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Church and Development in Ethiopia: The Contribution of Gudina Tumsa's Holistic Theology

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Abstract: There has been much debate in the church over the relationship between evangelism and development. In past decades, the involvement of the church in God's mission has been defined with emphasis on either evangelism or development. The church, however, is called to participate in God's ongoing creative work of nurturing the whole aspect of life (physical and spiritual) without separation. This article explores the challenges to the holistic understanding of mission in the Ethiopian context and attempts to show the contribution of Gudina Tumsa's holistic theology in the context of the ministry of the Lutheran church in Ethiopia. The two challenges explored are the Western missions' emphasis on development and Pentecostal teaching that downplays the public role of the church.

Introduction

Evangelical Christianity was introduced to Ethiopia over a hundred years ago. Through their ministries, Evangelical Christians have been playing a major role in shaping the values and attitudes of individuals and societies in terms of social behaviors and political and economic activities. In the past few decades, however, religious instructions (particularly by Evangelicals) have largely been absent from the agenda of development. As studies indicate, this absence is due to teachings and practices that separate between the spiritual and physical realms.¹

The Ethiopian Evangelical churches' approach to development is influenced by two major factors: the Western missions' emphasis on social and physical development over against evangelism and the Pentecostal teaching and practice that minimize all except the spiritual activities of the church. These two approaches to missions have resulted in mission activities in Ethiopia suffering a longstanding



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dichotomy between evangelism and development “which have been considered as mismatching pair that exist and operate in their own differing worlds.”²

Development activities of faith-based organizations in Ethiopia have either been used as a vehicle for evangelism or considered to be the sole purpose of Christian mission. Both these approaches are problematic, since faith and development belong together. Based on Gudina Tumsa’s understanding of holistic theology, this article proposes a holistic approach to development from a critical perspective and as an alternative to the above-mentioned one-sided and partial practices of service in a society.

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Challenges to a Holistic Approach to Mission

Ethiopia is one of the oldest Christian nations. Christianity was introduced to Ethiopia in the fourth century. Adopting the Eastern Orthodox tradition, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) was established as a national church. The history of Evangelical churches in Ethiopia, however, begins with the first attempt of Lutheran missionaries to reform the EOC in the seventeenth century followed by the first successful mission endeavor of the Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM) which happened at the end of the nineteenth century.³

The first three missionaries (Lars-Johan Lange, Per-Eric Kjellberg, and Johan Carlsson) of the SEM were sent to reach Ethiopians, particularly the Oromo tribe, via the Sudan in 1866.⁴ However, when they arrived at Kunama (a town in today’s Eritrea), they were faced with two major problems. First, the missionaries learned that the River Nile was too unstable for the expedition. Second, the Ethiopian emperor, Emperor Tewodros, had closed all the ways to the Oromo territory out of suspicion of the missionaries’ desire to connect with that part of the country. Therefore, the missionaries were forced to remain in Kunama and work among the people of that area until the situation changed.⁵

Because of local wars among the Kunama, the SEM missionaries had to move to a new location, Massawa, in 1870 and later build their mission station at Imkulu. According to Eric Virgin, Imkulu, “the territory around and to the west of Massawa, was at the time a no-man’s-land” divided between Ethiopia and Egypt.⁶ This situation created a favorable context for the SEM to freely engage in mission, which would be a strong foundation for the start of Evangelical churches in Ethiopia. Here,

the SEM had to wait for a period of twenty-eight years to realize their primary mission of reaching the Oromo territory.

The SEM's understanding of mission at the time can be understood from the general policy they adopted in 1871, which reads "mission should not only be a mission of preaching, but also a mission of service which in the beginning lays more stress on caring for those in need."⁷ At Imkulu, they opened a fully equipped school that provided a Western form of education to the local community. Carpentry and metalwork were also part of the curriculum. Additionally, they established a printing press and began to publish Scriptures translated into local languages.⁸ In this way, the SEM founded a mission station that provided holistic service to the community. This approach helped the SEM to win souls around their mission station. As a result of mutual interaction between the SEM and the Reformed EOC clergy, the Eritrean Evangelical Church (EEC) was also founded. However, as Halldin Norberg explains, "the work [of the SEM] in Eritrea was regarded only as a station on the way to the Oromo."⁹

