

The influence of the missionary legacy on the practice of discipleship in the Anglican Church of Uganda

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Abstract

At this stage in African mission history, one would assume that African churches would have thriving Christian education programmes that are disciplining people and growing the church deeply. However, this is not necessarily the case, as this article will reveal through an explanatory study that explores the disconnect between ideas of discipleship and practices of discipleship, impacted by Revival movements. How African church leaders define discipleship and execute it in churches is an important task for the growth of the church. The value of the study is in its decolonial examination of Christian education to stress the need for the inculturation of the African worldview towards meaningful discipleship practice.

Keywords: Discipleship, Christian Education, Missionary Legacy, Uganda, Inculturation, Anglican, Church of Uganda,

1. Introduction

This article reflects on an empirical study about the praxis of discipleship in the Anglican Church of Uganda (CoU), influenced by its colonial history and missionary influence. The legacy of the missionaries has continued to influence how Christianity, particularly Anglicanism, is expressed in Uganda. This is seen in many ways: through the liturgy and the hymnody brought from the Church of England, and even through insisting that worship be done through the singing of hymns and not through the familiar drumming or dancing. The emphasis on individual faith fractured the bonds within the family, clan, and tribe with regard to Christian culture, and even now, the church is struggling to reclaim this. Currently, in the Anglican CoU, evangelism is still the hallmark and priority of the church; the church's motto is "to proclaim the gospel in accordance with Christ's commission to make dis-

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ciples of all nations” (Church of Uganda, 2015b). The number of people ‘saved’ in a service is often publicised, even among the bishops’ press releases regarding their pastoral visits. Though the Great Commission is featured in the Anglican CoU’s motto, discipleship has largely taken a back seat to evangelism in terms of church priorities. Many churches have discipleship programmes, though often they are run through a Western parachurch organisation, such as the Navigators.

The research problem in the study was understanding how discipleship education was understood and lived out within the Anglican church and establishing—through the missionary legacy—whether discipleship was a Western concept or if it was understood from an African perspective. A Western bias would see discipleship as an inner work taught in the church as a programme that follows a strict curriculum. However, the African worldview and experience of faith, spirituality, education, and discipleship are entirely different.

The Western definition of discipleship is understood as sitting at the feet of a master for the purpose of learning to be like the master. For Willard and Johnson, this is the first step in spiritual formation, which they define as the “process of forming the inner world of the human self so that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself” (2006:15). Apprentices, or disciples, must be “immersed in the Trinitarian presence” (Willard & Johnson, 2006:168) or fully experiencing God’s teaching and healing, and being Jesus’ disciple must bring such a change in the disciple’s life that living the Christian life becomes their default setting. For Willard and Johnson (2006), this exemplifies the phrase “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:10) in the Great Commission. This is crucial because discipleship is not a one-time event in a Christian’s life; it is an ongoing process of becoming more and more like Christ in thought, word, and deed.

On the other hand, African understanding of education are based on the African worldview, placing a high value on culture, family, and attachment to the family, clan, and tribe. Obetia (2012:248) noted that the “tools of Christian maturation” are “the vernacular Bibles, the leaders ... and, a living experience of the Lord”. These three things are critical to a contextual and vibrant faith. Unfortunately, the Church of England-associated Church Missionary Society (CMS) that came to Uganda in the 1930s came with the opposite concepts: they brought a Western interpretation of Christianity. They demanded that the African converts conform to their Western culture. Obetia noted that “the Revival movement put personal salvation, testimony and the preaching of the gospel at the heart of Ugandan church life” (2012:259). This is an interesting mix of the Western emphasis on salvation as an individual act and the African emphasis on the communal acts of storytelling and preaching. This imposition of Christianity’s Western understanding and practice rejected the African worldview of community and family above self. This launched a cultural crisis in which people had to decide

whether to continue with their cultural values and the community accountability that was inherent because it maintained the stability of the family and the tribe, or whether to accept the new individualistic culture from the missionaries, which came with the positions of power and influence in the government. The gap created could have been filled by the church, had it been presented as a family and clan with its own culture; however, this was not the case. This missed opportunity would have been a new cultural structure that would have perpetuated the African and simultaneously Christian worldview of caring for others above the self and protecting the values, traditions, and norms of the new cultural community. Yet, for this to have taken place, the Christian values and traditions would have had to be inculturated.

