which leader they should follow (1 Cor. 1:10-17; 3:1-9) (Cole 2007:252). The body of Christ is also universal: there are no boundaries of race, nationality, or any status that we can mention, for as Paul wrote (Col. 3:11) "Here there is

no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free but Christ is all and in all.” The church as the body of Christ is the center and extension of Christ’s ministry for all the authority in heaven and on earth is given to the church (Erickson 2015:396).

The church is the organization of the individuals through the miraculous power of grace and it is the institution founded by Christ. This community is different from any other sociological entities for the church is a priesthood of believers. Nevertheless, throughout the history, the church stands to be a distinct entity, even though it is as socially constructed as any other organizations in the community. This emphasizes that the church is God’s institution founded by Christ through His life, death and resurrection. The ideology that the church is an institution or organization always needs to be clarified, for the church has a different nature and essence from other secular institutions, even though outwardly the structure of the church may reveal a certain kind of organization. The description of the church relies on the matters or concepts not chronology (Gerish 2015:213,214).

The terms “body” and “people” of God are not contradictory; Paul used the terms in his expression of the unity between believers themselves and Christ. The body of Christ is seen not in the sense of an abstract body but as the people of God who are placed in Christ through history. The idea of seeing the church as the body of Christ which is thus the continuation of the people of God from the Old to the New Testament is a fundamental point which we have to see in the church. When we see the church as the people of God then we come to understand the idea that the church is the body of Christ. The church is making a journey from the old election of the people of God, to the present, and toward the future. The expression of the church as the body of Christ describes the new and unique nature of this people of God. Christ is the one who constituted this new nature and thus the church truly becomes the body of Christ (Kung 1967:224-225). The concept that the church is the people of God and now has become the body of Christ has Jewish roots. Jesus as the Son of man was linked to Adam as the first man; Paul in his Epistles sees the Son of man as an eschatological Adam (Romans 5:15) whose fate would be shared by all the people. Paul developed the ideas about Christ as the eschatological Adam from the Jewish point of view, only in his writings where this expression occurs. Paul adopted this image which was familiar among the later Judaism and Hellenism (I Corinthians 15:21 f; 45-49).

In the Hellenistic language during those days, it was very common to express unity using the body which is made up or consisted of various members. From this expression the “*ekklesia*” was a body which is made up of many members. Paul used the word, the body of Christ” when referring to the body of Christ which was crucified as well as the body which was present during

the Lord's Supper and also to the church which is made up of members of the crucified body of Christ (Küng 1967:226). Paul in his Epistles referred to the local community as the body of Christ, for example, to the community in Corinth (1 Cor. 10:16 f): this verse is connected to the Lord's Supper and 1 Cor. 12:13; 14-27; 6:5-17 which is talking about baptism. This community was founded through baptism and it found its reality through the Lord's Supper, as the body of Christ. Another expression of the church community as the body of Christ is found in Romans (12:4ff,)

The church has never been a gathering of individuals which enjoys its own private relationship with Christ independently, but it is the community that uses its gifts for the edification and for the benefit of all the members of the body of Christ (Küng 1976:227). The concern of Paul to describe the church as the body of Christ was purposely to persuade its members to live in unity providing mutual help and sympathy. The fact that the body has many members and all the members of the body function as one, make it similar to that of Christ. It may be argued that the members of the body have the same care for one another as the care demands for the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-27 Romans 12:4) (Küng 1967:228). The Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 12:27) emphasizes the relationship between body and head which is similar to the members of the church of Christ in their relationship toward Christ who is the head; when Paul speaks of the relationship between head and feet he is teaching against superiority/domination among the members of the body of Christ. Believers, through baptism and the Spirit are one body, also through their sharing in the Lord's Supper and, therefore, believers ought to live in unity. Through the lives of believers the body of Christ is represented for together they are one body in Christ (Romans 8:1; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:17) (Küng 1967:229).

7.5.3 The church is the temple of the Holy Spirit

The church is the temple of the Holy Spirit in the same manner as in the Old Testament time where the dwelling-place of God was in an earthly place in the temple (2 Chron. 6:1-2). Now the New Testament church is a temple of the Holy Spirit, which thus means that the Spirit of God dwells in believers' hearts. Now the presence of God is no longer in the temple as a building but He has fellowship with His people. Christians as the temple of God are required to live a holy life (Grenz 2000:467). The church is explained in a "temple" metaphor: Christians are the temple of the Holy Spirit and they should not allow that this temple as dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit to be defiled. Believers are priests who serve under Christ as the high priest: this is what it means regarding the priesthood of all believers. Scripture illustrates the church as branches of the vine and the olive tree, of which some branches have been broken off and others grafted in (Frame 2013:1022).

The Apostle Paul says “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?” (1 Cor. 3:16). He says this to the church to show that they are inhabitants of God’s church. In the same way Peter sees believers constitute a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5). At the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost it shows the mark of the first expansion and growth of the church which began thereafter. The church has to receive and accept the work of the Holy Spirit; it is by God’s grace that the Holy Spirit dwells in the church to fortify believers even though people aggrieve Him and work against Him but He is still dwelling among them in the church. The Spirit brings gifts to the members of the body of Christ intentionally for the edification of the body of Christ (Van Genderen & Velema 2008:701, 702).

The church is the temple of the Holy Spirit in the sense that it is the Spirit who brought the church together during the day of Pentecost when the disciples were filled by the Holy Spirit and baptized, and later on three thousand people were converted and the church began to expand and grow and bear witness to the world. So, all believers are baptized with the Holy Spirit so that they become the one body of Christ which is universal and local, for among believers there is no difference between Jew or Gentile, slave or freeman, since all have been given one Spirit. The church now lives and operates by the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit in individuals and the whole congregation locally and universally. The dwelling of the Holy Spirit in the church imparts life to the church; in other words, the life of the church is given strength and nurtured by the Holy Spirit of God (Erickson 2015:396). As a result, the church can bear the fruit of the Spirit which is mentioned in Galatians (2:22-23) which comprises love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. When the church experiences the fruit of the Spirit, it indicates that the church is true and alive. It is the Spirit who gives the church power, just as Jesus promised His disciples, that “when the Holy Spirit comes, it will enable you to do great things” (John 16:7; 14:12). Jesus promised the disciples that after His departure He would not leave them alone but the Holy Spirit would come - the Spirit of God is the One who brings unity within the body. The indwelling of the Spirit in the church guides believers in the truth of God’s Word. An example of the Spirit leading believers into the truth can be found in Acts (10:11-13) in the case of Peter when he saw the vision of a great sheet opened up containing all kinds of unclean animals, and he was told to kill and eat. Peter was fully aware that there was a prohibition against eating unclean animals; yet through this vision the intention of the Holy Spirit was to tell Peter that he also had to take the gospel to the Gentiles. The Spirit which was within him led Peter to obey and take the gospel to the Gentiles as well. The Holy Spirit also cleanses the church and makes it holy and pure just like the temple that was sacred and a dwelling-place of God (Erickson 2015: 397).

7.5.4 The church is visible and invisible

In its true spiritual reality of individuals, the church is invisible. This is because we cannot see the heart of the believers. We can see people who attend church gatherings outwardly and we can see outwardly spiritual change but we cannot see people's hearts and view their spiritual status, only God can do that. Apostle Paul says "The Lord knows those who are his" (2 Tim. 2:19). In our churches and even our neighbour Christians, only God knows true believers who are without error. The definition of the invisible church is the church as God sees it. Martin Luther and John Calvin both were against the Roman Catholic teachings that the church was the one visible organization which had originated from the apostles and continued through an unbroken line of succession of bishops of the church. This view is still held by the Roman Catholics even today. The Catholics hold that evangelical Christians were separated from the one true church. The Roman Catholic view eliminates the biblical perspective that the founder and head of the church is the Lord Jesus. Instead it accepted the historical authority of the church in continuity with Peter and other apostles. The New Testament however, asserts that, the church was started by Jesus Christ and he chose Peter and other apostles as foundations of his church (Noll 198:80; Frame 2013:856)

On the other hand, the visible church is the church which exists on earth as all Christians see it. The visible church includes all who confess and have faith in Christ and give evidence of that faith in their lives (Frame 2013:855-856). The church is visible due to the fact that it is in the service of one another and forms a worshipping community. It is invisible in the eschatological aspects for the body of Christ at the end of time will be united with Christ for eternity (Bonhoeffer 1998:141). For the church to be perceived as a sociological entity does not lie with the problem of its origin but of its essence. The church contains a divine entity and it was established by God, yet it works in the community and is visible there like any other social organization. These two aspects of the church, that it is visible and invisible, provide a challenge in defining the church as social institution. If the church is understood and defined as a sociological phenomenon it will be an organization with religious interests. Therefore, the church according to the Scripture from where it originated in both the New and Old Testament, is God's establishment/ and organization where Christ is the master and Lord of the church (Bonhoeffer 1998:252-253; Cole 2007:249). The visible church contains both the elected and non- elected ones who do not keep the covenant and at the eschatological time they will be separated from those who kept the covenant (Frame 2013:1019, Allen 2007:117).

However, due to the visibility and invisibility of the church, Frame (2013) argues that the word "visible" and "invisible" church is from the traditional background and not found in the Bible. Yet

the word helps us to express the idea that in the church there are both believers and non-believers. This concept does not lead us to the conclusion that there are two churches which exist simultaneously but rather that there are two ways of examining and looking into the same church. The invisible church is the true church which God sees: God can quite surely determine and see which person has true faith and is joined to Christ. He can really see the hearts of people; we human-beings cannot see what God sees (Frame 2013:1019). The visible church is the church which men see however God sees both the visible and the invisible church. In some churches, before a person joins and gets membership, church leaders have to examine that person to see if he/she lives under a certain kind of sin, such as living with a woman or a man without being married but it is difficult for church leaders to evaluate or see sins such as greed and others. Therefore, the visible church can include unbelievers as well (Frame 2013:1020).

Regarding the visible and invisible church Erickson (2013) poses a question, "Is it possible to distinguish the visible and invisible church"? This question can be dealt with in this way: the visible church consists of all believers who gather together to hear the Word of God and celebrate the sacraments. This means that the visible church constitutes the true church which is the invisible church. The true church has distinctive marks; namely: (1) proclaiming the Word of God, (2) proper administering of sacraments and, (3) implementation of church discipline (Belgic confession, article 29). From the parable of Jesus concerning weeds in the midst of the wheat, as well as that of sheep and goats, it means that the distinction between the visible and invisible church has to be maintained (Matthew 13:24-30, 47-58) (Erickson 2013:966-968; Allen 2007:117). On the other hand Grudem (1994) holds that we cannot see the spiritual condition of individual believers from the visible church. For Grudem the "invisible" church is the one which only God knows. Therefore, this means that for a fellow-human it is not easy to discern the invisible church, for within the visible church there is the invisible church, which only God knows. This is contrary to the Roman Catholic teachings that the visible and true church is the organized Roman Catholic one with an unbroken line of succession through the bishops (Grudem 1994:855-856).

However, in the eyes of society, the church is not invisible, rather, it is visible - the church is that one consisting of human-beings. It is not invisible or spiritual but it is seen. Throughout the history of the church there never was an invisible church. A church made up of people can never be invisible: the Roman Catholic Church, the Reformed Churches, and other sects and spiritual groups, are all visible. The church has its history and is different from all other social groups and social organizations in the community. It is visible like any other group in society, making it true and important by its very nature. Because of the visibility of the church there is a home for all believers where they can join in and receive assistance (Küng 1967:35). The

church however can be both invisible and visible: invisible in the sense that the visibility of the church entails the aspects of the invisible or it is the reflection of the invisibility of the church. It is not like any other group of people for they are special people, the mysterious body and spiritual edifice. Because of the visibility of the church the outsiders see it as a religious organization which they might take seriously or not. The church can also proclaim to be more than it seems and give answers to the disturbing questions that outsiders are asking. If the church forgets to keep its true nature then it will be like any other entity in the community (Küng 1967:37).

