

MISSION ECHO

UNITED EVANGELICAL MISSION AFRICA REGION

Issue No 51 | January - June 2024



United Evangelical Mission
Communion of Churches
in three Continents



Church Music

Dear readers,

"That far the Lord has help us", we are thankful to the Lord Almighty for His Grace day after day.

We are delighted to present this magazine of **Mission Echo** for the period of January to June 2024. Indeed, everyone has the right to be informed, to learn and to be understood.

In the magazine, we introduce joint programs implemented by the **UEM Africa** region, some events from churches and organizations and some academic work. Following are themes developed: "From information to impact: Harnessing Open Source Intelligence Tools (OSINT) for Enhanced Church Security and Missionary Outreach.", "Economic news from Maendeleo Bank", "St. Paul as Resource for Apostolic Ministry in the 21st Century.", "Being Christian means being in unity", "**UEM Africa** Region: Celebration of the UEM 28th anniversary-International Consultation on contextualization of classical church music with traditional music.", "The **UEM Africa** church treasurers and ambassadors workshop", "Induction of Dean Onalenna Hambira in Evangelical Lutheran Church of Botswana", "the Africa Regional Board of UEM met in Karagwe/Tanzania", and "Women: Empower to sustain." Learning for us in the **UEM** is a keyword of our work and therefore it offers an opportunity for churches and their members to learn from one another. This is anchored on Global Learning in Ecumenical Perspective. To us this means learning jointly, globally, inclusively and in ecumenical perspective.



Dear readers, we are dedicated to serving you and meeting your expectations. If you have any suggestions on how we can improve the quality of our magazine, please do not hesitate to contact us at the following e-mail address: africaregional@vemission.org

We look forward to continuing this important work while learning with you as you use this magazine.

We hope and pray every reader will enjoy reading it.

Blessings.

Christine K. Musongya

Region Manager:
Rev. Dr Ernest Kadiva

Editor:
Christine K. Musongya

Consulting Designer
Michée Wabomundu

United Evangelical Mission
Africa Region
P.O.Box 75240
Fax: 00255 22 2125967

CONTENTS

FROM INFORMATION TO IMPACT: HARNESSING OPEN-SOURCE INTELLIGENCE (OSINT) TOOLS

The Center of Excellence on Cybersecurity at the Dar es Salaam Tumaini University – DarTU.

By Geoffrey Kilimba

Abstract

OSINT¹ (Open Source Intelligence) can play a valuable role in enhancing a church's evangelism mission by providing insights, opportunities, and strategies to effectively reach and engage with individuals both within and outside the church community. It covers areas like Understanding Community Needs and Interests; Identifying Target Audiences; Engaging with Seekers and Skeptics; Content Creation and Distribution; Reaching Beyond Traditional Boundaries; and Monitoring Effectiveness and Impact. OSINT is also important because it can enable churches to enhance their security posture[2], improve situational awareness, and respond more effectively to security threats and crises.

OSINT tools and analytics can help churches measure the effectiveness and impact of their evangelism initiatives. By tracking online engage-

ment metrics, such as website traffic, social media interactions, and conversion rates, churches can assess the success of their outreach efforts, identify areas for improvement, and refine their evangelism strategies over time.

This paper presents OSINT tools and techniques which can be used by churches to collect online information and analyze them in order to extract intelligence that can be used by churches as a very important feedback to their evangelism mission. The paper is based on Lk.9:18-21; "Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, Who do the crowds say I am? Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone.

Screenshots of what the Tanzania public had to say on social media about KKKT and some selected church leaders is provided at the Annex as an example of useful OSINT can be.

¹ Key words: ICT in Churches. OSINT for Churches. Cybersecurity for Churches

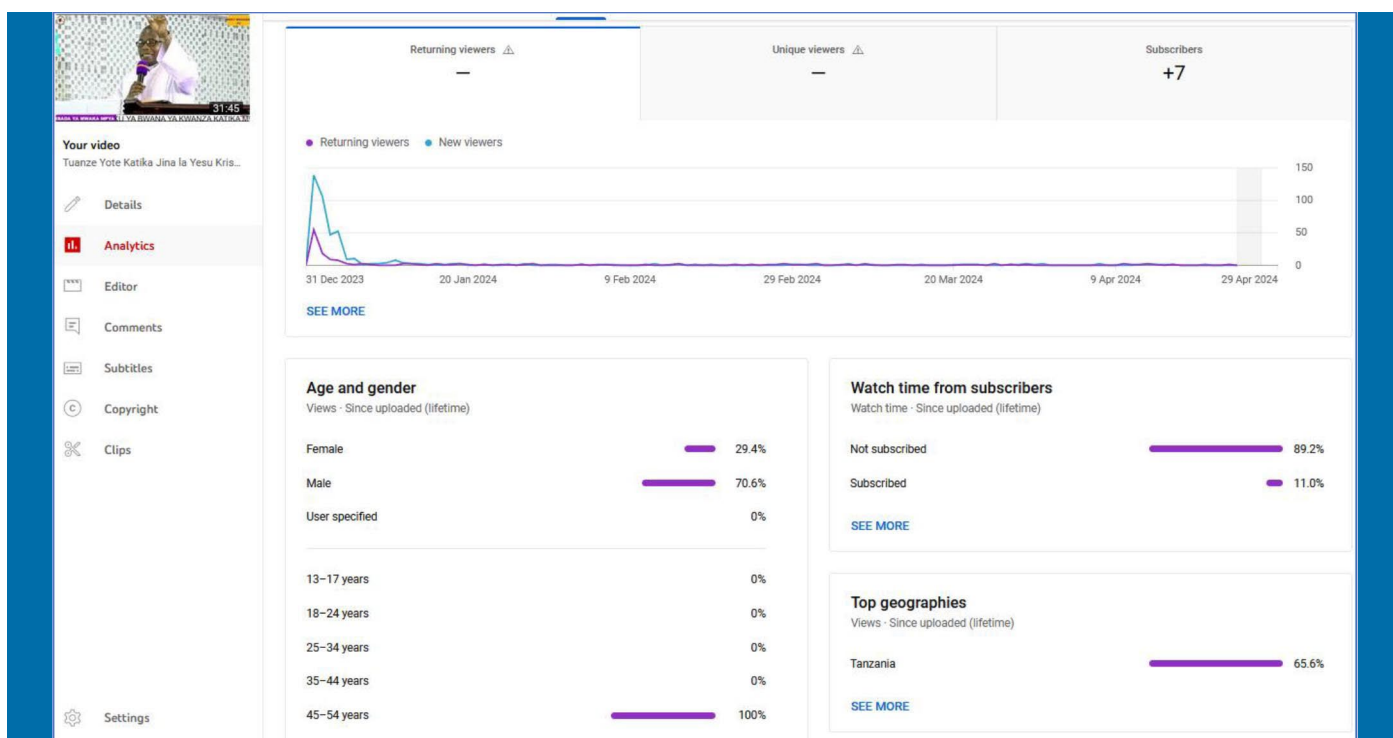
WHITE PAPER

1.0. Introduction

OSINT, or Open Source Intelligence, refers to the process of collecting and analyzing information from publicly available sources to gain insights, make informed decisions, and address various needs. These sources include websites, social media platforms, news articles, public records, government publications, and more. When the information collected is beneficial for churches, then the process becomes OSINT for churches. OSINT can be beneficial for churches in the following areas:

1.1. Identifying Target Audiences

Social media platforms collect data on user behavior, including browsing history, preaching or religious songs they like, worshiping behavior, and interactions with preachers and religious contents. Churches can leverage this behavioral data to target audiences based on their past behaviors and online activities. For example, Evangelists can target converts who have recently turned to Jesus.



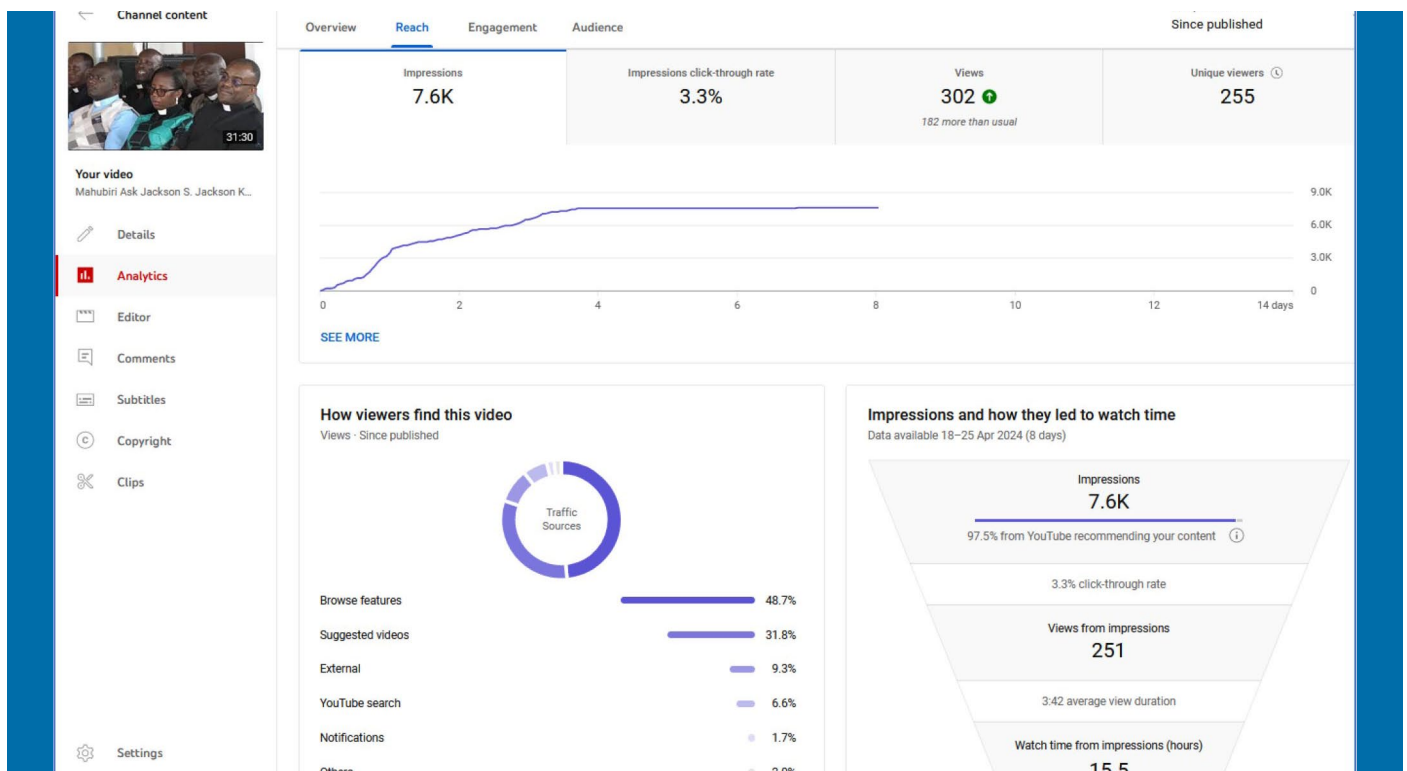
Screenshot 1: The preaching issued by a pastor at Msasani Lutheran church showing the number of viewers according to their gender; 70.6% of the 700 viewers were male. The preaching managed to add seven more subscribers to the YouTube channel.

OSINT can assist churches in identifying and segmenting target audiences for their evangelism initiatives. By analyzing publicly available data, such as demographic information, social media profiles, and online behavior patterns, churches can identify specific groups or individuals who may be receptive to their message, enabling them to focus their outreach efforts more effectively.

1.2. Content Creation and Distribution

By analyzing online conversations, trends, and popular topics, churches can create relevant and engaging content, such as blog posts, videos, podcasts, and social media posts, that resonates with their target audience and effectively communicates their message of faith.

By analyzing impressions and Click-Through rates, Evangelists can know which sections of their preaching were the most liked by viewers. In the context of social media, an impression refers to the number of times a piece of content (such as a post, ad, or video) is displayed on a user's screen. Each time a user sees a piece of content in their social media feed, it counts as one impression.



Screenshot 2: When Bishop Jackson Sosthenes Jackson was invited at the Dar es Salaam Tumaini University (DarTU), his preaching as posted by Msasani Lutheran church YouTube channel received 7,600 impressions. Analyzing the Click-Through rates indicated that the section which was mostly viewed was that explaining the Plato's Metaphysics is his distinction between two realms; Realm of Immaterial Objects (Invisible/Intangible) and that of the Visible world.

