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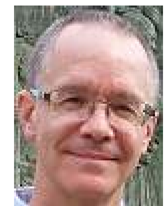

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Editorial

The Beauty of Particularity

J. Nelson Jennings

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Jesus of Nazareth. All that the Shunammite woman in Elisha's day faced: the birth and death of her son, their seven-year sojourn with the Philistines, the restoration of their land and wealth (2 Kings 4 & 8). Those "men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus" (Acts 11:20). The myriad recipients of the gospel of Jesus Christ across the generations, shared by witnesses empowered by the Holy Spirit—just as Jesus predicted (Acts 1:8). All these and countless other people, situations, encounters, and events were unique in their particularity. They have also shared describable traits with other people, situations, encounters, and events, but each particular person and episode within the outworking of God's mission has carried its own fascinating characteristics worthy of marvel, interest, and discerning examination.

This July issue offers several enlightening analyses of numerous particular situations, contexts, and challenges in worldwide Christian missions today. The need for empathetic listening, especially to diaspora peoples, is examined and encouraged by Joey Peyton. Jim Harries breaks down a complex political, legal, interpersonal, cross-cultural, ethical, and religious situation involving attempts to safeguard against vulnerable people suffering abuse from international aid workers. The proliferation of miracles and claims of miracles among Pentecostal churches in the Nigerian city of Owerri is carefully dissected by Ifeanyi Okeke. The variety among mission thinkers in describing movement catalysts is reported and analyzed by Gene Daniels and Emanuel Prinz. This issue's two book reviews convey important studies of Christ-ward movements and of the Ugandan Anglican Apolo Kivebulaya. Each of these studies considers particular people and situations.

Focusing here on people's unique particularity and on how God deals with his world does not stem from a philosophical preference for nominalism over realism or idealism. Nor does the stress here on "the beauty of particularity" unwittingly arise from an underlying individualism that under-appreciates the corporate people of God. Rather, God—not an abstract "unmoved mover" or some kind of "ultimate reality" but the world's Creator, Judge, and Redeemer—has dealt personally with all the creatures with which he has populated his created universe. He "made . . . the sun to rule over the day [and] the moon and stars to rule over the night" (Psalm 136:7-9). "'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: . . . "It is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth, with the men and animals that are on the earth, and I give it to whomever it seems right to me"'" (Jeremiah 27:5). "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (II Peter 3:9). The story of redemption features the lead Actor and a multitude of particular characters playing unique roles.

The particular authors of this issue's articles, reviews, and books reviewed have researched and reported on an intriguing array of settings, communities, ministries, and people. Each situation, person, and episode conveyed throughout this issue is full of special needs, actions, consequences, interpretations, questions, and characteristics worthy of careful attention, prayerful consideration,

and further study. Wherever you and those whom you serve might be on your particular journeys, and no matter the unique settings in which you live, may you find in this issue's studies helpful lessons, insights, and examples—and a renewed appreciation for "the beauty of particularity."

The Role of Listening in Intercultural Settings: The Empathetic Act of Listening Gives Voice to Marginalized People Groups

Joey R. Peyton

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Abstract

The fast-paced nature of a world on the move creates a community that rarely listens to those they know well and never to those they don't know or understand. This failure to listen is especially detrimental when the listeners should be missionaries, aid workers, counselors, and/or pastors who are reaching out to those migrating into their area. This article will outline the role of listening within such encounters, highlight listening's role across cultural lines, warn of the potential downfalls of not listening, and make suggestions for improving one's listening skills in intercultural settings.

Key Words: active empathetic listening (AEL), aid worker, care, counseling, diaspora, immigration, intercultural encounters, listening, migration, pastoral care

Introduction

At the foundation of pastoral care and counseling is the art and act of *active empathetic listening*. With global digital availability that influences/distracts the lives of us all, no matter how remote one may be, active empathetic listening becomes increasingly rare with the accessibility and overstimulation of digital media/entertainment. After defining and establishing active empathetic listening as a foundational tool in the ministry of global Christianity, this article highlights the important role of active empathetic listening in intercultural settings, the benefits towards holistic outcomes (including care, counseling, relationships, and ministries), and the potentially unfortunate outcomes when listening is circumvented, assumptions are made, and cultural stereotypes are applied. Ultimately, because we are a world with cultures constantly on the move, this article offers suggestions for improving active empathetic listening in intercultural settings.

Active Empathetic Listening (AEL)

> Many people are looking for an ear that will listen. They do not find it among Christians, because Christians are talking when they should be listening. He [or she] who no longer listens to his [or her] brother [or sister] will soon no longer be listening to God either. One who cannot listen long and patiently will presently be talking beside the point and never really be speaking to others, albeit he [or she] be not conscious of it (Bonhoeffer 1954, 97-98).

Definitions of simple listening vary greatly among researchers; however, all definitions tend to include elements of cognitional (ability), behavioral (willingness), and relational (understanding) processes (Bletscher & Lee 2021, 162). One must be able physically and mentally to listen, be willing to take the time and make the effort, and have the capacity to understand both what is said in word and behavior. It is important to note that the activity being described here is more than just simple listening. Rather, in cases of ministering to voiceless people groups and across cultural/ethical lines, definitions of the adjectives *active* and *empathetic* must join with the above mechanical and cognitive processes of simple listening.

Active listening enhances the relational process described in simple listening, whereby the listener does more than just hear what is being said and establishes relationships with those to whom she/he would listen. Active listening considers the emotional and the relational aspects of the speaker when responding. During this process, the active listener "reflects back her or his 'impression of the expression of the sender' by paraphrasing or interpreting what the talker is communicating" (162). Interpersonal connections and relationships made while actively listening assist caregivers to discover commonalities, further develop interpersonal connections, and postulate potential outcomes.

Empathetic listening then becomes the "cornerstone of building strong interpersonal relationships by understanding and respecting the other(s) involved. One must not only know how to listen to others' experiences, ideas, and thoughts, but also suspend their own judgments, prejudices, or preoccupations of themselves in the process." When listening, "Active Empathetic Listening is an active and emotional process that involves both parties—the speaker and the listener—in the course of their interactions with sharing information" (162-163). Active empathetic listening invites speakers "to expand on their feelings or experience" without the listener pursuing their own primary interests, even though it creates "feelings too painful to trust to words" and is shown in body language, voice tones, and/or the silences between words (Clinebell & McKeever 2011, 71).

The Role of AEL

> When I told my story you responded, train me well in your deep wisdom. Help me understand these things inside and out so I can ponder your miracle-wonders. My sad life's dilapidated, a falling-down barn, build me up again by your Word. Barricade the road that goes nowhere; grace me with your clear revelation (Ps. 119:26-29, MSG).

The Old Testament presents God in a role that includes his willingness to hear the voice of his creation and the unspoken doubts and words of the heart and mind. As *El Roi* (the God who hears), he is the God who heard the story of the Fall from Adam and Eve in the Garden (Gen. 3:10-13), he is the God who heard the wails of Hagar and Ishmael dying in the desert (21:16-19), and he is the God who heard the cry of the Hebrews enslaved in Egypt (Exodus 2:23-25). In short, Yahweh was the God who hears and cares about humanity.

Likewise, the New Testament presents Jesus as this same God who came into this fallen world hearing, caring, and restoring humanity. Jesus heard blind Bartimaeus when he cried out, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Mark 10:47). He heard the adoration of the woman when she broke the box of alabaster (Luke 7:37). He heard the cry of the accusers and the resigned whimper of the woman when he knelt to write in the dirt (John 8:11). Over the roar of the crowd, he heard Zacchaeus up in a tree (Luke 19:1-4) and he heard the heartbeat of the woman who reached out to touch the hem of His garment (Luke 23:43). This Jesus was and is *El Roi,* the God who hears and compels the emulation of this listening behavior by those who are called; "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15), and "Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:37).

As a people called to emulate the God who hears, aid workers, missionaries, health workers, caregivers, and pastors step into that role as God's active empathetic listener in the community in which they live. Communities around the world are evolving daily with the massive migration of human cultures due to economics, war, politics, persecution, and more. This listening role requires

one to respectfully focus on the speaker cognitively, behaviorally, and relationally while reflecting a full range of the perceived emotional and relational aspects to the other(s) involved in the event. There are three basic steps in the listening dance, be it performed as missionary, aid worker, pastor, counselor, and/or friend. First, the listener hears the story (sometimes in all its shocking details). Second, the listener ensures honesty and depth by reframing and/or asking the speaker tough clarifying questions to discover the breadth of the story. As well, while suspending judgement in the moment, the listener affirms the reality of the events, emotions, and behaviors of the story.

This process of "stepping respectfully and compassionately into another's narrative" begins when a listener enter the speaker's "story-making with a sense of wonder, awe, and humility, opening himself up to the mystery of life narratives" (Doehring 2015, xvi-xvii). Active empathetic listeners enter others' pain or joy by making emotional and spiritual connections through their stories, demonstrating kindness, empathy, and compassion by being present with them emotionally, spiritually, and physically. The job of active empathetic listening occurs when one holds up a mirror so the speaker can see how his or her own story mingles with God's story and how their combined story contains inherent beauty, power, and redemption. When one sees this beauty, a sense of homecoming—a sense of belonging—greater than this temporary life is created (O'Donohue 2005, 2). This sense of belonging is often absent in a world where millions of people and thousands of people groups are migrating to places they don't want to go, among cultures they don't understand, with help that doesn't make sense to them, and among people that don't want them in their backyard.

The Role of AEL in Intercultural Settings

> Everyone tells stories—children, youth, and adults of all ages. Hidden inside those stories, like diamonds in the rough, are the deep truths of the unconscious. Story telling is a form of self-disclosure. You cannot avoid telling your story. You can only try to make it abstract, in an attempt to hide the deeper struggles you are experiencing (Savage 1997, 77).

From pastoral care and counseling to missionary work, listening lies at the heart of all that is ministry. Listening is the act of receiving and understanding "what another human person has to say. Listening, unlike other forms of silence though, requires that the listener be open and active, not asleep or dead. The true listener is quiet and yet sensitive, open, receptive and alive to the one listened to" (Lartey 2003, Loc. 916-918). The important points in intercultural settings are the same as in all listening events: the imperative of the speaker being fully understood and the opportunity for both speaker and listener to fully be their real selves.

Listening that occurs within a familiar setting, among familiar faces, a familiar culture, and a familiar language creates a potentially sacred space that can bring succor, comfort, and peace in an otherwise chaotic and strange world. However, listening that occurs within an unfamiliar setting, among unfamiliar faces, an unfamiliar culture, and/or in an unfamiliar language creates the potential for chaos, ignorance, misunderstanding, stereotyping, profiling, and outright dismissal. Often, even in the familiar, what a caregiver sees is frequently not what is, and what the care seeker says is usually not the problem. When this dynamic is compounded by the unfamiliar across cultural lines, the potential for a negative outcome is exponentially greater.

Given a chance, sharing stories across culture opens a new world of enlightenment for both the listener and the speaker. Listening explains how the unfamiliar makes sense of life in general and events specifically, it demonstrates how one digs through the minutia that bombard life through

strange media, news, radio, and television, and it clarifies how one understands an overwhelming, complex, and unexperienced world (Scheib 2016, 1-5). An active empathetic listener builds mutual trust between both parties; assists the care seeker in discovering meaning in the crucible of suffering, joy, and the upheaval of their formally ordinary life; and assists with the convolutions of theological meaning that emerges from intercultural stories that spawn from historical, biblical, and global theologies (Doehring 2015, xv).

Active empathetic listening enables "listeners to enter into the real-life, human experiences of people who struggle to recover their humanity" while migrating in a strange new world/situation. Such deep listening guards "against the overgeneralization that is a temptation of culturalists. It permits stereotypes to be challenged by the concrete experiences of living people—a crucial task in an intercultural approach" (Lartey 2003, Loc. 1343-1345). While little else can be certain in the news, the certainty of misunderstandings permeates social media, border disputes, immigration thinktanks, and government bureaucracy. This author's prayer is that Christians would appear in the cross-cultural chaos as a people that realize "that listening can be a greater service than speaking. Many people are looking for an ear that will listen." Let it not be said that "they do not find it among Christians, because these Christians [were] talking when they should be listening..." (Loc. 922-923).

The Benefits of AEL in Intercultural Settings

With the increase in migration both global and domestic, ministries must listen as the stranger, from the other side of the world, shares their pre-migration, migration, and post-migration stories from one culture to another. When the voices of the silent are allowed to speak, opportunities arise for the still, small voice of the Spirit/Word to demonstrate, in concrete ways that are palatable and understandable, how their similar story combines with God's grand biblical narrative of love for the world (Burfield 1995, 151). "The purpose of gaining voice [telling one's story] is not to drown out those other voices in the community, but to enable all to be co-authors and co-creators with each other and with God" (Gorsuch 1999, 92). Nothing will draw one closer to God, to their new community, to healing, and to God's beauty than when his/her story is received into a relationship with that same story-telling God as part of his on-going creation.

For many recent arrivals, the very act of listening by a missionary, pastor, and/or aid-worker creates a warm awareness of being heard, seen, and valued in an often strange and unwelcoming world. In this researcher's experience (especially in this postmodern generation), many newcomers, if not most, are not necessarily looking for specific answers and/or solutions to their complex problems. Instead, they are seeking a safe place of welcome, a change from the ordinary struggles that persist every day, a place to be fully themselves, and a place to be heard/seen away from the mundane, and sometimes hopeless, existence of everyday life.

