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## Lutheran churches in Africa (30A)

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Item Type	Book chapter
Authors	Lugazia, Faith Kokubelwa
Publisher	Regnum Books International
Rights	With permission of the license/copyright holder
Download date	2026-07-11 15:55:48
Link to Item	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/166284">http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/166284</a>

## **(30A) LUTHERAN CHURCHES IN AFRICA**

### **Faith Kokubelwa Lugazia**

#### **Introduction**

Lutheran churches in Africa, as elsewhere in the world, owe their theological and ecclesiastical tradition to the sixteenth-century reformer Martin Luther (1483-1546). Those convinced by Luther's view on doctrinal teachings of the church of reformation later became the Lutheran church family.

This article will provide a brief history of Lutheranism in African Christianity,<sup>1</sup> an introduction into major theological profiles and marks of the Lutheran Church in Africa and the special ways in which Lutheran churches contribute to social witness, development and *diakonia* in the African continent. While it is not possible in this paper to give data on work done by every Lutheran church in Africa, some actual examples of work done in different Lutheran churches on the continent will be referred to. We are beginning by clarifying some crucial terms.

#### **Lutheranism**

Historically, the term 'Lutheran' originally was used as a belittling term in polemics against Luther by John Maier von Eck during the Leipzig debate in July 1519.<sup>2</sup> Since Eck followed traditional Roman Catholic teachings, and Luther formulated his teachings against the prevailing medieval Roman Catholic positions, it followed that all who identified with the theology of Martin Luther, were later labelled as 'Lutherans'. Lutherans believe that human beings are saved by grace through faith and this grace is obtained by being in Christ. Lutheran churches practise the two sacraments of Baptism (Matt. 28:18-20) and Holy Communion (Matt. 26:29-29) and also insist that faith, doctrines, confessions and the order of worship are built on the foundations as rooted in the living word of God.

#### **Confessions**

The Lutheran Reformation has produced confessions, which are writings by the reformers which articulate the core biblical teachings in which the beliefs of Lutheran Christians find their expression. Carl Braaten would add that 'The true intent of the Lutheran confessional heritage is to settle for nothing less than a theonomous vision of a church with an evangelical heart beating in a Catholic body'.<sup>3</sup> These Confessional Writings are documented in the Book of Concord.

#### **Social Witness**

In the context of this paper the term 'social witness' is referring to the participation of the church in society in different activities aiming at transforming and improving the living conditions of people.

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<sup>1</sup> African Context in this work is confined with African Lutheranism found in the south of the Sahara.

<sup>2</sup> Jack E. Linquist, Lutheranism" in *An Introductory Dictionary of Theology and Religious Studies*, eds. Espin, Orlando O. and Nickoloff, James B (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press), 792.

<sup>3</sup> Carl E. Braaten, *Principles of Lutheran Theology*. 2nd. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 37.

### Development

Development is a complex term. The meaning of the term is changing according to time and context depending on the needs of the community. After World War II, the term ‘development’ often was used as synonymous with economic ‘growth’ and was closely associated with expectations concerning political freedom, new technology and the role of science.<sup>4</sup> Towards the end of the twentieth century when much of the world was suffering from poverty, environmental destruction and social disintegration, the term came to be defined as:

... a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations.<sup>5</sup>

In the African context, the term ‘development’ often is used to point to the use of resources available in a given place to uplift and equip communities to deal with social and economic problems of their time. Understanding development in the African context is always related to the concerns for human dignity as far as production and consumption habits, human relations and social compassion are concerned.<sup>6</sup> The term ‘development’ can be summarized in African perspectives as a process of empowering people through and with resources available for the positive transformation of their lives and communities.

### Diakonia

For Luther, *diakonia* is the ministry of caring for the body, a work which requires men to distribute material goods<sup>7</sup> and to assist with the uplifting of the poor.<sup>8</sup> Today in Lutheran understanding, ‘Diakonia is the embodiment, through human actions, of God’s love for the world’.<sup>9</sup> The practical implications are thus described: ‘Diakonia is a call to action, as a response to challenges of human suffering, injustice and care for creation.’<sup>10</sup> The LWF global consultation on ‘The Diaconal ministries of the Lutheran Churches’ which met in Sao Leopoldo, Brazil, 2nd-7th November 2005, defined *diakonia* as:

... the core component of the essence of the church and its mission in the world. Diaconal ministry is the manifestation of diakonia in the life of the church in which every Christian is called to participate through baptism in daily life as an expression of the priesthood of all believers.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Richard, D.N. Dickinson. “Development” in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, eds. Nicholas Lossky, José Miguez Bonino, et al. 2nd. edition (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2002) 298-303.

