

## A STUDY OF LUKE 4:18-19: IMPLICATIONS FOR GHANAIAN PASTORS IN CHRISTIAN MISSION AND MINISTRY

Paul Kang-Ewala Diboro (Mphil) & Christian Addai (BAT with Administration)

<sup>1</sup> Christian Service University

<sup>2</sup> Presbyterian Church of Ghana

### ABSTRACT

The study of Luke 4:18-19 presents a rich foundation for understanding the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ, particularly regarding his proclamation of liberation, healing, and restoration to the marginalized and oppressed.<sup>1</sup> In the context of contemporary mission and pastoral ministry, Ghanaian pastors encounter diverse challenges ranging from socio-economic issues to spiritual warfare, all within a rapidly changing cultural landscape. However, amidst these challenges lie invaluable lessons and principles embedded within Luke 4:18-19, offering timeless wisdom for effective mission and ministry. The study employed both historical and exegetical approaches to explore the implications of the text and its application to the context of Ghanaian pastors. It also discusses the nature of Jesus' mission and ministry, mission and ministry in the early Church and ministry to the poor among the church Fathers in order to draw informed conclusions for the text's implications. This study argues that delving into the contextual significance of Luke 4:18-19, by elucidating its implications for Ghanaian pastors, is key to providing valuable insight on biblical exegesis, interpretation, Christian mission and ministry among young, gifted, but desperate pastors in Ghana.

**Keywords:** *Mission, Ministry, Church, Pastor, Poor*

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#### Correspondence

Paul Kang-Ewala Diboro  
[pdiboro@csuc.edu.gh](mailto:pdiboro@csuc.edu.gh)

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The pursuit of effective pastoral ministry is not only a calling but a journey marked by continuous learning, reflection, and growth. Within the Christian faith, the Gospel of Luke offers a rich tapestry of teachings, narratives, and insights into the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Among the pivotal passages within this Gospel is Luke 4:18-19, often regarded as Jesus' manifesto for his ministry.<sup>1</sup> The statements in the text encapsulate the essence of Jesus' mission on earth and provide profound insights into the nature and purpose of Christian ministry.

In the context of Ghana, a country where Christianity plays a central role in the lives of many, and where the pastoral landscape is continually evolving, it is imperative for Ghanaian pastors to delve into the teachings of Luke 4:18-19. This passage not only offers theological depth but also practical guidance for navigating the complexities of ministry in a contemporary Ghanaian context. Luke 4:18-19 forms a pivotal moment in the Gospel of Luke, encapsulating the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. The text occurs early in Jesus' public ministry and serves as a manifesto for his mission. The language used, including motifs of liberation, healing, and proclamation of the gospel, underscores key themes that are developed throughout the Gospel.<sup>2</sup>

Joseph M Lear argues that, the declaration in the text reveals Jesus' identity as the anointed Messiah empowered by the Spirit of God. His mission to preach the gospel to the poor, heal the broken-hearted, and liberate the oppressed highlights the transformative and redemptive nature of his ministry.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Jesus' proclamation of the "acceptable year of the Lord" points to the inauguration of God's kingdom and the fulfilment of divine promises.<sup>4</sup> Beyond its historical and theological significance, Luke 4:18-19 continues to inspire Christian reflection and praxis. The text challenges Ghanaian pastors to embody the values of justice, compassion, and liberation exemplified by Jesus' ministry. It calls for active engagement in addressing societal injustices, caring for the marginalized, and proclaiming the transformative message of the gospel.

