

Factors Affecting Lutheran Church Planting in Lake Victoria Islands: A Case Study of Ukerewe District in Mwanza Region Between 1972 and 2022

Stephen Ling'hwa John

He holds a Master of Arts in Mission from Africa International University, Kenya, and a Bachelor of Divinity from Tumaini University Makumira, Tanzania.

Email: stephanojohn01@yahoo.com

Abstract

In the past, church planting efforts by the Lutheran church in the Ukerewe islands of Lake Victoria have been unsuccessful. Out of the 38 islands that comprise the Ukerewe District, the Lutheran Church has managed to plant a few churches on only two islands from 1981–2000. The study examined the church planting challenges and strategies by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) of East of Lake Victoria Diocese (ELVD) in the Mwanza region from 1972 to 2022. The study examines the church vision and mission analysis, cultural anthropology for the Christian mission, church planting strategies, models of evangelism, and discipleship. It suggests ways the Lutheran church can be effective in this mission field.

Keywords: Church Planting, Missions, Lutheran Church, Lake Victoria Islands, Tanzania

Introduction

This study aims to determine the factors affecting church planting in the Ukerewe District of Lake Victoria in the Mwanza region from 1972 to 2022. Three objectives guided the study. First, to establish why the Lutheran Church has not succeeded in planting churches in Ukerewe District between 1972 and 2022. Second, to discover the challenges hindering the Lutheran church planting process in Ukerewe District. Third, to determine strategies for further planting Lutheran churches in Ukerewe District. Hopefully, the findings of this study will inspire the Lutheran Church in the Mwanza region to plant churches both on the mainland and on the islands of Lake Victoria by overcoming the existing challenges. The



study also potentially informs the decision-making of churches and missionaries interested in planting churches on the islands.

When planting churches, key questions should be asked, for instance, Who lives here? What are their values, goals, and needs in life? What barriers do we have to overcome to share the gospel with them? What kind of church meeting is going to resonate warmly with these people? Is one approach enough in this community, or are multiple approaches required due to the different sub-groups within the community? If we choose a specific cultural group, who are they? What are the language and culture like? Who can reach them most effectively? (Niebauer 2016, 41) argues that the answer to the above questions significantly determines church planting effectiveness. In the following section, we shall consider factors that affect church planting, such as social, political, and economic.

Factors Affecting Church Planting

Social Factors and Climatic

According to Apeh (1989, 2), social factors are critical in church planting; they include the message, the messenger, the method, and the receptor. Apeh argues that to succeed in church planting, missionaries must understand the context of the society and the gospel message. They need to contextualise as God Himself did through the Holy Spirit on Pentecost when the Christian church was born (Acts 2), where people from different languages heard others speaking in their language, declaring God’s mighty works (Acts 2:5–12). It demonstrates that language is an essential bridge to reaching others with the Word of God.

The Roman Catholic missionaries first came to the Ukerewe islands in 1895. They first focused on understanding the Kerewe culture and language and gaining the favour of the local leadership before starting to evangelise (Kangwa 2019, 30–44). These strategies helped them contextualise the message to the local people. Although we can contextualise to be part of the community through learning their language and engaging in different cultural issues, Rhyno (2014, 96) warns that we should avoid syncretism in doing missions by allowing the uncompromised Word of God to confront each people group and the authority of the Bible to remain above all. According to Rhyno (2014, 96), “contextualisation is not implied compromise of the gospel message or the authority of God’s Word, rather, it is simply communicating it in a way that will be understandable in a local language and cultural



worldview.” Also, regarding cultural context and communication, Christians must understand that we live in a multicultural and fast-changing world. Thus, communicators should use simple language to bring attention to everyone by using new ways to reach them. A clear understanding of the context is fundamental. Rhyno (2014, 100–101) claims that church planters must understand that “some church planting models are more effective in rural than an urban setting. Some work better among the upper class than the lower class. Some encourage better results among those living in more permanent settings than the nomadic.” Therefore, when planting churches on islands, missionaries must be careful to employ more appropriate church planting models.

Missionaries must consider geographical and climatic factors in the larger Lake Victoria islands. Globally, it has been observed that many islands, like Papua New Guinea in Australia, face natural hazards such as hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, landslides, and tsunamis (FAO 2008, 32; Klöck (2019, 204). Lake Victoria has been categorised as one of the most dangerous waterways in the world (CNN Report, 2013; EAC, 2011). It is argued that 4,000–5,000 people die yearly on Lake Victoria due to navigation accidents, as Kiwanuka (2019,1–5). Kiwanuka (2019, 5–6) noted that ‘in May 1996, a passenger ferry, the MV Bukoba capsized while on its way from Bukoba to Mwanza in Tanzania, killing about 800 people. Also, on 21 April 2006, the MV Nyamageni capsized and went under the water’s surface, resulting in 28 deaths; in Uganda, on 22 July 2010, a passenger boat loosed 50 people. Again, on 20 September 2018, the ferry MV. Nyerere, which was making travels from Bugolola Ukerewe to Bwisya Ukara, capsized in shallow water at the tiny port of Ukara island on Lake Victoria with the loss of 228 lives (Cooksey 2019,1-3).