The work of the SEM in providing religious as well as other forms of education at Imkulu resulted in a different, but fruitful, strategy to reach the Oromo with the Gospel. It was this little seed planted by the SEM at Imkulu that would grow like a tree throughout Ethiopia as indigenous converts trained at this institution became pioneers of Evangelical faith among the Oromo. These converts were freed Oromo slaves, poor fugitives, and exiled Reformed Eritrean clergy who were in conflict with EOC for adopting the Evangelical faith. The SEM's holistic approach to evangelism became a strong foundation and a viable strategy for indigenous missionaries who, following their footsteps, reached out to other parts of Ethiopia. From this time on, evangelization was linked with the holistic services that the church provides for the community it serves: education, health services, shelter and food, and advocating and providing a voice for the poor and the marginalized.

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Gebre-Ewosatewos Ze-Mikael (1865–1905) and Daniel Debela (1866–1904) were the two indigenous missionaries (both trained at Imkulu) that reached the Oromo for the first time in 1898. They were engaged in evangelism and development work from the day they started ministering among the people. In addition to religious instruction and changing the livelihood of the community, both Ze-Mikael and Debela organized a team and together started an elementary school where they introduced modern education to the local community and where "students who were

born by landless parents were encouraged to take up manual crafts which promoted local economy and social change.”¹⁰ They also discouraged slavery and paid from their own pockets to free as many slaves as possible.¹¹ They were later joined by Onesimos Nesib, and the two women Aster Ganno, and Feben Hirpe, all freed slaves trained at Imkulu by the SEM.¹²

Indigenous pioneers have also contributed to the indigenization of the EECMY by using local languages in worship, by translating Scriptures, liturgies, and hymn books into local languages, and by using cultural concepts in translating and evangelizing the communities. It was Nesib who played a major role in 1887 in translating hymn books that contained one hundred songs, which he named *Galata Waaqayyoo Gooftaa Maccaa* (Glory to the Everlasting God). He also translated the New Testament (1893), the whole Bible (1899), Luther’s Small Catechism, and Dr. Barth’s *Bible Story* with the assistance of Ganno and Hirpe. In addition, he wrote a book, *Jalqaba Barsiisaa*, also known as the “Readers” (1894), with the assistance of Ganno and Hirpe.¹³ One may ask what translation has to do with helping the Christian community in becoming active in the socio-economic life of their country. As Andrian Hastings rightly argues, translation of the Bible and other literature into vernacular languages results in the building of the national consciousness.¹⁴ It was the availability of these translations, coupled with other forms of indigenization (as mentioned above), that has continued to shape congregational ministries (which is holistic) and in how the EECMY continued to be engaged in the nation building.¹⁵

When the door was opened for missionaries to work in Ethiopia, Evangelical Christianity was already an established movement following the tradition of the SEM. What the missionaries did upon their arrival was to strengthen the work and help in the establishment of congregations. This took place until the Italian occupation (1936–1945). Upon Italy’s invasion, European missionaries were expelled, and indigenous leaders continued to plant congregations and provide holistic service to the communities they served. As Eide states, “from the very beginning of the evangelical enterprise in Ethiopia, we see that wherever there is a congregation there is a school. Wherever a group of evangelical Christians gathered they established a school.”¹⁶

Following Ethiopia’s liberation from the Italian occupation in 1941, Western mission organizations started to come back to Ethiopia after Emperor Haile Selassie I permitted them to freely work in the country. The freedom, however, was given with certain restrictions. One was on the work of evangelism, which limited the missionaries’ spheres of evangelistic work to the so-called “mission-open” areas, i.e., areas not designated to the EOC.¹⁷ According to the Emperor’s autobiography, this permission was granted to missionaries because of their contribution to education and health services. The emperor’s goal was to modernize the country using mission organizations as a means to introduce modern education, social services, and medical services in all parts of the country.¹⁸