<sup>5</sup> David C. Korten, *Getting to the 21st Century. Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*. (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1990), 97.

<sup>6</sup> Molefe, Tsele. “Current Issues in Africa.” *Africa Moving Towards the Eighth Assembly, Harare*, ed. John S. Pobee (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998), 15-20.

<sup>7</sup> *Luther’s Works*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald Vol.28 (St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973), 693

<sup>8</sup> Oswald., *Luther’s Work*, 694.

<sup>9</sup> Ishmael, Noko, “Foreword” in *Diakonia in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment. A Lutheran Contribution to the Understanding and Practice of Diakonia*. Ed. Kjell Nordstokke (Geneva: LWF Publications, 2009). 5.

<sup>10</sup> Kjell Nordstokke “Introduction” in *Diakonia in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment. A Lutheran Contribution to the Understanding and Practice of Diakonia*. Ed. Kjell Nordstokke (Geneva: LWF Publications, 2009), 8.

<sup>11</sup> “The Diaconal Ministry in the Lutheran Churches” in *Diaconal Ministry in the Mission of the Church*, ed. Reinhard Boettcher (Geneva: LWF Document, 2006), 82.

This paper explains *diakonia* as the work of the church and her members in responding to God's love by serving others in words and deeds.

We now turn to some general perspectives on the history of Lutheran churches in Africa:

### History of Lutheranism in Africa

Lutheranism was introduced in Africa in the nineteenth century by different missions from Europe, the USA, Africa and other parts of the globe.<sup>12</sup>

The United Lutheran Church of America started to work in Liberia in 1860.<sup>13</sup> Lutherans of German background from both the Lutheran Mission Hermannsburg and the Neukirchen Mission started their mission in Kenya in the late 1880s.<sup>14</sup> Lutherans also came to today's Tanzania in 1886 from Germany under the umbrella of the Evangelical Mission Society for East Africa (German: *Evangelische Missionsgesellschaft für Deutsch-Ostafrika*, also known as 'Berlin III' or the Bethel Mission).<sup>15</sup> North Westerners from Tanzania became Lutherans only after the Church of Sweden and the Danish Mission Society started their mission activities, while others were more influenced by the Berliner Mission. While the Leipziger Mission in Tanzania was Lutheran (from Saxony) the Bethel Mission was shaped by Prussian tradition, which was united according to the Prussian Union and therefore not purely Lutheran.<sup>16</sup> Lutheran brethren arrived in Cameroon in 1918 to help the Paris Mission in the development of their work. They were joined in 1920 by the Brethren Church Mission from the USA.<sup>17</sup>

In the late twentieth century, Lutheranism was also introduced into the continent through African initiatives. For example, several other African Lutheran churches (like Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Lutheran churches in Uganda, Congo, Malawi, Rwanda and Burundi) were born through initiatives of missionary outreach originating from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT).<sup>18</sup>

While analyzing how Lutheranism came into function in the north-western part of Tanzania, Josiah Kibira said, 'We have become Lutheran by grace. It was not by literal spoon-feeding by foreigners but through the revelation and help of the Holy Spirit and by the study of the part of local Christians.'<sup>19</sup> Kibira's analysis can be supported as the contextualized versions of Lutheranism show equal input from both indigenous African as well as from western sources and factors, being embedded with both western and African cultures. There is a great variety of forms of Lutheranism in Africa, and there are different emphases in the interpretation of the doctrine of justification by faith or structures of leadership within Lutheran churches in Africa, which therefore are not always in complete conformity with the original

<sup>12</sup> Faith K. Lugazia, "The Relevance of 'Smalcaldian Articles' in Tanzanian Context: A Lutheran View", an unpublished paper presented at the Smalcaldian Conference, Germany, 23rd June 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Jonathan Hildebrandt, *History of the Church in Africa: A Survey* (Achimota: African Christian Press, 1981), 110.