## **2.0 HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE TEXT**

The author of Luke's gospel is not explicitly identified in the book. However, scholars like Donald Guthrie and Craig S Keener, argue that, there is adequate evidence to point to Luke as the author. For example, Guthrie points out that "the gospel itself does not tell us anything specific about the identity of the author, but it does tell us about his methods."<sup>5</sup> According to Kari Pekka Tolppanen, "The tradition that the evangelist was Luke, a companion of Paul, mentioned in Colossians 4:14, Philemon 24, and 2 Timothy 4:11, goes back to the second century."<sup>6</sup> Donald concludes that the book was written by Luke based on literary conventions.<sup>7</sup> The author claims to have obtained knowledge about Jesus' life from eyewitnesses, hinting that he was not an eyewitness.<sup>8</sup> Craig S. Keener further affirms Luke, Paul's traveling companion, as the author of Luke-Acts, as supported by early tradition and witnesses from the second century.<sup>9</sup> Luke's use of educated language aligns with the history of Lukan authorship, notwithstanding inflated claims about his use of medical terms.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan E.T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, "New Testament Theology for College Students and Pastors." (2020): 18.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas S. McComiskey, *The Literary Structure of Luke 4: 14-24: 53 A New Proposal* (Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen, 1997), 89.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph M. Lear, "The Hybrid Isaiah Quotation in Luke 4: 18–19," In *Ancient Readers and their Scriptures* (Brill, 2018): 159.

<sup>4</sup> Lear, "The Hybrid Isaiah Quotation in Luke 4: 18–19", 159.

<sup>5</sup> Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Apollos, Inter-Varsity Press, 1991), 28.

<sup>6</sup> Kari Pekka Tolppanen, "A Source Critical Reassessment of the Gospel of Luke: Was Canonical Mark Really Luke's Source?" (PhD diss., University of St. Michael's College, 2009), 21.

<sup>7</sup> Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 28.

<sup>8</sup> Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 29.

<sup>9</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 34.

<sup>10</sup> Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 34.

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Scholars argue on the precise date when the Gospel of Luke was written. B.J. Koet notes that Dickson places the date after AD 70 on the basis that, “Luke made extensive use of Mark’s Gospel, and Mark’s Gospel, which was the first of the New Testament Gospels to be written, probably took place around AD 70.”<sup>11</sup> Keener’s opinion on the date of Luke’s composition is that, while some academics propose a date before AD 64 and others after AD 70, none of these dates is definitive with evidential substance.<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, a date after AD 70 is more plausible, considering that Luke referred to Mark’s work, which had previously existed.

For the recipient and purpose of the book, Wilber T. Dayton indicates that both the Gospel and Acts mention a person called Theophilus.<sup>13</sup> The Greek phrase *Klaudios Lysias tō kratistō hēgemoni Phēliki chairein* used by Luke to address Felix in Acts 23:26 and 24:3, as well as Festus in Acts 26:25, shows that Theophilus in the Gospel refers to a single person rather than a collection of God’s disciples.<sup>14</sup> Bock agrees that Theophilus is the intended receiver of the book, arguing that he is a prominent individual who has been exposed to the religion and is seeking comfort.<sup>15</sup> By implication, Luke was aware that Theophilus would not be his sole reader, and there are questions concerning his involvement with the emerging Jewish-Gentile community and the predicted return of Jesus Christ.<sup>16</sup> If Theophilus was a Roman officer, he may be a Gentile, given the contents of the gospel and Acts of the Apostles indicate a Gentile readership. Bock speculates that, Luke meant to publish this work and envisioned a larger audience than just one man.<sup>17</sup>

## **3.0 LITERARY CONTEXT OF THE TEXT**

The text (Luke 4:18-19) is from Isaiah 61:1-2, which Jesus recited, and was seen by Jews as a messianic scripture explaining what the Messiah would do when he arrived. Warren W. Wiersbe writes, “The Jewish rabbis took this text to relate to the Messiah, and the people in the congregation recognized it.”<sup>18</sup> However, the Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah because they did not perceive him as a deliverer from Roman oppression. Additionally, they were familiar with his parents and his growing up.

Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown argue that, Jesus’ citation from Isaiah’s prophecies in the Septuagint shows his divine purpose and unique endowments.<sup>19</sup> Jesus was the Lord’s Servant, leading Jacob’s tribes and accomplishing Yahweh’s deliverance. The acceptable year is seen as an illusion compared to the Jubilee (Lev. 25:10), which is a year of universal liberation for persons and property (Is. 49:8; 2 Cor. 6:2). According to these writers, Jesus addresses humanity’s afflictions in the text, including poverty, broken heartedness, bondage, blindness, and bruisedness.<sup>20</sup>