It is still expected that these Western concepts should be propagated in the church today, which points to the ongoing colonialism of the mind. This article reports on the disconnect between understandings and applications in a typical Anglican church sample in Uganda. What is worthwhile to underline here is that how African church leaders define discipleship and execute it in churches is important, as this further impacts on practices in the local church, its growth, and its identity.

2. The Research Project

This practical theology study aimed to understand how leaders in the Anglican CoU, both ordained and lay, view and practice discipleship in order to understand the reasons that have impacted current practices. Hadidian stated that the discipleship process has three phases: “evangelising, edifying, and equipping” (1979:21). In the Anglican CoU, this progression is not evident. Instead, the work done in and outside of the church overwhelmingly focuses on gaining believers and numbers, rather than deepening the spiritual maturity of the Christians. The impact is that the church is sending people to evangelise, yet they are only prepared to carry out the first aspect of the Great Commission, to go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19)—though this is often interpreted as “go and make believers”—and not to carry out the last, “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20). This project aimed to establish the reasons for the disconnect in understandings and practices. It wanted to understand how the practice of discipleship was contextualised for meaningful practice.

2.1 Methodology

The research used an interpretivist paradigm, which allows the researcher “to gain further depth through seeking experiences and perceptions of a particular social context” (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020:39). This study was a qualitative explanatory study, taking into account the historical, cultural, and social understandings of discipleship and its influence on the current day lived experiences of church members.

The theoretical framework of the research was based on Mamo's (2017) model of discipleship and contextualisation. Mamo asserted that the gospel must be contextualised before it can be preached, that "contextualization is about effective communication of the gospel" (2017:149). His model illustrates the interdependency of discipleship, contextualisation and mission, and it notes that at the intersection of these are conversion, rituals, and community. Mamo asserted that "if the church fails to make disciples it means it will also fail to effectively accomplish its mission" (2017:340). He explains that there are three difficulties in the church: the church's production of "converts not disciples", the culture's animosity towards discipleship, and the "overwhelming presence of the world in the church, leading to incomplete mission" (Mamo, 2017:395). Mamo's framework showed that at present, "church leaders notice the issue of discipleship as a key missing link in the mission endeavour of the church" (2017:171).

This study used Branson and Martinex's (2011) practical theological methodology's first three steps to gather information on trends and dynamics in the parish regarding how discipleship is understood and practiced, and to explain the 'why' of actions. Branson and Martinez stated that "spiritual formation is about attending to God, learning about God's activities and character, and participating in God's life and initiatives" (Branson & Martinez, 2011; Chapter 2, Church Formation, para. 3). To execute this qualitative research, interviews and focus groups were deemed suitable to gain people's definitions, views, and perceptions of discipleship. The sample was the Eastern Archdeaconry of Kampala Diocese of the Anglican Church. The study strategically and purposively sampled the Eastern Archdeaconry because it consists of six parishes of various sizes and socio-economic strata. The churches are vibrant and have a programme on nurturing the Christian faith.

The data collection involved interviewing twelve clergy and conducting three focus groups of the lay leaders. The selection of clergy was appropriate since they are the vision setters of the church; however, they also received a Western theological education and hence have Western definitions of evangelism and discipleship. The study aimed to understand whether they had indeed received and internalised this Western definition and whether it was implemented in their churches. They have also inherited the legacy of what the Church Missionary Society (CMS) built in terms of church structure, methods, and education and whether they were continuing to pass this onto their congregations. Lay leaders were also selected as they shared the congregation's experience of being taught by the ordained church leaders and their perceptions of how discipleship should be carried out in the parish. Four leaders of the three Christian education parachurch ministries were also interviewed as they were key stakeholders in serving churches with unique views of discipleship.

The interviews and focus groups were recorded, transcribed, coded and captured using the QDA Miner data analysis software. The data were analysed using

content analysis (Weber, 1990, Chapter 1, para. 1) with 107 codes which were further categorized into nine themes.