<sup>14</sup> W.B. Anderson, *The Church in East Africa 1840-1974* (Dodoma: Central Tanganyika Press, 1977), 62.

<sup>15</sup> S. Von Sicard, *The Lutheran Church of the Coast, Tanzania 1887-191*, (Lund: Lund Printing Press, 1970), 55; Cf. Wilson Niwagila, *From the Catacomb to a Self-Governing Church: A Case Study of the African Initiative and the Participation of the Foreign Missions in the Mission History of the North-Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania 1890-1965*, 2nd ed. (Hamburg: Verlag der Lottbek, 1991), 98; Also Carl-Eric Sahlberg, *From Krapf to Rugambwa: A Church History of Tanzania* (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1986), 59. Carl-Eric Sahlberg differs with Von Sicard and Niwagila on the arrival of Berlin 111, for him these missionaries arrived in 1887.

<sup>16</sup> Comment given by Dr. Fidon Mwombeki (9th January, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Hildebrandt, *History of the Church*, 211.

<sup>18</sup> *Full Gospel: History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania 1963-2013*. eds. Godson S. Maanga, Wilson Niwagila et al (Moshi: Moshi Lutheran Printing Press, 2013), 133-141.

<sup>19</sup> Josiah M. Kibira, "Has Luther Reached Africa: The Testimony of a Confused Lutheran," In *African Theological Journal* 12, No. 1 (1983): 6-15.

teachings of Martin Luther – just as history and context have also transformed Lutheran teachings in certain contexts.<sup>20</sup>

Lutheran Christianity planted in Africa is therefore not a direct mirror or re-run of the theological positions, debates and arguments of the sixteenth century Reformation, but was moulded by different African cultures and a process of reinterpretation which took place as an integral part of the missionary spread of the gospel as expressed in the Lutheran tradition.

### **Major Theological Profiles and Marks of the Lutheran Churches in Africa**

Certainly, the insistence on the Word of God being preached rightly and the two sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion being administered correctly are still common elements underlining the key features of Lutheran churches in Africa.

The teaching on justification by faith through grace has always been a major concern close to the heart of Lutheran confessional identity. These marks of the Lutheran churches are expressed in key chapters of the Lutheran Confessional Writings,<sup>21</sup> are found in the Book of Concord, and are always interpreted together with ancient creeds of the Christian faith. Lutheran confessional writings have always understood themselves as pointing to the central message of the scriptures as a whole, not changing anything important in apostolic teachings, but renewing a clear focus on the core of the gospel as understood in relation to the Reformation principles of *sola fide, sola gratia, sola scriptura, solus Christus*.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Contribution of Lutheran Churches to Social Witness, Development and Diakonia**

The Lutheran churches in Africa, like other churches in Africa, are in a transition period concerning a clear understanding of their relevant contribution to society as there is a constant process of ‘self-criticism, self-motivation and self-contextualizing’.<sup>23</sup> In the process, there are also critical voices arguing that Lutheran churches have not yet fully attended to their call as still there is much poverty, bad leadership, corruption, hunger, disease, and a high rate of illiteracy. Others affirm the positive nature of the realized social contribution of Lutheran churches in Africa, as many of them are embarking on ‘bringing good news to the poor, proclaiming the release of the captives, recovering the sight of the blind, letting the oppressed go free, and proclaiming the year of the Lord’ (Luke 4:18-20). The positive voices are represented, for instance, by Martin Shao when he said, ‘There are so many concrete success stories of churches working with their people to overcome poverty and other challenges.’<sup>24</sup>

Probably both perspectives and voices are correct, depending on which context you are looking at. There are contexts which are marked by intense suffering, HIV/AIDS, Ebola, starvation, poverty, ethnic wars, corruption and violence, but also, even in the midst of all this, many positive examples can be found

<sup>20</sup> Martin, Luther, “The Augsburg Confession Article VII: The Church” in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Lutheran church*, eds. Theodore Tappert, Jaroslav Pelikan, et al (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 32.

<sup>21</sup> For the sake of clarity, these confessions will be elaborated briefly in this paper.

<sup>22</sup> David G. Tuemper, “The Lutheran Confessional Writings and the Future of the Lutheran Theology” in *The Gift of Grace: The Future of the Lutheran Theology*, eds. Niels Henrik Gregersen, Bo Holmetal. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005). 131-144.