For those who are residents, listening to the pain and the joy of the *other* in their midst allows the voices of the unheard to speak and may never happen unless the caregiver intentionally make space for it. The culturally different, the mentally challenged, the disabled, the feeble, and the very old/young lose all sense of self-value until a listener takes time to be present with them in their loneliness. Often the inherent 'myths' and 'stereotypes' assumed about the traditions and culture of the *other* remain unrecognized in the silenced voices/stories of disenfranchised people whose culture and history is unknown. Finally, the 'hopelessly' broken can find hope in joining their voices to the story of the unfathomable mercy of God and the sacrifice of His Son on the Cross in payment for one's sin.

If the caregiver makes no effort to listen to the stories of the *other* or to make a space for them to share the stories of the world that is changing around them, the relationship remains unfamiliar, unpalatable, ineffective, and unsustainable. To break this chain of events (cause/unheard—effect/outsider), one must "listen deeply to [the other] who has been deprived of voice or authority, believing whatever she says and allowing her to name and define the problems she experiences, creates a novelty that in itself empowers and strengthens" (Neuger 2001, 88). This ability, in part, to tell the story that names the pain, the fear, the joy, and whatever the care seeker wishes to name in effect empowers, strengthens, and makes new relationship/community real and possible (Clinebell & McKeever 2011, 100).

Quite simply, one can only begin to understand the *other* after listening to his/her story in the illuminating light and power of God's own story. Only when we who are caregivers intentionally take the time to better understand the *other*—especially when the *other* is culturally different, speaks a different language, and previously lived in places we never heard of—through listening and reflecting on their joint stories in the light of God's story will we create the community intended by Jesus. Mutual transparency, through *active empathetic listening*, can bridge the gulf across intercultural lines (Lartey 2013, 110-112), provide an ability to see each other clearer, and enable a fuller understanding of the issues at hand.

The Absence of AEL in Intercultural Settings

"The pastoral healer listens deeply to the sighs and groans of humans in distress. The healer listens" (Lartey 2003, Loc. 651) when communicating across cultural lines; also, one is not able to fully understand "without struggling with the cultural differences within and surrounding what is said" (Justes 2010, Loc. 117). Emma Justes, in her seminal work on listening, postulates, "The problem with listening is that it is so easy not to do" (Loc. 99). Doing the job of listening effectively will take more than education, practice, or instruction. All of these are beneficial and should be taken advantage of, but dependence upon them alone will not produce the results desired. Listeners must struggle with the arduous task of reflecting honestly: "Have I heard correctly? Am I listening well? Did I hear what was important? Will my response be clearly understandable?" (Justes 2006, 72). The more one grapples with being a good listener, the more one realizes that it will take the active role of the Holy Spirit to fully listen, fully engage, and fully welcome the global community into one's local community.

Another troubling area, not initially pursued in my recently completed dissertation (Peyton 2022) but confirmed when a recurring theme manifested itself, was expressed specifically in nine out of eleven interviews of forcefully displaced immigrants about the absence of being listened to by pastoral caregivers. This absence of listening is troubling, especially when it is compounded by seven separate examples that also expressed a strong *desire* for someone to listen to them. Specifically poignant were these words: "This is the first time I have been interviewed [since being displaced for six years] …this thing is really good because I get to share my experiences… this is a really good experience for me" (221) or, in other words: This is the first time someone listened to me! Another remarked that this was the first time anybody cared enough to listen to her story. These comments should remind everyone "that good listening skills can indeed be taught and learned, but not in a one-off session. It requires repetition and consistency. It also needs to be modelled by [pastoral leadership]. It needs to be embedded and integrated into training" (Bloom 2014, 23).

Further, the mass, forced migration of people groups in geographically troubled areas has contributed immensely to the problems of globalism and is apropos to this article. The 281 million people that make up today's worldwide diaspora (World Migration Report 2022), can overwhelm the abilities of caregivers and leave no time for listening or researching newcomers' cultural and ethnic norms and/or expectations. Consequently, most caregivers' approach to intercultural pastoral care reflects their own tradition, history, and contextual experiences and is "relevant [only] to those whose religious, educational, and professional context are similar to theirs" (Doehring 2015, xxvii). There remains a temptation in all caregivers to presume the needs of others, which becomes even more tempting the greater the gap is in one's understanding. Often, when caregivers do not understand others they activate their own elitist presuppositions. Such professional arrogance assumes one knows the need, the emphasis, the solution, and/or care needed.

Summaries, Lessons Learned, and Suggested Remedies

> 'First time… [anybody] cared… to listen,' 'This is the first time I have been interviewed [since being forced to leave my country],' '…this thing is really good because I get to share my experiences,' 'this is a really good experience for me,' and 'Thank you for coming and listening to us… it desperately helps' (Peyton 2022, 220-222).

Active empathetic listeners allow the often-silent *other* to have a voice while negotiating life among the hitherto unknown and overwhelming impulses of the dominate culture. Only by listening in relationship can one learn the contrasting cultural differences that exist across immigration lines, across gender ideologies, across economic brackets, across political positions, and across age disparities. Intentional active empathetic listening, set in a desire to know and be known, brings a space of understanding to any relationship. Hearing the stories that influence others as they assimilate in the dominant culture allows for multi-directional interpretation and collaboration with the God who created us all. The inclusion of participatory collusion between the speaker and the listener creates mutual transparency when the caregiver and the care seeker bridge the gulf across all cultural lines.

"One of the major obstacles to listening is talking" (Lartey 2003, Loc. 918). Christians must pause their talking, their singing, and even their preaching to give voice (listening) to the voiceless. "If there's anything worth calling theology, it is listening to people's stories—listening to them and honoring and cherishing them, and asking them to become even more brightly beautiful than they already are" (Neuger 2001, 71). Nothing draws others closer to God, to their 'new' family, to healing, and to God's beauty than when one joins his/her story as a co-creator with that same storytelling Creator. One must enable the voices of the other to sound clearly in a setting where they are often excluded from the altar and community of God based on linguistic, financial, and logistical grounds (Brundsdon 2017, 112-114).

Active empathetic listening to the pain of the other "is not only difficult to do well, but it can be uncomfortable when done well" (Justes 2006, 89). Further, "…people's lives are unexamined because no one is listening to them" (Savage 1996, 33). Listening may be uncomfortable or absent because in many cases the other pours out horrendous stories of fear, anger, frustration, desperation, loneliness, violence, abuse, and so much more. However, Christians are called to emulate Christ—the *El Roi* (the God who listens)—and must pursue listening through the cycle of education, praxis, reflection, reeducation, further praxis, further reflection, and further reeducation. The more this cycle is repeated, the better the listener will become.

Without the ability to *actively listen emphatically*, even with the least of one's community, most pastoral efforts remain worthless. Consequently, the recommendation for training, practicing, and reflecting on one's listening skills provides a hallowed place that welcomes the *other*, works to bring peace, and restores the confused, displaced, and broken world. In this holy space Jesus becomes the guest when we listen, extending love and hospitality to the least of these.

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Preventing Abuses in the International Aid Sector: A Global Effort, and a British-based Case Study

Jim Harries

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Abstract

Embarrassing international revelations of aid workers' sexual involvement with populations they serve have contributed to major efforts at eradicating sexual and other abuses of vulnerable people in international work. With buy-in from diverse governments, the United Nations and the World Health Organization have led an endeavour at countering abuses globally, especially among those in receipt of various forms of international aid. This article provides an overall introduction to this effort, adds a case study of how the British government sees itself as taking a lead, and concludes with ways in which this endeavour impacts Christian mission work by British citizens.

Key Words: Africa, child protection, international aid, mission, safeguarding

Introduction

Embarrassing international revelations of aid workers' sexual involvement with populations they serve have contributed to an instigation of major efforts at eradicating sexual and other abuses of vulnerable people in international work. With buy-in from diverse governments, the United Nations (UN), especially the World Health Organization (WHO), have led an endeavour at countering abuses globally (World Health Organization, 2023). The focus tends to be on abuses of girls and women but also vulnerable people in general, especially those in receipt of various forms of international aid. After explaining my personal concerns, I give an overview of this effort up to the present (2023). A detailed case study of particular ways the British government sees itself as taking a lead draws heavily on recent literature regarding safeguarding against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC). The article concludes with ways in which this endeavour impacts Christian mission work by British citizens and advocates for foundational policy transformations.

Personal Concerns

My personal investment in this topic arises from finding myself being under pressure to comply with new British laws, the implementation of which could not only disrupt or destroy my 35 years of ministry in East Africa but could also put my life at risk, along with the well-being of many with whom I associate closely.

Possible consequences for being in non-compliance with British law include involvement of INTERPOL, imprisonment, being considered guilty unless proven innocent, and making it illegal for British people to support me financially. Locally, foreigners raising concerns about sexual misdemeanours by missionaries through insisting that externally-rooted checks be put in place may easily imply that they have evidence that the person concerned has engaged in illicit sexual activity. The impact of such implication could at best be confusing and at worst could result in physical attacks

(lynchings) of missionaries and colleagues, or different possibilities between these extremes.

As I will explain further below, the apparent intolerance of new international regulations for anything but their own solutions clashes with existing means of preventing abuses in the African communities in which I am embedded.

Overview: What is Happening Globally

The following draws particularly on what the UN is doing and the USA's determined support and insistence on it (Office of the Spokesperson, 2018). The features below characterize discussion on efforts at countering abuse:

1. *Zero Tolerance*. Language used frequently makes it very clear that there should be no exceptions and no tolerance for any abuse at all (Office of the Spokesperson, 2018), including zero tolerance for inaction when abuse is suspected (World Health Organization, 2023).
2. *Victim / survivor centered*. Policies being devised and implemented seek to: a) investigate, b) support survivors/victims, and c) discipline perpetrators (World Health Organization, 2023, p. 2). Supporting, listening to, and protecting victims, typically women and girls, is considered the most important part of proposed strategies.
3. *Do no harm*. Throughout, interventions are perceived as correcting abuses while having a neutral or positive wider impact, so that they "do no harm" (World Health Organization, 2023, 1).
4. *Criminalization*. Many want to make sexual abuses a criminal offence, to be harshly dealt with using criminal law (United Nations, 2019, 6).
5. *Religion seen as a barrier*. Any "religious" objections or perceived desire for compromise are perceived as "barriers" to necessary processes of legal implementation with zero tolerance (United Nations, 2019, 6).
6. *International Aid is the fulcrum of concern*. Efforts are being primarily oriented to correcting of faults in the international aid system. The same policies engulf related international activity that are not international aid as such, like Christian mission.
7. *Avoiding discrimination*. The above are rooted in the UN charter that prohibits discrimination according to sex (United Nations, 2019, p. 2).
8. *Translatability assumed*. While questions of language are mentioned, the easy and straightforward translatability of what is being proposed is generally assumed.
9. *The proposals are Western/individualistic*. So, for example, victims are expected to "tell on" perpetrators of abuse, expecting international bodies to protect them from revenge, while "traditional" values, such as respect for age and the need to maintain the integrity of a family, are ignored.
10. *Victims are to be compensated*. There is a not-closely-detailed anticipation that victims will be cared for, as were 92 in the Congo (World Health Organization, 2023, p. 4) in unspecified ways and for unspecified durations.

Need for Changes in Countering Abuse

While these principles are already being implemented in many countries, it is clear that all is not well. Attempts at preventing SEA are acknowledged as having been grave failures in the past (World Health Organization, 2023, p. 14). A need for continuous feedback on the system indicates that what is currently being implemented remains fluid (World Health Organization, 2023, p. 19). There is an acute shortage of qualified people who can implement proposed strategies (World Health Organization, 2023, p. 13). Just this year (2023), there is acknowledgement of a need for a comprehensive overhaul of what is currently being implemented (World Health Organization, 2023, p. 9).

An alternative engagement in LMIC that could help to counter widespread abuse, known as vulnerable mission (), is given no official consideration in new legislation. Neither does the UN literature incorporate the kinds of extension of grace for which Jesus is known.

A British Case Study

The British government sees itself as leading efforts at stamping out SEA in the aid and development sector in LMIC. However, responses intended to provide relief, such as the handing out of aid, can open doors to SEA through providers of relief acquiring power-over-locals (International Development Committee, 2021, section 4:61). In the LMIC in which Britain is active, the whole population can be seen as "vulnerable" to outsiders who wield financial and material power on which locals are dependent (Orr et al., 2019, pp. 24, 29; Sandvik, 2019, p. 1).

This case study first describes UK policies aimed at eliminating SEA and then critiques those policies on a number of scores:

1. This study points to a clear risk that British efforts at imposing safeguarding from afar can result in dangers to British people and projects as well as locals in LMIC, who understand safeguarding (i.e., ways of preventing sexual and other abuse of vulnerable people) differently.
2. Assessments of safeguarding policies tend to make erroneous assumptions regarding language and translation. Correcting such assumptions would undermine the logic that is widely used to defend safeguarding in the international aid and development sector.
3. Using the threat of legal action and punishment to deter British involvement in SEA in LMIC may culminate in a "cutting off" of LMICs from supportive understanding by the wider world.

Explanation of British Attempts to Eradicate SEA

A safeguarding policy that legitimizes a dominating voice from the UK inadvertently allows the UK government a heavy-handed intervention reminiscent of empire into other people's business. This intervention is justified as necessary to prevent SEA of vulnerable children and adults (Mednick & Craze, 2022; Sandvik, 2019, p. 2). The UK endeavours to ensure compliance with strict accountability structures, designed to make SEA impossible wherever British influence extends around the world, in a 'root and branch transformation' (International Development Committee, 2021, section 1:7). In some instances, UK authorities would value having victims beyond its shores contact

them directly (International Development Committee, 2021, conclusion section 13, paragraph 56), especially where indigenous systems of justice may seem wanting or corrupt. British citizens can be prosecuted in the UK for offences carried out overseas (International Development Committee, 2021, section 3:59). Terminology used to describe the UK's stand against SEA in the aid sector often focuses on its conviction and determination to succeed (International Development Committee, 2021, summary). Prevention of SEA is purposely not a box-ticking exercise (International Development Committee, 2021, summary). It is not enough to have an employee responsible for safeguarding (Orr et al. 2019, p. 25). Instead, real radical action is required. This action should not merely be a "scurry of activity" as some might consider it (Gecim et al., 2020). It should make abuse 'as impossible as possible' (Zollner, 2022, p. 18).