According to Welch, the text opens the door of compassion for the poor, captives, destitute, and sorrowing to hear the good news of liberation through Jesus himself.<sup>21</sup> Guthrie contends that, the placement of the episode in Nazareth by Luke was suitable since it gave an outstanding summation of Jesus’ message. He claims that Jesus read Isaiah 6:1-2 in the synagogue and explained its fulfilment on three levels: current, personal, and gracious.<sup>22</sup> He thinks the passage contains a line from Isaiah

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<sup>11</sup> B.J. Koet, “Today this Scripture has been Fulfilled in Your Ears. Jesus’ Explanation of Scripture in Luke 4, 16–30.” *Bijdragen* 47, no. 4 (1986): 368.

<sup>12</sup> Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 31.

<sup>13</sup> Dayton, Wilber T. “A New Look at the Marcan Hypothesis and Gospel Research.” *The Asbury Journal* 17, no.2 (1963): 7.

<sup>14</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts: A Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan: 2012), 12.

<sup>15</sup> Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 12.

<sup>16</sup> Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 12.

<sup>17</sup> Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 12.

<sup>18</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament* (Colorado Springs: David C Cook, 2007), 34.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary: Practical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974), 79.

<sup>20</sup> Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *Commentary: Practical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, 79.

<sup>21</sup> Reuben Welch, “Luke.” *Beacon Bible Expositions* 3 (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1974), 13.

<sup>22</sup> Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 29.

58:6, most likely used to characterize Jesus' work. In his view, the deeds mentioned should be interpreted spiritually rather than literally, and the people were first surprised before becoming angry owing to the arrogant claims.<sup>23</sup>

In the opinion of Tokunboh Adeyemo, Luke 4:14-44 uses clear political language. He argues that, Jesus proclaims five goals for God: delivering good news to the poor, announcing liberation for captives, restoring sight for the blind, freeing the oppressed, and proclaiming the year of the Lord's favor.<sup>24</sup> Jesus made this proclamation during his visit to the synagogue in Nazareth, where he publicly introduced himself as God's Messiah. Adeyemo thinks that communicating a message from God is best done in a setting where people gather to worship or hear God's word. From beginning to the end, Jesus focused on the poor's needs, both internally and in social, economic, and political settings. He concludes that Jesus' portrayal depicts someone empowered by the Holy Spirit, separating his audience into two groups: those who recognize God in Jesus' words and acts, and those who do not.<sup>25</sup> It is noted that no one can rule out the political element of Jesus' statements in Luke 4:18-19. However, it must be recognized that politics is done by people who are very much absorbed in selfishness.<sup>26</sup>

According to Gooding, Jesus' statement addresses the economic, political, social, physical, and spiritual elements which is comprehensive, suggesting that the purpose outlined by Jesus reveals something about holistic ministry.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, Ministry requires a holistic approach, including preaching to the morally and spiritually bankrupt, addressing poverty, liberating the oppressed, healing the sick, supporting the weak, and fixing the economy.

## **4.0 SOME EXEGETICAL DISCUSSIONS OF THE TEXT**

### **4.1 The Greek Text of Luke 4:18-19**

*πνευμα κυρου επ εμε ου εινεκεν εχρισεν με ευαγγελισαοθαι πτωχας απεσιαλκεν με, κηρυξαι αιχμαλωτιοκ εφεςιν και τυφλας αναβλοφιν, αποσειλαι ιοθραυσμεους εν αφεσει ηρυξαι ενι αυιον κυπιου δεκιοπ.*

### **4.2 Transliteration in English Luke 4:18-19**

*Pneuma kuriou epi' eme ou eineken echrisen me euangelisathai ptochois, apestalken me, keruzai aichmalotois ephesin kai tuphlois anablephin, aposteilai tethrausmeous en aphesei, keruzai eniauton kuriou dekon.*

### **4.3 English Translation of Luke 4:18-19**

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.<sup>28</sup>

In Greek, this phrase *euangelisasthai ptochois* can be translated as *evangelize*. The text Luke 4:18-19 considers the concept of *euangelisasthai*, which means to declare or herald the word of redemption or rescue to God's people. The verb - evangelize comes from the Greek noun *euangelion*, meaning "good news" or "gospel." Green states that the term *ptochois* "poor" in the text refers to all disadvantaged members of society, not only the economically poor, because these concepts are poorly established in ancient Mediterranean culture and the social reality of Luke-Acts. For Green, delivering good news to

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<sup>23</sup> Donald Guthrie, "Biblical Authority and New Testament Scholarship." *Vox Evangelica* 16 (1986): 23.