<sup>23</sup> Stan Nussbaum, “Africa Independent Churches and a Call of r New Three-Self Formula for Mission” in *Freedom and Independence*, ed. S. Nussbaum. Nairobi, OAIC, 1994), 1-8.

<sup>24</sup> Martin, Shao, “A Response to Zephaniah Kameeta” in “*So the Poor Have Hope, and Injustice Shuts its Mouth*” *Poverty and Mission of the Church in Africa*, eds. Karen Bloomquist and Musa Panti Filibus, Geneva: LWF Document, 2007), 71-72.

in which African people feel and appreciate the social contribution of the church, and particularly of the Lutheran church in social witness and service. Fidon Mwombeki has argued that:

The Church (and the cross) in Africa has, from its genesis, had as part of its mission the alleviation of suffering and human pain wherever it is found. The church takes the lead in feeding the hungry, healing the sick, raising the downtrodden, fighting for the weak, and so on.<sup>25</sup>

On a similar line of thought, the LWF scholar Kenneth Mtata has argued that there was a unique contribution of Lutheran churches in education and health services and that the education provided by the church through missionaries helped not only the spread of general literacy but also gave Africans critical tools with which to challenge colonialism.<sup>26</sup> Paul John Isaak has shown how the Lutheran Church in Africa, in collaboration with other religious institutions, has fought against unjust political oppression, arguing that ‘we marched against the evils of apartheid, sexism and colonialism’.<sup>27</sup> Tenagne Negusse, Elieshi Mungure, and Sarojini Nadar, to mention but a few, have documented Lutheran churches in Africa playing a significant role in upholding African cultural values where they were contributing to positive aspects of human dignity and challenging African cultural practices where they were oppressive, especially for women. They have stated that, ‘now as society is changing, women are on the administrative committees of the synods and also more women on executive committees’.<sup>28</sup> According to Sarojini Nadar, ‘critical interpretation of the Bible leads to transformation because... access of the word of God to the believer in the Lutheran tradition helped women to re-read and reinterpret the scriptures and discover its potential for transforming traditional practices and taboos’.<sup>29</sup> Thus it is becoming clear that Lutheran churches in Africa are still in a process of actualizing their critical potential, their motivation and their contextualization call; they are in a process of continued reformation.

### Participation of Lutheran Churches for Social Witness and Diakonia

The Lutheran churches in Africa in their prophetic role of comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable have been advocating for the rights of Africans wherever they have been deprived by powers and principalities of this world. For example, Lutheran churches in Africa with the collaboration of other churches in Africa have spoken out to remove oppressive powers in their countries in periods of racist governments or military rule. A Namibian bishop has affirmed in looking back at the history of his own country:

We have won the political struggle for independence and democracy and the church can proudly say that it has kept the light of hope for justice, peace and liberation throughout difficult times... Despite great suffering, we did so, and won.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Fidon, Mwombeki, “The Theology of the Cross: Does it Make Sense to Africans” in *The Gift of Grace: The Future of the Lutheran Theology*, eds. Niels Henrik Gregersen, Bo Holm, et al (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 101-114.

<sup>26</sup> Kenneth, Mtata. “Religion and Development: Friends or Foes?” in *Religion: Help or Hindrance to Development?*, ed. Kenneth Mtata (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2013), 23-35.

<sup>27</sup> Paul, John Isaak, “The Church’s Prophetic Witness: Social, Economic, and Political Engagement” in *Theological Practices that Matter*, ed. Karin L Bloomquist (Minnesota: Lutheran University Press, 2009), 143-152.

<sup>28</sup> Tenagne, Negusse, “The on Going Discussion” in “*Our Journey in Faith*” *Lutheran Women in Africa Speak* compiler. Musimbi, R.A. Kanyoro (Geneva: LWF Document, 1991), 6-10.

<sup>29</sup> Elieshi, Mungure, “Narratives of Sexuality and Hope: An African Woman Perspective” in *Theological Practices that Matter*, ed. Karin L Bloomquist (Minnesota: Lutheran University Press, 2009), 71-78.

<sup>30</sup> Kameeta, “The Church and Poverty”, 65-70.

