

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

DETERMINANTS OF PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH
AMONG THE MARGINALIZED GROUPS:
A Case Study of the Pygmies in Ijwi and Katana
Forests in Congo

BY
SAMUEL MURAGURI MWANGI

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
Divinity in Missions Studies

JULY, 2007

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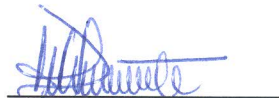
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July, 2007

Student's Declaration

**DETERMINANTS OF PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH AMONG THE
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IN IJWI AND KATANA FORESTS IN CONGO**

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other College or University for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners.

(Signed)  _____
Samuel Muraguri Mwangi

July, 2007

ABSTRACT

The issue of taking social responsibility as part of Christian outreach has been ignored and overlooked for a long time. The purpose of this study was to establish the determinants of participation in Church among the marginalized people groups. Specifically, the study looked at social needs as determinants that hinder Church participation among the Pygmies.

Two research visits were done in Congo. One was in Katana forest and the other in Ijwi forest. Data collection involved the use of discussion questions which guided the focus groups. The discussions were held in these two different regions to establish whether social needs among the Pygmies would determine their Church participation. Participant observation was also used to give independent findings as well. Four groups involved in discussions were; a group of Pygmy men, Pygmy women, Pygmy children as well as pastors who have Churches in the Pygmy neighborhood or having ministry among the Pygmies.

It emerged from the study that social needs hinder participation in Church directly or indirectly. In order to transform the lives of the Pygmies, social responsibility must be given its rightful place.

Recommendations from the findings were made calling Christians, the Church, NGOs, and other stakeholders to do holistic ministry to the Pygmies and by extension to the marginalized people groups.

TO

all the Pygmies living in the forests of Congo.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Wambutu tribe in Congo forests commonly known as the Pygmies is among the most marginalized groups in Africa. In his past encounters, the researcher closely interacted with the Pygmies as well as pastors having Churches near the Pygmy villages. In his bid to reach this marginalized group, it came to the researcher's attention that although there were Congolese Churches in the Pygmy neighbourhoods, most Pygmies did not attend these Churches but rather chose to stay at home to continue with their daily cores. This raised many questions in the researcher's mind and he doubted how effective ministry would be if new converts would not attend Church for spiritual growth and nurture. At this point, the researcher got interested in knowing the relationship between the Congolese Church near Katana and Ijwi forests and the Pygmies in these areas. In the interaction, one Pygmy observed that he used to attend Church together with other Pygmies but the Church did not care for their social and economic needs and so the group pulled out of the Church. The Church according to this man did not care about their feeding, clothing, education for their children and medical care among others important social needs.

The expectation and assumptions from the Pygmies was that both the spiritual and the social needs would be taken care of. In the mindset of the Pygmies, attending Church was more than spiritual enrichment as would be considered the norm. Little did the Pygmies know that the Church did not consider social responsibility among the Pygmies as part of their calling and ministry.

A pastor of the nearby Congolese Church where these Pygmies used to attend before the fallout observed that, the Church did not have enough resources necessary to take care of the Pygmies. He complained of low income and lack of employment for the members of the Church who are not even able to take care of him as the pastor.

On the basis of this scenario the researcher who was by then doing outreach among the Pygmies felt interested in carrying out an in-depth research to establish whether there was any relationship between meeting the social needs of the Pygmies and their attendance and participation in Church hence the topic, “The determinants of participation”.

The scenario above leaves many questions on the role of the Christian community to the unreached, the poor and the despised in the contemporary society. Whichever way, God wills that the Pygmies and other such neglected and marginalized groups be reached with the good news. Strategies and programs must be sort on the best methods to reach them. A wide consultation needs to be done in order to do effective ministry to such neglected groups of people. The plight of the Pygmies leaves us with many unanswered questions; how can such a group of people who have nothing to survive on be reached with the transforming gospel? How can the Church effectively reach the Pygmies with the gospel? What social programs can the Church appropriately integrate in reaching the Pygmies with the gospel? It is in this light and seeking of answers to many questions that the need to do research among the Pygmies becomes vital.

Topic

Determinants of participation in Church among the marginalized people groups: A case study of Pygmies in Katana and Ijwi forests in Congo.

Theory

Social factors deter Pygmies in Katana and Ijwi forests from fully participating in Church. Low esteem among the Pygmies due to their poor standards of living and the feeling of neglect by Church has resulted to their negative attitude towards Church hence minimal participation in Church activities. Similarly, lack of Church involvement in social responsibility among the Pygmies has deterred Pygmies from active Church participation. Among the marginalized groups, social needs determine their participation and the Church needs to address these needs.

Problem Statement

The research undertakes to investigate the social factors that deter Pygmies from participating in Church.

Variables

The independent variables used in the research will explain the dependent variable. The independent variables called determinants in the research include such social aspects like: land, food, education, source of livelihood, income, housing, medical care and exposure among others.

The dependent variables called participation in the research include: attending Church, being positive and receptive to the gospel, attending fellowships, prayer meetings, choir, reading the Bible, attending Bible studies and commitment to personal devotions among others.

The hypotheses are:

1. Lack of land leads to search for food
2. Lack of land leads to poverty
3. Poverty leads to search for food
4. The search for food keeps Pygmies away from Church activities
5. Lack of land leads to frequent and abrupt migration from one location to another
6. Frequent and abrupt migration cuts short any meaningful participation in Church.
7. Poverty leads to sicknesses due malnutrition
8. Sicknesses hold people back home thus cutting Church participation
9. Poor houses cause sicknesses due to cold and mosquitoes
10. Lack of medical care leads to sicknesses and death
11. Illiteracy reduces chance of opportunities in Church participation like Bible study.

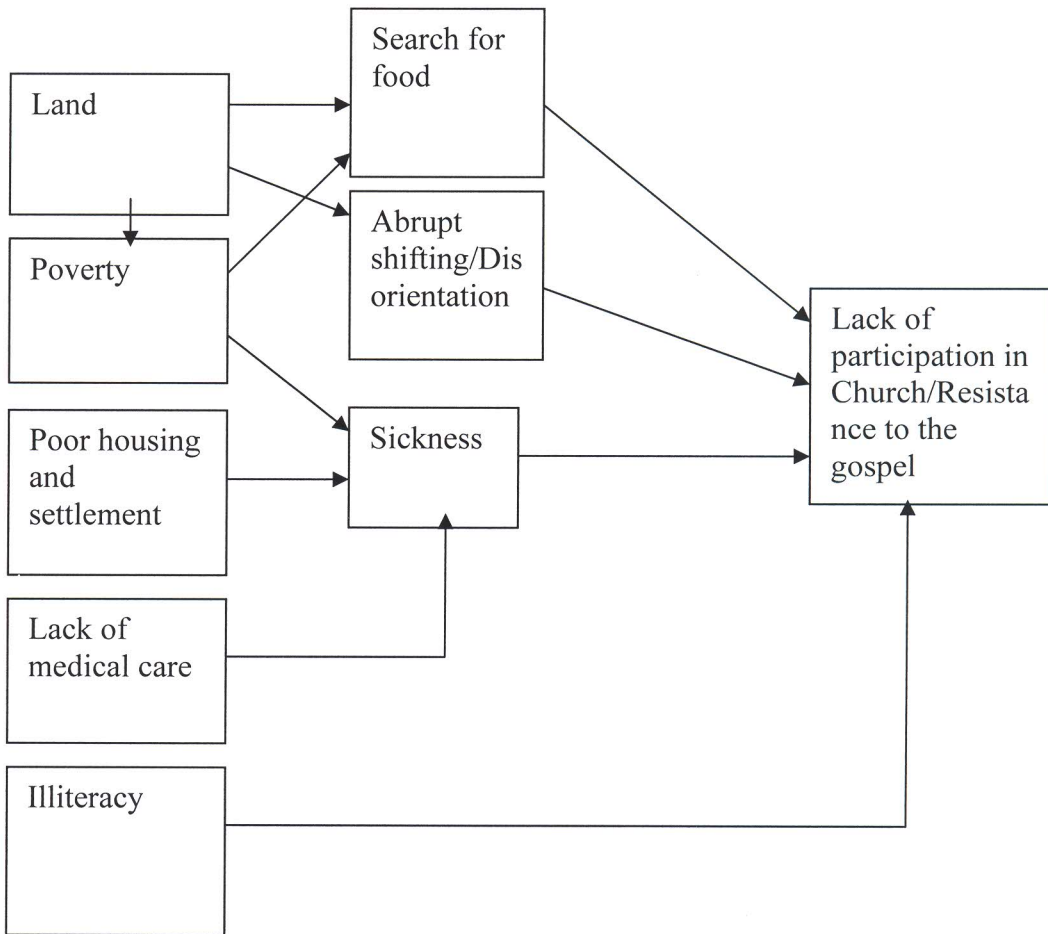


FIG. 1: Path Model of Determinants of Participation

Research Questions

Question 1: What are the social needs of the Pygmies?