Evaluation of British Attempts to Eradicate SEA

Power Imbalance

Abuses are likely to arise in contexts of gross power by one group over another. The solution seen to such abuse of the vulnerable is to look for means to empower *beneficiaries* of aid and development assistance (International Development Committee, 2021, summary). One of these means is to make it unacceptable to relate sexually across power differentials, which has led to a "*de facto* criminalization" of payment for sex (Sandvik, 2019, p. 3). This step represents a determined effort to thwart the tendency—especially for those in powerful institutions responsible for distributing aid—to take advantage of the vulnerable. Reporting of abuses has become mandatory for Brits and those in British funded projects (Orr et al., 2019, p. 22). In order to maintain accountability, lone working is discouraged (Orr et al., 2019, p. 35).

The Church

British government efforts at protecting the vulnerable could be interpreted as an attempt at marginalizing church authority. Hence sexual abuse by clergy has received singular attention (Zollner, 2022, p. 16), the results of which are used to discredit them. There is little evidence to suggest that clergy are more likely to engage in abuses than others. Instead, there seems to be an underlying expectation that clergy should never have exploited anyone at all, and that any cases of SEA by clergy in the past should have been made public and led to prosecution. Oviedo points out that the October 2022 "Report of the Independent Inquiry" (Jay et al., 2022, p. 39) indicates that just 6 percent of child sexual abuse is due to religious staff. "It is of little use to focus on the Catholic church," suggests Oviedo (2022). The church is criticized for its human weakness without apparent regard to the strengths it brings to the table resulting from the role of God and his Holy Spirit working through weak vessels.

Labeling LMIC as Vulnerable

Considering the whole population of LMIC to be 'vulnerable' can be a means to disenfranchise them. Outsiders, like the British government, seem to be needed to protect them. An orientation to needing to take care of victims when all are victims empowers Westerners to dominate the lives of whole populations.

For someone familiar with Christian theology, labelling all LMIC citizens as "vulnerable" can be a means of Westerners usurping power that rightly belongs to God. Safeguarding can itself be a usurping of power and denial of the capability of LMIC people to adequately protect themselves.

Translatability

The British recommendation that there should be "active engagement with local populations" can be problematic if English is the operative language rather than the native language of the LMIC (International Development Committee, 2021, section 4:65).

The very concept of "safeguarding" as contemporarily understood in the UK may well be untranslatable, according to the UKs Department of Foreign and International Development (DFID) (Bayley, 2022). Use of English or European languages in LMIC generally assumes that what can be said in one language can simply and clearly be heard in another, for example that English can be easily, satisfactorily, and "completely," translated into Swahili (Ezekiel et al., 2017). However, such an assumption ignores ways in which Swahili is used in African contexts that are culturally (and in almost every other way, e.g, historically, religiously, environmentally, ethnically) vastly different from those of English as used say in the UK. In actuality, a language can only ever be correctly understood in relation to the context of its use.

Use of outside resources to entice people to use languages rooted in distant and foreign communities can itself be very destructive. It can prompt young and old alike to discount what makes sense locally in favour of linking to generous outside networks. The undermining of local language and culture over decades or generations can contribute to rendering indigenous communities incompetent in running their own affairs. Thus, insofar as British implementation of safeguarding requires cooperation with nationals, and if those nationals are engaged using English, then implementation of safeguarding is itself "doing harm" (Harries, 2013).

Development workers who believe that their work that is engaged using English in LMIC does no harm are deceiving themselves. This deception is rendered dangerous because of the resources they use to back what they are doing. Differences between the cultures of native-English-speaking peoples and those of many African peoples is such that use of English:

1. Often forces LMIC populations to learn by rote ("African innovations … have … been viewed as errors" (Muthwii, 2007, p. 53). To not make errors, Africans imitate and as far as possible learn by rote. So presumably do others in LMIC.
2. Renders avenues advocated for indigenous development consistently dependent on being led by Westerners. When the West dominates, the way for people in LMIC to thrive is to appear to understand and to appear to do what they understand they are being told to do (Spivak, 1988).
3. Undermines efforts made by indigenous people to make sense of their own lives using their own thinking.
4. Sets indigenous people onto a course of incompetence and dependence.

Humanitarian workers who want to "do no harm" need to engage people using their own languages, having learned those languages in culturally appropriate ways. They should not connect their interventions to financial incentives. Following this kind of recommendation may well, I suggest, obviate the need for a great deal of safeguarding.

Accountability

Safeguarding, as designed for British people and British funded projects overseas, aims to facilitate whistle blowing on SEA and protect whistle blowers (International Development Committee, 2021, section 2:32). The orienting assumption is that a British person in an LMIC, through distributing resources, is likely to be tempted to take advantage of people's dependence on their resources in order to abuse the vulnerable. The consistent supposition is that the Brit relates to citizens of LMIC as a benefactor. An alternative option that I consider here is that a British national perhaps ought to relate to people in ways other than as a benefactor.

UK in-country safeguarding strictures require reporting any instances in which harm is inflicted (or reported to be inflicted) on vulnerable adults or children. The same reporting should, according to the UK government, happen internationally. However, implementing such reporting can prove difficult, as discussed in *Progress on Tackling the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Aid Beneficiaries* (International Development Committee, 2021). Perpetrators will be punished (International Development Committee, 2021, section 6:124), yet this requirement has its own dangers. "There is potential for reporting to have negative consequences for victims / survivors in certain situations" (Balch et al., 2020, p. 8). "Operating with precise guidelines can be inflexible and dangerous," commented one aid worker (Orr et al., 2019, p. 35), adding that "the duty to report may need to be met in ways that avoid putting the person in further harm's way" as a result of reporting (Orr et al., 2019, p. 35). "Imposing … protection values and practices on people in other [unfamiliar] settings … might be quite dangerous" (Orr et al., 2019, p. 43). Even when asked to do something that would be abusive to them, people may still be unwilling to refuse (Balch et al., 2020, p. 25). Such a reluctance reflects a wider tendency in parts of LMIC of people being keen to agree with and loath to contradict a potentially generous outsider (Balch et al., 2020, p. 25).

The imposition of safeguarding structures linked to funding can result in people thinking, "I need to be accountable to those people over there rather than accountable to the people I am serving," suggests Faith Mwangi-Powell with respect to Africa (Gecim et al., 2020). Such misplaced accountability can negate vital and deeply ingrained "normal" local accountability structures.

Local Involvement in Accountability

Outside efforts at safeguarding by holding people accountable risk undermining indigenous safeguarding processes in potentially dangerous ways. Local communities have their own means of keeping the sexual habits of high libido males within bounds. These mechanisms include shaming, shunning, exclusion facilitated by gossip on the village grapevine (to which safeguarding advocates from outside will have very limited access), fining, calling young men to councils should their wives walk out on them, instruction on relationships in circumcision camps, advocating for salvation in Christ then

insisting on sexual chastity, and so on. Reliance on safeguarding processes that meet the satisfaction of people guided by the UK could easily undermine local means while providing much less-effective alternatives.

Safeguarding protocols can wrongly assume that young people's preferences—expressed according to what they have been told in school using English—are workable and helpful in the long term, when they may instead lead to disaster.

Undermining indigenous sensibilities risks leading to flagrant sexual abuse of vulnerable children and adults. Foreign mandates can contribute to conflicts, fights, propagation of witchcraft, unwanted pregnancies, dangerous abortions, depression, suicide, infection by AIDS and other painful debilitating sexually transmitted diseases, lack of accountability by men to the women they have impregnated, children being discarded who are born to unmarried women, and so on (Amann & Sleigh, 2021, pp. 715, 719, 722; International Development Committee, 2021, section 2:25; Orr et al., 2019, pp. 6, 29, 36, 37, 41, 43; Bayley, 2022; Kaviani-Johnson & Sloth-Nielsen, 2020, pp. 1, 14; Medrick, 2022).

I suggest that efforts at ensuring that British foreign nationals are held accountable to the UK government while living and working overseas may often not be helpful. While they may help those who are short term (and largely existing inside foreign bubbles apart from occasional ventures into "the indigenous"), foreign accountability efforts could be extremely harmful in cases where British citizens and their activities are already being "safeguarded" by local mechanisms that outside interventions could undermine.

Cutting off Africa

My major fear regarding the UK's contemporary efforts at promoting safeguarding against SEA may be that they are condemning LMIC populations to a kind of second-class subject status from which they may never be able to recover. I have expanded on this fear elsewhere (Harries, 2021). British efforts at safeguarding can imply a denial of the capability of LMIC people to adequately protect themselves, so outsiders, like the British government, seem to be needed to protect them. Considering the whole population of LMIC to be "vulnerable" (Orr et al., 2019, pp 24, 29; Sandvik, 2019, p. 1) can be a means to disenfranchise them. An orientation to needing to take care of victims, when all are seen as victims, empowers Westerners to dominate the lives of whole populations, portraying Whites as being needed to save brown bodies from themselves.

Partly no doubt arising from fear of Westerners getting caught in safeguarding traps, "humanitarian action is [increasingly] quantified and remotely controlled" (Sandvik, 2019, p. 4). That is to say, Westerners who have enormous influence over LMIC are being discouraged from coming close to the people they are guiding. The disaster that this distance portends is concealed by the unfounded but widely promoted assumption of inter-ethnic global cultural uniformity, which amounts to an assumption that all people of all ethnicities around the world either are, or can quickly and easily become, modern, liberal, and secular in their thinking, i.e., like Westerners. The myth that it is simple for all other populations to become like Europeans can be considered dangerous, implying that no special effort is required to bring about cultural change by indigenous people.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The cultural change needed in Africa and other LMIC must be a part of what is spiritual, based on biblical principles that underlie Western humanism's humanitarian practices. "Humanism is a Christian Heresy," suggests Tom Holland (Holland, 2022). That heresy includes practices advocated by the West for the Majority World today in the humanitarian and aid sector. Yes, the aid sector needs reform, but I suggest the needed reform will not be achieved by ramping up rules and laws in hand with severe penalties for those that break them by taking sexual advantage of the "vulnerable" in foreign contexts. Reform must be achieved through a re-Christianisation, a revealing of the origins of the humanitarianism that underlies contemporary practice in the aid sector. Sinners practicing SEA should be brought to repentance and to a living relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Power imbalance plus lack of mutual understanding leads to a heightened likelihood of British people in the aid and development sector reaching out to LMIC becoming involved in exploitative relationships. Rather than safeguarding originating in the UK, indigenous safeguarding measures are more durable and incorporate better those outsiders who avoid misunderstandings through vulnerable use of indigenous languages and participation in indigenous accountability structures.

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The Miracle Theology Factor in Pentecostal Churches in Owerri

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Abstract

Miracles, miracles, miracles in the churches. The Pentecostals are echoing it all the more. The Nigerian populace is clapping, jumping, and dancing to the rhythm of the beat of this theology, mostly orchestrated in the Pentecostal churches. It is catching the congregations across the board. The theology seems to be the reason for increased mobility of Christian faithfuls from one church to another. Owerri is not left out in this experience. It appears that the promise of miracles to church members by the Pentecostal churches in Owerri is attracting worshipers, and the churches have made the theology of miracles their main focus more than ever before. This article uses documented interviews and observation methods of data gathering while deploying the sociological/functionalist approach in its data analysis.

Key Words: miracles, Owerri, Pentecostal, theology

Introduction

In recent times, there appears to be a wind blowing across Christian churches worldwide. Going around the city of Owerri (henceforth Owerri) of Imo State of Nigeria, a casual observer will be astonished at the presence of numerous Pentecostal churches with different names, captions, and insignia displayed conspicuously on their signposts, boards, and posters, including their handbills distributed to people in Owerri. A closer look at these ubiquitous materials reveals claims and counter claims of miracles of different types taking place in special gatherings and locations. Obilor (2003, 160) observes that there are claims and counter claims of miracles everywhere. The new churches and their founders seem to hinge their proselytization on claims of miracles. Religion is ceasing to be a worship of God and fast becoming a place where miracles happen.

Such miraculous claims include those of healing from sickness and diseases; deliverance from the power of demon and occultism, armed robbery attacks, premature death, accidents, imprisonment, barrenness, and all forms of problems and challenges; success in business, marriage, political appointments, prosperity, and examinations. In fact the list is endless. Issues are being raised daily by both Christians and non-Christians regarding such claims and the rush to experience them. Some of people’s concerns should be on the realities of the claims: are the claims confirmable? why the upsurge? has the church derailed from the message and purport of the gospel of Christ and the study and knowledge of God through Christ? Most importantly, what could be the powers behind such a quantum leap of miracle claims by this sect of Christian faithfuls?

In global times like these, it is imperative and expedient to draw the attention of the Christian populace and of all people to this recent and trending facet of Christian theology. In particular, what is the justification for the current dance to this bizarre tune being orchestrated by the Pentecostal churches in Owerri in particular?

