

RITUAL AND CONGREGATIONAL HEALING

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ABSTRACT

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zambia

People experience worry occasionally. Africans sometimes interpret crises as arising from enemies or offended ancestors, whom, in anger, trouble the individual. If individuals believe that hexing comes from an enemy, then the problematic relationship between them will worsen if a hexing accusation becomes public. Such social eruptions can happen within church bodies, stifling progress.

Hexing is a symptom of anxiety and because such beliefs are traditional, the tradition has its own methods to bring back wholeness. This paper cites anthropologist Victor Turner for a deeper understanding of kinship, conflict and illness. Africans use rituals ostensibly to cure the patient or address their problems, through settling the conflict. However, most mainline African churches lack any ritual that addresses the conflict. Therefore, their adherents may visit other churches or traditional practitioners when under stress.

Can Christian ritual encourage reconciliation in the *Zambian Lutheran Church*? Might Zambians' faith deepen if liturgy inculturates African religious concepts?

Our ethnographic study involved a pastor's intensive during which we discussed liturgy, conflict, suffering, healing, prayer, and traditional religion. They then composed intercessory prayers which referred to African values: ancestors, farming, child-bearing, kinship/conflict, spirits, and illness. Each pastor experienced deep listening and personal hands-on prayer, for their consideration for possible inclusion in their own ministries. Afterwards, back home, these

pastors used the communal intercessory prayers and hands-on prayers for those worshippers carrying burdens of various kinds. I collected qualitative feedback from focus groups, pastors, and project leaders.

Feedback demonstrated that worship reduces anxiety. However, forgiving enemies remains difficult. Holding up commonly-held cultural values in the prayers was well received. Personal, hands-on healing prayers are essential. Using ritual objects was not formally assessed. The author's influence as a white missionary and cross-cultural limitations are considered, towards assessing to what extent the project findings are provisional, yet useful.

Tentative signs indicate that such a workshop and liturgical supplements can contribute to church transformation, including better relationships between members and pastors, and among pastors themselves.

Engaging traditional religion bears fruit for ministry. Concerns over the dead remain a spiritual priority. Forgiving enemies remains a spiritual challenge. Continued inculturation of worship holds promise for churches to deeply touch their adherents and have increased ownership of their liturgies.

DEDICATION

To Our Savior's Lutheran Church, of Lafayette, California,
who always trusted and supported me, even so far away.

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I would like to thank my dear wife Susan for her inspiration in my life and my work.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Narrative of Concern and Opportunity

My jaw still drops when I tell it. One of the fifteen pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zambia (ELC-Zambia), E. Rugowo, became quite ill in May, and was admitted to the main government hospital in Lusaka. Note that this hospital is very far below western standards of care. He was in pain, confused, with symptoms that were unclear to me. His Lutheran congregation and the ELC-Zambia Senior Pastor had also visited and prayed for him. After five days, he was not improving and the doctors were unable to make a diagnosis. They scheduled a lumbar puncture to extract spinal fluid for bacterial lab examination. Upon quiet advice from a nurse about the significant risks involved in such a procedure at that hospital, Rugowo's brother wisely discharged him. Instead of taking him to another hospital or doctor, the brother took him to his own rural village for two weeks, beyond the reach of the Senior Pastor's cell phone, and three hours out of town. Rugowo was very weak and semi-conscious. Note that Rugowo's family did not have the money to afford a private doctor.

Rugowo's brother practices Zionism, which is a blend of the Old Testament and indigenous African traditional religion and has nothing to do with Judaism.¹ African Zionism helps people navigate their problems through the control of unseen, malevolent forces. The brother kept Rugowo in his home and had Zionists praying for him daily, depending on the

¹ Zionism has its earliest origins in missionary activity by a church in Zion, Illinois, in the late nineteenth century, from which its name is drawn.

power of God whom Zionists claim is the God of the Bible. While the Zionists essentially camped out at the brother's house, nearby Lutheran congregations came to pray as well. While Rugowo's brother allowed the Lutherans to pray by him, they felt uncomfortable in the Zionist setting, and did not come as often as they wished. In addition, the nearest Lutheran pastor felt that Rugowo's brother had excluded him from extending sufficient pastoral care. Rugowo did ask to visit a small rural mission hospital nearby, where the doctor concluded that Rugowo had adult onset diabetes. He made some nutrition recommendations, and provided initial medications.

One day the Senior pastor came to visit Rugowo, having driven out from Lusaka. Despite waiting for three hours, he was unable to see Rugowo because he did not insist firmly that he be granted time with Rugowo, as was his right. (Pastors are normally accorded great respect in Africa). Later he learned that Rugowo did not want to see his pastor because he had brought Rugowo's lay parish worker, Mr. Moonga, along with him. Rugowo had since become convinced in a dream that his illness was caused by this co-worker. Many Africans, who are still pre-scientific, ascribe sustained illness to unseen forces manipulated by witches at the request of jealous persons who pay for this service. The local Zionist Bishop agreed that Rugowo had been hexed by an enemy, and apparently did not trust the Lutheran Church to be able to handle such spiritual matters adequately.

After two weeks of prayer, along with the ingesting of various Zionist herbs to stimulate vomiting, and the drinking of blessed water and special teas, Rugowo improved and regained some strength. Zionist *nyangas* (healers) can also use ritual steam baths, cuttings, washing, psycho-active plants, and extended forest journeys to heal individuals. He finally participated in

a Zionist worship service, in which he gave a testimonial to his healing at their hands. With them he had met his God, the healer.

Rugowo saw the messages I left on his cell phone, and called me as soon as he returned to Lusaka, where we had an extended sit-down discussion. He knew that the ELC-Zambia had said prayers for him during his absence. He told me his whole story and also his personal hurt over the betrayal of his lay parish worker, Moonga, in executing a plan for Rugowo to be hexed with a deadly illness. Listening to his experience with Zionism and his claims against Moonga was very challenging for me. However, I knew that a non-judgmental orientation would serve us both better. I did declare that I found his confidential accusation extraordinary, that such an accusation could divide his congregation, and that he must be careful regarding how he would handle it. Rugowo said that he would meet with Moonga privately over the matter. I know Moonga quite well; he has a good reputation in the ELC-Zambia, and the church council even considered him for ordination. I have never heard anyone else accuse him of engaging in the black arts. Rugowo and Moonga did have a subsequent meeting, and Rugowo told me that he was pleased at the outcome: they were able to resolve their mutual ill feelings. Unfortunately, the hexing claim had leaked, because Moonga later informed me how angry he was that Rugowo had damaged his good name with such an accusation without proof. He wanted an apology. Their difficult working relationship has not improved since this episode.

Rugowo also told me about his blood sugar problem. He asked if I could help find him a blood sugar measurement machine, which I did and he now measures his own blood sugar at home. He eagerly showed me the rural mission doctor's instructions with his recommended new nutrition program for stabilizing blood sugar and he said he was still in contact with the doctor

for follow-up. His belief in his western response to diabetes had no apparent bearing on his simultaneous holding on to traditional healing as his interpretive frame.

Alternatively, I have heard testimonials from African Christians who, depending solely and powerfully on the biblical God, are able to find healing after trauma without the use of African traditional religion. For example, I was working in a forest for a couple days in September 2013 clearing and marking the running path for our annual off-road running event with a group of Zambian workers I had hired to help me. When one of them, named Singidi, learned I was a pastor, he felt emboldened to tell me his story. We had ample time for me to ask him many questions for clarification.

Some years ago, his first born child was away visiting his wife's parents for the afternoon. This child, probably only one or two years old, put something foreign into his mouth and accidentally swallowed it. The child could not expel the object, which prevented the child from breathing. The child fell unconscious and the grandparents were not able to revive the child. By the time they reached the clinic, it was far too late and the child was pronounced dead. Singidi and his wife soon received word of the tragedy and entered the worst nightmare of any parent. He did not order an autopsy, as it seemed pointless to him, he recounted to me.

Within the first few days of this heartbreak, Singidi's brothers were extremely angry. They spent time with him, attempting to convince him that his wife's family was responsible for his child's death. His wife's family must have certainly used a witch for such a disaster to come upon him. After all, the child died while in the care of his wife's parents! They wanted Singidi to accompany them to a witchdoctor/witchfinder/diviner to verify the witch's identity and to orchestrate an appropriate murderous revenge on his wife's family. They also expected him to reject his wife as well. Singida was tempted by his brothers' proposals, as he was in great

emotional pain and confusion and at this point he and his wife were not even speaking. In the same period, Singidi's Pentecostal church community undertook frequent visits with him, singing and praying with him. Congregation members counseled him during his periods of great anger and desire for revenge. They advised him that vengeance was not his, but the Lord's. They told him that divorcing his wife is not acceptable for a Christian, nor is participating in acts of Satan (witching). They reminded him that his wife was also grieving. They offered that God gives, and God takes, and that His ways are not ours to understand right now. They reminded Singidi that he will be joined with his son in heaven. Despite all of this, Singidi remained in a great struggle.

On the day of the big funeral, there was much wailing, and people even attended with no connection to the grieving family because they heard a rumor that there was going to be violence at the funeral. They heard a rumor that Singidi, the father, was going to start a physical altercation with his wife's family members. Flanked by his congregation members, Singidi sat through the long funeral and graveside ceremony in torment, torn between the desire for reprisal and the call of the God he knew from his church. Ultimately, Singidi did not entertain his brothers' wishes, but stayed in his marriage, had more children, and released his child to the Lord. He admitted that sometimes the anger still rises up inside him, but in general he has peace and has even become a preacher.

I've listened to many narratives that illustrate how personal or social crises within the church are sometimes interpreted by Africans as resulting from enemies or offended ancestors, either of whom, in anger, might choose to hex, bewitch or trouble the individual or family. If individuals believe that hexing comes from an enemy, then the problematic relationship will become even worse if an accusation of hexing is made public.

Stories like these have captured this western missionary. Most days I engage with my Zambian colleagues, the pastors and lay leaders, as if we are operating from a common frame. Less common experiences like this one uncover a different reality of which I have only begun to scratch the surface.

A Portrait of the Zambian Church Context and its Notions of Itself.

The ELC-Zambia was founded in 1983 by lay persons breaking away from the Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA), a Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod aligned church body in Zambia and Malawi. Remarkably, and with little external support, this small network of relations and friends planted and grew small congregations across remote regions of Zambia. This church body has struggled with organization, management, finance, and administration, and yet has survived. The vision statement of the church, is to be:



Figure 1. Sunday Altar.

“a spiritually vibrant self-propagating and self-reliant church, which is dedicated to serving God and humanity, governed by and upholding Christian values of compassion, humility and accountability, with principled policies, manifest growth and contextualization of the Gospel.”²

This has inspired and motivated all church programs and activities.

Further, the mission of the church “encourages all members to be visibly committed to serve God and people through the preaching and teaching of the Gospel and through *diakonia*-

² Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zambia “*Semi-Annual Narrative Report For 2009 Submitted To Lutheran World Federation Department For Mission And Development*” Lusaka, December 31, 2009, pg.1.

acts of love.”³ In 2002, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) accepted ELC-Zambia as a member which enabled them to find international partners. Since then, the ELC-Zambia has



Figure 2. Women's League processing.

these districts are located across as many as five of the nine provinces of Zambia. The geographical reach makes visitation and evangelism outreach on the part of central office quite difficult, given its limited resources.

The church consists of forty-one congregations. There are fifteen local pastors of whom two are female pastors. One has a university degree. Five have a junior seminary diploma and the rest have a bible school certificate. Only five have completed high school properly. The ELCA called and appointed this author, Rev. Arden Strasser, to serve as a missionary, engaged in leadership

received small annual grants from the LWF and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

The Church is located in seven districts: Petauke, Choma, Lusaka, Copperbelt, Mufumbwe/Kabompo, Zambezi and Chavuma. Although the church membership is just less than three thousand,



Figure 3. Rev Mwale beginning Sunday worship.

³ Ibid.

development and capacity building, from 2006 to 2014.

The sustainability of the ELC-Zambia for God's mission in Zambia is directly dependent on the quality of its congregations' worship life, spiritual vitality, and human resource capacity. The ELC-Zambia is not yet self-reliant and able to support a central administration on its own to undertake its mission in the long term.

Across the entire national church, there are now two durable church buildings built professionally: Matero/Lusaka and Zambezi, with three more in the villages of Nyakulenga, Mupitanshi and Yumba of a marginally acceptable construction standard. Six other sites have prepared burnt bricks, in anticipation of the Senior Pastor obtaining support for building materials. Most other congregations construct their own temporary houses of worship with cut trees, mud and thatch, or sun-burnt clay bricks, which are not truly water proof.

It is noteworthy that as a completely indigenous church, the ELC-Zambia never had a western mission organization underpinning its early development as is the case with almost all



Figure 4. Mrs. Mwaisela leading prayer at funeral.

other mainline churches in Africa.

Further, the ELC-Zambia suffers from thinness of membership density across a vast geographical area, with wide areas suffering from extreme poverty. Pastors remain loyal despite very low, and sometimes non-existent, monthly allowances.

Noting the inability of ELC-Zambia to advance, international partners responded to the requests for assistance. They placed experienced expatriate African pastors to lead the ELC-

Zambia for four years, from 2005-2008. (Namibian Rev. Paulus Hieta 2005-7 and South African Bishop Manas Buthelezi in 2008) In 2009, a Zambian pastor was once again elected to head the church. Rev Alfred Chana is the first leader to have been trained beyond diploma level, holding a Master of Theology degree. He has broad support both internally from the other Zambian pastors and externally from regional and international partner church bodies.

The strengths of the ELC-Zambia are the loyalty of its members, the increasing respect for the Senior Pastor, recent modern construction of five new rural churches and pastors' houses, quality candidates for ordained ministry in the coming years, and a malaria outreach campaign funded by the ELCA. Leaders now convene Church Council meetings without external financial support. Previously, council meeting expenses were covered by international partner church bodies. The Youth League and Women's League now gather using more of their own finances, with less funding from the central administration. The senior leadership is gaining critical competence in administration and management of the national church and also of the sizable professional public health and livelihood program, including the ELCA Malaria Campaign. The ELC-Zambia has also established long term partnerships with church bodies in northern Germany, upstate New York, and two individual ELCA congregations. Central administration has improved, as has pastoral collegiality. The leadership has carried out intensive discussions with congregations about stewardship, towards battling the syndrome of dependency and these efforts



Figure 5. Senior Pastor Chana and Pastor Rugowo.

will continue. The self-identity of the members is varied. I have heard a wide variety of narratives over my years. At first, they were primarily negative. That is, they reflected the themes of dysfunction, jealousy, struggles for resources and the human loss from AIDS. One particular story I heard numerous times was about a well-loved man, Pastor George Mwanza, who travelled quite long distances on foot in the northwest, evangelizing and encouraging the remote congregations. He was also one of the key church leaders who died of AIDS. His wife was later the first member to publicly disclose her HIV status, which was a watershed moment for the national church. This story was often also paired with a sharp critique of the other pastors, none of whom has heretofore shown similar dedication to visiting the villagers. The story teller would blame the lack of development of the congregations on the pastors, none of whom have shown the willingness to make the sacrifices Pastor Mwanza used to make. Additionally, there are shadow scripts which involve marriage infidelity, corruption, and traditional worship practices. Members lament their lack of growth, tribalist tendencies, lack of infrastructure, and low education levels. At the same time, they trust that God is nevertheless with them and active. Other themes are also circulating, of collaboration, second chances, resilience and hope. For

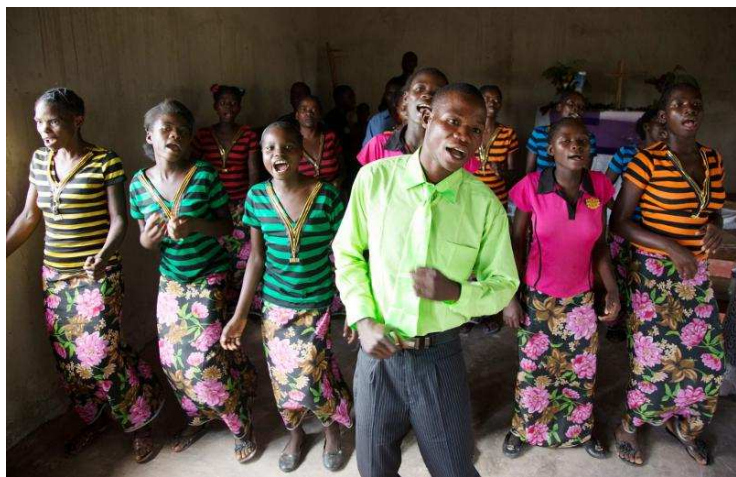


Figure 6. Zambezi congregation choir.

example, one prominent congregational lay leader, Florence, began an affair in 2010 with a married man. After the scandal was too much to bear by the congregation, she was and publicly shamed and embarrassed. Florence maintained a very low profile for a few years. I would still see her at

church programs, but she was clearly humble and stayed behind the scenes. Rather than leave the church, to my surprise she stayed and slowly rebuilt her reputation, and in 2014 was once again brought back into the congregational leadership. In my visits, I have seen how members thoroughly enjoy coming together for festivals and gatherings. After worship, the sense of kinship and mutual care is palpable.

Allow me to close with another story. Our microcredit workshop in Kashima could not begin on time, since a woman in the community died the day before, and some of our local participants needed to attend the funeral. Some had commented to me that she lived long, dying at the old age of 45. The bereaved family quietly approached us, disclosing that their own church, New Apostolic, would not give their mother a Christian burial because she had been a drunkard. They were ashamed and embarrassed, since people had shown up for the burial. With little debate, my Zambian colleague pastor Chana led an impromptu funeral in the Luvale language. The villagers were very moved by this act and the news spread. Did we make the right decision? Sometimes the beliefs of the pastors of this church become apparent in times of difficult choices.

A Portrait of the Missionary-Researcher-Participant. Notions of Himself.

My fourteen years in southern Africa have seen me drawn to seeking a deeper understanding of the drives, assumptions, and ways of being for Africans. I first served in Zimbabwe as a lay missionary high school teacher for two years, beginning in 1988, on a rural Catholic mission station, among the Shona tribe. I remember wondering some nights from my bed what was going on during the beating of the ritual drums I could hear coming from the nearby villages, particularly when the Jesuit fathers advised me to stay away from such goings-on.

Although I am American, I requested and undertook my three years of required seminary theology studies in kwazulu-Natal, South Africa, in 1996. I also completed my clinical pastoral education unit in South Africa, in 1999. I have led cultural immersion trips for US Christians to



Figure 7. Pastor Arden at Dikolonga congregation.

South Africa and Guatemala. Besides studies in African culture and religion, I have learnt to partially navigate a cultural terrain quite different from the one in which I was raised. Over the years, as I've naturally made mistakes in interpreting cultural cues, I have also grown in self-understanding. Being allowed to build deep friendships with Africans and witness the burdens carried by persons living in poverty has also shaped me deeply.

During my work with the ELC-Zambia, I lamented the broad dysfunction and underdevelopment, while at the same time worked and hoped for health and growth, continually looking out for the obstacles, gaps and blocks.

I became aware of the poor Christian formation that existed across the board for congregations and their leaders, and I also noted competition and jealousies among the members. I collected stories around interpersonal and intrapersonal situations that resisted obvious explanation to me, and uncovered strong beliefs in an unseen dimension of reality that I did not expect, at work in the church. One story which was repeated verbally a number of times to me involved Pastor Kaumba, who was defrocked in 2005 as ELC-Zambia Senior Pastor. There was a firm belief that the Pastor Kaumba's family was responsible for the endless difficulties faced by the central congregation in the Matero compound of Lusaka since 2005. After his departure, this

congregation suffered numerous church break-ins, property thefts, window breakages, and internal wrangles. Over the years, I never received clarity on the means of the influence they thought Pastor Kaumba had, so I concluded that their vagueness was intentional. The Matero congregation actually became fatalistic about the sad state of affairs, and was only starting to shake off this resignation in 2014. Such beliefs promote anxiety, despondency, mistrust, or vengeance, and concerned me as a pastor and friend.

To understand such behavior, I became more interested in traditional religion. Traditional religion holds that all of life is saturated by invisible influences, some of which can be influenced by specialists for good or ill. African Christians are of course surrounded by this belief system, which I will be expand upon in chapters three and four. How do traditional culture and religion and Christianity interact and intersect in the understanding of life experienced by Africans?

During my years of service, I developed strong relationships with the

pastors and co-workers and remained in good standing with regard to the church. Both of these gave me the courage to face squarely the realities of African traditional religion with my Zambian colleagues. I am honored that Pastor Rugowo shared his narrative with me before he told his Zambian colleagues, given that I am not an African. He told me his story in confidence without any apparent fear that I would not believe what he told me nor betray his seemingly fantastic conclusions.



Figure 8. Pastors Strasser, Chileshe, Chana, Banda at ELC-Zambia Council meeting.

Processing my experiences in the Zambian church like those above has led me to question my own epistemology. There exists a dissonance between my trust in western medicine and my colleagues' trust in traditional African beliefs surrounding healing. How might I reconcile my own understanding of the truth with those truths upheld by those with whom I work? I have considered myself post-modern, and agreed with Smith that "postmodernism can be understood as the erosion of confidence in the rational as sole guarantor and deliverer of truth..."⁴ However, I didn't expect that this erosion might include my respect for western diagnosis of illness. We are all responsible for owning and pondering our experiences. Spiritual or metaphysical truth arises from making meaning out of them. In the end, does Rugowo's unverifiable story carry truth? And as a cross-cultural worker, how might I enter it?

I was aware of my changing notion of myself as missionary during my summers in the US, giving presentations to American Lutheran congregations about my work. In these sermons and talks I normally highlighted the expected themes, such as programs for reducing poverty and growing the African church. I became accomplished at motivating American audiences to support global mission. However, beginning in 2011, I found these exchanges increasingly partial and unsatisfactory. I did not know how to share my internal struggle towards a deeper understanding. Rugowo gave his story to me – his story of God working in his life is to be pondered and carried to others, but if I tell his story to an American congregation, the members might be stunned and confused. I recently had the unique opportunity at an ELCA mission conference seminar to read the above story of Rugowo to a group of long and short term ELCA global mission personnel, after which I asked them, "So what happened here?" Most stayed quiet, two persons chose to explain the story in western medical terms. After some discussion,

⁴ James K.A. Smith, *Who's Afraid of Post Modernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), Kindle Edition, location 1002.

the long term missionaries then shared their own experiences of Africans and the mystical, without judging or analyzing them according to their plausibility or factuality. I will note some of their comments in chapter six but, in general I can report here that I was pleased to be able to share these things openly with them.

The Motivation Behind our Proposed Ministry Action. Is the Action Important for the ELC-Zambia?

In much of Africa, personal wellness is bound up with social wellness. That is, personal wellness is an outward manifestation of the quality of the relationships with one's kin and also with the living dead – one's ancestors. According to this understanding, suffering is to be avoided, as it is a marker for broken relationships, which brings additional distress.

Because these beliefs are part of African traditional religion, the religion also has its own methods to reconcile broken relationships and bring about wholeness. Some African- initiated churches, such as the Zionists, have practices and rituals for this purpose. The conceptual framework of anthropologist Victor Turner shall help us in understanding kinship, conflict, illness and ritual.⁵ His early research examined the means by which the Ndembu tribe in Zambia managed social conflict via ritual, or prescribed behavior. "Performance of ritual in Ndembu society are, in a way, confessions of failure in the power of secular mechanisms to redress and absorb conflicts that arise in and between local and kinship groups."⁶ For our purposes, we shall not use Turner's exploration of ritual responding to changes in personal status, such as puberty, but of ritual responding to affliction, for those burdened by troubles, or by wrangling with others, or by ailments, etc. "Each individual's misfortune brings to light some specific and localized

⁵ Victor W. Turner, *Schism and Continuity in an African Society* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1957), 288-317.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 289.

conflict in inter-personal or inter-group relations. Ritual is then invoked, under the pretext of curing the patient or removing his misfortune, to settle the conflict.⁷ Of particular note for the church in Africa, is the cultural practice of healing through publicly reinforcing the shared norms and values “in a number of ways, in prayer, precept, symbol, mimetic action and in the ritual association of those who have suffered...⁸” Turner, later in life, will attend to the mystical nature of ritual, and ritual as social drama, to which we will turn in chapter four..

Unfortunately, African Protestant Christianity, as transmitted by western missionaries, who rejected much of the unseen African reality, may not be providing the right spiritual food for navigating the many personal crises Africans experience in community relationships, in health, agriculture/livelihood, and marriage/childbirth.

I was initially disturbed by the syncretic practices of the Zionists and I grumbled to myself, perhaps like the Pharisees grumbled about Jesus of Nazareth. To my queries, Pastor Rugowo simply replied, “I was sick, and now I am healthy.” He had met God, the healer, among the Zionists. So, God is to be found outside the western missionary church tradition in Africa. In Rugowo’s story, the Zionists demonstrated great faith, hunger and persistence. Is the ELC-Zambia as thirsty as the Zionists? What happened to their thirst?

Pastor Rugowo, having been healed, went home, and then felt empowered to face Mr. Moonga, the one he believed caused his illness, for reconciliation. Yet, sadly, Mr. Moonga remains deeply offended because Pastor Rugowo has not publicly withdrawn the accusation. What treasures of the church might be able to speak into such gaps between persons?

Such questions are directly relevant to the life of the ELC-Zambia and are the motivation behind this ministry initiative. My aim is to assist the church in responding to the cultural and

⁷ Ibid., 302.