Question 2: To what extent has the Congolese Church been involved in addressing these social needs?

Question 3: How does social needs affect the participation in Church activities?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine the social and economic needs that hinder participation and by extension the receptivity of the gospel among the Pygmy community in Katana and Ijwi forest.

Significance

The study is significant in several ways. First, the findings will help the researcher in his ministry endeavor to the Pygmies. By the findings, the researcher will make important discovery towards fruitful and relevant ministry to the Pygmies. It will help the researcher and the Church to arrive at a way forward in reaching the Pygmies by offering biblical suggestions which can be implemented in the efforts to reach out to the Pygmies holistically.

Secondly, it is hoped that the research will shed light to the Church in Congo in its bid to reach out to the Pygmies holistically. Similarly, the knowledge obtained could be used by other Churches, non-Governmental organizations and other stakeholders in their strategy in reaching the Pygmies. Likewise the world needs to be sensitized on the conditions of such groups of people and the plight they are going through. All interested stakeholders will then be provided with documented material on some aspects of the Pygmy. The information would be an added knowledge and information to stakeholders and the world at large.

Thirdly, the results of the study of the social needs of the Pygmies will help to establish the importance of social action among them. If recommendations made are implemented the life of the Pygmies would be dramatically changed for their good.

The society's perspective on dealing with the Pygmies and other marginalized people would be shaped positively as well.

Lastly the study would provide some theological understanding in relating the reality of the Pygmies with biblical principles in dealing with the poor in society. This by extension is significant in reaching other marginalized groups in Africa.

Limitations

Although the Pygmies speak Kiswahili, the Congolese Kiswahili has some dialectic differences from the one spoken in Kenya, which can be a challenge. The researcher overcame this by having an interpreter in case of unfamiliar words or words that mean differently from their usage in Kenya.

Security in Congo and specifically towards the forests can also be a threat. The researcher overcame this by having pre-arranged security details with relevant security authorities of his presence and purpose. This was done through the Congolese Church. The researcher was also accompanied by locals whenever he moved around these regions. Having visited the forest before and interacted freely with the Pygmies the researcher was confident that his research work would go on well.

Time available for doing this research was limited for two reasons. One, the researcher shared the available time with other school work in the one year period of research. Secondly the distance between Kenya and Congo limited the researcher to travel regularly. However the researcher started his research early enough to avoid unseen inconveniences. Other than time, this study was faced with a shortage of finances required for traveling and other expenses. The funds required for the entire

process was enormous and the depth to which the research would go largely depended on available finances.

Delimitations

The research was narrowed down to a people group known Mbuti and commonly referred as the Pygmies. The researcher chose to limit himself in two regions, which are Katana and Ijwi forests. He also limited participation to two Churches; EGD and CEPAAK. Similarly the research does not deal with every aspect of Pygmy life and cultural behaviors. The research only focuses on the social hardships of the Pygmies and how that relates to participation in Church.

Definitions of Variables

The following are variables used in the thesis

Lack of Land – Refers to a situation whereby the Pygmies have no land of their own for settlement or cultivation.

Poverty: This is absolute lack of the basic necessities of life including food, clothes and shelter

Search for Food: This is going out to do anything that can result in bringing food on the table.

Church Activities: Refers to church activities like singing in choir, prayers, preaching, visitations, etc

Migration: Refers to shifting from one location to another in search for land for settlement and cultivation.

Participation in Church: Refers to taking part in church activities like choir, leading Bible study, preaching, leading service, being active in prayer groups, etc

Sicknesses: Refers to any kind of illness

Malnutrition: Refers to lack of certain foods that are important for the well being and functioning of human beings.

Medical Care: Refers to medical attention like having access to medicines in times of sicknesses.

Illiteracy: Refers to lack of education among Pygmies leading to inability to read and write.

Definitions of Terms

The following are some key terms used in this thesis.

Pygmies

The word Pygmy refers to the short people in West Africa. The Pygmies speak different languages as adapted from the neighboring communities. In Eastern Congo they speak Kiswahili, Kihafu and Mashi languages. The thesis is restricted to those in Congo forests. The plural for Pygmy is Pygmies.

Social Action /Responsibility

This refers to any work done towards the community or individual like visitations, feeding programs, hospital ministry, charity work, etc.

Models

The working definition of a model in this study is a trend of a pattern drawn from the Bible on how social responsibility was tackled as viewed in different times of the Bible.

CEPAC Church

CEPAC (Communauté des Eglise de Pentecôte an Afrique Centrale.)

This is the association of the Pentecostal Churches in Central Africa called in the French name above and translated in English as Pentecostal Community Churches of Central Africa.

EGD Church

EGD (Eglise de la Gloire de Dieu). This is French name meaning Church of the Glory of God.

Holistic Ministry/Approach

This is ministry that is done towards the whole person. It targets the spiritual, physical, social, mental and all other aspects of humanity

Marginalized Groups

Groups of people who are limited in accessing resources which others have at their disposal. They are overlooked and sidelined in terms of development.

NGO

This is the short for Non-Governmental organization

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Literature review is vital as it helps one to clarify the problem being investigated as well as interacting with other writers on the same or related topic. The literature review will include the genesis of Pygmies and their traditional social involvements in their day-to-day living. It is worth noting that not much has been written about the Pygmies of Congo. The books accessed are more of adventures stories in the Ituri forests where Pygmies live. However, the researcher accessed some information from the internet that he used alongside the few books.

Emphases will include social responsibility and biblical principles towards the ministry to the poor and underprivileged as seen in the Bible. The literature review will use models as a guide through the biblical principles of social responsibilities. The models include; Old Testament model, Jesus model and the early Church model.

Description of the Pygmies

Origins

In trying to describe the Pygmies' people, Duffy, puts it this way,

Try to imagine a way of life where land, shelter, and food are free, and where there are no leaders, bosses, politics, organized crime, taxes, or laws. And to this the benefit of being part of a society where everything is shared, where there is no rich people and no poor people, and where happiness does not mean the accumulation of material possession. Put all this together and you have part of the traditional life of Africa's hunting and gathering Mbuti Pygmies who live in the Ituri forest of Zaire (1984, vii).

It seems to me that the definition above only gives us an idea of the Pygmy community in the forest but the reality has changed over time. The land, food and other utilities are no longer free. The government has pushed them out of the forest yet no alternative has been offered to them. Today, the Pygmies have nothing to share as opposed to having everything to share and they are actually poor beggars now.

The Pygmy people are described as the smallest or shortest people on earth. The average height for a man is four feet, eight and a half inches tall and four feet six inches tall for women (Duffy 1984, 15).

Traditionally, the Pygmies exchanged their produce like feathers, skins, meat, and ivory from their hunting with villagers who in turn gave them such foods as they required (ibid., 32). Due to this interaction with the villagers the Pygmies would easily adopt the language of the villagers and the surrounding environment (ibid., 4). They have remained remarkably intact in adjusting and integrating their lives to the two worlds they live in - world of the forest and the outside world of the villagers (ibid., 35).

Pygmies are the earliest known inhabitants of the Congo Basin, which is located in Zaire. It is also reported that the Pygmies have occupied the Ituri Forest for over four thousand years. The Pygmies who live in the forest today call themselves the Mbuti. The Mbuti includes such groups as the Efe, the Aka, and the Bayaka Pygmies (Bethany World Prayer Center, 1997). Turnbull notes that, it is not known how long the Pygmies have lived in the forest but it is considered that they are amongst the oldest inhabitants of the vast continent (Turnbull 1961, 19).

The Pygmies predominantly live in the forests and call themselves “children of the forest”. They also acknowledge that their beloved forest home gives them

everything they need including food, clothes, shelter and affection. They look at the forest as their parents (Duffy 1984, 3)

The only home they know is a one-room, beehive-shaped structure made in about two hours from sticks and leaves. No windows or doors and is barely the length of a sleeping person (Duffy 1984, vii). The researcher had never seen such pathetic housing before and the worst in the Kenyan context such as the Manyatta of the Masai people are much superior with no comparison.

The researcher observed the truth above in his visits to the Pygmies and the situation is pathetic. With the government restriction on hunting in the forests, the Pygmies are getting more and more desperate each day. They can no longer trade with the villagers as it was before since their trading products were got from the forests. Those found by the government soldiers hunting in the forest are killed. The “lucky” ones on the other hand are killed by the Interahamwe soldiers (the Rwandese rebel soldiers who ran away to Congo forest after the 1994 genocide) as they compete for food in the same forests. Girls are raped and young men taken up to work for Interahamwe’s in the interior parts of the forests. The situation therefore is getting worse for this neglected group of people. It is no wonder the Pygmy population has not grown over the years. This is one group that faces extinction if no measures are taken to redeem them.