The Lake Victoria islands have challenging weather due to the strong winds. Ssebugwawo (2005,42) describes the weather condition,

The waters of Lake Victoria are set into motion by energy exchange processes across its surface. Winds blowing over the surface can set near surface waters into motion and cause horizontal circulation (currents), as well as generate wave-related confusion that can mix waters more deeply into the depths of the lake. Where rivers enter, both horizontal transport and vertical mixing can be set in motion by the momentum and physical characteristics of the entering rivers. The Kagera River is exceptional in the dominance of open lake processes affecting the behavior and mixing of its clouds as it enters into the lake directly. Most of the other rivers entering Lake Victoria enter behind islands or into protected gulfs



and embayment's where the hydrodynamics of river mixing are governed by local coastal process and the dynamics of the bays.

Due to the weather patterns in this area, missionaries should understand the three phases of wind in Lake Victoria (Ssebuggwawo 2005,42–43). During the first phase, between September and December, the gradual warming of the water column is weak and almost total mixing occurs in December and January at some stations. While phase two is the development of a deep (40m) thermocline from February to May, and phase three is the total vertical mixing that occurs from July to August. The three phases are less developed on the western side of the lake. While the eastern part of the lake is much more influenced by persistent thermal stratification, vertical mixing is mainly by seasonal temperature-dependent density currents (Ssebuggwawo 2005, 42).

Political Factors

As Ming (2020, 10) noted, “politics is not only about state institutions, namely the legislature, the executive and the judiciary, but real politics is a complex process involving the attitude of citizens, interests, organisational groups, general election activities lobbying, formulation, application, and interpretation constitution, this is what is called as a ‘political system.’” The unity of the church and state has been categorised into five models: the church power ecclesiocracy; the unity of the church with the state, which gives the state power over the church (Erastianism). In other words, the church and the state work together to serve the community. However, the church tends to focus on religious rituals that deny things of a secular nature, as Jesus Christ argued (Ming 2020, 11). According to Calvin, church and state are two circles whose centre is Jesus Christ as their source. Although Martin Luther treats the two kingdoms separately, there is also a point of contact between the two, as God works with two hands to serve the community. Hence, the church and the state have the same responsibility, namely, the welfare of the people (Ming 2020, 12).

Early Roman Catholic missionaries who planted churches recognised the local leadership and government representatives by developing a working relationship before presenting the gospel. This happened when the Roman Catholic Church in Mwanza region was under the White Fathers' organisation in 1873 (Kangwa 2019, 6). In Uganda in 1879, the early missionaries first reported to Kabaka Mutesa, who allowed them to build their station near his state house. Although they later fled from Uganda to Kageye, Tanganyika, in 1883



due to persecution and proceeded to Bukumbi (Kangwa 2019, 6–11). From Bukumbi, they started other mission stations on Lake Victoria islands like Kagunguli Ukerewe 1895, Kome Buchosa 1900, and Murutunguru Ukerewe 1909. They could navigate through these regions using fishermen's canoes and later using public boats (Kangwa (2019, 30–34). However, in 1895, due to hostility from the natives of the Ukerewe Islands, they moved the mission station to Kagunguli (Kangwa (2019, 33). The early Roman Catholic missionaries in Buhata, the western part of Lake Victoria, sought to establish a mission station but did not succeed despite establishing a good relationship with the existing political powers. The successes and failures of these Roman Catholics in the Ukerewe islands can provide lessons for missionaries seeking to move to these areas.

Economic Factors

Financial challenge is one of the factors cited as hindering church planting. However, Game (2020, 77) differs from this view and argues that the problem is not economic status but economic mindset. He argues that material prosperity or poverty in church planting is not the main reason for African churches but a mindset. According to him, the economic mindset problem developed over a long period of time in the African Church, leading to the perception that cross-border mission is the responsibility of the Western church. However, God needs His Church around the world to go out to evangelise and make discipleship for all nations (Matt 28: 18–20). Game (2020, 78). When Jesus Christ sent the Apostles for the mission, they were poorer than today's African Church.