<sup>24</sup> Tokunboh Adeyemo, ed. *Africa Bible Commentary: A one-volume Commentary Written by 70 African Scholars* (Michigan: Zondervan Academic, 2010), 48-49.

<sup>25</sup> Adeyemo, ed. *Africa Bible Commentary*, 48-49.

<sup>26</sup> Adeyemo, ed. *Africa Bible Commentary*, 48-49.

<sup>27</sup> Judith M. Lieu, *The Gospel of Luke: Epworth Commentaries* (Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012), 11.

<sup>28</sup> J. I. Packer, *Global Study Bible* (China: Crossway, 2012), 1426.

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the impoverished is a message of inclusiveness, not exclusion, as the Jews did throughout Jesus' earthly ministry.<sup>29</sup> In this sense, the term *ptochois* (the poor) refers to someone who is disadvantaged in society because of their lower social rank or honor.

Joseph A. Fitzmyer indicates that Isaiah was announcing the consolation of Zion to the poor in the postexilic community.<sup>30</sup> Hopkins, on the other hand, argues that spiritualizing the passage cannot remove the divine emphasis on poverty and oppression.<sup>31</sup> Along the same lines, the Greek definition of salvation, *soteria* that "salvation is a larger concept in Greek than we commonly conceive of in English. Other ideas inherent in *soteria* include restoration to a condition of safety, soundness, health, and welfare, as well as protection from the threat of destruction."<sup>32</sup> Aside from delivering spiritual redemption to humanity, which Luke 4:18 highlights, Jesus in his earthly mission gave healing to the sick and fed the hungry.

Apart from preaching the gospel to the poor, Jesus promises in Luke 4:18 to heal the brokenhearted. In Greek, this can be expressed as *therapefste tous syntetrimmenous tēn kardia*. The word *therapefste* which means "to heal" or "to cure." It implies an active and intentional effort to restore health and wholeness. According to Uwaegbute, this cannot be spiritualized in the sense that the Roman government's repressive reign caused significant anguish and grief for the Jews Jesus addressed.<sup>33</sup> The Roman government's imperialist dominance may have resulted in significant injustices for Jews. Jesus' teaching was intended to bring pleasure and consolation to the brokenhearted. These brokenhearted were not always victims of political violence, but rather individuals whose hearts were broken due to sin and Satan's attacks.

Jesus' anointing was a metaphorical act of *Kēruxai aichmalōtois áphesin*, which means proclaiming release to captives, not physical prisoners of war. Gooding notes that Jesus was referring to those who were bound by guilt, Satan, and money.<sup>34</sup> However, Uwaegbute, Kingsley Ikechukwu contends that Jesus' audience was more concerned with the liberation of Jewish prisoners as a result of the Roman Empire's imperialistic control.<sup>35</sup> By and large, the idea of announcing release to spiritual captives also suggests that the church should be concerned about the situation of physical inmates. As other scriptures suggest, the church should aid poor persons in society through advocacy, relief, and development activities. The perspective of Jesus' audience was more towards the release of Jewish captives, because many Jews had already lost their inheritance.

The phrase *anáblepsis typhlôn* which means the recovery of sight for the blind is another aspect of the text, Luke 4:18-19. Gooding goes on to say that, "this obviously included the offer of literal sight to the physically blind, since various cases of healing of blind people are recorded in the Gospel."<sup>36</sup> He swiftly adds that the phrase *anoixai ophthalmous autōn tou epistrepsai apo skotous eis phōs* suggests the opening of people's spiritual eyes, allowing them to turn from darkness to light, quoting Acts 26:18.<sup>37</sup> Russell posits that, Jesus utilized his divine nature to heal people while teaching the gospel.<sup>38</sup>

The usage of *apoluson tous katapepiesmenous* in Jesus manifesto means to set those who are oppressed free, which was a daily reality under Roman colonial control. The Jews interpreted this

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<sup>29</sup> Joel B. Green, *The gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: WB Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 45.