Furthermore, there is no invisible and visible church where the visible is earthly and material and the invisible is spiritual and heavenly. The distinction between visible and invisible church will result in emphasizing the invisible which is regarded as spiritual while neglecting the visible that is regarded as worldly and material. The church is the same church which seems at once visible and invisible. Thus it means the church that Christians believe in is one church, visible and invisible (Küng 1967:38). Martin Luther, when he was struggling with the hierarchical government, referred to the church as spiritual and visible. Any distinction between the visible and invisible church will result in two separated churches. We cannot oversee/supervise the entire church and thus there is no reason to conclude that the church is invisible. We are able to see the church differently from the way God sees it; however, not everything we see about the church is important but there is more to a church than what we see. Therefore, it is important not to work too extensively on distinguishing between the invisible and visible church. The Word of God speaks about the church in two ways: (1) the church as seen from human perspectives and (2) the church in God's perspective. This means that the true church which God sees can also include the hypocrites who pretend to be Christian but are not. We human-beings are able to see one church but God can distinguish clearly (Van Genderen & Velema 2008:705-706).

7.6 The attributes of the church

7.6.1 The church is one

The Reformed Churches traditionally, in the Nicene Creed confess that the church is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. However, the Roman Catholic Church traditionally interprets the four attributes of the church as ONE only, HOLY, CATHOLIC, and APOSTOLIC; when referring to the Roman Catholic Church it is ONE against many Protestant churches, it is HOLY in its masses and ceremonies performed by the Catholic Church; the Roman Catholic Church is APOSTOLIC because it has direct succession from the apostles through the ordaining of bishops by laying-on hands from one generation to another. This ideology is contrary to the Scripture. According to Scripture the unity of the church is spiritual which has been received by

faith in Christ and through baptism; thus all Christians are bound through faith in Christ (1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12, 13). Jesus (in John 17) prayed for the unity of the church, and the Apostle Paul also insisted on the unity of the church for he was aware that there would be disunity among believers. Both Jesus and Paul did not distinguish unity whether spiritual or organizational, but the church has been called upon to seek unity and eliminate any disunity among Christians (Frame 2013:1021).

Jesus insisted (John 17:14) that in the church they should help and care for one-another, to love, and to glorify God and one another. The unity of the church is also organizational because Jesus founded one church which was under the leadership of apostles, elders, and deacons (Eph. 2:20; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 1 Tim 3:1-7). When problems occurred in the church, Jesus gave guidance on how to solve them (Matt. 18). During the disagreements and chaos in the church, God through Jesus provided guidance on how to calm the situation and not to leave the church. According to Frame, (2013: 1022) the rise of denominations was the result of disagreements within the church-that was the reason why others had gone out and started other denominations. The outbreak of and surge in denominations was the result of sin - either of those who remained in the former church or of those who had left or both (Frame 2013:1022).

The Scripture speaks about the unity/oneness of the church in John 17, Acts 2:41-47, 1 Corinthians 12:4-27 and Ephesians 4:1-6. These Bible verses speak about the church as one body of Christ: the unity of the church is in Him for He is the head of the church. We may ask ourselves why there is a multiplicity of churches and whether they are different from one another? Because Jesus Christ is the head of the church those who belong to them belong together-this means that the unity of the church is not visible. The unity of the church also ought to be visible (Van Genderen & Velema 2008:709). The Roman Catholic Church claims that the visible unity of the church is the one of which the Pope is the head while other ecumenical churches are of the opinion that, all churches are inclusive and are one. The World Council of Churches realizes that the oneness of the church originated from Christ himself. The unity of the church was given through Christ, for He despised all the differences, and the ecumenical churches insisted on the unity in Christ (Van Genderen & Velema 2008:710).

The unity of the church is the spiritual unity for which Jesus prayed (Van Genderen & Velema 2008:711). We are aware of present divisiveness within the ecclesiastical community and that this means that the unity of the church is not bound in agreeing on everything or being uniform. However, true unity is unity which brings Christians together by agreeing to the truth and norm of the Word of God (Van Genderen & Velema 2008:713). The question about the unity of the church is complex and problematic. How can we say the church is united while there are

uncountable denominations and disagreements between one another? The unity of the church is confirmed in Jesus Christ since all believers love and serve the (same) Lord Jesus Christ. They might not be organically connected to one other and cooperate outwardly in any way but they do love one another even though they don't have contact. From this perspective the unity of the church is invisible and universal and this is where the true unity will be at the time when Christ comes when there will be one flock and one shepherd. Currently, the unity of the church is universal and spiritual which binds Christians together in faith in Christ which therefore is invisible. Another form of unity which can be observed among believers is fellowship: sometimes believers can move from one denomination to another or they can have a pulpit and ministers may be exchanged; sometimes they can work in one program in the service of the Lord. In other cases the unity of the church can be organic, for example, the Christian Council of Tanzania which includes denominations such as Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist and others (Erickson 2015:393, Christian Council of Tanzania website 2023).

The early church was considered as the elect of God who lived under the leadership of the apostles; this community, as the body of Christ, shared the fellowship in the Holy Spirit. Sometimes this community encountered the interference of false teachings from people who came with intentions to defile the church, but the apostles were careful to correct errors (Romans 16:17-18 also Reymond 1998:837). The church of Christ is united and is one and in this sense, the members receive one baptism, one Spirit and one Lord. It is a building which stands on one foundation as a flock under the leadership of one Shepherd. In most cases the church faces division from within itself and dissension which obscures the unity which is to be found in Christ. The church community is, in many ways encouraged to maintain oneness which originated from God (Reymond 1998:939). Jesus preached and prayed for the unity in the Church community. The Apostle Paul in his ministry insisted on fellowship and sharing, so for example, the Gentile church had to contribute and give with joyful hearts to the needy of the Jewish church; also the Jewish church was to joyfully receive the gifts from the Gentile church (Reymond 1998:840). This entails that the universal, and the church particularly of Tanzania is expected to reflect the unity and oneness in Spirit as shown through the Scripture. By doing so, the church can distinguish itself from other social organizations in the community (Psalms 133:1; Deuteronomy 7:6; Matthew 5:16).

On the other hand Shastri (2014) observes that, the church is aware of the changing world, and it maintains a good relationship with any other and in ecumenical organizations. The church in this era encourages solidarity so that it can serve the world when it encounters despair and discouragement. Jesus is a model for the church, for just as Christians also face challenges - this means that they share the cross of Christ - this helps them to remain united and true. The

church experiences challenges within its unity and in ecumenical institutions due to the questions people are asking daily and the changing mode of lifestyle. Due to this, the church has the task to unite and encourage unity for all Christians and churches (Shastri 2014: 25). However, the world where the church exists is surrounded by big non-Christian religions such as Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, etc. and therefore, the church has the task to witness and to bring the true Gospel of Jesus Christ to the false non-Christian religion with love (Cole 2007:249). There is also chaos and wars between the nations or between people in the same country, and the church has to help prevent wars and promote peace so that they may fight against disease, famine, ignorance, poverty, and other problems facing the community. In modern societies there are a lot of problems and yet there are many opportunities which the church can use to bring hope to the rest of the world (Küng 1967:4).

In order for the church to keep its unity, it has to bear one another's burden, and share life in good relationships with all the inhabitants of the world. The unity of the church seeks to maintain integrity, peace and justice for human-beings and for all God's creation. The nature of the unity is from God-the church has to cherish both local and global unity (Shastri 2014:28).

7.6.2 The church is holy

Van Genderen & Velema (2008:714) provide a definition of the word "holy" as without sin, pure or perfect. When we say the church is holy from the biblical perspective, that "holy" means that it is something that belongs to God which is set apart for a special purpose. The holiness of the church does not come from human qualities but from God's grace acting upon human-beings (1 Cor. 1:2). Christians are aware that not everything done in the church is done in a holy manner but the church itself is an object of faith. According to the Scripture the church becomes holy through the covenant which God made with His people through the sacrifices of Jesus on the cross and the continuation of sanctification through the Holy Spirit. The holiness of the church does not rely on high moral standards or follow a certain set of regulations; it rather lies in God's providence to His people (Van Genderen & Velema 2008:714; Vinson, Jr. 2012:19; Mayer 1962:659). For the church to continue to be holy, the boundaries between the secular world and the church have to be considered. When the church becomes secularized it surrenders its holiness and loses its identity. The church has been called into sanctification and thus it has to reflect and show the world that it is cleansed and redeemed by the power of the Holy Spirit; this will be the testimony to the world so that they will come to know that God has people in the world who belong to Him (Van Genderen & Velema 2008:716)

On the other hand, the church is sinful and yet it is holy. When we say the church is sinful we need to clarify: the errors, the imperfections, and the misguided notions in the church do not

alone bring us to the conclusion that the church is sinful. When considering the history of the church and of humanity which went hand-in-hand, we come to realize that there were times when they made mistakes. Therefore, the church throughout its history went through reformations. "The church encountered problems, yet found solutions; it sometimes got spoiled and rebuilt it again - it went through difficulties and (had) injuries but it solved its problems and carried on" (Küng 1967:320).

There were times when the representatives of the church, in response to the needs of mankind, failed to adapt to new problems, and to understand the views in certain areas: this means that they failed to understand the changes and values of the world, or to be able to see the signs of the times, and consequently had the reality of falling behind the times. The church and its leaders went through this trend, so much so that they still have this problem which led to the church being unable to fit into society. Then when we say the church is holy, it means that, the holiness of the church becomes obvious when those who are in God's family, demonstrate how to live in obedience to His commandments (1 John 2:4-6). This does not mean that a believer does not sin at all or never makes mistakes. The holiness of the church is based on day-to-day practising of righteousness, and following in Jesus' footsteps and remaining in Him until the end. This means that individuals are holy because they are not continuing on the road of sin and that they hate sin. The church has to be aware and acknowledge personal failure and guilt which is the result of wrong decisions and false development which was applied throughout its history. Through this imperfection we can discern the sinful course of the church. In this sense the history of the church is not only a human history but it is also a sinful history and it has always been so (Küng 1967: 320-321; Weil 2007:351).

The fact is that we all fall short and make mistakes, as the Scripture says (James 3:2. and 1 John 1:8) "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not with us". This means we are all sinners, and thus we need to ask God's forgiveness and for this reason the church which does not confess its sin does not exist (Küng 1967:322). In fact, the holiness of the church is not found in the moral and religious behaviour of its members. However, the church is holy in the sense that, it was separated for God's service and dedicated to God. The holy are those whom God set apart, where human activities are not included (Küng 1967:324). The church community is holy in the sense that it is Christ who cleanses the church. All members and believers are sanctified day-by-day, and they have not yet reached perfection but they are holy and making progress. Furthermore this community is holy because of the fact that it is separated from the world. Jesus declared in John (17:15-19) that they may be protected from evil for they are not of this world and He is also not of this world (Reymond

1998:842). The holiness of the church comes from the fact that those who are in God's family demonstrate that they live in obedience to His commandments (1 John 2:4-6 Weil 2007:349).

The holiness of the church is developed through the intimacy/relationship between believers and Christ as it becomes obvious through believers being associated with Christ. Believers are God's saints - they are God's people, His holy people. This does not hold that believers are perfect or sinless as we have discussed regarding the visible and invisible church, but that those who are associated with Christ are being sanctified until the time when they will be glorified at the eschatological moment. Since God is holy anyone who associates with Him becomes holy (Frame 2013:1023).

7.6.3 The church is catholic

The church in the New Testament is described as local, regional and universal. Due to the situation of the early church, people mostly met in homes (Romans 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15). However, some churches were in regional settings, for instance, there were churches in the cities of Rome, Jerusalem, and Antioch. There were also, churches in big cities which were divided into house churches. When we say the church is universal/catholic it means that, it includes all believers all over the world (Matt. 16:18; Acts 15:22; 1Cor. 12:28; Eph 1:22) (Grudem 1994:858; Frame 2013:1020).