Game argues that the economic mindset challenge has been overcome in other contexts. For instance, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus International Mission Society (EECMY-IMS), between 2007 and 2017, managed to send hundreds of missionaries with the support of economically poor Ethiopians. Similarly, Kangwa (2019, 34) observes that when the Roman Catholics reached the Ukerewe Islands and stationed a mission station at Kagunguli in 1895, they worked hard with the local people by using local materials like soil and grass to build their houses and the church. They utilised the land to plant coffee and cotton at Murutunguru in the year 1906, which would bring them income for the mission work (Kangwa (2019, 40–41).



Theoretical Literature Review

The theoretical literature review intends to give theoretical background on church planting. It surveys various church planting models, such as the Traditional Model, the Launch Big Model, the Missional Incarnational Model, the Organic House Church Model (Cell Church Model), and the Multi-Site/ Satellite Model.

1. Traditional Model

Even though different models of church planting have been used in the Islands of Lake Victoria in the Mwanza region, the Bible alone remains the foundation of the mission (Weldy 2007, 5). Jack Redford advocated a practical church planting model for all local churches to plant additional local churches in the United States of America (Weldy (2007, 5-6). He argued that it is a biblical and necessary function for all congregations to engage in church planting to obey the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20).

In this model, churches multiply daughter churches through a sequential nine steps. These nine steps are: first, select a church mission committee that will be committed to preparing the task of the church planting under the mother church or sponsoring churches. Not only that but also launching the new mission, making follow-up about the needs and problems of the new congregations as it grows. The second work of the committee is to select areas for new work by considering a location for church planting, needs, growth, potential, population data, and more. Third, to prepare the sponsoring churches, who will be able to carry the cost of educating, training, and sponsoring needs to the specific congregation as needed. Fourth, to cultivate the mission field by identifying two things which are community needs and interests, which will help them to do missions. Fifth, to have mission fellowship by gathering together the people into a small group as core workers, who will participate in evangelism to convert new Christians and help them develop into effective serving as Christians. Sixth, the mission chapels to be under the mother or sponsoring church to initiate worship service as their congregation. By ensuring spiritual leadership is appointed among the congregates after being matured as the Bible suggests (1 Tim 5:22). Seventh, during the early stage, the mother or sponsoring churches are responsible for determining financial needs, studying the resources available, and managing the money as a medium of financial decisions, at the same time planning for the future and sovereignty. Eighth, to provide facilities for church building according to the communities by contextualising. But what is needed is to be aware of not



building the church compared to their shrines. Ninth, establishing the new church will be the last step of church planting after ensuring the new church attained spiritual maturing and actual stability to self-government (Weldy (2007, 5-6). Even Apeh (1989,14) supports this model by saying that; the traditional model normally helps the young church to grow under the mother church until will be able to mature to reproduce. This model will help to gauge the progress of church planting in the case of the Lutheran church ELVD. By considering these nine steps, the church will identify which stage it failed and which it succeeded.

2. The Launch Big Model

The second model of church planting is where church planters usually begin with a core/ launch team under staff members responsible for organising it (Stetzer 2016, 1-6). Their team may take 30-60 or more people who make the team, sent by the mother church somewhere to plant a church (Stetzer, 2016, 7). According to Stetzer (2016, 8), before going to plant a church, they start practising a 'soft launch' by cooperating with gatherings or large Bible studies in an attempt to build their launch team. Also, Stetzer (2016, 9) argues that weeks or months before reaching the targeted place for church planting, they send out a few members to make a survey or pre-preparation for the group that will participate in church planting according to their budget. Although in reality, to decrease running costs, all members are responsible for volunteering by playing different parts of hard work during launch day Stetzer (2016, 9). According to Stetzer (2016, 9), this model originates from the book of Acts 2, as many scholars agreed that the church of Jerusalem was a Launch Large Church planting model with a launch of over 3,000 people and kept growing.

Stetzer (2016, 9-10) mentions that many scholars agree with this model as the best for witnessing many people in a short time compared to other models. Even though in a contextual element within an event-based culture using door-to-door evangelism, conferences, and seminars. Due to cultural changes in society, this model is losing popularity compared to two past decades (Stetzer 2016, 9). However, the downsides of this model include requiring high-end funding for rental, equipment, staff, community events, and marketing tools. These can be very costly. This model needs more people to participate, more campaigns, time, and money to make others participate too (Burke 2020, 137-138). It normally begins with a greater number of people joining the church. But finally, end up with few people who will remain in the church as active members.