What the missionaries did was to provide modern education coupled with theological training, which enhanced the ministry of the church. They played a major role in providing modern education to the communities they served. The training centers, hospitals, schools, and other institutions planted by missionaries were meant to meet the spiritual and physical demands of the community. As Eide emphasizes, this approach “led to a re-establishment of the dignity and the identity of ethnic groups, which in turn came to play a role in the Ethiopian revolution.”¹⁹

The shift in the missionaries’ approach to mission, however, started to change in the early 1960s. This shift was from a holistic approach to mission to a new emphasis on social action and community development.²⁰ This shift was preceded by the new concept of development that emerged in the West after the Second World War, particularly in the 1950s “to describe the wellbeing of the poor.”²¹ During those years, the intellectual discourse was focused on economics, mainly because it was the time when Western nations were under pressure to grant political independence to their respective colonies in Africa.²² In this discourse, the term “civilization” was equated with “Christianization,” which led to the promotion of economic prosperity as a means of redeeming Africa to Christ.²³

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This shift resulted in an imbalance in funding received from the West for development projects over against projects that supported the evangelistic outreach of churches in Africa, particularly the EECMY. The Western mission organizations were “readily prepared to assist in material development, while there seemed to be little interest in helping the church meet her primary obligation to proclaim the Gospel.”²⁴ As Megersa Guta also noted, there were also labels put on machinery used in development projects of the church, which read, “Not for evangelism work.”²⁵ This stipulation was required by some governments that were able to contribute resources to church programs—for example, agricultural development—but not to church programs in evangelism. Even though the EECMY was not convinced by the new approach of the Western mission organizations, its traditional holistic approach to mission was challenged. To the present time, Western partner churches of the EECMY hold on to similar theological positions that give little or no attention to the evangelistic mission of the church. Therefore, how the church continues to uphold its holistic theology and practice remains to be a challenge.

Besides the theology and practice introduced by Western missionaries, the EECMY’s understanding of mission, particularly related to development, was also

influenced by the Pentecostal movement that began in the early 1950s.²⁶ This movement was started by the Swedish Philadelphia Church Mission and the Finnish mission. In the 1960s, many young Ethiopians were attracted to the movement, and the first Pentecostal church, the Ethiopian Full Gospel Believer's Church, was established in 1967. Their application to be registered as a national church was rejected the same year by the Ministry of the Interior, which entailed the closure of the church's meeting places.²⁷ This action resulted in the influx of a large number of Pentecostal believers into the mainline denominations, including the EECMY, until they were allowed to have their own worship places in 1991.

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As Gemecho Olana states, "one of the dominant features of the [Pentecostal] movement in Ethiopia is their reluctance to engage in social action or prophetic ministry. [They] are indifferent to the social implication of the gospel and take no interest in politics."²⁸ They emphasized the "otherworldliness" of Christians, which encouraged political and economic passivity. In their teaching, they discouraged members from having commitment to anything other than the spiritual aspects of life. According to Mamusha Fanta, one of the main Pentecostal leaders, "the major reason that made [Pentecostals] passive when it comes to economic and political things was that [they] perceived that the government [that persecuted them] was anti-Christian."²⁹

The teaching of the Pentecostal movement that emphasizes the spiritual aspect of life and gives little or no value to social, economic, and political matters has influenced most of the EECMY members. Its major impact was on creating two separate worldviews about reality: the sacred (good) and secular (evil). Spiritual practices (worship, preaching, and so on) are considered as heavenly, and other activities (in the social, economic, and political realms) are described as evil or other-worldly.³⁰

The EECMY on Holistic Ministry (Evangelism vs. Development)

The EECMY's theology, commonly described as "holistic theology," was developed by Gudina Tumsa, the General Secretary of the EECMY (1966–1979) in response to the two challenges mentioned above: the Western emphasis on development over against evangelism and the influence of the Pentecostal movement on members of the EECMY (which highlighted the spiritual aspect of mission). For

Tumsa, God's mission cannot be dichotomized between the spiritual and physical, because it is holistic in nature.³¹