⁸ Ibid., 301.

systemic roots of intrapersonal and interpersonal conflict in their church body and in society. I aim to understand the links through which individuals manifest animosities, with an eye toward seeing this church body become healthier. Can Christian ritual be a mechanism for reducing social tension and anxiety, and for encouraging reconciliation in the ELC-Zambia, towards imagining alternate, harmonious futures? Might Zambian Lutherans appropriate their faith more fully into their lives and problems if their church inculturates, or internalizes more intentionally, some African religious concepts?

Practical theologian Mary Clark Moschella believes that pastors can more deeply read their congregations using social research. Moschella lays out four helpful descriptors for pastors involved in ethnography.⁹ These help in clarifying my project approach.¹⁰ When I review my questions above, it's apparent that I am ultimately seeking to understand how Christian practice may influence community life. Using her labels, this appears to be a causal/predictive line of inquiry.¹¹ "If you undertake this type of puzzle, you might eventually try to predict the outcomes of a certain religious practice or teaching. Ethnographers don't usually arrive at simple or straightforward cause and effect statements, but rather at particular theories about causation in local settings..."¹²

⁹ Mary Clark Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2008), 57-61.

¹⁰ Ethnography questions can be grouped into four types. Developmental, asking how did this come to be? Mechanical, asking how this works? Comparative, asking how does this compare to that? And Causal/predictive, asking how does this impact that?

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹² *Ibid.*

Local Advisory Committee (LAC) Recruitment and Initial Planning

I began an illuminating dialogue with the four pastors and two committed lay persons listed here:

1. Alfred Chana LAC Chairperson
2. Doreen Mwanza
3. Matilda Banda
4. Eliphaz Rugowo
5. Bernard Mapulanga (lay)
6. Aaron Kanyama (lay)

I shared many stories during our meetings, which stimulated conversation around the research questions I raised in the previous section of this paper. In response, they expanded upon my understanding that jealousy, blaming, enmity are bound to misfortune and illness. In response to my questions about traditional religion and Christianity, they explained to me that Jesus is sometimes perceived as the chief ancestor. Like an ancestor, he is seen as a judge, even portrayed as such in the New Testament.¹³ However, he does not need to be appeased, like an ancestor does. Rather, Jesus is the mediator with God, and thus becomes the one who intervenes on our behalf. I also challenged them on the endless squabbles that seem to arise within the ELC-Zambia. They admitted that the ELC-Zambia suffers from internal conflicts emanating from extended family jealousies, and from competition over the meager church resources for scholarships and paltry church wages.

I suggested that our continuing dialogue might serve as a basis for the long term liturgy redevelopment project of the national church, to which they agreed. The primary work of the LAC in 2013 was therefore to discuss the themes behind this project topic and contribute to the ministry project design.

¹³ John 9:38-39, John 5:21-31, Matthew 25:31-46

We discussed the need to step back and consider how we might adjust or revise our Sunday morning liturgy to include some of the African experience, if at all. The LAC believed our church should better address the inner burdens Africans carry, in addition to the gospel we preach. These burdens include their problems of illness, strife, hunger, lack of children, poverty. They agreed that our liturgy does not assist pastors in praying for interpersonal reconciliation, and furthermore does not address the importance of farming, including the all-important seasons of planting and harvesting, nor the essential African traditional values and milestones, such as remembering the ancestors, and blessing new babies and parents. They suggested that our pastors are weak in public praying, which is meaningful to Africans. We discussed the possibility of a healing liturgy in worship, since some of our members are even double booking on Sundays (going to deliverance churches after the Lutheran church). They were concerned that our theology of praying for healing is not the same as the popular, local neo-Pentecostal churches, who measure the spiritual strength of a pastor by their ability to heal. They suggested that a pastors' focus group could also discuss the related issues of anointing, of congregational mass prayer (simultaneous praying), personal prayer, the appropriate relationship to one's ancestors, and healing effected by traditional specialists, such as *nyangas*.

Paying attention to our liturgy is core work, they held, since our liturgy shows who we are, as African Lutherans, and it is a sign of our national church unity. As a result of these discussions, we were getting excited again about liturgy!

Hypothesizing that Christian liturgy as ritual, can be transformative, we decided that our ministry intervention shall include the celebration of new corporate prayers and healing rituals in ELC-Zambia congregations.¹⁴ These liturgy supplements would be the result of a study group of

¹⁴ Carl Savage and William Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry: A Postmodern Research Approach for Faith Communities* (Louisville, Kentucky: Wayne E. Oates Institute, 2008), 86.

pastors who would explore alternate word translation choices and tribal understandings of hurt, hexing, forgiveness, reconciliation, revenge, and ancestors, with a view to inculturating the liturgy.¹⁵ The prayers of the people could then refer directly to core African measures of well-being which are not currently present in their liturgies, based upon those brought to Africa by western missionaries long ago. The composed prayers could address measures such as ancestors, hexing, farming (in season), child-bearing, and harmonious kinship. The healing ritual would only be for those who wish to be prayed for. Illnesses and other personal problems are often ascribed to the work of ancestors who might have been offended in some manner or, perhaps, the work of jealous individuals, via witches. We intended to offer prayers for these and other types of problems.

The pastors would then take the written liturgy supplements back to their home congregations, celebrate them, and collect narrative responses from their congregations. The LAC became curious. Since Sunday liturgy is the true heart of the ELC-Zambia's shared activity, how might our congregations come to experience new liturgy that we planned to introduce? How might God work in our church through this new liturgy and to what future? The LAC also saw this project as supporting renewal amongst the pastors and congregations with the caveat that we should be mindful of changing liturgy, as some people do not like change.

The project continued to evolve, as we shall see in chapter five, where we discuss the project methodology. The drivers behind the project, stated above, were brought into clearer focus when the related biblical and theological matters were dealt with, to which we now turn, in chapter two.

¹⁵ Inculturation is the dialogue between church and cultures. Specifically, the adapting or resistance of Christian theology as Christian faith is transmitted across cultures. This includes not only the interaction of Christianity with cultural idioms, but with indigenous religious concepts.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL ENGAGEMENT

Lutheran Tradition

I'm a Lutheran pastor, working in a Lutheran church body. Does our tradition provide particular resources for engaging with the research questions of our project?

People have often asked me to present workshops for the ELC-Zambia church workers on Lutheran theology. As a very small national church body when compared to the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches in Zambia, ELC-Zambia pastors lamented their lack of importance nationally, although they knew they were part of a deep theological heritage. Although the life story of Martin Luther was inspiring to them, my own experience in ELC-Zambia congregations suggests that the core tradition itself is weakly preached, and its personal spiritual value for Africans is not clear to me, when compared to other features of their church life.

Long ago, in a place far away, Martin Luther was vexed by a personal problem, "Where do I stand in relation to God?" He noted the spiritual anxiety of the German masses around him, and they found a profound resonance with him. Using scripture, Luther resisted some of the theological distortions of his day, aiming toward a faith based less upon institutional dependency and fear of the future, and more upon God's grace. Luther insisted on a more direct access to God and God's promises. He emphasized that God's grace is available through simple faith, uncluttered by indulgences and requirements of worship attendance. Luther attacked whatever

man-made burdens of practice seemed to be ends in themselves, or which detracted from the centrality of faith in Christ's work on the cross. He was able to connect theological emphases to his pastoral concerns. Luther ultimately introduced many reforms around priestly requirements, the Mass, vernacular Bible reading, the catechism and congregation life; all intended for the spiritual welfare of the people. Pastoral concern is also the impulse behind the purpose of this project. Of course, Zambians are not asking the same questions Luther did, given their thoroughly different context. However, from a pastoral approach, we may still propose pastoral project questions inspired by Luther, such as "what elements of Lutheran theology could contribute to Zambian Lutherans experiencing more spiritual freedom in Christ? And, what reforms in worship could we introduce today that intersect more directly with African culture and truth?"

To begin this, I will engage Luther's practical theological responses regarding the saints, suffering, and the devil, each relevant to the Zambian experience.

A feature in common among Africans and sixteenth century Europe is the belief in ancestors who can influence our well-being. Specifically, in Europe this was the cult of Mary and the saints. Note that the saints influenced earthly matters only indirectly, through interceding or mediating with God. Luther never questioned the existence of these ancestors in the faith, and he always held Mary in very high regard. Yet, "while he did not reject invoking the saints for several years, his growing belief in the Christocentric nature of the gospel led him to retreat from the idea that Christians should call upon Mary and ask her and the saints to pray for them..."¹ Later in his development, Luther moves more strongly against the spiritual dependence upon the saints, holding that their "associated festivals, masses, sacrifices, prayers,

¹ Beth Kreitzer, "Luther regarding the Virgin Mary" in *The Pastoral Luther: Essays on Martin Luther's Practical Theology*, ed. Timothy J. Wengert (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 238.

and churches and altars dedicated to the saints are in fact idolatry.”² Clearly, Luther values and appreciates the witness of Mary and the saints as examples of Christian faith and virtue; they are to have no bearing in influencing the difficult circumstances in which people find themselves. Therefore, Luther contributes nothing to a sincere dialogue with the African cultural practice of ancestor veneration.

Another popular religious practice of medieval Germany relevant for this discussion, is praying to the cult of fourteen saints, each of which served as a patron saint or a helper designated for providing protection against specific illnesses and misfortunes. The saints were Pantaleon, Achatius, Blasius, Catherine, Cyriacus, Dionysius, George, Christopher, Eustace,



Figure 9. Saints Christopher, Eustace and Erasmus. Germany ca 1500-1504

⁴.

² Ibid., 239.

³ *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia Of Religious Knowledge*, vol 5, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1909) 215, 216.

⁴ "Tilman Riemenschneider: Saints Christopher, Eustace, and Erasmus (Three Helper Saints)" (61.86) In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000—. <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/61.86> (accessed on September 16, 2014).

Erasmus, Margaret, Vitus, Aegidius, and Barbara. These helpers responded to problems including difficult deliveries, possession by demons, cramps, and fever.³ Three appear in this wood sculpture. In 1520, Luther wrote his *Fourteen Consolations* as a devotional book for those who suffer, loosely modeled upon these fourteen saints. As you might expect, Luther turned the intent behind the devotion upside down for those who had depended upon these saints for relief. To be specific, he advised the reader with various approaches for changing

their attitudes during times of distress.

“As Luther and numerous medieval theologians before him pointed out, many saints suffered disease or physical affliction. God thereby taught these chosen ones patience, crowning their faith with virtue, while manifesting God’s own majesty by perfecting power in weakness.”⁵

Additionally, Luther also held an “understanding of the positive role suffering, particularly illness, can play in the life of the Christian. It can drive the sinner out of self-satisfaction to the very border of despair and then ultimately to Christ.”⁶ “Moreover, to depend on the saints and their relics to restore one to bodily health is to make far too much of earthly well-being and far too little of the mercy of Christ.”⁷

Bodily health matters a great deal to Africans, and everyone else as well for that matter, causing no small measure of angst when it is threatened! Some of Luther’s consolations are of spiritual benefit to Christians around the world, including African Christians. Patience and waiting on God are Christian spiritual gifts, and Zambians are quick to give testimony before their congregation to the healing they experienced from God after a long illness. Zambians would also agree with Luther that since God was with us in past travails “when we did not think so, we should not doubt that he is always with us, even when it seems that he is absent from us. He who upheld us in many times of need, even without our request, will not forsake us in a smaller affliction.”⁸

⁵ Jane E. Strohl, "Luther’s Fourteen Consolations” in *The Pastoral Luther: Essays on Martin Luther’s Practical Theology*, ed. Timothy J. Wengert (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 311.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 312.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 313.

Luther knows that our thoughts about our suffering are conditioned.⁹ He knows that we are inured to many of the emotions we experience when we are in trouble. Luther reminds me of a Buddhist teacher in his desire to untangle our habituated emotions of dread, fear, and anxiety from our lived experiences of suffering. In times of difficulty, we ought not to languish in emotional storms or detachment, but to be able to contemplate with gratefulness on what Christ has done. These postures of Luther, of course, are the same as the Apostle Paul.¹⁰



Figure 10. Lusaka Mini-bus with Romans 1:17 on the lower left of the rear window. “The just shall live by faith.”

Like the narrative told to me by Singidi, related in chapter one, the fellowship of the Christian community can also bear a portion of our pain. Luther states, “when we feel pain, when we suffer, when we die, let us turn to this, firmly believing and certain that it is not we alone, but Christ and the church who are in pain and are suffering

and dying with us.”¹¹ Thus, Luther’s admonitions to those who suffer are of value to Africans.

Finally, let us turn to the devil. While most people in the West rarely speak about or dwell on the devil, Africans are completely convinced of the presence of evil spirits, and in urban

⁸ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, American Edition, Vols. 1-30, edited by Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing Company, 1955-1967); Vols. 31-55, edited by Helmut T. Lehmann (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1955-1986) 42:131.

⁹ Strohl, 313.

¹⁰ Colossians 1:24, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, 1 Thessalonians 5:18

¹¹ Luther, 163.

areas, Satan is commonly named out loud in prayers and sermons. Sixteenth century Germans also lived in a worldview which assumed the presence of demons. Luther was naturally convinced the devil was real, but “to argue that Luther never overcame the medieval belief in the Devil says far too little; he even intensified it and lent to it additional urgency: Christ and Satan wage a cosmic war for mastery over church and world. No one can evade involvement in this struggle.”¹² Although the Satan of Luther and the Satan of Africans are not quite the same thing, Luther brings directness and intensity to a dynamic which Africans find just as real as Luther did. We may miss the value of Luther for Africans today, for “if the reality of the powers inimical to God is not grasped, the incarnation of Christ, as well as the justification and temptation of the sinner, are reduced to ideas of the mind rather than experiences of faith.”¹³

For Luther, Satan is that force which obstructs the advance of the gospel. For Africans, Satan is that force which enters into bloody deal making with those who desire material success or revenge on an enemy. Still, Luther’s admonitions against the devil apply in this context. In his hymn, *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*, we sing “Though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us, we tremble not, we fear no ill, they shall not overpower us. This world's prince may still scowl fierce as he will, he can harm us none, he's judged; the deed is done; one little word can fell him”¹⁴

Admittedly, it is apparent that at first glance, the apparent key theological differences between African and Christian traditions in approaching human suffering are perhaps not reconcilable. For example, suffering and death in African religion is almost always perceived as

¹² Heiko A. Oberman, “Luther Against the Devil” *Christian Century* January 24, 1990, pp 75-79, <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=750> (accessed on September 25, 2014).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Martin Luther, *A Mighty Fortress is Our God* in *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981).

completely contrary, is to be avoided, and is a marker of broken relationships. Suffering and death in Christian theology is inevitable and is a result of a fallen humanity. Additionally, Luther's rebuke of spiritual dependence upon ancestors or saints appears to be an obstacle to our hoped-for project goals.

However, as demonstrated above, Africans, insofar as they face multiple uncertainties, hardships, adversity and distress, have similarity with the experience of medieval Europeans. Both contexts know suffering well, and both contexts have an awareness of evil forces, to which Luther speaks at length. The namesake of our tradition is not bereft of resources for the conflicted communities of the ELC-Zambia. Later, in chapter four, we shall take a deeper step in this encounter, when we explore inculturation.

Biblical Encounter

How do the Biblical authors treat indigenous religions? Does scripture indicate points of contact by which Christian faith or worship may more fully enliven the lives of Zambians, amidst their stresses? In order to explore these questions, we'll look at the relationship between Yahweh and Baal, in 1 Kings, and the relationship between Jesus and traditional Galilean culture in the Gospels.

The Old Testament includes endless dramas of challenges between Israel and neighboring nations. Historically, the rise and fall of Israel, in its various forms, through periods of strength and subjugation, extends over thousands of years. We will not survey all of this, but rather look at one classic encounter between Elijah as a prophet of Yahweh in his struggles with King Ahab, his wife Jezebel and Ba'al, a philistine God, found in 1 Kings 17-19, 21.

Ancient Hebrews considered Ba'al religion to be idol worship. Ba'al, as the Lord of all Canaan, was not understood to be a lesser god, but one worthy of faithfulness and submission.

As Old Testament scholar from South Africa, Elelwani B Farisani, points out, Jezebel, a Phoenician princess, “was determined to introduce into Israel the worship of Ba'al, the patron deity of her own people”¹⁵ Ahab, the king of Israel, allowed for the establishment of altars, shrines and a state temple to Ba'al in Samaria.¹⁶ Jezebel even eliminated Israelite prophets.¹⁷ In response, 1 Kings 16:33 is unequivocal in its devastating critique of Ahab and Jezebel for such behavior. “Ahab did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.” There shall be absolutely no allowance for a competing religion in northern Israel. Yahweh alone could meet the people’s needs, providing the all-important rain, fertility, and harvest. Elijah and Ahab confronted each other. Elijah announced a three year drought, as an act by an offended Yahweh. This is a seemingly cruel act by Yahweh, but “the point was that Ba'al, whose worshippers claimed he could bring rain, was to be challenged at his own game.”¹⁸ In the third year Elijah visited Ahab, and challenged the prophets of Ba'al to the well-known showdown, in which Yahweh prevailed. As 1 Kings 18:38,39 states: “Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, “The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God.”” Elijah himself slew many Ba'al priests, and had to go into hiding, avoiding the queen who wanted him dead.

The related story of Naboth’s vineyard in 1 Kings 21 highlights the abuse of power of the peasant farmer by the elite. King Ahab wished to buy Naboth’s land. However, Naboth did not

¹⁵ Elelwani B Farisani, “A sociological reading of the confrontation between Ahab and Elijah in 1 Kings 21:1-29,” *Old Testament Essays* 18:1 (2005), 50.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁷ 1 Kings 18:4

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

own the land privately.¹⁹ Rather, the land belonged to his extended family, and he could not simply sell it or exchange it. Israelites honored their long-established beliefs around land holding



Figure 11. Farming in Zambia.

and small-scale agricultural production, like many Zambians still do, ensuring that all families must be able to sustain their own

livelihood. Israelites did not manage land commercially. Farisani states that “The Yahweh party retained the traditional values represented in pre-monarchical Israel of an egalitarian societal configuration where Yahweh owned the land and the people were in equal relationship to their God and to each other.”²⁰

So, Jezebel has Naboth set up, tried in a mock court and executed, in order that his land can be appropriated by the King. The resulting condemnations from Yahweh, uttered by Elijah upon Ahab and Jezebel, are truly violent.

We have observed here that Yahweh has no tolerance for other monotheistic religions. Only one God shall be worshipped at all times. At the same time, we have also seen that Yahweh upholds the ancient social and economic values of Israel. Some of these beliefs resonate with rural Zambians.

¹⁹ Leviticus 25:23

²⁰ Farisani, 52.

Jesus and Popular Religion

Now let us turn to the gospels, and glean a picture of how Jesus interacted with the popular religions in Galilee.

Historical-critical Jesus research presents various personages to help us understand the so-called real Jesus of Nazareth. These have included Jesus as cynic, wisdom teacher, healer, prophet, magician, rabbi, etc. Pieter Craffert, a South African New Testament scholar with strengths in the social sciences, finds this body of research limited. He claims that in the late twentieth century “historians are grappling with the plurality of viewpoints and the multiplicity of reality systems that characterize the landscape of postmodern thinking.”²¹ To be specific, these reality systems can include indigenous cultural/religious practices, non-western levels of consciousness, and local non-western epistemology. In taking culture seriously, Craffert presents a relatively new anthropological-historical perspective, which hypothesizes that Jesus can be understood, in part, as a Galilean shaman.²²

Such a consideration of Jesus as a shaman, when seen within Galilean folk religion, may assist us in developing more links with indigenous African culture, which also features religious specialists (shamans) who heal, control spirits, and mediate divine knowledge.²³ This approach is to serve our long-term aim to find touch points for Christianity to speak to Zambians on a deeper level. Recall our question in chapter one: might Zambian Lutherans appropriate their faith more fully into their lives and problems if their church inculturates, or internalizes more intentionally,

²¹ Pieter Craffert, *The Life of a Galilean Shaman: Jesus of Nazareth in Anthropological-Historical Perspective* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), xv.

²² *Ibid.*, ix.

²³ A shaman is a spirit mediator. They are also known as medicine men, witch doctors, sorcerers, magicians, healers, diviners, seers. Craffert., 143.

some African religious concepts? I will continue to develop this overarching question in chapters three and four, and will share our project answers in chapter seven.

Although Galilee was largely Israelite, it was also a traditional Canaanite culture, with a broad awareness of demons and spirits. We'll review a few of the numerous gospel accounts of Jesus of Nazareth acting like a shaman in this traditional, rural, Galilean culture. These, of course, involve his acts of healing, which was clearly a major feature of Jesus' public ministry.²⁴ To do this, we shall have to temporarily set aside our intellectual commitments to the western medical paradigm. Such a paradigm was not part of the culture of first century Galilee²⁵, just as it is not part of traditional African culture. Accordingly, we do not intend to dismiss these Gospel accounts of healing as therapeutic comfort, autosuggestion, psychosomatic healings, or post-Jesus early church embellishment.²⁶

Further, as I acknowledged in chapter one, it has been challenging for me to consider illness so entirely outside of the western biomedical paradigm. Yet the western paradigm, while very powerful and successful, is largely separate from the worldviews of traditional cultures. Through this project, I am learning and relearning that all societies understand health and illness in a cultural context. We cannot answer our research questions by maintaining a judgmental posture and, consequently, avoiding the indigenous culture. Craffert notes, that "while sickness is universal, how, when and why people experience ill health remains particular-it depends on context and culture...Sickness follows cultural patterns, and even pain is subject to cultural beliefs."²⁷ He offers us a different construct, used by medical anthropologists, called the

²⁴ Matthew 15:30

²⁵ Craffert, 246.

²⁶ Ibid., 251.

²⁷ Ibid., 266.

biopsychosocial paradigm, an expansion of the biomedical paradigm. “The impact of society, culture and the human mind on sickness conditions is extremely wide ranging. It includes...patterns of sickness shaped by culture and somatization as the bodily manifestation of psychological, social or cultural problems.”²⁸

With that caveat, let’s begin. Of special note for our project are Gospel accounts of healing and forgiveness of sin. Israelites would have believed that some connections exist between sin and suffering. They knew the story of Moses with their ancestors on Mount Hor, in Numbers 21, recounting how the Israelites complained bitterly against God. “Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you...” They would have also remembered the Mosaic covenant. Israelites knew that when they obeyed Yahweh, they would be blessed. If they did not, Deuteronomy 28 lays out a host a maladies that would befall them, including wasting disease, fever, inflammation (28:22), boils, tumors (28:27), madness, and blindness (28:28). In the first century CE, these associations of sin with suffering were active, but Jesus actually challenged these beliefs. “Those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:4-5) Still, it is notable that Jesus acknowledged this traditional idea by verbally forgiving sin at the well-known healing, recorded in Matt 9:1-8 and Mark 2:1-12, where Jesus forgave and healed a paralyzed man.

Another relevant gesture for us is Jesus combining touching and healing. In all of these texts, Jesus used his hands directly on the affected person. For example, Jesus healed a crippled woman on the Sabbath, in Luke 13:10-17. Jesus healed a deaf and mute man in Mark 7:31-37.

²⁸ Ibid., 269.

Jesus healed a blind man at Bethsaida, in Mark 8:23-25. Jesus healed Peter's mother in law, in Matt 8:14-15. In fact, Jesus' reputation grew to the point that people simply reached out to touch him for healing, as recorded in Luke 6:19.

Another pertinent feature is how Jesus removes the stigma of social exclusion through healing. Persons with chronic skin conditions were segregated from the core village life. In Matt 8:1-4, Jesus healed a man with leprosy. In Luke 17:11-19, Jesus actually healed ten men with leprosy. Lepers were of course, unclean and excluded from normal participation in society. Jesus "declared people clean, and, therefore reinstated them into the community..."²⁹

Another characteristic for consideration is healing through the removal of spirits. In all of these gospel accounts, Jesus cast out demons, sometimes by Jesus' verbal rebuke, in order to affect release from some debilitating condition.³⁰ Jesus restored a man possessed by Legion in Mark 5:1-13. Jesus saved a boy with seizures in Matt 17:15-18. Jesus healed a boy with convulsions in Mark 9:14-29. Jesus healed a dumb man in Matthew 9:32-33. Jesus healed the daughter of the Syro-phoenician woman in Mark 7:25-30.

Lastly, let's look at the gospel associations between healing and faith. In all of the following texts, the reason given for the efficacy of their healing is the faith and trust of the sick person in Jesus' ability to heal. Some specific examples include: Blind Bartimaeus who received his sight in Mark 10:46-52. Two blind men recovered sight in Matt 9:27-31. Jesus heals the centurion's servant in Matt 8:5-13. He also heals the woman who had been bleeding for twelve years in Mark 5:25-34. In addition, both accounts of cleansing from leprosy, mentioned above, were ascribed to the faith of those affected by the disease.

²⁹ Ibid., 291.

³⁰ Luke 6:18, Matt 8:16

When we review such gospel accounts, it is self-evident that people clearly perceived Jesus as a popular faith healer, not unlike a shaman. Jesus removed social-ritual uncleanness. People had confidence in Jesus' power to heal them. Jesus exorcised demons. Jesus "actually employs ancient techniques or practices that were well-known in magical circles and among other folk healers...this includes touching, spitting, mud application, the recommendation of taking a bath,...and magical words."³¹ "The healing accounts can be seen as normal and typical activities of someone controlling and manipulating the symbols of meaning in his cultural world, and in that way affecting sick people-this is precisely what shamanic figures do all the time."³²

We also note that, on the contrary, what appears to distinguish Jesus apart from a shaman are his verbal utterances of forgiveness of sin, which are not normally ascribed to shamans.

There is great power in our seeing Jesus with new eyes. Jesus did not critique or stay aloof from the indigenous culture in which he moved. Rather, he used and controlled the beliefs and symbols of the indigenous culture, to effect physical and psycho-social healing, all pointing to the breaking in of the kingdom of God.

³¹ Craffert, 292.