3. Missional Incarnational Model

Due to what God did to humanity through His only Son (John 3:16), all churches should be missional, and believers should represent Jesus Christ in incarnational ways. The main element of missional incarnational church plants is to desire to incarnate in the community as Jesus Christ did (John 1:14; Acts 2:47). It seeks to build a bridge to the community by engaging in a holistic mission as a blessing to the city or the community in which they are planted.

Through the incarnation, God became human to be with us, meet us right where we are, and identify with our needs (Thurston (2020,1). Thus, missionaries must stay within the community to be active with those around them as God did through His only Son (John 1:1–14). In this model, the church, through organisation and discipleship and structured church governance, focuses on missional ministry done in incarnational ways (Stetzer 2016, 11–13).

Missional incarnational church planting is relational and authentic, with an internal and external community orientation (Stetzer (2016,12-13). Embracing a holistic mission through love helps them to build a good relationship with the community and, at the same time, focus on remaining biblical as Paul did in his missions (1 Cor 9:20).

4. The Organic House Church Model (Cell Church Model)

The first-century Christians met in houses as a starting point for church planting in different places (Acts 2:46–47; 5:42). In the New Testament, the term church refers to the gathering or assembling of believers and is never used to describe the building until the third century (Carry (2008, 35). In addition, Jesus spent much of His ministry in homes. The infant church gathered in the upper room to pray, worship, study, and break bread. Peter did the same in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10) (Carry 2008, 36).

The strength of this model includes focusing on the simple elements of discipleship by engaging believers in leadership and service at a higher rate than other models. While its weakness is limiting singing to be excellent, teaching and preaching to be proficient, and the children/youth programs to be safe, secure, and engaging. Also, some organic churches have no elements that can make many Christians who can constitute a church (Stetzer, 2016, 15–17). Stetzer (2016,15) remarks that in this model, “they just do life, which is good, but they don’t do church, which is more than just being in the community. Doing church, as practised



by those first-century organic churches, included things like covenant community, biblical teaching, baptism, and more.”

5. The Multi-Site / Satellite Model

This is the way of planting churches without considering campuses or the location of the campus. In other words, they are a multi-site church that plants separate churches. Although, “some churches are part of a denomination that network together for the same purposes as that of a church planting network to fulfil the Great Commission” (Floyd 2010, 3). Christians or church planters must ask themselves, “What’s Christ’s Church supposed to be doing, and who are we trying to reach?” (Floyd 2010, 5). The answers to the questions undoubtedly are the Great Commission and lost people. This model allows local churches to saturate their community with God-honoring congregations and to reach out locally, nationally, and internationally. It grows the home church through multi-site and then sends out for Church planting’ (Floyd 2010, 6-7).

Regarding the main elements of the Multi-site / Satellite model, Stetzer (2016, 16) states that the main campus has a better resource, and most church plants are connected to the main or mother campus through a shared mission, vision, structure, strategy, and budget. According to Stetzer (2016, 16), the Satellite campuses may have many, if not all, of the features of the main campus, hence the motto, “One Church in multiple locations.”

Why implement a Multi-site / Satellite Model? Stetzer (2016, 16-17) claims that many churches and practitioners utilise the multi-site / Satellite model by insisting that duplicating a campus is less expensive than planting a sovereign church. However, Stetzer (2016,17-18) believes that church plants would be doing much better if churches were as involved and committed with their church plants as they are with their campuses. Second, churches may use this model to extend their reach (mission and vision) into a geographical area. Third, it has been observed that the days of building a large worship centre that can house all attendees in a single service have ended due to different changes in society.

The connection of the new satellite church to the well-resourced, organised, structural, and professional main campus strengthens the campus’s foundation. It becomes an incubator for developing new and young leaders (Stetzer 2016,18-20). On the negative side, building a model by depending on personal focus and interests is very dangerous to lead or pastoring for



all the campuses (Stetzer 2016, 19). When the person is gone, the campus suffers. This model appeals to the consumeristic and entertainment-driven culture.

Empirical Literature Review

The empirical literature review focused on giving the empirical application of the justified approaches to various places in the world to validate their applicability.

Church Vision Analysis

Having a vision for the future is an essential barometer of church health and vitality because this brings together all levels of the church to be aware and committed to their idea of vision without one person to capture and own it. In this way, vision gives a clear sense of direction and facilitates decision-making and resource allocation instead of giving priority to other things as (Cronshaw 2014,1–2). Cleveland (2014,25–26) states, “Many times we fail, not because we’re afraid, nor because of peer pressure, nor because of anything other than the fact that we lose sight of the goal.” This relates to Proverbs 29:18, “Where there is no vision, the people perish. Vision for ministry reflects what God wants to accomplish through his church to build His kingdom and impact the world (Cleveland 2014, 26).