Tumsa's distinct contribution to the church worldwide can be viewed from his perspective on holistic ministry. He was a holistic thinker who believed in the undivided human reality. Tumsa's concept of holism is built on the African's view of life in its totality. This became most obvious in the context of international church and development work through the EECMY's 1972 document "On the Interrelation between the Proclamation of the Gospel and Human Development."³²

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This document addressed the theological basis of human development involved in the development efforts of the EECMY in collaboration with partnering churches, established the EECMY's theology of "serving the whole person," and has guided its development programs ever since. The core of this theology is the notion of "holistic ministry," which serves both the spiritual and material needs of the human person. This particular brand of "holistic ministry" is deeply rooted in an African concept of the place of human beings vis-à-vis God's creation, and it centers on the idea of "integral human development," which views proclamation of the Gospel and human development as having the same objective—transforming the human being in society.

In the document, Tumsa and EECMY's leaders define development from a Christian point of view as "a process of liberation by which individuals and societies realize their human possibilities in accordance with God's purpose."³³ This process starts with being freed from one's own "self-centered greed" by the liberating power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.³⁴ It is this freedom that leads to "development of the inner man [which is] a pre-requisite for a healthy and lasting development of [the] society."³⁵ The spiritual freedom and maturity is basic for lasting development because it "enables [individuals and the society to] responsibly handle material development."³⁶ Otherwise, "what was intended to be a means of enhancing the wellbeing of man can have the opposite effect and create new forms of evil" that result in the destruction of the society.³⁷

Tumsa and other EECMY leaders articulated this theological statement at the height of the so-called "golden age" of development and presented these ideas as a critique of the dominant ecumenical debate over the nature of the relationship between the new independent churches in the developing world and their missionary counterparts in the West. The leaders were trying to communicate to their Western partners that in the church's involvement in God's mission there exists no dichotomy between the sacred and the profane, the physical and the spiritual, the religious and

the moral. In the main, the religious and the moral permeate the physical, material, political, and social concerns of the people. They emphasized that churches should strive to promote the well-being of the members of society, and Christians must promote the well-being of community and restore it when it is disrupted.

In this document, Tumsa and other leaders of the EECMY addressed the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) with the following statement:

We believe that an integral human development, where spiritual and material needs are seen together, is the only right approach to the development question in our society. . . . The division between witness and service or between proclamation and development is harmful to the church and will ultimately result in a distorted Christianity. . . . The development of the inner person is a prerequisite for a healthy and lasting development of society.³⁸

According to Johnny Bakke, the EECMY letter of 1972 “accused the missions and the Western churches in general of splitting the task of the church into an evangelism and development ministry, distorting its vocation to serve the whole person.”³⁹ This letter indicates that “to strip development activities of the evangelistic aspect means to accept that man can be treated in parts”—which is incompatible with an African worldview. Therefore, according to Bakke, “the main purpose of the letter was a reminder to the donor agencies that man may not be divided arbitrarily as soul, body and mind and ministered to in sections.”⁴⁰

For Tumsa and other EECMY leaders, both aspects of the church work, mission and human development, must not be separate—they are part and parcel of the church’s responsibility in carrying out God’s mission in this world. This was an absolute challenge to the mission organizations that are shaped by ideologies that believed in compartmentalization of the dualistic Western worldview and organizational structures.

Tumsa’s concept of holism is built on the African view of life in its totality. His argument was focused on challenging both the Western churches to help them understand the holistic nature of the gospel and his fellow Africans to adopt a theology based on an African holistic worldview which is compatible to the Gospel. This is mainly reflected in his letter to Carl-J. Hellberg, Director of the LWF Department of Church Cooperation in 1992, where he stated that “an African view assumes the totality of man which is not in line with the Western ways of thinking,”⁴¹ and that it is such an understanding that should guide the way African theology is to be developed.