3. Research Findings

The prominent themes in the data in the major groups are (1) understanding that discipleship is formed by experience-based learning, the influence of the East African Revival (EAR) that took place in the 1920s and 1930s, the immediate family socialisation and Christian education parachurch ministries; (2) the practice of discipleship are shown in church ministries, the communal nature of discipleship, and the activity focus of ministries; and finally, (3) the last group focused on reasons for the current discipleship practices; that discipleship is not prioritised; that it looks like a programme, and that the focus was never a part of the history of the Anglican CoU passed down by missionaries. These findings are summarised briefly to provide an overview of the study.

3.1 African understandings of discipleship

The study found that the Ugandan understanding of discipleship is formed by experience-based learning and practised learning that conveyed the definition of discipleship to people and not solely on the transmission of knowledge. Learning largely came from what was experienced or seen, versus what was taught, either from the pulpit or in a classroom. This was primarily through the family, both immediate and extended, in discipleship. Most respondents noted an experience of being disciplined in the home, which was noted with great fondness and great impact. Of course, the African understanding of the family is much broader than the nuclear family and includes both extended relatives and the community.

Understandings of discipleship were also from the Revivalists, who have long taught that their way of giving testimonies, running fellowships, and behaving appropriately according to their standards are the only acceptable means of living out one's faith (Bruner, 2013). Ugandans prize interpersonal relationships, and as a hierarchical culture, these instructions of the elders are sacred and must be passed down (Bai, 2016). Another contributor to the Ugandan understanding of discipleship came from parachurch ministries that assist the church with its mission but are not formally part of any given church. These parachurch ministries have their origins in the West (Scripture Union in the United Kingdom; Navigators and LIFE Ministry in the United States). Therefore, their theologies are rooted in Western thought expressed in their theology and pedagogy based on transmission or teaching 'head' knowledge.

3.2 African practice of discipleship

The discipleship practices are seen in various church ministries, in the communal nature of discipleship, and the activity focus of ministries. In this study, clergy respondents

mentioned the difference between personal salvation and the communal nature of the church, noting that when the missionaries came, one of their mistakes was to break this communal aspect of Ugandan society (which would have been a natural setting for discipleship) and impose an individual and personal view of spiritual growth, which, in turn, has caused difficulties. One clergy respondent framed it like this:

“On the one hand, there is a preaching that came to us where salvation is individual. The Lord Jesus Christ is my personal Lord and Saviour. It has gotten its share of criticism in the recent past. So that’s one point where the African communal culture will be broken up. And sometimes we do, not just because of that, but because of a true conversion which has broken the fabric of the communal structure, because the communal structure is held together by certain individuals, and certain ancestral ties, and sometimes we worship. So, a true conversion will mean that someone has to break out of that, and when you are breaking out of that and you find a place which is saying, ‘Take Jesus as your personal Lord and Saviour’, then it’s devaluing the communal culture where you’re coming from, and so you’re there by yourself”. (Participant’s view)

The missionaries enforced a low-context culture for expressions of Christianity on a high-context culture (Bai, 2016), which has resulted in “devaluing the communal culture where you’re coming from” (4:503), as the same respondent said. Uganda is a high-context culture, in which “communication is seen as an art form ... People focus on relationship-building as well as information-exchanging” (Bai, 2016:23). In contrast, the low-context culture missionaries from England would have prized sharing detailed information since “they compartmentalize their personal relationships, their work, and many aspects of day-to-day life” (Hall & Hall, 2001:201). This meant that the missionaries needed, and therefore taught that it was important to communicate detailed information. Yet, that was neither required nor desired by the Ugandans.

What was evident was that the Anglican CoU conflates discipleship with other ministries, particularly evangelism. However, other ministry activities are also conflated with discipleship. These activities are outward-facing and measurable; therefore, they are highly valued because they show value in that the churches are bustling with programmes. Discipleship is seen as an element of various ministries, such as teaching, preaching, and evangelism. It is assumed to be occurring alongside those ministries.