The word "catholic" means universal: Christianity is universal with no boundaries in terms of race, nationality, language or any personal or national status. In John (3:16) the Bible speaks of the universality of the church, and in Matthew (28: 19) we find the message of the church to the world. The universality of the church was first manifested on the day of the Pentecost at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which was the beginning of the witnessing of the catholicity of the church to the people of all nations, languages, and cultural backgrounds. The universality of the church expresses the freedom in Christ (Van Genderen & Velema 2008:719). Christ is the one who gathers the church from one end of the world to the other and includes all human races. The church gathered a multitude of people all around the globe, united in true faith without being bound in one specific area; this is in contrast with the Roman Catholic teachings that Rome is the centre of the church and the Pope with his hierarchy. According to the Bible, the universal church has no geographical boundaries and Christ is the head of the church (Van Genderen & Velema 2008:720). From the very beginning Jesus demonstrated that the church is universal for He preached the gospel which had no boundaries of race, nationality, language or any differences whatsoever. The universal church opens its heart to everyone, rich and poor, those in high positions, and ordinary people. In the book of Acts chapter 2, the apostles were

filled with the Holy Spirit and they went everywhere on the earth to proclaim the Kingdom of God (Weil 2007:351).

It is also God's plan of salvation to bring those who are not yet saved into the family of His people. There is one Mediator between man and God, viz. Jesus Christ, who offered His life for the whole world. This means that it is God's desire to save all the people and to bring them to the knowledge of the truth (Kung 1967:319). In catholic sense we may see the church as one yet divided, as catholic and yet limited. We cannot deny the existence of the church on the universal level for it is visible and yet in another sense invisible (Küng 1967:320; Kamphuis 2013:98). The church is everywhere, fulfilling the great commission of Christ. The universality of the church is not only geographical but it is also social. This fact is revealed in Revelation (5:9-10) that Jesus by His blood purchased people from every tribe, language, and nation and made them to be part of His kingdom of priests to serve God and to rule the earth. With Christ, through Christ, the Church is everywhere, including with all people regardless of their traditions, language, race or any differences we can mention (Reymond 1998:844; Weil 2007:351; Frame 2013:1023).

7.6.4 The church is apostolic

The last attribute of the church is its apostolicity - this is because the church has a relationship with the apostles and their work. The Scripture testifies to this direct connection between the apostles and the church in Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 2:20; and Revelation 21:14: the apostles stand in a unique position in the church since they were the eye-witnesses of what God did through Christ (Bentley 2009:27). The apostles witnessed the process of the redemption story, the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. They were assigned and authorized to represent Christ and testify to all about Him. The teaching of the apostles is about the gospel of Christ, which they proclaimed in the name of Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit. The church received the message of Christ and continues to proclaim the gospel in the name of Jesus. It adheres to the teachings from the apostles, just as Paul recorded everything in 2 Timothy (2:2; 1) and Timothy (6:20) there is a continuation of the apostle's teachings (Van Genderen & Velema 2008: 743). The church is apostolic in the sense that it follows and operates under the authority, instruction, and directions of the apostles because the church listens to and accepts their message. Furthermore, the apostolic church is not an organization which works on succession back to the apostles as the Roman Catholics teach (Reymond 1998: 844) indeed, the New Testament does not say anything about the continuation of the apostolic office in the church but it does speak of the church abiding by the teachings of the apostles and following the examples in the footsteps of the apostles. The Church can be apostolic only if it adheres

continually to proclaiming the apostolic gospel and remaining true to the apostolic foundations (Frame 2013:1023; Reymond 2008:845).

7.7 The calling of the church in a religious pluralist society in Tanzania

Christianity consults the Bible in order to deal and respond to religious pluralism phenomenology. In the Old Testament after the Creation as described in Genesis 1-11, God desired all people to love and maintain a relationship with him. After the fall of human-beings God's plan was to redeem a fallen human race and He established a covenant with Noah. Then the Babel history in Genesis 11 indicated that mankind refused to worship God because of its rebellion and idolatry. As a result God chose an individual, Abraham and made a covenant with him and all the people of Israel through Abraham. God therefore chose the people of Israel through Abraham. God chose the people of Israel and through the Israelites all the people of the earth will be blessed (Gen. 12:3). However, throughout the history of Israel they continued to struggle with their tendency towards idolatry and pluralism in the face of other religions of the surrounding cultures. The failure of the Israelites during the time of the Judges and the monarchs/kings was due to the attraction of other deities in their pluralistic environments. The exclusivism of worship in the Old Testament was the theme which characterized the monotheistic Jews. Yahweh brought judgment upon gods of Egypt (Num. 33:4). God warned his people not to follow the detestable religious practices of the Canaanites which the Lord hated (Deut. 12:31). The Psalms affirm that all the gods, of other nations were idols (Ps 96:5). The prophets repeatedly mocked the worship of false gods made with human hands (1 Kings 18:27ff; Isa. 40:19-20, 44:9ff.; Jer. 10:1-16). However, the covenantal relationship between God and the Israelites in the Old Testament required exclusive worship to Yahweh (Feming 1997:44-45; Greenspahn 2004:480; Rosner 1994:22).

In the Old Testament there is another side where God's revelation and salvation plan does not exclude people of other nations. In the Old Testament there are individual Gentiles who responded to God's covenant with Israel. One is the mysterious figure of the Canaanites, Melchizedek who was called a priest of God the Most High (Gen. 14:18-20) and blessed Abraham in the name of the God Most High. Abraham reveals the true identity of the Creator God of Israel. This implies that Melchizedek (probably with other Canaanites) worshipped the true God of Israel even before his encounter with Abraham. Abraham was also called by God from his Semitic culture. In the Old Testament God revealed himself to God-fearers and Gentiles like Abimelech king of Gerar and Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in the forms of dreams (Gen. 20:3; Daniel 4). On the other hand, Jethro the Midianite priest became Moses' father-in-law and he offered sacrifices to the God of Moses. Then he met Moses at Horeb after

the Exodus and he used God's covenantal name in praising Yahweh for his deliverance (Ex. 18:10-11). Not only that, but when the Israelites prepared to enter Canaan the figure of Balaam appeared on the scene. Though he was a Mesopotamian diviner, Yahweh communicated with him (Num. 22:18-20) and used him to speak his word of blessing to Israel (Num. 23:3ff). God also spoke directly to Job who lived in the land of Uz and called him his servant, a "blameless, upright man who fears God and shuns evil" (Job 1:8). The inclusiveness of God's revelation and salvation in the Old Testament can be also detected through prophets. The people of Nineveh in Assyria were more obedient to Yahweh than Jonah's own people and own prophet. The people of Nineveh, even though they did not know God's covenant and were not seriously connected to Yahweh in the same way as Jonah they repented and had faith in God (Jonah 3:5; 7-9). Amos also affirms that God holds all the nations under his judgment -that was including the Israelites (Amos 1:3-2:16). He warned the Israelites against pride about their unique status by indicating that God throughout the history of salvation and revelation was also concerned with other nations as well (Amos 9:7). Malachi declared that the name of the Lord was greater among the nations (Mal. 1:11). In the Old Testament Scripture, apart from God calling the Israelites, he is also drawing people of other nations to him. Moreover, the Old and New Testaments do not confirm that salvation can be obtained/ is available from any other religion. But the inclusiveness of the people of other nations is all in the plan of God to draw all the people to him. Therefore, the inclusiveness is for those who will respond to God's calling and this exclusiveness again emphasizes that there is no salvation except through Christ (Fleming 1997:45-46).

In the New Testament God's plan of salvation focuses on one individual, Jesus Christ, just like in the Old Testament, God chose Abraham and through him all the Israelites were saved and through Abraham all the people of the earth were blessed. Through Christ, God accomplishes his universal saving purpose. The New Testament salvation is universal and is inclusive. God intended to reconcile all creation under the headship of Christ (Eph. 1:9-10). God's desire is for all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth. The New Testament Scripture declares that 'there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men'. This is the exclusive message in the New Testament. The Church in the first-century existed in a culture of religious pluralism during the Roman Empire. The struggle of the early church was all about the choice among many gods and lords of the Greek and Egyptian deities which included the worship of rocks, plants and animals. Moreover, the religious climate was syncretic and there was a lot of tolerance with participation in various religions which made very few exclusive claims. From this historical background, the New Testament writers stressed the uniqueness of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12; John 14:6). Paul when

addressing Christian believers in Corinth insisted that there were demonic elements in non-Christian religious worship (1Cor. 10:18ff). In Colossians Paul encountered the claim of other intermediaries and he stressed the exclusive supremacy of Christ in whom all of God's fullness dwells (Colossians 1:19; 2:9-10). Paul also reminded the Ephesians that they were following the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air (Eph. 2:1-2). The purpose of Paul's mission to the Gentiles was to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to the light and from the power of Satan to God (Acts 26:17ff). The Pergamum church, stood at the centre of religious pluralism in Asia Minor where pagan teachings and practices flourished (Rev 2:14ff). The Pergamum church stood as comparison to the Israelites being led astray by Balaam into idolatry and immorality. The Old and New Testament testifies that human religions were idolatrous, distorted by sin, under satanic influence and unable to save. The church today shares a pluralistic context in many ways that can be similar or different from that of the first-century Christians. The response of the New Testament writers can be applied by Christians today. The Christians responded to religious pluralism by distinguishing Christianity from other religions, indicating that the uniqueness of Christianity lies at the heart of the gospel which is Jesus Christ (Fleming 1997:47-48).

It was obvious that the incarnate light was not received by his own people (John 1:10f.) who from the Old Testament revelation had received more revelations than any other religions. This indicated the fact that, devotion to religion may lead people to reject the light of Christ. Thus religions are paradoxically both the arenas of divine enlightenment and of darkness and rejection. Apostle Paul's speeches in Lystra and Athens in Acts, gives a good picture of the relationship between Christ and other religions. In this case Paul interacted within the religious pluralist context. Most of the crowd in Lystra adhered to the popular religion of the Greek pantheon (Acts 14:11f.). Paul used their knowledge about the Creator God as a point of contact and then he pointed them to God who had created and is still sustaining the universe (Acts 14:15, 17) (Fleming 1997:49). Even though the Gentiles were ignorant about God (Acts 14:16) God did not leave them without a witness (Acts 14:17a); this witness in creation should have led the Gentiles to turn from their idols and worship the living God (Acts 14:15). At the Areopagus where the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers attended, Paul investigated further and was distressed by the idolatry and religious pluralism he discovered in Athens (Acts 17:16; 29. Paul recognizing their religious life calls the Athenians 'very religious'. Paul found a contact point in the Athenians' worship of the "Unknown god" and said: "Now what you worship as unknown I am going to proclaim to you" (Acts 17:23). This statement of Paul's does not confirm that this "Unknown god" and the living God are one and the same. This point was the door which Paul used to introduce the living God to the Athenians. Once again he used the theme of creation

and God's universal providences as a form of self-revelation (Acts 17:27). Paul quoted two Stoic poets which had insight into the nature of God (Acts 17:28). The Athenians knowledge failed to point them to the knowledge of Christ, and to know God. Now through Paul God commands all people everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30) for he has appointed a day of judgment for all (Acts 17:31). Paul's approaches to the people of other religions stands as a lesson to Christians even today when they encounter religious pluralism in their societies. Paul begins at a point of universality and commonality: he starts from creation and general revelation and moves to the particular revelation of Jesus Christ (Fleming 1997:50).