Theoretical Framework

This article adopts the theory of structural functionalism. In any given society, there exist institutions which correlate in carrying out their functions for the sustenance of that particular

society. Levy's (1952) term "institution" will be used here as a particular type of normative pattern (miracles) that affects human action (Christians) in terms of social system (religious beliefs and teachings). In this sense, the claims of miracles are part of the theology of Christianity/church institutions which refer to those particular normative patterns, conformity with which is generally to be expected and failure to conform is generally met with the moral and biblical indignation of those individuals who are involved in the same general social/belief system and who are aware of the consequences of any failure in this regard (Parson, 1940).

The theory of structural functionalism is anchored on its sociological origins in the works of its founder, Auguste Comte. According to Comte (Poloma, 1979), society is like a living organism. However, it was the British sociologist of the mid-nineteenth century, Herbert Spencer, who discussed specific differences and similarities. For Spencer, the parts that develop in living bodies and in social bodies each serve a function or purpose. They grow into different organs having unlike duties; in the social system as in human bodies, any change in the part affects the family, informal education, religion, and so on, which includes Christianity and by extension the theology of miracles. Perry & Perry (1931) argue further that Durkheim observes that modern society is like an organic whole having a reality of its own. This whole has needs or functions that must be met by the member parts in order for it to exist in its normal state.

Research Area

The area known as and referred to as Owerri consists of many communities in the old provincial "Owerri nchi ise" (Owerri with five alms). The area is bounded on the north by Owerri North and Mbaitoli Local Government Areas, on the east by Owerri West, Aboh Mbaise, and on the south partly by Owerri West and Ngor Okpala Local Government Areas respectively. According to oral tradition, Owerri (Owerri "nchi ise") people migrated to their present location as a result of a family feud very many years ago in a place called "Uratta." One of the brothers of the progenitor family felt offended during a conflict. He decided to take the life of his elder brother, who got wind of the plan to assassinate him and fled with his family at night to the present day Owerri. When they arrived at "ugwu ekwema" they rested and had their first meal of roasted yam with (red) palm oil. The runaway family became the ancestors of the indigenous inhabitants of Owerri today, while their first meal of roasted yam and palm oil became the origin of their festival called "oru Owerri" (the annual remembrance of their survival and escape from death).

Owerri houses the seat of the goverment of Nigeria's Imo State. Owerri's population grew from 125,337 in 2006 to 172,600 in 2016 (Owerri City Population, n.d.). Its area is 62.40km^2 with a population density of 2,766/km^2 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2009).

The Concept of Miracle

Cross (1981, 905) defines miracle as a sensible fact (*opus sensible*) produced by the special intervention of God for a religious end, transcending the normal order of things usually termed the law of nature. Iwe (1986, 157) opines that a miracle implies a special and extraordinary presence of God's power in a given human event. Hence, when God's presence is observed or seen by men extraordinarily, a miracle has taken place. Sumrall (1999, 6) posits that, in the simplest sense, a miracle is God acting in a way which is beyond human understanding. It is the suspension of what mankind considers to be natural laws. Along this line of argument, a miracle can be seen as the removal of human or natural barriers so that divine energy flows unhindered.

Papyri (1980, 621-622) defines a miracle as a supernatural event, a marvel, a wonder. It is a divine, supernatural intervention in a hopeless situation bringing about a positive turn around. The individual who receives a miracle recognizes it for what it is even if he does not know how to define it. Arguing that the word “miracle” is a vague and ambiguous one, Guy (1960, 27) adds that the word literally means anything at which people tend to marvel. For Guy, therefore, what is a miracle to one age or nation might not be considered miraculous to people of another time or culture. Going by this view, what is a miracle today may not be one tomorrow. David Hume, as cited by the aforementioned Guy, argues that a miracle is a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the deity or by the interposition of some invisible agents. Thus a miracle by its very nature is a violation of the law of nature, contrary to the natural course of things—like the dead coming back to life.

Ekarika (1986, 47) posits that, for Christians, miracles are not therefore extraordinary because they are rare, but because they take place beyond the natural order. Hence even if, for example, blind men were to receive their sight everyday, what has happened in every case would still be regarded as a miracle. But a generation of offspring everyday and everywhere through conception would not be termed a miracle since it does not transcend the effective operations of nature, i.e., the nature of man to reproduce its kind.

The Bible and Miracles

Emerole (1995, 35) argues that many Christians believe that miracles began on the creation day. Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 14, and 24 agree that God created the earth and all that there are in it by his spoken word. It was not mere words, but words of spirit and life (John 6:63). Demaray (in Emereole, 36) estimates that 61 miracles were wrought in the Old Testament alone, excluding creation day miracles. Sixteen (16) of these miracles were recorded in Exodus, one in Leviticus, five in Numbers, and three in Joshua. Others were in 1 Kings (five), 2 Kings (16), Daniel (two), 2 Chronicles (one), and Jonah (one). The Old Testament writers described anything which made people wonder as being the direct result of God's activity in the world—hence the word “miracle” seldom appears in the Old Testament. The writers without considering the possibility of natural explanation saw all in the unexpected apparently unnatural events and experiences as a lively sense of God's presence and power. Such events which made people wonder (miraculous) included a pillar of cloud by the day and a pillar of fire by night deployed by God to guide Isreal's journey from Egypt to the promised land.

In Old Testament, the two Hebrew words most commonly used for miracle occur in Deuteronomy 13:1, as translated by the RSV: “If a prophet arises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign (אֹות) or wonder (מוֹפֵת)...” (Buttrick, 1962, 393). There is another Hebrew word for miracle (פֶּלֶא) which means something beyond one's power to do or to understand. It appears in Exodus 15:11 referring to the wonders of the Exodus; but in Psalms 89:5-6, it means wonders of the natural world. This term also refers to the wonderful acts of God. In Exodus 3:20; Judges 6:13, it refers to events of the Exodus. But in Job 5:9 the reference includes rainfall, which God sends upon the earth and fields (Buttrick, 1962, 394). Miraculous healing in the Old Testament is generally attributed to the intervention of God. An example is the recovery of Moses (Ex.4:24-26) from the illness associated with his disobedience over his son's circumcision: that recovery is given an entirely spiritual significance. The healing of Miriam's leprosy (Num. 12:1-5) and of Naaman, through Elisha (2 Kings 13:3-6); the healing of Jeroboam's suddenly paralyzed hand (1 Kings 13:4-6), the raising from dead of the son of the widow of Zarephath by Elijah (1 Kings

17:17-24), and the raising from the dead of the son of the Shunammite woman by Elisha (2 Kings 4:1-37): these events are clearly miraculous. The recovery of Hezekiah (2 Kings: 20:1-11) was attributed directly to God (v. 8) and was accompanied by a nature miracle (vv. 9-11).

Sawyer (1987, 14) notes the enigmatic Old Testament story of how Isaiah made "the shadow cast by the declining sun on the dial of Ahaz turn back ten steps" (Isaiah 38:8; cf. 2 Kings 20:8-11). Moses also performed miracles: turning his staff into a snake and covering his hand with leprosy "that they may believe" (Ex. 4:1-9); the stretching out of hand towards heaven that brought about thunder and hail and fire darted to the ground (Ex. 9:23-26). Hannah was a woman who had been denied by nature the right to have children, but through the supernatural intervention of God (miracle) she conceived and brought forth a son. Jericho was a city with strong walls which collapsed miraculously when the people of Israel led by Joshua marched and shouted around it seven times (Josh. 6).

In the New Testament, what in English might be termed a "miracle" is variously designated as "sign," "wonder," and "mighty work" (Onwu, 1991, 179-180). The Greeks refer to miracle as "semeion" (σημείον) and "teras" (τέρας) but the Greek New Testament also uses the word "dunamis" ("power" - δύναμις) for miracle. All four gospel writers recorded that Jesus performed "mighty works" (ἐκεῖ δυνάμεις), a phrase much used for miracles in the Synoptic Gospels. Such miracles include the healing miracles (Matth. 4:23-24; Luk. 22:50-51). In fact, in the combined narratives of the four gospels, there were over 20 stories of the healing of individuals or small groups (Papyri, 1980, 622). Jesus's recorded miracles include the turning of water into wine at the marriage in Cana (John 2:8-10); casting out demons (Mk. 1:32-34); healing the paralytic (Mk. 2:3-11), the woman with the flow of blood (Mk. 5:27-34), and the deaf and dumb; feeding the multitude; the raising of Jairus's daughter (Lk. 8:54-56); the healing of the two blind men (Matt. 20:30-35); the calming of the sea (Matt. 8:24-26); and many more.

A careful observation of the biblical miracles reveals that they satisfied and answered the needs of the people. Jesus never went to those places to perform miracles. His Apostles or disciples never called out the people to observe or to experience the miraculous. Rather, the miracles were wrought because of the needs of the people which arose in the course of the preaching or ministry of Jesus. The performance of miracles by the Apostles took place in the course of their evangelism. As is obvious, Peter and John were just going to the temple at the ninth hour to pray when they saw a man lame from birth who was kept at the temple gate called Beautiful. The two prayed for him, and he was healed. They didn't invite people to come and witness the miraculous at the gate. Similarly, signs and wonders followed the activities of Philip in the Acts of the Apostles. Paul was able to command Elymas the sorcerer to become blind, and it came to pass. The miracles were proofs that the Apostles were truly men of God; they had God's backing and support; they were not speaking their own words but God's words. The Apostles didn't go to such places with the aim of performing miracles. Rather, such miracles were results of situations which presented themselves. They never advertised miracles to attract a crowd nor asked for any pecuniary gain after performing them. Miracles were not the focus of the biblical prophets, Apostles, or priests. They were a result of a direct encounter with God unannounced, on the spot, freely, and to the need of the time and moment. They were never for show nor for the glory of the human instruments.

Origin of Pentecostal Movements/Churches

The word “Pentecost” derives from the Greek for “the fiftieth day.” It was the Jewish Feast of Weeks (Ex. 34:22), variously called the Feast of Harvest (Ex. 23:16) or the Day of the First Fruits (Num. 28:26), which fell on the fiftieth day after the feast of the Passover (Tenney, 1963, 635). Pentecost was the second of the three annual festivals at which every male Israelite was required to appear before the Lord at the sanctuary, and the first of the second agricultural festival (Ex. 22, 23, 34; 2 Chron. 8:12-13; cf. 1 Kings 9:25). It was so called because its date was set seven complete weeks after ripe barley (Lev. 23:15, 16; cf. Deut. 16:9, 10) (Gehman, 1898, np). Uterman (1981, 198) argues that the word “pentecost,” or “Shavuot” as Jews more commonly know it, is a one-day festival (two days in the diaspora) for which no fixed date is given in the Bible. It falls on the fiftieth day after the Omer offering is brought, and with the advent of a calendar based on calculation rather than the sighting of the moon, it was assigned to the sixth of the Hebrew month Sivan. In the Bible it is described as a harvest festival (Ex.23:16), but its main significance for later Jewish consciousness, as well as in the early Christian centuries, was its association with the revelation of Torah at Mount Sinai.

The most notable Pentecost was the first which occurred after the Resurrection of Christ (Acts 2). At the institution of the Risen Jesus, the Holy Spirit descended on all believers, without distinction of age, sex, or social status. The consideration for the claim to such a supernatural manifestation became, in the early decades of the twentieth century, the most characteristic mark of the religious groups which may be generally termed “Pentecostal” (Tenney, 1963, 636).

The Pentecostal movement began in the first years of the twentieth century among believers who sought a baptism in the Holy Spirit, accompanied by speaking in tongues similar to instances recorded in the book of Acts of the Apostles. Cross (1981, 1043) observes that the manifestations of this nature, occuring in some special meetings in Los Angeles in April 1906, were the first to attract worldwide attention. The movement spread rapidly. Offiong (1996, 103) argues that the origin of modern Pentecostalism is debatable. He insists that some scholars date the origin of the phenomenon to the nineteenth-century Holiness and Higher Life Movement in England and America which emphasized a “second blessing,” sanctification, and baptism in the Holy Spirit as endowment of power for service (Burgers, 1988, 220-221).

For Turner (1979, 122), the Pentecostal movements in Nigeria appeared as spontaneous and independent “prophetic” or “spiritual” movements in areas where non-Pentecostal movements had developed. He refers to this phenomenon as “Nigerian Pentecostalism,” pointing out that it does not share certain features found in Western Pentecostalism. For example, Turner notes that Nigerian Pentecostalism may not be congregational, show interest in millennial Adventism, or stress personal holiness, while it may share with Western Pentecostalism such traits as practicing baptism by immersion and emphasizing the importance of prayer and most importantly the working of the Holy Spirit evident in charismatic gifts and visible signs and results. These characteristics are also observable in Pentecostal churches in Owerri, as we shall soon observe.

Pentecostal Churches and Miracles in Owerri

In Owerri, there was no single Pentecostal church until 1968, when Rev. Ezeugo with the assistance of Evangelist Alalibo opened the Bible Missionary Church (BMC) branch in Avu-Owerri. Although this initiative was met with stiff resistance from Owerri residents and from several previously established churches, the BMC in Avu-Owerrie nevertheless thrived until Nigerian troops occupied Owerri and its environs during the Nigeria civil war of 1967-1970. Later the Scripture Union (SU) was founded while the BMC gained more converts and acceptance by

the local people (Emereole, 1995, 20). According to Rev. Ezeugo, other Pentecostal churches which sprang up after the Bible Missionary Church were Jesus the Way Mission, Riches of Christ, The Church of God Mission, Assemblies of God and others. Moreover, the presence and planting of Pentecostal churches in the area were energized by the evangelistic crusades/campaigns of charismatic preachers like Rev. Don Stewart from America in the mid 70's (Ezeugo, 2016).