3.3 Making sense of current discipleship practices

The missionaries’ emphasis on evangelism was noble and important, yet the desire to spread the gospel and to get converts resulted in neglecting the importance of

growing and deepening the faith in the converts. Due to the missionaries singling out individuals' faith and emphasising that individual decision, the result is a lack of cultural appropriation, the almost split personality of being an African and Christian. Due to the lack of buy-in, the community was not built up on the Christian faith and values. However, as Bongmba noted, "as an extended family, the church is the clan of Jesus" (2001:141). The family plays a crucial role in modelling the Christian faith—especially parents, as they are the ones to instruct and impart the crucial traditions, cultures, and knowledge to the children. However, the missionaries' separation of the African communal values and the imposition of individual values prevented this new clan from forming. Since the individual was divorced from the community, the community cannot influence and hold individuals to account for their shared Christian values. As Bujo noted, "in the postcolonial era many Africans no longer know their traditions" (1992:68). Bediako observed the same, stating that "missionary activity never amounted to a genuine encounter, and the Christian communities that have resulted have not really known how to relate to their traditional culture in terms other than those of denunciation or of separateness" (1995:69).

The Western education that the missionaries brought resulted in cognitive learning, which focuses on knowledge, but not experiential learning, which involves the entire person: the affect, behaviour, and cognition (Hoover, 1974). Experiential learning is at the centre of the African educational worldview, in which the individual does not exist independently but is a crucial and integral part of the community. Katola notes that in the traditional African education system, "no effort was spared by parents, grandparents and elder siblings during the socialization process to bring up community members who perpetuated the values that helped the community to be integrated" (Katola, 2014:32). More importantly, "the education system was designed to create an ideal individual who would fully fit into and be accepted by society" (Katola, 2014:32), and that this social focus is critical for the society to continue to function smoothly, as everyone has shared knowledge and experience of what is important for the group as a whole. This created a dichotomy for the African Christian, who needed to accept the Western education and medicine, and had to receive the Western education, which focused on self above society. Yet, in the process, lost the connection with the African culture, holistic model of education, and practice of benefiting the community over self. Katola observes that this educational shift "produces a tremendous waste of human talents" (2014:34). The connection to the community and society and focus on its health and survival is severed.

When asked whether discipleship is a priority, the overwhelming answer from all groups was negative. This is to be expected, as discipleship was not the focus

because the emphasis was on evangelism from the start of the missionary engagement. Although, according to clergy responses, discipleship is important, the effort to do this and the emphasis on it is lacking, which indicates that the church is challenged in sustaining the work of discipleship. Clergy also hinted at a lack of training or teaching about discipleship, whether in theological training or in the biblical teaching from the Anglican CoU. It would seem that the CoU is still imitating the model of the Church of England that was established and focused on evangelism and the growth of the church.

4. Discussion

Since Western missionaries came with a great deal of imperialistic baggage, this had implications for the African church and prevented it from digging deep roots in the culture. This implication will show how the Anglican CoU had imbibed Western practices and that the work moving forward should be expanded using a decolonised perspective.

4.1 Impact of mission history on education

When the Church Missionary Society (CMS) came to Uganda, they came not only with evangelistic zeal, but also with an imperialistic zeal to conquer Africa for England. Tuma and Mutibwa (1978) divided the missionaries who came to Uganda into three categories: those who came to explore and thereby expand European knowledge of Africa, those who came to teach the uncultured African natives how to be cultured and launched schools and hospitals to do so, and those who came to conquer the land for their sponsoring governments. The numbers of missionaries in the three groups listed above overlapped somewhat, as missionaries often had mixed motives for coming. Tiberondwa noted that missionaries established “a church to ‘save’ the soul, a school to capture the mind and a dispensary or hospital to heal the body” (1998:38). Those missionaries who made the most considerable impact, culturally and spiritually, were those who worked in the schools and the hospitals (Tiberondwa, 1998). Unfortunately, imperialism also extended to education, with Tiberondwa observing that education is a type of “cultural imperialism” (1998:14). The education system was modelled from what the missionaries knew, which was the British education system. Therefore, the Ugandan students were taught the subjects and topics taught in British schools and generally provided with an education that did them little good, as rote memorisation of British history was not useful, nor was the British emphasis on the individual over the community. Literacy was good and helpful, but they were also subjected to an education and, therefore, a leadership system that was not their own. The ones who were educated were allowed to become leaders in

society, as well as in the Anglican CoU. These divisions created a chasm that has been difficult to close, in that those who have been taught by the British system or have been brought up through the Church are seen as being superior to those who have not because the implication is that things that come from the West must be superior. Throughout history, chiefs have been revered. Making the chiefs the church leaders ensured that Christianity would be accepted within the tribe, though it also ensured that the church leaders were seen as beyond reproach and unapproachable, as the chiefs also were (Nyegenye, 2012). This ensured that the church leaders would not be questioned by the church members, and therefore, the leaders were free to continue to follow the Western norms for worship and worship styles, rather than following cultural styles of worship. This included wearing very heavy and hot robes that were worn in the Church of England, which was not necessarily practical in the hot equatorial climate.