African people and in this particular case the Tanzanians, are deeply religious; their lives are surrounded by religious mysticism which accompanies individuals from birth to death in different forms of religious manifestation. In Tanzania we find religions such as African Traditional Religions, Christianity, and Islam. In the 19th and 20th Centuries, these religions were characterized by conflict and attempts at co-operation as they struggled to co-exist side-by-side in Africa for the common good. In Tanzania, Christianity, Islam and African Traditional religions have the highest number of adherents when compared to other World Religions. As discussed in this thesis, these religions have their similarities and differences which cause conflict and struggle. Furthermore, the co-existence of these religions has created religious pluralism in society (Amanze 2000:325)

The early church also encountered religious pluralism. The conversion of the Gentiles to Christianity was the first theological revolution, the turning away from the worship of idols (1 Cor. 12:2). Religious pluralism was a daily life practice in Corinth so that for example, meat was bought after being sacrificed to the idols (1 Corinthians 8:1, 4; 10:19,21). Apostle Paul recognized that Gentiles converted to Christianity had a need to deal with idolatry issues. Religious pluralism of Roman-Corinth Christians was complicated by their history of many gods and many lords. Religious pluralism was common in the entire Roman colony and the archaeological evidence shows that there was quite a number of temples and shrines such as those of Demeter, Persephone, Octavia, Hera Acraia and the ancient temple of Apollo in the city of Corinth and in other cities in Greece. The problem of religious pluralism is discussed in 1 Corinthians chapters 8-10. In the ancient time when a visitor approached Corinth through the one of its two ports, viz. Lechaenum he would encounter Achaia's religious pluralism. There were sanctuaries and a stone statue of Aphrodite. However, religious pluralism in Corinth was seen in the heart of the city. Monotheism was far from the customary thinking of the people in Corinth, as there was no problem for them to keep all the gods and lords in their temple or homes (Winter 1990:210-211; Fleming 2002:54).

In the early centuries the Diaspora Jews and Christians lived in a society where religious pluralism flourished. Due to religious plurality the Jews regarded it as paganism. The Jews struggled to live in an environment where paganism was practised in their daily lives. (Winter 1990:225). The monotheistic Jews and Christians were challenged within the religious pluralist society where they lived. The pagan people did not only worship idols/images but they also worshipped the sun, moon, mountains and hills, springs and glens and even human beings. The question may arise to whether there was any power in idols, or why God is jealous over the worshipping of idols Exodus 20:5. However, the Christian theology explains that God is jealous because all the honour and glory is rightly due to him, while this worship is given to an idol by mankind (Winter 1990:217).

Jews who lived in the city of Corinth where religious pluralism flourished, knew very well what they ought and ought not to do so as to distinguish themselves from Gentiles. For example there was clear prohibition on eating blood and abstaining from food offered to idols. There was also the absolute- prohibition for Jews to enter into pagan temples, for whoever entered was unclean. The Jews also avoided attending the Gentiles' parties for fear of the host making a confession of faith before an idol. There was also a ban on selling animals to Gentiles especially during or near the time of pagan religious festivals because they could be used for idolatry. Therefore, the Jews avoided any means of being associated to the Gentiles in their religious activities (Winter 1990:217-218).

The Christians in Corinth especially Gentiles, also had to learn to cope with religious pluralism. There arose a diversity of opinions in the church regarding what could and could not be done in particular circumstances especially on the matter of food offered to idols in the temple (1 Corinthians 8:7-10). Christians like Jews consulted teachers to settle the matter. In Corinth some Christians justified their entering pagan temples in order to participate in the idol feasts, arguing as Rabbis would on other issues. Another argument was that of meat which had been sacrificed to the idols and which was later sold in the meat-market..., on this some Christians cited Psalm 24:1 'the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof'. Even, Apostle Paul cited the same verse in the discussion in 1 Corinthians 10:26. The Corinth Christians however tried to justify their eating in the idol temple as summarized in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6. It indicated that Christians in Corinth knew their God and were able to distinguish their God from pagan gods and lords (but not all of them). 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 however, describes clearly that Christians had to know that the pagan activities and their worship was not worshipping a true God. Therefore, they should have known and avoided any activities which would indicate them worshipping the gods of the pagans. This knowledge was in the light of the fact that an idol was nothing. Some strong Christians whose conscience was strong ate the meat that had been sacrificed to the

idols knowing that everything was from the Lord and that the idols were nothing to the God of the Bible. Because of that knowledge they ate and entered pagan temples but did not worship idols. On the other hand there were other weak Christians who, having no knowledge and being accustomed to the idols and with their weak conscience and consequently it defiled them (Winter 1990:219-222).

Apostle Paul dealt with the issue of religious pluralism in 1Cor. 8-10. His discussion involved both arguments of the confident and weak Christians of Corinth concerning the matter of eating meat that had been offered to the idols. The warning in 1Cor. 10:11 included all Christians who were tempted to make a compromise with idolatry. They were warned to totally disassociate themselves from idolatry 1Cor. 10:13. For Paul, the idols and everything which had been sacrificed to them was a sacrifice to demonic powers and not to God. Because the idols were nothing and since there was no reality in any idol the Corinthian Christians quite highly agreed not to engage in any activities taking place in the idol temples (1Cor. 10:21) nor to drink or eat from their table. They weren't to associate at all with for their God was jealous God who cannot share power with any idol, according to 1Cor. 10:22 (Winter 1990:223-224).

The contemporary church and specifically the church in Tanzania, exists in a world of religious and moral pluralism. It is the world which embraces the idea that different forms of religious belief and behaviour should coexist. The nature of pluralism is that it does not relativize truth but rather it relativizes different responses to truth which are conditioned by history and culture. Pluralism rejects the claim of any particular response to be absolute. It holds that no-one can have the truth in the palm of his hand (Martin 2011:114; Marbaniang 2007:1). There are the Jewish, Christians, Islam, African Traditional religions, Hindu, Buddhists, Taoist and Confucian religions, and all these experiences expresses ideas that form truth perceptions. Their claim of pluralism, challenges the Christian conviction of "no other name" (Acts 4:12) which has guided Christian theology for centuries (Theodoor van Veelen 2021:65). The pluralism ideology is a serious challenge to Christianity and it can bring division among Christians. Thus for-example, miracles for some Christians are essential while to others they are not and some Christians emphasize the doctrine of the inerrancy of the Bible as the core of faith while for others it has little significance. Also, for some Christians the papacy is an integral part of faith, while for others it represents a huge obstacle to their faith. Some of the Christian Scriptures were used to justify slavery, abortion and capital punishment while others were against it. However, each denomination in a Christian circle has its central confessional theme that has emerged through history which is also defensive and closed to other traditions. The church is also defined and experienced differently. Even the person of Christ is differently experienced and expressed. The Chalcedonian definition in the 5th Century created two families within the Orthodox Church

which from 1054 to 1965 were excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church of Constantinople for more than nine centuries. In Asia and elsewhere the evangelicals (conservative Christians) and ecumenical (liberal Christians) there are suspicious which exists among themselves. This indicates that the tension within Christianity was more intense than the tension it experienced in the inter-religious contexts. The reason for this diversity is that the Christian truth claim is not identical within a religious pluralist society. Also Christians mistakenly treat that truth claimed by religious pluralism as identical. In fact in the world there will always be a particular person or group who mentions truth which cannot be touched by humans; this means that no any other truth that can be as perfectly received or communicated as that of the Bible. Christians were warned about this (Mic. 6:8 and 1 Cor. 13:2) (Koyama 2009:160-161).

Religious pluralism denies the fundamental Christian insights, and therefore, it is the task of Christians to answer to every idea of religious pluralism so as to maintain their biblical teachings. Since all religions have a god or (God) whom they worship, the question arises whether all religions refer to the same god or (God)? However, we have seen from the previous chapter of this research that there are different concepts about God among religions. Many religions systems acknowledge and express their belief that God exists as a personal God. Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and African Traditional religions affirm this, while Hinduism, Buddhism and others have different perspectives about God. It is found throughout this research that God is at the centre of all religions, and God exceeds all human thought. Yet, in a Christian perspective God is known through Christ. The Christian point of view expresses the concepts which explain all about God more than any other religion. The strength of Christianity is that it worships a God who is known and who is clearly explained in its Scripture. Even if pluralism criticizes the exclusivity of Christianity, especially the concept about God, then other religions also have that tendency towards of exclusiveness as well (Objantoro 2018:5)

Another response of Christianity to the pluralist society is about the doctrine of salvation. In chapter 3 of this research we discussed about the concept of salvation from different religious points of view. However, salvation is not considered as a special phenomenon within a religious pluralist society. This is because they argue that the meaning of salvation depends on how people define it. The world's religious pluralist views hold that all religions lead to salvation. They affirm that salvation is not found only in Christ. Salvation is defined/ expressed differently from the point of view of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, African Tradition religions and the Eastern religions. Salvation is commonly defined in Christianity and Judaism, but in Islam it is expressed in terms of total submission to God who is a giver of life, and who is gracious, and merciful to humankind. In the African Traditional religions salvation is to be free from all problems while the

Eastern religions explain salvation as liberation or enlightenment. Furthermore, the concept of salvation from religious pluralist point of view is that all religions lead to salvation even for those who do not adhere to any religion. This means that pluralism believes that people in all religions have the same chance to be saved or not. They believe that there are people among them that will be saved and others not (Objantoro 2018:4; Pelko *et al* 2010:3185)

It is also found out that the pluralist ideology does not have a specific concept about salvation. They understand salvation with a broader perspective. From the pluralist point of view questions such as whether salvation is the same as the concept of liberation, or is salvation the same when under-going the change of orientation from self-centeredness, may arise? The questions are still on the general level of salvation. However, Christianity responds to the above questions as follows: Christianity recognizes that salvation is liberation because salvation makes human-beings free from the bondage of sin. Salvation also leads human-beings to focus on God in this life. More than that, salvation in Christianity is related to Christ's work on the cross- it is God's work for His creation (Hoper 2017:109). This Christian concept differs from that of other religions. The differences of Christianity from other religions are not in its symbolic or its theological concepts but from the fact of Jesus' presence. In Christianity and from some other faiths the concept of salvation will be meaningless/ useless if there is no relation with Jesus Christ. The uniqueness of Christianity is based upon the person of Christ who saves men and women of the past, present and the future. Jesus can save people because of the two natures in him (divine and human). Jesus is God and also human. This doctrine is very essential to the Christian faith and because of its importance it has been attacked by other doctrines among which the pluralist ideology. The world pluralism and other faiths confuse the two natures of Christ and as always emphasize only one nature God or human. In Christianity, Jesus Christ is fully God because he possesses all the essential properties of God. Jesus Christ is also fully human, that is, he possesses all the essential properties of a human-being. The two natures of Christ form a logical unity and even if is not acceptable to other faiths (including religious pluralist views). Christianity affirms that Christ is the Saviour for human-beings (Acts 4:12) (Objantoro 2018:6-7).

Since religious pluralism entails that all religions are equal and that truth in religions has the same value this remains a challenge to the Christian faith which proclaims that Jesus is the only way to salvation. Therefore, the Christian response to the religious pluralist world is based on the Word of God which claims that biblical truth is unique and only found in Christianity. It is undeniable truth that the world is pluralist in many ways, such as ethnicity, language, culture and religion. Therefore, religious pluralism remains a theological challenge especially to Christianity. However, there are a few Christian theological books or articles which have been

written about religious pluralism. The only available material for Christian apologetics for its exclusive message of salvation is through the Word of God (Bible) (Objantoro 2018:1). Moreover, Christianity needs to explain in detail through Scripture its exclusive message of salvation. This is because in Christianity God is one in Trinity. While other religions such as the Jewish, Islamic, and African Traditional religions do not understand/accept the whole concept of God in Trinity. The strength of Christianity (when compared to other religions) is its concept of worshipping a known God who has revealed himself through creation, Jesus Christ, and the Word of God. Jesus claimed that “no-one comes to the Father except through me: (Matt. 11:27; Jn. 14:1-6). Therefore, Christianity understands the concept of God from biblical perspectives (Objantoro 2018:5).

Moreover, religious pluralism measures the standard of a godly person from moral aspects. According to the Christian view, moral standards cannot be an excuse to justify that a person is God-fearing. That is why even atheists can have a good moral standard. But, according to Christian Scripture, all humans regardless of their religions, are sinners and in need of divine grace (Isa. 64:6; Jer. 17:9-10; Rom. 3:23; 1John 1:9-10). In Christianity, moral aspects are meaningless if a person is still sinning before God. Other religions, however, emphasizes moral aspects so that one can obtain/receive salvation. The concept of sin is not dealt with clearly in other religions. Christianity believes that there is no other way for human-beings to get rid of sin in life except through Christ (Objantoro 2018:5). Another thing, which religious pluralism emphasizes is the religious experience. But in Christianity religious experience is when someone encounters Christ in his/her life. In this way it is an experience of conversion. Religious pluralism also sees a religious experience as a matter of being faithful member of a certain religion. More than that, Christianity's experiences rely on the concept that one should have the experience of encountering Christ personally. This experience in Christianity is when God changes that person into the new person (11 Cor. 5:17). From this point on that person who has experienced Christ, may continue to grow in faith (Objantoro 2018:5).