Population

There are currently about 250,000 Pygmies, divided into four groups: the Binga along the Atlantic coast, including the Beku, Bongo, Jelli, Koa, Kola, Kuya, Rimba, and Yaga; the Twa in the high regions surrounding Lake Kivu; the Gesera and Zigaba in Rwanda and Burundi; and the Mbuti, Aka, and Efe of the Ituri forest in Northeastern Congo - Kinshasa (Eder 1987)

The Lifestyle of the Pygmies

According to African guide, the 'Pygmy' peoples are forest dwellers, and know the forest, its plants and its animals intimately. They live by hunting animals such as antelopes, pigs and monkeys, fishing, and gathering honey, wild yams, berries and other plants. For the Pygmies, the forest is a kindly personal god, who provides for their needs. All Pygmy groups have close ties to neighbouring farming villagers, and work for them or exchange forest produce for crops and other goods. At its best this is a fair exchange, but it can involve exploitation of the Pygmies, especially where they have lost control of the forest and its resources (African guide 2006).

The Pygmy Religion and Belief Systems

The religious life of the Mbuti is not at all clear according to the African guide. Early reports state that they had no religion at all, and later reports dwell on whether or not the Mbuti relationship to the supernatural, structurally constitutes religion or magic (African guide 2006).

According to the "Pygmies of Central Africa" article, the Pygmies believe that a god named Tore created the world and is the Supreme Being. He is identified with the forest, since everything is dependent on it. They only call upon Tore during times of crisis. He is usually summoned by a trumpet blast, which is supposed to imitate his voice. Some groups believe that after creating the first humans, Tore was no longer interested in the affairs of the world, and so he withdrew to the sky. Pygmies also believe that "forest spirits" influence the souls of the dead. The Efe, in particular, believe that after Pygmies die, their *borupi*, which means "rhythm" or "life," is carried away from the body by a fly. They believe the fly takes them to Tore (Bethany World Prayer Center 1997).

This shows that the Pygmies have always known of the existence of God just like many Africa traditional society. One should not go to the Pygmies with an assumption that they do not have an idea of God. Their belief of Tore can be an opportunity to introduce the love of the living and caring God.

The Needs and Problems of the Pygmies

In the last ten years, Congo has had its worst times due to wars. The government systems have totally collapsed. The government can no longer provide the needed utilities for its people. Health and educational services are no longer provided by the government. Schools are supported by parents and where parents can not afford, the children stay back at home.

There is great demand for medical supplies as well as trained doctors and nurses to work among the Congolese people. Educational facilities and teachers are needed in great need. In such a scenario the poor are worst hit as they can not afford the money to support medical or educational facilities.

Pygmies see their rainforest homes threatened by logging, and are driven out by settlers. In some places they have been evicted and their land has been designated as national parks. They are routinely deprived of their rights by the government, which do not see these forest-dwellers as equal citizens (African guide 2006). The question raised is; what can the Church do? or what is the way forward?

Spiritually, the Pygmies are in need of a Savior. They must be told that there is a loving God who cares for them and longs to make them part of His family. Who will tell them that the Creator is a Father who will never abandon them? This is the challenge the researcher finds in his visits as he observes the need for involvement of the local people and the wide Church of Christ.

Understanding Social and Evangelism Concepts

There is need to have basic understanding of what the Bible says on social responsibilities as part of our outreach endeavour. Human body has many needs and none of these needs should be overemphasized at the expense of the other. The spiritual and the physical are equally important.

Evangelism or Social Action

Moberg notes that, “The question of how to deal with poverty and the numerous other interrelated problems of our day has divided Christians in two camps. One of them builds a strong case for evangelism as the basic solution while the other emphasizes direct social involvement” (1977, 13). We still observe Churches differing in this opinion today. Usually each group adamantly stands its ground as being in the right position. Many Christians assume that someone will take social responsibility. Ryrie says, “Those who feel that social ethics are not part of the gospel are accused of mutilating the gospel, and those who feel that social concern is a part of the gospel are charged with preaching another gospel” (1982, 14). The debate then is never ending and each accuses the other. The Church must rise to the knowledge that it is called to the same purpose and mission which encompasses both aspects equally. How would one preach to a hungry Pygmy without first offering something to eat? How would one express the love of God to a naked-sickly Pygmy child without first clothing and taking him to hospital? These are the realities to wrestle with in this context.

Moberg adds that “We cannot substitute... evangelism for social concern...If we do, we compartmentalize ourselves still further and bury God still deeper in the shrouds of irrelevant. We must rather unite these alienated partners in a holy and

fruitful matrimony” (1977, 163). It looks clear that both aspects are equally important and are partners. We should therefore not use social action as bait for evangelism. The two ideas should never be seen to compete but they should be viewed as actually two sides of the same coin. Beals describes the two aspects as two legs to the gospel. “If we don’t walk or run on both legs, we have a lopsided gospel” (1985, 145). In support of the ideas above, Hancock notes that “The fullest demonstration of effective evangelism is one that sets in motion not only spiritual rebirth but also physical, social and emotional vigor and vitality to the glory of God” (1979, 85).

Biblical/Theological Basis for Social Concern

To explain the biblical/theological basis, the researcher uses several models as seen in the Bible at different times in history. These are Old Testament model, Jesus model, and early Church model and he compares them with the contemporary Church trends. The researcher then compares the trends with the response as observed in the Pygmy ministry in Katana and Ijwi forests.

Old Testament model

In the Old Testament God called Abraham and promised him that all peoples on earth will be blessed through him (Genesis 12:3). Deuteronomy 15:11 says, “There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be open-handed toward those of your people who are poor and needy in your land”. The Israelites were not to take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is an Israelite or is a foreigner residing in one of your towns (Deuteronomy 24:14 NIV). Oppression was highly forbidden in the Old Testament. God took keen interest in the lives of those that were under privileged and oppressed and defended their cause for justice.

God also commanded the Israelites in (Leviticus 23:22 NIV) saying, “When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am the LORD your God”. In this line of thought we find Boaz giving orders that Ruth should be allowed to glean his land (Ruth 2:15 NIV). Boaz goes ahead and takes Ruth as his wife in accordance to the kinsman redemption structure that was already in place. (Ruth 4:14 NIV) says, “The women said to Naomi, Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a kinsman-redeemer”. Clearly these institutional structures in Israel took care of the poor and the neglected. God was setting an example in showing no partiality. The nation of Israel had put measures as God commanded so that all may be well with the poor among them. Consequently, this is a lesson for those who are rich today to share with the poor even as Paul admonishes the Church in the New Testament (1 Timothy 6:17-19 NIV).

The poor need the basic facilities, partnership and encouragement. They need to see someone standing with them. The Church today as the alternative society is given the responsibility to take care of the social needs of the poor people among them. The Israelites had workable methods like kinsman’s redeemer and gleaning rules during harvests that took care of the less privileged in the society. Since gleaning in the fields and kinsman redeemer may not be necessarily applicable today, the Church needs to develop workable systems and structures to take care of the poor in the society.

David in Psalms 82:3-4 calls us to defend the cause of the weak and the fatherless and to maintain the rights of the poor and the oppressed. To rescue the weak and the needy.

The Prophets in the Old Testament condemned injustices done by the kings that were oppressing the poor in Israel. Israel was to seek justice, encourage the oppressed, defend the cause of the fatherless and plead the case of the widows” (Isaiah 1:17 NIV). Similar sentiments are echoed in (Jeremiah 5: 28 NIV) saying, “Their evil deeds have no limit; they do not plead the case of the fatherless to win it, they do not defend the rights of the poor” From these passages and others it is clear that, neglect and oppression of the poor was always considered horrible sin and could cause retributive judgment (punishment) to the society. Christians today must guard against any kind of injustice practices whether in courts, through bribing, evading taxes and all sorts of social injustices. This should be part of our lifestyle since we are the light and the salt of the world (Matt 5:13-16 NIV). The case in point shows the Pygmies as an oppressed lot with no government support and the Church must stand out for the course of these little ones of God. This can be achieved by sharing whatever God has given us. Structures must be set to give dignity to all humanity. Pygmies are God’s creation and the Church has a social responsibility towards them.

Jesus model

Jesus introduced his ministry in reference to the prophesy in Isaiah as recorded in (Luke 4: 18-19 NIV) saying, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me for he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour”. His ministry had special concern and responsibility for the poor and oppressed. Jesus clearly integrated both the social action and evangelism perfectly well. Throughout the gospels, Jesus preached the good news, fed the hungry, healed the sick, comforted the discouraged and restored the dead to life. This was his mission: a ministry to the whole person. (John 20:21 NIV) says, “As my father sent

me so I send you". The researcher therefore believes that, Jesus sends the Church today to identify with the world just as he identified with it. He calls the Church to evangelize and be involved with social action as well.