Impressions are an important metric in social media because they indicate the reach of a particular piece of content.

1.3. Monitoring Effectiveness and Impact

OSINT tools and analytics can help churches measure the effectiveness[3] and impact of their evangelism initiatives. By tracking online engagement metrics, such as website traffic, social media interactions, comments from viewers, and conversion rates, churches can assess the success of their outreach efforts, identify areas for improvement, and refine their evangelism strategies over time. Through the analysis[4] of sentiments, church leaders and evangelists can re-frame their public comments and preaching. This paper will elaborate more on this benefit in the coming sections.

1.4. Understanding Community Needs and Interests

OSINT tools and techniques can help churches gain a deeper understanding of the needs, interests, and demographics of their local community. By monitoring social media conversations, news articles, and online forums, churches can identify topics, trends, and issues that resonate with community members, allowing them to tailor their evangelism efforts to address relevant concerns and interests.

Churches can play a vital role in addressing a wide range of community needs as instructed in the Bible (James 1:27; Galatians 6:10; Matthew 25:35-36; 1 John 3:17-18; Acts 2:44-45), providing support, resources, and services to individuals and families. Some typical community needs that can be helped by the church include:

- Social Services like providing food assistance through food pantries or soup kitchens, offering clothing and hygiene items, and organizing community meals or holiday events for those experiencing homelessness or financial hardship.
- Health and Wellness
- Community Development by fostering social cohesion, promoting civic engagement, and advocating for social justice and equality
- Emergency Relief and Disaster Response
- Community Building and Fellowship
- Spiritual Support and guidance including counseling, and pastoral care to individuals seeking support in times of crisis, loss, or personal challenges. They provide a safe and nurturing environment for individuals to explore their

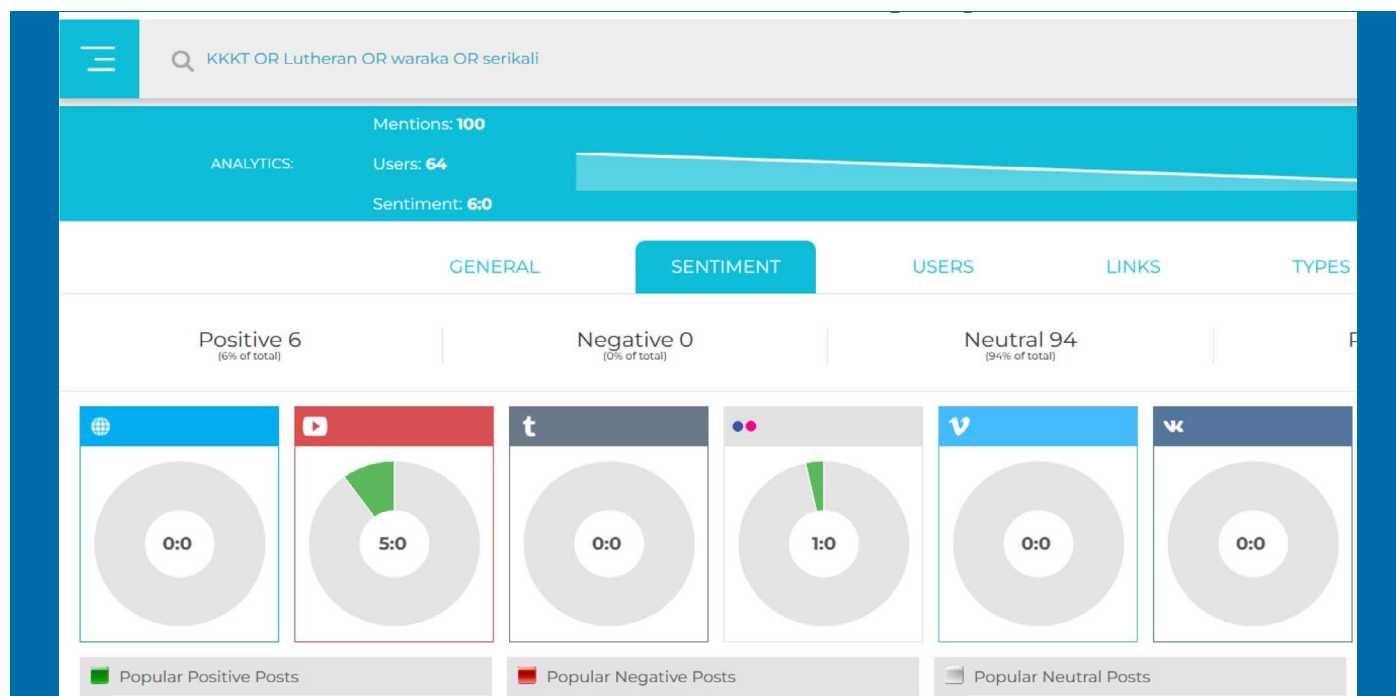
faith, find solace, and connect with a supportive community.

2.0. An Overview of OSINT Tools for Churches

As explained earlier, OSINT is the practice of collecting information from published or otherwise publicly available sources. It uses advanced techniques to search through massive data of visible information to find the “hidden secrets” they’re looking for in order to achieve their goals. Below, we provide an overview of some OSINT tools that churches can consider:

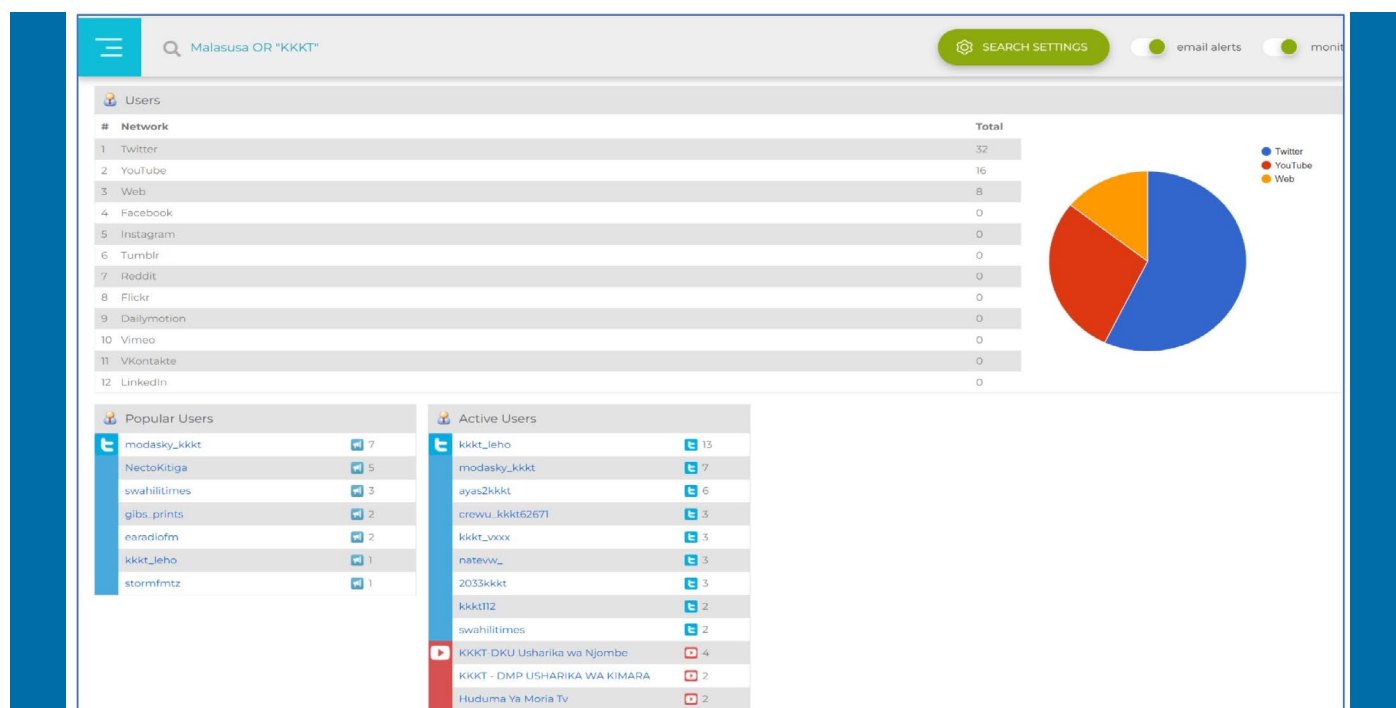
2.1. Social Media Monitoring Tools

Tools like Social Searcher, Brand24, Hootsuite, Sprout Social, and Buffer allow churches to monitor social media platforms for mentions of their brand, keywords related to their mission, or relevant community topics.



Screenshot 3: The power of social media monitoring tools like Social Searcher collects information as per the inputted keyword from all the social networks and blogs. The information is then grouped into those with positive, neutral or negative comments.

These tools enable churches to stay informed about conversations happening online and engage with their audience in real-time



2.2. Keyword Research Tools

Keywords are very important to uncover what is community thinking and saying about the church and its leaders in general; remember when Jesus wanted to know from his disciples what do the community say about him (Lk.9:18-21). In today's digital era where everything is almost online, to be able to know what the community is saying or thinking about the church's teachings, we have to make use of keyword searches.

Keyword research tools like Brand24, Google Keyword Planner, Social Searcher, SEMrush, and Moz Keyword Explorer help churches identify relevant keywords and topics related to their ministry, mission, or community needs. By researching popular search terms and topics, churches can create content that resonates with their target audience and improves their visibility in online searches.

A summary of various keyword searches from different social media monitoring tools is provided at the annex.

2.3. Threat Intelligence Feeds

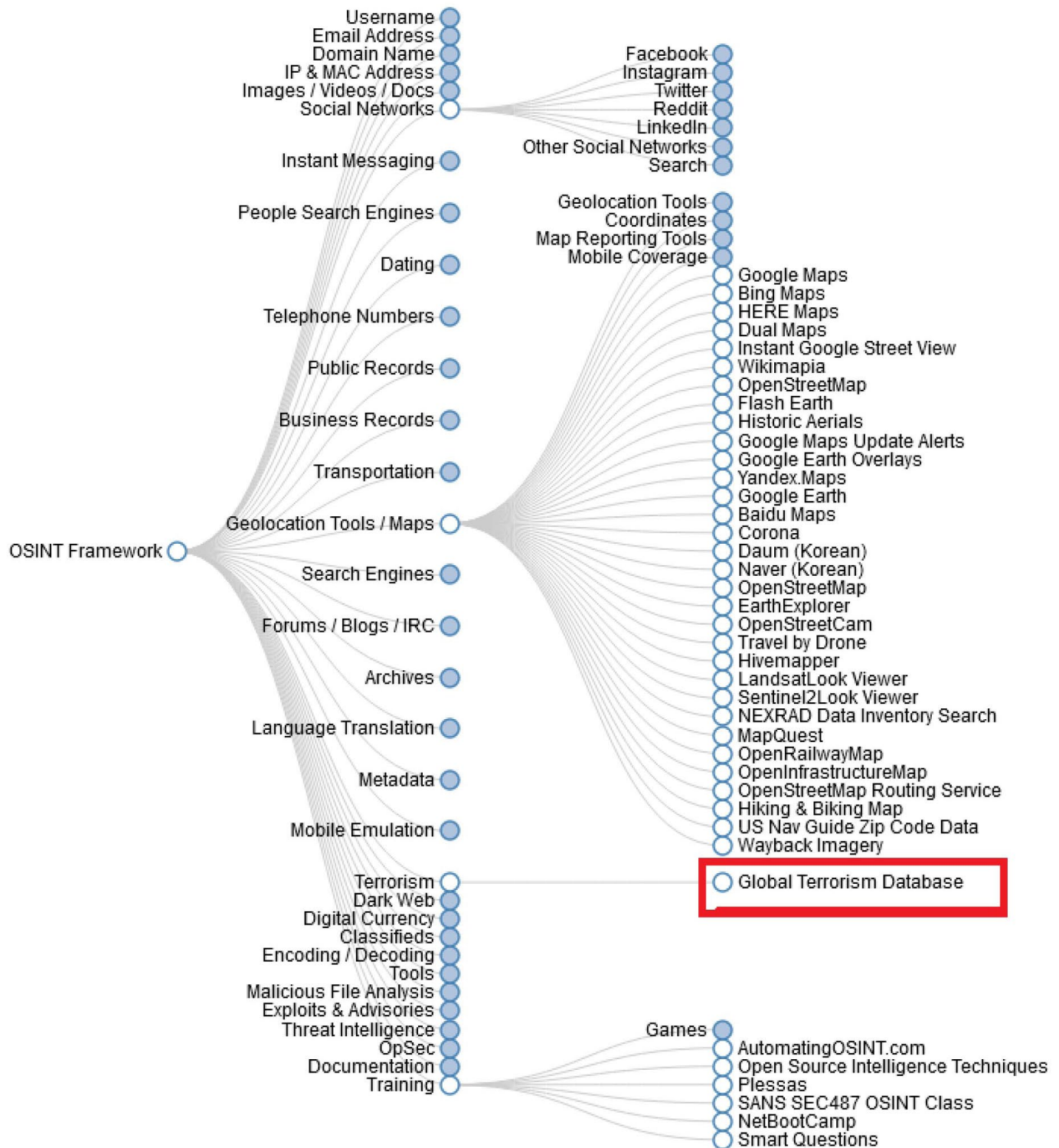
Threat intelligence[5][6] feeds like OSINT Framework, AlienVault OTX, Recorded Future, and IBM X-Force Exchange provide churches with real-time information and analysis of cybersecurity threats, vulnerabilities, and trends. By subscribing to threat intelligence feeds, churches can stay informed about potential security risks and take proactive measures to protect their digital assets and sensitive information.