Bishop Kameeta's voice highlights the social role Lutheran churches have played in witness and *diakonia* in different fields. The role is also enabled by deliberate efforts to make lay people participate in church leadership and decision-making: An example can be cited from ELCT in Tanzania, where 'the active layman is becoming more and more a reality... the politician taking full part in the church and in the Synodical Council; the prisons commander as the churchwarden'.<sup>31</sup> The Executive Council of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, which is the high decision-making body, has 52 voting members, out of which 24 are lay.<sup>32</sup> Research, educational programmes and advocacy on human rights have been constant concerns in the social witness of the church. In relation to poverty reduction, a specific action plan from Lutheran churches was the 'Arusha Action Plan', which is an outcome of the consultation strategy for confronting poverty.<sup>33</sup> The Lutheran Church in Namibia has implemented the fight against poverty by:

... having started a training for lay people to do research on the living conditions in the first growing informal settlements, in towns and villages, developed a social security manual for information on how to access support from the government. And a Bishop's Office Development Committee (BODC) was installed whose task is to find ways to ensure the future financial sustainability of the church.<sup>34</sup>

With regard to political issues, Lutheran churches together with other churches in Africa have been in the front line to fight against the apartheid system in South Africa. Also one could refer to the protest of Lutheran churches against the repressive communist government in Ethiopia, especially by the outspoken Lutheran general secretary of the Mekane Yesus Church, the Rev. Gudina Tumsa who, when asked to escape, renounced, saying:

Here is my Church and my Congregation. How can I, as a Church leader, leave my flock at this moment of trial? I have again and again pleaded with my pastors to stay on... quoting 2 Corinthians 5:15: 'Christ died for all – that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. Never ever will I escape.'<sup>35</sup>

It will always be remembered that Tumsa's advocacy later led him into death and he became one of the martyrs of African Christianity.

In several countries, Lutheran churches have launched educational programmes on human rights and responsibilities emphasizing the need of church members to participate in programmes for the transformation of society. This included educative seminars and workshops on election rights especially for the countries which adopted multi-party systems. One of the key intentions of Lutheran churches has been to create an awareness among Christians of their rights in elections and also the need for full participation in electoral processes.

### **Participation of Lutheran Churches in Diaconical Ministry**

In the past, *diakonia* was often performed as charity for health and healing through medical services, prayers, pastoral care and counselling. Today, following the renewal of a more broad-based understanding of participation of the church in the *Missio Dei*, Lutheran churches in Africa have expanded diaconical

<sup>31</sup> Josiah M. Kibira, *Church, Clan and the World*. (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1974), 71.

<sup>32</sup> Information obtained from the 2015 Calendar of the ELCT, entitled: *Kalenda 2015: Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania*. (Mtwara: Ndanda Mission Press, 2014), 13-15.

<sup>33</sup> "Confronting Poverty and injustice in Africa: A Message from the LWF Consultation on Poverty and the Mission of the Church in Africa. Arusha, Tanzania. 4-8 September, 2008".

<sup>34</sup> Kameeta, "The Church and Poverty...", 65-70.

<sup>35</sup> Gudina Tumsa: [www.dacb.org/stories/ethiopia/gudina\\_tumsa.html](http://www.dacb.org/stories/ethiopia/gudina_tumsa.html).

ministries to include actions of solidarity and justice. Not only have hospitals, clinics and centres for people with disabilities, orphans and old people have been founded and constructed by Lutheran churches, but also advocacy and prophetic public voices on issues of justice and solidarity with the disadvantaged have become a regular phenomenon in several churches. Lutheran churches have medical schools and nursing schools for preparing those going to serve in the community in many countries. Concerning the deadly epidemic of Ebola, the Lutheran Church in Liberia, in collaboration with other churches and the government of Liberia, and under the umbrella 'ACT Alliance' (Action of Churches Together), has been going out to every hospital and health centre around the country to distribute Ebola preventives and medical supplies. According to the Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Liberia, 'This act had been part of efforts to demonstrate the love and care of God to his people'.<sup>36</sup>

Lutheran churches also have pioneered to work against HIV/AIDS through different programmes of counselling to both the infected and affected, delivering material services, fighting for the rights of HIV/AIDS orphans, widows and widowers through the work of their human rights desks. Nowadays educational programmes on HIV/AIDS issues are offered in almost all colleges and universities of Lutheran churches.