For Tumsa, a theology shaped by an African holistic view is what enables the church “to rededicate itself to living for others, serving the whole human person, meeting the spiritual as well as the physical needs.”⁴² Such an understanding of Christian ministry is compatible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Gospel that not

only sets us free from the spiritual bondage or “eternal damnation,” but also from “economic exploitation, political oppression, etc. Because of its eternal dimension the Gospel of Jesus Christ can never be replaced by any of the ideologies invented by men throughout the centuries.”⁴³

In his address to the Lutheran World Federation consultation held in Nairobi Kenya in 1974, Tumsa states:

In the Ministry of Jesus we note that forgiveness of sins and healing of the body, feeding the hungry and spiritual nurture, opposing the dehumanizing structures and identifying himself with the weak were never at anytime divided or departmentalized. He saw man as a whole and was always ready to give help where the need was most obvious.⁴⁴

For Tumsa, the church’s role in the society is to serve as a means through which God provides healing. This healing, according to Tumsa, is not simply a question of medical care, but “has to do with the restoration of man to liberty and wholeness.”⁴⁵ This ministry of the church is founded on the understanding that in the ministry of Jesus, “forgiveness of sins and healing of the body, feeding the hungry and spiritual nurture, opposing dehumanizing structures and identifying himself with the weak were never at any time divided or departmentalized. He saw man as a whole and was always ready to give help where the need was most obvious.”⁴⁶

Tumsa, in his “Report on Church Growth in Ethiopia” presented in Tokyo 1971, two years before the EECMY letter was written, had also argued that “central to the proclamation and witness of the believers is the idea that Jesus saves.” As he contends, “[From an African point of view,] there is no distinction between curing from malaria, pneumonia and saving from sin. ‘Jesus Christ saves’ means that he literally cures from physical diseases as well as from the burden of sin. The simple preaching of the Gospel was very often accompanied by healing, exorcism or by some other signs that were interpreted to be the new God demonstrating His power.”⁴⁷

One can argue that the EECMY’s understanding of holistic theology is mainly informed by Luther’s distinction between the two kingdoms or realms. According to Luther, on his “left hand,” through secular governors, God rules over the whole universe. On his “right hand,” through the church, God provides mercy and grace.⁴⁸ As Luther indicates, God’s kingship is not limited to the spiritual spheres of life. He is the Lord of the whole universe.⁴⁹ Through these two kingdoms, God provides holistic ministry to His creation.

Holistic theology adopted by the EECMY is also founded on the Scriptures. A closer look at the ministry of Jesus and His disciples, particularly in the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, reveals that their ministry was holistic. It was holistic because their focus was “a wholehearted embrace and integration of both evangelism and social ministry so that people experience spiritual renewal, socioeconomic uplift,

and transformation of their social context.”⁵⁰ Jesus has come to this world to restore His people (Lk 4:16–21). This restoration is to be manifested in the lives of the poor and the oppressed as compassion and justice prevail.

In the Book of Acts, the disciples’ life and ministry is described as a continuation of this liberating ministry of Jesus Christ—which is holistic. Holistic ministry in Acts is three-dimensional: *evangelistic*, *fellowship* (communion), and *prophetic*. The *evangelistic*

aspect of the church’s ministry is vividly expressed in Acts, where the disciples are described as those committed to teaching and preaching—“preaching the word of God” (Acts 6:2) and “the ministry of the word and sacrament” (Acts 6:4). In Acts, Luke gives emphasis to the actual story of the lives of the Apostles, focused on teaching in the ongoing life of the Christian community. In Ephesians, Paul continually taught for two years (Acts 19:8). Apollos, after being instructed by Priscilla and Aquilla, was also engaged in teaching the Word of God (Acts 18:24–28). These and other similar stories about the commitment of the Apostles to teach and instruct the church show the intention of Luke to illustrate to his readers that this particular characteristic of the church is needed for the nourishment and guidance of the believing community.

The social ministry of the church is described in Acts within the *fellowship* and communion shared among believers. One of the areas on which Luke focused while describing the life and ministry of the apostles in the Book of Acts is that they devoted themselves to *fellowship*, the breaking of bread, and helping the needy (Acts 2:42ff; 4:32ff). They had “everything in common” to the extent that they were “one soul” (Acts 2:44; 4:32).⁵¹

The socioeconomic and transformational ministry of the church, which others describe as the *prophetic* role that the church plays among the community it serves, is demonstrated in the life and ministry of the Apostles of Jesus Christ—in that the mission for which they are being commissioned is the same as that attributed to Jesus: healing the sick, casting out demons, and preaching the kingdom of God (Lk 4:43; 8:1; 9:11; 11:20).