³² Ibid., 298-299.



Figure 12. Jesus heals the blind man. Jesus raises Lazarus. Fresco on canvas. Spanish. 12th century. The Cloisters Collection. Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York.

Mark Abducts the Participant-Researcher

In the well-known gospel text, Mark 2:1-12, desperate friends carry a paralyzed man to Jesus for healing. Because of the large crowds in their way, the friends actually manage to lift him up onto the roof of the house in which Jesus is preaching, tear open part of the roof, and then lower the man down through the roof. Quite impressed, Jesus pronounces the words, “My son, your sins are forgiven” and heals the paralytic. Jesus, interpreting illness as bound to social brokenness, forgives the paralytic of his sin. This direct link between illness and status, which is verbally reinforced by Jesus in many of his healings in the gospels, is readily understood, in my experience, by people living in pre-scientific cultures.

The Pharisees, witnessing this, are quite disturbed. They consider Jesus’ pronouncement of healing completely unorthodox and outside the norms of their tradition. They consider Jesus’ pronouncement of healing completely unorthodox and outside the norms of their tradition. In first century Palestine, the Pharisees upheld a renewed, yet rigid form of Judaism. To their chagrin, Jesus, although Jewish, is not operating according to their traditional boundaries. Jesus

finally justifies his God-given authority to these Pharisees by instructing the paralytic to rise and go home, which the paralytic does.

This story has abducted me, in view of our primary narrative in chapter one. In Mark's narrative, the paralytic's friends cared enough for him that they were willing to push through a physical barrier to reach Jesus. In Rugowo's narrative, Rugowo's brother, according to his own interpretive frame, cared passionately for him, and similarly broke through barriers of the western medical system and western Christianity, in taking his brother away to his village of Zionists deep in the forest. He tore up the veritable roofs to get to God, in order to save his brother's life.³³ In the text, Jesus responds positively to those seeking on God. Jesus responds negatively to the critique of the orthodox.

Mark's gospel here suggests that we can find Jesus wherever people demonstrate great faith, hunger and persistence. Is the ELC-Zambia as thirsty as the Zionists? What happened to their thirst? Have I not been like the Pharisees, protecting a western orthodoxy?

In this chapter, we have looked for points of contact between the Lutheran tradition and the biblical witness and traditional culture and religion which may bear fruit for our project. Along our journey, we must also analyze the customs in African traditional religion and in African Initiated Churches for resolving interpersonal conflict and stress. It is this to which we shall now turn.

³³ Kathy Stoner-Lasala, comment to author, Madison, NJ, July 2013.

CHAPTER 3

ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONFLICT AND DISTRESS

At an ELC-Zambia Church Assembly, two delegates punctuated the proceedings with disrespectful remarks against the church body leadership. During breaks in the meeting, they would gather outside the church with others to make their plans for the upcoming election of the next Senior Pastor/Bishop. They wanted a new Senior Pastor, but this was not to be, as the Assembly ultimately deferred the vote for one more year. One of these delegates, in his anger, burst out that if the Senior Pastor does not step down soon, something bad may happen to him. The Senior Pastor later heard about this comment second hand, since he was out of the room during the election discussion. In his anguish, he told me privately that this office had become too much to bear and he wanted to stand down and let those against him have their way. In fact, he revealed to me that he had had trouble sleeping.

In a healthier church body, such public talk would not be countenanced. Such threats imply that the particular disgruntled delegate has access to resources with sinister powers he should not be entertaining as a Christian. Sadly, no one critiqued the delegate, nor his comments. Further, if the senior pastor experiences any problems over the next few months, he might attribute them to the same delegate's private dealings.

I was introduced to the seemingly unending, interpersonal, latent conflict within groups during my particular missionary assignment in Zambia, beginning in 2006. During my earlier years in South Africa and Zimbabwe, I was either not positioned or not disposed to detect this

undercurrent. Then, without looking for it, I encountered the story I shared in chapter one. This is where I first discerned the linkages between personal misfortune and interpersonal conflicts and healing.

There are various avenues for addressing, managing and resolving such matters, which have bearing on our research questions. In this chapter we will turn to some of the customs in African religion, in African Initiated Churches, and in urban settings for resolving intrapersonal and interpersonal conflict and stress. This includes dialogue, gift-giving, traditional ritual, and deliverance-focused prayers.

Victor Turner and Conflict

Anthropologist and author Victor Turner, to our benefit, conducted his seminal field-anthropological work in Zambia in the 1950s among a sub-group of the Lunda people, specifically Lunda-Ndembu. The Lunda are the heart of the ELC-Zambia, in the northwest province. The ELC-Zambia is comprised of congregations from five of the nine main ethnic groups in Zambia, and Turner's findings are therefore relevant for this project. Because the members of the ELC-Zambia congregations come from the surrounding villages, the congregations are prone to continual conflicts and stresses, like any village.

Turner's early work is captured best in his *Schism and Continuity in an African Society*. This book unpacks the mechanics of Ndembu social structure. He does not delve deeply into ritual itself in this book, but rather the place of ritual in social life. His supervisor, Max Gluckman, summarizes this rich book.

“Turner has built his study of Mukanza village around what he calls ‘the social drama’ - one of a series of crises occurring in the history of the village, when either a quarrel between some of the inhabitants, or a misfortune ascribed by the people and by divination to ancestral spirits or sorcery, precipitates threats to the unity of the village. The village as a whole, and its neighbors,..try to use different forms of redress to meet these threats.

Turner argues that when the conflict emerges from opposed interests and claims of protagonists acting under a single social principle, judicial institutions can be invoked to meet the crisis... But when claims are advanced under different social principles,... there can be no rational settlement. Here recourse is had to divination of sorcery or ancestral wrath, causing misfortune; and ultimately to a ritual reconciliation which can reassert all the values held by decent Ndembu"¹

As noted above, Turner coined the phrase “social drama,” to describe the “eruptions of conflict.”² He outlined four stages in this process. These are: 1) the breach 2) mounting crisis 3) redress mechanisms, which “may range from personal advice and informal arbitration, to formal juridical and legal machinery, and to resolve certain kinds of crisis, to the performance of public ritual.”and 4) reintegration.³

In my experience, most conflicts in the village involve marriage problems, unequal sharing of resources, and struggles over headman succession. Further, distress and animosity can arise around the chronic illness or death of one’s kin, even someone already quite old.

Talking as a Method for Redress

For resolving normal miscommunication, slights, and everyday offenses, discussion and negotiation is, of course, natural and appropriate. I have led workshops in Zambia on making better marriages and on pastoral counseling. I participated in countless efforts at conflict resolution in and out of the Zambian church using dialogue, mediation or even external judgment. One church member, who had been insulted, even made a claim of libel against a pastor, which took us all to the magistrate’s court. The judge threw the case out. Generally, dialogue is the key initial mechanism for redress, as Turner states above. In fact, I felt that

¹ Victor Turner. *Schism and Continuity in an African Society* (Manchester: University of Manchester, 1957) xi-xii.

² Ibid., 91.

³ Ibid., 92.

bringing aggrieved parties together to talk was actually a good use of my missionary gifts, especially when the disaffected individuals or groups had stopped all dialogue. I attempted to save at least three clergy marriages on the verge of break-up with counselling and dialogue. I did not always succeed, despite my faith in my well-regarded clinical pastoral education methods.

I failed, not surprisingly, with one clergy couple in which the husband was having dreams about his wife being in love with another man. These dreams were clear evidence to him of her infidelity, despite her claims to the contrary. I once participated in a three-hour reconciliation meeting between a Pastor, with a few of his colleagues, and the elders of his wife's family, all from a different church body. Such meetings between the wife's kin and the husband's kin are common African approaches for bringing estranged couples back together. In this particular case, the husband's kin was his church family. Despite an exhaustive sharing of hurts, reflecting, forgiving, pleading, goal-setting and the apparently reconciled couple even joining me for the long drive back to their marriage home, the marriage soon fractured again.

Again, I offered my role as a western marriage counselor for another couple. However, I developed a hunch that our dialogue was not reaching that which was hurting them. At one meeting the husband accused his wife of causing him great leg pain during his sleep, which was his justification for not sleeping in the same bed with her. His wife denied this, of course. I was flummoxed and they have since agreed to divorce.

Gift Giving as a Method for Redress

The giving of material objects mediates, lubricates and enhances human relationships in many cultures. For Africans, gift giving is integral to relationships. Whenever I entered a rural area I had not visited recently, it was incumbent upon me to ideally visit the chief himself, or one of his *indunas* or councilors, or a headman, first. This visit included bringing gifts of blankets,

maize meal, oil, sugar, or cash. A very well-received gift was beer, but this I did not bring him. “Through the medium of gift-exchange, the message is mutual indebtedness...the purpose...is precisely the creation of ties.”⁴ In effect, my giving signified my personal respect for their traditional offices and the chief’s giving back to me would be the buffering of our relationship with his goodwill, which would go a long way in giving me some benefit of the doubt should a conflict ever arise.

To illustrate the importance of this, on one occasion I was walking between two Bemba villages for the first time without informing the local chief. A group of young men with slingshots surrounded me, quite angry at seeing a stranger among their maize fields. They thought I was a sorcerer, come to hex their crops. I was forced to depend on a headman I knew from the area to rush over and calm the men down.

In a manner similar to above, gift-giving also serves to reconcile parties who have become separated. Anthropologist and Professor Katherine Coe, et al. give us some examples in Africa.

“When one brother wronged another among the Ganda, the offending brother was told to present his offended sibling with an offering of a white goat and a white fowl to seek reconciliation. Further, Ganda women who argued with their husbands would offer them a cock, with the goal of seeking reconciliation. Similarly, if an Igbo wife was found to be at fault for initiating a marital dispute, she had to buy her husband a cock, goat, or kola. Onitsha women of the Igbo society forced their husbands to pay a fine if they acted as tyrants.”⁵

Even a very serious crime can be resolved through gift-giving in the form of compensation. One day Senior Pastor Hieta answered the ring on his cell phone, and a worried

⁴ Anthony Gittins, *Bread for the Journey: The Mission of Transformation and the Transformation of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993), 83.

⁵ Kathryn Coe, Craig T. Palmer and Khadijah elShabazz, “The Resolution of Conflict: Traditional African Ancestors, Kinship, and Rituals of Reconciliation,” in *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review*, 3, no. 2 (Fall 2013): 110-128.

look came over his face. “What’s wrong?” I asked. Putting the phone down, he replied, “The chief of the Lunda people is threatening to close our congregations. I must go there, now.”

The next day, after pulling in two of his experienced Zambian pastors and me to join him, planning the logistics and driving the twenty hours on the poor roads to northwestern Zambia, we finally found ourselves with a rural congregation, named Dipalata, at the breaking point. Nasty letters and gossip had been circulating between members jealous over last year’s church aid distributions of corn flour, cooking oil, soap, blankets and clothing to vulnerable families. The church handed out these supports only to registered families with orphans and vulnerable children. The crisis began after one church elder, Peter Kazeya, received a threatening letter from church members who believed his family had received some of this material aid unfairly. To make matters worse, the same elder had died soon after receiving the letter, and the distraught un-churched relatives were convinced the authors of the hateful letter were responsible for his passing away, so they petitioned the Chief to punish the congregation for his wrongful death.

We traveled to the Chief’s palace with the congregational leaders and asked his headmen for an audience with the Chief. After a few hours waiting under a shade tree, we were allowed inside his walled compound. When the chief entered the room, his headman instructed us to lower our stance. Everyone got down on one knee, heads bowed, and began to clap in rhythm.

The chief entered and asked many questions. He reviewed the elder’s family’s accusation against the congregation, asking many questions for clarification. Despite our pastors’ protests, the coincidence of the elder’s death so soon after the threatening letter was proof enough for the Chief that the elder Kazeya had been “hexed.” The chief declared with great seriousness that if the eight Lutheran congregations in his kingdom are at all like this particular one, practicing witchcraft, then they shall be banned. Although I remained largely

silent, I was granted a chance to speak, where I shared that the elder in question, according to the local clinic, had actually died from an untreated chronic medical condition. The chief responded, “Yes, I know that, but even in the bible you can find stories of evil spirits causing illness.”

In order to save his congregations, the senior pastor promised to clean up his congregations from such practices, and asked for permission to continue the work of the church. The chief then rescinded his ban, but held up a very, very severe punishment on the congregation: a payment of four cows to the aggrieved family. Without referring to evidence of the type normally required in a western court of law, the Chief simply made his final finding of guilt and assigned a death payment as damages. This family agreed to this settlement and we all knelt before the chief once again as he left the room. To my colleagues, it felt as if the evil behind the death of the elder had been purged, even though the punishment was crippling. The chief, seemingly pleased to reach the end of the hearing, invited me and the senior pastor back sometime soon to sit and become better acquainted! My ministry quickly turned to encouraging other congregations into solidarity as they raised the funds to purchase the cattle. Walking together, the congregations took two years to raise the money, but eventually paid the penalty.

In his book, Turner narrates a social drama involving a death payment as well.⁶ Like me, Turner witnessed an abundance of dissonance and discord, leading to poor apparent social cohesion. He writes, “among the Ndembu, conflicts in secular, non-ritual, relations speedily sharpen to the point of irreconcilability in terms of the maintenance of local cohesion. The high rates both of divorce and of village fission attest to this.”⁷ In the last three decades thousands of independent congregations in Zambia have been born, mostly formed by schisms

⁶ Turner, 267-274.

⁷ Ibid., xxiii.

within other aligned and non-aligned churches. This trend calls to mind the village fissions Turner charts in some detail.⁸

Addressing Conflicts Through Ritual

Turner writes that:

“judicial mechanisms...to redress conflict...involve rational investigation into the motives and behaviors of the contending parties. Ritual mechanisms tend to be utilized where conflict...expresses itself through projection-that is, in the collective association of misfortunes with ill-feeling and the working of mystical beings and forces, with dreams, and with answers to divination...It appears to the members of the society as though mysterious forces are attacking the very foundations of the moral and social order, not from within, but by projection from without, in the form of witches, spirits and mystical powers which penetrate individual members...in the form of dreams, illness, infertility, madness, etc.”⁹

In this early work, Turner sees ritual as undertaking sociological and political functions.

That is, partially and temporarily reordering that which has been disordered.

“the instability of the secular social structure can be palliated but not controlled by secular means...Ritual performed by cult associations...acts to keep the common values of Ndembu society constantly before the roving individualist of which it is composed. These values include historical renown, hunting and virility, fertility and motherhood, and health and strength...The misfortunes of life, are attributed to the punitive action of ancestor spirits, who are exorcised and placated in rituals specific to each mode of affliction...in the context of the ritual the common values of the whole society are stressed in symbol, mime and precept...Ndembu ritual compensates for the integration deficiencies of a politically unstable society.”¹⁰

So, as a response to deeper conflict, specialists continue to perform various rituals on other individuals who are afflicted or caught by an unseen spirit or ancestor. Such individuals may be suffering personal misfortune or who are “quarreling with close kin or (are)

⁸ Ibid.,48-51.

⁹ Ibid., 126.

¹⁰ Ibid., xxi.

representatives of kin groups torn by conflicts.”¹¹ Adepts, then carry out the rituals themselves in a manner that is appropriate to the “spirit which afflicts and its mode of affliction.”¹² They collect plants, as medicines, “with song and symbolic action.”¹³ These plants can be prepared and eaten or simply placed or pounded and smeared on the patient’s body. Someone might also sacrifice a chicken or goat and use the body parts as well. Every object carries symbolism.

“the dominant symbols...associated with each ritual...reflect...the values which all Ndembu possess in common, such as, for example, the fertility of women, crops and animals, huntsmanship, health, and the power of the ancestors to bestow or withhold such benefits.”¹⁴ One purpose of the ritual is to placate the offended spirit, and adepts, again, would speak prayers aloud repeatedly for that purpose. Assistants to the doctors may dance, sing songs and play drums as well during the ritual.

Notably, every type of ritual performed or celebrated in response to a crisis will also make reference to a social conflict. “Each severe case of illness brings into the open some rankling dispute...between specific persons with opposed interests.”¹⁵ Victor Turner’s wife, Edith, returned in 1985 to the same village to describe in great detail only two rituals in their entirety, called *Ihamba*, and she appropriately entitled her book: *Experiencing Ritual*.¹⁶ *Ihamba* is noteworthy insofar as it involves the doctor cutting the skin of the patient and sucking on a

¹¹ Ibid., 292.

¹² Ibid., 293.

¹³ Ibid., 294.

¹⁴ Ibid., 290.

¹⁵ Ibid., 301.

¹⁶ Edith Turner, *Experiencing Ritual: A New Interpretation of African Healing* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1992).

cupping horn, “to remove the tooth of a punitive dead hunter.”¹⁷ Of note for our project purposes is one feature found in both *Ithamba* rituals Edith Turner narrates. After some hours, near the peak of the ritual’s intensity occurred a “stage of *mazu*, the ‘coming-out-with-grudges,’ ... whatever was secretly bothering the patient about her fellows.”¹⁸ The doctor’s spoken prayers and commentary then made specific reference to this uttered conflict, as he or she urged the ritual concentration to increase and drove it towards its climax.

We see that healing and conflict resolution are absolutely bound up, and that ritual addresses them both.

As it is an aim of this project to identify what features of African culture can inform Christian worship for healing and reconciliation, let us now turn to African initiated churches (AIC).

African Initiated Churches and Conflict Resolution

An African initiated church body is largely sustained by Africans alone. Let us look at one of the largest types of AICS, Zionist churches, who stress faith healing, revelation and include aspects of traditional African religion. Note that Zionist churches in southern Africa have nothing to do with Zionism, the Jewish nationalist movement. Robert and Daneel have given years to studying AICs. ¹⁹ From their work in Zimbabwe and South Africa, they write that:

“preparation for worship is a communal cleansing of the congregation so that it appears worthy before God. Prophets form the gates into the holy terrain. People file barefooted into the sacred space between the "gates." With the help of the Holy Spirit, the prophets diagnose and observe the sins of the people who are entering the sacred space. They encourage them to confess their sins in a process of internal cleansing. Since the AIC

¹⁷ Victor Turner, 164.

¹⁸ Edith Turner, 59-60.

¹⁹ Dana L. Robert and M. L. Daneel, “Worship among Apostles and Zionists in Southern Africa,” in *Christian Worship Worldwide: Expanding Horizons, Deepening Practice*, ed. Charles E. Farhadian (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2007). Kindle Electronic Edition (location 608-865).

congregation usually consists of a local community, rather than the western pattern of people driving from miles away to attend the church of their choice, the prophets already have a good idea of the sins and weaknesses of the congregation. Through the act of confession, people reveal what is not right in their lives, and they improve themselves through the inner cleansing provided by the act of confession. Since ritual cleansing is a big part of African traditional religions, it appears that the extensive preparation ritual in AICs is an adaptation of both traditional and biblical patterns of ritual cleansing. The communal process of ritual cleansing extends throughout the service. Prophets continue with the process of communal purification by counseling and praying with persons seated along the edges of the congregation. Cleansing of life problems and of evil spirits continues throughout the afternoon.”²⁰

“During the worship service, prophets counsel needy people. Toward the end of the service, they may bring some of these people forward, tell their stories, and invite the congregation to sing and dance around them. Persons share the details of their condition, including confessing sins that have made them ill, or telling of dreams that have haunted them. Individuals with prayer needs come forward and kneel. Bishops and prophets go from person to person, laying hands on them and praying. The laying on of hands can be a matter of quiet individual prayer, or it can be a public exorcism, in which several prophets place their hands on the head of the afflicted and pray to drive out the evil spirits that are afflicting him or her. Healing in the context of AIC worship encompasses all of life - the need for rain, jobs, work, sound family relations, and physical health. People often attribute their problems to being bewitched by others, and thus witchcraft detection and eradication remain big parts of the healing process.”²¹

From the above, we might frame Zionist worship in part, as an extended series of impromptu public rituals over the course of the gathering day, albeit less complex and nuanced than the traditional African rituals studied by Turner. Zionist worship directly addresses personal distress and conflict. “In the AICs, worship, healing, and communal fellowship together create a seamless whole of acceptance and well-being, using African cultural forms.”²²

²⁰ Ibid., Kindle Locations 681-688.

²¹ Ibid., Kindle Locations 810-815.

²² Ibid., Kindle Locations 626-627.

Urban Experience of Distress

Problems and stresses faced by rural people change during urbanization – a trend at work in much of Africa. People who move to the city experience crowding, close interaction and inter-marriage with other ethnic groups, non-traditional dress, loss of traditional authority structures and roles, loss of farming, loss of hunting, and loss of kin staying close by. If one's sense of identity is primarily bound up with one's kin, leaving kin behind can be an existential crisis. City dwellers are also confronted by a very small, but visible minority of persons with significant wealth. Each of these literally assaults and violates the traditional African norms and worldview which Turner studied sixty years ago. Moving from the village into an urban milieu with such different mores and patterns of life from the village is akin to being turned upside down.

What remains the same is the need to find well-being amidst such an environment. These new stresses, as well as the normal anxieties over periods of illness, mean that people continue to experience affliction and to seek release. Increasingly the terminology used has shifted from the African spirits (*mashave, ngulu*) to demons and Satan. White Father Bernard Udelhoven has been ministering in rural and urban settings in Zambia since 1989. He writes that

“Spiritual realities in Zambia always have something to do with social issues. What is described today by Satanism people could as well have described in terms of the older terms of witchcraft or spirit possession. The fact that urban people needed a new word lets us suspect that people are dealing with new experiences that cannot be captured adequately by the old concepts of witchcraft and spirit possession.”²³

“The panic of Satanism coincides with other developments in Zambia: the opening of Zambia's economy, globalisation, the availability of a desired Western lifestyle at the fingertips in Lusaka – amidst widespread poverty. Access to power and wealth remain hidden and opaque, and there are new pressures and strains on family life. Riches & power in Zambia have always been suspect to be connected to the occult.”²⁴

²³ Bernhard Udelhoven. “The Social Side of Possession,” *FENZA Documents*, February 2009, http://www.fenza.org/docs/fingers/the_social_side_of_possession.pdf, page 2 (accessed on October 5, 2014).

This relatively new spiritual reality focusing on demons and Satan also find its home in a different spiritual cosmos from the African traditional worldview. Udelhoven holds that “the modern fears – with roots that touch old *Zambian* traditions (witchcraft, spirit possession) – have been reshaped by a dualistic worldview (there is only God and Satan).”²⁵ I agree with this statement, and further classify this dualistic worldview as a syncretic co-mingling of *Zambian* traditional religion with a mutated Christianity, since the God and Satan named herein are clearly assumed to be biblical, in my experience.

“A possessed person is flooded with dreams, images and symbols. These symbols derive their power not only from the individual psychic make-up, but also from the fears, suspicions and uncertainties of the surrounding community. The names or types of the “demons” can stand for the social ills and conflicts.”²⁶

Notably, young persons and children are affected by this phenomenon.

“People who have been wounded in their families are more vulnerable toward experiences with demonic powers. Many... had a traumatic childhood. Some experienced rape or other forms of abuse. Other youths live with high expectations from their parents or guardians with which they cannot cope. Others have serious problems in school.”²⁷

Many urban parents and aunts and uncles see education as the only route which they can access out of poverty for the family, and thus, may apply unrealistic academic demands on their teenagers in school, which can become awful for a child or teenager to bear.

The most frequent theme, in our experience, were issues of belonging: People overpowered by evil forces were often youths who did not develop a healthy feeling of

²⁴ Bernhard Udelhoven. “A Ten Step Pastoral Approach to Satanism in *Zambia*,” *FENZA Documents*, November 2010, http://www.fenza.org/docs/fingers/a_10_step_pastoral_approach_to_satanism_in_zambia.pdf, page 2 (accessed on October 5, 2014).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁶ Udelhoven, *The Social Side of Possession*, 1.

²⁷ Udelhoven, *A Ten Step Pastoral Approach to Satanism in Zambia*, 5.

belonging to their families... The world of Satanism thereby could become their own world – especially during the time of puberty when the inner world is restructured.”²⁸

“Sometimes their involvement in Satanism was in fact a means to trigger a crisis within the family because of problems they could not address otherwise.”²⁹ In addition, illnesses are interpreted as manifestations of possession by demons:

“demon possession have become so much part of a belief system, that many people see demons behind HIV, diabetics, high blood pressure, family issues, marriage problems, with the hope that these demons can be cast out, if one has but sufficient faith.”³⁰

Treatments

There are now thousands of urban deliverance preachers, Pentecostal pastors and non-Christian spiritual healers, all independent and generally non-aligned to one other, responding to these needs, in the categories of the new spiritual universe.

“the recurring exorcisms of Pentecostal and charismatic churches, where the possessed are allowed to roll on the floor and scream and shout, and where the possessed go from one church to the next to be exorcised again and again, have something in common with the night-long dancing and drumming of those who appease *ngulu* and *mashawe*. (traditional African spirits) Psychologically speaking, both forms could be regarded as methods to abreact inner powers, but also to provoke a crisis (when issues have been kept ‘under the carpet’ for too long) and also public recognition.”³¹

In my experience, most mainline Protestant pastors and Roman Catholic priests in Zambia wish they could close their eyes to this powerful trend, having spent enough time in western education that they feel they have inadequate spiritual or cognitive tools to engage it.

²⁸ Ibid., 5.

²⁹ Bernhard Udelhoven. “A Pastoral Approach to Deliverance in Zambia,” *FENZA Documents*, December 2008, http://www.fenza.org/docs/fingers/a_pastoral_approach_to_deliverance_in_zambia.pdf, page 11 (accessed on October 5, 2014).

³⁰ Udelhoven, *A Ten Step Pastoral Approach to Satanism in Zambia*, 3.

³¹ Udelhoven, *A Pastoral Approach to Deliverance in Zambia*, 10.