For example, the Global Terrorism Database (<https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>) available on the OSINT Framework can provide data on terrorist activities targeting churches and its leaders. Although the database has a stockpile of previous terrorism data, the information provided gives an insight of what should churches do to protect themselves.

GTD ID	DATE	COUNTRY	CITY	PERPETRATOR GROUP	FATALITIES	INJURED	TARGET TYPE	REGION	ATTACK TYPE	WEAPON TYPE
202010160016	2020-10-16	Tanzania	Mahembe	Central Africa Province of the Islamic State (suspected)	Unknown	Unknown	Private Citizens & Property	Sub-Saharan Africa	Unknown	Unknown
201812060023	2018-12-06	Tanzania	Nyakato	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Religious Figures/Institutions	Sub-Saharan Africa	Hostage Taking (Kidnapping)	Unknown
202010140014	2020-10-14	Tanzania	Kitaya	Central Africa Province of the Islamic State	Unknown	Unknown	Military	Sub-Saharan Africa	Facility/Infrastructure Attack	Incendiary,Unknown
202010140013	2020-10-14	Tanzania	Kitaya	Central Africa Province of the Islamic State	20	0	Private Citizens & Property	Sub-Saharan Africa	Hostage Taking (Kidnapping),Facility/Infrastructure Attack	Incendiary,Melee
201605190006	2016-05-19	Tanzania	Unknown	Al-Shabaab (suspected),Jabha East Africa	3	1	Religious Figures/Institutions	Sub-Saharan Africa	Bombing/Explosion,Armed Assault	Explosives,Firearms,Melee
201603180011	2016-03-18	Tanzania	Dar es Salaam	Unknown	0	1	Journalists & Media	Sub-Saharan Africa	Hostage Taking (Kidnapping)	Melee

Screenshot 4: An extract of terrorist information showing terror attacks that had happened in Tanzania. For example, according to that extract, in year 2018, there was a terror attack targeting Religious Figures/Institutions in Nyakato, Kagera region. The attack involved hostage taking (kidnapping).

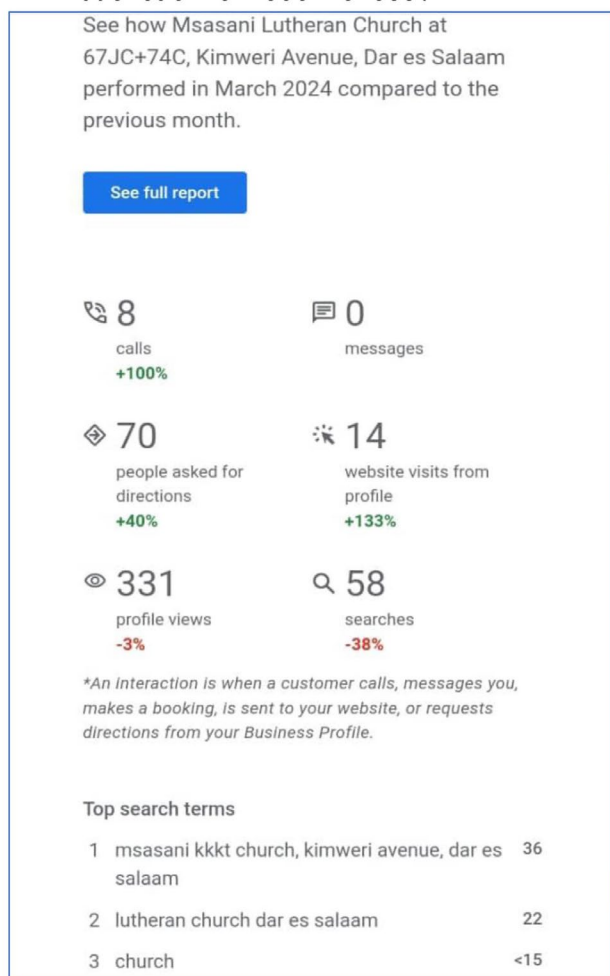
OSINT Framework



Screenshot 5: The OSINT Framework displaying various OSINT tools including for social media. The Global Terrorism Database is found in this framework as well.

2.4. Website Analytics Platforms

Platforms like Google Analytics[7], Piwik (Matomo), and Open Web Analytics provide churches with insights into website traffic, user behavior, and engagement metrics. By analyzing website data, churches can understand how visitors interact with their online content, identify popular pages or topics, and optimize their website for better user experience and outreach effectiveness.



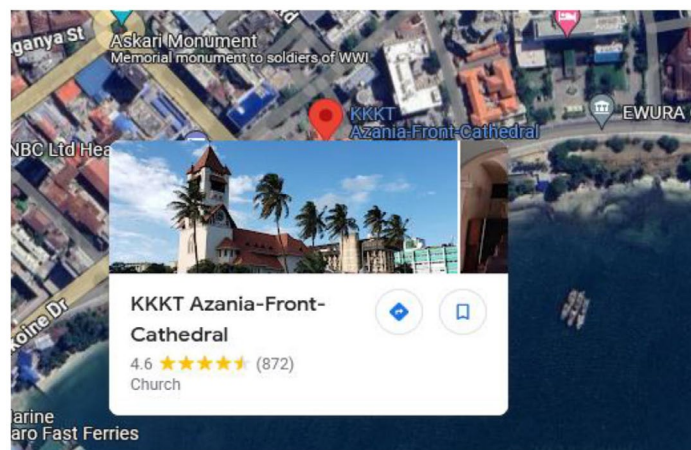
Screenshot X: Website Analytics for churches providing useful information like the number of new visitors, those who were convinced and decided to ask for the direction to the church or make phone calls

2.5. Public Records Databases

Public records databases such as county's citizens record websites, national bureau of statistics, property tax databases, voter registration records, etc. can provide churches with valuable information about their local community, including demographics, property ownership, and voter registration data. This information can inform outreach efforts, community engagement strategies, and ministry planning initiatives.

2.6. Geospatial Analysis Software

Geospatial analysis tools like Google Earth/Maps, ArcGIS, and QGIS can enable churches to visualize and analyze geographic data, such as the location of their facilities, community demographics, and areas of need within their community.



These tools can help churches identify target areas for outreach and tailor their ministry efforts to specific neighborhoods or regions.

3.0. Building an OSINT Center for the Church

Having gone through on the benefits for OSINT and the tools necessary, it is time to discuss on how an OSINT office for the church should be. In cybersecurity jargons, such office is called a Command Center. An OSINT (Open Source Intelligence) command center for a church should contain essential tools and resources to monitor, analyze, and respond to relevant information and events affecting the church community.



Picture:

Typical OSINT operation centers equipped with necessary tools and personnel.



Sources:

<https://isog.org/intelligence-operations/osint-open-source-intelligence/>

<https://datasurfr.ai/online-security-command-centre-operations-training/>

The basic components that could be included in an OSINT command center for a church includes:

3.1. Computers and Workstations

Equipped with internet access and necessary software tools for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information. These computers should have access to relevant OSINT platforms, social media monitoring tools, and analytical software.

3.2. Monitoring Screens

Large display screens or monitors to visually monitor real-time feeds from social media platforms, news sources, weather updates, and other relevant sources. These screens can provide situational awareness and facilitate quick decision-making

3.3. Secure Communication Tools

Access to communication channels such as secure email, messaging apps, and phone systems to facilitate communication and coordination among church staff, volunteers, and security personnel.

3.4. Data Analytics Software

Tools for analyzing and visualizing data collected from various OSINT sources, such as geospatial analysis software, keyword research tools, and website analytics platforms. These tools can help

identify trends, patterns, and insights relevant to the church's mission and community needs.

3.5. Threat Intelligence Feeds

Access to threat intelligence feeds and cybersecurity resources to stay informed about potential security threats, vulnerabilities, and emerging risks. This can include subscribing to threat intelligence platforms, cybersecurity blogs, and industry reports.

3.6. Resource Library

The Center must have a collection of reference materials, guides, and documentation related to OSINT best practices, security protocols, emergency response procedures, and community engagement strategies. This resource library can serve as a knowledge base for staff and volunteers involved in OSINT activities.

When conducting OSINT for churches, it's important to consider several ethical considerations to ensure that information is gathered and used responsibly and ethically.

- Respect for Privacy
- Accuracy and Verification; Operators should strive for accuracy and verify information from multiple credible sources before drawing conclusions or taking action based on OSINT findings. They have to avoid spreading rumors, misinformation, or unverified information that may harm individuals or the church.
- Transparency and Disclosure
- Responsible Use of Technology by adhering to legal and ethical guidelines governing data collection, surveillance, and information dissemination. Avoid using OSINT techniques for malicious purposes, such as stalking, harassment, or cyberbullying, and respect the terms of service and usage policies of OSINT platforms and tools.
- Accountability and Oversight; The church should Establish clear policies, procedures, and oversight mechanisms to govern OSINT activities within the church community. Designate responsible individuals or teams to oversee OSINT initiatives, ensure compliance with ethical standards and legal requirements, and address any concerns or complaints raised by stakeholders

3.7. Physical Security Equipment

Integration with the church's physical security infrastructure, including CCTV cameras, access control systems, and alarm monitoring systems. These systems can provide additional situational awareness and security monitoring capabilities.

Conclusion

Traditionally, OSINT was viewed to be useful only for government agencies, researchers and academicians. The aim of this paper is to show how Open Source Intelligence can be useful for churches and in deed, churches cannot avoid using it as long as the community it serves has largely moved to the digital world. OSINT offers churches a valuable toolkit for enhancing security, community engagement, missionary outreach, strategic planning, and resource allocation. By leveraging OSINT tools and techniques responsibly and ethically, churches can strengthen their mission and impact, foster meaningful connections with their congregation and community, and fulfill their calling to serve others in a rapidly changing world.

References:

1. William (Chris)

Dietz. (2011). OSINT: From the Trenches. ISBN: 978-1-935653-14-3. A collection of essays and case studies on OSINT practices and applications in various domains.

2. Michael Bazzell. (2018). Open Source Intelligence Techniques: Resources for Searching and Analyzing Online Information. ISBN: 978-1-5374-2530-0

3. Matthew A. Russell. (2019). Mining the Social Web: Data Mining Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, GitHub, and More. ISBN: 978-1-4493-8282-5

4. Daniel S Mariano, Gustavo H M de Oliveira. (2019). Social Media Mining and Social Network Analysis: Emerging Research. ISBN: 978-1-7998-1182-5

5. R J Beam. (2018). Cybersecurity for Houses of Worship: A Guide for Protecting Your Church, Synagogue, or Mosque. ISBN: 978-1-5439-0714-3

6. Ian Mann. (2008). Hacking the Human: Social Engineering Techniques and Security Countermeasures. ISBN: 978-1-59749-996-4

7. Eric Fettman, Feras Alhlou, Shiraz Asif. (2016). Google Analytics Breakthrough: From Zero to Business Impact. ISBN: 978-1-119-47207-4

Annex

A collection of information from social media and internet blogs with keywords related to KKKT and some selected church leaders like bishop Mwamakula.

 www.mwananchi.co.tz
Posted 06:59 26 Apr 2024

Aug 26, 2023 — Muktasari: Askofu wa Dayosisi ya Karagwe, Dk Benson Bagonza amezungumzia siku nne za mkutano mkuu wa Kanisa la Kilinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania (...