<sup>30</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (Garden City, N.Y: Anchor Bible, 1985), 86.

<sup>31</sup> Dwight N. Hopkins, *Introducing Black Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis Books, 2014), 78.

<sup>32</sup> Hopkins, *Introducing Black Theology of Liberation*, 78.

<sup>33</sup> Uwaegbute, Kingsley Ikechukwu. "A Challenge of Jesus' Manifesto in Luke 4: 16–21 to the Nigerian Christian." *International Journal of Theology and Reformed Tradition* 5 (2013): 150.

<sup>34</sup> David Willoughby Gooding, *According to Luke: A New Exposition of the Third Gospel* (Myrtle field: Inter-Varsity Press, 2013), 56-57.

<sup>35</sup> Ikechukwu, "A Challenge of Jesus' Manifesto in Luke 4", 153.

<sup>36</sup> Gooding, *According to Luke*, 67.

<sup>37</sup> Green, *Luke as Narrative Theologian*, 59.

<sup>38</sup> Mark Russell, "Christian mission is holistic." *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 25, no. 2 (2008): 95.

scripture to mean that the expected Messiah would free them from Roman control. Biblical stories show God's support for oppressed people, such as the account of Yahweh delivering Hebrew slaves from slavery to liberty (Exodus 3:6-11).<sup>39</sup> The biblical liberation freed not just the unseen souls of slaves, but also real laborers who were slaves to the ruling class, whose goal was to make money via forced and unfair labor.<sup>40</sup> Ikechukwu opines that throughout Jesus' time, the devil oppressed people via afflictions and diseases.<sup>41</sup>

Jesus promised in his manifesto to declare *eniautos Kyriou dektos*, which is the Lord's acceptable year, before giving the scroll to the attendant. Accordingly, the *etos apheseos* translates to "release" or "forgiveness," indicating the Jubilee year's purpose of release from debts and restoration of lands; this was a respite from Leviticus 25.<sup>42</sup> Keener suggests that the Jews had recently celebrated, or that it was expected but not yet commemorated.<sup>43</sup> Jesus' mission proved the goal of the Jubilee year by meeting man's material and spiritual needs while also forgiving sin and granting eternal life. During this memorable year, slaves were freed, property was returned to its original owners, debts were erased and the field sat fallow as humans and beasts slept and rejoiced in the Lord.<sup>44</sup> Jesus applied this to His ministry, not in a political or economic sense, but in a bodily and spiritual one.<sup>45</sup> Fitzmyer points out that, "Isaiah description of *eniautos Kyriou dektos* was a period of favor and rescue for Zion is being utilized to declare Jesus' reign and the new way of redemption that will come through him."<sup>46</sup> These viewpoints are consistent with Luke's authorial desire to declare the Lord's acceptable year.

## **5.0 NATURE OF JESUS' MISSION AND MINISTRY**

For MacArthur, the usage of *Kýrios Didáskalos* depicts Jesus as a Master Teacher. Being a Master Teacher, Jesus modelled and demonstrated what he taught. When one considers how Jesus worked with his disciples, one notices that he modelled everything for them. As they became an integrated group (community) they travelled everywhere with him, observing how he preached, taught, healed, cast out demons and brought about the Kingdom of God. The disciples were fortunate in that they would have an opportunity, while Jesus was still with them, to go out on two substantial ministry trips. This was a key moment in their lives as they were given the opportunity to put into practice what the Master had taught them. MacArthur speaks of this progression in the training of the Apostles. "At first, they simply followed Jesus, gleaning from His sermons to the multitudes and listening to His instructions along with a larger group of disciples." He goes on to show that after some time "He [Jesus] selects twelve men out of that group of full-time disciples, identifies them as apostles, and begins to focus most of His energies on their personal instruction."<sup>47</sup> MacArthur goes on to describe how the disciples became full-time students, learners through teaching, asking questions, and having intimate fellowship with him. By this, the disciples explored ministry opportunities as they were engaged in special assignments.<sup>48</sup>

Jesus had a three-pronged process in his ministry, which would be passed on to His disciples. He would gather people and minister to them, either by teaching, preaching, or by a demonstration of God's power through healing and deliverance.<sup>49</sup> The primary task in evangelism is to gather people with the purpose of preaching the Gospel and then to gather them into the Church. This gathering

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<sup>39</sup> Hopkins, *Introducing Black Theology of Liberation*, 56.