Jesus' approach to his ministry was holistic as did the pioneer missionaries where ministry was to the whole person. In the words of Hancock, "the dichotomy of evangelism had not yet crept into the activity. William Carey and Hudson Taylor, to name but two of the better known pioneers, consistently ministered to the whole man" (1979, 86).

The story of Jesus is that of a compassionate man. He was always moved with what he saw. Whenever Jesus met hurting people, he did not just weep and walk away. He did not just have pity on them. He was moved with compassion and acted. This was the situation as he comforted Lazarus sisters in (John 11: 17- 44 NIV), feed four thousand people (Mark 8: 1-9 NIV). Beals argues correctly that compassion is an action response, which demands direct involvement (1985, 43). One gets involved rather than just feeling sorry for the victim. It is the compassion that pushes us to act. Compassion pushed Jesus and it should push us in our ministry endeavors.

As Perkins rightly notes, "Jesus never put evangelism and social action at odds with each other, so neither should we" (1993, 83). Social action was part of the whole deal in the ministry of Jesus and it should be the same for our ministries as well. In Lane's observation, the account of the mission of Jesus focuses on the practical and performative of his mission; a mission directed in the name of the coming kingdom and God to the transforming of those who are poor, captives, blind and oppressed. A mission concern about changing the conflictual situation of humanity in the world (1984, 125).

Bosch in talking about the inclusiveness of Jesus mission says “It embraces both the poor and the rich, both the oppressed and the oppressor, both the sinners and the devout. His mission is one of dissolving alienation and breaking down walls of hostility, of crossing boundaries between individuals and groups” (1991, 28). Jesus included all. We must be willing to include all even those whom the world has given up on.

Early church model

Acts 2: 44 gives us a picture of the early Church where all believers were together and had everything in common. They gave to anyone as he had need so that no needy person was found among them. (1 John 3:17 NIV) says, “If anyone has material possession and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love God be in him”.

The New Testament is a book of faith with action. (James 1:27 NIV) says, “The religion that God our father accepts as pure and faultless is this; to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world”. God has not left the weak, the sick, the widows and orphans without anyone to take care of them. The Christian community is admonished to look after these people and to keep doing good. (Galatians 6:10 NIV) says, “Therefore as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people especially to those who belong to the family of believers”. The poor are part of the household of faith, which forms the priority of Church’s responsibility.

The apostles of Jesus also participated in social work. They took care of widows by appointing men to be in charge. In (Acts 11:27-30 NIV), we see the

apostles being involved in charity work when Agabus predicted severe famine in Roman world. The apostles gave gifts according to their ability.

Contemporary Church Trend

What we are witnessing today is an individualistic and materialistic society. Everyone is concerned for his or her own good. The Church has not been any different but has only been struggling with weather or not social action is part of the mission.

Stott correctly observes that, we are called to obey the great commandment (love your neighbour) and fulfill the great commission (go and make disciples) (1975, 29). If you love your neighbour you will then be concerned with his total welfare, which includes his spiritual and social aspects. There is need then to balance between social action and evangelism or the physical and the spiritual. These are clearly partners although independent from each other. Most of the time we use social action as a means to evangelize and win people to Christ. This is wrong since we have an obligation to social responsibility without attaching the outcome in terms of salvation. Our call and our mission are to evangelize and be compassionate at the same time. It's both a call for passion for God and compassion for God's people.

Charity Versus Development

It is unfortunate that our social responsibility in most cases has to do with short-term programs. We see many organizations and institutions responding to feeding programs in famine stricken areas. Nevertheless, fewer organizations are concentrating with long-term projects that are more meaningful to lives of many. Perkins notes that, "Christian charity should never be discouraged, and there will

always be a place for acts of sharing and kindness, but charity is only a beginning point, not the final strategy or solution” (1993, 23).

Organizations need to rethink in terms of sustainable long-term development projects. It is ironical that whenever hunger situation arises, these organizations will always come in handy to assist and usually will not be heard again till such famine reoccurs. In Kenya for example, we witness multinational companies making donations through the President for family relief. Whether such donations are genuinely given or not is needs to be established. The government on the other hand does little as far as offering permanent solution is concerned. The researcher feels that most organizations choose not to provide permanent solution otherwise their job will be over and their sources of funding will have no valid reason for more funding. Charity work should not result into dependency syndrome. We need to go further and introduce projects that make people independent and self-supporting.

The Church Mandate to World

Does the Church have a role to play in social responsibility? The call of Jesus to the Church in reaching the world with the good news is still in effect. The Church has a divine mandate in transforming the world holistically.

Call to Mission

As Wagner notes, becoming a Christian is an option. But once you decide to ask Jesus Christ to take control of your life, involvement in world mission is no longer optional (1983, 5). In order to be involved in such a great task (world mission), we are called to understand the people whom we are to minister to. Different cultures will uphold different values from those that we subscribe to. Jesus calls us to preach

in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and other parts of the world (Acts 1: 8 NIV). If the Pygmies form part of the world of which they do, it follows that we are called to reach out to them as well. These are the people who will not afford an offering on a Sunday thus pastoral work among them is not the “business as usual”.

The challenge is that many Christian and Church organizations will rather not involve themselves with such “risky” business. It is worse in our days when the Church is perceived more as a “commercial” entity with leaders enriching themselves at the expense of the flock of Jesus Christ. As noted by Wagner, “some Churches have virtually no special interest in missions. As a matter of routine, they contribute to their denominational mission board program at the recommended level and let the board do the rest. The fault generally is found not in pew but in the pulpit. A missionary minded pastor can do wonders from an entire Church by developing a creative missionary program” (1983, 93)

Call to the Poor

Vinay and Sugden in looking at the poor as victims of other people say, “They are deprived by others of the necessities for maintaining human life and dignity. Poverty destroys their bodies and degrades their personalities. They are unable to fulfill their human potential” (1982, 9). This indeed is the situation the researcher finds with the Pygmies. Although they are said to be earliest settlers in Congo, they now find themselves as squatters without anything they would call their own. They are rejected not only by the government but also by the communities around them. The Church on the other hand has not helped either.

Jesus and the early Church had concern for such poor people and the Church today must address such situations. Nearly two-thirds of humankind are deprived of the essentials of life (Vinay and Sugden 1982, 81). Yet it is evident from the

scriptures that the gospel is concerned with the situation of the poor. The Church should not only help the poor like the Pygmy situation but as well advocate for justice. As Vinay and Sugden note, “The Bible does not glorify poverty; it condemns it as scandalous condition and demands justice for the poor. Precisely for this reason, God identifies himself with the poor. This is also why Jesus assumed a life of poverty and why Paul associated the preaching of the cross with the humble and ignorant” (1982, 83)

Freunenbeger and Minus say “Over one-half of the human race exists in conditions of chronic poverty that keep them underfed and uncertain about their next meal. Growing numbers are convinced that their plight need not be so desperate that if the earth’s resources were justly utilized there would be food for all. They hunger for bread and justice” (1976, 7). This is probably the best explanation of the Pygmy village. First, they are squatters living in shoddy and pathetic “houses”. Their real worry is not shelter, clothing, school or such issues but simply to fill in their hungry stomachs with something.

Hunger is said to be the human family’s most devastating foe, but also the most conquered (Freundenberger and Minus, 1976, 14). Since the Congolese government has neglected such regions, it becomes difficult for any organized programs to utilize the economic resources, which are readily available in these areas. Due to insecurity in Congo most non-governmental organization dread working in such situations. Indeed the world vision closed its doors in the needy Bukavu area and now operates in much safer places like Goma. The Pygmies continue to sleep on gold beneath them but sleep with hungry stomachs.

A Call to Evangelism and Social Action

As Stott suggests, every Christian must think about their relationship with the non-Christian friend, neighbors, and indeed to the whole non-Christian community. (1975, 11). Jesus in sending his disciples, deliberately and precisely made his mission the model for ours saying, “As my father has sent me so I send you” (John 20:21 NIV). It therefore means that we have to look at the mission of Jesus as we do mission today. Jesus healed the sick, fed the hungry stomachs and raised the dead. He gave himself selflessly for others and his service took a wide variety of forms according to men’s needs (Luke 22:27 NIV).

As Christians seeking to do ministry among any group of people we should never lose the focus on the needs of such people. We cannot send the hungry empty however much we may have preached to them. Our mission focuses on the whole person and not just one part. The physical is as important as the spiritual and we cannot separate one and serve the other. Jesus served in deed as well as in word, and it would have been impossible in the ministry of Jesus to separate his works from his words (Stott 1975, 24). Jesus now sends us with the same mission to the same kind of service he was involved in, service to the whole person.

Humanity is full of hurting, dying, hungry, frustrated and neglected people like the Pygmies. These are the kind of people we would find in the Congo forests with no support at all on their side. Such kinds of people understand the language of love, which is coupled with action. Reaching them is more than mere words or a “powerful gospel”. It means spending time with them, engaging them in their daily search for a better life and giving them hope of a better life both here on earth and later in heaven. Their needs are evident in many ways and the Church must be relevant to the needs of the Pygmies if it hopes to make an impact among them.