Balancing the Church’s Ministry in a Society

In this section, I will discuss the implication of Tumsa’s holistic theology for understanding the church’s role in society. As stated in the above sections, the Lutheran church in Ethiopia has been deeply involved in development, especially in the areas of education and health. This involvement is due to its longstanding

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understanding of God's mission, which encompasses all aspects of life. This understanding, however, is being challenged by two different views held by Western missionaries and the Ethiopian Pentecostals.

The Western missionary's emphasis on development and the Pentecostal's emphasis on spiritual ministries resulted in the distorted or "unbalanced" understanding of mission. Tumsa's holistic theology responds to this challenge by indicating that the church's mission has to be holistic. For Tumsa, both positions are unacceptable because they "are equally harmful to the local churches in Developing Countries, which see it as their obligation to serve the whole man."⁵²

The Western missionary's emphasis on development results from an understanding that separates the spiritual and physical domains of life. This approach, according to Tumsa, should be criticized because it is "a threat to the very values which make life meaningful if carried out without due attention to a simultaneous provision to meet spiritual needs."⁵³ It also has the capacity to "weaken the spiritual life of the church and turn away those who long for the Gospel."⁵⁴ This assumption not only controls the intellectual inquiry and practice of missions, but also affects the ministry of non-Western churches working in partnership with them. The EECMY, as indicated above, is a case in point. Many members of the EECMY and other Evangelical churches in Ethiopia have succumbed to this Western worldview and have allowed themselves to be relegated to the spiritual world.

The Pentecostal emphasis on the spiritual aspects of ministry is another challenge that results in a focus on spiritual activities (evangelism) over other ministries. Other ministries, such as development and advocacy, are considered as non-essential for salvation and are therefore considered secondary or supportive ministries. This understanding has also influenced many members of the EECMY and other Evangelical churches in Ethiopia, resulting in their withdrawal from all kinds of development activities.

Tumsa's holistic theology challenges these two understandings by interpreting the Scripture from various dimensions and considering God's mission as concerned with all aspects of human life. As Tumsa articulates in the 1972 document, God's mission, in which all churches are invited to participate, is holistic in nature in that it encompasses all dimensions of life. The significance of adopting a holistic approach

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(holistic theology) is that it provides us with a profound foundation to critically engage all forms of complacency and silence of such congregations. It provides us with the tools to stand alongside persons struggling to break free from multifaceted oppression. More importantly, the concept of holistic ministry in the EECMY is mainly focused on people's development (both spiritual and physical), not just on material or economic development.

As Tumsa contends,

[The problem among Ethiopian Evangelicals is that] the Gospel was not understood as the Good News for the whole man, and salvation was given a narrow individualistic interpretation, which was foreign to [Africans] understanding of the God-Man relationship. God is concerned about the whole man, and this concern is demonstrated in the Gospel. [Therefore], the imbalance created by some Missionary [and Pentecostals] attitude has been harmful to the Church in its consequences.⁵⁵

Conclusion

The majority in Ethiopia live under conditions of economic deprivation. Hundreds of millions live in utter poverty and experience inhuman conditions. This economic condition also affects members of Evangelical churches. Evangelical churches, however, are being challenged by non-holistic approaches to mission, which minimizes their contribution to changing the lives of the community they serve. As I tried to argue in this article, Tumsa's holistic theology can serve as both a critique and foundation for further development of theology and practice in African context.

The interplay between theology and development is not new to Ethiopian churches, as the African worldview is also dominated by a holistic view of life. The problem, however, is that in Ethiopian Christian studies the issue of the contribution of Christian faith to development has been ignored for so long and there is a long way to go to introduce this subject in Ethiopian Christian and academic traditions.

Endnotes

¹ "Strategic Plan Presented to the Eecmy General Assembly," (Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, 2013); Johnny Bakke, *Christian Ministry: Patterns and Functions within the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1987).