Walking round Owerri reveals a large number of Pentecostal churches. The researcher countered over sixty (60) of them in the course of this work. While some of the churches visited own their worship centers, others (the majority) are operating from rented apartments, uncompleted buildings, and school premises. Some of the Pentecostal churches are: Will of God Church; Redeemed Christian Church of God; Arise Chapel; Abundant Life Gospel Church; Jubilee Chapel; Vote for Jesus Church; Church of God Mission; Assemblies of God; Overcomers Christian Mission. There are many more.

A major determinant of the mobility and population of these churches is the search for miracles and ability of the churches, founders, or pastors to wrought miracles for their congregation. The researcher observed that the churches that claim to wrought miracles are daily increasing in membership and branches, while other churches which do not have such claims are not growing. In one of the church services at Overcomers Christian Mission, the Archbishop while preaching stated that "a church where God does not perform miracles is a dead church and not a living church." This statement aptly summaries the general belief and theology of the Pentecostal churches. The researcher observed that miracles and claims about them were always on the lips of their pastors and members alike. It may not therefore be an overstatement to conclude that Pentecostal churches in Owerri dance miracle, announce miracle, expect miracle, pray miracle, preach miracle, walk miracle, sleep miracle, wake miracle, and teach miracle.

Testimonies as Evidence of Miracles in Owerri Pentecostal Churches

Testimonies abound in all the Pentecostal churches visited in the course of this research. While some were made during Sunday services and during the churches' weekly programmes, others were published in the churches' books, magazines, and newsletters. The testimonies reported here are simply representive and were chosen randomly. Emerole (1995, 42-45) presents the testimony of a little boy (Obinna) whose leg was miraculously healed to save him from amputation. The parents were introduced to the church and the pastor prayed for the boy and his leg was healed. In another church, Mrs. Stella Nwokenna testified how God wrought a miracle of pregnancy in her life without passing through the normal menstrual circle. During April's Holy Ghost night, a 51-year-old medical doctor practitioner received a miraculous healing on January 13, 1999. After the general overseer laid hands in him, he was able to get off his wheelchair and walk back to his seat some 20 metres from the altar. Mrs. Aishat Odigie, a former research officer with Nigerian Tobacco Company (NTC) was childless for 14 years, conceived and had a baby girl after the prayer of the General Overseer (Dirionyemma, 1999, 10).

Edward Nakasala (2004, 7) gave testimony that God miraculously rescued him from an armed robbery attack. He thanked God for saving him from the trigger of the gunmen. Mrs. N. Edeodum (Uwem, 1998, 2-3) testified that her husband, whose promotion was delayed for many years, was promoted after the man of God prayed for her husband. Shortly after the death of a relation, according to Mrs. Christie Ekewuba, the spirit of fear came into her life. She later got her complete deliverance after prayers (Ekewuba, 2000, 9).

This research observes many ways of receiving these claims of miracles by the congregation. One such way is through direct and personal prayers by the acclaimed men of God. The pastors pray directly for the person with such pronouncements as "receive your healing now." In other cases, the people who need a miracle are called out in what is known as an "altar call" and prayed for individually or collectively.

There is also what the churches call intercessory prayer. This may involve a wife, father, brother, or sister representing the person facing challenges and who is not in the church because of distance or other challenges. Sometimes people are asked to write down the names of the persons who need prayers on a piece of paper and either lift it up or throw it into a basket in the church. Prayers are then offered on their behalf as they are told to expect answers henceforth.

Congregational prayer is another form of receiving miracles. In this method, the pastors ask the sick or people with problems needing miracles to place their hands on the affected areas or raise the hands towards heaven. Prayers are then offered for them as they are invited afterward to confirm their miraculous healing. There is also the laying of hands. This the commonest form observed by the researcher among the pastors of these churches. Apart from re-enacting the ministry of Jesus by touching or laying on of hands on the sick, these churches seem to follow the biblical injunction in James 5:14-16: "Is there anyone of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray for him and anoint him oil in the name of the Lord..." It is observed, too, that in these churches people can receive their miracles through the media (television and radio) for those churches that can afford such broadcasts. Some of their media programmes are "Spiritual Cafeteria" of the Praise Centre Church; "Regeneration Hour" by the Life Line Chapel; "Restoration Hour" of Revival Peoples Church; "Overcomers Half Hour" by Overcomers Christian Mission; and "Power in the Word" by the Redeemed Evangelical Mission. Television viewers or radio listeners are told to touch any part of the TV or radio set as the prayers are going on to receive their miracles.

The Roles and Significance of Miracles in the Pentecostal Churches

Miracles in these churches are there for a function or purpose either for the pastors/ founders of the churches, the congregation, or the wider society. Firstly, the miracles serve as a means of reassuring and convincing members of the congregation that all hope is not lost in whatever circumstances they may have found themselves. The sick are reassured that through miracles their hitherto helpless situation will be turned around by God for the better. Those who are having marital challenges are told to expect a miraculous solution from God. The poor and physically challenged in the churches, who have no one to help them eke out a living, have their hopes of a better tomorrow renewed and strengthed. They look forward hopefully for a miraculous turn around, thereby redirecting their minds from engaging in anti-social activities, crimes, and criminality. This redirection in the long run enhances social order and stability.

Like the lame man at the Beautiful gate (Acts 3:1-10), those with similar challenges are convinced not to lose hope or to be frustrated---as it could be their turn next. To fully appreciate the role of miracles in this circumstance, we must acknowledge that, like the first-century Jewish worldview (Onwu 1999, 181), the Owerri (Igbo) society is a precarious one, full of sickness, misfortunes, and demons. The churches further teach that there is a relationship between sickness, the devil, and sin. This teaching is in line with African Igbo cosmology (Metuh, 1986, 94). Onwu (189) points out that a logical counterpart of the Pentecostal churches' miracle theology to such a concept of ill-health is the belief amongst the Igbo that total recourse to the services of a physician demonstrates a lack of faith, since healing is a monopoly of God. This understanding is all the

more so as the cost of medication is unarguably beyond the reach of the common man. Since men of God like Elijah and Elisha could mediate God's healing power, Pentecostal pastors could also replicate it. Offiong (1996, 195) observes in further support that “the Pentecostal churches have become an important attraction because of the socio-economic situation in the country.”

Another important significance of the miracles is that they remain a source of the confirmation that their pastors, founders, or bishops are men of God or that God is truly with them. Like miracles of the apostolic times as opined by Iwe (1982, 157-158), miracles in the Pentecostal churches are signs of God’s presence with the preachers. Congar (Iwe, 158) speaks of the joint action of God and his ministers of the gospel, remarking that “God accompanies them, too, bearing them witness by signs and wonders and diverse miracles and distribution of Holy Ghost according to His will” (cf. Heb. 2:3-4). God himself “witnesses to” (cf. 1 Thess. 1:5). Thus, the miracles in the Pentecostal churches as the sensible presence of God co-jointly witness with his human agents as they proclaim him. The miracles serve to confirm the message of the pastors, demonstrating the vital force and power of the word of God.

Miracles in the Bible were dramatized signs intended to teach a double lesson. They were to authenticate the word of the person who performed them (Ex. 7:9; Lk. 5:20-24; Jn. 7:19-22, 10:37-38; Acts 2:22) and to illustrate the Word. Hence, what happened to the body of the paralytic in Luke 5:18-26 was a proof and picture of what happened in his soul. The purpose was theological and not medical. This significance is true of the Pentecostal churches in Owerri. In Overcomers Christian Mission, the Presiding Bishop (Alexander Ezeugo) posits, “these miracles you see happening in this church are proof that I am a man of God, and that God is here. If what I say does not happen, then know that I am not a true man of God. In short do not call me a man of God” (Ezeugo, 2016).

Sawyer (1987, 3), points out that miracle working is an integral part of the prophet phenomenon. Miracle working constitutes one of the main ways by which society recognizes the prophet and acknowledges his power, in particular the truth and divine authority of his word, since people hailed Jesus as “a great prophet” after a healing miracle in the city of Nain (Lk. 7:11-17).

Ekarika (1987, 50) writes that miracles could be worked indirectly in favour of a doctrine if a man who claims to be a messenger from God in turn appeals openly to the miracles as a guarantee of his divine mission. He cites an example of St. Paul who established his apostolic identity by appealing to the miracles that accompanied his labours (2 Corinthians 12:12). So the miracle, by directly proving the divine mission of the legate, indirectly proves the divine origin of the doctrine or religion he is preaching. Ekarika therefore concludes that it should be definitely clear that the miracle was wrought either directly or indirectly for the purpose of guaranteeing that doctrine. Christ definitely worked miracles to prove the divine origin and authority of his doctrine. He asserted in clear terms and by his manner of acting that a miracle he was about to perform was for the expressed purpose of vindicating his doctrine. Thus, before healing the paralytic at Capernaum, Jesus stated clearly, “but that you know that the son of man has power on earth to forgive sins...” (Matt. 9:6). In support of this position concerning the Pentecostal churches in Owerri, Emerole (1995, 41) postulates that "it is not mere sweet talk to say that the fire of miracles, signs, and wonders has been kindled at the Overcomers Christian Mission and as many as it pleases God to use are catching up with this fire.” It is as though God in his wisdom has elected to use the ministry to reach out to people at this point in time. He simply, as the Apostle Peter prayed in Acts 4:29-30, stretches forth his hands to heal and wrought signs and wonders.

Onwu (1999, 187-189) argues that, like Jesus's miracles in the Bible, the Pentecostal churches' miracles are part of the proclamation of the kingdom of God. They are designed not for divine authority alone, not for amazement, and not for personal popularity, but to awaken repentance (cf. Matt. 11:20-21 and Luke 10:13).

It appears that the Pentecostal churches use the claims of the miraculous to show that through the power of the Holy Ghost new grounds are being broken. The cures and healings as claimed by the beneficiaries in these churches were unique not because they were merely unprecedented but because they were characteristics of the new age as could be found in the book of Isaiah 35:5-6. Stanton (1989, 219) states that the miracles of Jesus were signs but not proof of the kingdom of God. The outsiders could see and hear but not perceive and understand (Mk. 4:10, 8:18). They were intended to convey the reality of God's kingly rule. In the Pentecostal churches in Owerri, the miracles are not only signs but also demonstrations that they carry not just an individual, local, and contemporary physical significance but carry a general, eternal, and spiritual meaning. Pastor Ngaodi of Grace Tabernacle Church states that the point made in the case of the man born blind was that individual sicknesses, sufferings, and difficulties in human life are not necessarily attributed to individual sin but are a result of ancestral curses and the activities of wicked people.

The claims of miracles are to further manifest the knowledge of God. Pastor Henry Ngamdi of Overflowing Church of Christ agrees, arguing that the knowledge of God receives a bigger boost when miracles happen (Ngamdi, 2016. This view for Ekarika (1986, 26) aligns with that of Thomas Aquinas that there is no better way of making it obvious that the whole gamut of nature is subject to the divine will than for God from time to time to do something over and beyond the order of nature. By so doing, God makes it clear that the order of creation flows from himself: not from any necessity of nature, but by his own free will. We should not deem it frivolous that God should perform something in corporal creatures directed towards an intelligent being, whose nature is to know God.

There is nothing strange, then, in having an occurrence in corporal nature serve as a means of bringing knowledge about God to intelligent beings. It becomes impossible to therefore deny that miracles in Pentecostal churches in Owerri like those performed by Jesus Christ, were meant more or less than to teach great spiritual truths (the existence and knowledge of God (Ryle, 1976, 494). Christopher Nwanna of Christian Evangelical Liberation Mission stresses that, as a believer in miracles, he prays for miracles because they are means of fulfilling the biblical injunction of setting the captives free and of liberating the people from poverty, joblessness, hunger, and other vicissitudes of life which obstruct people from making progress in life. He sees miracles in his church as performing the role of liberation theology (Nwanna, 2020).

The problems which miracles have come to ameliorate are well captured by Okoro (1994, 84), who opines that Africa is far from being in tranquility and order. It is in turmoil because of ethnic rivalries, racial strife, coups, counter-coups, refugee problems, and violations of basic human rights. Foreign and domestic tyranny, exploitation (ever since the colonial days), and protracted hunger, disease, and death seem present from time immemorial. No doubt the call by Africans to develop their own liberation theology geared towards the evil structures peculiar to the continent seems to have been answered by the deployment of miracles as strong tools.

Conclusion

The central or major theology of the Pentecostal churches in Owerri from this research is miracle theology. It is the cornerstone of their theology and the reason for giving offering, tithes, praises, testimonies, prayers, and the entire church service. Miracles top all discussions, programmes, activities, and concerns of the churches. It is therefore safe to argue that the theology of miracle drives the sustenance of the churches from the clergy to the congregation. It is the major determinant of the mobility of Christian congregants within the area of study. Pentecostal faithfuls in Owerri are always on the move in search of the miraculous to satisfy their needs. There is nothing to show that they are genuine seekers of true repentance or to be edified by the gospel. Most of them are simply on the move to locate miracles. The seekers are not new converts of Christian religion but are already converts of other churches, including Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches. Women are more affected than men by this movement. If they are not searching for babies through pregnancy, they are battling one form of ill health or the other, especially the challenges of spiritual husbands and "mamiwota" (mermaid) spirit.

To satisfy the population of these seekers of miracles, there has been a rise in the number of Pentecostal churches in Owerri. As note earlier, the researcher saw over 60 of such churches. No doubt this rise in the number of churches has produced fake pastors and ministers of miracles who are leveraging the quest for miracles to dupe gullible and unsuspecting seekers of miracles. The accumulating pressures from those in demand of miracles may also have forced some Pentecostal churches to misplace their priorities from the onset by placing and laying as much or more emphasis on miracles than the salvation of human souls. This imbalance accounts for these churches' inability to hold on for very long. While some Pentecostal churches are growing, many others are shrinking. There are now Christians who are simply in search of miracles without *metanoia* (change of heart). In the process, many such seekers may have been duped of their valuables and money. Many may have been forced to abandon their faith, especially when the miraculous has failed to happen. In all, the evangelization of the people has taken a back seat, allowing the theology of miracles to flourish. This imbalance ought to be checked by every Christian, the Church, and the society at large.