As Stott notes, “Jesus took our humanity, our flesh, our blood, our culture. He actually became one of us and experienced our frailty, our suffering and our temptation (1975, 25). Our Lord Jesus sends us to identify with others as he identified with us. How much is the Church in Congo and indeed the world wide Church ready to identify itself with these beautiful creation called Wambutu or the Pygmies?

It is our Christian responsibility to get involved with lives of people as we seek to minister among them. Our basic emphasis should be the people themselves. Many times Christians are interested in making quick converts and to record the number of souls converted at the expense of the lives of people themselves. Richardson notes, “The Church’s first concern is not with making converts but with making people. It becomes more natural to us to shout the gospel at the people from a distance than to involve ourselves deeply in their lives, to think ourselves into their culture and their problems and to feel with them in their pains” (1977, 13). This is normally because much involvement with diversity of cultures and the contemporary problems in the world today can be really bothersome. At times the issues to be addressed are beyond us and the best we can is to avoid these issues altogether by having little to do with social lives of those we minister to.

We need then to take social action not as a bait to win people but as a partner of evangelism. Each of them is an end in itself. Evangelism and compassionate service belong together in the mission of God (Stott 1975, 27).

The Christian community or the Church must address the needs that are visible among our target groups. We need to relate what we see with what we have. “To see need and to possess the remedy compels love to act, and whether the action will be evangelistic or social, or indeed political depends on what we see and what we have” (ibid.).

Our social responsibility has its firm foundation in the Bible. Members of the early Christian Church took Jesus seriously in trying to express love in a manner consistent with his example and teachings (Watkins 1994, 6). We see their evidences as they sold their property and gave to each other according to their needs (Acts 2:44-45 NIV). The apostles did not neglect the ministry of the widows and the less advantaged in the society (Acts 6:1-6 NIV). Watkins notes that, the early Church engaged themselves in ten areas of social ministry: care of widows and orphans, care of the sick, poor, and disabled, care of prisoners and captives, burial of the poor and other dead, care of slaves, care of victims of calamity, employment, services, hospitality and agape meals (1994, 7). This shows clearly that whatever needs the early Church found on its way of ministry, they tried to be involved and address them. Many times we shy away from social work and responsibilities, which forms part of our Christian call. We are commanded to love God and to love our neighbours as ourselves. Our action of what we did with our neighbours will actually be judged. Jesus says, “In as much as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren you have done it to me” (Matt 25:40 NIV). (Matt 25:31-46 NIV) illustrates what will happen at the judgment sit when Christ will separate the sheep from the goats, or rather those who took care of the poor, hungry, prisoners and those who did not. The Bible expects each of us to respond to whatever needs we find our fellow human beings in. Failure to which one is counted responsible and worthy of punishment.

Watkins defines social ministry as helping persons with spiritual, physical, emotional, mental, relational problems in the name of Christ (1994, ix). Most of us Christians today will concentrate with the spiritual part of humanity and ignore all other equally important aspects. We still struggle with the controversial question of whether evangelism and social ministry are compatible. Groups like Pygmies who

have little or no access to food, clean water, medication, shelter, education, etc will definitely need these resources as much as they need the gospel of salvation. A person in need of food should be fed first and later the gospel of Jesus Christ can be introduced to him.

Summary

This chapter has offered insights on how the Church can integrate social actions into its ministry for effective work among its less advantaged members of communities. However the researcher has not been able to find much literature that can exhaustively deal with his context of the Pygmy social concerns. The researcher hopes that his ethnographic study will enable him to gain useful insights that will make the outreach to the Pygmies a reality.

We can summarize the biblical view of social action as seen in the literature review in several points.

1. God forbade his covenant people from discriminating the less fortunate in society and demanded advocacy for social justice to the poor.
2. The early Church practiced hospitality by showing acts of mercy, feeding the hungry, widows and orphans in the society.
3. The early Church was involved in social action thus meeting the holistic needs of the less fortunate in the society
4. Evangelism and social action are partners in the Christian outreach efforts
5. Jesus our example per excellence had great concern for the poor and we ought to follow his steps.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The field research will help the research to establish the determinants of participation in church among the Pygmies. In this chapter, the research will explain the process of collecting data in the field.

Research Paradigms

All research methods generally fall under two broad categories of Qualitative and Quantitative. A third category is only a blend of these two methods. This research uses qualitative method.

Quantitative Research Method

Defining the quantitative research method, Mugenda and Mugenda (1999, 156) see quantitative method as one that includes designs, techniques and measures that produce discrete numerical data or quantifiable data. Gillham (2000, 9) echoes the same understanding of the research method by observing that, “Quantitative methods are those which involve counting and measuring: the much dreaded subject of statistics”

Qualitative Research Method

According to Creswell (1998, 15), qualitative research is “an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem.” In this inquiry, he adds, “the researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, details views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural Setting.” Gillham (2000, 10) describes qualitative research method as one that “focuses primarily on the kind of evidence that will enable you to understand the meaning of what is going on.” To him, a qualitative method of doing research has “great strength in that they illuminate issues and turn up possible explanations...” Gillham adds that this kind of research focuses on the kind of evidence that the researcher will be told or observe which will help him to comprehend what is going on in the lives of the respondents and in their social situation (ibid.,13)

Having interacted with the two research methods, it has become apparent that the answers to the research problem in this study will be best obtained by use of qualitative research as the researcher seeks to explore a social or human problem by observing to find the meaning of what goes on among Pygmies in Church participation.

Population

Target population of this study was in two fold. One, it targeted Pygmies who have left the forests and living in the slopes. Secondly, it targeted the pastors serving the Pygmies or serving in the neighborhood Churches who are well acquainted with the Pygmies.

The choice of participants was to help the research understand the social issues that hinder participation in church. This would help get relevant information and eventually do a thorough analysis of the study.

Sampling

Pygmies are found in many forests in Congo. For the purposes of this study the researcher chose to sample two areas. Katana and Ijwi forests were chosen as the researcher has had earlier interaction and he was familiar with these regions as well as having valuable contacts.

Samples of informants put in focus groups were drawn from men, women, children and pastors who have Churches in the Pygmy neighborhoods.

Groups ranged between ten to fifteen members chosen at random for men and women in both regions.

Children were divided into two groups. Since it was hard to establish the children ages, the researcher with the help of church facilitators separated the older ones and the younger ones in order to ensure participation by all.

Seventeen pastors working in the neighborhood were identified and interviewed. Seven were from Katana region and ten from Ijwi region.

Research Methodology and Procedures

Insights obtained from literature review have greatly influenced the choice of research methods to be used in this study. The nature of the research is descriptive and hence a qualitative approach is the most appropriate for this study.

In order to overcome limitations of time and shortage of finances, focus group discussions and participant observation were used to collect data in this study.

Focus Group Discussions

Focus groups are “small structured groups with selected participants, normally led by a moderator. They are set up in order to explore specific topics, and individuals’ views and experiences, through group interaction” (Litosseliti 2003, 1).

This method was selected due to its low cost for the researcher, speedy results, maximized group dynamics and synergy and high face validity among others. Litosseliti adds that, “In contrast to many other methods, focus groups are appropriate method for obtaining information from illiterate communities” (ibid., 16). This was exact the situation the researcher found himself in as most of the informants did not have the basic literacy knowledge.

However, in the use of this method, the researcher was keen to address its limitations and weaknesses such as lack of adequate control once a discussion is established.

Formation of Focus Groups

The research formed small focus groups in collaboration with the CEPAC and EGD Church leaders who were the contact people on the field. The researcher made four homogenous distinct groups as follows: men, women, children and pastors. The researcher identified facilitators to assist him form groups. The facilitators also helped in taking notes which the researcher compared with his notes after the discussions. The data was collected from the responses to issues the researcher had raised using discussion guides and interview questions.

Data Collection Tools

As mentioned earlier, a discussion guide was used to guide all discussions. With the permission and clear explanation of the purpose; the researcher collected information mainly by taking notes. In a pilot study the researcher observed that the use of tape recorder could raise issues and therefore he chose to take careful notes. Two other facilitators helped in taking notes independently to get best results after comparisons.

Data Analysis

The researcher reviewed the session in consultation with his facilitators each evening. Based on notes taken and experiences noted with the groups, the researcher looked at the line of reasoning, similarities and patterns and applied content analysis to make conclusions.

Entry

In doing the research the researcher needed to get to the people of study. Since the researcher had to travel to Congo to collect data, the researcher planned two formal sessions; one in August 2006 and the last in April 2007. This enhanced the

earlier visits and participant observations made since April 2005. He made contacts through the CEPAC and EGD Churches through which access to the Pygmies in the forest became easier. The researcher explained to the participants the reasons and intentions of the research and modes of reporting and any publications to be made. The researcher promised to ensure confidentiality of data collected.