From Christianity's point of view, what is the gospel? Christian gospel is Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 2:2) “I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified”. This name is core-essential to a Christian life (1 Cor. 12:3) “No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit”. (Matt. 16:17) “For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven”. Whenever the name Jesus is spoken it changes situations/things. Peter healed a lame man from birth just by invoking the name of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 3:1-10). The pluralists deny the name of Christ but Christ is the centre of the gospel and Christianity. According to Christianity, the gospel is the fullness of grace and truth that comes from the compassion of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:37-39). The prodigal son (Luke 15:20) was received by his father when he

put his arms around him and kissed him. The Old Testament Scripture also testifies that God is merciful, gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and He is faithful (Ex. 34:6; Num. 14:18; Joel 2:13; Neh. 9:17). In the Christian Scripture, the compassion and forgiveness are cooperative words they are united. When Peter (Matt. 18:21f) asked how many times he should forgive-Jesus answered “not seven times, but seventy-seven times”. Jesus’s answer reveals how compassionate he is to his people. The entire earthly ministry of Christ is characterized by compassion and forgiveness. In Christianity, Christ remains as the strength of the Christian faith (Koyama 2009:162-163; Budiman et al 2022:51-52).

Jesus said to them “all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I command you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:18-20). The authority was given to Jesus. According to this verse the authority was not automatically given/ transferred to the church or Christians. The authority to the church or to Christians is self-serving Christians can participate in Christ’s authority but cannot possess it. The participation of Christians in the authority of Christ is dangerous for it entails taking up the cross and following Christ (Matt. 16:24). This means that evangelism involves the time for repentance. The sacrifices that are acceptable to God are a broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart (Ps. 51:17). Christians are called to preach the gospel of compassion-forgiveness and the way of self-denial. The term ‘go therefore’ is not a military command, nor is it a mortal conflict between righteous Christian and unrighteous non-believers in Christ. Rather, it is a command to share Christ in compassionate-forgiveness. (Acts 4:12) Christians have maintained this in their gospel throughout centuries that “there is salvation with no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven among mortals by which we must be saved.” Christians can make mistakes if they apply this verse to exclude others who are not Christians in God’s salvific plan. Christians are urged to bring people to a name (Christ). The name of “no other name” is open to all regardless of race, gender, age and religion. It is the name which was there in the beginning and will be in the end. Christians can respond to other faiths in a way which does not offend people of other faiths. When Christians insist that Islam or the African Traditional religion is nothing but deception, it will reduce its spiritual stature and credibility in the eyes of people of other faiths. It is nothing to establish one’s own superiority by depreciating others. Christians can make simple statements like “For the church to which I belong, Christ is the truth.” (Koyama 2009:166-168). As we discussed earlier, the presence of religious pluralism is not new to Christian society. The early church and the Apostles also faced the same challenge in a Greco-Roman world (1 Cor. 8:5). In contemporary societies religious pluralism is a huge challenge because of the globalizing advancement in communications,

international travel and immigrations, etc. Therefore, religious pluralism and the relationship between Christianity and other world religions is the agenda in a Christian community. The unique and exclusive message of salvation in Christianity can be considered as triumphalist or imperialist because in the world of religious pluralism there is not any other religion that can claim more valid than the other (Fleming 1997:44).

The inclusivity of the Christian message is the claim of Jesus's ministry which focuses primarily on the house of Israel (Matt. 15:24; cf. 10:5f.). In the Synoptic Gospels there is not much evidence of Jesus' attitude towards other religions. Yet the Gospel provides the information about the continuation of God's revelation to Israel. Jesus commented on the great faith of the Roman centurion and Syro-Phonecian woman who were beyond out of God's stream of revelation to the Jews. Jesus' inclusion of revelations went to both Jews and Gentiles at the Messianic banquet in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 8:11). Another relevant point in the gospel is that concerning the Magi who came from the East to worship the Christ child (Matt. 2:1-12)-these were the pagan astrologers whose religious culture had prepared them in the same way for a journey to Judea. They came with a limited understanding to worship king, and not a Saviour. Yet, Christ revealed his salvation to the Magi through their idol worship of the star and drew them to salvation. It is clear that the faith of non-Christians and the journey of the Magi reveal God's plan of salvation to the Gentiles/non-Christians. John in the New Testament speaks of Christ as the logos, the one who is the light of men from the time of creation (John 1:4) Christ is the true light who gives light to every man (John 1:9). The light which came into the world through incarnation that illuminates every person, is the light which is shining in any culture and religion (Fleming 1997:49; Bano *et al* 2021:231)

7.8 The church in Tanzania and its response to religious pluralism

Today African Christians realize who they are in Christ, and they want to worship God on their own. African Christians feel comfortable to worship God with their own hymnal songs and to thus keep their identity as Africans. Since a large number of Africans have embraced the gospel of Christ they are finding a way to integrate Christ into their culture. From the ideology of African Christianity the following questions may rise: Is it possible for African Christians to find a true and biblical spiritual worshipping of God on their own? Is it necessary for the African Christians to copy Western norms and liturgy? Since the Holy Spirit helps Christians in worship why is it that the African people haven't felt free to innovate and pray in their own way? These and many questions can be asked regarding the reformation / creation of African Theology (Chepkwony 1994:24). To answer the questions above, Chepkwony (1994) tries to define the term "African Theology": the term is problematic according to Chepkwony this is because Christian Theology

and African Theology are different. The former is biblically-based and the latter is a pre-Christianity experience of God for the African people. The true definition of African Theology is the African experience of God before the arrival of Christianity and other religions. In other words it is a return to African Traditional religious experiences. However, the dialogue in the Christian community is supposed to consider the formulation of a Christian/ biblical theology which will fit and answer African problems and questions. This is because, it is seen that African traditional religion has much more to offer to the African people than Christianity itself. That is why there are many African Christians who still value and follow traditional African religions (Adamo 2011:1; Gausset 1999:260; Gabbert 2001:292; Masondo 2015:88). Therefore, Chepkwony (1994) suggests that African people should formulate the Christian Theology in Africa themselves which will be authentically African and genuinely Christian-a theology which will not be a copy of Western theology nor be a syncretism of African traditional religion and Christian faith; it will be a theology which is grounded in an African understanding of Scripture as the only true infallible Word of God (Chepkwony 1994:26).

My personal opinion is that, African theologians should teach/insist the biblical Christian theology which is fitting into African settings, this will help in dealing with the issues of syncretism and of religious pluralism. Many African Christians who still value and practise African Traditional religions found that Western Theology and their practices do not meet their full spiritual and physical needs. Therefore, they go somewhere where their questions can be answered and their problems solved. Not only that, but they are also not sure of their belief in Christ, if it is the only truth, or way to salvation. Most of Christians practises religious morality and pluralism and they think there is also salvation from other faiths/ religions.

In regard to the Christian response to religious pluralism, one should when reading the Bible focus on the compassionate-forgiving God in Jesus Christ in order to transform peoples' lives. The authoritative Word of God is not isolated from the challenges that Christians encounter in their daily lives. The Word of God should be strongly engaged to deal with moral and religious pluralism in society. It is strongly contested/ rejected by Muslims and others that God is not a Triune God. Therefore, Christianity needs to carefully argue and present the God of the Bible to non-Christians in a way which will not offend people of other faiths. This will not be counted as an act of compromising the gospel but it will open more doors to sharing the truth from the Bible. The more Christians engage in the Word of God in a confusing world, the more powerful the Bible will speak to Christians. The Bible comes to Christians in many and various ways (Heb. 1:1). The Word of God does not directly say 'take this or leave this' it rather engages in patient persuasion in its presentation of truth. The Bible is more interested in a compassionate-forgiving human relationship than in correct doctrine. Compassion compels Christians to interpret and

apply the Bible openly to the world of moral and religious pluralism. The interpretation should not be based on examples such as sheep for Christians and goat for non-Christians. The salvation plan in the Bible includes all people of the world regardless of their religion, culture, language etc. Christians must know that when they say “no other name but Jesus” Jews, Muslims, African Traditional religions, and others are listening. If people of other faiths are excluded and condemned they will not seek spiritual advice from Christians, for the Bible is not the book which contains lists of good and wrong references. When two people read one passage from the Bible, each will come out with different insights from the same passage that they read. This means that God speaks to his people through his Word in different ways (Koyama 2009:169). As was seen in the previous paragraphs, the Israelites in the Old Testament experienced the problem of religious pluralism from the exodus experience onwards and they struggled to keep their identity as God’s people. Therefore, syncretism, moral and religious pluralist phenomena are not new within Christianity. The same situation was experienced by the early church where the Christian faith existed in the society and culture of many gods and lords. The task of prophets and judges in the Old Testament was to remind the Israelites about the covenant they had closed between themselves and God to worship God and not any other gods of other nations. The same task in the New Testament church was given to the apostles to teach and insist on the worship of God through Christ. The contemporary church of Tanzania and the universal church have the same opportunity to respond to the ideologies of religious pluralism through the Word of God, through dialogue, and tolerance (Lanoska 2014:7; Smith 2019:236). Since the church in Tanzania struggled to keep peace with their fellow Muslim sisters and brothers, tolerance and inter-religious dialogue are necessary. The dialogue and tolerance do not mean a compromise between the gospel and religious pluralism but rather it helps Christians to share their exclusive message of salvation in a way that will not offend people of other faiths. We have seen throughout history, that Christianity and Islam in Tanzania co-existed for many years but in recent years conflicts emerged from time-to-time (Poncian 2015:60). This means that even though these two major religions might share some broader concept about God they still have differences in understanding and explaining things about God. Therefore, syncretism, moral and religious pluralism are vividly active in the communities of Tanzania, and Christians are urged to consult what the Word of God says when dealing with pluralist ideologies. The Old and New Testament church also experienced the same challenges yet struggled and survived through the Word of God (Winter 1990:223).

7.9 Conclusion

The salvation plan of God is to save the fallen human-beings as seen from the Old Testament, where God called the individual Abraham, and later on the nation of Israel to be his people. It is clear from this chapter of my research that the plan of God to redeem a human being was exclusive and inclusive as well. God called the Israelites only in the Old covenant, but in the New covenant God calls all the people of the earth regardless of their nation, language, tribe, etc. The church of the New Testament stands as the continuation of the people of God whom God collected from the Old Testament. The New Testament church is also the people of God, which has characteristics in that they are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the body of Christ. The church is also one, holy, catholic and apostolic institution. The contemporary problem of syncretism and religious pluralism was also the situation of God's people in the Old Testament. The Israelites from time-to-time struggled with idolatry, religious pluralism and culture which permeated their environment. God in the Old Testament made it clear that, he is God who cannot share his glory with idols or images that had been made by human hands. The Israelites were punished when they worshipped idols and when they repented God forgave them. The same situation happened to the early church. The New Testament church also existed in an environment where there were many gods and lords. The Corinthian church for instance, existed where there were a lot of idols and their temples and idolatrous worshipping activities.