The famous example to the contrary was the Archbishop of Lusaka. Emmanuel Milingo, who, in the 1970s, began a new ministry of public healing and exorcism of spirits (*mashave*) by the Holy Spirit through the laying-on of hands, in the capital city. These became extremely popular, sometimes attracting thousands of city dwellers, although controversial with the rest of the Catholic church leadership. He eventually departed from Zambia in 1983. It is noteworthy that his popularity soared at the same time the Zambian economy entered a long national decline. This was due in large part to a world-wide decline in copper prices upon which the Zambian economy relies for employment and revenue.

Dutch academic Gerrie ter Haar undertook an analysis of the many personal letters Milingo received during that time. The study revealed that those who believed themselves possessed by various spirits or Satan suffered from extended unemployment, childlessness, poverty, disturbing dreams, sexual problems, poor chronic health, and, notable for our project, family dysfunction, domestic strife, and family quarrels.³²

Since then, Udelhoven, one of only a few priests or pastors from the historical Christian churches engaged directly with this reality in Zambia, has spent years developing approaches for the benefit of his colleagues that still honor their Roman Catholic tradition.

“Our approach looks at exorcism from the angle of a patient-centred therapy. People who strongly believe that they are possessed and who are mentally fixed on that possession may need a powerful rite of exorcism in order to be mentally ready for a new step forward in their lives. Since the patients are immersed into their families and communities who often see them to be possessed with demons, they too may need the assurance of a rite that delivers them.”³³

The primary gift Udelhoven believes the church can bring to such persons is prayer and ritual. Note that this can also include invocations, addresses, appeals, and implorations, which

³² Gerrie ter Haar, Stephen Ellis, “Spirit Possession and Healing in Modern Zambia: An Analysis of Letters to Archbishop Milingo,” *African Affairs* vol 87 no 347 (1988):185-206.

³³ Udelhoven, *A Pastoral Approach to Deliverance in Zambia*, 9.

are extended, physical, loud, and even chaotic. This is what is meant by the term *dramatic*, below.

‘People come to us priests as “men of God” and they expect from us to pray with them and to help them to pray. Our presence often means to them also the presence of God. We pray in a way we feel at ease in – so that our prayers inspire confidence and trust. Sometimes it proved effective to bring people’s images and their dream-materials into prayer before God. Sometimes it helped to encourage the sufferer to speak a prayer after the priest. The Catholic church has many rituals (blessings of homes, families, sprinkling with holy water...) since people are often in dire need of tangible signs. Here is also the place for the “minor exorcisms” of which the church has a rich tradition. Some people may need some dramatic forms of prayer ... and room for creativity can be given.’³⁴

Conclusion

Worthy of note from the above case studies for reducing conflict and stress is the small emphasis given to that very practice upon which Christianity places great weight. That is, spoken words of personal apology and forgiveness. Coe, *et al.* have noted this as well. “We contrast our approach, which focuses on culture as a strategy used to move people towards reconciliation, with an approach that focuses on forgiveness...”³⁵ Uttered statements of personal apology and forgiveness may occur in African arbitration and mediation, and even then, in my experience, they are rare. I believe that such verbal utterances are limited in their power to reconcile Africans because they are individualistic and do not include all those whom the speaker would consider as one’s kin, including their elders and ancestors. In African culture, individual identity is inseparable from one’s kin.

Next, in chapter four we will investigate Victor Turner’s later work on ritual and liminality and Religious Anthropologist Fr. Anscar Chunpungco’s work on the inculturation of worship, all with an eye towards informing the liturgical healing proposals the ELC-Zambia pastors considered during this project, which we will then lay out in chapter five.

³⁴ Udelhoven, *A Ten Step Pastoral Approach to Satanism in Zambia*, 4.

³⁵ Coe, 111.

CHAPTER 4

RITUAL AND INCULTURATION OF WORSHIP

As a sixteen year old boy of Rochester, NY, I was selected and sent away on a special weekend-long ritual for a Boy Scout honor society called Order of the Arrow. During the weekend, called an Ordeal, My fellow candidates and I had to maintain complete silence, be separated at all times except for the ritual, eat little food, perform physical work during the day, and sleep alone outdoors under the stars. The closing ritual included special songs, handclasps, rhythmic touching, symbols, actors, stories, and the imparting of secret wisdom. The entire experience was inspired and informed by Native American religion, specifically the Delaware tribes. I never imagined that I would return to consider its ritual form thirty-five years later, in a different country far away.

Liminality

As I mentioned previously, Victor Turner's early work was on social conflict and its resolution through social drama. At that time, anthropologists studied rituals primarily as mechanisms for healthy society – his initial field assignment. We noted this early work in Ndembu ritual in chapter three. Later, he focused exclusively upon ritual *per se*. Turner developed his ideas on ritual as a choreographed handling of symbols, which refer to all-important religious beliefs. “When we talk about the ‘meaning’ of a symbol, we must...distinguish between at least three levels or fields of meaning...indigenous interpretation

(exegetical meaning); the operational meaning; and the positional meaning.”¹ In the 1960s, he also advanced his processual view on ritual. Turner grounded this examination in the work of French ethnographer Arnold van Gennep, who first coined the phrase *rites de passage* in 1909.

“Such rites indicate and constitute transitions between states. By ‘state’ I mean here...such social constancies as legal status, profession, office or calling, rank or degree...the term “state” may also be applied to...the physical, mental or emotional condition in which a person or group may be found at a particular time.”²

The three phases or stages of this processual scheme are well known. “All rites of transition are marked by three phases: separation, margin (or *limen*), and aggregation.”³ The first is preliminary: preparing and undertaking to separate from, detach from, or leave a state. It is to leave the “everyday flow of activities.”⁴ The second is the ambiguous realm in between the two states. This is the margin or liminal phase, which is explored further below. The third stage is post-liminal, which is the incorporation and assimilation of the person or group into the next state, one which is again normative and defined in the community, or in a new community.

Ritual, in this frame of reference, is the vehicle or process by and through which one is carried, held and changed on their passage to the next state.

“I consider the term ‘ritual’ to be...applied to forms of religious behavior associated with social transition, while the term ‘ceremony’ has a closer bearing on religious behavior associated with social states...ritual is transformative, ceremony confirmatory.”⁵

Turner advances his investigations into life-crisis ritual by exploring the liminal phase in particular. He first characterizes the “transitional-being” or “liminal persona.”⁶ The person in this

¹ Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1967), 50.

² Ibid., 93-94.

³ Ibid., 94.

⁴ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969), ix.

⁵ Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, 95.

phase is partly invisible, ambiguous, and difficult to define. They are on the threshold of, but have not yet reached, the state where their journey is leading. They are being born again. They may be considered novices or neophytes.⁷ For example, in the Ndembu girl's secluded puberty ritual, called *Nkang'a*, the girl spends an entire day wrapped up in a blanket without moving.

This is

“ ‘*the place of dying.*’ The novice is regarded as someone dying. She must not speak, her fists are clenched-and must not be opened that day-and she may not eat. For this reason she is sometimes spoken of as ‘closed up’. Nor may she be seen by men. She is also separated from her parents during the daylong ritual. Like a baby or a corpse, she lies in the foetal position, wrapped in a blanket.”⁸

The liminal stage may include suffering. “In all these life-crisis rituals is stressed the theme of suffering as a means of entry into a superior ritual and social status. The novices undergo symbolic death and real ordeal.”⁹

The liminal phase is also not definable. “Their condition is one of ambiguity and paradox, a confusion of all the customary categories.”¹⁰ The liminal stage also has the connotation of hibernation, which some animals undertake, or hiddenness, like the absent moon between lunar cycles.¹¹ ¹² “The passivity of neophytes to their instructors...are signs of the process whereby they are ground down to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to cope with

⁶ Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, 95.

⁷ Ibid., 96.

⁸ Victor Turner, *The Drums of Affliction: A Study of the Religious Processes among the Ndembu of Zambia* (London: International Africa Institute, 1968), 213.

⁹ Ibid., 16.

¹⁰ Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, 97.

¹¹ Ibid., 99.

¹² Ibid., 109.

their new station in life.”¹³ Often, elders and others pass on valued wisdom to the novice during rites around life crisis transitions. It is also a time for reflection on “their society, their cosmos, and the powers that generate and sustain them.”¹⁴

The installation rite of the Lunda senior chief Kanongesha includes instances of the above. The chief-elect spends the night, set apart, in ragged clothing, sitting in a modest posture, silently withstanding verbal admonishments, harsh counsel, humiliation, censure, towards stripping him of selfishness and pride and developing his self-control.¹⁵

Turner introduces the term *anti-structure* for describing the liminal. Insofar as the liminal is a temporary experience outside of the social structure, it is anti-structure. The neophyte in the liminal phase has no social standing. In a group ritual, all neophytes are equal, undifferentiated, and without position. “They are persons...that...fall in the interstices of social structure.”¹⁶ The liminal is evident in its juxtaposition to social structure.

Turner holds that African ritual is not the only institutionalization of liminality, but it appears in world religions as well. He comments specifically on the Rule of St Benedict as an example.¹⁷ It is noteworthy that he also found many instances of liminal-type phenomena in modern, industrial societies.¹⁸ Many contemporary interpreters of Turner have applied his work to the western context. In the field of pastoral counseling, Timothy Carson notes that

“The frequent parallel to and interior reflection of the liminal state found in rites of transformation and passage is an intrapsychic state of ecstatic experience. Non-rational

¹³ Ibid., 101.

¹⁴ Ibid., 105.

¹⁵ Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 100-102.

¹⁶ Ibid., 125.

¹⁷ Ibid., 107-108.

¹⁸ Ibid., 192-194.

experience, especially when located in liminal passage, may be revelatory and provide special access to certain categories of knowing. Ecstatic experience is itself liminal as it constitutes an interim phase of separation from the rational, perceiving ego. This separated anti-structure of the non-rational way of knowing moves eventually to a post-liminal structure of rationality, but in its new transformed state it blends the insights of both rational and non-rational categories of knowing.”¹⁹

My Own Initiation Ritual

I began this chapter with a weekend away I experienced as a boy, about which I’d like to share further because of its obvious markers to liminality. During my Order of the Arrow Ordeal ritual, there were four principal characters who led us, in costume, as described in the secret guidebook.

“Kichkinet (Guide) – represents helpfulness and friendliness.

Nutiket (Guard) – represents cheerfulness.

Meteu (Medicine Man) – represents brotherhood and reminds us to love one another.

Allowat Sakima (Mighty Chief) – represents service.

The four tests of the Ordeal:

- Night Alone (in the forest)– to teach you self-reliance and to show that you are set apart from your fellow Scouts for something higher.
- 24 Hours of Silence – to turn your thoughts inward to the things of the spirit.
- Scant Food – to teach you the virtues of self-denial.
- Arduous Toil for a Day – to indicate your willingness to serve others all through your life.”²⁰

¹⁹ Timothy Carson, “Liminal Reality and Transformation Power: Pastoral Interpretation and Method,” *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 7 (Summer 1997): 101-102.

²⁰ “Order of the Arrow Brotherhood Requirements,” Boy Scouts of America, http://www.takodalodge.org/uploads/4/2/1/0/4210812/brotherhood_study_guide.pdf (accessed November 23, 2014).

The True Name of the Order of the Arrow is “Wimachtendienk, Wingolauchsik, Witahemui,” which means “The Brotherhood of Cheerful Service.”²¹

The four “native American” characters choreographed the pre-ordeal (separation) and post-ordeal (aggregation) rituals involving us candidates. The ceremony included a ritual firepot on the ground for each candidate, all positioned in intentional locations. We were loosely roped together and led in line to our positions, representing our ties to one another. We listened to the extended exhortations for higher service and the leaders handed to each of us in turn a stringed bow on which to pull and to symbolically test our strength. We repeated statements of commitment to the ideals of brotherhood and scouting. The characters made a number of movements, including taps on our shoulders, imitating the clauses of the Scout Oath and Law. We repeated the Order of the Arrow obligation. The core of the secret wisdom given to us was a whispered admonition in native American tongue, which shall not be written down. I found out later that it meant “love one another.” This liminal period included many of the features we reviewed above, including symbols, suffering, hiddenness, hibernation, wisdom instruction, obedience, reflection, and temporary changes in eating. It also included touching of the candidates by the ritual guides, as is done some Ndembu rituals.

In my remembering this ritual, the values of Scouting and service to others are re-awakened in me, like they were long ago. As a young adult, I was aware of my orientation to others and self-confidence in the outdoors and in leadership, which I felt had come, in part, from Scouting. I am grateful for this initiation ritual which helped me transition from a boy to a man.

²¹ “Order of the Arrow Brotherhood Requirements”.

Communitas

A group of novices in the liminal stage together exhibit “homogeneity and comradeship”²² Turner calls this temporary grouping *communitas*. It is “society as an unstructured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders.”²³ Turner contrasts *liminality* and *communitas* with structured, normative society, which assigns every person status, role distinction, rights and obligations. “Communitas is of the now; structure is rooted in the past and extends into the future through language, law, and custom.”²⁴

Borrowing from Martin Buber, Turner states that *communitas*:

“is the being no longer side by side (and, one might add, above and below) but *with* one another of a multitude of persons. And this multitude, though it moves towards one goal, yet experiences everywhere a turning to, a dynamic facing of, the others, a flowing from *I* to *Thou*. Community is where community happens.”²⁵

Relevance For Liturgy

Turner also explores the modes of communication of the sacred in such rites. The three main components are “1) exhibitions, “what is shown”; 2) actions, “what is done”; and 3) instructions, “what is said.”²⁶ The first includes instruments, clothes, icons, masks, jewelry, etc. The second include postures and gestures. Of course, these modes and the three stages of *rites de passage* all have strong, obvious associations with liturgy, although there can be a great difference in duration. Ndembu rituals typically last a few hours to multiple weeks, while

²² Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 96.

²³ *Ibid.*, 96.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 113.

²⁵ Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 127.

²⁶ Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, 102.

western-style Christian Sunday morning liturgy takes normally less than two or three hours in Africa.

We have examined Turner's work on Ndembu ritual above with an eye to answering our research questions. Yes, the Zambian pastors participating in this project, as Christian worship leaders, can potentially reframe their own ministries partly as ritual guides of the liminal. Pastor Timothy Carson, examining the relationship between liminality, transformation and pastoral care, writes that:

“The religious leader is strategically positioned, both in terms of specific roles within faith communities and also by virtue of a particular theological worldview, to be an extremely important ritual guide to individuals, groups and social and ecclesial systems upon entrance into liminal states within passages... Assessment, guidance and healing based on such categories as awareness of the holy, providence, faith, grace, repentance, communion and vocation are especially suited to interpreting transitional phenomena and the intrinsic potentials for transformation they hold.”²⁷

As explained in chapter one, most of the ELC-Zambia pastors had shown little competence in or enough access to the liminal or the mystical, or to praying with confidence during conflict and illness, which Zambians are seeking. By participating in this project, which will involve attending to prayer, we thought that the pastors may themselves be changed.

“The ecstatic experience and participation of the ritual leader or therapist is also indicative of the flow of the process. The degree to which they lose track of time and experience a solidarity, oneness or identification with the liminal person seeking help is an indication of their informed participation in the liminal process.”²⁸

Inculturation of Worship

Turner's work unearthed the storehouse of core values and symbols of Ndembu religion and culture. Let's recall the research question in chapter one: might Zambian Lutherans appropriate their faith more fully into their lives and problems if their church inculturates, or

²⁷ Carson, 105.

²⁸ Carson, 107.

internalizes more intentionally, some African religious concepts? What are the principles the pastors should be aware of when adapting the Sunday morning liturgy? With the help of Anscar Chupungco and others, we'll review some approaches to cultural adaptation of liturgy.

Chupungco

Fr. Anscar Chupungco, a Filipino Benedictine monk, dedicated the bulk of his career to liturgical renewal and is one the most well-known liturgists in the Roman Catholic Church. He is also highly regarded in ecumenical circles. Let us review his principles of adaptation. Culture is already a very broad term, and given that “every culture is in constant evolution,” Chupungco helpfully sets the stage for us in narrowing which features of culture we are most interested in.²⁹

“Adaptation does not mean returning to primitive or discarded ways. But neither does it mean futuristic approach or assumption of cultural forms that are still in the process of being assimilated. Adaptation refers to firmly established values and traditions which have shaped for many generations the religious, family, social and national life of the people. If adaptation must tend towards the integration of worship with culture, it must seek stable cultural elements which the people can identify as their own.”³⁰

Chupungco further advises that indigenous liturgical development requires indigenous theological development.³¹ The core work of liturgical adaptation therefore includes indigenous Christians. This is evident in our project design, which I will describe in chapter five, in which the Zambian pastors will themselves wrestle theologically with some foundations of African culture and religion before they consider how they might adapt Sunday worship services with these considerations in mind.

When we consider liturgical adaptation, Chupungco states that:

²⁹ Anscar J. Chupungco, *Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1982), 76.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 77.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 79-80.

“This calls for a discernment of the authenticity of cultural forms...Authenticity here means that the forms adequately express the reality experienced *by the people*. Critical evaluation means that they undergo a process of purification so that *they can convey* the Christian message (emphasis added).”³²

The above is fundamental. Can a particular traditional cultural form, as experienced by the Zambians, be treated, fashioned or handled in a manner in worship that conveys Christianity?

There are three commonly accepted categories of adaptation. Liturgical *accommodation* consists of minor worship practices, such as physical gestures and etiquette, insofar as they honor cultural norms. Next, liturgical *acculturation* is the “process by which cultural elements which are compatible with the Roman liturgy are incorporated into it either as substitutes or illustrations of ... the Roman rite.”³³ This commonly involves the use of local idioms, sayings and expressions, so to better communicate the prayers, the preaching and the written words of the liturgy. Acculturation can also encompass word substitution with words in the local language, which can more effectively convey the intent. “While retaining the content of the Roman eucharistical formula, it is vehicled by such cultural ingredients.”³⁴ Ten years later, in 1992, Chupungco further refines his assessment that such *acculturation* is not assimilation of the given liturgy with the non-Christian culture, but more properly a juxtaposition of the two.³⁵

Lastly, the category of adaptation known as liturgical *inculturation* is the challenge behind our core question, above. Given our project, we wonder whether a pre-Christian rite can be “endowed with Christian meaning.”³⁶ Chupungco is affirming in his response, and he refers to

³² Ibid., 80.

³³ Ibid., 81.

³⁴ Ibid., 82.

³⁵ Anscar J. Chupungco, *Liturgical Inculturation: Sacramentals, Religiosity, and Catechesis* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992), 27.

³⁶ Chupungco, *Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy*, 84.

the original development of the baptism and the eucharist rituals as examples. “Inculturation, properly done, is an ideal means of ‘Christianizing’ the *entire* culture, that is to say, of imbuing culture with the spirit of Christ and his Gospel” (emphasis added).³⁷ “Liturgical inculturation...means that the liturgy and culture share the same pattern of thinking, speaking, and expressing themselves through rites, symbols...the liturgy is inserted into the culture, history and tradition of the people...”³⁸ On a practical level, inculturation, at the present, for Chupungco, is to be realized through small changes in the text of the mass, adjusting for good flow and rhythm, including local images and idioms, and writing prayers appropriate to the local context. It can also include changes in music melody and rhythm, gestures, ordo, vestments, spatial positioning of worship leaders and fixtures, and even the type of bread and wine. Of course, there is much more flexibility in adapting the lesser liturgies, such as funerals, marriages, building dedications, and healing, which is our greater interest. However, Anscar does not actually discuss the adaption of non-Christian rites originating in Africa.

Later still, in 2010, Chupungco expands:

“inculturation is a dynamic translation of the typical edition of the liturgical books...does not create alternative rites...what it does is translate the Roman rite into the language of the local church by integrating suitable cultural elements...by translation I mean dynamic equivalence, not formal correspondence.”³⁹

³⁷ Ibid., 85.

³⁸ Chupungco, *Liturgical Inculturation: Sacramentals, Religiosity, and Catechesis*, 30.

³⁹ Anscar J. Chupungco, *What, Then, Is Liturgy? Musing and Memoir* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2010),

Inculturation Discord

Perhaps Chupunco has a more positive view of culture than his colleagues. Intended to promote the second Vatican Council, the 1985 extraordinary synod of bishops indicates a more conservative stance in its own section on inculturation,

“From this perspective we also find the theological principle for the *problem* of inculturation. Because the Church is communion, which joins diversity and unity in being present throughout the world, it takes from every culture all that it encounters of *positive value*. Yet inculturation is different from a simple external adaptation, because it means the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity in the various human cultures (emphasis added).⁴⁰

Who decides what is of *positive* value in a given culture!?

CAN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION BE INCULTURATED?

Despite Chupungco’s encouraging comments around inculturation, we need to probe further to find to what extent liturgy can be inculturated with African traditional religion (ATR). Chupungco uses yet another phrase below, *cultural pattern*, apparently similar to the above *cultural element* and *cultural form*, none of which mean quite the same as *culture* itself.

“the cultural pattern of a people has a principal role to play in the process of liturgical inculturation. Cultural pattern is the typical mode of thinking, speaking, and expressing oneself through rites, symbols, and art forms. It affects society’s values and ideology, social and family traditions, socioeconomic life, and political system... It is a people’s prescribed system of reflecting on, verbalizing, and ritualizing the values, traditions, and experiences of life.”⁴¹

So, does inculturation include or exclude traditional religious beliefs? He includes rites and symbols above, which are of course religious. Of course, the answer cannot be an unqualified yes. Despite Chupungco’s thoroughly positive understanding of culture, he is evidently excluding traditional religion itself, or at least the features of traditional religion which

⁴⁰ *The Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod*, December 1985, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/synfinal.htm>, no D.4 (accessed on November 15, 2014).

⁴¹ Chupungco, *Liturgical Inculturation: Sacramentals, Religiosity, and Catechesis*, 35.

directly contradict the foundations of Christianity. In his writings, Chupungco never directly addresses African traditional religion (ATR) as a whole. Perhaps he believes that ATR is distinguishable from African culture and that interacting with ATR is more properly a matter of interfaith dialogue, rather than inculturation. Turner might not agree with this assessment. African culture cannot be separated from African religion. According to Turner, Ndembu religion is a comprehensive set of beliefs. Turner's own outline is here shortened here by sociologist Mathieu Deflem, as:

“(1) a belief in the existence of a high god (Nzambi) who has created the world but does not interfere with worldly human activities (this god is largely absent from Ndembu ritual and prayer); (2) a belief in the existence of ancestor spirits or "shades" who may afflict the Ndembu (their importance is manifested by the numerous performances of rituals of affliction among the Ndembu); (3) a belief in the intrinsic efficacy of certain animal and vegetable substances; and (4) a belief in the destructive power of female witches and male sorcerers.”⁴²

Although some African cultural forms, including gestures, etiquette, music, rhythm, movement and local word choices, have been accommodated or acculturated, in my experience, only the first belief, above, has been truly inculturated in the western church's expression in Africa. In all liturgies I have celebrated across seven African countries, the local name for the high God of African traditional religion was the same name used in the translated liturgy for the English word Lord or God. The second belief has only marginally been inculturated in liturgical churches. The other two have generally not been. In a revealing story, Chupungco remembers when then Cardinal Ratzinger had:

“asked what I thought about this invocation of ancestors in the entrance rite of the Zairean mass: ‘Oh you, our ancestors of righteous heart, stay with us’ The obvious problem is that the ancestors who had not been baptized are now invoked together with the Christian saints. In my answer I recalled the disastrous decision of Rome banning the Chinese ancestral rites... fueled the antagonism of the Chinese people toward the “western” religion. History might be telling us that it would not be prudent to delete the

⁴² Mathieu Deflem, “Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion: A Discussion of Victor Turner's Processual Symbolic Analysis,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 30(I) (1991): 9.

Zairean invocation, since the veneration of ancestors, as in China and other parts of the world, is the bedrock of African civilization. The invocation stayed, but as the cardinal wisely noted, no explanation should be made about it.”⁴³

Note that the reason given to allow a call to non-Christian ancestors during mass was not based upon theological reflection. By allowing this practice, a non-Christian belief is being “Christianized,” although the Vatican would have rather not done so. What would the Lutherans do?

Lutheran World Federation

A key document informing this project resulted from a seven year study on worship and culture, beginning in 1993, including regional gatherings, undertaken by the Lutheran World Federation.⁴⁴ Four international liturgical consultations were convened, with twenty-five people from five continents, with Anglican, Roman Catholic and Methodist participant-observers. The two resource persons were Anscar Chupungco and Lutheran liturgy professor Gordon Lathrop. In particular, the third of four international consultations, held in Nairobi, in January 1996, produced a high quality statement, to which Protestant church bodies refer. Although rather brief, it clearly attempts to begin to level the playing field, after the northern hemisphere’s influence on global Christian worship practice for most of Christian history. It suggests that a congregation anywhere should be aware of the connection between its worship, the global church, its tradition, and its own culture. The statement presents four central principles of the relationship between worship and culture:

1) Worship is transcultural (Worship has certain dynamics that are beyond culture, including the trinity, the sacraments, the bible, Holy Communion, the creeds, etc).

⁴³ Chupungco, *What, Then, Is Liturgy? Musing and Memoir*, 21,22.

⁴⁴ S. Anita Stauffer, ed. *Christian Worship: Unity in Cultural Diversity* (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1996).