### **Participation of Lutheran Churches in Development**

One key to understand the participation of Lutheran churches in Africa for social and economic development is the whole area of education. Many informal and formal education programmes have explored different tools and methodologies for economic development in Africa. Local Lutheran parishes, for instance, often provide educational seminars on how to start and sustain small local development projects and skills training. SACCOS (Savings And Credit Co-operative) is a network in which people are taught to save money collectively, to get loans and return loans accordingly. Several churches have also opened banks with the aim of empowering people by getting capital and being enabled to run economic businesses and create jobs.<sup>37</sup> The Lutheran churches in Tanzania in 2005 opened a commercial bank, the objective of which is to reduce poverty through loans to individuals and small business initiatives. During the first year of operation, 35 savings and credit co-operative societies were established under the banks' outreach programme.<sup>38</sup> Improved approaches to sustainable agriculture with modern technologies have also resulted as part of the impact of this project.

The basis of all participation in development work in Lutheran churches is education; therefore Lutheran churches are marked by a sustained commitment for formal education, ranging from pre-primary, vocational, secondary schools, and colleges to universities. It is important to note that the vocational schools and universities of different faculties prepare people of different religions and ideologies to serve the church and community, not only Lutheran church members.<sup>39</sup>

Theological institutions like Tumaini University Makumira or educational institutions of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, together with the Bible schools in almost all 54 Lutheran churches in Africa have produced thousands of native pastors and evangelists who nowadays communicate the gospel in ways appropriate to their cultural traditions thereby leading to more indigenization of Lutheran churches in Africa.

<sup>36</sup> Jensen Seyenkulo, "Ebola Not God's Punishment", eds. Revina Judah and Bridget Milton, "Umoja Newsletter", 1 issue 3 (2014).

<sup>37</sup> Dawson Maanga, "The Role of the Church in Development" in *Society and Church in African Christianity*, ed. Benjamin Simon, (Erlangen: Erlanger Reihe Für Mission und Ökumene, 2006), 98-132.

<sup>38</sup> Shao, "A Response", 71-72.

<sup>39</sup> "First objective of the University", *Tumaini University Makumira Main Campus: Prospectus 2012-2015*.

One important tool for more indigenization of Christianity and the promotion of the social witness of Lutheran Christians is a special programme devoted to the creation of 'cell fellowships', where Small Christian Communities (SCC) emerge<sup>40</sup> which contribute to localizing Lutheran theology. Small Christian base groups like this read the Bible together and interpret it in a way which fits their questions of life and context. They also share their concerns related to living together in the local church or local community and thereby develop a new sense of sharing social responsibilities as one family.

### Conclusion

It can therefore be affirmed that Lutheran churches have contributed significantly to the development of the continent in Africa. While there are convincing examples that Lutheran churches have become something like the 'garden of Eden' on the continent, there are also examples and contexts in which the opposite holds true. Lutheran churches, even amongst themselves and within in their own midst, are still facing challenges of being divided into rich and poor, and are struggling with bad leadership, with corruption and the violation of basic human rights.<sup>41</sup> Church members therefore still need more education and training on the 'ownership' of their church, and on participation in social witness, *diakonia* and prophetic public theology. The contextualization of the Lutheran tradition to be relevant and correspond with the African context is therefore an ongoing and an unfinished process. Lutheran churches in Africa are no exception to the principle of *Ecclesia semper reformanda*, which takes shape in continued efforts for self-criticism, self-motivation and self-contextualization.

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<sup>40</sup> SCC is an initiative started by the Association of Member Episcopal Conference of Eastern Africa (AMECEA) as a solution for the participation of local church in the life and work of mission and evangelization. Cf. AMECEA Bishops, "Guidelines for the Catholic Church in Eastern Africa in the 1980s" in *African Ecclesiastical Review* 16 no.1, 2 (1974); 9-10.

<sup>41</sup> *Tackling Poverty, Food Insecurity and Hunger: Guidelines and Tools for Participatory Poverty Studies by Churches in Africa. Poverty and mission of the church in Africa*, ed. Elieshi Ayo Mungure (Moshi: Moshi Lutheran Printing Press, 2013), v.

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