The contemporary church, the universal church and in this particular case the church in Tanzania exist in the world of religious syncretism and moral religious pluralism. Because of the development in communication and technology, people of different cultures, and religions are traveling, immigrating universally and this phenomenon creates a new blend of society of diversity. Therefore, religious tolerance is much encouraged so as to build a community which will live in peace regardless of its religious or culture diversity. The church in Tanzania in this particular instance exists among Muslims and African Traditional religious societies, where the church needs to respond to religious pluralism from a biblical perspectives, just as the Israelites in the Old Testament and the early church which existed in the world of religious pluralism, did as well. The response of the church concerning religious pluralism should be based on the infallible Word of God. What does the Bible teach about other religions? What did the Word teach in response to the ideas of worshipping other gods; what did God instruct his people regarding the worshipping of other gods? And so forth... Therefore, Christianity and the church should adhere to what God says to them through his Word,

CHAPTER 8 SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This study topic discussed the problem of syncretism and religious pluralism in the church of Tanzania. The church exists and operates in a society of religious plurality which is a threat to the Christian faith. The church, throughout its history from the Old Testament where the Israelites were called the people of God, from time-to-time struggled with the problem of worshipping idols or the gods of other people of and nations. The early church in the New Testament also faced the problem of idol worshipping around them, and most of the people who converted to Christianity were from the community that had worshipped other gods. The Corinthian Christians, for example, encountered the problem of idol worship therefore, from the Old to the New Testament, God urged his people to worship Him alone. The present day church is facing the same problem. Throughout scripture it became all too clear that the church of the Old and the New Testament was repeatedly instructed by God and given laws to keep and maintain its identity as the people of God who live in this world yet-they are not of this world. The church in Tanzania and the universal church according to the Christian Scripture were instructed to not compromise its exclusive message of salvation with pluralist ideology. This last chapter gives a general summary of the research problems, hypothesis, questions, methodology, debate, discussion and findings around the research topic. It also suggests and recommends further studies on the issues of dealing with syncretism and religious pluralism by formulating a Christian theology in Africa which will answer the questions and problems of the African people.

8.2 Summary

This study defined religious pluralism from a metaphysical, ontological, epistemological, logical and theological point of view. Pluralism, however, entails diverse societies in which people believe all kinds of different things yet tolerate one another's beliefs even when these don't match their own. It is the doctrine of duality and unity; it is a belief that there is not only one consistent means of approaching the truth about the world but rather many (Richardson 1975:259-260; Prince 1992:387; Spinks 2017:2-4; Zalta 2020:17; Westerholm 2019:230; Peters 2018:3-4). Moreover, theology and science relate to each other in many ways and also have differences regarding explanation and understanding. Metaphysics, ontology, epistemology, and logic are philosophical and scientific ways of explaining and understanding cosmology and the truth. It is the scientific way of understanding the world but it also denies the theological aspects

and understanding of the creation from a biblical perspective. Therefore, there are some instances of agreement and disagreement between science and theology in explaining and understanding the truth, the universe, and creation (Tenneson *et al* 2016:216).

It is also found that the reality of existentialist syncretism, and moral religious pluralism in the society of Tanzania, pose a threat to the Christian faith and the church. The history of religious pluralism in Tanzania was traced back to the colonial time. The colonial economy encouraged people to immigrate from rural settings into urban areas and big cities; and some even travelled overseas. Therefore, life that was associated with geographical location and ethnicity was of no significance and people were and are still everywhere. This phenomenon resulted in the creation of new cultures and ways of life. Due to national and international immigration people shared ideas, information and religious beliefs and convictions as well. This was the genesis of syncretism and religious pluralism in Tanzania (Aikaeli *et al* 2021:90).

Christianity and Islam religions form the majority of the religions in the country and they are approximately equal in numbers. This seems so although since 1973 the government has preferred to not provide statistics on religiously-affiliated groups for it regarded religion as a sensitive issue and that it could be a threat to the unity of the country if not handled carefully. Therefore, other institutions still provide religious-related statistics which are not reliable (Chisaye 2019:9). Due to their population and influence on the country, and because of their differences in doctrines, conflicts emerged from time-to-time (Ramadhani 2016:87-89). The government of Tanzania insists on religious pluralism and tolerance to maintain peace, unity and stability of the nation. The encouragement of the government and the implemented law promotes religious pluralism and tolerance so, therefore, the church exists in a religious pluralist society. It has to function and propagate its exclusive gospel of salvation while in a pluralist society. Consequently, the church is challenged and it has to try to keep its identity and uniqueness in society (Mesaki 2011:257).

Salvation is an idea held by all religions and each religion has its own way of explaining, and understanding how to obtain salvation. In Christianity, salvation is available to all people who confess and accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Christianity maintains that salvation is not possible in any other way except through Christ (Ngele *et al* 2017:3; Pelko *et al* 2010:3186). In the Islam religion, salvation is obtained through good works. The way to salvation in Islam is measured through deeds such as prayers, fasting, good morals, etc. When someone lives a righteous life it has been seen as a way to receive or obtain salvation in the Islam faith. In the case of the African Traditional religion, salvation is to get rid of all troubles of this world. This means to live in good health, prosperity, and other human needs (Ngele *et al* 2017:4; Pelko *et al*

2010:3186). However, Christianity in Tanzania is facing syncretism and religious pluralism since most African Christians still practise African Traditional beliefs especially when they face difficulties such as sickness, drought, etc. in their lives. The reading, understanding, and application of the Bible for the African people is also the challenge which contributes to the rise of syncretism and religious pluralism (Chisaye 2019:38).

The history of Christian evangelization in Tanzania has also been discussed from the time of the missionaries, colonial, post-colonial and the modern era. During the missionary time, missionaries devoted themselves a lot to providing in the social needs of the people such as health and education (Leurs, *et al.*, 2011:14). At that time slavery and the slave-trade were quite commonly practised in East Africa and in particular in Tanzania. Christian missionaries also participated in caring for slaves who had escaped from their masters as well as those ransomed by missionaries and mission agents. The missionaries also contributed to the emancipation of slavery and the slave-trade in Tanzania (Sundkler & Steed 2000:553). During the colonial time, evangelism shifted somewhat because the history of the country was divided into two colonial rules, viz. the German reign and after WWII the British took over the leadership in Tanzania. Therefore, evangelism continued even though with different challenges (Reed 2007:86). When Tanzania became independent in 1961 many missionary agents from Western and other countries started to depart from the country and leave the mission works under the surveillance of the indigenous missionaries, priests, and teachers. In the modern era after the East African revival, evangelism took another direction: at this stage the emphasis was on the teaching from the Bible which insisted on continuity and discontinuity. It was the time of spiritual awakening where those who confessed faith in Christ had to live a life reflecting their faith. This revival was not denominational but rather it affected all Christians from all denominations. However, the pioneers of this revival were the neo-Pentecostals (Gehman 1986:36). This phenomenon continues today where there is a lot of self-proclaimed prophets, priests, and bishops who preach and teach the mixing of biblical doctrines and some African Traditional beliefs-thereby creating syncretism and religious pluralism-and that seems to be the problem of the modern church in Tanzania (Adamo 2020:1).

During the missionary era, the propagation of the gospel was not direct, but indirect. Those who attended missionary schools were baptized and received Christian teaching. The ransomed or escaped slaves in the slave villages or missionary centres also became Christians and were baptized because of the love and care they had received from missionaries. Therefore, missionaries demonstrated the love of Christ by providing in the physical needs and then spiritual guidance to all those who were willing to receive Christ as their Saviour (Rweyemamu 2012:138). For the first time since missionaries had arrived in Tanzania, they built missionary

centres in the areas where the Islam religion had been dominant, but they did not stay longer; they moved into the interior of the country to evangelize those who were still adhering to African Traditional religions (Mbuju and Kapinga 2022:5). The act of missionaries in their attempt to avoid directly evangelizing the people with the gospel, is regarded as compromising the gospel. They did not tell the people about Christ at first but they used the services they provided to draw people to Christ (Rweyemamu 2012:139). After independence, the government of Tanzania introduced the Ujamaa policy which required people to live in unity and without any discrimination against either, race, gender or religion. Therefore, during this time the church had to embrace religious pluralism and tolerance (Cornelli 2012:23-24). The propagation of the gospel changed, and the emphasis was not so much on the exclusive message of salvation in Christ as it was on emphasizing unity and tolerance despite the differences in belief or any other kind of difference. Because of time-to-time conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Tanzania, the government and non-government entities established organizations such as the Union of Muslims and Christians of Rufiji (UMCR), Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) etc. (Leurs, *et al.*, 2011:32. These organizations were to promote religious pluralism and tolerance in the community so as to strengthen the unity of the nation. The government of Tanzania presently supports religious pluralism to keep the peace in the country. However, the church is under a siege when propagating its exclusive message of salvation to people of other faith: because there are differences in religious doctrines, conflicts emerge from time-to-time (Ridder and Woudenberg 2014:23-25).

The church, according to Christian Scripture is a separate community in the world, its people live in this world but they are not of this world. In the Old Testament, the Israelites were called by God to be a separate community to represent God on earth. They were God's possession, they belonged to God. The Israelites received laws and guidance for life from God; they were supposed to worship only God and live differently from people of other nations. The church is called to live in praise and glorification of God so that the outside world may see that the church exists for the Lord, for, as Peter wrote: (1 Peter 2:11) "Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us." To worship God is to fear, love, praise, trust, and serve Him alone through Jesus Christ as the mediator between God and man (Reymond 1998:886). The gathering of the Israelites in the Old Testament was purposely to listen to the Word of God. However, the New Testament church is the continuation of the people of God which began during the Old Testament. The church has its characteristics, viz. that they are the people of God, they bear this title in the Old Testament when God dealt with one nation

the-Israelites, but in the New Testament God included all the people of all nations in his salvation plan (Küng 1967:51). Now, the church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 12:27) and he is the head of the church. It is also the temple of the Holy Spirit, in the Old Testament (2 Chron. 6:1-2), and whereas the dwelling-place was in an earthly temple, in the New Testament church, the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit is within individual believers (1 Corinthians 6:19; Romans 12:4-5; Colossians 1:24; John 2:19-22). The church is visible and invisible: in the visible sense the church is that which is organized and seen as the institution but the invisible one is the true church within the visible church. The invisible church is one that only God can discern. But this does not mean that there are two churches which exist at the same time but one church which is visible and invisible at the same time (Frame 2013:1019, Allen 2007:117). The church has its attributes: it is one, not institutionally, but one in spirit because it shares one Lord and the Word of God; the oneness of the church is not denominational but rather spiritual. The church is holy-the holiness of the church does not mean without sin, but it is holy because God separated it to be the salt and light of the world. The holiness of the church is because it was set apart for God's purpose. The church is Catholic, because it is scattered around the world; it is a universal church and apostolic because it is continuing with the apostles' teachings (Frame 2013:1021).

8.3 Recommendations

8.3.1 The formulation of African Christian theology which identifies, addresses and answers questions in the African Christian context

8.3.2 Introduction

Before the advent of Christianity, Islam or any other religion in Africa and in particular in Tanzania, the African people had their own religion which was spread and arranged according to clans and specific tribes. Yet, in many African societies, they shared common religious beliefs. At the first contact with Christianity in Africa, some missionaries ignored the presence of African Traditional Religion while others regarded it as having no power and considered it an inferior and uncivilized religion. This attitude shut the door to understanding what the African people believed. As a result, after many years of Christianity in Africa, there is still a problem of syncretism and religious pluralism among many Christians in Africa. This study identifies some of the reasons that have caused the presence of syncretism and religious plurality in African Christianity. It also suggests the formulation of a biblical, Christian theology that identifies, addresses, and answers questions and problems African Christians encounter in their daily lives. This theology has to be aware of the problem of syncretism and religious pluralism in Africa because most Christians in Africa, when encountering a certain challenge in life such as

sickness, drought, famine, etc., go back to African traditional religions to find answers. This theology has to know the reality of the pre-Christianity concept of God for the African people who believed in the Supreme Being (God the creator) ancestors, spirits, and other divinities. The current Reformed theology which is Christian and biblical does not address or identify the presence of African Traditional Religion in African Christianity. Therefore, this theology does not fully meet the needs of the African Christians.