Why is Vision Important in Church Planting?

Vision is specific, detailed, customised, distinctive, and unique to a given church. It allows a leader to say no to some opportunities, provides direction, empowers people for service and facilitates productivity Barna (1992,1–2). Greys (2007, 1–5) describes a vision as a descriptive picture of the future of that congregation. It should answer the question, “What would it look like here if we were fulfilling our mission?” By defining the future, the congregation can form plans and priorities to support that future. Without this vision, the congregation cannot choose between many positive opportunities, which could weaken their impact and limit their success.

Leaders’ Roles in the Vision of the Church Planting

In North America, most churches are experiencing minimal growth or decline due to a lack of clear vision, purpose, and direction to unite and motivate the congregation (Nicholas (2007, 20–22). According to Nicholas, pastors are responsible for having a vision that will share with



their congregates what to do for the glory of God, as business people do to share a vision with their core workers to build a team.

According to Nicholas (2007,22-24), church leaders need faith-based hope, which will help them desire to achieve some great by facing challenges in church planting. He states, “A clear vision will give people hope for better ways and better times in the most difficult circumstances.” When congregants have a clear vision will stand together with their leaders to support it without fearing any challenges. Jesus Christ shared His vision with His disciples to proclaim his word and make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19-20). Thus church leaders are responsible for seeking, determining, and articulating visions for the glory of God.

The Biblical Foundation of Mission in Church Planting

Jesus’ charge to bring the message of salvation to the ends of the world was realised in the early Church (Fagbamigbe 2020,1-10). Arthur (2009,3) argues that from the beginning of the age of the Triune God participated fully in His mission to the world through created Adam and Eve (Gen 1:27-31, 2:18-25). When they failed (Gen 3:1-22), God sent His only son to the earth as a missionary to redeem them through His sacrifices at the cross (John 3:16, 1:1-14, Phil 2:5-11). Also, God empowered the presence of the Holy Spirit in His church for those who come to know Jesus Christ as their Saviour (Acts 1:8, John 1:12). God welcomes them to become co-missionaries with Him in His mission Arthur (2009, 3-14).

The church is not a building but a people. In the New Testament, Ekklesia refers to a gathering of people, a new community. When people become followers of Christ, later they become members of His church, and their commitment to the church is indistinguishable from their commitment to Him (Matt 16:15-18; 22:36-40; 25:31-46; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 12:12-27; Gal 6:10; 1 John 3:14; 4:19-20) (Colson 1992: 64-65; Menn (2017, 2). The church is universal, local, invisible, and visible (Menn (2017, 26, 30). Its universal through Jesus Christ, who owns the church as head over all things to the Church (Matt 16:18, Eph 3:10). Also, the church is local and is found in specific geographical places (Acts 9:31). At the same time, is invisible for his universal members to enrol in heaven (Heb 12:23), and the Lord knows them who are His (2 Tim 2:19, Luke 13:24-30). The visible church is the church on earth.



According to the research by Walls (2018,4), there is much confusion over the function of the church mission. There is debate over whether it is simply to preach the gospel and convert people, change the culture by advocating for social justice or merely obey all of the Lord's commands. Walls (2018, 4–6) suggests that the church exists to deal with expanding the border of God's special dwelling by witnessing the external world of darkness, nurturing God's people as they mature, and doing all the ultimate and supreme goals of God's glory. While Cherpeski (2021, 1–3) states that the mission of the church is “to proclaim the gospel, perfect the saints, redeem the dead and serve the poor and needy.”

The five marks of the mission of the church, as first developed by the Anglican Consultative Council in 1984, are to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom, to teach, to baptise and nurture believers, to respond to human needs by loving services, to transform the unjust structure of society by challenging the violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation and to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth (Farnworth (2019,1). The church is part of the *Missio Dei*, but the mission of the church cannot simply be identified with God's mission (Engelsvilcen (2003, 487; Van Aarde (2016, 290). The church and the mission of the church are tools of God, instruments through which God carries out His mission” (Engelsviken 2003, 482).

The Roles of the Local Church in Church Planting

Among the roles of the local church in church planting is to fulfil the Great Commission by raising, training, sending, and supporting missionaries working in mission areas. The local churches are responsible for supporting mission works around the world in the capacity they have been given by God (Lee 2019, 1–6). Keller (2002,168–169) argues that all Christians are responsible for participating in church planting without any accusations to be true to the Great Commission.