Recommendations

The observations just discussed are not in any way to suggest that there are no genuine seekers of the gospel in the Pentecostal churches in Owerri. Nor are they suggestive that some Pentecostal ministers are not actually or truly empowered by God to perform miracles. No doubt some people have encountered genuine miracles. But over-emphasizing and hyping miracles out of proportion will not serve any useful purpose. As Christians, miracle seekers should first be seekers of true repentance and followers of Christ. The clergy should be seekers of genuine biblical truths. It is only through a robust application of the sincerity of purpose across the board that the propagation of the gospel of Christianity in Jesus can effectively be achieved.

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An Elusive Consensus: Traits and Competencies of Movement Catalysts

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Abstract

Mission literature that addresses the key characteristics of movement catalysts is for the most part based on personal observations and reflections. A recent study by Bethany Research Institute included an extensive literature review that found there is no consensus among trusted thinkers regarding what effective movement catalysts' most important traits actually are. Such a confusing range of understanding is not a minor issue, since effective leadership is vital to the emergence of all movements. To help clear the way toward arriving at a shared understanding of effective catalysts' qualities, this article seeks to understand the reasons why leading mission thinkers have widely divergent views.

Key Words: catalysts, competencies, movements, pioneers, traits

Introduction

We know what an effective movement catalyst looks like, don't we? We should! We need to know the qualities, traits, and competencies that characterize effective pioneers who take the kingdom where it is not yet realized. At least, we should have an intuitive understanding of the qualities of these important people who advance the kingdom of God. The fact is: We don't! A systematic look at the evangelical literature that has been published on movement catalysts reveals this lack of clarity. This confused situation constitutes a significant problem, because only when we understand the profile of pioneers can we effectively mentor, equip, develop, and place them.

With the need for consensus about catalyst characteristics in mind, this article explores the missiological implications of findings from a wide-ranging review of evangelical literature conducted by some of us associated with Bethany Research Institute (BRI). That review was to lay the foundation for an extensive empirical research project to discover the core personal traits and ministry competencies of mission pioneers who have effectively catalyzed a movement to Christ (CPM, DMM, T4T, etc.). The literature review went much further than a mere academic formality, cataloguing what had already been written on the topic. Instead, the review created an opportunity to compare and contrast what leading voices in the field are saying about movement catalysts (Bloomberg & Volpe 2008), as well as to generate a new understanding of the subject.

Lack of Agreement in the Literature

It is important to recognize first that the literature on movement catalysts is not well developed. The few publications that address this subject sum up the intuitive understanding of key movement thinkers. Unfortunately, these intuitions have serious limitations, as they derive either from the cumulative experience of a single seasoned individual or from analysis of a limited number of case studies. Carefully reviewing the literature gives detail and substance to the nature of this lack of consensus about movement catalyst characteristics.

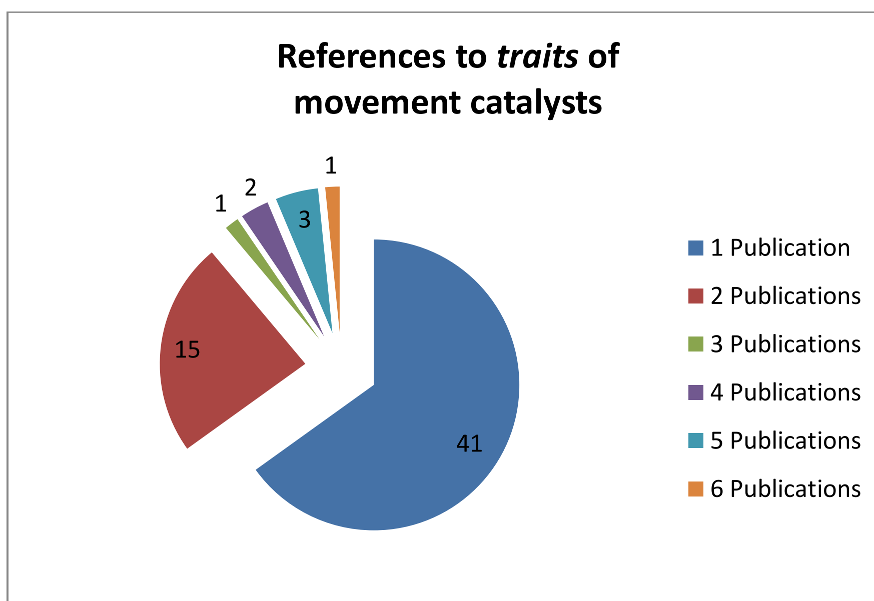
According to our survey, the most relevant literature consists of 14 monographs (books, articles, and research papers) that address in some way the traits and competencies of movement catalysts. The authors use various terms for those whom this study labels as "movement

catalysts"—"pioneer," "apostolic agent," "movement leader," and "catalyst," to name a few. We identified a total of 64 different traits and 46 competencies listed in the various publications. One of the first discoveries that stands out from these two long lists is that there is very little overlap between the traits and competencies put forward by the different authors. This lack of consistency has probably handicapped both thinking and practice in the movement world. However, before we explore the implications of what we found in the literature, we should first examine the specific findings on traits and competencies in the relevant literature.

Traits of Movement Catalysts

For our purposes, the "traits" of a movement catalyst consist of their personal characteristics which contribute to consistent leadership effectiveness. Trait researcher Stephen Zaccaro puts it this way: the traits of a leader are simply the "qualities that differentiate leaders from non-leaders" (2007, p. 12). To apply this definition more specifically to our context, "traits" are the qualities that differentiate effective catalysts from other pioneer missionaries.

The sizeable majority (41) of 64 traits identified with movement catalysts were referenced in only a single publication. Only half (23) of the total number were mentioned by more than one author. As Graph 1 below illustrates, even the 23 traits mentioned by more than one author do not represent anything like a consensus (see Appendix A for further details).



Graph 1

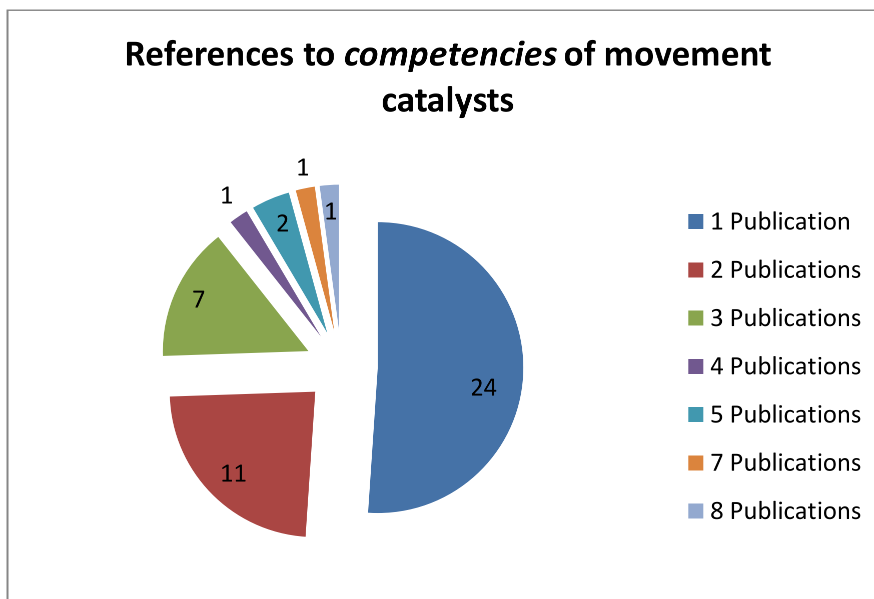
The graph above makes it abundantly clear that the vast majority (89%) of these traits were mentioned by only one or two authors. That fact also means that only 11 percent were mentioned in more than two publications. Furthermore, even the single most commonly identified trait, "perpetual learner," was mentioned in only six of the 14 publications. We see a similar phenomenon in the literature regarding ministry competencies.

Competencies of Movement Catalysts

When applied to movement catalysts, a "competency" represents an area of knowledge or skill critical for the catalyzing of a movement, always related to an activity or outcome. Competencies

should be distinguished from traits in that they are "what leaders can accomplish" as opposed to traits which identify "who leaders are" (Katz 1955, p. 34).

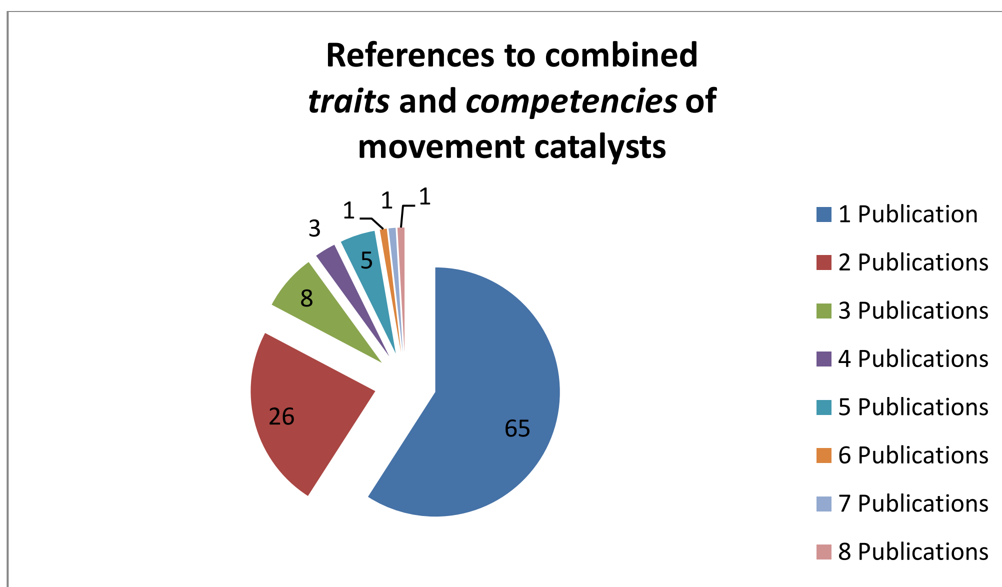
As we turn to considering the competencies of catalysts, we found only a little more agreement across the publications than with traits. We identified a total of 47 competencies that were listed, but less than half (23) appeared in more than one publication, as shown in Graph 2 below (see Appendix B for more details).



Graph 2

Again, this diverse labeling of competencies illustrates the lack of consensus about what a movement catalyst's competency profile should actually be. Of the 47 total competencies identified, a significant majority (35) were mentioned by only one or two authors. Only one competency—that of "delegation/equipping"—came anywhere close to what we could call a consensus, appearing in only a slight majority (eight) of the 14 publications.

If we combine traits and competencies together, we end up with a total of 110 separate items listed in the literature, represented below in Graph 3.



Graph 3

In this third and last graph we can see that the vast majority (83%) of the traits and competencies of movement catalysts discussed in the literature appeared in only one or two publications. It is thus safe to say that our wide examination of the relevant mission literature uncovered a significant lack of consensus as to what an effective catalyst looks like. This wide range of viewpoints is not a minor detail, since effective leadership is vital to the emergence of all movements.

We believe that is important to understand the reasons why leading mission thinkers have such different views about effective movement catalysts. We propose four possible interpretations of this lack of consensus, all with implications that need serious consideration.

Lack of Consensus as a Problem

One way to think about the lack of consensus described above is to view it as a problem. People may find it disconcerting when those who are considered experts do not agree on an important topic. After all, when competent people study the same phenomena, they will come to basically the same conclusion or at least similar conclusions, right? Unfortunately, viewing the lack of consensus as a problem may constitute a problem in and of itself, because such a view—particularly with respect to understanding movement catalysts—oversimplifies a very complex subject.

Effectively catalyzing a Christ-ward movement involves multifaceted human-to-human interactions, as well as the somewhat mysterious domain of divine-human interaction. Intellectually, we accept the idea that launching a movement is a complex process, yet subconsciously we wish it were easier to understand. Perhaps the lack of consensus in the literature expresses this very complexity. The multifaceted nature of how movements begin can serve as a helpful reminder that the hard work of thinking about complex realities better equips us to wrestle with the challenges of catalyzing movements. Furthermore, being aware of this complexity helps us see other, more productive ways of thinking about the issue of describing effective movement catalyzers.

Lack of Common Nomenclature

Another factor that may partly contribute to the lack of consensus in the literature is the use of different terms for conceptually similar traits and competencies. For example, the literature review identified each of the following traits separately:

- Strong personality (Miley 2003)
- Boldness (Prinz 2016; Larsen 2020)
- Aggressiveness (Larsen 2020)
- Over-assertiveness (Sinclair 2005)
- Tenacity/not back down (Miley 2003)
- Action-focused (Smith 2014)

Although this set does not represent formal linguistic equivalents, the terms' semantic ranges certainly overlap significantly due to conceptual similarities. Similar semantic range clusters can be seen among others of the 64 traits identified in the literature. Likewise, the list of competencies contains several of these clusters. Two examples will suffice:

- Gains a following (Miley 2003)
- Influence (Miley 2003)
- Leadership (Sinclair 2015)

and

- Vision casting (Sinclair 2015)
- Inspiring vision (Prinz & Goldhor 2022a)

These clustered lists demonstrate that one of the reasons for a lack of consensus is the way individual authors and researchers use terms, along with the differing nuances of meaning they intend by those word choices. At the same time, we need to emphasize that, even if all publications were synthesized and their nomenclature standardized, a clear consensus as such would not be achieved.