8.3.3 The African understanding of God

8.3.4 The Supreme Being in African Traditional Religion

The African Traditional Religion holds that the Supreme Being (God) is the owner and controller of heaven and earth (Cordeiro-Rodrigues & Agada 2022:3). Other Divinities who relate with God act as messengers and intermediaries between God and men; Sibani and Ofure (2020) acknowledge that Africans had known God before the missionaries came (Sibani & Ofure 2020:519). However, the relationships between God (The Supreme Being) and other Divinities remained problematic for many decades because the historians and scholars who wrote about African Traditional Religion lacked reliable information that would help them to reach a conclusion about God in the African context. The early authors of ATR relied on the information received from missionaries who mostly worked/concentrated in a certain tribe or a group of people (Sibani & Ofure 2020:520; Ekeke & Ekeopara 2010:209; Ushe 2017:154). In the African context, God is the living eternal being who is the source of all living beings and is the one whose power sustains the universe (Ushe 2017:155). This God has revealed Himself in many different ways. In the African Traditional beliefs God revealed himself in the nature of the universe and Africans came to believe in the Supreme Being as the Creator of the universe. Africans concluded that there is a Supreme Being whose power created the universe and also sustains it. After they had acknowledged the presence of the Supreme Being throughout the universe they began to give this Being their worship and adoration (Sibani & Ofure 2020:521; Ekeke & Ekeopara 2010:209; Cordeiro-Rodrigues & Agada 2022:3). Moreover, the African people and their belief in other spiritual beings do not in any way see their belief in the supreme being as contradictory as some Western scholars opine (Ushe 2017:154)

8.3.5 Ancestors, spirits and divinities in the African Traditional Religion

African people respect the dead and these are remembered annually or occasionally. The African Traditional Religion acknowledges that humans were created by the Supreme God, but it does not make clear what happens when a person dies: does he go to be with God, or not? The African Traditional Religion says that when a person who lived a good life dies, he/she

goes to join other ancestors who died before him/her. But also when a person who lived a bad life dies, his/her soul will never rest, it will be wandering around, in places such as caves, lakes, rivers, big trees, mountains, valleys and in the seas; even more than that, these souls at night may bring harm to the living especially those who are close members of his/her family. Therefore, in the African Traditional Religion there is no judgment apart from being excluded from or included with ancestors after death. There is no reward more than what the Bible/Christianity explains about life after death. From a Christian perspective when a person dies there are two things: whether to join with God in an eternal life or to be separated from God eternally. In African belief, a person can be included in the ancestor's village or excluded and his/her soul will be wandering around forever and that spirit will bring harm to people who are still alive. Therefore, African belief has to deal with those bad spirits in order to get rid of their distractions (Mwanampepo 1996:49; Asuquo 2011:174).

Most African beliefs maintain that all dead people who lived upright lives would join with other ancestors in an ancestral village where they would continue with life as they had been living on earth. The Wafipa tribe and most tribes in Tanzania believe that when a person dies there is no judgment or reward as explained before, yet they maintain that the relationship between God (Supreme God), the dead and the living, continues. They believe that God is God of the living and the dead. More than that, many Africans believe that dead people are closer to God, so therefore, they have easier access to God and they can pray to God for their own living existence and God can answer the questions and solve the problems of the living through ancestors; they are therefore the mediators between the living and God (Mwanampepo 1996:5). Furthermore, ancestors in the African Traditional Religion are remembered and honoured in many ways such as their names being given to newborn babies in the family. They are remembered and prayed to when problems occur. They are regarded as participating and celebrating together with the living during prosperity and success in wealth or health, etc. (Mwanampepo 1996:52; Moscicke 2017:13).

The African people also believe in spirits, but in this context lesser spirits are ubiquitous, malevolent, and or benevolent (Ajah & Iwara 2018:1). The spirits are the remains of human who have died, and even though they were created by God they may be are spirits of animals or of humans who were not properly buried, they are invisible and lack bodily form, and may dwell in forests, rivers, mountains, etc. They may seek to possess people, animals and other objects. The spirits are feared by humans because they are strangers and they can disturb the peace in the community or they can attack and destroy (Moscicke 2017:129).

On the other hand, the divinities are the associates of God, the Supreme Being. They are related to one another but they can be distinguished in their personhood and function. The divinities and deities are associated with nature (river, earth) or activities such as (farming and, fishing). They are ministers of God and intermediaries between God and man. Moreover, divinities and ancestors are associated with families and communities (Mosicke 2017:129).

8.3.6 Witchcraft and traditional healers in Africa

Witchcraft can be defined as the invisible power or act that can harm people or their belongings. It is a demonic force aimed at afflicting, manipulating or hindering someone or something (Ngangah 2020:165, Ojoajogwu 2021:1; Mosicke 2017:130). Witchcraft however, still exists in traditional African societies even though charges and allegations of attacks are not easily proved. This is because witchcraft is still something of a mystery, since its effects cannot be ascertained beyond metaphysical realms, yet some of its effects are so real and can be easily detected through the physical features of the victim and observers. More than that, witchcraft is not only a phenomenon in African societies but it also has an impact and has been practised within other societies in the world. In modern world countries such as Europe and the United States where there is great industrialization and the advancement of science and technology, believing in witches can be regarded as modern paganism (Ngangah 2020:164). In African communities witchcraft and its practices are vivid and affect the urban and rural people and even the diaspora. The African people regard witchcraft as evil. In African, Asian, and Native American cultures they understand that witches are elderly and socially isolated; they meet at night in small groups and plot evil deeds; they can leave their bodies or change their shapes; they can suck blood, drain the energy or devour the internal organs of the victims. They murder family members, commit cannibalism, fly through the air, seduce sleeping people etc. These days witchcraft in Africa is not practised by elderly people only and thus their activities can take place even at daytime where women and children are also included. Perhaps the witch's activities nowadays are even more devastating than they were in the past (Ngangah 2020:165; Sulu 2018:2)

Many African societies consider the practice of witchcraft, magic and sorcery as an anti-social obstacle to development and progress. The practice of witchcraft can also bring enmity between families, relatives and friends. More than that, it may cause political instability and social unrest (Ojoajogwu 2021:1). In African communities, the practice of witchcraft has caused crime, as happened recently for example, in Tanzania: from time to time elderly women were killed for they were suspected of being witches and were associated with any sudden death or destruction that occurred unexpectedly in their communities (Sulu 2018:2). Traditional healers

are the first people to be consulted when the problem occurs in African societies. It is believed that they can solve problems regarding any challenges people encounter in their societies (Shabangu 2005:188-189; Ross 2020:3). The role of traditional doctors is also to treat those who are bewitched through visible symbolic rituals (Moscicke 2017:130)

8.3.7 Syncretism and religious pluralism in African

The influence and presence of Western Christian missionaries in Africa can be traced from as far back as 1884 after the Berlin Conference, to 1960. During the colonial era, Western colonizers had a racial superiority mentality over primitive African people. Consequently, Christian missionaries to Africa shared the European ethnocentric presupposition that Africans are uncivilized. The mentality of civilization in Africa came with the importation and imposition of Western Christianity in Africa. The idea that Africa was uncivilized brought Christianity with some elements of Western civilization to the African people. The missionaries considered themselves the ambassadors of God and they represented higher civilized countries who were to transform the dark continent of Africa. African people were to receive salvation and missionaries intended to give the African people a total package of Christianity and European civilization (Han 2013:13; Sibon & Ofure 2020:520; Manganyi & Buitendag 2013:1). In education systems for example, missionaries began to spread the biblical myth of the curse of Ham in order to justify the colonial dominance over African/Black people. Missionaries taught that the curse of Ham/Canaan stood for all his descendants. This myth derives from Genesis 9:25-27 even though the Bible does not exactly tell us who the descendants of Ham were. However, the spread of this ideology that was built upon racial superiority led some missionaries and Western defenders of imperialism to believe that theirs was a God-chosen race and that they had been entrusted by God to evangelize and civilize the African people. More than that, children in mission schools in Africa were taught to accept their inferior status; for instance, they were taught about the origin of their races by tracing them to the three sons of Noah: according to which the children of Shem went to Asia, the children of Japhet went to Europe and the children of Ham/Canaan went to Africa (Sanders 1969:521; Campiot 201:37; Braude 1997:103).

In the process of evangelizing and civilizing African people, missionaries continued the notion that European culture and religion was superior to that of Africa. Therefore, missionaries chose not to know/learn all about African culture, religious experiences and their heritage. Missionaries considered African people to lack proper religion and their hearts were empty/without religion and thus Christianity could be planted. The emphasis of missionaries was to give Africans a new identity and as a result Christianity did not integrate well in African soil. This phenomenon caused the problem of syncretism and religious pluralism that persists in African Christianity

even to date (Han 2013:14; Sibani & Ofure 2020:520; Ushe 2017:154). More than that, the discipline of the philosophy of religion is very much centred on the Western and specifically, Judeo-Christian tradition (Cordeiro-Rodrigues & Agada 2022:1).

As has been discussed elsewhere in this thesis, missionaries concentrated much more on providing education, health facilities, and introducing new methodologies in agriculture and new crops such as coffee and tea to the African people, and did not spent time on learning to understand African culture clearly. The saying that missionaries did not adequately understand African beliefs means that, for example, the understanding of the spirit world in African traditional beliefs was not clear to the Christian missionaries. The dualistic strategies that missionaries used promoted the tendency towards dualism in African Christianity. For example, in some of the African Bible translations such as Ewe, Rundi and the Yoruba Bible, the name "Satan" is translated as "Legba" which refers to local African divinities. However, none of these African divinities are truly equivalent to the Satan of Christianity. Eventually, many converts revert to their traditional religion when the God of Christianity fails to deliver the goods (Mosicke 2017:131).

8.3.8 Biblical, Christian theology that fits in the African contexts

According to Ajah and Iwara (2018), statistics from 2010 indicates that the total population of Africa represented 1,033,043,000 people. Of these the Muslim believers were 421,938,820 (40%) of the population. Christians were 488,880,000 (47.32%) while those who adhered to African Traditional religion represented 109,592,000 (10.6%). Other religions comprised 12,532,200 (1.22%) (Ajah& Iwara 2018:1).

Even though there is growth in the number of converts to Christianity and Islam in Africa it is clear that syncretism and religious pluralism still exist in African Christianity and that people are still negotiating between Christian faith and African Traditional Religion. The above statistics indicates that there is a huge number of converts to Christianity and Islam in Africa, and there is also a decline in those following the African Traditional Religion, but this means that those who adhere to these major religions (Christianity and Islam) are still participating in African traditional rituals and practices (Chisaye 2019:36). Within Christianity also, there is integration between the African traditional spiritual worldview and Christianity's spiritual worldview. The interaction between the spirit world of the African Traditional Religion and the supernatural worldview of the Bible has as yet remained problematic. This is because missionaries did not adequately come to terms with the spiritual reality of the African Traditional Religion. Christian theologians in Africa need to find a way to enculturate the Gospel in the African world of divinities, spirits, ancestors, and witchcraft. The African theologians must not ignore the reality of the influence of

African Traditional Religion in African Christianity. There is still a struggle that exists between the spirit world of ATR and that of Christianity which was inherited from Western missionaries (Mosicke 2017:127).

Pentecostals/charismatic churches are trying to solve the spiritual challenges in African Christianity by emphasizing spiritual welfare so that someone can get rid of poverty, sickness, curses from ancestors, and attain wealth and health, etc. This concept is very familiar in the African context. Therefore, the Pentecostals/charismatics and independent churches in Tanzania are perceived to be better equipped than the historical churches because they are dealing with issues such as witchcraft and ancestor curses (Lindhardt 2019:84). Sulu (2018) maintains that despite the influence and spread of Christianity and Islam in Tanzania, witchcraft still remains a part of Tanzanian popular culture (Sulu 2018:1).

The neo-Pentecostal churches in Africa are still fighting Satan who is believed to operate through traditional spirits. The break-up from ancestral spirits is not a one-time break but it is a long-term process in a spiritual battle. The members of the neo-Pentecostal church are urged to disconnect themselves from traditional divinities and spirits. Failing to do so, means that they will continue suffering ancestral curses and Satanic attacks. In neo-Pentecostalism, deliverance is needed where the Spirit-filled minister casts out demons from the victim. During this process, convulsions, vomiting, and prostration commonly accompany the deliverance rite, as the Devil's power is nullified. However, this phenomenon is the blending of traditional witchcraft beliefs with Christian demonology. The neo-Pentecostal churches, charismatic movements and independent churches in Africa are more demon-conscious and they are taking the African map of the cosmos serious blending it with the biblical one, and some have gone so far as to utilize the names of demons and deities from Scripture. As example, they include Apollyon and Belial (powers); Ashteroth (agriculture deities) Baal (earth deities) and Beelzebub (god of witchcraft) with African spirits (Mosicke 2017:133).