According to the Great Commission, all Christians are called to spread Good News. Therefore, the church is responsible for appointing and training Christians and sending them to make disciples of all nations as Jesus commanded His church. In training, Lee (2019, 2) claims that the local church can train church planters through long and short terms like workshops, seminars, colleges, universities, and even under informal education, as Apostle Paul did to his core workers like Titus and Timothy. Lee rightly argues that the church that



does not spread the gospel grows stagnant (Lee 2019, 2). He contends that local churches must consider if they have received such wonderful Good News about salvation through God's Grace, how could they keep it for themselves? He further recommends that the local church cultivate a good atmosphere to help others understand God's love for the global church to those who have not heard the Word of God (Lee 2019, 4). The Antioch church did this by sending Barnabas and Paul as Missionaries to other countries to fulfil God's mission (Acts 13:13). After sending missionaries, local churches should support missionaries financially, emotionally, and spiritually. If the local church is unstable financially, they can spiritually support missionaries through prayers and constant encouragement as the first church did in Jerusalem (2 Thess 3:1–5). Similarly, the Macedonia church supported financial missionaries and the Jerusalem church that was facing financial difficulties (2 Cor 8:1–15). Therefore, the local church must understand that missions is a partnership between the local church and the missionaries (Lee 2019, 4).

The Roles of Church Leadership in Church Plantings

The leadership of the diocese where church planting takes place is significant in supporting, directing, and allocating resources to targeted areas of missions to archives the organisation's purpose as God commanded. Dadswell (2013, 30–39) argued, "The Bishop is seen as the leader in mission in his diocese, the focus of unity, and the key broker of new initiatives consulting widely but with authority to dominate local opposition when he sees fit." The diocese leaders have crucial roles in church planting by identifying quality leaders and churches capable of planting new congregations and organising a team that will work together in church planting. The leadership must also share a vision of church planting with all core workers from the beginning to have one team focusing on accomplishing the same vision (Dadswell 2013, 40).

The church has a role in reaching the unreached people. Church planting is the only way to make God keep His church alive in the world (Seni 2018,1–3). As the Church of God, we must remember that God calls us to do His mission in our area and even beyond through church planting, intending to save His people. The Lutheran Church in Mwanza region should embrace this mandate by planting churches in Ukerewe Islands and beyond.



Church Planting Models/ Strategies on the Islands

Right from 1972 to 2022, the Lutheran Church in the Mwanza region focused on planting Lutheran Church in places where Lutheran members stayed or have moved to (Ling’hwa 2005, 6–18, Maanga 2012, 269–270, Makala 2006, 39 and Chovenye 2020, 17–30). Hence Lutheran Church needs to use different models in church planting to reach unreached people in the Ukerewe District and other places instead of focusing on only one model.

A model is a preliminary representation of something serving as a plan (strategy) from which the final, the usually larger objective, is to be constructed Niebauer (2016, 23). It can also refer to the type of church. Stetzer defines models as “constructions and symbols of reality-they are guides, but not exact representations of what we do” Stetzer (2016, 1). Further, models help church planters to label and give images to certain practices; they are God-given guides to assist us in our church planting endeavours. When choosing a model, we should select one that will fit the cultural environment depending on the place (Stetzer (2016, 1). The church planting model must reflect the community of people it is planted in by understanding that it is culturally specific and uniquely shaped by the people and the context. At the same time, we must realise that no single model is the answer for global church planting (Conner 2012, 3).

Discussions

As mentioned earlier, the study aims to establish factors affecting church planting in the Lake Victoria Islands of the Mwanza region from 1972 to 2022. The study investigated why the Lutheran Church is not making initiatives to plant churches in the Ukerewe District. In addition, to find out the challenges that hinder the Lutheran church planting process in Ukerewe District and to determine strategies for further Church planting of Lutheran Churches in Ukerewe District. To succeed in church planting in Ukerewe District, Lutheran Church must use different strategies to reach unreached people in the Ukerewe islands. Instead of focusing on planting Lutheran Churches in places with Lutheran members only, as has been the trend since 1972 in the Mwanza region, a change of strategy is desirable.

First, the Lutheran Church organisation needs to have a map for church planting on Lake Victoria, which will identify thirty-eight (38) islands found in Ukerewe District and plan how to reach it as the Roman Catholic did Kangwa (2019,10–11). Fifteen islands (15) are



permanent settlements, while twenty-three (23) are temporary settlements for fishermen. The church can consider planting churches in the permanent settlements and sending evangelists and missionaries who will live among the people to be in the daily life of the community. In the temporary settlement section, the church can arrange a schedule to reach them with a “moving church,” which can combine different activities like; small open-air meetings, distributing Christian brochures, Christian films, Bible, and offering medical services to those in need. Moreover, the church should also consider monitoring and evaluating the initiatives (Powell 1998,106-110).