[Uchaguzi KKKT: Askofu Bagonza aibuka na mambo matatu](#)

 [link](#) 

 www.jamiiforums.com
Posted 18:53 21 Apr 2024

Kurunzi - Veronica France
Amuomba Msamaha Baba
Askofu Mwamakula na Viongozi
wa CHADEMA, Naye Akubali
Msamaha Wake. Started by
Kurunzi; May 24, 2023; Replies: 66.

[Askofu TD Jakes ajizulu baada ya kashfa
ya kutembea na ...](#)

 [link](#) ...

Billy Shechambo
Posted 15:24 21 Apr 2024

Rais wa Fungamano la Makenisa ya Kilutheri Duniani (LWF), Askofu Dkt. Henrik Stubbjaer, akiteka jambo na Maaskofu wa KKKT, alipokuwa katika ziara ya kikazi hapa nchini, kushoto ni Mkuu wa KKKT na Mkuu wa Dayosisi ya Mashariki na Pwani, Askofu Dkt. Alex Gehaz Malasusa.
#proudlylutheran



Photo 👍 12 likes

 **willyungilise**
Posted 18:53 20 Apr 2024
[@ExMayorUbungo](#) Mpigie simu askofu mwamakula yupo ndani ya hiyo train mwambie atakukuta Dodoma kesho mweleze upo na fuso ya mizigo umewapita hapo Ruvu.

 status

Clicking on the link associated with the information, the Analytics tool will open the media and displays all comments from the viewers for an OSINT team to analyze.

Billy Shechambo

Posted 15:24 21 Apr 2024

Rais wa Fungamano la Makenisa ya Kilutheri Duniani (LWF), Askofu Dkt. Henrik Stubbjær, akiteta jambo na Maaskofu wa KKKT, alipokuwa katika ziara ya kikazi hapa nchini, kushoto ni Mkuu wa KKKT na Mkuu wa Dayosisi ya Mashariki na Pwani, Askofu Dkt. Alex Gehaz Malasusa.



Photo 12 likes



16



zaibani_company
Posted 10:09 22 Apr 2024

@JamesMbowe4 Huyu mzee anazeeka vibaya , kiti ule uongozi mkuu wa **KKIK** mbona akutoa tamko lolote , kwamba ulikuwa wa haki ? Tanzania kuna maali tunakosea sana maana kama kiongozi wa dini akiona uongozi uliopo madarakani hanufaiiki nao basi vjembe kila Kona bora tungefuta tu huu uchaguzi mkuu

status

Analysis of the comments from the social media can help the Church and its leader to:

- 1) Be selective in the ways they choose their words before cameras and microphones
- 2) Understanding the spiritual level and needs of their followers

 **Mchunggaji Fina makoi**
Posted 04:27 24 Apr 2024

KKKT Sombetini Morning glory
maombi na sadaka 0757577099
au 0754632043.





6450_Okk
Posted 23:45 23 Apr 2024

@modasky_kkkk きゃ〜〜〜ファン
サだ〜〜〜🥰🥰🥰🥰🥰かわ
いい❤️もっとちょううのって❤️(応
援うちわ) いつもかわいい写真ありが
とございます！日々の癒しです❤️

KKKT - DMP Usharika Wa Mbezi Beach
Posted 04:15 24 Apr 2024

DARASA LA UTUMISHI ,
JUMANNE 23.04.2024. Karibu
nyote nyumbani mwa Bwana
tumwabadu Mungu wetu katika
Roho na kweli. Toa sadaka yako
kupitia MBEZI BEACH ...

**DARASA
LA
UTUMISHI**

JUMANNE
16.04.2024

video

crewu_kkkt62671


Posted 21:34 23 Apr 2024


ひゃあ〜かわいい

 **KKKT-DKU Usharika wa Njombe**
Posted 02:44 24 Apr 2024

KKKT DKU -- USHARIKA WA NJOMBE.IBADA YA MORNING GLORY TAR 24-04-2024. KKKT DKU -- USHARIKA WA NJOMBE.Ibada ya Morning Glory

A screenshot of a social media post from 'Morning Glory'. At the top left is a red YouTube play button icon. Next to it is a circular profile picture with a black background and the text 'Morning GLORY' in white. To the right of the profile picture is the video title 'KKKT-DKU Usharika wa Njombe' in blue and green text. Below the title is the timestamp 'Posted 03:30 24 Apr 2024'. The main body of the post contains Swahili text: 'KKKT DKU -- USHARIKA WA NJOMBE. IBADA YA MORNING GLORY TAR 24-04-2024. KKKT DKU -- USHARIKA WA NJOMBE. Ibada ya Morning Glory Mtumishi Mwl Maxmilian Joseph Ungana nasi kupata ...'. At the bottom of the image is a large, stylized 'Morning GLORY' logo in white text on a dark red background. The logo has a thin white underline under the word 'Morning'. To the left of the logo is a small circular icon with a cross and a figure. To the right of the logo is a small rectangular icon with the text 'NJOOME 4K' and 'Download'.

 **LIVE** **CONING** **CLORY** **igana nazi Kupata mwanafisho huya na Kamukakuru, Mungu i**
▶ video

  **MWL AMANI LEE**
Posted 21:00 23 Apr 2024

MAENDELEO BANK SETS COURSE AT 10th AGM

By Ibrahim Wangabala



Dar es Salaam, June 14, 2024 – **Maendeleo Bank PLC** is preparing for a significant milestone as it gears up to convene its 10th **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** on June 22, 2024, at Massani Hall in Dar es Salaam. The meeting, scheduled to commence at 4:00 AM, will open with a seminar on investment strategies and mergers and acquisitions, setting the stage for strategic discussions.

The AGM's agenda will include a comprehensive review of Maendeleo Bank's fiscal year ending December 31, 2023. Directors and auditors will present detailed reports showcasing the bank's robust financial health and operational achievements. Key items for deliberation include the approval of directors' and auditors' fees for the upcoming year, alongside an eagerly anticipated dividend proposal. Additionally, shareholders will consider a merger proposal, signaling the bank's ambitious expansion plans.

Reflecting on the bank's journey, in his Press release, Dr. Ibrahim Mwangalaba, Managing Director, remarked, "Since the inception of Maendeleo

Bank, our mission has been to deliver accessible and dependable banking services, overcoming challenges such as regulatory hurdles and market dynamics." He added, "Securing initial capital in our early days was a significant challenge, but we navigated it with steadfast support from our founding shareholders. Investments in technology and our workforce have been pivotal, with innovations like mobile banking and digital platforms enhancing both customer satisfaction and operational efficiency."

Board member Dr. Ernest William Kadiva underscored the collaborative efforts with government bodies, employees, and stakeholders in positioning Maendeleo Bank as a benchmark in Tanzania and beyond. He extended a warm invitation to shareholders, urging their active participation in shaping the bank's future direction.

Commending Maendeleo Bank's strategic growth, Dr. John Mwakapunga from the Bank of Tanzania (BOT) endorsed the bank's model as exemplary in strategic growth and technological integration, offering invaluable lessons for

smaller banks.

Engineer Benjamin Safe, an AGM participant, praised the bank's transparency and accountability, stating, "Year after year, Maendeleo Bank's exceptional growth underscores its commitment to setting industry standards and fostering economic ownership among Tanzanians." Innovative initiatives by Maendeleo Bank include leveraging technology for enhanced shareholder engagement, enabling virtual participation via Zoom for the AGM. Shareholders are encouraged to register by June 21, 2024, reflecting the bank's commitment to technological advancement and inclusive governance.

In preparation for the AGM, Maendeleo Bank has made comprehensive documentation, including AGM books and proxy forms, available at its Luther House headquarters starting June 14, 2024. The same will be accessible at the Massani Hall venue on the day of the AGM.

Maendeleo Bank recently announced a dividend of 708 million Tanzanian Shillings for the fiscal year 2022, marking a substantial 136% increase from the previous year, reflecting robust financial performance and shareholder value enhancement.

The upcoming AGM promises to be a pivotal event, shaping Maendeleo Bank's strategic roadmap for the upcoming year. It will foster interactive sessions between shareholders and leadership, facilitating dialogue on critical developments and future directives.

Maendeleo 's public limited Company's strategies course at its 10th AGM stands as a testament to its growth trajectory amidst dynamic market conditions, heralding new benchmarks for financial excellence and stakeholder engagement.



Click or scan this QR code to download previous issues of Mission Echo

visit our website



St. Paul as Resource for Apostolic Ministry in the 21st Century

By Modestus Lukonge

Introduction

In this article I intend to argue on the relevance of the epistles of St. Paul for apostolic ministry in the 21st century. Space and scope will not permit me to treat any single epistle fully, nor will I dwell on all possible issues in ministry. I will therefore focus more on selected epistles that scholars currently agree to be authentic Pauline texts, even as I refer to other texts in the Bible. In the selected texts, I will address two topics. The first one is the message of salvation to the present era; while the second one is on newness of life and ethical living. The first theme is very relevant because we live in a world where the message encounters doubt, opposition and rejection. Unbelief and efforts to discredit the message of salvation is generally an ordinary occurrence now in the same way that it has been in the past centuries. The second theme follows from the first one, in that where there is no real newness of life, further questions tend to confront the Church regarding the authenticity of the message itself. In other words, we are not to 'preach wine and drink water.' The article is divided into four parts. The first part is this introduction, while the second part argues for a contextual presentation of the message of salvation as articulated by Paul in Galatians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans. The third part dwells on the call to ethical living as articulated in the same epistles. Part four is the summary and conclusions.

The Message of Salvation in Paul's Epistles in Today's Context

We live in a world that daily keeps throwing doubt on the message of salvation as presented both in the Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT). The latter includes the gospels and the epistles. Paul's epistles stand out as among the texts that have expounded the message of salvation at length and in-depth. The world longs for answers as to the destiny of humanity, for instance on whether there is a life after death and if so, what sort of life it will be. I argue here that the Bible and specifically the gospels and the epistles provide their own answers and truth claims for all the world to see, consider and accept. However, these claims were made thousands of years ago, in different social, political and economic contexts. To make them relevant today, the minister of the word of God needs to present them in proper context. That context should take into account the situation of the text and our situation and therefore, be mindful of the realities of both contexts while keeping to the core of the gospel. I will attempt this task with a number of Pauline texts I mind, as will be seen below.

My opening text in this survey of the rele-

vance of Paul as a resource for apostolic ministry in the 21st century is 1 Cor. 2:2. In that text Paul presents the uppermost preoccupation of his mind: "For I decided in my mind to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." Paul does not here imply that he knew nothing else like the need for feeding and resting the body or the need for people to raise a family and provide for it, and so on. Rather, the context should lead us to the point that he made this number one priority in his life, to know Christ. The following phrase 'and him crucified' has its own importance. It is possible for one to know Christ as a historical figure, a moral teacher and a role model. It is possible however, to know him in that sense while at the same time denying that he was crucified, buried and rose from the dead. It is further possible to refuse acknowledging his death as intended to secure human salvation. It is this type of understanding that we encounter when subscribe to certain strands of liberal theology of the 19th and 20th century. For a minister of the word of God, it remains a duty to know Christ; and know him as crucified. That is an imperative which the Church cannot afford to ignore. In the 21st century, we need to tell people the same story, that we are preaching Christ and him crucified, who died, was buried, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven.