2) Worship is contextual

"a given culture's values and patterns, insofar as they are consonant with the values of the gospel, can be used to express the meaning and purpose of Christian worship... dynamic equivalence is particularly useful. It involves re-expressing components of Christian worship with something from a local culture that has equal meaning, value and function. Dynamic equivalence goes far beyond mere translation; it involves understanding the fundamental meanings both or elements of worship and of the local culture, and enabling the meanings and actions of worship to be "encoded" and re-expressed in the language of local culture... local churches might also consider the method of creative assimilation. This consists of adding pertinent components of local culture to the liturgical ordo in order to enrich its original core."⁴⁵

3) Worship is counter-cultural "some components of every culture in the world are sinful, dehumanizing, and contradictory to the values of the gospel. From the perspective of the gospel, they need critique and transformation"⁴⁶

4) Worship is cross-cultural "the sharing of hymns and art and other elements of worship across cultural barriers help enrich the whole church."⁴⁷

We see above that this consultation held a more negative view of culture than Chupungco did personally. At the same time, they directly included his contributions of dynamic equivalence and creative assimilation into the final text above.

Thankfully, the consultation record included regional reports. Of considerable application to our project is the Africa region's report to the study:

"Even in areas where everybody is 'churched,' people often lead a double life. The things that happen in public worship often do not seem to connect with people's existential realities as well as traditional rituals did... African leaders discussing these issues were reported to be 'stunned by similarities in problem areas.'... The gestures and symbols of present day worship services are often devoid of meaning for most Africans. This is an area of great potential, since African culture is full of meaningful symbolism... Baptismal rites could be enriched... local traditional materials should be

⁴⁵ S. Anita Stauffer, ed. "Nairobi statement on Worship and Culture: Contemporary Challenges and Opportunities" in *Christian Worship: Unity in Cultural Diversity*. ed. S. Anita Stauffer (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1996), 25, 26.

⁴⁶ Stauffer, ed., 27.

⁴⁷ Stauffer, ed., 27.

used, e.g., calabash, wooden or skin containers. Candidates should dress in white. Exorcism and the signing of the cross on the forehead and the chest are encouraged...a revision of confirmation rites might profitably look at parallel rituals of initiation...the need was expressed for liturgies of healing, exorcism, and house blessing...Lutheran rites do not address some local concerns within the areas of marriage and death-for example, the fertility of a couple.⁴⁸

This African-only feedback demonstrates a hunger for inculturated Christ-centered ritual to address their core African values around death, marriage, role transitions, child-bearing, health and coping with spirits.

Examples of Worship Inculturation in Africa

In 1989, the Anglican province of Kenya attempted to adapt the preface of their Eucharistic prayer, as follows. Note the narrative style, the numerous terms for groups of people, and the nod to *faithful ancestors*.

“It is right and our delight to give you thanks and praise, great Father, living God, supreme over the world, Creator, Provider, Saviour and Giver. From a wandering nomad you created your family; for a burdened people you raised up a leader; for a confused nation you chose a king; for a rebellious crowd you sent your prophets. In these last days you have sent us your Son, your perfect image, bringing your kingdom, revealing your will, dying, rising, reigning, remaking your people for yourself. Through him you have poured out your Holy Spirit, filling us with light and life. Therefore with angels, archangels, faithful ancestors and all in heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, forever praising you and saying: Holy, holy, holy...”⁴⁹

Next, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madagascar (ELCM) and Church of Jesus Christ of Madagascar (FJKM), have, for a long time, designated lay "shepherds" in addition to pastors and elders.⁵⁰ The ELCM alone has 7,000 shepherds who undertake a healing ministry. Shepherds have special charisms or gifts, plus two years of training. In many churches, where the

⁴⁸ Marcus P.B. Felde. "Reports of Regional Research" in *Christian Worship: Unity in Cultural Diversity*. ed. S. Anita Stauffer (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1996), 29-32.

⁴⁹ *A Kenyan Service of Holy Communion* (Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1989), 27-28.

⁵⁰ Rev. Lala Haja Rasendrasahina, President/Moderator of the Church of Jesus Christ of Madagascar (FJKM), the largest national protestant church, with 3.5 million members, of Reformed origins. personal conversation, September 24, 2014.

pastor allows, shepherds hold healing services every third Sunday after normal worship. Anyone is welcome to stay and participate in their healing liturgy with songs, exhortations of faith in Christ to the patient, and New Testament readings and prayers. The sick come forward, asking forgiveness from God or one another, kneel, and the shepherd(s), dressed in white, lays hands on the person and prays for their relief, calling out for the ancestral spirit or evil spirit to come out. Often the patient weeps. The shepherd(s) may pray for an extended time. If the person is not healed, they are able to stay for days, or even weeks, at one of their spiritual hospitals, for more prayers. This ministry is very, very popular, and is a vehicle for church growth.

“the revival movements agree on... theological perspectives regarding Christian healing. First, the Malagasy view that sickness always requires a deeper, mystical explanation is accepted as a point of departure. But, for the shepherds, the reality which provides the explanation of health and sickness is the relationship to Jesus Christ. Sickness is explained as either an indication of a broken relationship between the patient (including his/her family) and the source of life or an attack of the demonic on the faith of the patient and a challenge to the Christian community and its Lord. A shepherd will never turn away from such challenge. Second, shepherds believe that in order for a cure to be effectual the healing process must already have taken place... This means... broken relationships must be mended, i.e., sin must be removed by way of thorough repentance, and reconciliation must be established among people and between them and God.”⁵¹

Conclusion

In this chapter we have reviewed Turner’s later processual view on ritual, including his first work on *liminality* and *communitas*. We have noted the obvious associations with liturgy and those who lead liturgy. With this connection made, we then attempted to explore further our project questions around the potential value of inculturation for Zambian Lutherans’ faith and well-being. We considered Anscar Chupungco’s key work on the principles and categories of cultural adaptation, as well as finding some limits on the inculturation of ATR. The Lutheran World Federation also contributed a major, yet simple set of four qualities for the proper

⁵¹ Péri Rasolondraibe, “Healing Ministry in Madagascar,” *Word & World* 9/4 (1989): 348.

relationship between worship and culture. The regional contribution from African leaders surprised us with a desire for inculturated Christ-centered rituals to better address their core African values and needs. Finally, we learned about a unique and powerful witness of inculturation from the Lutheran Church in Madagascar in lay-led healing ministries, directly relevant to this project's concerns around conflict, illness, and hexing, in the ELC-Zambia.

Next, in chapter five, I lay out our research methodology, including the theoretical considerations and the project undertaking in full.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY

Our original concerns were the level of interpersonal conflict and attendant accusations of hexing in the ELC-Zambia. Our research questions aimed to investigate the role of ritual and liturgy in mitigating and reducing conflict. In this chapter I will present methodological approaches which informed the study design and then describe how the project unfolded during 2013 and 2014.

Qualitative Research

This project, as qualitative research...

...seeks to understand a given...topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves...The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given...issue. It provides information about the human side of an issue – that is, the often contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals. Qualitative methods are also effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion...¹ Although striving to be systematic, such research uses semi-structured methods which are flexible and iterative.²

Also, given the complete dependence upon human data collection, ethical guidelines must be adhered to. I completed the NIH training course entitled “Protecting Human Research Participants.” Additionally, on January 19, 2014, this project qualified as non-regulatory research, as determined by the Chair of Drew University’s Institutional Review Board.

¹ Natasha Mack et al., *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector’s Field Guide* (Research Triangle Park: Family Health International, 2005), 1.

² *Ibid.*, 3.

Doing Theology

Although this project has one principal investigator, it arises, is undertaken and assessed within the ELC-Zambia members themselves. They are the ELC-Zambia, in which this project has its very life. In order to ensure that we maximize their contributions, let us refer to former Anglican bishop Laurie Green, who provides a valuable process for the pastor/leader, in his book *Let's Do Theology*. Green believes that truly contextual theological insights are to be uncovered among the participants themselves. "Theology from the roots up, which actually derives from the context in which it is set and incarnated...is the stuff of the model I propose...it resonates...with

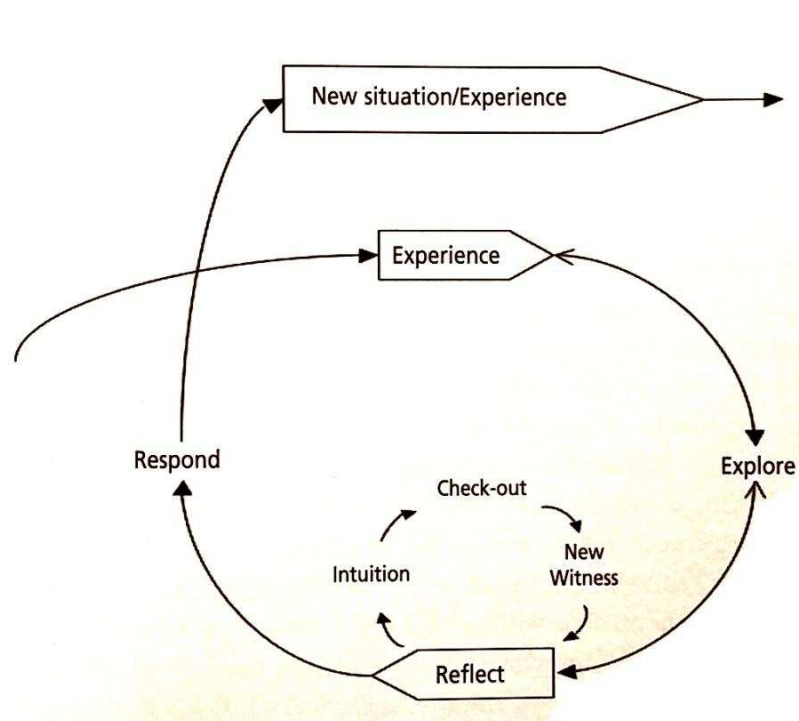


Figure 13. Theological Spiral⁵.

the felt experiences of the...people, and leads them to new awareness and to new exciting possibilities”³ We have intentionally informed this project design by “doing theology, making the transforming connections between our real-life issues and the fundamentals of our Christian heritage...”⁴ Probably

the best illustration of this process is Greene’s own theological spiral.

³ Laurie Green, *Let's Do Theology: Resources for Contextual Theology* (London: Mowbray, 2009), ix.

⁴ *Ibid.*, x.

⁵ Figure used with permission of Laurie Green.

1. “We begin by trying to become as conscious as we possibly can of the real situation that surrounds us.”⁶ How have we been affected by the problem or issue, and how do we feel about it? The members of the group should know each other well. They should agree that the concern is of mutual interest.⁷ Every participant must have the space to contribute their stories and anecdotes.⁸
2. The next task attempts to answer the question, “what is really going on here?” The participants seek out multiple perspectives and facts behind the stories told in the first task. The perspectives of interest to our project are historical, cultural and religious.⁹ The group looks for connections and shared values in the collected knowledge.¹⁰ The group members should explore their own role in the problem.¹¹
3. The third task involves bringing the Christian tradition to bear on the presenting issue. Where is the God in all this? That is, the God we have known through our church. By probing the explored issue with the eyes of Christian tradition, realizations emerge. On the other hand, when we use the issue to query Christian tradition, different insights emerge.¹² Rather than placing Christian tradition in a position of authority, allow the two worlds to interrogate each other on an equal footing, and new truth can emerge. Which biblical texts are particularly relevant? Do they suggest new

⁶ Ibid., 17.

⁷ Ibid., 46.

⁸ Ibid., 50-54.

⁹ Ibid., 63.

¹⁰ Ibid., 72.

¹¹ Ibid., 75.

¹² Ibid., 83.

- interpretations of our issue of concern? Surround this task with prayer. This phase includes a secondary cycle, visible in the figure. When a group member has reached a new perception about God’s action, it remains tentative until a pastor has checked if the biblical basis, which inspired the perception, was correctly read.¹³
4. The last task is praxis. “The group sets about experimenting with a range of different responses to see which one works best in practice, given the new insights derived from all their theological reflection.”¹⁴ Where is God specifically inviting our engagement with our broader community? What is God’s hope around the presenting issue? Brainstorm various provisional personal and group responses to our spiral experience. What is achievable? Are the causes of the original situation being addressed?

The group’s action shall have impacted the presenting issue or problem. The group could choose to begin the spiral yet again, based upon the changed environment.

Ethnography

The other method informing this project is ethnography. We introduced practical theologian Mary Clark Moschella, along with her book *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction*, back in chapter one. Moschella believes that pastors can more deeply read their congregations by utilizing social research. If one was an anthropologist-pastor and the field of study was a faith community, this would be the text to guide them. Moschella provides a roadmap for undertaking ethnographic research with an eye toward community transformation

¹³ Ibid., 102.

¹⁴ Ibid., 23.

and spiritual growth.¹⁵ Moschella gives the researcher the tools and encouragement for unearthing stories, and seeing and hearing that which one might often miss in the midst of their context. Some of these tools are open-ended questions¹⁶, open disclosure¹⁷, deep listening¹⁸, watching¹⁹, and reflexivity²⁰. Moschella also provides practical advice on organizing qualitative data.

A key lesson of pastoral ethnography is that the theological tradition of a church body may have little to do with the group's real beliefs and conduct.²¹ Therefore, understanding the values and theologies of a faith community requires listening to and observing the community itself. This is the reason our project involved a ministry intervention by pastors in a week-long intensive in which their own ideas, narratives and creative work were prominent, shown below. Our project also involved the celebration of their pilot liturgy supplements in various congregations, followed by focus group feedback, provided in chapter five.

Lastly, as noted in chapter one, our study is casual/predictive.²² Our research questions ultimately seek to understand how Christian practice may influence community life.²³

¹⁵ Moschella, 11.

¹⁶ Ibid., 8.

¹⁷ Ibid., 36.

¹⁸ Ibid., 159.

¹⁹ Ibid., 25.

²⁰ Ibid., 31.

²¹ Ibid., 38-40.

²²Ethnography questions can be grouped into four types. Developmental, asking how did this come to be? Mechanical, asking how this works? Comparative, asking how does this compare to that? And Causal/predictive, asking how does this impact that?

²³ Ibid., 60.

Project Planning with the Local Advisory Committee (LAC)

September 2013 to January 2014

On September 30, 2013, we obtained the initial project approval from the ELC-Zambia Church Council. The project LAC met a total of five times. For the first two meetings I served as story broker: sharing stories I had collected over the years from among them, and asking for their thoughts, and if they were spurred on to share their own stories. The narratives certainly helped us engage. I only shared our key narrative of Rugowo, again from chapter one, at one of our meetings when Rev. Rugowo was not present. I also shared the narratives of Singidi, from chapter one, and of Dipalata congregation, from chapter three.

For example, I told the story from chapter two about one clergy couple in which the husband was having dreams about his wife being in love with another man. These dreams were clear evidence to him of her infidelity, despite her claims to the contrary. He believed she calls out her lover's name in her sleep. He was also convinced she was hexing him. He therefore wanted to divorce his wife. We had tried to save the marriage with late night meetings and counseling, but failed.

We discussed the many mysterious break-ins at the Matero church building, partly attributed to hexing by disgruntled, defrocked, former leaders of the ELC-Zambia. We discussed Pastor Mwale's account of his suffering through exhausting nights in which his children could not fall asleep, keeping him and his wife up. His children were convinced that an invisible ghostly threat was lurking in the house at night. Night frights are not uncommon for children around the world. What was noteworthy was that his wife had attributed the frights of their children to hexing by a hateful congregation member. We also explored the witness of Pastor Mushani, who, despite great pressure from his own congregation and surrounding community,

refused to join in local rituals to the ancestors during a long drought, to pray for rain to fall for the maize planting season.

Pastor Matilda told us a powerful story. She is the only surviving adult sibling in a family of seven children. After the death of her last sibling, someone encouraged her to consult a diviner to find out who had caused such absolute tragedy to befall her family, and then to avenge the deaths by engaging a witch. She said in response, “Will it bring my siblings back?” The person replied, “No.” So Matilda said, “Well then, no thanks. My father was clear to us. Our family does not give time to witches and such. We look only to the Lord...and so that’s what we do.”

We explored the issues raised by these and other narratives, including conflict, illness, hexing, prayer, liturgy and traditional religion. The LAC was also valuable for validating or rejecting my intuitions. Senior Pastor Chana was the strongest participant. We teased out some tentative insights and agreed on the main project activity, the celebration of new corporate prayers and healing rituals in ELC-Zambia congregations’ congregational worship. This is presented in chapter one.

Before the central project activity, we agreed that we must carry out a five-day face-to-face exchange with a focus group of five to seven pastors gifted with liturgy and/or language. This group would engage with the same narratives we had heard and explore the topics of conflict, suffering, healing, prayer, and ritual, with attention to African religion and Christianity. We would also focus on the supplemental liturgy development tasks, and then translate them into the five languages in which the ELC-Zambia worships. The pastors would then practice the supplemental pilot liturgy, and be trained in reading their people’s as “participant observers,” noticing verbal and non-verbal cues, behaviors, and codes to the feelings of the participants.

Finally, the pastors would provide personal feedback around their experiences of this week-long intensive.

We also considered the following concerns: since Sunday liturgy is the true heart of the ELC-Zambia's shared activity, how might our congregations experience new liturgy like that which we are going to compose? How might God work in our church through new liturgy? To what future?

Our Sunday liturgy is the mark of who we are, as African Christians, and it is a sign of our national church unity. Because of this project, we found ourselves getting excited again about liturgy, after years of the ELC-Zambia focusing on other church-wide matters. We also felt that we should expand our original plan of a focus group of five to seven pastors, given the beneficial value of this topic. So we agreed that we would invite all thirteen pastors, although we fully expected that not all would make it, given the long distances. We sent these invitations by SMS and by phone calls. In the case of Pastor Njapau, who lives out of cell phone range, we sent text messages to Pastor Chinsembu, who then forwarded the message to him via a church member who was traveling out that way, and could carry the invitation note.

When 2014 began, the main task of the LAC became the realization of the pastors' gathering. I was able to successfully write a grant to an American congregation to assist with the project expenses. We agreed that we would all be present during the pastors' gathering, except Mr Kanyama and Mr Mapulanga, who were to handle logistics for the meeting, including transport for the pastors, food, notebooks and pens during the week. Some participants required that we send them long-distance bus transport money in advance through the Zambian post office, which operates a money transfer service. Once everyone had gathered, the participants

slept on mattresses on the floor of the church in Matero during the week. Lastly, we engaged church members to prepare the food for the week.

Leader Workshop Feb 24-March 1, 2014

Pastor Alfred Chana and I provided facilitation during the pastors' gathering. I reviewed the plan for the week with the participants. Every day included taking attendance, housekeeping, a reminder of our ground rules (confidentiality, democracy in speaking, etc.), personal sharing and prayer, and an opening bible study. We reviewed the hope for preparing updated ELC-Zambia liturgies, approved by Council, which might start at this meeting, but might take several years to complete. I explained that during this week we would discuss liturgy and prayer, with one eye on African culture and another eye on our beloved church. I told them I was also going to share stories of the ELC-Zambia from the past eight years to stimulate our conversations along the way. We would also start work on the composition and subsequent translation of our new pilot prayers for use in the liturgy.

In attendance were Pastors Vernon M. from Yumba, Phillip H. from Mulendema, Brighton C. from Zambezi, Maildah B. from Matero, Doreen M. from Mulimba, Alfred C. Senior Pastor, Christopher M. from Ukwimi, Arden Strasser, Eliphaz R. from Kamwala, Godfrey N. from Kashima (Wednesday arrive), George M. from Chavuma (Wednesday arrival) Collins C. from Dipalata (Thursday arrive) Lason M. from Kitwe (Friday arrival). As the reader can see, two of our pastors are women.

Personal Prayer

Each morning we asked two or three pastors to share how they have been doing, professionally and personally. We listened to them speak and I took notes. Each took about

fifteen to twenty minutes. They shared their joys around their families, their harvest, and their particular ministries they were pleased with, and other persons who had helped them. Some told stories. Rev Mushani is satisfied with the four young persons who were confirmed this year, but is disappointed with the loss of Mary Sibelo, a leader of women in the congregation. He is also grateful for his wife, who is able to provide food for the family each day. Rev Njapau shared that his wife resists his church work, since it does little to help them financially. Pastor Mwale shared his anger over his son having impregnated a woman in their area with whom he is not married. He had hoped his son would succeed him in the ministry. Pastor Mwanza shared the challenges in her area around the prevalence of polygamy. Polygamists cannot serve in congregational leadership, yet some of them are among the few who can read and write well enough to serve as leaders. Pastor Nguvulu lamented the need to slaughter their pigs, which have been marauding nearby homes and gardens. They received the pigs from the ELCA livelihood project, but they ran out of pig feed, so he let the pigs each day out to roam for their food, but their neighbors are now angry. Pastor Haabowa shared his joy over his progress informing a youth choir, who is ready to help him evangelize. The challenges they faced included illness in their families, farming problems, family hunger, friction with their spouses, money problems, congregational conflict, stolen maize, too much polygamy, extended family deaths, house burglars, burdensome school fees, and vocation regrets. In general, anxiety is a common feature. Then we all laid our hands on each of their heads, shoulders and backs and I prayed out loud for a minute or two for their particular joys and struggles, informed by my notes.

“Heavenly Father, Here is your son/daughter, (name). You have heard him/her tell us how they are. We thank for the blessings you have given them (from notes)... You have heard the challenges and struggles he/she faces. We ask you to heal/resolve/strengthen him-her

despite/find a way through/bring hope out of /release from/ (specific problems). We entrust your servant and those he/she loves to your care and protection. Forgiven him/her his/her sins, according to your mercy, through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

Then I debriefed with each pastor in front of the others about the experience of being prayed for. Since their congregations do not pray for them in this way, they were all encouraged, comforted and moved by this experience. Even Pastor Collins, normally resistant such encounters, found the experience satisfying. They stated that they have never prayed individually for each other as pastors before and that we should do it again. They commented that they felt comfort, release, and an assurance of positive change. Pastor Nguvulu noted that I showed caring during the listening and praying. He said, “when the person praying speaks out loud regarding that which is burdensome to me, there is a powerful feeling of relief.” The person praying “puts on their coat of suffering,” as Pastor Mahunda noted.

Monday Bible Study About Suffering and Prayer

Matthew 26:36-45 Jesus Prays in Gethsemane.

I spoke about the uniqueness of Jesus’ prayer at Gethsemane, in verse 39. “My father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

This is not how most people pray. We avoid suffering at all costs. In African tradition, suffering is mostly bad and to be avoided. Yet Jesus knows that sometimes God’s will may even include suffering. During the Bible Study, we asked the following questions:

Q: What do Zambians think about suffering?

A: In response, the participants noted that there are different theologies around suffering, without describing them. Pastor Mwale noted that, “our church practices counseling and loving

care as our main response to suffering. There is a different theology which aims to remove suffering through deliverance. Pentecostals preach a life without suffering.”

Q: When we pray for healing, whose power is doing the healing?

A: Pastor Manianga replied, “God’s. We pastors are only the mediator, the spanner (wrench), the opener for God. Some preachers become too proud, thinking they carry healing power in themselves, which is wrong.” Pastor Rugowo noted that, “the faith of the person in God is also important, without which no healing can happen.”

Q: Why are some of our pastors reluctant to pray for healing?

A: “It is not common for Lutherans to pray for healing like the Pentecostals. Also, we have never learned it in bible school or seminary.”

Pastor Chana added:

“When I have a problem, then I pray alone with power and without ambiguity. When I have no problem, then I find my prayer weak. Our people are hungry for healing, and I have recently begun to pray for their problems. When I undertook evangelism programs in Choma in 2013, a lady fell down at my feet as I prayed for her problems. I even rebuked Satan with my words.”

Liturgy Discussions

In this segment, we considered several questions, among which were: what is happening during our Sunday liturgy? Is our entire liturgy necessary? Do the words in our written liturgy help people? Can liturgy improve the community?

We discussed the state of our key liturgies, including Sunday morning, burials, confirmation, baptism, marriage. Pastor Muhonda stated that, “These all need to be strengthened, and in some cases, written for the first time. We need to know exactly how to bury Christians and non-Christians, since we are asked to do so.” Pastor Njapau noted that, “We could write liturgies for the birth of a new baby, distinct from baptism, the blessing of a house with

holy water, and how to remember those who have died. Such liturgies would mean a lot to our people.” We agreed that the benefits of liturgy are the sense of unity and ownership it engenders. Sunday liturgy ensures the participation of all in worship, which Africans like. Worshippers grow in Christian faith and knowledge by doing the liturgy. Pastor Chana stated that, “As Lutherans, our entire liturgy is crucial.” Pastor Mwale attached great importance to the general confession and absolution placed at the beginning of the Sunday liturgy. He stated that, “The pastor functions as a mediator between the people and God during liturgy.”

Pastor Rugowo was disappointed that we pastors are not using the seasonal antiphons properly, and that few of our members know the liturgy well. He felt that more training in liturgy is needed. “A good choir can train a congregation in the liturgy,” he said. Pastor Banda stated that, “One way to increase lay participation is by asking people to pray. Our members are generally quick to pray aloud on any requested topic. It is not difficult.”

Mass simultaneous praying (not glossolalia, but praying in one’s local language), undertaken for a few minutes during liturgy, was generally not welcome. A few congregations began introducing it in 2008 under the interim leadership of South African visiting Bishop Manas Buthelezi, who had encouraged it. Pastor Mwanza held that, “the people require a leader or guide during congregational prayers, or there is confusion. Even the apostle Paul said that speaking in tongues confuses outsiders. We should rather use our good singing as a worship outreach tool instead of imitating mass prayer done in other churches.”