Participant Observation

By definition, participant observation is an ethnographic method of data collection involving those “forms of research in which the investigator devotes himself to attaining some kind of membership in or close attachment to an alien or exotic group that he wishes to study” (Nachmias 1976, 90).

According to Selltiz and others this method has various advantages including; taking care of many forms of behavior that are so taken for granted by researchers that use other methods. Secondly the method is useful in collecting information from informants who due to one reason or another are not able to speak. Finally, this method enables the researcher to collect information from informants who may be unwilling to report (1951, 202).

Data Collection Strategy and Procedure

The researcher has visited the Pygmies severally over the last two years and has done intensive observation as well as participating in day to day activities of the Pygmies. The researcher participated in the activities of the Pygmies by accompanying them to Church, sang together, preached to them, gone to market with them, visited their tiny house, prayed with sick people in their houses, visited the

market with them, etc. He has also interacted with Church pastors near the Pygmy sites and has shared with the pastors a lot on the work of the Pygmies.

Katana and Ijwi forests Pygmies' villages are the sites of the research. Due to previous interaction and interest in the Pygmy ministry, the researcher felt that this would be the best place for the research work which was enhanced by earlier visits to the same regions.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Best defines validity as “that quality of data-gathering instrument or procedure that enables it to determine what it was designed to determine” (Best 1981, 55). In order to be consistent in carrying out the research, the researcher developed discussion guides and interview questions from the variables which he had formed from the hypothesis. The guides and interview questions guided every discussion giving insights to the problem of the study. There was consistency from each individual discussion group showing that the method used was reliable.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The purpose of the study was to determine the social and economic factors that hinder the participation of the Pygmies in Church and by extension receptivity of the gospel among the Pygmy community in Katana/Ijwi forest.

The Research Questions Were:

Question 1: What are the social needs of the Pygmies?

Question 2: To what extent has the Congolese Church been involved in addressing these

social needs?

Question 3: How does social needs affect the participation in Church activities?

The Analysis attempts to determine the social and economic factors that hinder participation or the receptivity of the gospel among the Pygmy community in Katana/Ijwi forest.

Data was collected from focus group discussions. Four homogenous groups were composed comprising of: men, women, children and pastors in both Katana and Ijwi Islands.

From the literature findings, several issues come out strongly in support of social action in the outreach efforts to the poor in society, a situation that describes the Pygmies. Looking at the Old Testament, New Testament, Jesus model and the early Church model, several principles were drawn as follows:

1. God forbade his covenant people from discriminating the less fortunate in society and demanded advocacy for social justice to the poor. The early Church practiced hospitality by showing acts of mercy, feeding the hungry, widows and orphans in the society.
2. The early Church was involved in social action thus meeting the holistic needs of the less fortunate in the society
3. Evangelism and social action are partners in the Christian outreach efforts

The findings were analyzed and interpreted to help the researcher, the Church and other organizations with interest in reaching the Pygmies to have a clear understanding of the importance of integrating social action in the outreach efforts to the Pygmies in the Congo forests.

Analysis and Findings of the Focus Groups

The data analyzed in this chapter were based both on the participant observation as well as focus group discussions. In establishing the determinants of participation, I sort to understand the general perception on how social needs affect participation of Pygmies in Church activities and ministry. I used my research questions as the basis for analysis.

Research question 1: What are the social needs of the Pygmies?

The research used interview guide to discuss the social needs of the Pygmies that would deter their participation. This research identified five key social needs that were brought out as deterring the participation of Pygmies in Church.

Land

All the focus groups were in agreement in giving the background story of their land. The researcher found that the Pygmies have lived in the forest for as long as they can remember. Nevertheless their habitation has been turned into government national park and they were asked to leave without being given an alternative. They had to move from the forest. They then scattered in different slopes and regions around the forests. Today, they have no land of their own and they keep shifting from one place to another. At times before they settling down, the land owner takes back the land and they relocate to wherever they get assistance next. This has destabilized their lives over the years. They live under the mercies of the traditional Kings (Mwami) who gives land in exchange of money as he wishes to those who can afford.

Another reason that forced Pygmies to leave the forest were the soldiers called Interahamwe (Rwandese soldiers were fled Rwanda after the genocide in 1994). These soldiers are still in the forests and have consistently harassed the Pygmies and eating them for medical purposes. There is a believe that Pygmies have a medicinal capabilities. These were very frightened even as they narrated the latest case where one Pygmy was captured by these soldiers in their usual hunting this February 2007.

The third reason cited was clearance of forests for cultivation. As the King sells part of the forest to the indigenous much of the forest has now been cleared and farming taking place. Pygmies had to give way for the new development.

Informants were categorical in citing land as the one big need among the Pygmies in these regions. The researcher found that if the land issue was sorted out or if Pygmies had land, they would not be experiencing the problems and heartaches they experience today.

Pygmies confessed that they would farm the land, keep bees, pigs, cattle, etc. They were categorically that they would be independent if land was provided for them.

Food

Another need which is related to the first is food. Research found that Pygmies were used to forest food while they were living in the forest. They gathered fruits and hunted animals. One Pygmy observed “*Tulikuwa tunawida nyama za poli, tunauzisha kwa watembo (wale wenye akili) na hau wanatupea chakula kama mihogo*” (We used to hunt wild animals and we sell to indigenous people (“people who think”) in exchange for food like cassava). The researcher found that most Pygmies take one meal in a day or as available. They can go for days without any substantial meal. The main meal is cassava. Cassava leaves are very common as stew. In order to get the food needed, Pygmies do several things: both men and women farm for the indigenous people in exchange for food. Women also burn charcoal and sell to the indigenous people. They also cut firewood in the forest and supply to people in the market in exchange for food. Other women make pots and baskets and sell them off. Apart from farming men hunt in the forest and fish in Lake Kifu. One Pygmy makes peddles for moving boats and sells to his regular customers to buy food. As far as Pygmies have no food on the table, they will continue on with these activities irrespective of the day of the week. Sunday therefore is not an exception.

The researcher observed malnutrition among children due to lack of proper diet. Child mortality is very high among the Pygmies. Although figures were hard to come by, it was clear that while the indigenous Congolese had average of nine children; the Pygmies had two or three.

This confirmed the first hypothesis that the search for food keeps Pygmies away from Church activities

Housing

The researcher observed very poor housing among the Pygmies. There are many reasons attributed to the poor state of housing. One, the duration of stay is never assured and therefore most Pygmies feel that there is not need of having “permanent” houses. However the houses were very poorly done. Most houses have leaves both for the walls and the roofs. This poor state of housing has contributed to diseases caused by cold, rains, and mosquitoes. The few mud walled houses looked better and more habitable than the leaves walled ones. The houses were all dark as the concept of windows seemed unknown. The researcher observed that there were no furniture like, chairs in these houses. The utensils are the very basic comprising of at most two *sufurias*, and some wooden plates.

Education Facility

The researcher learnt that all the adults could not read or write. Most could speak both Kiswahili and Kifaru languages. Some spoke another popular language called *mashi* as well. Having spent most of their time in the forest, education was inaccessible. Illiteracy level for adults could easily be said to be 100%. Efforts by the researcher in his earlier visits to admit children to school have borne fruits and since last September some children started attending school. The researcher had in his first official visit found only two Pygmy children attending school. Later the Church was prevailed upon to admit Pygmy children for free. Thus 46 children started attending school with most of them dropping later. One school was about 20 km away where older children attended. The children took over three hours walking in the morning and three hours in the evening. With no lunch being provided the children opted out

of school. Another Church that admitted young Pygmy children was 5 km away. With no money to pay teachers, the school closed its doors asking the children to return when money would be available.

Medical Facility

The researcher found that there are many cases of sickness among the Pygmies. In every visit the researcher encountered very sick people in their tiny houses. In the last research visit in April 2007, a four year boy died the same day the researcher was doing his work. At the same time another boy about six years was in his final days after three months of being in a bed ridden situation. He could not stand, move or even open his eyes. The informants commented, “He is waiting to die and we burry him just like the other one, this is common here, and what do we do?” The researcher also noted that four other adults had died in the course of the two researcher period differences (August 2006 and April 2007).

Informants said that most Pygmies remain at home to die because they could not afford the money required to go to the hospital. The use of herbs which was common earlier is uncommon today as vegetation has been cleared and access to the national park prohibited. Nevertheless there was still usage of herbs although the variety is not as it was before. Other reasons for not attending hospitals were; proximity of the dispensaries; the main hospital is about four hours walk and there is no transportation available in the Island.

On vaccinations, the researcher found out that the Pygmy community has never had immunization for the children which may have contributed to the high death rate.