This brings me to the next point. We need to elaborate on the crucifixion, since the world would justifiably ask: why the crucifixion? The question is valid whether asked by Jews or Gentiles. The reply from the biblical text is in Rom. 3:21-5:

The righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law....For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

Here we have the gist of the matter. The Jews believed that they could attain righteousness through the law, by keeping the word of the Torah. Gentiles, represented by Greeks, thought they could attain 'knowledge' by arriving at rational judgment of the order of things, thus liberating the soul from the miseries and imprisonment of the body. In our age, the same patterns of thought reign. Either people feel they can appease and please God by good deeds and keeping the commandments, or feel that they are free to do what they want since they have a good understanding of the nature of things, which informs them that there is no god or that they can attain godhood through certain routes, meditative practices notable among many. Paul presents a picture that consigns both views into

one lot: 'error.' In his epistle, Paul holds the view that all are sinners and all are in need of a savior. Even the Jews, who held themselves apart as chosen, are included in this indictment that: 1) There is no partiality with God, for all are sinners; 2) All are justified by his grace by faith; 3) Through Christ Jesus and 4) Whom God made an expiation. The term expiation is an English translation of the Greek noun *hilasterion*, which connotes the verb *hilaskomai*, which means to appease, to expiate, to atone for, to propitiate, to be gracious, and to show mercy. The force of *hilasterion* therefore is in appeasing God, so that the broken relationship is restored. The idea is not to appease an angry God, but to draw humanity back again towards God and into God (Eph. 2:18). It is not merely to appease or satisfy a deity for wrongs committed, as in some of the offerings in the OT, but to give full and enduring satisfaction and remedy for the gulf of separation from God. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) translates the word *prosagōgen* as 'have access.' The Swahili Union Version is probably much closer to the original where it translates *prosagōgen* as *kumkaribia* which is much closer to 'to draw near,' 'to lead,' 'to conduct,' 'to procure access for,' 'to bring near,' 'to approach'; even though the NRSV's use of 'access' has not entirely lost the force of the Greek word.

It is this message that a preacher of the 21st century ought to continually focus on. That is, the message about availability of free grace for all to cater for and remove the guilt and sin that afflicts humanity (of which Paul speaks at length in Romans 2). Any other message should cater for, accommodate and illustrate this core message. If it does not, it risks being human wisdom and contentions about worldly things. Christ, and him crucified, is the central point. The message is intended to effect radical change on the hearers but without appeal to philosophical nuances, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power (1 Cor. 1:17), a point Badiou remarks on:

The announcement of the Gospel is made without the wisdom of the language 'lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.' What does it mean for the event whose sign is the cross to be emptied of its power? Simply that this event is of such a character as to render the philosophical logos incapable of declaring it.¹

Badiou continues that the Christ event and the discourse around it is that the claim of Christianity does not require wisdom of power to further the message, because God has chosen an entirely different approach that is not open to adjustment to fit our outlook of things: "From a more ontological viewpoint, it is necessary to maintain that Christian discourse legitimates neither the God of wisdom (because God has chosen the foolish things) nor the God of power (because God has chosen the weak and base things)."²

Badiou argues further that for Paul, the Christ

event does not come as proof of something already there, but rather as a pure beginning:³ "Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come" (1 Cor. 5:17). This demands that radical change is noted in the individual and society that claims to be Christian.

But one may ask today. Can't we change ourselves into better persons? The question is valid, and actually it implies another question: Wasn't Paul a Jew and isn't his message therefore directed to the Jews and them only? To this question Paul himself provides the answer. First of all we are reminded that Paul has self-knowledge of himself as sent to the Gentiles, in the same way that Peter and others were sent to the Jews. That being the case, we have to understand the meaning of this double sending. Why? Paul provides the answer: All have sinned. All seek some form of understanding of the universe and of themselves. Basing on the Torah, the Jews demand a sign. Basing on Sophia, the Greeks seek wisdom and understanding of the principles underlying the nature of the universe (1 Cor. 1:22-25). For the Jews a sign is necessary because they have Moses and the other prophets, who came to them with signs and wonders (cf. Jn. 6:30). For the Greek, things have to make a 'scientific material sense or, alternatively; be explainable in terms of knowledge, gnosis.

Broadly speaking, the Jews represent a religious system that seeks signs and strive to conform certain laws and hence to moralism. On their part, the Greeks represent rational approaches to issues of life. They will only accept a considered argument on the nature of things, or to state it differently, on all what humanity, creation, the cosmos and essence are. The two worldviews definitely will have their distinct questions on claims about substitutionary or representative death of Jesus Christ as posed by Paul and on the resurrection of the dead. The resurrection does not make sense to a group that has a fixed code for relationship with God. It equally does not make sense for a community influenced by gnostic beliefs that material is evil and only the spiritual is pure and sinless; or to other philosophical thought that did not grant existence of the soul and life after death.

Paul approaches both groups with the simple statement: "Nothing but Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). It is a message that demands the breaking of a separation between the two groups represented by the Jew and the Greek. The law is excluded, for salvation does not come by works of the law, but by faith in Christ, a point he makes in Galatians 2:16. Like the law, the philosopher's approach too is condemned and excluded (1 Cor. 1:20 & 3:18). By extension, the agnostic view is equally condemned as a form of unbelief. But Paul is not to be viewed as one presenting a naïve faith:

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom,

1 Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: the Foundations of Universalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 46.

2 Ibid., 46-7. Contemporary preaching especially in the prosperity gospel movement where power rather than the emptying of power is emphasized, is thus rendered subject to serious questioning.

3 Ibid., 49.

although it is not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification (1Cor. 2:6-7; cf. 1Cor. 1:20-21).

This is a very bold statement. First he argues that while the Greeks as an instance claim to have wisdom, or means to attain it; there is a far more superb wisdom that resides in God Himself. Not only that, he goes on that God chose to hide this wisdom from the world, for a time: "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him" (1Cor. 2:9). He then goes on to argue that it is this hidden wisdom that God has revealed to humans through the Holy Spirit. The carnal person cannot know this wisdom except by the Spirit. Paul therefore, it is like one saying 'you do not understand because you are carnal. If you let yourselves be led by the Spirit (or, allow the Spirit free reign in you), you will know the truth, the wisdom.'

It is my argument here that a minister of the word of God should not lose sight of this reality. The carnal person cannot attain the knowledge of the message, because it is tossed between the two extremes: works of the law or philosophies. This is our lot, unless we are led by the Spirit from either extreme and pointed to the gospel instead. Paul argues that this a gift from God himself. Even the ability to clearly recognize where one is standing before God as condemned is a gift. Preachers should never shy away from this point as well. As ministers in the twenty first century, we ought to constantly have this in mind and pray fervently that whomever we reach to with the gospel will be touched by the foolishness of the message (1Cor. 1:18 & 27), rather than by some signs (as in prosperity gospel movement) or with wisdom and eloquence of speech (as in liberal forms of theologizing).

This message demands a persistence in faith. Paul explains somewhere in Romans what the word of faith is, by touching on its contents: 'Confess with the mouth and believe with your heart'. As we have noted above, the Jews demand signs and seek to press ahead with accomplishing the requirements of the Torah; while Greeks seek for wisdom, sophia. Paul presents a demand that is both different from Sophia and from the requirements of the torah: "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9). As ministers, we ought to press this point on, time and again. It is undeniable that preachers would constantly find themselves under pressure to make the word more palatable in conformity with the trend of the time, or make it politically amenable and comfortable to ruling authorities. This happens more so often in societies with ruthless rulers, where corruption and materialism are rife and where there are severe external social and economic pressures. An instance is the corporate world; or hegemonic

powers that seek to maintain imbalanced human relationships everywhere which accentuate exploitation of humans by humans. Paul calls on us not to water down the message, which invites all to freedom in Christ.

The message itself is simple, outwardly foolish and apt to bring up a number of questions: Why Jesus and not Shiva, Brahman, The sun god or some other deity? Why does suffering still exist if Christ accomplished all? And these cannot be said to be invalid questions. Plus, there are no easy answers or quick solutions, a fact that may prove to be a serious distraction on part of a minister. The answer remains the same: This is what we believe: "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Now that we have a resurgence of Gnostic ideas; new-ageism; goddess worship; a proliferation of eastern mystic beliefs and many other movements and ideas; the call is as urgent in the 21st century as it was in the first. Now that exploitation of humans by fellow humans continues, the gospel should be presented in earnest to all, without being embarrassed about it. I mentioned above that Paul calls for breaking of boundaries, what Badiou calls a universalism in Paul. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave or free, male nor female, for they are all one in Christ (Gal. 3:28). This outlook sums up the universalism of humanity as Badiou attempted to sum it. Paul, and as Badiou notes, is not however naïve to the reality that Greeks and Jews still exist, men and women still exist and there are people with authority and those under authority, not to mention that there are differences in cultural patterns and geographical boundedness.⁴ The point therefore is that we should shun moral judgment of others: "Within the order of particularity everything is permitted."⁵ All things in terms of food, cultural norms and social settings are permitted so long as the core message of salvation in Christ and that of faith, love and hope are presented and articulated. Even accepting others in a different culture as they are and avoiding 'othering' them is both faith and love. Preachers should therefore be sensitive to cultural patterns. The aim is to change hearts, not cultures. That means certain social patterns will have to be accommodated. Those that run counter to universal morality (incest, licentiousness or stealing are typical examples), need to be handled with the gospel itself.

We may agree with Badiou that if Paul calls us into a universal humanity in which "There is neither Jew nor Greek" (Gal. 3:28), that call demands something more: "It is incumbent upon love to become law so that truth's postevental universality can be continuously inscribe itself in the world, rallying subjects to the path of life."⁶ The emphasis here, again, points to the fact that with Christ reigning in our lives, there is no longer separation along ethnicities (we may even consider Greece as an ethnicity, the only difference being that both Jews and Greeks though

4 Ibid., 98.

5 Ibid., 101.

6 Ibid., 88.

that theirs was the universal and all the others 'ethnicities'). Instead, it is love that reigns, and love is universalizing. Love universalizes in the sense that it is a law that all can identify with. The message of Christianity in the 21st century should revolve around love, for Christ himself says: 'Love your neighbor.' For the Jew, former enemy is now a neighbor. For the Greek, the former unenlightened 'savage' is now equally someone to be loved as a fellow Hellenes.

Paul emphasizes this point again and again in his epistles: In Christ all boundaries of ethnicity, nationality, language, and philosophies and many others are excluded. This is precisely the life of Jesus, who rebuked the Jews for their perceived privileged position, welcomed sinners and ate with them, and accepted being invited in their homes. Not only that, in a parable that has come to be widely known as of the Good Samaritan he forced a Jew to see the reality to the point of commending the action of someone who was not to be esteemed at all among Jews.

In Philippians, Paul calls on the recipients to "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" (Phlp. 2:5-7). Here is something important. Not are only we to present Jesus as savior, but as God become human. This assertion has divided the Church over the centuries. It is beyond my scope here to dwell on questions of Christology and heresies the centuries over. Rather, I am only emphasizing here that part of our ministry is to declare Jesus as God become man. The world needs this message now as it did centuries ago. For "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8). The point is not to make a reasoned conviction, but to invite all to Christ and the hope he offers.

The world needs hope. Hope for the suffering, the internally displaced persons; the refugees; those suffering under tyrannical rulers; the sick and afflicted; those who daily go without food or with very little to eat. Yet all this suffering occurs in the same world where there are those who have more than their needs, lead luxurious lives and can afford leisure without worrying when the next missile will be fired against them. Such a world needs love and hope. Both love and hope are universalizing concepts. And it can be said that hope cannot come where there is no love, since when love is not there, trust cannot be there and therefore hope cannot be there. Trust is necessary for love—in human sense, to grow. Paul points us to hope as subjective victory.⁷ It is subjective in that it does not have to be realized immediately, but something we travel with in the journey of faith. Badiou admits that Paul's argument is difficult to understand. I agree with him, but we can take comfort in that where the order of things is so hopeless, Paul provided the first step towards resolution of the problem of suffering: "And we rejoice in

our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our suffering, knowing that suffering produces patience, and patience produces enduring fidelity, and enduring fidelity produces hope, and hope does not disappoint" (Rom. 5:2).

The Newness of Life

Paul informs us, and calls time and again, for us to get hold of, or accept; being transformed into a newness of life that comes by faith in Jesus, 'If a man is in Christ....' The message is on being clothed by the new humanity. But what is this new humanity? It is precisely the one we have remarked about above, one not bounded by geography, law or philosophy, but by a call to respond to the love of God, and extending this love to others. This is what forms the opening verses of chapter 12 in the epistle to Romans (Romans 12:1-2):

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Here there are a few lessons for us 'I appeal to you by the mercies of God' is a call to all who have believed. Behind this is a 'hidden' call upon ministers to remind people to cling to this call, giving their bodies as a sacrifice. In this century we are accosted by preachers of a different gospel, who calls on people to give this or that; or do this or that, in order to be in right standing with God. We are further confronted with sociological and psychological views that call on people to 'love yourself.' The proposition may sound harmless and may even be attributed to Christ, but in real life it places emphasis on the self rather than on the others.