Ritual and Conflict

I noted that I had observed much interpersonal tension in our congregations and wondered if our liturgy could more directly respond to this. These conflicts are often left unresolved, inhibiting the development of the congregations or national church. This reality is

well known by all of us, given discussion on this topic during our years together. Pastor Mwale told an illustrative story:

“Some months ago my evangelist Wilson Kamoboko insulted another member of the congregation in public. This happened after worship, during a congregational meeting. The headman later demanded an apology, which did not come. I was unable to bring them to reconcile, despite my efforts. So the headman told Wilson that he could not live in the village anymore and had to move out. (The headman is the local, traditional authority over many concerns, including land apportionment) Wilson was shocked, and petitioned the chief, which is not a small matter. Given that this conflict was breaking up the congregation, I was also present during the meeting with the chief. He listened to the story. To my surprise, he was very wise and helpful. He stated that inside the church realm the pastor is the leader over his people. He said that he obeys his own pastor regarding church affairs. He encouraged me. Eventually, the chief instructed Wilson to apologize to the headman. His decision was not to be debated. Wilson visited the headman, and apologized giving him a significant amount of money, fifty kwacha (US-Ten Dollars). Such conduct is cultural and understood by all. The headman accepted the money, indicating his putting the matter behind him, yet he has not returned to worship yet. I will be visiting him soon.”

So, following the theme of reconciliation, I asked if they could conceive of any simple actions or rituals encouraging reconciliation that one day might find themselves in the updated liturgy. I explained that the ELC in South Africa included an offering a sign of the peace before Holy Communion, as a means of interpersonal reconciliation. They felt that such a gesture would not be strong enough. Rather, they felt that the pastor should verbally encourage interpersonal reconciliation after the absolution or before Holy Communion and that new words could be added, such as those in the Roman Catholic Mass, including “Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.” Pastors should also encourage reconciliation before or after worship through the shaking of hands. Pastor Manianga preached to us all of the reconciling power inherent in the Lord’s Prayer itself, which we speak every Sunday. “Forgive us our trespasses *as we forgive* those who trespass against us.” (emphasis: Pastor Manianga) In order to reduce conflict, Manianga holds that we should simply speak about this clause every

Sunday before the congregation begins to pray it. We cannot seek personal forgiveness while we hate others.

We reviewed the liturgical calendar and compared it with the cyclical agricultural calendar of planting, first fruits and harvest. The pastors agreed that praying during worship for these important events connects Christianity to the real lives of the worshippers. This was our first liturgical update agreement. It was simple, yet important, because it was a clear nod to their own culture, which they had never formally made before.

Day 2 Bible Study About Suffering and Healing, From John 9:1-12 The Healing Of The Man Born Blind in the Pool of Siloam.

I discussed the understanding of personal illness or handicap as pointing to personal or family sin. This belief is not only common in first century Palestine, but also in much of Africa. Jesus' answer to his disciples is therefore startling in both cultural contexts. Contemplating suffering is the task of the mature pastor. Suffering is not to be glorified or to be sought after, but it is unavoidable, and generates intense personal concern around its relief, its cause, and its purpose. In hindsight, periods of suffering are sometimes periods of spiritual growth. Also noteworthy is Jesus' healing the blind man with no request from the blind man at all! Also, Jesus gives no words of healing, no prayer, and no assessment of the blind man's faith, etc. Jesus discerned that God's work was to be done, and he did it.

Core Values of Traditional Religion/Culture Vis-À-Vis Christianity

In response to my questions to them about the core values of traditional culture, they told me that:

A. “Marriage is very important, so that you can have children. If one does not, there are serious consequences. You are seen as anti-social. However, Christianity softens such attitudes towards those without children.”

B. “Families are very extended, and not small, as in Europe.”

C. “In Africa, problems result from invisible causes. The unseen world influences the seen world all the time.” However, they acknowledged that most witch accusations come out of anger.

D. Agriculture. “There are traditions around planting, first fruits (giving thanks to the chief and the ancestors), and harvesting.”

E. Hunting has traditions. Pastor Brighton, normally quiet, enjoyed telling the group the Luvale traditions around becoming a hunter, about hunting and the funeral rituals for hunters.

F. Rites of Passage for women and men, including coming of age, marriage, widowhood, and death. Pastor Doreen explained the cultural practices of widow cleansing among her people, to some amazement of the other pastors.

E. Kinship and Harmony.

Q: Is the God from traditional religion the same as the biblical God?

A: “Yes, the name of the high God in our culture is the same name used in the liturgy.”

Q: What is the relationship between traditional culture and Christianity?

A: Most pastors were quiet, except Chana: “Christianity should not destroy traditional culture completely. Rather, it should embrace the cultural practices that go hand in hand with it, and criticize those practices which are not God pleasing.”

Q: What parts of traditional culture can be carried into Christianity and what should not be carried?

A: Manianga said, “As pastors it is best to not focus too much on spirits and witches. Don’t give such things much discussion time or discussion space, and then you won’t be giving them customers. Focus time and attention rather on matters of God.”

Q: How ought we to pray for the ancestors, as African Christians? Why do we avoid doing so in our church?

A: “We can only respect our ancestors. Christians should not worship them. Further, it is difficult to know how to pray for them if they were not Christian.” Some pastors felt that All Saints Day could be better used to remember our ancestors.

Q: What does Christianity offer the person afflicted by a sense of offending the ancestors or being hexed from others, experienced as life problems or illness? How should we help someone falsely accused of witchcraft?

A: This was difficult to respond to and they all admitted these are difficult pastoral challenges.

Day 3 Mark 2:1-12 Bible Study on the Healing and Forgiving of the Paralytic Lowered Through the Roof.

Why did Jesus forgive the paralytic’s sins without being asked to? Whose faith is highlighted here? Why exactly are the Pharisees upset? Jesus simply tells the paralytic to get up. Why does Jesus not formally heal him with a ritual touching or speaking? I did not record the conversation out of this text.

Healing Ritual with Oil or Blessed Water

What about using blessed water or anointing with oil for healing? We had a long discussion around this, but they were reticent to move towards using anointing oil or blessed water. These options generated confusion, which was surprising to me. Over the three days together, the group had come to appreciate and grasp God's healing action through touch and word. However, blessed water is also used by some traditional healers in which the water is thought to have inherent efficacious power. This is contrary to the understanding to which our group had come. The pastors had arrived at a theological understanding of healing as God's action, in God's way, received with faith, and conveyed by a pastor's word and touch. They could not ascribe to the addition of external elements any special properties, since no special properties were required if God chose to heal someone.

One or two pastors were happy with using blessed water, as they had purchased some from traditional healers in the past for aches or pains, and were satisfied with the results. The rest of the pastors felt that using blessed water would confuse the faithful about the source of their healing. Even though anointing with oil is in the bible, because various vendors sell anointing oil on the streets in Zambia for treating all illnesses, its use would also be confusing.

Healing Prayer Pilot Agreed

Based upon our experiences of prayer each morning and our discussions around the nature of prayer and healing, I proposed that we imitate what Pastor Mwale now does, at the end of each Sunday worship at his congregation: he invites persons who are carrying burdens of any kind to come forward, to be prayed for. Everyone was willing, except one pastor, who remained

quiet about this matter.²⁴ The pastors suggested that those who wish would come forward and speak quietly to the pastor about their anxieties, which are held in confidence. They might choose to kneel if they can or choose, receive laying-on of hands and intense, sustained prayers to Christ while surrounded by the pastor and elders. Singing by the choir and playing of drums might take place during the healing prayers. Also, pastors could invite the other worshippers to extend their hands toward the person for whom everyone was praying.

More Story Sharing

Over the course of the week, I shared the other stories with the pastors which I had collected and shared with the LAC, in chapters one and five. I did this to nudge them into sharing their own narratives, in order to help them confront traditional religion as pastors; a subject which they had previously avoided. (I did not share stories about other pastors where the pastor in question might be embarrassed.) I also shared the story of my housekeeper, whose adult son was killed in Mutendere, a Lusaka compound, and who was found with some of his body parts missing, ostensibly for sale to powerful witches in other African countries.

Pastor Brighton Chana volunteered his story on day three, which must be included, as it intensified again the interpersonal dilemmas of illness, conflict and hexing, and led well into the Thursday morning bible study:

“I lived in Kasekeseke village with my family, twenty kilometres west of the Zambezi river, across from Zambezi town. It is remote, and only visited by the church head office every other year, given the deep sand on that side of the river. The village is part of the Luvale kingdom, adjacent to the Lunda kingdom. In 2012 the ELC-Zambia head office gave me a motorcycle, to assist me in my evangelism and pastoral work with villages in the area.”

²⁴ Pastor Collins C. has generally felt uncomfortable about practices which are not part of the Lutheran traditions which he learned at home and in seminary. He was also absent at times from the intensive and is more independent, the only pastor having formal employment outside the church. He has had a strained relationship with the ELC-Zambia leadership.

Note that a motorcycle is an extraordinary asset in a typical village. It generated significant gossip, suspicion and jealousy. Acquiring such personal wealth without sharing its benefits is considered extremely anti-social. Brighton was under strict orders to use the motorcycle exclusively for church work. However, separating oneself socially from one's kin attracts gossip about being in league with evil, or with spirits who harm others. Shortly after receiving his motorcycle, an infant in the village had died. (we do not know the circumstances) According to African traditional religion, death is never only a biological matter. Death is always deemed a consequence of hidden, evil dealings. The grieving family determined that Brighton had engaged witches to kill their baby, or that Brighton himself was a sorcerer, a male witch. They did not believe he received his motorcycle from the church, but through entering into a bargain with a witch, who in exchange for the baby's life, granted him a motorcycle. Given that such accusations of witching are not legal, the family did not go to the police. They rather found extended family members willing to kill Brighton in revenge. Under the stress and fear, Brighton found his church work impossible, and his own congregation floundered in this atmosphere. They did not protect him, which is not uncommon, according to the stories I have gathered. "I requested of the Chief and he sent over watchmen to guard my homestead from those trying to kill me." Sadly, the Chief did not employ his own powers to adjudicate this matter with his own councilors and diviners.

"After six months, the chief advised me to move away, to a more remote area that he would grant to me to live on and farm. So, I have now cleared farm land, dug a well and made a new homestead in the forest for my family. Kasekeseke villagers do not know where we are staying, for fear the attackers will find me."

Brighton shared with us his sufferings, and his long term aim to return, but he does not know how. His motorcycle and the help of the church head office have been invaluable in supporting him in the meantime.

Day 4 Bible Study Text Luke 11:14-26 Jesus Drives Out a Demon that was Mute.

Why would people accuse Jesus of being in league with demons? Why would people today accuse someone who is doing good of actually being motivated by evil? Some admitted that jealousy could have been a factor. A pastor remembered of an old story I had not yet heard about a few former ELC-Zambia pastors who had been accused as a group by a distraught widow of hexing and killing her husband.

I was then reminded of my own story when I visited Pastor Haabowa's congregation in 2009 to preach. During worship, a woman had collapsed. Because I had a vehicle, I drove her body to the clinic, and Pastor Haabowa continued leading the liturgy. At the clinic, she was pronounced dead. The nurse remembered that the woman used to be on treatment for very high blood pressure, but had stopped her treatment. I spent the afternoon praying with the grieving family, and paid for a coffin. Later the word spread that I was responsible for her death, since it occurred during my special visit. Needless to say, I did not return to that congregation for a long time.

After telling this story, I noted that all of us pastors, as one time or another, have been accused being in league with evil, just like Jesus was!²⁵ So we are in good company! We are all sorcerers! I saw some smiles breaking on the pastors' faces.

Day 5 Bible Study Text Luke 17:11-19 Jesus Heals Ten Lepers.

²⁵ Mark 3:22, Luke 11:15

How is a leper treated by society, then and now? Does it matter that the lepers were not true Israelites? Why did Jesus not perform a ritual with words or touching to heal them? What does Jesus mean when he states in verse 19, “your faith has made you well?” What is happening in healing? I did not record the conversation out of this text.

Composing New Intercessory Prayers Day Three Through Five

We discussed the absence of intercessory prayers in our existing liturgy as an important gap we which needed to fill. We agreed to compose prayers in our vernaculars for the topics we had been discussing and other concerns which the group agreed were important. The areas of particular importance to Africans are agriculture, child bearing, harmonious kinship, marriage, elders, long life, ancestors, keeping spirits at bay, and traditional leaders. Other topics they felt important to include are those suffering from AIDS, our church body, our government, youth, personal problems, those who are excluded from society, and our enemies. Pastor Chana wanted prayers addressing wars, environmental stewardship, and gender, but this did not gain traction.

Before composing, we encouraged them to consider language simplicity, flow, and choice of words that had cultural resonance. Note the wording which they chose. We edited these prayers, compiled them, and translated into five languages, including English. By the end of Friday every pastor had paper copies to take back home.

1 Almighty God. Lead your church, to grow in unity and in its witness to the world about your saving love.

2 Compassionate Father, we remember our beloved ones who have died before us. We give thanks for their lives. May their souls rest in peace.

3 We give thanks for our parents and grandparents, who take care of us. May we follow in their good example. Send your Holy Spirit to guide them in their lives and protect them.

4 Holy Lord, bless those who are married. It is your will that man enjoy marriage, which you have given to us. Unite and strengthen married persons with the power of your love. Sustain them so they may overcome any challenges they face in marriage and can remain firm.

5 Thank you for children. Bless our children and our youth, so that they may grow up knowing and following you. Increase their wisdom as they grow up. Protect them, so they shall be healthy.

6 Creator God, Everything good comes from you. We are grateful for the land, sun, the rain, and the food which comes from the land. Give us strength to work hard on our farms and provide food for our families. Please send enough rains that our crops grow well.

7 We ask for your comfort when we suffer problems and anxiety. Give us patience as we wait for your hand. We ask for your healing when we are sick. Inspire us to rejoice in you at all times.

8 Gracious God, Set free those who are possessed or suffering from evil spirits. It is through your name they are delivered, for your glory.

9 Heavenly Father, look upon our brothers and sisters who have no children, or no husband or wife. Give them peace and hope, according to your will.

10 Grant your mercy and tender care on those who are aged, orphans, widows, and prisoners. Inspire us to reach out to them as well. Let your holy angels be near them.

11 Merciful God, we hold up our sisters and brothers living with HIV and AIDS and related long term illnesses. Have mercy on them and comfort them, through the hope which is found in you. Thank you for the improvements in care and treatment available to them for living positively.

12 We pray for our leaders in government, including our President. We pray for our traditional leaders, including our Chief. Let them be attentive to our problems, and give them wisdom to make good decisions for the development of our society. Bless them and keep them from any harm.

13 Lord, give wisdom to our church workers to lead us in the work which you give us to do. Keep them safe and free from any evil. Bless our Church Leader, as he represents the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zambia.

14 We pray for our enemies, that we may be reconciled with them. Even though it is difficult for us, transform our minds towards our opponents. Help us to forgive them, as you forgive us.

15 We ask you to strengthen the bonds of friendship in our community and society so that we can work together well. Send your Holy Spirit to lead and guide us.

16 We rejoice in your heavenly glory, together with the saints who died in Christ. We ask all these things through your Son, Jesus Christ, Our Savior. Amen

Continue with the Lord's Prayer altogether.

I proposed separating each petition, to which the group agreed. After each short prayer, the pastor shall say "Lord, in your mercy," and the people reply, "Hear our prayer."

Reading Our Environments

The initial study design was that the pastors would be properly trained during this week as participant observers and focus group moderators, in order to collect and feedback quality data from their congregations. During the week, it became clear to me that most of them did not have the capacity to undertake this suitably and we did not have the days required to undertake such instruction. Therefore, I decided to moderate the seven focus groups myself in the field with their

assistance, and on Friday I provided four hours of didactic input on reading and interpreting one's environment, as another skill of good pastoring. This follows below:

As we read the Bible to learn God's promises, we also can read the newspaper to learn about the important events affecting the lives of the people we minister to. We also can read the feelings of the people for whom we care spiritually.

Good Pastors read the Bible.

Good Pastors read the newspaper.

Good Pastors read their people's lives.

To read people, we take notice of their verbal and non-verbal cues and behaviors. Pastors can be worship participant-observers, sensing the disposition of their people by paying attention to their behavior. We shared examples of peoples' various behaviors during worship, in conversations, and in meetings. Pastor Chana and I asked them to study the reactions of their congregations as they implemented the liturgical supplements we had created. We also study our members as we provide them with care and counseling. We also read the culture around us through asking questions of those who are knowledgeable about traditional matters. We thought our ministry might improve when we read our human environment in this way. When we regroup later in 2014, we hope the pastors shall tell this group the reactions of their people during these liturgy supplements. We reviewed the focus group questions (below) to have in mind as they study their people.

Near the end of the fifth day, I asked the pastors to share their impressions of the week. These are included in chapter six.

Evangelist's Supplemental Intervention in Lusaka March 11-14, 2014

I had separately coordinated five of our parish workers, called evangelists, to attend a short ministry course in Malawi in late March, as part of my work. They arrived in Lusaka and we were working on their travel documents when the church in Malawi explained that the course would be delayed by a month. Instead of sending the five home, I suggested to them that they stay for a while, to which they happily agreed. I undertook the same workshop format with these Lutheran church workers as I did with the pastors, since it had been well received by the pastors. However, given that they are not pastors, the level of dialogue was simpler. They included:

Justin M. (Nyaulenga-Kaisaka)

Daniel M. (Mupitanshi)

Aston B. (Ukwimi)

Chrispin S. (Kalolwa)

James K. (Mulimba)

We reviewed the long term liturgy project in ELC-Zambia. I opened each session with a gospel text identical to the one I had used at the pastor's workshop, then opened up similar dialogues about prayer, healing, liturgy, conflict, culture, etc. Each day we also practiced active listening and praying for one person, as fellow congregational leaders. We discussed the positive experience of being prayed for. We discussed how God works through prayer, which they found valuable. Specifically, this prayer is like a conduit for God's close presence to the person being prayed for. They felt that the person praying does not have any power of their own, a misconception in some independent African churches. God can affect change (or not) and in God's time and God's way, despite the neo-Pentecostal preachers who promote quick results. We explored varieties of group prayer methods available to congregational leaders, to which they

added their own suggestions. For example, Mr Mangongo organizes people into small groups of five each to pray around a need he assigns to them. We discussed the power of church women in prayer ministry. We were able to translate the new Sunday morning prayers, written by the pastors at their seminar, into a fifth language, Kaonde, which was helpful. They were given the same intercessory prayers to take home and use, and we encouraged them to use the same healing prayer method we modelled with their own congregations, as the pastors will do.

Everyone noted that burials were a key intersection point between Christianity and traditional religion. By this time I had even more stories to generate conversation among them. These included narratives that dealt with jealousy, hexing, spirits, anxiety, prayer. They shared their own additional stories about their church members who were tempted to pay for witchcraft or traditional spiritual divination about a problem and how they, as leaders, had responded to the situation. Chrispin shared a story about a congregant who was ill in the hospital:

“I visited him at the hospital and prayed with him. At some stage the congregant was discharged. Sometime later, I visited him at his home, as he was sick again. The man told me he wanted to see a diviner or traditional healer to find out the source of his ailments. I counseled him regarding the costs of such a service, and reminded him of the power of prayer I could offer instead. The man assented to my offer and so I came every day to his home to pray for him and read from scripture. A few days later he was healthy.”

Justine shared a story as well:

“A businessman I know was ill and confided in me that he wanted to see a traditional healer. I did not agree with such an idea, and remarked that even Christ suffered. I told him rather to go for a blood test, which he eventually did, and found out that he was HIV+. This explains the sicknesses he was experiencing. Now he follows the advice of proper doctors.”

Chrispin also told us an incredible story of inculturation near Kalolwa, wherein a former Lutheran Pastor Kajimba was asked to participate in the final day of blessing the celebration of *Mukanda*, the boys' traditional initiation ceremony, with his church choir. His Lutheran church

elder Geoffrey Vineza was even asked to provide *Mukanda* instruction to the candidates during their seclusion. They explained that some *Mukanda* rituals included Christianity, and some rituals remained fully traditional.²⁶

We discussed the spirit possession known as *Mashave*, which can affect women. (We did not discuss *mashave* in the pastors' workshop). The people believe that these nature spirits can possess a particular woman incrementally over an extended period of time. If she cannot be freed, then she develops a codependency with the spirit, and eventually is drawn into an isolated multi-year apprenticeship in traditional healing/divination. Such women withdraw from social activities, showing other changes in diet and habits. Like the pastors, these evangelists had no Christian response to such afflicted persons. This corroborates with my own research and I have found that only the Zionists are able to engage such situations in rural Zambia.

My initial assessment from the first workshop is that developing a ritual using water, oil, or a small cross, will not be received well, since they struggled with the actual origin and flow of the unseen healing power. Unseen power is core to African traditional culture. The pastors and evangelists are able to place unseen power in God's hand, but become confused when we introduce objects other than bread, wine and baptism water to carry God's power. Even my suggestion to use anointing oil implied for them that the oil has inherent or ascribed magical power to heal people. Anointing oil confused them and I decided that I ought not force the piloting of a ritual with an unfamiliar object, if it would cause confusion.

We explored another key theological challenge with this group more so than with the pastors. In ATR, separating sacred from profane, good from evil, natural vs. unnatural, is

²⁶ Later, on April 20, I had an informal interview with Pastor Collins C., in which he noted that the *Mukanda* boy initiation ritual is still popular for Luvale and Lunda-Ndembu peoples, but it is now shorter than before. It is normally three or four weeks in duration now. Some of the traditions undertaken at Mukanda have weakened and Christian songs are also sung during the experience. Also, those who cut the foreskins may actually be trained health workers nowadays, so to avoid infections. Mukanda also now includes education on AIDS.

necessary for maintaining one's well-being. However, in Christianity, we are all both sinners and saints, if you will, which requires teaching to explain this concept to our members. They are not able to accommodate this theological difference in their view.

A challenge I faced in both the pastors' gathering and evangelists' gathering was our different understandings of how learning happens. Formal education in Africa is thoroughly hierarchical. That is, the teacher dispenses knowledge, which the students memorize. A student is expected to provide a correct answer to any question. Despite my years working with the pastors using models of adult education, they still prefer hierarchical learning experiences. It was challenging to elicit honest, personal narratives from some of them in the formal group setting. Sometimes we broke up into small groups, which better allowed for this. Another effective technique was to write their comments on newsprint, which placed their ideas on equal standing with those of the "teacher."

Congregational Liturgical Celebrations and Focus Groups April 6-May 18, 2014

The pastors took the written liturgy supplements back to their home congregations, and began to use them. I visited seven ELC-Zambia congregations to witness the next phase of the project first hand and to moderate the focus group discussions myself. I used my personal vehicle to travel out. This phase of the project entailed 1800 miles on the road. Despite my reluctance to do so, at each congregation, I was compelled to preach and to assist the local pastor in the healing prayers. Not to preach, as a visiting pastor, would have been misinterpreted and found hurtful. The local pastor normally chose to pray five or six of the sixteen intercessory prayers, instead of all sixteen of them.

The healing prayer was powerful to behold and participate in. Sometimes the pastor and I stayed side by side. At other locations there were so many people in line that we divided. My

observations will follow in chapter six. The problems that the individuals who came forward presented, included: Confusing dreams, marriage problems, temptations, confusing thoughts, illness in family, excessive bleeding (women), desertion by husband, academic problems (test performance, school fees), small business failure, family arguments/dysfunction, vague body aches, difficult choices ahead, spirits at home causing problems, wife making herbal love potion which will confuse husband's responsibilities to work and provide for family, and sensing a call to serve the Lord. One grandmother requested prayers for her sick granddaughter, who lived far away.

We always asked the members for their permission to hold a focus group after worship, which they granted. We explained to them the purpose of the focus group and the local pastor often served as translator. I took my own notes, as the LAC had determined that would be a better method than the alternatives. (A trained note taker, from the outside, would have affected the safe, trusting environment we have in our church. Further, the only persons inside the church body who possessed the literacy levels to record proper notes are a few of the pastors, who had their own responsibilities every Sunday morning). Before the focus group commenced, we reminded everyone that the group was voluntary, that their opinion was theirs alone, that there was no expectation that we all agree, and that this was not a space for debating, but listening. I also noted that everyone's voice is valuable, if they wished to speak, and that I would not record names. I answered any questions from the participants before we began and the reader may find my summaries of notes from the focus groups in chapter six.

Focus Group Questions

Tell us about your experience with the liturgy today as compared to other Sunday mornings. Did it speak to you or your life? (What about) the spoken intercessory prayers? (What

about) the personal prayers at the end? How do you feel now after Sunday worship? Do you feel better or worse? Do you feel different towards other people? What part of worship is important to you? Does worshipping together on Sunday affect our community? How? What might happen if this liturgy were introduced to our whole church body? to what future?

TABLE 1. FOCUS GROUP LOCATIONS AND DATES

Date	Congregation	Local pastor	Language	What took place
April 6	Mulimba	Doreen M.	Tonga	Intercessory prayers, healing prayers, focus group
April 13	Chongwe, Luther	Eliphaz R.	Nyanja	Intercessory prayers, healing prayers, focus group
April 18	Chavuma	George M., Evangelist Godwin M.	Luvale	Intercessory prayers, healing prayers, cross ritual with feedback. (see chapter six)
April 20	Zambezi	Collins C., Brighton C., Geoffrey N.	Lunda	Intercessory prayers, healing prayers.
May 4	Kamwala	Eliphaz R.	Swahili	Intercessory prayers, focus group
May 11	Matero	Matildah B.	Nyanja	Healing prayers, focus group
May 18	Chongwe, Immanuel	Evangelist Noah P.	Nyanja	Intercessory prayers, healing prayers, focus group

Reconvening of ELC-Zambia Leaders for Feedback - June 3, 2014

I was disappointed that none of the pastors wrote down the observations of their congregations' responses to the liturgy supplements, but I was not surprised. So, we alternately collected their verbal feedback during one morning in a June workshop at which all pastors were gathered in Lusaka. This workshop turned out to be a valuable means for assessing changes in pastoral unity and growth. Alfred Chana provided facilitation during this gathering.