Other than the five social needs, the women cited other issues as important to them of which men did not cite that include; clothes, beddings, cooking utensils,

water storage tanks, seeds for planting and hoe for farming. When the researcher asked one women focus group why they did not include land as an important need in their discussion, they said that it was an obvious need and the starting point to the right direction “Si iyo ndio mwanzo” (“is that not the entry point?”)

On the other hand, children who were grouped separately cited books, uniform, lunch, pens and shoes as their main needs. One child said that “*nafasi ya shule iko bali hatuwezi kwenda huko*” meaning the school is far we cannot go there. They also cited regular sicknesses as a hindrances to education.

When the researcher interviewed four leaders of the Pygmies, he noted some differences when the leaders cited their (leaders) houses as an important aspect. They said their followers do not respect them since they lived in shanty houses like anybody else. The researcher saw this as a selfish motive as opposed to genuine concern. The leaders went further to ask for mobile phones for communication which looked very sad especially looking at the state of the village the desperate and important issues that needed to be addressed.

The researcher observed other urgent needs that the community could not cite, may be due to ignorance. One such need is sanitation. The researcher observed that Ijwi village had a population of about 150 people yet they had no single “toilet” in form of a small smelly trench. It looked obvious to the researcher that any outbreak of diseases would be very dangerous. Children could be seen near the smelly, bee filled trench. The researcher saw this is complete ignorance and lack of education and exposure. It was clear that some diseases could easily be prevented by using right facility which would be done without any outside assistance. Digging a toilet would be done by the men in the village. There is need to educate these people on basic hygiene.

Summary of Social Need in Connection to Hypothesis

The researcher found that since Pygmies have no land of their own, they have to keep working on people land in exchange for food. They have to do this irrespective of the days of the week including Sundays since they need to eat on Sunday as well. This confirmed the first hypothesis that: Lack of land leads to search for food.

The researcher also found that lack of land has contributed to poverty state of the Pygmies. While they would be working on their own farm for their food and to sell the surplus, they now have to work for others who eventually exploit them. This confirmed the second hypothesis that: Lack of land leads to poverty.

Due to the poor state Pygmies find themselves into, they have to keep searching for food on Sundays and thus having no opportunity to participate in Church. This confirms the third hypothesis that: Poverty leads to research for foods.

As noted earlier, due to exploitation, the food given in exchange for labour is so little that the Pygmies have to keep working all the time for the indigenous people. They have no time to rest and no time for Church. This confirms the fourth hypothesis that: The search for food keeps Pygmies away from Church activities

On the other hand, Pygmies keep shifting from one region to another at times almost without any warning. In Ijwi, for example, all the focus groups confirmed that they had shifted five times in about four years (It was hard to confirm the years and one relies on the children who were born and then estimate the age). These frequent and abrupt shifts make it hard for any meaningful participation. The uncertainty of how long they would stay on one place is a factor to consider. This confirms the fifth hypothesis that: Lack of land leads to frequent and abrupt shifting from one location to another.

Subsequently if Pygmies were involved in any meaningful participation, they would have to any sort of participation when they abruptly shift to another place. This confirms the sixth hypothesis that: Abrupt shifting cuts short any meaningful participation in Church.

Women focus group reported that, whenever they work for the indigenous people they are mostly given cassava in exchange of labour. Other times they are given bananas. These are their common foods and they hardly afford any other types of foods. Their state of poverty prohibits them from taking balanced diet which has medical implications for themselves and mostly for their children. This confirms the seventh hypothesis that: Poverty leads to sicknesses due to lack of necessary foods in the body.

All focus groups were in agreement that sickness is a key factor that prohibits them from going to Church. They argued that if one member of the family was sick, the rest will look after him while others would search for food and herbs. No member of the family would therefore attend Church if one member was sick on a Sunday. Due to lack of medication, the researcher found that sick members spend weeks in the bed before recovering. This confirms that eighth hypothesis that: Sickness hold people back home thus cutting Church participation.

The research found out that most houses were purely made of leaves both the wall and the roofs. Few were mad walled with no widows or any ventilation. The reasoning for such houses was that they were not sure how soon they would shift over to another location. They do not want to waste a lot of energy and resources and then shift as soon. However, the researcher found out that this state of housing is a health hazard. Many children were sick with cold related illness and the Pygmies die of malaria symptoms. Death rate for children is very high, with most children dieing at

infant age. This confirms the ninth hypothesis that: Poor houses are a cause of sickness due to cold and mosquitoes.

At the same time the Pygmies lack medical care. They can not afford the money needed at the hospitals. The few *Waganga* (name for medical doctors) cannot treat them unless they pay the due fees. This has led to many deaths and sickness situation among the Pygmies. It confirms the tenth hypothesis that: Lack of medical care leads to sickness and death. Again sickness leads to hypothesis 8 as seen above.

Another factor has to do with education. Pygmies have been segregated over the years. All the adults in Katana and Ijwi have never had an opportunity to attend school in these regions. None of the women in the focus groups could read or write any language. Four men in their focus group said they had been to school many years ago (we estimated ten years) in a different region called Karehe but after shifting over, they stopped. Children who had been admitted to a Church primary school in September 2006 either dropped because of distance or asked to leave due to lack of school fees. Due to illiteracy, Pygmies cannot teach in Church, preach, take leadership position, etc. This confirms the final (eleventh) hypothesis that: Illiteracy reduces chances of taking up opportunities of Church in participation.

Research question 2:

To what extent has the Congolese Church been involved in addressing these social needs?

The researcher interviewed ten pastors all working in the neighbourhood of the Pygmies in Ijwi and seven pastors in Katana. They all cited lack of resources as the major reason as to why the Church in these regions is incapable of doing social

work among the Pygmies. They noted that they used to give food stuffs and clothes before the war broke. After the war the country of Congo has gone down to drains and the Church is not capable of any help.

As a result of war several things were observed; very high rate of unemployment, poor government systems, destabilized peace process, farming affected by Interahamwe soldiers in the forest who occasionally come to the villages to steal foods in their land. The researcher in all his visits has not found a single person keeping cattle. The reason given is that the Interahamwe will often come to the villages and take any animals for their consumption. The Congolese people are generally at the bottom financially.

Teachers, doctors and nurses, agriculturists, policemen, etc, have not been paid for over ten years due to the effects of war. This puts the Church in awkward position and the Church has to struggle with its own problems with little effort to help the worst hit. The state of hopeless makes the Church to have no initiatives among this marginalized group of people.

Interviewing the pastors, the researcher found that from the pastors' point of view, it is practically impossible to penetrate the Pygmies with the gospel if you do not offer any social help. One pastor said, "They could welcome you the first time hoping that you will eventually help them but if not you will not be given any other chance". Out of the ten pastors in Ijwi, only one pastor has his ministry directly focusing on the Pygmies. He said that he invites the Pygmies in his Church severally but he encourages them to meet in their village for Sunday service. One of the Pygmies takes care of the service and the pastor sends someone to preach once in a while. He also noted that it is difficult to get fully involved since the Pygmies will keep asking for food and other social issues which his Church cannot afford.

“Ukiingia kwao sana watakusubua na chakula na mavazi” (if you get too close to them they will disturb you asking for food and cloths). Most pastors avoid direct ministry to the Pygmies only preferring to have them in special occasions where food will be served. However all the pastors agreed that they would be more than willing to work with the Pygmies if there was external assistance to enable them provide for the need of the Pygmies whenever they visit them.

This notwithstanding, the researcher still felt that the Church had the capacity to share the little they had especially clothes and foods. This is the only way they can demonstrate good neighbourhood and eventually attract them to active participation.

Pastors were in agreement that, no amount of dishing food, clothes, etc will solve the Pygmy problem since it goes beyond that. The Church, NGO or any other organization hoping to bring transformation to the Pygmies must think of long term goals.

The researcher was convinced beyond any doubt that land would go along to solve part of the Pygmy problem.

In conclusion the Church has limited social involvement which has affected participation.

Relationship Between the Social Needs and Participation

Research question 3:

How does social needs affect the participation in Church activities?

The researcher found that the Pygmies over the years have felt neglected both by the Church and the community at large. On their participation, they noted several things that make it impossible to attend Church regularly and by extension participate in Church activities.

The researcher noted that the Pygmies still go around their daily cores of looking for food on Sundays just like other days. Men sometimes go hunting while women work for others in exchange of food.

The other reason is sicknesses. When someone or a member of one's family is sick, it becomes difficult to attend Church leaving the person behind alone. Those affected might go looking for herbs or food for the sick person. Informants also said that since the Church did not bother about their struggles, the tendency to go around other things as opposed to attending Church was high.

Due to poor housing, it is difficult during heavy rains. At times Pygmies are forced to flee to mountains where they can take shelter. Some times they do not attend Church since they hardly sleep at night. Sicknesses associated with colds are also common in the rainy season. At such times any opportunity is taken to look for food and Church is thus shelved.