Missionary churches during the missionary era and that of the mainline churches today dismissed ATR functions and denied the existence of African spiritual beings. Churches in Africa and in particular, Tanzania, have accepted the cosmic dualism that was introduced by the missionaries categorizing traditional spirits as Satanic. Most neo-Pentecostal churches and charismatic movements are trying to integrate elements of ATR into Christian religion. Most of these churches have developed the demonology aspects of ATR and indicated them as Satanic and as witchcraft from a biblical perspective (Mosicke 2017:134).

We have discussed in a very short analysis how Christians in Africa have engaged and transformed the cosmology of ATR and its beliefs into the Scriptural realm (Mosicke 2017:135).

According to the challenges which the African and other non-western Christians face, a desire and interest in debates emerged on topics such as the nature of God, and supernatural entities outside Western culture perspectives (Cordeiro-Rodrigues & Agada 2022:1). As discussed in this study, salvation is the goal of every world religion. In the case of African traditional religion, salvation is regarded as overcoming all challenges and obstacles in this life so that after death they join with their ancestors (Banda and Masengwe 2018:3). It is also seen that most African Christians still cherish and practise African Traditional Religion in one way or another. Yet, some Christians in Africa are integrating the African spiritual worldview and that of Christianity which is different in expression, understanding, and goal. For example, recently in Tanzania and most African countries self-proclaimed prophets, bishops, apostles, and priests emerged who are preaching in the name of Christianity and quoting Scripture texts while integrating/blending Christian ideologies and that of African Traditional Religion (Oladipupo 2018:431). Recently in Tanzania, one could witness a huge number of neo-Pentecostal, charismatic movements and independent churches. However, their theology entails the mixing of African Traditional Religion philosophy and Christianity (Lindhardt 2017:37).

As an example, the use of anointing oil, holy water, salt, and other objectives during prayers, is an indication of syncretism and religious pluralism. These items are also used by traditional healers during their rituals and healing processes in African Traditional Religion. According to Banda (2020), neo-Pentecostalism is the movement of prophets, pastors, and apostles who claim to be in a lineage of biblical prophets and sometimes they claim to be superior to biblical prophets. In the neo-Pentecostal movement they bless objects and give or sell them to their followers as a means of communication between believers and God (Banda 2020:1). As we discussed in the previous paragraphs this phenomenon is the same within the African Traditional Religions, where divinities, ancestors, and good spirits are being used as mediators between humans and the Supreme God. However, the use of objects such as water and oil is common in the history of the church. The Roman Catholic and the African independent churches have been using those objectives in public services. Not only that but in Scripture there are uses of objects such as a staff (Ex 7:8-13), water (2Ki 5:14) mud (Jn. 9:6-7) and even the bodies of Apostles to perform healing miracles (Acts 19:11-12) (Banda 2020:1). The challenge and question that exists in the use of these objects in neo-Pentecostalism are that their practices and function are influenced by the African Traditional Religion which amounts to an entanglement, blending, and borrowing of African Traditional spiritual worldview with Christianity's spiritual worldview (Lindhardt 2017:36).

Therefore, as discussed in this study, my personal opinion is that. African theologians who are aware and knowledgeable enough in the field of African Traditional Religion and Christian

theology, have to formulate a new theological paradigm which will make a clear separation/distinction between the African spiritual worldview and the Christian worldview. It has become clear that in neo-Pentecostalism and charismatic movements syncretism and religious pluralism have become prevalent in their theology and practices. Since the African Christians are still influenced by their traditional religion, Christianity has to show the ability to solve their daily challenges through Scripture and prayers. It has become obvious that both African Traditional Religion and Christianity acknowledge and have knowledge about God the Supreme Being, but in ATR God has His agents, viz. the divinities, ancestors, and spirits. These agents of the Supreme Being in the African context are problematic and a threat to Christianity. This is happening because, throughout the history of Christianity in Africa, the missionaries did not allow room for them to become acquainted with the African Traditional Religion which would have helped them plant the Gospel in Africa. The formulation of the biblical theology that fits into the African contexts should rely on eradicating errors which occurred during the history of evangelization in Africa, and correcting errors which are caused by the contemporary charismatic movements and neo-Pentecostalism: these have been trying to solve the problems of the African Christians by mixing/integrating the spiritual world of the African Traditional Religion with the worldview of Christianity. This theology would help the African people to make a distinction between the cultural and secular, on the one hand and the sacred world in the light of Scripture on the other.

Religious pluralism holds that all religions are equal and that there is no religion which has a monopoly on the truth and which claims to be true over another. It embraces the ideology of metaphysics, epistemology, ontology, and logic which claims that science is mandated to prove, measure, and provide answers about all things. However, this research recommends that more theological research on the topic of 'science and theology' should be conducted to answer some of the important topics such as the relationship between the general creation revelation of God and science. It indicates that science and theology relate and differ in their way of understanding and explaining.

Since the word (ekklesia), for the church appears only in the gospel of Matthew 16:18 and 18:18, the term "church" does not appear in the other Synoptic gospels such as in Luke, Mark and John, it would seem that Jesus, during his ministry on earth, concentrated more on announcing the coming kingdom of God than establishing the church. However, the church and the kingdom are inseparable even though, without Jesus, there will be no church for Jesus is the founder of the church. More research/teachings on the doctrine of the church and its purpose for existence are needed so that people can understand the function of the church and its exclusive message of salvation from a biblical perspective. It is clear from the biblical point of

view that Jesus is the founder and head of the church. This is also the view of the Evangelical Reformed churches which is contrary to the understanding of the Roman Catholic view which teaches that the Pope is the head of the church. More than that, the Catholic Church teaches that the leadership of the church is in line with the apostles through the succession of bishops from Peter onwards to present bishop who is the Pope. More evangelical biblical teachings about the leadership of the church should be conducted to assist the biblical understanding of the church and its leadership.

However, more research and studies about religious pluralism, syncretism, and secularism from a biblical perspective had to be conducted in a contemporary society, so that one can deal with issues of syncretism, conversion, continuity, and discontinuity in African Christianity. A clear identity of African Christianity should be understood from the biblical nature of conversion, this includes the understanding of the continuity and discontinuity after conversion to the Christian faith. It would seem that the Reformed and biblical theology which is fitting and suitable for the African context is not shared well in Tanzania. Therefore, the church needs a theology which is relevant to its needs. It is clear that syncretism and religious pluralist practices are the result of lack of biblical knowledge/teachings which is suitable and can answer African problems and challenges. Most Christians in Africa, when encountering a certain challenge in life, go back to African beliefs to find the answers. As we have discussed, salvation in the African context is to get rid of all one's troubles, so therefore Africans seek solutions to their problems from their ancestors, or divine healers etc. This research recommends and insists on the sharing of the biblical theology which is fitting to African people and in this particular the Tanzanians, so that to deal/solve the problems of syncretism and religious pluralism. It is time for African theologians to find Christian answers to the questions African people encounter in their daily lives. This theology needs to be purely biblical which can address African challenges/ problems. It has to clearly distinguish between African Traditional belief and practices, and Christian faith which is biblical founded.

The church in Tanzania which exists in a religiously pluralist society, is advised to continue to embrace religious tolerance, and dialogue to keep the peace but not in a way of compromising the truth of the gospel of salvation with religious pluralism ideologies so that the church can/will remain alive and continue to be relevant. It is obvious that salvation is the idea and the promised destination of all religions, but in Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional religion, salvation is understood and explained differently. Christianity maintains that there is no salvation elsewhere except through Christ. This emphasis on Christianity has continued from generation to generation and will continue thus until the end of time. Therefore, when the church declares that it is a witness and willing acquire salvation in Christ, it needs to follow the example

of the compassionate love of Christ when calling people to repentance. The Christian church throughout history has been urged to keep its identity and nature while existing in a religious pluralist and syncretic society.

8.4 Conclusion

As was discussed, Christianity and Islam are the major religions in Tanzania, but on the other hand, African Traditional religion is still active and alive among the people. One can be a Christian or a Muslim yet practises African beliefs. For Christians and Muslims to live in peace, the government however, insists on religious pluralism and tolerance. There is also a diverse society where other religions and cultures exist in the country, so therefore, syncretism and religious pluralism are vivid and active in daily life. The government requires all people regardless of differences of any kind such as race, gender, ethnicity, and religion to live in peace and harmony. But the reality in religions is that there are differences in what they believe and worship. That is why the challenge of social instability remains in society. The church also continues to exist in a pluralist society yet it has to keep its identity and nature.

Religious syncretism and pluralism are the problem and threat to the Christian faith in Tanzania it is also an opportunity for Christianity to reveal its uniqueness among other religions. Since religious pluralism denies the exclusive salvific message which is proclaimed by the Christian religion, Christianity has remained challenged. Therefore, according to Christian Scripture, the church is commissioned to keep propagating the good news of salvation which is only obtained/received through believing in Christ. The history of the Church in Tanzania has indicated that there were times when the church compromised its exclusive message with religious pluralism due to the political and social atmosphere of the particular time. The church is mandated to preach the salvific message which is only available in Christ. For the church, however, to encounter syncretism and religious plurality has been a continuous challenge, and the Israelites as the people of God struggled with the same problem. The New Testament church of the early and modern church is similarly facing the challenge of syncretism and religious pluralism. The response of dealing with the challenge of syncretism and religious pluralism throughout history was to remain loyal to what the Word of God teaches. The prophets, the judges, in the Old Testament reminded the Israelites about the law God had given them whenever they tempted and worshipped idols or gods of other nations. The apostles in the New Testament also dealt with the problem of idols and the worshipping of other gods during the era of the early church. The modern church which exists in an era of cultural integration and in the world of developed science and technology is facing the challenge of syncretism, religious pluralism, secularism, etc. Therefore, the application and response are the same as that which the Israelites and the

early church experienced and had to apply to rely on God's law. This study discussed in-depth the issue of salvation, in Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional religions, and it also found different ideas about salvation in these three major religions in Tanzania. It has also looked at the history of evangelization in the country and found that there were occasionally times when the church compromised the gospel with a religious pluralist society. It also looked at the church, the marks of the church, the characteristics of the church, and the attributes of the church. The church according to the Bible, throughout history was urged to reflect upon its nature, identity, and uniqueness among other religions. Therefore, the church in Tanzania and the universal church had to remain unique and had to constantly reflect upon its uniqueness as seen from the biblical perspectives.

It became clear that the existence of multiple doctrinally diverse religions within a single society has negatively affected social stability. Religion plays a role in the unity of a society only if that society has a single religion. This entails that a truly religious society is one that has one faith and one church, but religious pluralism where different religious faiths exist within a single society, weakens the stability of that society. Religious norms and values can change and influence society only if it has a monopoly on the truth. Yet, religious pluralism does not allow religious values to represent community values. Furthermore, religious pluralism prevents religion from performing its traditional role of unifying society. Therefore, religious pluralism contributes to a negative stability in society (Uzoma 2004:651-652). The society in Tanzania has been facing social and peace instability throughout its history because the major religions, Christianity and Islam in Tanzania encounter violence and conflicts from time-to-time. This happens because there are differences in their doctrines and teachings. Therefore, to conclude: the question of Christianity and Islam worshipping the same God, is not plausible. The church/ Christianity has survived throughout history when it kept its nature sound and faithful as seen from a biblical point of view, whenever it encountered syncretism and religious pluralism.

Religious freedom which is granted in the laws of Tanzania does not imply that all religions are equally true, but it is maintained for the sake of sustaining national peace. That explains why religious tolerance is important so that people will live in peace and have an opportunity to worship and propagate their religion in a way which will not offend people of other faiths. Then the church will have a chance of sharing the gospel in a religious pluralist society.

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