I shared with them the varieties of requests we received from worshippers for personal prayers during the congregational visits. These served as a window into the anxieties experienced by the church members, and Zambians in general. By feeding these anxieties back to the pastors, we validated the strong need for a ministry intervention of prayer. During the February

workshop, they had openly lamented the popularity of Pentecostal churches, which do focus on powerful prayer. Yet, after the ministry intervention, the pastors expressed a satisfaction about gaining spiritual competence in prayer and touch, which should better meet the needs of their congregants. I present the rest of their feedback in chapter six.

Conclusion

In this chapter five I revisited core concepts of qualitative research, contextual theologizing, and pastoral ethnography. I described the activities and ideas of the LAC in planning the project. I recorded the relevant deliberations and accomplishments of the participants during the five day leaders' workshop and subsequent evangelist workshop. I also explained the procedure of collecting qualitative data from seven participating congregations and the ELC-Zambia pastors at the end of the project field work.

In chapter six we will find the experiences of the pastors after participating in the leader workshops, my observations of the formalized healing prayers, the feedback of all the focus groups to the updated liturgy, the assessment of the project by the LAC, and my personal experiences and observations during the project phases.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS

In this chapter we will present the results and analyses of the qualitative research described in chapter five. This will include narratives, conversations, comments, focus group responses, and also perceptions and signs noted by the pastors and me. I will organize the data to identify dominant themes and categories. In addition to the large amount of spoken and transcribed data, we have included some semiotic perspectives. I invited the Local Advisory Committee and the pastors to respond to my assessments of the focus group experiences for coherence and to offer their suggestions.

This project did not incorporate written surveys or questionnaires. This is because many of the ELC-Zambia members are not able to write at all. Recruiting, training and sending interviewers and translators out to the field in five different languages would have been cost and time prohibitive, given the six month research window, and did not appear in the approved prospectus.

Participant Responses From Leader Intensive March 1, 2015

Near the end of the fifth day, I asked the pastors to share their impression of the week together with these open ended questions: What did you experience this week? Do you see yourself as pastor any differently after these days? How will this experience ultimately affect our congregations? Where will this take us?

All pastors agreed that the week was a positive experience which will benefit the congregations.

Brighton Chana: I learned more about the relationship between African traditional religion and Christianity. I understand the need to be aware of what is happening in the community and world. I see the need, despite what other churches say, to engage (read) with the issues of the world. The focus on prayer is heightened for me.

George Mahunda: The learning around ATR was helpful. Now I can better bridge between ATR and Christianity. I am better able to interpret God's world as a Luvale man. I appreciated the time spent on how pastors read the bible and read the people.

Goeffrey Njapau: I am pleased we spent time spent praying and having the discussions about prayer. Bishop Buthelezi also valued prayer, especially big prayers. I valued the work on ATR, and I am thinking it all through again. I now want to write a cultural history of the Lunda people!

Godfrey Nguvulu: I will not forget the witch finder story Pastor Arden read. The witch finder requests forgiveness at the end of the story, and other villagers will avoid sinning. Peace has come back to the village. (He is referring to an account I read them of a diviner/witch finder at work in West Africa)

Vernon Mwale: I valued the topic of reading the people. I admit that reading the bible is tough when we are tired from farming. I am intrigued by Pastor Doreen's stories of the Tonga practices around cleansing of widows. I was not aware about such traditional practices. Doreen had conducted good research.

Doreen Mwanza: Coming together and sharing experiences and common challenges was valuable. Praying for one another is absolutely vital. Also, back at home we can now be more

comfortable in associating with villagers in various activities, towards understanding (reading) our communities better. Perhaps we can even learn more about traditional religious activities in our local area.

Phillip Haabowa: I appreciated the reminder to read newspapers. I remember back when I was a student at St Ignatius School, when the priest preached about what he read in the newspaper. I also am pleased with the emphasis this week on the necessity of prayer, which we did a lot of.

Eliphaz Rugowo: This is the first time for us to work on our liturgy together. The Sunday liturgy is from the outside, but we own the prayer supplement since we did it ourselves. Also, I liked learning how to pray with others and how to pray for healing. The dialogue around ATR was also interesting. I am now more sensitive to determining what cultural features are good and to be kept and what traditional features are to be questioned.

Christopher Manianga: The new prayers will encourage and attract members. The last session on reading our community was interesting. We Christians used to avoid and fear entering the beer halls. Now I see that they can be a source for our sermons.

Matildah Banda: Let us keep what is good in our traditional culture, and refer to some of these things in our preaching.

Collins Chinsebu was absent that particular afternoon.

Three Dominant themes: They valued the time on prayer, reading the community, and the engagement with ATR.

My Observations of The Healing Prayers Being Undertaken in the Congregations

April 6 To May 18

During the usual congregational announcements, the local pastor would announce the healing prayers available after worship. After the benediction, the local pastor would invite anyone carrying a burden to come forward for prayer. He reminded them that their afflictions would be dealt with confidentially. The choir often sang, with or without drums. Between ten and twenty people would come forward, which was once up to one-third of the worshippers present. We would quietly listen to their personal concerns. The person would kneel or remain standing and the local pastor and I would pray together for one person at a time. If there were many, then we would split up. If they were standing, we would place our hands around their hands and/or on their shoulders. If they were kneeling, we'd place our hands on their head and/or shoulders. We prayed for their concerns for one to two minutes each and sometimes people would cry. One woman actually collapsed at my feet and I asked the elders to help her as I moved on to the next person. After we prayed for the last person, the choir led everyone in the final hymn and we recessed. Unfortunately, the prayers that my colleagues spoke went by too quickly for me to understand. However, I did note all of the eight pastors with whom I prayed at different times had an urgency and power which I did not expect. Did they already know how to do this, but had not been doing it? I remember Pastor Brighton Chana giving his very strong voice to rebuke and call out that which was troubling the person before him. "Wow!" I thought. "Where did that come from?" I should have asked him.

Dominant Themes: members will participate in personal prayers with pastor in public, a few pastors and worshippers find this spiritually vital, severe and intense.

Responses from the Focus Groups.

(Each group is headed with its date, location, local leader, and language.)

April 6 Mulimba rural congregation Pastor Doreen Mwanza. Mostly Tonga

“The short prayers are good. Keep them. I am happy they are written in Tonga, our own language. They are new, and will take time to get used to. They are simple, so that even children can follow them. We like the prayer for those who have passed away, as we have lost our loved ones. We like the prayer for those in marriage, which is appropriate for this area, where marriage is a problem. Praying for rain is needed, given the hunger we face. The prayer to work hard is also important. Yes, let all our congregations speak these prayers, so we can follow the same format, whenever we travel and must worship in another ELC-Zambia congregation.”

“We like the healing prayers. Most Lutheran congregations do not pray like this, except sometimes during home visits. We would like these healing prayers weekly.”

“After liturgy, I feel different, more comfortable, changed. At home, I have problems. After worship, I have reconciliation and forgiveness. I feel better.”

April 13 Chongwe rural Luther congregation Pastor Rugowo Mostly Nyanja.

“The short prayers are good. I do like the prayer for guiding our President. I also noted the prayers for children and for marriage. This is unique. I appreciate also the spoken words we said after each short prayer. It involved us. The prayer we usually hear is not specific at all. These new prayers are helpful. You have showed us a way to pray for specific problems.”

“As an observer to the healing prayers, I was myself becoming encouraged while watching them. Next time I might come forward myself. I believe God said, “Come, you who are carrying a heavy burden.” Even the heaviest burdens are for God to hear.”

“Worship has an effect on our community. We can pray alone at home, but fellowship here on Sunday is good. We come closer together. I feel guilty if I am not in church.”

April 18 Chavuma rural congregation Pastor Mahunda. Mostly Luvale

During Saturday Easter Vigil, we were not able to conduct a focus group, although we did incorporate the intercessory prayers and the healing prayers. On the previous night, at the climax of the Good Friday evening prayers, I chose to experiment with the use of a symbol and individual touch, since it was a possibility I had proposed in the project prospectus, but was not a

product of the pastor's gathering. After my preaching on the cross of Christ, I asked the worshippers to grasp the cross I would hand them and to mentally place their sins on it. I moved to each person in turn and handed them my large (four inch) welded pectoral cross. Although I did not ask for comments, most of them chose to speak out loud what they were laying onto the cross. I asked them to tell me about the experience afterwards.

“Tonight we are happy and freer, after what we have done today. Touching the cross has helped us deepen our thoughts of guilt and sin and the cross of Christ. Even us church workers are normally stiff, but touching the cross broke through and opened me to lay my sin at the cross. This action had an impact. It released my sin. It is effective. Do this touching in other congregations. It can help the church to grow.”

April 20 Zambezi rural congregation Pastors Chinsemu, B Chana, Njapau. mostly Lunda, few Luvale.

This Easter worship, with liturgy additions, lasted four hours. Pastor Chinsemu also participated in the healing prayers. Afterwards, we were all tired and hungry, so we released the people for the afternoon to prepare their food, and did not conduct focus groups. I did record my observations of the healing prayers and undertook an informal interview with Pastor Chinsemu about traditional rituals, described in chapter five.

May 4 Kamwala urban congregation Pastor Rugowo Mostly Swahili, of Tanzanian origin.

This congregation normally practices mass prayer, as described in chapter five. We included the intercessory prayers, but because of a newly announced funeral I was not aware of, there was not enough time available, so we skipped the healing prayers and moved straight to the focus group.

“The short prayers are alright, but we question the short prayer written for those who have died. That is the short prayer, “Compassionate Father, we remember our beloved ones who have died before us. We give thanks for their lives. May their souls rest in peace.” The

Kamwala member continued, “Those who have died are out of our hands, so we cannot pray for their salvation after the fact.” Despite my personal opinions on the subject, I said that I will ask the ELC-Zambia pastors to respond to this question. Others shared:

“We attend worship because it is natural, and it is following the third commandment, to honor the Sabbath day. I attend worship because it helped me change my life for the better. I attend worship so I can forgive my enemies. I am not sure if I can forgive all my enemies, though. After worship, my anxiety is lessened, although it comes back later. I was worried before entering married life, but because of regular worship, I am less worried.”

Regarding prayers for healing on Sunday morning, one man was against it. “Such activities are Pentecostal, and Lutherans are not Pentecostals.” Most of the participants thought it that it is a fine proposal to hold such regular healing prayers. A few of them were cautious, and felt that any healing prayers should follow a prescribed liturgy, like the liturgy found in ELC-Tanzania.

“Prayer is always good, and can be practiced anywhere and anytime. I pray out loud when I need God’s help. There are many different ways to pray. We can pray over the phone with another. There are many crossing intentions of all of our prayers. I pray for you and you pray for me. Everyone is praying for each other.”

I commented out loud that it appears as if we are all interconnected to each other through networks of prayer.

These responses inspired me to further engage with this urban Lutheran congregation, so I asked them how our church can help our members who face anxiety over problems they believe are sent by their ancestors.

“Our church must give them true knowledge. The truth is that their dreams of their ancestors are illusions. In truth, the ancestors are dead, and we should have no fear of them. We should rather pray for those persons who are still afraid of their ancestors.”

Such a response was startling. I had not heard such an opinion in the ELC-Zambia before. I wish now that I had asked such a question to all the groups. Finally, contrary to the above

opinions, one lone man commented that ancestral spirits are too powerful to be removed by prayer. No one objected to his opinion.

May 11 Matero urban congregation Pastor Matildah Banda. All Nyanja

Today we only conducted the healing prayers because the local pastor forgot to bring her copy of the intercessory prayers.

“We are completely in favor of continuing these healing prayers on Sundays. They are excellent, as we speak our burdens and release them in a safe manner. We leave feeling freer and uplifted. We are all passing through challenges in our lives. If our burden is touched, we feel improved. This praying also strengthens the relationship between us members and our pastors. We cannot be distanced from one another when the pastor has prayed for me. Pentecostal churches do such prayers and people like it. All people have problems. Some people miss worship because of their problems, but if the pastor prays for me, I will probably come to worship. Yes, the office of minister is to encourage the member’s faith. Such prayers by the pastor show promise in this regard. Observing the healing prayers was a blessing to me. Some people used to say that such prayers are not Lutheran. It could be better to have healing prayers before worship, after our morning bible study. This may help our experiences of worship right afterwards.”

“Some Sundays I feel the Holy Spirit is in our midst and some Sundays worship feels dry. If you come with a closed, heavy mind, you will not go home with anything. If you come open minded, you will go home with something.”

May 18 Chongwe Immanuel rural congregation Evangelist Noah Phiri. All Nyanja.

“We are so pleased with the intercessory prayers. Please make copies for us so we can have them also.”

“We like the healing prayers also. We all come to church with our problems.”

“We feel better after worship.”

Given the slow pace of exchange, I asked how the church can help reduce tensions between families.

“The church can teach, counsel, and encourage us all in reconciliation. The church can help us to pray. Yet, praying for our enemies is difficult.”

Dominant Themes: Problem anxiety is universal, worship reduces anxiety, the intercessory and healing prayers are very desirable, they provide for order, conflict resolution remains a

challenge, concerns over the dead remain high spiritual priority, cross as ritual symbol has spiritual potential.

Reconvening ELC-Zambia Leaders for Feedback June 3, 2014

After using the updated liturgies at home, we asked them to share their experiences and observations, as they assessed their people. Rev Nguvulu commented:

“In the former times, we used to go to the chief to follow traditional rituals to ensure a good farming season, but now we ourselves can pray for a good harvest. Some of the worshippers have become excited and even want us to write seasonal antiphons. The intercessory prayers are short and written down, which removes improvisation and chaos. We, as pastors, must select, in advance, the most suitable short prayers to use in the liturgy.”

Rev Rugowo shared:

“Regarding the healing prayers, when I forgot to do them, a worshipper cried out that I forgot! I am so encouraged by these prayers. Could we establish an SMS prayer chain, to provide more frequent encouragement? We could SMS prayers via cell phones to our members who are students, before they sit for school exams, or SMS prayer requests to our members when someone is in a crisis.”

Then I provided for the pastors the feedback from the focus groups in the congregations I visited, as reported above. I told the pastors also about the Kamwala congregation’s response, questioning the second petition of the pastors’ intercessory prayers, (recall that the Kamwala members said that those who have died are out of our hands, so we cannot pray for their salvation after the fact). The pastors replied that,

“No one truly knows the disposition of the dead, given the reality of death bed conversions. Further, Romans 14:9 states the Jesus is the Lord of the living and the dead. Also, in traditional religion, we can still hope that the living dead, the ancestors, have peace, even if they are not in heaven. Finally, pastorally, such a prayer comforts those left behind.”

A few days later, in conversation, Senior Pastor Chana, a member of the LAC, commented that he noted more unity and collegiality in the conduct amongst the ELC-Zambia pastors during the gathering on June 3-6, 2014, than he had ever observed before.

Dominant Themes: liturgical orderliness is important, interpersonal relationships improved after the pastors' intensive, Liturgical prayer can serve an African seasonal calendar.

Responses From LAC

We held a final LAC meeting on June 11, 2014. They felt that this project was most valuable for our church. From the first meeting with the LAC, the members were most encouraging. They saw our project as a way to support renewal amongst the pastors and congregations.

The following four paragraphs are from the LAC's summary of this project:

Impact on the Candidate:

“After eight years with us, Pastor Arden has strong relationships and good standing across our church to discuss issues we sometimes avoid. He also grew through this project, as he explained that he was also learning along with all of us. He collected many stories during the project, which brings him closer to us.”

Impact on our Committee:

“We were able to participate in and witness the project activities, learning and growing. We contributed to the design, and we gained experience as the project unfolded.”

Impact on our Pastors:

“Our pastors experienced more unity in composing the prayers together, and in praying for one another. Pastors realized our liturgical insufficiency in the area of prayer. Their ministries have been strengthened through this project.”

Impact on our Congregations:

“They can better connect prayerfully and spiritually to their real context using the new liturgical prayers developed during the project, and they can experience personal healing prayer, demonstrated and experienced through the project. These are either somewhat new or uncovered practices in our ELC-Zambia congregations.”

The LAC and the pastors expressed deep sadness that I was leaving them, as they had hoped to continue the liturgy renewal project of the ELC-Zambia with me. At the Senior Pastor’s request, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is searching for a new missionary to arrive by August 2015.

Dominant Themes: LAC grew from the project design, pastors have gained new ministry skills. Pastor Arden is trusted.

Responses from Researcher

The Prospectus served us well as a detailed intervention road map for the project scope and plan of work. We followed it, although we had to make adjustments for unexpected situations, of course. As an example, regarding the congregational visit schedule, in two instances local pastors were not available on the Sunday we had agreed and I had to change the planned visit dates.

My prospectus stated that I would have a separate note taker. The LAC decided that an outside professional note taker would not be known by the congregation and could disturb the trust already established between me and the congregation over the last eight years. Still, there are very few persons in the ELC-Zambia who can write notes at the level required for this project’s research. So I decided to be my own note taker, to reduce the chance of missing what was being said, even though the flow of the conversation sometimes paused while I wrote.

Unfortunately, the LAC had determined that the use of a tape recorder was considered too foreign for the rural worship setting.

Also, the pastors turned out to be poor written recorders of their own congregations' responses to the liturgy supplements. So, we alternately collected their verbal feedback during the June 3rd gathering. This gathering turned out to be a valuable additional check-in, which was not part of the original approved prospectus. There were no other major deviations from the letter or the spirit of the prospectus.

The research project itself involved a week-long pastoral intensive, exploring prayer, healing, liturgy, African identity, and African traditional religion (ancestors, illness/dying, kinship/conflict, agriculture, child-bearing). We recorded all of the noteworthy stories and contributions from the pastors as primary source material.

The pastor's intensive involved discussing core spiritual topics to a depth not yet achieved during the eight years of my ministry here. Composing the sixteen short prayers involved the pastors directly in writing liturgy for their own church body – a body used to only speaking liturgies given to them from Europeans or neighboring national churches.

Each morning during the pastors' intensive, we also conducted twenty minutes of active listening and personal prayer for three pastors each. They had never before experienced this. Afterwards they shared about the experience with the whole group. During the week, as African Christian Leaders, they both practiced healing prayer and theologized around healing prayer. This was a core theme we wanted to explore, again as noted in the project prospectus.

I was surprised by the pastors' theological confusion around healing rituals, which ultimately forced me to withdraw rituals with objects (water, oil, etc.) from the project. Since witchdoctors and healers use objects and rituals to effect magical change, there arose a

theological conflict for the pastors. In the end, the Christian theology of prayer we had explored together in the gathering was best realized by spoken prayers and touch for God-initiated healing. In other words, material objects or symbols unduly confused their nascent theology of Christian healing.

A social researcher should stay neutral. During the focus groups I avoided leading participants' opinions. However, during the pastors' intensive, I was biased, insofar as I was pressing the pastors to face topics they normally avoided, at least in front of me. I maintained an active interest in resistance to pat answers. Once they showed me they had engaged more deeply, I became more neutral.

In order to assist the pastors to be participant-observers, we also spent time discussing how we each can "read" our congregations' experiences of the worship we lead.

I am pleased that I was able to participate personally in celebrating some or all of the liturgy supplements in seven congregations across Zambia. Some of the site visits were tiring, requiring long distance transport, a long liturgy, but evoked new compassion in me for their spiritual lives, as I watched and listened.

I recorded the types of requests we received from worshippers for personal prayers during the congregational visits.(see chapter five). These served as a window into the anxieties experienced by the church members and Zambians in general. By feeding these anxieties back to the pastors, we validated the strong need for the ministry intervention by prayer. During the workshop, they openly lamented the popularity of Pentecostal churches, which focus on powerful prayer. After the ministry intervention, the pastors expressed a satisfaction in gaining spiritual competence in prayer and touch, which should better meet the needs of their congregants.

In every case, all the adult worshippers attended the focus groups. These participants in the rural settings were all peasant farmers, while some also ran micro-businesses, including small road side shops. The participants in the urban settings were either visiting the city from the village, unemployed, students, or self-employed, trading in the market, running shops in markets. A few were employed by non-governmental organizations, including the church head office. In Kamwala congregation, some of the participants were importers and traders of goods from Tanzania. Two persons owned profitable, medium size businesses in Lusaka.

There were some persons who spoke more than others, which was to be expected. However, we attempted to reduce anyone who might try to dominate the conversations in order to elicit the thoughts of as many persons as possible. In two instances, the conversation got side tracked: Kamwala got stuck on an argument on disposition of those who die outside the church. Matero got stuck on the best time to provide Sunday healing prayers.

Both women and men spoke in the focus groups. In fact, given that women are more involved in church life, more of the comments came from women. At the start, I always introduced myself again, in case someone did not know me from a previous worship visit. Rapport was generally instant, since I was already known of by most participants and in order to maximize trust, we did not tape record the groups' conversations. I used follow up questions and sometimes challenged stereotypes and assumptions to force deeper thinking. Given the fact that I am not culturally Zambian, nor can I speak the five languages well enough, I obviously lost my ability to read some signs, codes and behaviors that would simultaneously accompany their speaking. I wrote in my notebook during the sessions and undertook a debriefing session with the translator after the focus group finished. In addition, we did not offer any monetary compensation for participation.

I was aware of the challenges of fieldwork in Africa, so the problems we experienced were not surprises. Some pastors made last minute changes to my planned congregational visit and I had to reschedule. Pastor Chinsebu's absences from the intensive disappointed me, since he is intelligent and thoughtful, potentially adding value to the project. The backdrop of the long standing criticisms of a few pastors towards the Senior Pastor and the Senior Pastor's marriage breakdown were two other factors of the pastors' intensive. They manifested themselves in various ways, such as criticizing the head office during the personal sharing time. However, these challenges did not reduce the overall quality of the very productive exchanges significantly.

Some challenges did not materialize. For example, I did not pick up much reluctance to speak among the focus group participants. They felt comfortable with me and their pastor. We allowed for digressions and gently brought the dialogue back to topic. Also, translation was not the problem I anticipated. A volunteer translator was always easy to organize upon arrival. Further, women participated fully, after some encouragement, in the focus groups, which was a concern in the project prospectus. Lastly, the pastors' intensive included more pastors than we had initially planned in the prospectus, a positive decision by the LAC.

My regret is my inexperience in collecting more new images and metaphors the project participants used in expressing their identity and journey during the intervention. Although we captured all of the verbal narratives, I missed opportunities to suggest the pastors speak to the groups in metaphorical ways, to thicken the narrative, which Africans naturally do well, in my experience.

After years of congregational ministry, I know my leadership style. I listen. I propose. I woo. I lead. I direct. I am open to correction. Given the particular emphasis on learning

throughout the project, I listened extensively. However, the time-limited nature of the project implementation phase in 2014 meant that I had to be focused and directive at times to maintain progress. At times I became frustrated over disappointments in persons who had failed in their verbal commitments to me or to one another.

Table 2. Data Summary

	Dominant Themes
Pastors after week long intensive March 1	Prayer experiences beneficial. Reading one's community beneficial. Engagement with ATR beneficial.
Healing Prayers participant-observer April 6 to May 18	Strong participation in personal prayers with pastor. A few pastors and worshippers find this spiritually vital, severe and intense.
Focus Groups April 6 to May 18	Problem anxiety is universal. Worship reduces anxiety. Intercessory and healing prayers very desirable. The updated liturgy provides for order. Conflict resolution remains a challenge. Concerns over the dead remain high spiritual priority. Cross as portable ritual symbol has spiritual potential.
Pastor's Feedback June 3	Liturgical order important. Liturgical prayer can serve an African calendar.
LAC June 11	Pastors' interpersonal relationships improved. (from Senior Pastor) Arden is trusted as participant-observer. LAC grew from the project design experience. Pastors have gained new ministry skills.
Lead Participant-Observer	Prospectus was largely followed. Focus group participation was broad and rich. Prayer ministry needed. I missed the collection of new metaphors.

We are able to provide some answers for our two project research questions:

Q1: Can Christian ritual be a mechanism for reducing social tension and anxiety, and for encouraging reconciliation in the ELC-Zambia, towards imagining alternate, harmonious futures?

A: We have demonstrated that worship reduces personal anxiety. However, while we can logically assume that Christian ritual reduces interpersonal tension, the data indicates that forgiving enemies remains difficult.

Q2: Might Zambian Lutherans appropriate their faith more fully into their lives and problems if their church inculturates, or internalizes more intentionally, some African religious concepts?

A: The responses to the intercessory prayers demonstrate that praying directly for some African core values is very well received as a valid liturgical element.

In this chapter six we have presented the core collected project data and the data summaries. These will be explored in more depth in chapter seven, where we present an evaluation of the entire project. We will answer the following: Can we discern any long term changes in this church body and in the researcher? What are the theological implications and insights of the project?

CHAPTER 7

PROJECT EVALUATION

In this chapter I reflect on how the project has affected the ELC-Zambia and me as researcher. Savage and Presnell separate evaluation of a ministry intervention into two parts.

“One part is observing change. This first part is fairly straight forward; you compare the state of the context prior to a new ministry intervention and afterward. In a sense, this part of evaluation is only a measurement process. Has there been change in activity, habits, stories told, etc.? The second part is discerning transformation. The definition of transformation is “a marked change, as in appearance or character, usually for the better.” The latter part of this definition is critical in this understanding of the purpose of evaluation—discerning transformation toward a preferred future.”¹

That is, we first note changes in observable behaviors and stories told before and after the intervention. We discussed these issues in chapters one, five and six. However, the more important second part of evaluation is discerning any longer term transformation towards a preferred future. For example, do the ELC-Zambia members and leaders continue to see themselves the same way as they did during the intervention?

To this end, we discerned transformation during and after this project using qualitative methods which others may find valuable in their own ministry settings.² We did not undertake focus groups before celebrating the pilot liturgy supplement, so post-project change will be more difficult to claim, yet we can glean indications by using a range of perspectives for looking into the project experiences. Specifically, the findings below arose from probing the relationships, the emotions, the behaviors, the stories, the ideas, the skills developed, and ways of being inherent in

¹ Savage and Presnell, 124.