The other reason is associated with clothes. When the researcher asked the women how often they changed their clothes, they women laughed. They all confessed to have only one peace of cloth which they have to wash on Saturday in readiness to Church on Sunday. They wash the clothes and wait as they bask near the river for clothes to dry. Others put on *shuka* and go about doing their duties as the clothes dry up. If climate is not favourable they do not wash the clothes and cannot go to Church. Those who do not get soap to wash or are caught up with work on Saturday avoid going to Church in dirty cloths. Unlike women, men did not care much about dirty cloths. They hardly wash their cloths. They will normally go to Church with the dirty clothes if they do not go to hunt or do other jobs.

The researcher found that the choice of the Church was determined by its proximity to the Pygmy village, its doctrine and the social needs the Church could

offer or promise to offer. Interestingly the researcher found that the Pygmies would not change their Church in favour of a new Church which is providing clothes and food. All the focus groups were in agreement that they would not shift to a new Church just because it is offering food and cloths. They said doctrine is important as well. The researcher could not establish how genuine the argument was. This was hard to establish since some members of the groups responding to a different discussion had indicated that they left the former Church because the Church did not care for their social needs.

Since Pygmies have no education, they can not read the Kiswahili translated Bible or participate in areas that require basic education. Their illiterate level shut them away from opportunities of service in Church and in the community.

Overall both the Pygmies and the pastors were in agreement that if basic social needs as cited were met, the Pygmies are capable of being independent. Two pastors however felt that guidance and leadership would be needed to ensure smooth transition from old forest thinking to active community life. Pygmies would appreciate Church and community if they saw efforts towards their good living.

In conclusion of this analysis, we may assert that meeting social needs is of paramount importance especially to marginalized people who have no regular source of income. The literature review showed that the Bible highly advocates for holistic care of humanity. Examples are drawn from the way Israel dealt with the poor, Jesus ministering to the needy and the early Church choosing men to take care of the disadvantaged in the society all emphasize this point. The good news is that with little efforts towards meeting these needs the gospel is bringing meaning and transformation in the lives of the Pygmies. Instead of seeing themselves as neglected people, holistic gospel can make them members of the family of God's people.

The discussion on the findings clearly addresses the hypothesis. The social needs identified in the research such as land, medical facilities, etc do affect the participation in Church. These needs are the determinants of participation in Church among the Pygmies. There is a clear relationship between the social needs of the Pygmies and their participation in Church. The findings show why these needs determine participation. The analysis of the findings confirms each hypothesis satisfactory.

The theory that social factors deter Pygmies in Katana and Ijwi forests from fully participating in Church is therefore correct. In order to reach marginalized groups such as Pygmies, there is need to emphasize on social responsibility for effective ministry.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to determine the social and economic factors that hinder participation and by extension the receptivity of the gospel among the Pygmy community in Katana and Ijwi forests and how this can be used to have a fruitful and holistic ministry among the Pygmies. Having analyzed the research findings, the researcher attempts to draw helpful conclusions and recommendations for Churches, missionaries, NGOs, and cross-cultural workers desiring to work among the Pygmies in Congo.

Summary

The research findings indicate that several social needs of the Pygmies hinder their Church participation. These social needs include; land, food, education and medical facilities among others. These indeed are the same needs all humans' beings require in life. While some have access to these much needed utilities others do not.

The study shows that the Pygmies are often forgotten people by the Church and the society at large. This group can be considered marginalized. The physical and social needs of the Pygmies are great and felt needs were ascertained through the extensive discussions and observations made. This people group is in desperate situation. With

insecurity in Congo, NGOs who were initially of great help have withdrawn from most parts of Congo. This leaves the situation much worse. The only alternative rests on the Church. Instead of the Church sitting and lamenting, she should take this as a great opportunity and an open door to preach the good news in a holistic approach. The research can ascertain that any reasonable ministry to the Pygmies must consider the social needs as much as the spiritual needs. The Church should not see Pygmies as beggars bothering them but as people who need encouragement and friendship.

The researcher also found that the Church in Katana and Ijwi feel incapable of addressing these needs due to their lack of the much needed resources. The researcher found that the greatest challenge facing the Church in its endeavor to reach the Pygmies is economic. Due to lack of needed resources, the Church is unable to do effective holistic ministry due to the expenses of meeting the physical needs.

Nevertheless the researcher felt that the Church needs to put more effort in its bid to reach the Pygmies. Suggestions on practical ways of Church involvement are elaborated in the recommendations section.

Conclusion

Research shows that social needs affected participation in Church. The study showed that a relationship exists between these factors since they acted upon each other to affect participation in Church.

Among the social needs, participants cited lack of land as the one single most important factor that affects participation. Lack of land brings in lack of food and other economical hardships. If Pygmies had land, they would farm for themselves and

possibly get enough to eat and sell the rest. They would be able to take care of other aspects like schools for their children, visit hospitals when sick, etc.

There is still an opportunity for the Church to salvage the situation by getting involved in holistic ministry. The Pygmies are still open and willing to work together with Christians and Churches for a better future.

Recommendations

This research indeed achieved its goals in that it determined the social needs that hinder Pygmies from Church participation. The researcher makes the following recommendations.

First, the Church must be more intentional in responding to the social needs as it reaches the Pygmies with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Its ministry should be holistic, touching the whole person. The physical, social, mental, spiritual and emotional needs should be met. Being aware of the needs that keep the Pygmies away from Church, the Church then must be willing to participate in meeting these needs. The need to contextualize the gospel to meet the felt needs can not be overemphasized. This calls for the Church to use both proclamation and social welfare methods in its outreach endeavors. This can be achieved by coming up with programs geared towards alleviating poverty among the Pygmies and creating sustainable projects.

Practically, the Church in Congo especially in the neighborhoods of the Pygmies should be involved in the short term plans. Church leaders can encourage their members to occasionally donate clothes and food stuffs to the Pygmies. Donating of clothes will give Pygmies a chance to change clothes and keep warm. The Church or its individual members can also invite Pygmies in their homes where

meals can be shared as a sign of love and fellowship. This act will bring Pygmies closer to the society and at the same time provide opportunity for outreach.

Secondly, since lack of land was cited as the greatest obstacle to meaningful development, the Church in Congo can partner with other stakeholders like NGOs and Churches outside of Congo to provide land as a long term plan and thus fight the high poverty level. The stakeholders should go further in providing seeds for plantings as well as relieve foods during this time of cultivating. On this land, pilot farming as a demonstration can be done. The farm can act as the training ground from where Pygmies and the wider community will get necessary training on farming techniques. There is therefore need for the Church in Congo to network with other institutions by sharing information available with others for informed involvement.

There is need for the world wide Church to be involved in mobilizing resources necessary to reach the Pygmies. This can be done through fundraising, awareness meetings, etc. The compassionate ministries are part of what God has called us into as seen in the literature review. The need for missionaries, volunteer workers like agriculturists, nurses, doctors, teachers, etc to work among the Pygmies would be highly encouraged. This includes both locals and internationals.

Third, the task is not easy and calls for heavenly intervention. There is need for concerted prayers for the Pygmies in Congo forests so that the Lord will raise laborers among them.

Fourth, there is need to train pastors who are working in these regions. Pastors need training on how to work among the marginalized groups and how to handle immerging challenges.

This social ministry must go further to seeking social justice and advocacy for this poor and marginalized people.

There is need to help the Pygmies leave their isolated life and interact with other indigenous people. This will widen their worldview and expose them to life outside their familiar territory (the forest). They do not have to abandon their culture but interact with others in order to cope with the change in a creative way. Having lived in the forest for years, the Pygmies need a lot of exposure from the outside world in which they are now part of.

This research has revealed some social aspects of Pygmies that are linked to their participation in Church.

Further Research

There is likelihood that the social needs category addressed here is not the only determinant to participation. There is therefore need for further research to establish other factors other than social needs that may determine Church participation among the Pygmies. This may include; religious beliefs, traditional belief system and cultural practices.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GUIDE 1

(The questions administered to the Pygmies for in-depth discussions)

1. Discuss the background of the Pygmies history
2. Discuss circumstances surrounding migration from the forest
3. Discuss circumstances surrounding migration from one locality to another
4. Discuss the social needs of the Pygmies?
5. Would meeting these needs make the Pygmies independent economically?
6. What determines the Church you attend?
7. Has the Church been helpful in meeting these needs?
8. How do you go about medication in cases of sicknesses?
9. Discuss your daily occupation in search for livelihood.
10. Does social needs determine Church participation?
11. In which ways does social needs determine Church participation?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GUIDE 2

(The questions administered to the Pastors for in-depth discussions)

1. Discuss the background of the Pygmies in terms of their social needs
2. Are the Pygmies capable of meetings their social needs?
3. In your opinion, who should take care of their social needs?

4. How much is your church involved in meeting the social needs?
5. What would be the hindrances of meeting such needs
6. How do the needs affect participation in church activities?
7. Discuss practical suggestions on how to help solve the Pygmy's social predicaments?