A minister should never lose sight of this clear call. The minister has to plead, appeal and insist on all under him or her, to present their bodies as a living sacrifice to God. Paul is reminding them that it is not him, but that the mercies of God are putting on him the charge to appeal to them. It is a reminder that God's mercy that has saved them and that mercy calls them into a newness of life. If their old picture of life mirrored Romans 1-3, the new one should mirror the new humanity, one in which Christ reigns (Gal 2:20): "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who lives, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I live now in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." He states further that: "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation."

In the text of Romans 12:1-2 he states that "present your bodies as a living sacrifice." The Greek word *thuzian* which is translated as 'sacrifice' comes from the Greek root word *thuō*, a verb which means 1) To kill and burn for sacrificial purposes, 2) To kill for sacrificial meals, (even if not burned); and 3) To kill for ordinary use as food. The term is used for

⁷ Ibid., 95.

inanimate items as well, for instance burning incense. Therefore, *thuzian* as used in the context of Rom. 12:1-2 is a noun that means something sacrificed, in the same sense that something is used as an offering to a deity, whether burnt or used in some other way. Paul writes with this context in mind, in which he calls them to ‘burn their bodies’ or let themselves be ‘killed in the flesh,’ so that even as they live, they will be reckoned before God as already sacrificed and hence ‘a living sacrifice.’ How this is possible can be illustrated by what happens when we resist sensual desires of the body, idolatry, covetousness, anger, malice, thefts and many others. For, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation” (2Cor. 5:17). This does not mean that the battle is over: “Against the rampant and divisive individualistic experience of salvation in the Spirit, he emphasizes the warfare of the body (1Cor. 13: 9-13.”⁸

Paul continues that presenting their bodies as a sacrifice is their spiritual worship, *teñ logikeñ latreian*. Here he is emphasizing that if our bodies have not been offered as living sacrifices, then our worship services are worthless and do not measure up to the standard of God, for they lose their essence. The term *logikeñ* connotes what is logical, what makes sense, but also what is spiritual, something having to do with body and spirit). As I have suggested above, Paul’s context leads us to think of burnt sacrifice, which were well known in Jewish worship and even among other religions of the time. It is more probable that Paul had the Jewish sacrifices in mind, but that does not necessarily exclude sacrifices to the deities of the Roman and Greek cities, as well as the emperors. The force of the words here possibly has a double role, the first one being to call them from unwholesome living, the second one is to call them from all forms of Jewish or Greco-Roman deities and ritualism. It is likely that just as in Corinth, the new converts in Rome and in other cities as well had questions on what to do with rituals, in their case and unlike the Jews, pagan rituals. This would be even more serious a question if they were required by law to appear at the rituals, failure of which would be a crime of subverting the state or undermining society. In any case, his emphasis is that worship is of the heart, not of external rituals. Or, the opposite, questions would have arisen regarding Jewish temple rites. Paul emphasizes that proper worship is a holy response in which we do not permit our bodies to dictate our behavior, but instead leads us to live according to the Spirit, because the Spirit now reigns in us. (Rom. 8:9).

Such teaching is relevant today where materialism and sensuality with which we are daily bombarded on TV and in other electronic media keep their attractions on all, young and old; and in which society’s role models tend to be people with scandalous lives, only hidden from the public unless and until exposed one way or the other. Paul is therefore appealing to them to begin on a clean slate from the time they believed. Their sacrifice from that moment is to honor God with their bodies, not to benefit themselves—in the manner of certain Greek

philosophies that advocated pleasure as the highest good, for instance. But honoring God in that manner is not an exercise into withdrawing from the world, a point he emphasizes in his epistles. We are to live here as members of society and improve the community with our various contributions: verbal, written, manual work and money. Our present apostolic ministry calls us into the same duty.

There are several ways Christians can respond to the appeal. One is by keeping in line with the words of the following verse: “Do not be conformed to this world” (Rom. 12:2). What is the way of this world? The Greek text uses the word *aïōni*, which comes from the word *aïōn*, which is a noun meaning age; aeon; a particular period with certain character, pattern of behavior and culture. Therefore *aïōni toutō* refers to ‘the whole pattern of this moment,’ ‘this age,’ ‘this season,’ ‘this aeon,’ etc. Paul therefore is pointing them to a community with a certain pattern of life characterized by evil, a matter he has already presented and explained at length in the first three chapters of Romans. This pattern of the age is not limited to spiritual matters but may be extended to attitudes, patterns of social life, economic and political concerns, patterns of consumption of the things consumable, ethical norms, cultural patterns, education systems and so forth. It is about a corrupt world that is unable to redeem itself, unless it heeds the call to accept Christ.

Even though Paul writes for Romans, *aïōni toutō* rings meaningfully even to us today. The warning of Romans 12:2 for instance, apply to our generation, such that the text of Rom. 1:18-32 stands in judgment of all who conform to the pattern of ‘this world.’ Believers are therefore called to be transformed into something else: “But be transformed by the renewal of your mind,” The term *metamorphousthe* is from the participle *metamorphoō*, which has given us the English word ‘metamorphosis.’ The participle *metamorphoō* has at least three meanings: 1) To be full transformed in its external appearance; 2) Morphological change or change in shape; 3) Spiritual change. It is the third meaning that context leads us to see as applicable here. Paul therefore calls on them to abandon the worldly ways by having internal change in every aspect of their lives. It is about being renewed. What is to be renewed is *noos* (your minds) from the noun *nous* (mind). Therefore *metamorphousthe noos* is ‘be transformed in your minds,’ ‘your thinking,’ ‘your faculties for decision making.’ The reason is that the world has its own way of looking at issues and manner of conduct, a fact Paul acknowledges in Rom. 12:2c “do not be conformed to this world.” They can only be able to be transformed if they really know the will of God (Rom. 12:2c). The word (*anakainōsei*) is from the verb *anakainōō* which refers to renew, rejuvenate, repair, apply maintenance on something so as to improve it, revive. When he says ‘by renewal of your mind’ it is as if he is saying: that you may be rejuvenated, re-energized, repaired, made anew, revived. One could use the illustration of a broken-down car or dilapidated house, or an insurance policy. It

⁸ Calvin Roetzel, “Paul the Apostle,” in *The New Dictionary of the Bible Vol 4* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009), 418.

is about something that can no longer serve the intended purpose unless renewed or repaired. This implies that an external agency is required, just as an insurance policy cannot renew itself, or a car repair itself. This is important in this generation where preachers keep inviting hearers into doing this or that so as to please God. Our righteousness is passive righteousness, for it begins with and ends with God.

In the same verse Paul continues that “That you may prove the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” There are three things to be considered here: ‘will of God,’ ‘good,’ and ‘acceptable and perfect.’ The first, the will of God is central. The remaining two are like satellites revolving around this will of God. They are therefore used for the sake of emphasis, since when someone does what is good, perfect and acceptable, then one has done the will of God. We live in a very permissive world in which people love to, and are encouraged in all sorts of ways, to seek their own desires. The language of psychology, sociology and business exerts no small amount of pressure on individuals to conform to a certain way of behavior, whose pattern is ‘me,’ ‘my rights,’ ‘my life.’ Paul points us to a different, in fact the opposite outlook, which is Christ and him crucified. It is an unceasing duty of a minister of the word of God to point his or her audience to Christ, to the cross, to possible suffering and unjustified denial of rights, to want and despair for the sake of Christ. When this is not done, and instead preachers and pastors are preoccupied with wealth, health and political power for instance, they fail the Church and deny Christ.

The force of *metamorphoō* in Rom. 12:2 therefore, is that being transformed will lead them into knowing the will of God, giving them the strength to accept it as good and perfect, and hence clinging to it. All preaching should have this as its main goal.

In the next verse (Rom. 12:3) Paul calls upon them not to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think. The verb *hyperphroneō* is an infinitive form of *phroneō*, which means among other, to entertain certain sentiments or thoughts of a specific kind, to entertain conceit, or to entertain a certain way of thinking in one’s frame of mind. With the prefix *hyper* the term refers to entertaining lofty thoughts, to be elated. Paul is therefore warning them not to think highly of themselves, for that is pride, but to think with sober judgment in all things. God has given them faith and has promised that with the faith and through the same faith in Christ Jesus, they can do many things and overcome obstacles. They are however to guard themselves against being puffed up. Instead, they have to think with sober (*sophronein*) judgment. The aim is to prevent divisiveness and maintain unity instead. This is a lesson to the Church as a whole, for divisiveness has been one of the main reasons why the gospel is discredited. This occurs when we preach peace, love and unity while the outside world sees all too easily, divisions, endless contentions and chaos in Church. Paul dwells on the same theme in 1Cor. 11:17-34

and in the following three chapters (1Cor. 12-14); where he tackles the problem of factions and divisions on account of a number of things. He discounts their lack of proper order during Holy Communion or agape feasts (1Cor. 11:17-34); their factious spirits based on differences in gifts (1Cor. 12: 1-34), and specifically divisions over speaking in tongues (1Cor. 14). In 1Cor. 14 he presents specific guidance on the gift of tongues. Unfortunately, the Church has never managed, we could say, to fully grasp the point and overcome divisions over tongues. As a result there are those who forbid speaking in tongues altogether, and those who think without that gift, one is not marked and having the Holy Spirit. Paul’s way in the matter is different. He sees it as a minor gift when compared to love and prophesying, that is preaching (1Cor. 14:1). He chastises them, warning them not to be like children in their thinking (1Cor. 14: 20). He clearly states that tongues should not be prohibited (1Cor. 14: 40), while still emphatic that everything should be one in order and with the possibility of interpretation, and if that is not possible, to let the matter of tongues be an issue of private worship. The lessons to the Church in Corinth are still relevant today: avoid conceit, prefer love and prophesying (preaching) over other gifts. Our ministry as preachers ought to emphasize that, too. This will benefit the Church and present good testimony to outsiders.

The Call to Ethical Living

The call to ethical living in Paul is intertwined with his call to accept the salvation that can be obtained only through faith in Jesus. The early Church seems to have been under the impression that Jesus would come soon (Phlp. 4:6). This apocalyptic hope was well known and articulated by some preachers, probably the apostles themselves as well, leading some to believe the day of the lord had actually occurred (2Thes. 2:2). Meeks writes that:

Paul cites all these apocalyptic images in response to worries about members of the congregations who have died. The Thessalonian Christians fear that these people who have died prematurely have somehow lost the hope of sharing the benefits promised those who are waiting for God’s son from heaven.⁹

The first converts therefore sold their possessions, put the money in a common treasury and continued together in prayer, witnessing and breaking bread house to house. That kind of life could obviously not be sustained for long. Not only that, problems of immoral conduct and laziness cropped up. Paul exhorts them not to be conformed to the pattern of this world as we have seen above (Rom. 12:2), that they should not obey their flesh: “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desire of the flesh. Apparently he warns them without saying it explicitly here, that the desires of the flesh will accompany them the whole life in their spiritual journey. He therefore warns them: ‘Do not walk according to the flesh.’ Other instructions scattered in the epistles all point to ethical living: “Let the thief not no longer

9 Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 175.

steal, but work but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands....Let no evil talk come out of your mouths" (Eph. 4:28-9); "Flee from sexual immorality" (1Cor. 6:18). And other exhortations. The exhortation to moral living reminds the believer that he or she still lives in a word that is under control of demonic power, which include Satan, the god of this age.¹⁰ The Christian has died, and his or her life is hidden with Christ in God. Present living entails 'being given up to death on account of Jesus.'¹¹

In other words, the message of the gospel ought to remind the recipient, particularly the one who has already accepted it, that he or she no longer lives for him/herself. He or she is duty bound to live a life that is pure and blameless. His other major warning is on the ruling authorities. Christians were to obey ruling authorities, insofar as that did not extend to the authorities demanding being worshiped, a common practice in the Roman Empire, where Caesars claimed to be deities and demanded that they be worshiped. NT Wright sums this up very well when he states that:

We must recognize that the modern western separation of theology and society, religion and politics, would have made no sense either to Paul or to any of his contemporaries, whether Jewish, Greek or Roman. Israel believed that its God was the creator, ruler and judge of the whole world. The gods of the Greco-Roman world were woven into the fabric of social and civic life; the newest god in the pantheon, Caesar himself was a living example of the uniting of the divine and human spheres.¹²