² See <http://egst.edu.et/workshop-on-redefining-development-from-faith-perspective-conducted/#more-1559>, accessed 2/13/17. According to Misgana Mathewos, "one of the major hurdles that exacerbate such dichotomy in Ethiopia is the policies of the successive governments that do not recognize religious/theological education on the basis of separation of state and religion in the past four decades and the churches' unqualified reception of those policies."

³ These missionaries were Peter Heyling from Germany (1607–1652), missionaries sent by the Church Mission Society such as Gobat from Switzerland and Christian Kugler, Johann Ludwing Krapf, and Karl William Isenberg from Germany and several missionaries from the German Hermannsburg Mission. For detail, see Gustav Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia: Origins of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus* (Stockholm: EFS Förlaget, 1978); Tibebe Eshete, *The Evangelical Movement in Ethiopia: Resistance and Resilience* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009); Debela Birri, *Divine Plan Unfolding: The Story of Ethiopian Evangelical Church Bethel* (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2014); Fakadu Gurmessa, *Evangelical Faith Movement in Ethiopia: Origins and Establishment of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus*, ed. Ezekiel Gebissa (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2009).

⁴ Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia*, 30.

⁵ Gurmessa, *Evangelical Faith Movement*, 128–129.

⁶ Eric Virgin, *The Abyssinia I Knew* (London: Macmillan, 1936), 109.

⁷ Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia*, 163.

⁸ Richard Pankhurst, “The Role of Foreigners in Nineteenth Century Ethiopia Prior to the Rise of Menelik,” (Boston: Boston University Papers on Africa, 1966), 164.

⁹ Viveca Halldin Norberg, *Swedes in Haile Selassie's Ethiopia, 1924–1952: A Study in Early Development Co-Operation* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1977), 105.

¹⁰ Gustav Arén, *Envoys of the Gospel in Ethiopia: In the Steps of the Evangelical Pioneers, 1898–1936* (Stockholm: EFS Förlaget, 1999), 62–63.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Gustav Arén, “Onesimos Nesib: His Life and Career,” *EECMY Information Release*, 1981, 8; Øyvind Eide, *Revolution & Religion in Ethiopia: The Growth & Persecution of the Mekane Yesus Church, 1974–85* (Oxford: J. Currey, 2000), 51.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Andrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood, Religion, and Nationalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 12; Willie Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 209.

¹⁵ There is a significant number of studies describing how Nesib adopted Oromo patterns of thought in his translation and how that impacted the ministry of the EECMY. See Bakke, *Christian Ministry*, 42, 127–128; Eide, *Revolution and Religion in Ethiopia*, 74–76; Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia*, 396.

¹⁶ Eide, *Revolution and Religion in Ethiopia*, 51.

¹⁷ Staffan Grenstedt, *Ambaricho and Shonkolla: From Local Independent Church to the Evangelical Mainstream in Ethiopia, the Origins of the Mekane Yesus Church in Kambata Hadiya* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2000), 79ff.

¹⁸ Selassie Haile and Edward Ullendorff, *My Life and Ethiopia's Progress, 1892–1937: The Autobiography of Emperor Haile Sellassie I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 69.

¹⁹ Øyvind Eide, “Political Dynamics in the Wake of Missionary Efforts within the Realm of Human Rights: The Case of Ethiopia,” *Swedish Missiological Themes* 89, no. 4 (2001): 473–474.

²⁰ Gudina Tumsa, *Witness and Discipleship: Leadership of the Church in Multi-Ethnic Ethiopia in a Time of Revolution*, vol. 1 (Hamburg: WDL, 2008), 62.

²¹ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2011), 26.

²² *Ibid.*, 27.

²³ This is also a well-established fact in African mission history. See Robert Addo-Fenning, “Christian Mission and Nation-Building in Ghana: An Historical Evaluation,” in *Uniquely*

African? African Christian Identity from Cultural and Historical Perspectives, ed. James Cox and Gerrie ter Haar (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2003), 193–212.

²⁴ Tumsa, *Witness and Discipleship*, 83.