While this difficulty in reaching a consensus may seem somewhat obvious, one important implication may not be. As the study of movements is becoming a sub-discipline within missiology, those who research them will need to start using the same terminology. Perfect unanimity seems unlikely, but a move toward common nomenclature would represent a big step forward in the development of the sub-discipline. When researchers and practitioners do not share the same vocabulary, they often talk past each other. As those who speak and write about movements and those who catalyze them, we recognize both the importance of nuance of meaning and the need for some degree of commonality in order to enable clear communication.

This importance of balancing the needs for nuanced meaning and clear communication demonstrates another way the work of Bethany Research Institute (Prinz & Goldhor 2022b) can contribute to our understanding of movements. Great effort was taken to harmonize the terms found in the literature so they could be used in the study of movement catalysts. As such, these distilled terms could provide a helpful step toward a shared nomenclature, used by both field missionaries and missiologists alike when talking and writing about movement catalysts.

Lack of Dialog among Movement Thinkers

When studying the publications on movement catalysts, we found that one author referencing another was an exception rather than the rule. Sinclair (2005), Dent (2012), and Smith (2014) were notable exceptions, but even then Sinclair and Smith quote only one other author. The vast majority of authors writing about movement catalysts never refer to any other publications. Where is the academic discourse, one must wonder? Where are we seeing the iron sharpening iron among reflective practitioners?

Unfortunately, it appears that many if not most authors research, reflect, and record in silos with a complete lack of healthy, robust dialog among researchers and movement thought leaders. Although solitary research might be common in the early stages of a budding field of thought, it must not continue. We propose that a new academic field of movement leadership, under the discipline of missiology, should emerge to facilitate such dialog. The fields of organizational leadership, pastoral leadership, and missional leadership exist; why not movement leadership? The time for the inception of this field has come.

Lack of actual clarity

The final way we can understand the lack of consensus about movement catalysts' traits and competencies is to see it as a call for intentional effort to gain greater clarity. As we have already noted, the lack of consensus among thought leaders is partly a reflection of the complexity of the subject at hand. The Christ-ward movements happening around the world today are undoubtedly complex social, spiritual, and religious phenomena. No two are exactly alike, nor are those who lead them, as reflected in the literature review results. We can appreciate the variety of the work that has already been published, while at the same time recognizing its limitations. Clearly new research, fresh writing, and more dialog is needed on what type of catalysts God uses to start movements.

This need explains why Bethany Research Institute has poured hundreds of work hours into the study of movement catalysts. We hope that many others will invest the time to tap into the resulting wealth of information by reading, reflecting on, and applying our findings—as well as contribute their own research findings to the overall discussion.

Conclusion: A Call to Dig Deeper

We live in an exciting time in the history of world mission. God is moving in incredible ways among the unreached, and various kinds of Christ-ward movements make up a large part of that picture. However, within a new and developing field of study, the literature about these movements shows a lack of clarity. In particular, our review of the literature revealed a striking lack of consensus among thought leaders as to how to describe the essential qualities, or traits and competencies, of the pioneer mission leaders this article has called "movement catalysts."

As noted above, there are several different interpretive lenses through which to understand the lack of consensus about what makes up a movement catalyst. First, we can regard the lack of consensus as a problem. However, this perspective oversimplifies the multifarious and mysterious phenomena we call movements, the complexity of which should openly be acknowledged. Alternatively, the confusion can be attributed to a lack of common nomenclature for movement catalysts' traits and competencies. A third way to understand the lack of consensus is to attribute it to a lack of dialog among thought leaders. Finally, the need for consensus can serve as a call for

the mission community to spend more time researching and reflecting on the very important, complex topic of movements and the pioneers who catalyze them, with the goal of greater clarity. We hope this article will stimulate more study and dialog, and we invite movement researchers and thought leaders to engage with this study and others like it. We believe that such missiological reflection will help equip a new generation of movement catalysts and could help lead to a major advance in world mission.

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Appendix A: Comparison of Traits of Apostolic Leaders Showing Distribution across Publications

Traits	Publications by Author and Date												
	Miley 2003	Sinclair 2005	Stevens 2008	Chard & Chard 2008	Nelson 2009	Hirsch & Catchim 2012 + Hirsch 2017	Dent 2012	Watson 2011 + Watson & Watson 2014	Travis & Travis 2014	Smith 2014	Addison 2015	Prinz 2016	Larsen 2016 + 2020
Big picture thinking	x					x							
Strong personality	x												
Self-awareness	x												
Desire to initiate	x					x						X	
Independent	x	x											
Nonconformist	x												
Thrive on challenge	x	x											
Critical	x												
Impatience	x												
Tendency to overextend	x	x											
Hunger for depth with God	x	x			x					x		x	

Traits	Publications by Author and Date												
	Miley 2003	Sinclair 2005	Stevens 2008	Chard & Chard 2008	Nelson 2009	Hirsch & Catchim 2012 + Hirsch 2017	Dent 2012	Watson 2011 + Watson & Watson 2014	Travis & Travis 2014	Smith 2014	Addison 2015	Prinz 2016	Larsen 2016 + 2020
Broad in their horizons	x	x											
Tenacity/not backing down	x	x						x		x			x
Want good handle on things		x											
Quirky/hard to get along		x											
Self-confidence		x										x	
Over-assertiveness		x											
Evangelistic heart				x					x	x		x	
Vision				x				x		x		x	x
Praiseworthy character/ Integrity				x			x	x		x			
Obedience to God								x					
Humility								x					
Determination to succeed								x					
Willingness to risk								x					
Ability to forgive								x					
Courage to change								x					
Passion				x									
Servanthood				x									
Love of people				x								x	
Availability				x									
Perpetual learner					x			x	x	x	x	x	
Reflective					x								
Sacrifice							x						
Focus							x				x		

Traits	Publications by Author and Date												
	Miley 2003	Sinclair 2005	Stevens 2008	Chard & Chard 2008	Nelson 2009	Hirsch & Catchim 2012 + Hirsch 2017	Dent 2012	Watson 2011 + Watson & Watson 2014	Travis & Travis 2014	Smith 2014	Addison 2015	Prinz 2016	Larsen 2016 + 2020
Passionate urgency										x		x	
Single-mindedness									x	x			
Love for God										x			
Led by God										x			
Action-focus										x			
Results-orientation										x			
Perseverance									x	x		x	
Been with and called by Jesus											x		
Intentional spiritual growth			x										
Being a model			x										x
Strong work ethic			x					x					
Holy discontent			x										
Bible-driven			x									x	
Listening for God's voice			x										
Live the Gospel											x		
Not fenced in											x		
Boldness												x	x
Emotional Stability												x	
Dependability												x	
Adaptability												x	
Drive for Responsibility												x	
Drive to Achieve												x	
Desire to Excel												x	
Intelligence						x						x	

Traits	Publications by Author and Date												
	Miley 2003	Sinclair 2005	Stevens 2008	Chard & Chard 2008	Nelson 2009	Hirsch & Catchim 2012 + Hirsch 2017	Dent 2012	Watson 2011 + Watson & Watson 2014	Travis & Travis 2014	Smith 2014	Addison 2015	Prinz 2016	Larsen 2016 + 2020
Confidence in the Spirit												x	
Confidence in Locals												x	
Inspiring Personality												x	
Sociability												x	
Aggressiveness													x
Entrepreneurial						x							

Appendix B: List of Competencies from the Literature Showing Distribution across Publications

Competencies	Publications by Author and Date													
	Miley 2003	Sinclair 2005	Stevens 2008	Chard & Chard 2008	Allen 2009	Nelson 2009	Hirsch & Catchim 2012 + Hirsch 2017	Dent 2012	Watson 2011 + Watson & Watson 2014	Travis & Travis 2014	Smith 2014	Addison 2015	Prinz 2016	Larsen 2016 + 2020
Gift of faith	x	x		x				x			x	x	x	
Influence	x												x	
Gain following	x	x							x					
Initiate		x												
Make things happen		x												
Vision casting		x	x								x		x	
Bible teaching		x					x							
Leadership		x									x			
Prayerfulness/ Intercession				x		x				x	x		x	
Experience in ministry				x										

Competencies	Publications by Author and Date													
	Miley 2003	Sinclair 2005	Stevens 2008	Chard & Chard 2008	Allen 2009	Nelson 2009	Hirsch & Catchim 2012 + Hirsch 2017	Dent 2012	Watson 2011 + Watson & Watson 2014	Travis & Travis 2014	Smith 2014	Addison 2015	Prinz 2016	Larsen 2016 + 2020
Delegation/ equipping			x	x	x				x	x	x	x		x
Recognize and catalyze gifts			x	x	x				x	x				
Evaluation of progress						x					x			
Leader development									x		x			x
Team building									x					x
Listening skills									x					
Knowledge of movements									x		x		x	
Strategize and implement plans									x					
Ethnographic learning										x				
Cross-cultural befriending			x							x				x
Miraculous gifts							x			x	x			x
Gift of evangelism										x		x		x
Advocacy										x				
Discipling							x				x	x	x	
Mentoring											x			x
Exercise accountability											x			
Cognitive ability											x			
Training			x									x		
Resource brokering			x											
Identify partners			x										x	
Connect with people												x		

Competencies	Publications by Author and Date													
	Miley 2003	Sinclair 2005	Stevens 2008	Chard & Chard 2008	Allen 2009	Nelson 2009	Hirsch & Catchim 2012 + Hirsch 2017	Dent 2012	Watson 2011 + Watson & Watson 2014	Travis & Travis 2014	Smith 2014	Addison 2015	Prinz 2016	Larsen 2016 + 2020
Gather communities							x		x			x		x
Ask DBS questions														x
Guide multiplying groups														x
Wholistic community development														x
Inner healing prayer														x
Group coaching														x
Assess health of groups and clusters														x
Multiplication of movements														x
Complex Thinking													x	
Innovation							x						x	
Influencing of Beliefs													x	
Inspiring Vision							x						x	
Challenging Assumptions													x	
Personal Consideration													x	
Empowering													x	

Book Review

Darren T. Duerksen, *Christ-Followers in Other Religions: The Global Witness of Insider Movements*

Reviewed by Ivan Satyavrata

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Duerksen, Darren T. (2022). *Christ-Followers in Other Religions: The Global Witness of Insider Movements*. Oxford: Regnum, 206 pp., £15, paperback, ISBN: 978-1-914454-64-6; Fortress Press (2023), 190 pp., $21.00, paperback, ISBN: 9781506497488, e-book, ISBN: 9781506497495.

Perhaps the greatest hindrance to people of other faiths being drawn to Christ in erstwhile colonies of the West is the perception that the gospel enterprise was a sub-set of the imperial "Christianizing" project and an assault on cherished ancestral cultural traditions, designed to undermine national identity. One of the greatest merits of Duerksen's work is the awareness it raises regarding the potential of Christ-ward movements to draw people to Christ in the postcolonial era. Insider movements seek to circumvent deep-seated anti-colonial sentiments in their attempts to share the "pure" gospel, minus the colonial-era missionary "baggage," so that people of other faiths are able to view Christ and his claims in all their simplicity and authenticity. This feature in itself makes this book an essential read for any thoughtful student of missions.

At the heart of Duerksen's project is an attempt to help us investigate more closely the tension inherent in identity struggles of "insider Christ-followers"—people of other faiths who decide to follow Christ yet choose to remain within their religious communities instead of identifying with the mainstream established Church. While acknowledging the complexity of the challenge, Duerksen nonetheless feels the experiences and insights of insiders provide a valuable crucible for the discovery of what he calls "alternative missiological imaginaries." This term, derived from the hermeneutic philosopher Charles Taylor's "social imaginary" (denoting the way in which people imagine and work to maintain the society in which they live), is fundamental to Duerksen's construct, which for him captures more accurately the distinctive contribution of insiders to the wider missiological discourse.

The author's purpose is clearly stated in his introduction: "The argument of this book is that insider movements are shaping alternative missiological imaginaries from which other Christ-followers can learn, or re-learn, insights about God and his mission" (15). Critiquing insider missional approaches and methods is thus not his main concern. His posture rather is one of respectful listening and learning how God might be at work within these movements and how the understanding of "outsiders" regarding mission, revelation, and the gospel could be enriched. This rare posture of humility in academic enquiry is a refreshing and admirable quality of his approach and runs right through every stage of his treatment.

Duerksen's approach is courageous in its attempt to tackle some extremely complex issues in inter-religious engagement impacting mission. In chapters 2 & 3, the nature of religion, religious tradition, and religiosity are all dealt with summarily, leading up to his main concern which is to make a case for the essential hybrid nature of all religion and religious tradition, including Christianity. Duerksen's case for the dynamic nature of religiosity is hard to dispute but lends itself to some questions. For instance, are there not elements especially within "prophetic" faiths such as Christianity and Islam which their adherents consider essential and non-negotiable—what

Andrew Walls would call the "pilgrim" strand in relation to Christian faith—that transcend space and time? Duerksen is clearly aware that there is a prescriptive dimension to Christ-followership: "it is certainly possible that such hybrid religiosity could dilute biblical revelation beyond recognition" (29). But one would have liked to see a careful scholar like Duerksen nuance his argument suitably in his explanation of hybrid religiosity. However, this lack of nuance is perhaps understandable given the extent and complexity of the terrain the author attempts to cover.