The Lutheran Church should identify the needs and cultural hindrances of the local people. Mutungi (2013,34-36) and Ng’weshemi (2019,22-23) identified that witchcraft activities are too high in the Ukerewe District, which leads to the killing of people with albinism, especially by the fishermen who have a belief that if anyone kills, albinos can become rich by getting more fish and earning much money. These are cultural strongholds that the church needs to address in these areas. Further, other factors of the target population need to be considered. For example, fishermen working on these Islands often stay away from their families for weeks. These situations have led to many engaging in immoral life, hence the prevalence of HIV and AIDS.

Figure 1: Church Planting Process

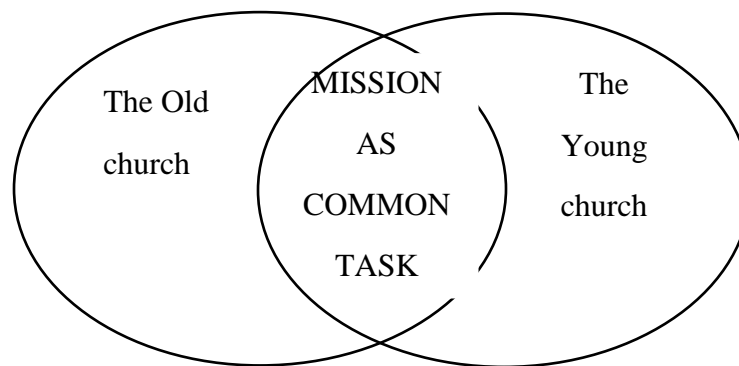


Figure 1 shows the process of church planting. The Young Church results from mission tasks as a common task organised by the old church (Apeh 1989,14).

Through the adaptation method, the bishop, as head of the diocese, may organise a team for church planting in Ukerewe District under the assistance of other church leaders by



involving partners within and outside of the diocese. This team will monitor and evaluate to ensure parishes taking care of allocated islands actively participate in their responsibilities (Powell 1998, 106–109). The Mother Church will be responsible for paying school fees and pocket money for their evangelists, who can go to islands after graduating from Bible School. The church should also pay salaries as they are doing to those working in their parishes to remove differences between those working in islands and other places. The bishop will also allocate resources from partners to the specific congregation according to their needs. Responsibilities for an old church in their area will be to work together with the missionaries as one team to disciple them until they become self-supporting and self-propagating.

Third, like the pioneer Roman Catholic mission work, the Lutheran Church should use local opportunities for economic sustainability. For example, surrounding Ukerewe District, the ELCT- ELVD can introduce a chain of medical facilities to offer treatments alongside the gospel. They could also consider starting a college to offer health care courses and use Nyakato Lutheran Bible College to offer basic theological education for pastors and church leaders. These initiatives can help in church planting efforts. Fourth, the church can consider having a radio and TV to extend its pulpit reach to those living in Ukerewe District and beyond. Fifth, short mission trips can be organised to the islands while considering Lake Victoria's weather patterns.

Conclusion

The paper has discussed factors affecting Lutheran church planting in Lake Victoria Islands between 1972 and 2022. Ukerewe District is a combination of thirty-eight (38) islands located in the Mwanza region. In the past, the Lutheran Church has not managed to plant churches on most of these islands due to several factors. The study examined church planting models and explored ways in which the Lutheran Church can successfully plant churches on these islands.