²⁵ Megersa Guta, “A Reflection Paper on the 1972 Eecmy Letter: ‘On the Interrelation between Proclamation of the Gospel and Human Development,’” in *Serving the Whole Person: The Practice and Understanding of Diakonia with the Lutheran Communion*, ed. Kjell Nordstokke (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2009), 183.

²⁶ For a detail history of Pentecostalism in Ethiopia, see Hausteijn Jörg, *Writing Religious History: The Historiography of Ethiopian Pentecostalism. Studien Zur Aussereuropaischen Christentumsgeschichte*. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 2011).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 2–7, 138–151.

²⁸ Social concern, according to Olana, refers to social actions such as “politics, and social and economic developments.” Gemechu Olana, “An Empowering and Reconciling Presence: Public Ministry in the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, a Brief Historical Perspective Review with Some Prospective Remarks,” in *Emerging Theological Praxis: Journal of Gudina Tumsa Theological Forum*, ed. Saamul Yonas Deressa (Minneapolis Lutheran University Press, 2012), 65.

²⁹ Quoted in Emanuele Fantini, “Transgression and Acquiescence: The Moral Conflict of Pentecostals in Their Relationship with the Ethiopian State,” *PentecoStudies* 12, no. 2 (2013): 214. According to Eide, the Pentecostals were also accused of being “dangerous for the nation” because they adopted a pacifist position. See Eide, *Revolution and Religion in Ethiopia*, 62.

³⁰ According to Rich Hansen, the dualistic worldview among evangelical Christians in Ethiopia is caused by the Ethiopian Orthodox tradition, Protestant missionaries, and the ideology of the socialist government (1974–1991). See Rich Hansen, “Transforming the Dualistic Worldview of Ethiopian Evangelical Chrstians,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 39, no. 2 (2015). Though the argument of Hansen may have some merits, other studies indicate that the dualistic worldview adopted by many evangelical believers is the result of Pentecostal movements in Ethiopia. See Olana, “An Empowering and Reconciling Presence.”; Tumsa, *Witness and Discipleship*; Eide, *Revolution and Religion in Ethiopia*; Bakke, *Christian Ministry*.

³¹ Tumsa was the former general secretary of the EECMY (1966–1979) who was murdered in 1979 by a communist military junta that ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991. When he was named general secretary of the EECMY in 1966, the church leaders faced multiple challenges relating to establishing the EECMY as a national evangelical church. Before his death, Tumsa wrote papers of global significance while leading an exemplary life. Many scholars have called him the Dietrich Bonhoeffer of Africa. See Øyvind Eide, “Gudina Tumsa: The Voice of an Ethiopian Prophet,” *Svensk MissionsTidskrift* 89, no. 3 (2001); Paul E. Hoffman, “Gudina Tumsa’s Ecclesiology: His Understanding and Vision of the Church,” in *Church and Society* (Hamburg: WDL Publishers, 2010); Samuel Yonas Deressa, ed. *Emerging Theological Praxis: Journal of Gudina Tumsa Theological Forum* (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2012).

³² Tumsa, *Witness and Discipleship*, 85ff.

³³ *Ibid.*, 89.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Bakke, *Christian Ministry*, 230.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Tumsa, *Witness and Discipleship*, 115–116.

⁴² Ibid., 82.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 112.

⁴⁵ Tumsa, *Witness and Discipleship*.121.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 122.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 135.

⁴⁸ John Dillenberger, ed. *On Secular Authority* Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings (New York: Doubleday 1961), 368. As F. Pieper reiterates, God’s “right hand” is the church “which is truly the kingdom of Christ.” For him, “the Kingdom of Grace is synonymous with the church of God on earth.” See F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. II (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), 385.

⁴⁹ For more details, see Robert Preus, ed. *The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance* (St. Louis, Missouri: Luther Academy, 1990), 174ff.

⁵⁰ Ronald J. Sider, Philip N. Olson, and Heidi Rolland Unruh, *Churches That Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 17.

⁵¹ For more reading on this particular aspect of the ministry of the church, refer to David Lyon Bartlett, *Ministry in the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 134ff.

⁵² Tumsa, *Witness and Discipleship*.

⁵³ Ibid., 88.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

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