Theological education quickly followed the same lines that had been drawn for general education; only the elite were trained for ministry. This is because those chosen for theological studies had to come from those who had been previously educated, which were those who could afford the education: the highest ranked in society. Therefore, church leaders were from the same lineage as chiefs, which created problems because it was difficult to separate the church leaders from the traditional leaders. The Baganda culture had clearly delineated ranks; positions and titles were very important, and “it is worth noting that the oppressive codes such as inequality, patronage, and patriarchy were embedded in almost every aspect” of life (Nyegenye, 2012:35). In this type of personality cult or worship, one simply does not question leaders, and that was true in the Baganda hierarchy as well. To make matters worse, the missionaries believed that they were greater than the Ugandans, and this attitude carried over into their church leadership (Nyegenye, 2012).

It was these premier leaders, both the missionary and the Ugandan, who launched the East African Revival (EAR) in the 1920s and 1930s (Ward & Wild-Wood, 2010). It is difficult to overstate the importance of the EAR, especially within the church. The vast majority of Christians have either been active in the Revival or have been raised by those who were in the Revival. Originally, the Luganda term *mulokole* or “saved one” was a term of derision for those in the Revival, but it has been adopted as a way to show that one is saved. The *balokole* [saved ones; plural] have long taught that their way of giving testimonies, running fellowships, and behaving appropriately according to their standards are the only acceptable means. This is very apparent among the *balokole*. However, this emphasis on appropriate behaviour can lead to rigidity and legalism. The *balokole* also dictate the conditions under which one is considered to be saved, and those who do not meet these criteria must be evangelised into ‘proper’ salvation.

The EAR continues as a strong and proud tradition of standing for biblical truth, confession, repentance, and 'walking in the light'. Confession and repentance are hallmarks of the EAR, and while these brought revival to the Church, how does one grow after one has repented? To the *balokole*, a prerequisite for being saved was an acceptable testimony, in which the convert spoke frankly of the sins he had committed and given up, now that he was saved (Ward & Wild-Wood, 2010). Joe Church, one of the leaders of the EAR, was so committed to evangelism that he stressed the urgency of "witnessing at once for Christ" (Church, 1981:71) to converts. Yet, he never wrote of how to ensure that converts grow in their faith. The essential ministries were preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and repenting of sin. Nyegenye (2012) also noted that throughout history in Uganda, the *balokole* [saved ones] were very involved in ensuring their children received an education. She noted that some studied theology, and they became bishops as well as priest leaders in the Anglican CoU. In doing this, they ensured that the *balokole* [saved ones] were in the position to influence the direction the church went, as well as how the church leaders were taught. Nyegenye (2012:66) observed that "with the exception of politics, the Revival was represented in all sectors including schools, hospitals and civil service. This is one way the Revival later penetrated the church because it constructed a foundation of highly educated young and faithful people. For them, education and cleanliness were priorities".

The EAR has also played a key role in how Christians view discipleship, which is due to the history of the Anglican CoU and the history of the Revival. Ndyabahika recorded that in the hierarchy in Uganda, "the Bishop of the Anglican Church ranked third after the Governor and the *Kabaka* [king]" (1993:22). Having an association with such a prominent position within the culture and in society was crucial for attaining and maintaining social credit.

Byaruhanga (2018) observed that it was impossible to separate religion and education in Uganda due to the missionaries' intertwining of the two. Byaruhanga noted that the missionaries wanted to convert Ugandans to Christianity to read and understand the Bible first, for their own faith, and second, to become evangelists (Byaruhanga, 2018). Byaruhanga elaborated that "it was the policy of the Church Missionary Society not to baptise anyone who had not learned to read the gospels" (2018:20). The missionaries emphasised that education should be regulated by the church.