² Savage and Presnell, 126.

the ELC-Zambia.³ None of the methods of evaluation in *Narrative Research in Ministry* alone fit this particular project and context, so we will not use one distinct method, but rather our own mix. “Whether one or more of these perspectives is employed is secondary to the goal of obtaining a holistic sense of the emergence of the new within the ministerial context.”⁴

Let us begin with our project intention. Its aim has been to respond to the cultural and systemic roots of conflict in the ELC-Zambia. I endeavored to uncover the links through which individuals manifest animosities, with an eye toward seeing this church body become healthier. Can Christian ritual be a mechanism for reducing social tension and anxiety, and for encouraging reconciliation in the ELC-Zambia, towards imagining alternate, harmonious futures? Might Zambian Lutherans appropriate their faith more fully into their lives and problems if their church inculcates, or internalizes more intentionally, some African religious concepts?

My preliminary finding is yes. An emphasis on corporate liturgical and pastor-led personal prayer can reduce tension and anxiety, and build relationships. This is borne out by the feedback from the pastors and the focus groups. However, we were not able to test rituals involving blessing with water or anointing with oil, as they generated theological confusion.

One key component of any success this project might have is that it was the first time in my missionary work that I squarely faced traditional religion with my Zambian colleagues. Many African pastors in the western Christian traditions avoid much contact with traditional religion, in my experience. After spending years with these pastors, I had an intuition that ancestors and witches were the “what-shall-not-be-named” that needed to be put on the table. They have a more developed grasp of the relationship now, as evidenced in chapter six.

³ The approved prospectus stated that we would use a semiotic approach to evaluation, expecting that focus group verbal feedback might be too limited. This turned out not to be the case.

⁴ Savage and Presnell, 129.

The pastors in the five day intensive were proud of their work in composing the intercessory prayers, although they did not verbalize this during the assessment on day five. Unfortunately, I neglected to specifically ask them, “What did you experience in composing new liturgy for the *Zambian context*?” Their satisfaction is instead borne out by the interest they showed when I projected their prayers onto the wall and the intent they showed in collecting enough copies of their prayers, asking me repeatedly to make more photocopies for them to bring home. They had never composed liturgy for the whole church before this project process.

Further, when we discussed the healing prayer pilot, I did not show them healing prayer language from Roman Catholic or Lutheran sources. In this way they would not simply copy the liturgical prayers of another church body, as they often ask me to provide for them. They would instead pray using their own words, aided by the theological explorations of the five-day intensive. I must assume that this experience is empowering for one’s identity as a pastor in a church which has never been the agent of its own worship expression.

This project attempted to aid the church in addressing conflict through practices new to the ELC-Zambia. These practices were informed by both Christian and African traditions. This project has encouraged and modelled personal hands-on prayer to and for our pastors, which they had never done before this project’s inception. The healing prayers at the end of Sunday worship were found to be spiritually encouraging even to those who were watching. Just the act of walking forward to receive healing prayers demonstrated spiritual initiative.

I am intrigued by the possibility of reducing unique tensions between the members and their leaders, to which I alluded in chapter one, but did not address directly in the project. For years I had heard members across the ELC-Zambia complaining about their pastors and evangelists. Matero congregants in the focus group noted the potential for a better relationship

with their pastor emanating from the personal prayers said by their pastor. This is another hopeful pointer for a reduction of tension and a building of unity.

I described the ELC-Zambia self-identity at length in chapter one. Do the ELC-Zambia members continue to see themselves the same way after this intervention? Are changes in self-identity appearing? Given that I have left Zambia, my response is partial. However, this project is an important event in the long term development of this church body, which I have observed for eight years. If the pastors take up and use their liturgical supplements with intention, I believe church solidarity can improve, based on the slow, steady improvement in the past.⁵ There should be less walking across to the Pentecostal churches nearby when one is facing a serious problem. ELC-Zambia members are proud of their integration of faith and livelihood improvement programs. They would most likely be prouder still if they experienced a respect for their African identities more fully in their liturgy.

Looking back, I remain satisfied that we were able to thoughtfully put the project elements into service towards a hoped-for transformation of this church body. With hindsight, I would not have made any significant changes in the prospectus. I did not expect the overwhelming positive response to the liturgical supplements. I was disappointed that the pastors didn't take their role as participant-observers seriously. None of them gave me their notes, verbal or written. In most cases, I had to elicit feedback from them myself, but only verbally.

The ELC-Zambia is situated in a national economy of material poverty and scarcity, which generates anxiety. Anxiety over resources can generate conflicts, which can manifest themselves as accusations of witching and which reverberates throughout communities. The

⁵ In 2006, a number of congregations were not even worshipping weekly. Addressing this gap improved church unity.

preferred ELC-Zambia future is officially a sustainable institution, as I indicated in chapter one, but my personal preferred near-term future for this project is simply less internal conflict.

I hope that, if all pastors and evangelists in all the ELC-Zambia practice the new liturgical supplements, perhaps over the longer term, jealousy and conflict might decline. This is because the anxieties and stresses of poverty, from which conflict and jealousies and hexing arise, might be lessened. This is my tentative theory of causation. Yet I have no objective means by which to claim this. I have a personal bias in praising the project and I could write reams to this end. Still, my discernment is subjective and intuitive. I would never be so bold as to point to the arrival of the preferred future, as no ethnographer should, in my view.

I could not find enough satisfactory indicators of church-wide transformation resulting from this project. For example, without my prompting, Pastor Chana told me that the fellowship of the pastors during the June gathering was the best he had ever seen. Then, three months later, to the contrary, Pastor Chana emailed me that at the September 2014 Church Assembly meeting, a few assembly delegates launched verbal attacks on him, as Senior pastor. They were not rebuked by other delegates, including pastors.

My inherent hopefulness is obviously a powerful force in my own discernment of transformation. On the other hand, the inertia and long standing church dysfunction is an opposing force to my hopefulness. Jealousy and enmity between church members is a habit which does not surrender easily. I did not find direct answers to my core research questions regarding the church's ability to reduce conflict, except that reconciling with enemies and ancestors is very difficult and not yet addressed within the mainline African churches themselves. This project uncovered the fear the ELC-Zambia has of engaging ATR directly. We can however recommend that active rituals should be developed and made available to Zambian

Christians to one day support a more powerful and alternative interpretive frame for understanding problems and conflict. The ELC-Zambia is certainly not prepared in this regard, except perhaps Kamwala congregation.

Researcher Transformation and Reflexivity

This project has been enormously valuable, professionally and personally.

I've learned how to be a story broker, how to ask evocative questions, and how to listen for patterns in narratives. Having stories in my back pocket certainly provided the fuel for the pastors to engage with the project topics. My most satisfying moment of narrative discernment was with regard to the common experience of the ELC-Zambia pastors with their Lord, on day four of the pastors' intensive, described in chapter five. In short, it became apparent that each of them had at one time been accused of hexing someone, meaning that they were consorting with evil. Their Lord Jesus was likewise accused of being in league with demons.

I was already a competent listener for feelings and drives, and was an experienced pastoral counselor and focus group moderator, but this project has taken me further into the use of narrative-based tools, which are superior when working with cross-cultural populations for whom western psychology does not always apply, in my experience. My preaching has also changed, as I have left propositional preaching behind and now am more narrative, metaphorical, experiential, and relational in my sermons.

My only interpersonal stumbling block was my strained relationship with Pastor Collins C. He is quite competent about cultural matters and had gifts to bring to the project. Thankfully, he and I were both present at a large conflict resolution workshop in October 2013, at which many persons, including he and me, buried the hatchet and started our relationship afresh. I like to believe that this resulted in his attending the intensive and participating in the project,

although he remained reserved. His relationship with the Senior Pastor remained strained, which may have affected his conduct, given that the Senior Pastor facilitated the pastors' intensive with me.

I will never be an African. Yet my world is thoroughly changed because of the stories I have lived, with Africans. They are in my stories and I am in their stories. There will always be large differences between the Zambian church and me in worldview, behaviors, relationships, and expectations, despite my cross-cultural experience and sensitivity. Some evenings my wife and I would share the challenges of the day's work, given the great cultural differences between us and our Zambian colleagues. I am extroverted and highly relational, which has allowed congregational leaders to come to know and trust me.

The power I hold as a white American in central Africa is difficult to convey. I became accustomed to paying attention to power dynamics in my ministry, since my assignment in 2006 was to *accompany* this church body, not to *lead* it. Because of that power dynamic I did influence this study, of course, given that the narratives of concern were chosen by me and the hypotheses and core study design were largely mine. However, during the LAC meetings, the pastors' and evangelists' intensives, and the focus groups, I attempted to get out of the way. I remained steady on the outside while I listened to stories to which I had a strong emotional response, ranging from encouragement to pity to anger to incredulity. I physically left the Matero site when the pastors composed the sixteen prayers during the intensive. My sense is that project participants did not say what I wanted to hear from them. The summaries and trajectories of the stories and insights shared generally cohere in an assortment, captured in the data summary at the end of chapter six. If they wanted to please me, the participants would have

resisted healing prayer, since most participants know it is not a western Lutheran practice, from which I come.

My views of African traditional religion have certainly evolved through this project. Two years ago, as described in chapter one, I had an arms-length understanding of traditional religion, but this project encouraged and systematized a way for me to enter it further with an eye towards improved ministry. The experience has shaped me and I now see more clearly the unspoken implications and meanings behind older pre-project narratives, such as the vandalism of the Matero church. I am now able to hold, and honor more than one frame for understanding illness in Africa. Spiritually, I was able to publicly pray with power for those persons for whom it is needed. I was able to rebuke demons without fear, knowing that, while I do not believe they exist materially or spiritually, I could allow myself to join with the person who suffers and who does believe in them, and who deserves their pastor to be where they are. I. At the same time, I sometimes found strong emotions evoked in me, witnessing again the deep poverty and the spiritual earnestness of those before me. I have had moments where the proverbial scales fall, and I see no fundamental differences between persons. We all have needs for relationship, for mercy, for an identity. Through this project the ELC-Zambia has abducted me. I was touched by Chavuma congregations' heartfelt responses to holding the cross during our Good Friday devotions.

The LAC noted my frustration once or twice when people did not undertake their commitments. These included persons missing a LAC meeting or forcing me to make a last minute change to a planned congregational visit. Given that the pastor's intensive participation was voluntary, I did not express any negative feelings when pastors were late or absent. I have come to expect the unexpected in Africa, but I became more intentional about following the

prospectus during the months of January through June, available for carrying out the field work. Senior Pastor Chana is close to me and would not hesitate to tell me if my conduct was negatively affecting any aspect of our ministry. In fact, he has done so once in the past.

During the evening of June 3, 2014, I had all the ELC-Zambia pastors over to my house for a final celebration of shared ministry with my family, as it would be the last time we were all together. We sat in a large circle, and I addressed each pastor in turn, sharing a vignette of them that had showed me a quality of a good pastor. Pastor Chana told a few stories about me. He and I have shared laughter and sadness together in ministry. He noted the times when I ate and slept with them in the bush, which he had not expected to see an American do. It was an emotional and authentic evening, for my part. As Moschella notes, “Pastoral ethnographers...must be open to being transformed, moved by the persons and stories that they encounter.”⁶

On July 24, 2014, I gave a ninety minute preliminary presentation to fellow missionaries at the ELCA Missionary Gathering in Chicago, as a way of sharing this project with colleagues.⁷ My presentation sits in the appendix. Although I had not yet processed the project data, this experience was still satisfying. As I indicated in chapter one, it was the longer term missionaries who engaged with the multi-layered nature of the topic. One commented, “Africa is thoroughly mystical. The church in Africa is trying to tone down the mystical in Africa.” Chad Rimmer, missionary to Senegal, noted that, “the west, through modernism, has lost the mystical. The church in the west is trying to bring it back, modified.” Another person noted that small touches of the non-Christian mystical still can be found even in America. “When a person dies, sometimes the surviving spouse or child sees an unexpected animal running by or a leaf or

⁶ Moschella, 109.

⁷ Moschella, 232.

branch waiving in the wind which catches their attention. They may count it as a sign from the deceased that he/she is looking out for them.”

Affirming the same needs which this project explored, one missionary in West Africa told us that Liberian pastors had even asked her for scholarship to a seminary where they could learn exorcisms! In response, another missionary to Madagascar noted that the Lutheran Church there does carry out exorcisms and healings during special worship services, in an organized fashion. This was new to me, so I investigated and discussed this briefly in chapter four. (I am giving an updated, final presentation on March 10, 2015 to all ELCA pastors who minister in Manhattan. I look forward to their feedback as well.)

My wife and I were honored for our service at this ELCA missionary gathering with speeches, a plaque, and a video of me reflecting on the missionary experience.⁸ My superiors debriefed me. Structurally, that vocational chapter of my life is ended. Since then, I have been in an extended liminal state myself, which is becoming disheartening as it continues on. I moved with my little family to New York City, a city in which I’ve never lived, to take up a unique career opportunity for my wife. We uprooted ourselves from the life we had known in Zambia and began by living for two months out of our suitcases here. Finding a new way of being and a new community of friends in a new city is naturally taking time and I miss Zambia very much some days. I have no congregation right now, which means I am outside the church structures. This means I have the status as a pastor without call, but I feel as if I have no status at all, and must continually introduce myself as former missionary as I supply preach around New York on Sundays.

⁸ Franklin Ishida, “ELCA Missionaries - Arden Strasser.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7ySj336f0k&feature=youtu.be> (accessed January 6, 2015).

My paid employment necessarily shapes my identity in part. I am certain I will find my next calling here in the city, yet I am beholden to the Bishop's staff, as they consider options for my placement. This has been an ambiguous period, albeit one with time for reflection on my ministry in Zambia, and strengthening of my exegetical skills, since I have joined a weekly pastors' periscope study. This liminal phase has also seen me become more compassionate for the many persons who fall between other kinds of spaces in our social structures.

Certainly I have experienced suffering, hiddenness, hibernation, wisdom instruction, obedience, and reflection, as does anyone who encounters liminality. I look across to the other side of liminal space, and I am making small decisions to assimilate socially into the next chapter of my life. Now we live near Harlem, an area with remarkable ethnic diversity, including Africans and African-Americans. I am curious how my ministry learning will find expression here.

Theological Evaluation

This paper includes theological discourses in chapters two, three, four and five. Let us look once again at the meeting of the key narrative frames surrounding this project. That is, African, Lutheran, western, and my own, as an American Lutheran missionary. The most



Figure 14. Clash of notions.⁹

compelling biblical illustration of this complex mis-meeting, or clash, between narratives remains Mark 2:1-12, Jesus' healing and forgiving of the paralytic lowered through the roof. We first discussed this text at the end of chapter two, and the clash of narratives is also found in chapter one, in the

⁹ Figure used with permission of Jeffrey Paul Baumgartner.

section entitled: *A Portrait of the Missionary-Researcher-Participant*.

I was undoubtedly the Pharisee, as an ordained pastor from the west. I am also American, which means I represent power, visible in the hospitals, the industry, the schools, the infrastructure and the type of governance which Great Britain brought to Zambia.

I have been post-modern and modern. I don't place all my trust in the rational, but in matters of illness, I have always placed myself in the hands of western science.

I am Lutheran by an accident of birth in that my father was Lutheran. I have come to appreciate and treasure this tradition, even as I move ecumenically with some ease. Luther was not a systematic theologian. He was committed to scriptural interpretation and church reform for the sake of each person's personal access to God's grace. The ELC-Zambia has a tentative grasp of this tradition, and they hope that it will one day provide them the sense of well-being they seek.

African religion is pre-modern, as we discussed in chapters three and four. Africans must constantly negotiate between their traditional world views and the relatively new reality of a cash economy, geographical mobility, written communication, and western democracy.

Africans, in my experience, tend to see Jesus most often as a locus of power for well-being and healing. The Markan text highlights so well our original narrative of concern with Pastor Rugowo. The paralytic's friends broke through the crowd and down through the roof to find healing from Jesus. Likewise, Rugowo's brother may have saved his brother's life by bringing Rugowo to find healing from God amongst the Zionists. In the gospel story and Rugowo's story, the interpretive frame holding more earthly or institutional power did not satisfy the needs of the patient. The pharisees' orthodoxy had institutional power, but not healing power

for the paralytic. Similarly, the ELC-Zambia, offering up the classical Lutheran tradition, did not have healing power for Rugowo.

My ego took a large knock. In my role as missionary with years invested in training and experience, I have been forced to acknowledge the failure of the western faith tradition to meet the spiritual needs of those I came to accompany as missionary. After the crash of meta-narratives, what is left behind? My historic religious tradition lies in tatters, not relevant to Africans and even rejected by Jesus the healer himself. Christianity fails as a meta-narrative if it is discarded by adherents when times are tough. Chapters three and four review forms of inculturation as an alternative local narrative which might hold promise for a kind of Christianity which Africans might more fully embrace.

Of course there is some spiritual value in the Lutheran tradition for the suffering Africans experience, which I described in the first half of chapter two. Even with the inner journey I have taken so far, I remain hard pressed to negotiate one particular theological discrepancy without my undertaking more study – the theology of

suffering in ATR and in Christianity. In the Lutheran paradigm, suffering, in part, is an inevitable feature of a fallen humanity, to which no one is exempt. In African religion, suffering is not received passively. It is always negative and



Figure 15. Another Clash of Notions.¹⁰

comes from wrong personal relationships and wrong personal conduct. I struggle to hold these truths together. I'd like to spend more time living this paradox of apparent opposites, teasing out common ideas, hoping for a personal synthesis around suffering. I have a hunch that a new notion may be born in me.

¹⁰ Figure used with permission of Jeffrey Paul Baumgartner.

In short, some days I think God is rather artful, given this project, which captured and took me places I did not anticipate!

Future Directions

This project has uncovered numerous options for the future. As noted in chapter five, the pastors expressed a broad need for key liturgies, including the Sunday divine service, burials, confirmation, baptism, marriage. These all need to be strengthened, and in some cases, written for the first time. They need to know exactly how to bury Christians and non-Christians, since they are often asked to do so. They'd like to have liturgies for the birth of a new baby, distinct from baptism, the blessing of a house with holy water, and how to remember those who have died. (I am able to locate and provide them some of these.) Death is an extremely powerful event for Africans, and requires more attention liturgically by this church body. We would need to consider post-funeral practices as well, given that such rituals exist in traditional culture, and consider Christian rituals for seasonal planting and harvesting.

At the suggestion of Kamwala congregation's focus group in chapter five, it would be beneficial to openly discuss the inner experiences of ancestors, with church members. Such matters could be included in Christian education programs, as I have never heard these matters discussed personally and extensively by any church workers, or in any African seminary, for that matter. The traditional reverence for ancestors can be positive, but is also a major source of anxiety which could detract from trust in Christ.

Lastly, based upon the comments from the evangelists' intensive in chapter five, I would study the existing and potential roles of pastors as teachers in traditional rites of passage schools and rituals, such as *Mukanda*.

Epilogue

It is fitting to return to the initial narrative in the first chapter one last time.

Well, today Pastor Rugowo and Evangelist Moonga are not close friends, but are seemingly able to work together at Kamwala congregation without animosity. Moonga is requesting to be transferred to another congregation.

In chapter three, I shared the story about the breaking marriage of a pastor and his wife. Well, they have since completed their divorce settlement with their families present.

I shared the heart-breaking story of Pastor Brighton in chapter five. He has decided not to return to Kasekeseke village, and has put a down payment down on a plot closer to Zambezi town, near the main road. Here he has access to schools and resources, which were difficult to access living alone in the forest. He feels the location is safe.

The word I am receiving is that the short intercessory prayers are still being used by the pastors. I was also told that the healing prayers are being seen some Sundays across the ELC-Zambia congregations. Even Pastor Banda, who had not done such praying with her congregation at Matero before, now undertakes it occasionally.

Their narratives have each become a jewel in the treasure chest called my life. It has been a privilege to ponder them, with them.

APPENDIX ONE: ELCA GLOBAL MISSION PRESENTATION

Arden Strasser

WITCHCRAFT, ANCESTORS, DELIVERANCE**PREFACE**

- ✦ Better title would be: Prayer and Social Healing
- ✦ Our audience today is varied.
- ✦ I'm not an anthropologist, but a pastor.
- ✦ Let's agree on our ground rules today.
- ✦ This was a shared project, not solo.

A STORY

- ✦ Rugowo healed by Zionists.
- ✦ What happened here?
- ✦ How much did Pastor Rugowo's brother love him?
- ✦ What is the difference between the responses of the Zionists and the Lutheran church?
- ✦ Where was God in this?

AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

- ✦ All of life is saturated by invisible influences. Indigenous religions generally include a supreme being who remains distant from daily affairs. More important are the spirits and ancestors who have bearing on well-being. ATR practice aims to harmonize the invisible powers with the living, through rituals, stories, and festivals, for protection and prosperity. Traditional religion is oral.

SICKNESS

- ✘ Africans may ascribe sustained illness and death to unseen forces, which have been manipulated by specialists at the request of enemies who pay for the service.

MY RESPONSES

- ✘ This dissonance between western medicine and traditional healing has troubled me, revealing many of my assumptions, defense mechanisms, and drives.
- ✘ Am I doing Zambians a dis-service by not engaging forthrightly with their traditional reality as a viable meta-narrative?
- ✘ I have considered myself post-modern, and agree that "postmodernism can be understood as the erosion of confidence in the rational as sole guarantor and deliverer of truth..." However, I didn't expect that this erosion might include western medicine and diagnosis of illness.

SMALL GROUP

- ✦ What brushes with traditional religion have you had?
- ✦ Does the unverifiable story carry truth? How important is personal experience in assigning truth?
- ✦ What is the truth here? Who decides? Solomon?
- ✦ What is your belief in the unseen?

A DYNAMIC OF SOCIAL CONFLICT

- ✦ I have collected many narratives around interpersonal conflicts in the church in Zambia, which limit the church body's growth and health. Occasionally these conflicts burst through the surface, manifesting as misfortune, followed by accusations of hexing or bewitching.
- ✦ Personal or social crises are sometimes interpreted by Africans to be the results of known or unknown relationship breakdowns with other persons or with the ancestors, either of whom might choose to hex or bewitch the individual or family in anger. If hexing is believed to come from an enemy, then the problematic relationship may become even worse if an accusation of hexing is made public.

-
- ✦ Hexing is a symptom of social anxiety. Unresolved, hexing can even exacerbate conflict.
 - ✦ The church lacks a ritual that addresses the conflict or its manifestation as effectively as hexing does.

ANOTHER STORY

- ✦ Mr Singini
- ✦ I have stories in which African Christians, depending on the biblical God, are able to find healing through trauma without the use of African traditional concepts.
- ✦ African church bodies historically connected to so-called mainline denominations may not be providing adequate spiritual food to respond adequately to such personal crises.

- ✘ Because these beliefs are part of African traditional religion, the religion also has its own rituals to reconcile the broken relationship, bringing wholeness. African Christianity, as practiced by the Zionists and Pentecostal church, also has practices and rituals for this purpose. However, African Protestant Christianity, as transmitted by western missionaries, who rejected much of this reality, is not responding adequately to such crises.
- ✘ Can Christian ritual be a mechanism for reducing social tension, and encouraging reconciliation in the church?
- ✘ What treasures of the church might be able to speak into such gaps between persons, and between meta narratives?

DIALOGUE WITH PASTORS

- ✘ Is our worship meeting our needs as Africans?
- ✘ No. "our worship should better address the inner burdens Africans carry, *in addition* to the pure gospel we preach."
- ✘ Neo-pentecostal churches are very popular, even taking away our members.

PASTORS' INTENSIVE

- ✘ What is happening during prayers for healing? What are different ways to pray? What do Africans seek in communal/individual prayer? Why are some of our pastors reluctant to pray for healing? How ought we pray for the ancestors, as African Christians? What about the Pentecostals?
- ✘ Theology of Suffering. In the Christian paradigm, suffering, in part, is an inevitable feature of a fallen humanity, to which no one is exempt. In the African paradigm, suffering comes from wrong personal relationships and wrong personal conduct.
- ✘ What is a proper relationship between ATR and XTY?

- ✘ New prayers composed. The prayers of the people refer directly to core African measures of well-being: ancestors, farming (in season), child-bearing, marriage, children, the elderly, harmonious kinship/conflict, forgiveness, anxiety, evil spirits, illness.
- ✘ Composing the sixteen short prayers involved the pastors directly in writing liturgy for their own church body, a body used to only speaking liturgies given to them ultimately from outside.
- ✘ During the gathering, each morning we also conducted twenty minutes of active listening and personal prayer for three pastors each. They had never experienced this before. Afterwards they shared about the experience with the whole group. During the week, they both *practiced* healing prayer and *theologised* around healing prayer, as African Christian leaders.

- ✘ We had never previously attempted to dialogue extensively around the two paradigms of Christianity and African tradition up against one other. Many African pastors in the western Christian traditions avoid contact with traditional religion.
- ✘ Why?
- ✘ Ancestors and witches were the “what-shall-not-be-named” that needed to be put on the table.

THEN BACK HOME IN THE CONGREGATION...

- ✘ Pastors conducted collective and ritual personal prayer with touch for those persons with problems.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ✦ Difficult marriage
- ✦ Family dysfunction
- ✦ Illness, pain
- ✦ Wife using herbs
- ✦ Failing small business
- ✦ School fees, poverty
- ✦ Distant relation ill

RESULTS

- ✦ strongly endorsed by congregations.
- ✦ Improves relationship with their pastor.
- ✦ Better sense of well being after being prayed for.

- ✦ Suggestions, corrections?

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