In other words, the early urban Christians especially, would always find themselves as subjects of suspicion and even accusations of destabilizing the social, religious and political order, with their truth claims. As N.T Wright suggests, we in the modern era tend to take it for granted that we know well the situation of the first century. He illuminates that our presuppositions are incorrect,¹³ we are wrong when we project our contemporary situation onto the New Testament period. From N.T Paul's arguments, I agree with him that the NT setting is entirely different from ours. However the challenges we face are comparable though not similar, where for instance reaching out to people with the gospel can be met with stiff resistance for one reason or the other: forms of radical religion (for instance Islam and Christianity, both of which tend to have radical pockets here and there), eastern religions, repressive governments, an extremely permissive society and a liberal

approach to scriptures that at times borders on the absurd.¹⁴ The preacher ought to remain faithful to the text, even as newer theological knowledge illuminate us on the best way to exegete certain texts that have been obscure in the past. We should avoid the danger in which: "Scriptural theology has been pushed aside in many quarters by a theology which is guided by the needs of the Church or its traditions."¹⁵

What is a preacher or Christian to do in such a situation? I suggest here that the solution remains the same as during Paul's time: Pressing on with the message based on scriptural theology, being open to dialogue, respecting the culture or social setting in which we find ourselves in ministry, persevere and be willing to suffer for the gospel if need be. We may emulate Luther where he states that the Jesus and the saintly apostles had to die to protect gospel with their blood:

For that reason, the apostles and prophets had to die, and in our day there would be much more to say [against such people] because it is much worse now. But Christ and Saints Peter and Paul are forced to adorn all of this [teaching] with their holy names, with the result that no more ignominious name exists on earth than the holiest and exalted name of Jesus Christ.¹⁶

Preachers of the gospel should never deceive themselves into thinking that our era, with its democratic values and separation of Church and state, is far better than the first century or the time of the Reformation. Now as then, the gospel is likely to be resisted more often than not. It will be opposed and its ministers vilified and persecuted. That does not necessarily mean all or everywhere preachers will be stoned, put on the stakes or thrown to hungry lions. Soft forms of persecution may apply, including laws forbidding what pastors can or should say, even when what they say is perfectly in line with scriptures and they have done their best not to abuse or offend anyone. In other word, even today, we see parallels with the life of the first century.

The other contemporary challenge is the doomsday cults. These claim to preach the gospel but do not serve the cause of the gospel at all. Instead, they serve the cult leaders and expose the true gospel to ridicule. Just like the first day doomsday preachers, they stir much more apprehension than warranted by the gospel and epistles. Pastors should in the course of ministering warn the flock against them, and comfort those who fall prey to these movements but somehow escape their claws

10 Ibid., 184.

11 Ibid., 188.

12 N.T Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 60.

13 Ibid.

14 Here I do not mean that a theologian for instance, should not study the scriptures diligently or attempt scholarly critique of the text. Instead, mean that an approach to scriptures that question so much to the extent that scripture is scrapped into 'bare bones (like what happens in the 'Jesus Seminar' for instance), should be viewed with suspicion. Taken to its farthest extremes a critical outlook it leaves us with no basis of proclamation. I once encountered a professor of theology and participant in the Jesus seminars, who was also ministering a Church in the USA. This Professor wrote a group email during Christmas in 2011. I was one of the recipients of the mail. In the email, he stated that he did not preach the Christmas story that year because it is not true. Instead, he wrote in the email, he read to the congregation a story from one of Charles Dickens' books. To him, that was more meaningful than presenting them with 'the lie' about the virgin birth.

15 Ernst Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 62.

16 Martin Luther, "Treatise on Good Works," in *The annotated Luther: The Roots of Reform* ed. Timothy Wengert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2015), 302.

and manage to return into the congregations. We can follow the example of St. Paul with the Thessalonian Christians, warning them not to be carried away with false claims regarding the 'end of ages.' Pastors should never assume that people understand and therefore can take care of themselves or sort it out when it comes to distinguishing between genuine and false teachings. In developing countries like in my Tanzanian context, it becomes all too necessary to reach out to people in a way that helps to meet their needs (medical attention, support to start an economic activity, assisting in providing education and clean water). This becomes necessary because preachers of the false gospel always prey on people with promises of instant, miraculous prosperity. This enriches the preacher while it impoverishes the givers even further, on the basis of questionable hermeneutics:

Kenneth Hagin, widely considered to be the movement's father, says: 'What is the curse of the law? The only way to find out is to go back to the law. The expression 'the law' as found in the New Testament usually refers to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. As we go back to these books—or the law—we find that the curse, or punishment, for breaking God's law is threefold: poverty, sickness, and spiritual death.' The implication, according to Hagin, is that since we have been freed from the former, we have also been freed from the latter.¹⁷

It is easy for an untrained person to see logic as Kenneth Hagin sees it. It is the duty of the minister to point to the unity of scriptures and guide the flock accordingly. The contemporary minister should therefore focus on reminding the flock that God's creation is essentially good, but it is God's creation in need of God's salvation.¹⁸ That salvation, unlike what Hagin is trying to suggest, does not mean there will no longer be any form of suffering. In the last century we witnessed doomsday preachers like David Koresh and Jim Jones in the US, Kibwetere of Uganda and others, who predicted the end of the world. At times, signs of some calamities or political upheavals and wars tend to be a portent for these preachers. Even purely chronological turns like the turn of the century have been used by such preachers. An Adventist group in Tanzania predicted that the end of the world will occur on in the last days of December 2000, the beginning of the new millennium. They therefore sold their possessions, left their homes and headed to a forest away from the city of Dar es Salaam. When the end did not arrive, they returned to their normal lives, embarrassed of course. Another group from the same Church went to the Dar es Salaam international Airport (as it was called then), with the aim of traveling to the US to preach the gospel to the end of the world, because the world was coming to its end. They had neither passports nor tickets, but believed if they prayed long enough at the airport, a miracle will occur such that they will be permitted to board an aircraft to wherever

they wanted to go, without travel documents or air tickets. These examples serve to illustrate how important the call for ethical living is.

Summary

In this article I have attempted to answer the question: How should we use Paul as a resource for apostolic ministry in the 21st century? The second part of this article focused on how the message of salvation can be delivered using Paul as a resource. I argued that the message ought to still be the same on salvation in the name of Jesus. This should be undertaken without feeling ashamed that the message does not make sense. In part three I emphasized on the need for ethical living, including participating in the issue of everyday life with others, even non-Christians. In summary, the message of the epistles of Paul is still relevant for reaching out to people for Christ. We would not be doing service to the gospel if we hold the view that people can take care of their lives because we are in the age of knowledge and freedom. The conclusion therefore, is that Paul is still relevant as a resource for ministry for all people and all places. Context and respect of cultures and local norms is crucial, but we cannot afford to close an eye on the need to reach out to people with the same gospel with which Paul reached his first century contemporaries

References

- Badiou, Alain. *Saint Paul: the Foundations of Universalism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.
- Gaventa, Beverly Roberts. "Neither Heights nor Depths." *Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology: With and Beyond Louis Martyn*, edited by Joshua Davis and Douglas Harink, 183-99. Eugene: Cascade Books, 2012.
- Käsemann, Ernst. *Perspectives on Paul*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969.
- Luther, Martin. "Treatise on Good Works." In *The annotated Luther: The Roots of Reform*, edited by Timothy Wengert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2015), 257-368.
- Meeks, Wayne. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Mende, David Prasanna Kumar. "A Biblical Analysis of the Main Teachings of Prosperity Gospel, with Special Reference to the Preachers of Hyderabad, India." *Journal of Asian Evangelical Theology* 23, no. 1 (2019): 19-35.
- Roetzel, Calvin. "Paul the Apostle." In *The New Dictionary of the Bible Vol 4*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009.

17 David Prasanna Kumar Mende, "A Biblical Analysis of the Main Teachings of Prosperity Gospel, with Special Reference to the Preachers of Hyderabad, India," in *Journal of Asian Evangelical Theology* 23, no. 1 (2019): 22.

18 Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "Neither Heights Nor Depths," in *Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology: With and Beyond Louis Martyn* ed. Joshua Davis and Douglas Harink (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2012), 189.



INTERNATIONAL CHURCH MUSIC CONSULTATION AND THE 28th UEM WEEK CELEBRATION IN AFRICA

By Rev John Kabango

UEM Africa Region: Celebration of the UEM 28th anniversary-International Consultation on contextualization of classical church music with traditional music.

From 30th May to 5th June 2024, the UEM Africa Region, in cooperation with the UEM Division Global Programs / Program on International Church Music, held an international workshop on church music, hosted by the ELCT-ECD in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. ECD Pastors and Co-workers, led by Dean Rev Chediell Lwiza, represented Bishop Dr Gehaz Alex Malasusa who was on another ELCT duty. The host Dean expressed thanks to the UEM for always organising joint programs which are benefitting and building the members' capacity. The official opening was televised by ECD Upendo Television Network.

On behalf of UEM, the Chairman of the Africa Regional Board and Vice Moderator, Bishop Muthusi Jairos Letlhage, passed on the greetings of the UEM Moderator, Bishop Dr Keshomshahara Abednego and the UEM General Secretary, Rev Dr Andar Parlindungan. He highly appreciated the 5-day intensive interaction session on the theme of Church Music. "This workshop is going to bring new insights in practicing theology, planning liturgies and composing Church Music.

In UEM Africa Region, members made it a tradition to celebrate the UEM anniversary the first week of June every year. With such important theme of Church Music, it is a great opportunity to remember that UEM is celebrating 28 years as an International Communion of 39 members: 17 in Asia, 7 in Germany and 15 in Africa", said the UEM Vice Moderator.

Participants of the consultation are committed Church Musicians supported by UEM regions-Asia, Germany and Africa in majority. Musicians from UEM members met to learn together how Church Music is going on and what areas need improvements. The objectives to be achieved:

- To raise awareness on the significance and value of church music;
- To encourage UEM members to use music for holistic mission and witness the gospel of Jesus Christ;
- To acknowledge church musicians and to pay adequate attention to their music ministry in the church;
- To employ trained musicians and to compensate them appropriately;
- To provide opportunities for church



members to benefit from music industry, provide avenues for music business and entrepreneurship;

- To provide grants for publication of music books and other music materials and resources.

The main topics were:

- Global Trends on Liturgy & Music;
- Church music goes Pop-Challenges and chances for German Churches;
- Music in the ELCT: Yesterday, today and tomorrow;
- Challenges for today's education of musicians;
- Music traditions in the Philippines and today's challenges for the church; Traditional and popular music in church in Indonesia;
- Traditional music in the today's music scene in Tanzania.

Each participant had an opportunity to present his/her own church music context. "In implementing the UEM holistic mission, Music and Theology have to go together if we aim to positively change people and ensure positive sus-

tainable transformation. UEM members have to keep the Christian faith that is pleasing God, promoting a visible church growth and using contemporary native art forms to interpret and witness the Gospel", said the UEM Executive Secretary for the Africa Region, Rev. Dr John Wesley Kabango.

The 28th UEM celebration involved a concert/festival of 12 ECD choirs and was held on 2 June 2024 at Boko Congregation. The festival was attended by all participants of the music consultation conference, the International Master of Arts Diaconic Management (IMADM) students, pastors from Iringa Diocese and ECD members.

"It is a special celebration of the UEM week, where we are honoured to have UEM international participants, interacting on the theme: Contextualization of classical church music with traditional music. UEM leaders and Co-workers at all levels are invited to implement the results of this workshop in practicing theology, planning liturgies and composing Church Music", said the UEM Vice Moderator, Bishop Mothusi Jairos Letlhage.

Having learned together how church Music is going on and what are the areas of improvements and having been sensitized by the respective presenters, participants agreed that it is high time to review the need of church music



today and tomorrow and adapt our liturgies accordingly.

For these reasons, some collective actions need to be taken, including the following:

1. On music in UEM member churches:

- To encourage UEM members to regularly review their liturgies and music programs in terms of embracing current music cultures (contemporary Christian music);
- To encourage bonding through networking and enhance partnership among UEM members;
- To organize music consultations yearly and include international concerts.

2. On capacity building

I. For church Musicians:

- To facilitate music programs, trainings, and seminars;
- To provide opportunities for the training of trainers in church music;
- To encourage non-formally trained musicians to acquire basic music education;

- To exchange church music trainers in all directions;

- To consolidate and improve existing programs of training institutions for church musicians and to invite cooperation among institutions;

- To provide scholarships for church musicians.