4.2 Implications of using Western ideas in an African church

Song rightly noted that "the right pedagogy for discipleship must touch upon all three dimensions of human learning: the cognitive, the affective and the volitional" (2006:261). Song (2006) affirmed that discipleship must be intentional; it cannot

be assumed to be happening as part of conducting programme activities as ministry, which is the case. Clergy stated that they taught the laity to carry out ministry, and they assumed that this was adequate to sustain learning and spiritual growth. Yet transformation cannot occur if the teachings and ministry of the church remain a cognitive exercise; the heart must also be transformed. There is a danger in leaving the liturgy and ministry of the church as empty rituals that have no impact on one's life, yet this is also where the community joins in to move alongside one another and encourage each other as they move together in faith. Pazmiño (2010) asserted that the part of Christian education that did not succeed was "the depth and breadth of the Christian education they experienced ... They lacked attention to the essential dynamic of transformation that would take into account the patterns of formation they experienced" (Pazmiño, 2010:362). Again, experiential education, as seen in the African educational model, is crucial to the success of spiritual formation and Christian education. As Orobator stated, "doing theology is not an isolated enterprise, particularly in Africa where doing theology is a community event" (2008:100). Du Toit elaborated that "African thought is holistic. It was never subjected to Cartesian mind-body dualism" (2006:1260). Du Toit states that "African spirituality is a spirituality of the marketplace, not housed in a church" and that "because African religion never acquired a temple tradition ... it makes no distinction between church and the world, between sacred and profane" (Du Toit, 2006:1260).

The study confirms this, and notes that community is crucial in the ministry of discipleship and that in the African worldview, there is no divide between the holy and the common. Ango explained how essential community is to Africans, quoting Mwiti and Dueck's explanation of its importance by stating that "each individual's survival is linked to the other, with God as the centre of life, with everything else in cosmic relationship to the order that his presence creates" (2008:155). Ministry must be lived out in a relationship, and the African understanding of the lived experience of life and Christianity is that it is done in the community.

The Anglican CoU can, and has, planned well the Decade of Evangelism (Church of Uganda, 2008), the Year of the Child (Nyangoma, 2019), and other focused themes, yet the lack of structures and mission strategies, particularly for discipleship, are crippling the church's ability to carry out the Great Commission. The results of the study confirm this, as the Anglican CoU has yet to elevate discipleship to department status in the Provincial Office, the office which manages and oversees the business and ministries of the Anglican CoU. Though the Church partners with several parachurch organisations that engage in discipleship, there is no guidance or directive to embrace these ministries. While creating a Provincial-level department for discipleship would not necessarily change the Anglican CoU's approach

to discipleship or its relationships with the organisations involved in parachurch ministries, it would be an explicit indicator that the church values discipleship as people look to the leadership of the church for guidance and priorities. It would also provide a direct office to offer the teaching that speaks to culture the most.

As a result of colonialisation, Galgalo's observation still rings true today, "The current state of the church characterized by a lack of vision, quality service, relevant structures, mission strategies and weak theology is a direct fruit of the seeds of the mismanaged transition and poor foundation" (2012:17). Galgalo's observation has been that "Christianity has failed to inspire, reshape or transform African social history and basic identity" (2012:7). The lack of the inculturation of Christianity has caused it not to become a part of the culture, and that means that Christianity, though widely accepted, has not been involved in moulding and shaping the Ugandan worldview.

4.3 Inculturating discipleship

To regain the African traditions, the church needs to be able to move away from the dichotomy of forcing people to choose either Christianity or their culture; there must be a blending of the two (Heaney, 2014). It must be an African Christianity. The age-old challenge for this gap has been the lack of translation of the gospel message into the local culture. Inculturation is the process of assuming or assimilating the behaviours and beliefs of another culture. Bongmba quoted Healey and Sybertz's definition of inculturation "as 'earthing' and 'rooting' the gospel in local cultures and practice" (2001:141). He also observed that this should comprise a meeting of cultures between God, people, and the church (Bongmba, 2001). Stinton defined inculturation as "how the gospel is planted and authentically rooted in a given culture" (2004:114). Many scholars have highlighted the need to ensure that the gospel "honours the culture and the gospel and enrich both" (Groome 2011:154). Bediako, in describing what Mbiti had said about how "the gospel is genuinely at home in Africa and is capable of being apprehended by Africans at the specific level of their religious experience" (1995:118), called this translatability or "the capacity of essential impulses of the Christian religion to be transmitted and assimilated in a different culture so that these impulses create dynamically equivalent responses" (1995:118). The gospel has been received in Africa, and it is time for African scholars to effect translatability for African audiences today. As Stinton observed, inculturation means an "ongoing, dynamic interaction between the Christian faith and culture so that both are mutually enriched" (2004:114).