References

- Apeh, J. E. (1989). *Social Structure and Church Planting*. Shippensburg, PA.
- Arthur, Eddie. (2009). *Missio DEI: The Mission of God*. Accessed 23/07/2022 Kouya.net /upload/missionofgod.pdf
- Bhandari, Pritha (2020). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. Accessed 31/07/2021. Com/methodology/qualitative-research.
- _____ (2021). *Ethical Considerations in Research Types and Examples*. Accessed 29/04/2022.
- Burke, A. (2020). *Developing a Church Planting Growth Strategy for Growing Metropolitan Communities in the United States*. (Doctoral dissertation, Southeastern University).
- Cherpeski, Larissa. (2021). Faith matter: LDS church serves a four-fold Mission Chovenye, Edwin Maliondo. *Kufika na Kuenea kwa Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania (Mkoa wa Shinyanga na Mwanza)*. Mwanza, Tanzania.
- Cleveland. (2014). *Vision – 2020 Strategic Plan*. Pdf- COGOP.org
- Conner, D. (2012). *Church Planting Models*.
- Cooksey, Brian. (2019). ‘That Sinking Feeling 2.0: Who is to Blame for Tanzanian’s Ferry Disasters?’ *The Elephant*. Accessed 24/08/2022 researchgate.net
- Corry, D. J. (2008). *Organic Ministry: Early Church Practices of Mentoring and Mission, Diss.*
- Cronshaw, D. et al. (2014). “Churches with a Vision for the Future: A Profile of the Baptist Union of Victoria.” *Australian e-Journal of Theology*, 21(1).
- Dadswell, Ripon (2013). *Church Growth Research Project: Church Planting*, Oxford Center for Ecclesiology and Practical Theology Ripon Colleges, Cuddesdon.
- Fagbamigbe, Margaret. (2020). *Book Review of Biblical Foundation for Mission 2: African Development*, Dominican Institute.
- Farnworth, Roger. (2019). *Mission: The 5 marks of mission*. Accessed 26/07/2022 rogerfarnworth.com/2019/08/28 the-5-marks-of-mission.
- Fleming, Jenny. (2018). *Special Issue: Work-Integrated Learning Research Methodologies and Methods*. Accessed 4/08/2021 files.eric.ed.gov
- Floyd, N. (2010). *A Multi-plantation Ministry: Blending a Multi-site and Church Planting Strategy in the Local Church*. Liberty University.
- Game, W. M. (2020). *The Role of the African Church in the 21st-Century Global Mission: A Case Study of the EECMY Global Mission Venture and Economic Mindset*.
- Greys, John (2007). *The pastor’s Role in Vision-Based Leadership*. Accessed 18/07/2022 jacl.andrews.edu
- Kangwa, Padre Francis. (2019). Roman Catholic, Jimbo Kuu la Katoliki Mwanza: *Historia ya Ujio wa Imani ya Kanisa Katoliki*.
- Kiwanuka-Tondo, J., Semazzi, F., and Pettiway, K. (2019). “Climate Risk Communication of Navigation Safety and Climate Conditions over Lake Victoria Basin: Exploring Perceptions and Knowledge of Indigenous Communities.” *Cogent Social Sciences*, 5(1), 1588485.
- Klöck, C., & Fink, M. (2019). *Dealing with Climate Change on Small Islands: Toward Effective and Sustainable Adaptation*. Universität Verlag Göttingen.
- Lee, Alyssia. (2019). *Just Disciple: Roles of the Local Church in Missions* (Biblical Examples) Accessed 28/07/2022 justdisciple.com



- Maanga, G.S. (2012). *Church growth in Tanzania: The Role of Chagga Migrants with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania*. Cpibuchbucher.de GmbH Birkach, Germany.
- Macintyre, John A. (2013). *Ministry and Mission: Church Planting Research and Strategy Recommendations*. Sydney: 168 Chalmers St Survey Hills. Accessed 28/01/2022 <http://mmpcns.org.au>
- Makala, Joseph Emanuel. (2006). *Church Planting Strategies for the Sukuma*. Makumira, Tanzania.
- Menn, J. M., & Africa, E. C. L. E. (2017). *The Church: Its Nature, Mission, and Purpose*.
- Ming, D. (2020). *The Relation Between Church and Politic*. *Didaskalia*, 3(1).
- Nicholas, T. (2007). *The Pasto's Role in Vision-Based Leadership*. Accessed 20/07/2022 <https://www.andrews.edu>
- Niebauer, M. (2016). "Virtue Ethics and Church Planting: A Critical Assessment and Reevaluation of Church Planting Utilising Alasdair MacIntyre's After Virtue." *Missiology*, 44(3), 311-323.
- Powell, D. B. (1998). *A Strategy for Church Planting in the Central Region of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada*.
- Rhyno, J. K. (2014). *Viable Long-term Church Planting Situations in the Maritime Provinces of Atlantic Canada: An Analysis of Common Characteristics*, Diss.
- Seni, Daniel J. 2018,1-3. *Church Planting and Evangelism: Master for Church Planting*. Accessed 30/07/2022 academia.edu
- Sharma, Hemant Lata and Sarkar Chiranjit. (2019). *Ethnography Research: An Overview*. Accessed 31/07/2021 researchgate.net
- Ssebuggwawo, V., Kitamirike, et al. (2005). *Hydraulic/Hydrodynamic Conditions of Lake Victoria*.
- Stetzer, E. (2016). *Finding the Right Church Plant Model: An Introduction to Church Models (Part 1)*. *The Exchange*.
- Van Aarde, T. (2016). "The Relation between God's Mission and the Mission of the Church in Ephesians." *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Mission Studies*, 44(3), 284-300.
- Walls, Taylor 2018,4-6. *The Three-fold Mission of the Church*. Grace Bible Institute. Accessed 26/07/2022 academic.edu