II. For theologians:

- To require theological schools to offer basic music courses for pastors, evangelists and other church co-workers;
- To recommended 'on-the-job training' (refresher courses) in music for church leaders, pastors and evangelists.

In conclusion, let us read Zephaniah 3:17, which illustrates that God sung the song. **"The LORD your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing."** In a view of this, we can therefore hold that the essence of church music is God Himself for His Glory. At its core, church music plays a significant role in enhancing worship and praise.

Being Christian means being in **UNITY**

By Rev Kadiva

Africans live under the influence of communion and they communicate through the narratives and proverbs. They believe that unity is a key attribute of a community living in harmony. Unity is also a pillar of development apart from equality and freedom. Africans believe in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity. In Tanzania we have a famous Swahili proverb about unity which reads “*Umoja ni nguvu utengano ni udhaifu.*” This Swahili proverb meaning **unity is strength, division is weakness**. It is used by leaders to unify people as well as family members or colleagues when in agreement.

One of the goals of this article is to bring together churches and shape a common witness to the Gospel. I realize how it has been difficult for the churches to come together for the common witnessing of the Gospel. One would also assume that if believers confess the same faith and share a common understanding of the sacraments, they would be committed also to a structured fellowship together. On the contrary,” one inherent problem on common witness of the Gospel is the tendency to work in suspicion and contempt. Currently churches and ministries are under pressure working hard to promote itself. There is more concern about what one should do than what Christ has done. Propagating the Gospel seems like a competitive business venture. The prayer of Jesus Christ in John 17: 20-26 of building a united community with common doctrine of God’s love and saving action towards all people has been torn asunder following a paradigm shift from church unity to individualism.

The book *In Search of Christian Unity*, edited by Joseph A. Burgess, discusses extensively the whole problem of church fellowship and the importance of doctrinal consensus. Burgess insists the church be aware with regard to its internal coherence and communal life in the mission of God. One should note that willingness to recognize and appreciate the other is essential for a common witness of the Gospel. Failure in this becomes a stumbling block for effective Christian mission.

The unity this article seeks is the openness of all ministers to stand and work together in the mission of God. It is about mutual recognition of both groups of ministers who are in the same church so that they can affirm the ministries of both as true ministries of the one church of Christ. Unity leads to recognize each other as co-workers in God’s mission which is not limited to certain group of people. It is the unity which recognizes the presence of the Holy Spirit and the variety of spiritual gifts as a blessing and

strength for the church. It is unity that focuses the believers into the present and the future of the Kingdom of God that will exist eschatologically. Therefore, common witness of the Gospel should not be reduced to individual or institutional structure of the church, but God’s will. Hans Kung articulates that in all churches there is a common Christian basis which is perhaps more important than everything that divides them. He suggests that being Christian means being in unity. But again, in many contexts there are more intense efforts to maintain and observe the heritage/traditions of the church than adapting new challenges which demand a common Christian basis for witnessing the Gospel.

Unity requires attitude of scriptural reading together with the purpose of clarifying overarching themes for common witness of the Gospel. It involves mutual recognition of ministries to allow for communion. For the sake of this article, it is where all churches ministers freely communicate, with full respect, and participate in the mission of God.

Michael Root writes in the American Lutheran Conference’s 1952 United Testimony on Faith and Life that: “Christian’s faith seeks fellowship, that is, the discovery and the practice of this spiritual fellowship with other Christians. It laments isolation; it yearns for communion. Christian faith seeks fellowship in prayer, in corporate worship, in Communion, in doing the Lord’s work, even in suffering for the faith.” Miroslav Volf says that all of us are poor Christians if we live divided, and that no ecclesiology can proceed in self-satisfied isolation.

The stumbling block of unity is rigid denominationalism and failure to differentiate and incorporate various gifts in the church. Christianity within rapidly changing societies demands diversification and flexibility. Participating in God’s mission is an imperative for all Christians, not only for particular individuals or specialized groups. Jesus came to bring unity among his believers (John 10:10). He prayed “that they all may be one... so that the world may believe” (John 17:21). Authentic common witness is for the building up of the church (Ephesians 4:12), rather than for giving prominence to one’s position over against that of others.

It is important to note that every experience of believer’s unity in our contexts is received as a witness of the Gospel. The church is gathered by the gospel, the collegiality of God’s ministers (pastors and charismatic ministers) is for the sake of the unity of the Gospel. Therefore, participation of believers in confessing the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior must be done in unity for the glory of God.

THE UEM AFRICA REGION HOLDS CHURCH TREASURERS AND AMBASSADORS WORKSHOP

By Leah Enock



From the 7th June to 11th June 2024, the UEM Africa Region, in cooperation with the UEM Finance and Administration Division, held an international workshop that called together Treasurers and Ambassadors from UEM member churches of Africa. It was hosted by the ELCT-ECD in Zanzibar, Tanzania. The goal of the gathering was to reflect on good stewardship of church resources in order to find strategies that promote financial sustainability and management and the United Action.

The workshop was attended by 37 participants from all UEM African member churches namely ELCT-ECD, CBCA, ELCT-KAD, CADELU, ELCT-NED, ECC, EPR, ELCT-NWD, EAR, URCSA, RCSA, ELCRN, ELCB, EEC and CDCC, facilitators and UEM officials.

The official opening of the workshop started by a welcome note from Mr. Goodluck Nkini, the General Secretary of ELCT-ECD, on behalf of the ELCT Presiding Bishop and Bishop of ELCT-ECD Dr Alex Gehaz Malasusa. He stressed the importance of financial management for church sustainability. Thereafter, the Vice-Moderator and Chairman of the UEM Africa Regional Board, Bishop Mothusi Jairos Letlhage, took the floor and brought greetings on behalf of UEM leadership.

The objective of this workshop was to:

- Have a clear governance structure and approved operational budget;

- Build transparency, sustainability, consistency, ethical decision making, and complexity of financial reporting;
- Ensure that internal and external audits are conducted in respective UEM member churches;
- Improve participants' expertise and their skills to produce predictable incomes versus expenses.
- Build live stewardship of all people responsible for resource mobilization;
- Build culture on investing in community impactful projects.
- Less prioritization of the United Action in parishes during collection;
- There is a lack of commitment and ownership;
- Resources are limited;
- People do not understand that member churches belong to the UEM family. So, member churches should not consider the UEM as a partner;
- There is a lack of qualified accountants and project officers.

The following topics were covered during the workshop:

- UEM Concept for fundraising and United Action strategies facilitated by - Rev Dr John Kabango.
- Financial Management and Budgetary system used at the UEM, facilitated by Mr Timo .
- Challenges of Financial Management, Accountability and Reporting in Religious Organizations (UEM Churches)-facilitated by CPA Mrs. Anna Mzinga.
- The best practices for Financial Management of Faith-Based Organizations (Auditing and Submission of Financial Returns in religious organizations) - facilitated by NCCL Auditor CPA. Anna Baliyima.
- Resource Mobilization Strategies for the church and its institutions by -Dr. Ibrahim Mwangalaba. (Former leader of Maendeleo bank).
- Project Development and Management, by: Reuben Inganji/UEM Project Officer.
- Session for working and presenting group works: Resolutions and recommendations: Final Church Recommendations and Commitments: Tentative Action Plan- by All Participants.

From the above topics, it was noted that financial accountability and internal controls are some of the themes that dominate discussions in the media around the world. The financial sustainability of the churches (accountability and transparency) is also a matter of utmost urgency.

Participants discussed on different questions to assess the ownership and strategies that may be put in place for being successful during the United Action collection. It has been observed that:

- Information about the United Action is not well communicated;

To bridge the gaps observed, the following recommendations were formulated by all participants:

- To raise awareness on UEM United Action, using brochures/or flyers written in local languages.
- UEM will provide the soft copy of flyers, brochures, and other necessary documents to be translated in local languages that every church member can understand.
- Every UEM church member can organize awareness campaign in their context.
- To strengthen and implement the UEM week to be monitored by the UEM Africa Region.
- The UEM member churches should integrate the UEM week in their annual action plan.
- To improve the understandability of UEM through social media (Web, Facebook, etc.)
- The member churches should define clearly specific terms of reference for the work for UEM ambassadors.
- UEM should facilitate the ambassadors to have the local resources mobilization skills.
- To build capacity of UEM treasurers in professional accounting courses.
- UEM can advise church leaders to retain staff and set strategies to avoid employee's turnover.
- UEM can support church in diversification of investment in churches.

We believe that, after the workshop, treasurers and church ambassadors will continue to comply with legal financial systems of their respective countries, comply with the international financial standard systems, to write good projects, to be good stewards, to organize fundraising for the sustainability of their churches.

"Honor the Lord with your possessions and with the first fruit of all your increase: So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine." (Proverbs 3: 9-10).

Africa Regional Board meeting

By Leah Enock



With regard to the work of UEM governing boards, from 14 to 18 June 2024, the UEM African Regional Board (ARB) met at the ELCT-Karagwe Diocese in Karagwe district / Tanzania. The ARB delegates arrived in Karagwe via Bukoba around 17:00 and were welcomed by the Bishop Dr Benson Kalikawe Bagonza, some pastors, choirs and the Brass Band. A short moment of prayer and worship was organized in the meeting hall.

Aligning with the UEM legal texts, the purpose of the ARB meeting was to receive and evaluate the work done in the African Region.

The chairman of ARB, Bishop Mothusi Letlhage, officiated the meeting and invited the host church for the presentation of the Karagwe Diocese. It allowed participants to know the history of the Karagwe Diocese and the progress of the UEM work in their area of operation.

The Board receives reports from the UEM Africa Department and the regional office about the plans implemented: joint programs, the progress of the United Action as well as the project support to all members. The United Action

report was also presented and discussed as a way of showing member churches how they can achieve the goals related to this joint action. Information about the preparation of the UEM General Assembly was shared and reminded that the Africa Region is the host of the General Assembly in September 2025.

Afterwards, ARB members exchanged information on the situation of their respective churches. As a practical example, the Board had the opportunity to visit projects sponsored by UEM within ELCT-KAD. It was a very good experience to witness how a UEM member church helps the church members in different projects for the sustainability of parishes.

ARB members traveled back to Bukoba for the presentation of the North West Diocese programmes and the visit of selected NWD projects such as Igabiro Training Institute and Ndolage Hospital.

Bishop Motusi closed the ARB assizes by thanking the Karagwe Diocese and the North West Diocese for the hospitality and organization of the ARB meeting.

Workshop on Agriculture and Leadership for URCSA women

By Christine Vuyokazi





58 Women from UEM member church United Reformed Church in South Africa gathered from 23 to 25 February 2024 in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, for a workshop on Agriculture and leadership. They come from URCSA's Cape Regional Synod. The workshop followed the objective of empowering women with leadership skills and sustainability skills so that they can be leaders who take care of both the spiritual and physical wellbeing of the women, congregations, and the entire community.

UEM Council member Vuyokazi Christine Vingi from the URCSA Christian Women's Ministries has organized the workshop. She says: "We were honored to have the Rev Braam Hanekom with Steven Bernard and Arthur from the Garden of Life, leading a workshop session for us. Here the women went to the garden to get their hands dirty and start a garden in one of our congregations, URCSA Motherwell."

In the workshop supported by the United Evangelical Mission and Cape Empowerment Trust, the women learned skills and knowledge about gardening and using the products to sustain themselves and their families.

We are so grateful to UEM and Cape Empowerment Trust for the funding to make this day a reality says Christine Vingi.

Induction of the Dean in ELCB/Evangelical Lutheran church of Botswana

By Dean Onalenna



On the 12 May 2024, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Botswana inducted Dean Onalenna Hambira of the Western Circuit.

Dean Hambira was elected for the first time as Dean in 2018, a position which she held for six years and was re-elected again into office in November 2023 for the second time.

She is the first female Dean of the Western District/Circuit.

The occasion was officiated by the Bishop of the ELCB RT Rev Bishop Mothusi Letlhage.

Dean Hambira is also a UEM scholarship holder who got her Bachelor from the Kgolagano College recently on 26 April 2024.



VEM
United Evangelical Mission
Communion of Churches
in three Continents

UNITED IN MISSION



Your donation by bank transfer:
UEM Africa
CRDB BANK PLC
Branch: 3319
Account : 0250299692300
Swift code: CORUTZTZ
Thank you and be blessed!



UEM AFRICA PAGE

www.vemission.org