This translatability can only be accomplished through the process of decolonisation: detaching from Western Christianity and allowing voices from the global South to be heard. Bediako notes that "a truly indigenous church should be a trans-

lating church, reaching continually to the heart of the culture of its context and incarnating the translating Word” (1995:122). This is crucial because, without the assimilation of a culture’s practices and beliefs, the gospel will only be an imposition and will not be absorbed into the culture. Wiredu emphasised the importance of decolonialism: the act of separating from the colonial power and history, noting that “if Africans do not enter these areas of philosophy and make their presence felt in them, they will in perpetuity remain outsiders to the project of understanding and clarifying modes of thought that have played a huge part in the making of the modern world” (2006:299). Smith et al., agreed and noted that postcolonialism “may function as a redemptive hermeneutical tool, especially as it presses evangelical adherents to re/read the Scriptures and rectify theologies” (2014:25).

An example of how to inculturate the gospel is found in the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) and how they develop liturgies, rather than only importing liturgies from the West. The ACK has maintained its link to Anglicanism in the structure of the liturgy and retained the Scripture throughout the liturgy. Yet, it has contextualised the liturgies to reflect African culture, notably by incorporating the ancestors, particularly in the section of the Holy Communion liturgy called the *Sanctus*, which is Latin for holy. Rather than the standard “therefore with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven”, the *Sanctus* in the ACK reads, “therefore with angels, archangels, faithful *ancestors* and all in heaven” (LeMarquand, 2006, The ACK, Appreciation of the African Traditional Context, para. 4). The ancestors are the those who were alive, but are now dead, and now live in “a realm where they enjoy powers beyond the scope of naturalistic comprehension of action” (Cordeiro-Rodrigues & Agada, 2022:6). This inclusion beautifully acknowledges the importance of the ancestors in the African religious life, while noting that it is the faithful ancestors, those who were Christians, who are now part of the great cloud of witnesses in Hebrews 12.

4.4 Renewed African discipleship

The Anglican CoU primarily uses liturgies from the Church of England, which were brought by the missionaries. Over time, these liturgies have been improvised to accommodate local customs somewhat. In the recent past, the Church of Uganda Liturgical Committee ensured that they incorporated cultural rites into the prayer book, such as the Service for Circumcision (Church of Uganda, 2013). However, more cultural adaptations need to be made.

Discipleship needs to be approached in new ways that must be taught via community, such as through the family or by creating new “families” via small groups in the church. Since the first experience of discipleship is in the family, this model must be embraced in the church. Godparents are required for baptism, yet the

model of spiritual parents is generally abandoned after the service. The church would do well to revive the concept, even symbolically, of spiritual parents raising and disciplining believers who are young in their faith to spiritual maturity so they can go and do likewise. An accountability model, similar to the East African Revival, in which these “families” or small groups shared testimonies, could also be useful, though rather than focusing on changes in behaviour, the testimonies could be centred on spiritual disciplines and what people are learning about themselves and God. This would encourage the active practice of and participation in the spiritual disciplines and model discussions about the deep inner work of the transformation that occurs with discipleship. It would also introduce accountability, which has been sorely lacking.

5. Conclusion

This article reports on a study that found that discipleship has not been prioritised in the Anglican Church in Uganda, mainly because the gospel has not been inculturated. Since the missionaries emphasised evangelism as the church’s primary ministry, discipleship has not been entrenched as part of the mission of the church. The study also reveals a confluence of both Western and African understandings. The value of this study is that in highlighting the entrenched beliefs and practices of the missionaries, these need to be examined to see what can and should be retained and what should be expunged. The goal of discipleship is one that needs to be deeply embedded within the host culture and owned, no longer a foreign concept. This is crucial, as the Anglican CoU is one of the leaders in the global South and in the Anglican Communion. The church can only continue to lead in both arenas if it continues to produce mature Christians.

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