Duerksen's discussion of religion and hybrid religiosity lays the foundation for a fascinating discourse on God's activity in other religions. He draws from an impressive breadth of scholarship to support his case for the Spirit as a helpful starting point in understanding God's work in other religious traditions. But the depth of treatment is marked by an overemphasis on the subjective dimension of revelation as an event which occurs "if and when God reveals himself through his Spirit" (37), and a corresponding tendency to dilute the notion of objective truth in the Word as Scripture. Duerksen is, however, careful to land on a well-rounded trinitarian understanding, affirming firmly his Christo-centric commitment: "Salvation occurs only through Christ ... and the Spirit's work of re-creation finds its ultimate fulfilment through Christ" (43).

In chapters 4 and 5 [Section Two] we see Duerksen at his best, wanting his readers to understand insider movements on their own terms in his description and analysis of the experiences of insiders, past and present. We are introduced to some wonderful Christ-lovers as the journeys of select Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, and Native American figures are all in turn explored sensitively and fairly. His primary intent and interest is not so much to evaluate their thought and experience theologically, as much as to listen and learn from their struggle to integrate their ancestral community identity with their commitment to the Way of Christ. He sees the missiological imaginaries that emerge from these struggles as gifts to the wider body of Christ.

In the following chapters [Section Three] Duerksen probes more deeply into the content of these imaginaries, focusing on four key issues: how insiders view the scriptures of their ancestral traditions in relation to the Bible; how they relate their traditional notions of salvation to that offered in Christ; what change or movement conversion to Christ entails; and how their journey with Christ affects their relationship to their family. He devotes two chapters [6 & 7] to a well-informed and fairly detailed treatment of the critical theological question of religious revelations. Some may find his key premise that the Spirit is actively at work in revealing himself through the scriptures of other religions problematic, but Duerksen leaves us in no doubt that insiders seem to place the Bible clearly and consistently in a privileged position as authoritative for faith and life.

Duerksen's treatment of how insiders view salvation and their journey to Christ is extremely helpful and a necessary corrective to traditional western expectations of conversion narratives in at least two key areas. Firstly, the experiences of the vast majority of people of other faiths who come to Christ are best understood in terms of a process—what Duerksen rightly refers to as a "journey." Even in instances where individuals experience a climactic movement by way of a power-encounter, dramatic healing, or "revelatory" dream, a full appropriation of the gospel and realization of its implications is usually a gradual process.

Secondly, in Duerksen's insightful explanation of the complex factors involved in the transformation process of conversion, most pertinent is his convincing case for discerning continuity within discontinuity in the conversion journeys of people of other faiths. In any individual's quest for God, it is but natural that her search begins and is grounded in the tradition of her birth. When a person of another faith first turns to Christ, he at first tends to be negative

towards his past experience, but in most instances with time such individuals go through a re-visioning experience. They begin to "re-story" not just their own journey but often "their community's past and tradition via their experiences and insights regarding Jesus" (137).

In his conclusion Duerksen summarizes the challenge of the missiological imaginaries of "insider movements" to traditional western "colonial" missiologies in terms of a mending, patient, and marginal missiology, reaffirming the original intent of his study: to inform, enrich, challenge, and even de-construct western "colonizing" missiologies. Duerksen's scholarship is sophisticated, based as it is on thorough research and first-hand acquaintance with insider movements, and his argument is compelling if at times provocative. But whether or not one agrees with the conclusions of the author, this book is ground-breaking in its creative originality and will set the terms of future discourse for reflection on interreligious engagement. For this reason alone, apart from its wealth of scholarship, *Christ-Followers in Other Religions* is essential reading not just for those interested in insider movements, but for mission theologians, scholar-practitioners, and all those committed to sharing Christ authentically and respectfully with people of other faiths.

Book Review

Emma Wild-Wood, *The Mission of Apolo Kivebulaya: Religious Encounter & Social Change in the Great Lakes c.1865-1935*

Reviewed by Andrew Ndegwa

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Wild-Wood, Emma (2020). *The Mission of Apolo Kivebulaya: Religious Encounter and Social Change in the Great Lakes c. 1865-1935*. London: James Currey, 336 pp., £70.00 / $105.00, hardcover, ISBN: 9781847012463; £24.99 / $29.95, Ebook (EPDF), ISBN: 9781787448995; (EPUB), ISBN: 9781787449916.

Written by Prof. Emma Wild-Wood, this book is a comprehensive historical analysis of the life of Apolo Kivebulaya, a Ugandan Anglican Christian who dedicated his life to being a missionary in what is now Western Uganda and Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Prof. Wild-Wood is Professor of African Religions and World Christianity and Co-director of the Centre for the Study of World Christianity at the University of Edinburgh. Having previously lived and taught in both Uganda and DRC, Prof. Wild-Wood's research has focused on religious encounters in East and Central Africa. She has a particular expertise in the growth of mission-initiated denominations in this region from the 1800s to the present day.

With Kivebulaya as the protagonist, Prof. Wild-Wood uses biography to expertly map out the rapid political, social, and religious changes that took place in the interlacustrine region of Uganda and Eastern DRC in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The author reveals how Kivebulaya, a man born as a lowly commoner (*mukopi*) on the fringes of the kingdom of Buganda, became a clergyman, a church founder, and an international missionary of repute during a period of upheaval that was marked by civil war, the emergence of Islam through foreign trade routes, the emergence of Christianity along with European missionaries, and the founding of the Protectorate of Uganda by British colonialists. Prof. Wild-Wood places Kivebulaya in the midst of these changes and demonstrates how they impacted his life and influenced his decisions.

Summary

In the first chapter of this study, Prof. Wild-Wood examines the memorialisation of Kivebulaya. The author notes that Kivebulaya is not remembered on a national stage in the same way the Uganda Martyrs are. There is no national public holiday of remembrance of Kivebulaya. However, he is remembered in writings such as biographies and stories as a model missionary because he "epitomised the missionary belief that profound Christian commitment knew no barriers of race, ethnicity, age and gender" (55). Through "self-sacrifice and hardship," the author notes, Kivebulaya "continues to be presented as a model for school-children and an important part of African Christian history" (58-59).

The second chapter excavates the early background of Kivebulaya, named "Waswa Kasirye" at birth. "Waswa" indicated that he was an elder twin, while "Kasirye" signified that he belonged to the Nvuma Clan (44, 61). Kivebulaya was born as a commoner in a highly stratified society and grew up during a period of political tumult in Buganda. He possibly apprenticed as a healer in his youth in Singo but eventually moved closer to the capital of Buganda at Mengo Hill to work in road construction.

The next chapter tells the story of how Kivebulaya became a Christian. He took part in the wars of 1888-89 that centred around religion. He initially was fighting in the Muslim faction,

but after his conscience was troubled, he categorically allied himself with the Christians (105). He then fought for the Christians against the Bunyoro Kingdom and the Baganda Muslim party (110). He then enrolled in baptism and started to reshape himself and his obligations by loosening his Buganda socio-cultural ties and considering loyalty to God as paramount, living counter-culturally. For instance, after a short-lived marriage due to the death of his wife, Kivebulaya decided never to marry again (114). Under the patronage of Ham Mukasa, he became a church teacher in Toro and thus began his extraordinary journey as a missionary.

In the fourth chapter, we see how difficult Kivebulaya's time in Toro was at first. After only a few months there, he was imprisoned and returned to Mengo after being falsely accused in December 1895 (135). He returned to Toro the following year, and that became his base. In December 1886, Kivebulaya started making itinerancy trips to Mboga in what is now DRC. He also met hostility in Mboga, being arrested but eventually released (146-154). As he continued his ministry in the Toro Kingdom and in Mboga, Kivebulaya grew in status and became a deacon in December 1900 (154).

The following chapter discusses the growing Anglican church in the Toro Kingdom of Western Uganda and how Kivebulaya's missionary vision was at the heart of this growth. He was the most senior African clergyman in Toro during this time (164), and he became deeply involved in developing mission stations there as well as pursuing social reform through Christian teaching.

In the two final chapters, Prof. Wild-Wood shows how Kivebulaya gave up his well-earned, year-long sabbatical to minister in Mboga. Once he moved to Mboga, he settled there until his death. A highlight of his time there was his travels in the forest to minister to the Mbuti. He was deeply committed to the translation of the Bible to the Mbuti language. During his time in DRC, Kivebulaya facilitated "an understanding of hunter-gatherer peoples as fully human" (261). His translation of Mark's Gospel into the Mbuti language became a tool in producing ethnographic knowledge on pygmies (263).

Evaluation

As a multilingual social historian who has accumulated a wealth of experience in living, teaching, and immersing herself in the life and culture of both Uganda and DRC, Prof. Wild-Wood stands at a unique vantage point for this study. Moreover, her research, publications, and general proficiency in the area of Christianity in both Uganda and DRC from the 1800s to present times lends this book an elevated level of expertise and authority.

Published in 2020, this book offers a timely reminder of the somewhat waning memory of Apolo Kivebulaya, a pioneering African missionary to other Africans. It is a welcome addition to the literature that demonstrates that "modern African Christianity is primarily a product of African agency and initiative" (Hanciles, 2008, 129). Moreover, this book is timely because it contributes to the topic of inculturation of Christianity in Africa. Using Kivebulaya as an example, Prof. Wild-Wood offers a counter-narrative that demonstrates that not all Africans wanted continuity between Christianity and indigenous traditions and religions. He was an outlier who was profoundly counter-cultural and sought for a radical departure from spirit (*lubaale*) worship, polygyny, observing clan rites, and other traditional practices. Kivebulaya "focused on establishing translocal Christian communities which eschewed past customs" (90). He did not focus on a continuity of indigenous traditions within Christianity or an Africanisation of Christianity. Prof. Wild-Wood's counter-narrative, therefore, offers a challenge to "a generation of East African theologians" who have argued for the inculturation of Christianity in Africa and "have been critical of European missionaries who denigrated African culture" (10). She writes that these theologians who were brought up in the last decades

of British rule in East Africa “rarely pondered why earlier generations of Africans, like Kivebulaya, might have welcomed new and foreign cultural systems of meaning as responses to domestic issues” (10).

Prof. Wild-Wood’s study finds a home in the field of World Christianity. World Christianity is an emerging field that encompasses the telling of and learning from stories of how God can and does use local, micro-level agents to create macro-level Christian movements that can have a global impact. The life and mission of Kivebulaya both impacted the East African Revival within the Anglican Church regionally as well as influenced the global missionary movement for a generation. According to Wild-Wood, Kivebulaya was regularly evoked in missionary circles between the 1920s and 1960s (54), and “European missionary writers knew that Kivebulaya outdid them in zeal, tenacity and in goodness” (55).

In addition to the field of World Christianity, students of the history of Christianity—particularly in Africa—will find this book to be of much interest because it “contributes to the religious historiography of the northern Great Lakes region” (2). This study has tremendous depth because it is much more than simply a biography of Kivebulaya. It is also a historical analysis of the rapidly changing social and political environments of Uganda and DRC in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Prof. Wild-Wood places Kivebulaya in the larger context of the modern missionary movement, factions among African kingdoms, slave trading of Buganda commoners by the elite and Arab slave traders, and colonisation. As such, students of such topics as missions and the political history of Uganda will also find this volume to be helpful.

The sources that inform Wild-Wood’s research are wide-ranging. These eclectic sources range from university archives to published books and articles to dissertations as well as interviews. Archives from schools such as Makerere University, Cambridge University, University of Birmingham, Uganda Christian University, and Mountains of the Moon University in Fort Portal, Uganda, feature prominently in the sources. The listed bibliography covers a vast array of topics including colonialism, slavery, politics, Islam, homosexuality, race, ethnicity, gender, missions, and inculturation of Christianity. Additionally, the author lists 18 interviews mostly conducted between 2013 and 2015 that inform this book. This all-encompassing bibliography points to the rigour of this study. In producing this volume, Prof. Wild-Wood gives Kivebulaya’s life and mission a deservedly thorough academic and unbiased treatment.

The major strength of this book is how well-researched it is. It is a compelling volume that therefore offers great insight into the political, social, and religious changes in the East-Central African interlacustrine region. In this analysis of the life of Kivebulaya, Prof. Wild-Wood paints him as a counter-cultural, socio-religious reformer who gave up much for the sake of taking the gospel message past international boundaries to unreached people groups. After his death, his memory as an ascetic with a life-long commitment to itineration influenced the East African revivalists who themselves became profoundly influential.

Conclusion

Apolo Kivebulaya is an impressive model of commitment to missions. His ascetism and peace-making especially stand out. So does his humility, which allowed him to arrive in Mboga with a hoe, ready to farm for his food unlike his colleagues Petero Nsuguba and Sedulaka Zabunamakwata (141). It is worth mentioning that, even though the East African revivalists were in part inspired by Kivebulaya, Wild-Wood writes that he would most likely not have been part of it had he been alive. It is likely that he would have questioned the divisive elements of this movement (48-53). Another impressive trait of Kivebulaya is his efforts to learn the

local languages, such as the Toro and Mbuti languages, and his commitment to Bible translation into these languages.

Through this volume, Prof. Wild-Wood stands out as an exemplar of academic scholarship. The rigour of the research that informs this volume is shown by the timeline that it covers. In order to fairly depict, situate, and understand the life and impact of Kivebulaya, the author spares no effort in using a timeline that spans from the 1840s, well before the birth of Kivebulaya (c. 1865), to the contemporary age of growing neo-Pentecostalism in Africa. According to Wild-Wood, "studying Kivebulaya's life necessitates a wider periodisation of the region's history than often expected of Christian history of the region" (10).

This book is both an example and an inspiration to continue searching for and telling the untold stories of how God uses ordinary people in extraordinary ways to reveal himself to the world.

References

Hanciles, Jehu (2008). *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration, and the Transformation of the West*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.