<sup>40</sup> Green, *Luke as Narrative Theologian*, 59.

<sup>41</sup> Ikechukwu, "A Challenge of Jesus' Manifesto in Luke 4", 146.

<sup>42</sup> Ikechukwu, "A Challenge of Jesus' Manifesto in Luke 4", 153.

<sup>43</sup> Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 50.

<sup>44</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Bible knowledge commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Dallas: Victor Books, 1983), 24.

<sup>45</sup> Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary*: 34.

<sup>46</sup> Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke: Introduction, Translation and Notes*, 45.

<sup>47</sup> John F. MacArthur, *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically* (California: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 22-23.

<sup>48</sup> MacArthur, *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically*, 24.

<sup>49</sup> Donald J., Goergen, *The Mission and Ministry of Jesus* Vol. 1. (Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), 16.

process had a three-fold effect. Firstly, it would be for discipleship purposes where those gathered could be trained. Secondly, the process of consolidation – the establishing of a nucleus community. Thirdly, by establishing a discipleship group, he would be able to send them out to follow the same process: gather, consolidate and send.<sup>50</sup>

## **6.0 MISSION AND MINISTRY IN THE EARLY CHURCH**

The church in Jerusalem grew rapidly after the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ because of the Holy Spirit's active role.<sup>51</sup> As the church was rapidly growing, socio-economic issues of side-lining the poor within the newly established church surfaced (Acts 6:1-6). The apostles addressed the new problem and wisely suggested it be resolved. In Antioch the church was visited by a group of prophets from Jerusalem; among them was a prophet, named Agabus. He prophesied about the coming famine in the Roman world which would affect the church in Jerusalem; the Antioch church took the message seriously and assisted (Acts 11:19-30). Furthermore, the apostle Paul complimented this move mobilizing the entire gentile church to assist and ensuring to remember the poor. Consequently, these developments elevated the status of the poor in the ministry of the church. Paul's concern for the poor was also demonstrated in Galatians 2:10, Romans 15:23-28 and II Corinthians 8:1-9:15 and he dedicated some of ministry time raising some welfare offerings for the poor.<sup>52</sup> Anthony Colin Ellis advocates for a church which is conscious of the plight of the poor. He notes that the New Testament church comprised apostles and prophets who exercised considerable influence in the Christian community on the poor.<sup>53</sup>

### **6.1 Ministry to the Poor among the Church Fathers**

Ambrose, Basil the Great, Tertullian, Jerome and Cyprian bishop of Carthage, among other church Fathers, were concerned about the prevalent socio-economic and religious conditions of the first century A.D. Gabriel Mumba captures their concern as follows: "If oppression and greed are grave sins, they become graver when man preoccupies himself with using his shrewdness, deceit, capabilities and authority to practice them with the assumption that no one has the right to call him to account."<sup>54</sup> Ambrose's days were filled with evil vices of injustice and oppression of the poor. Ambrose, who was a special advisor to an Emperor who ruled with an iron fist; embarked on a process of addressing many vices of injustice through his office; and became the first church Father and leader to use his office successfully to persuade civil rulers to look in the plight of the poor.<sup>55</sup>

According to Josef Lössl, Ambrose was concerned with the plight of the poor.<sup>56</sup> Ambrose as an early Church Father was an administrator and preacher who spoke for the poor; and was proved to be a fearless preacher who spoke against the powerful Arian groups which socially and spiritually oppressed the poor.<sup>57</sup> During Ambrose' time, poor people's fields and property were being violently taken from them without regard for the law and he became the first church Father and leader to use his office successfully to coerce civil rulers into helping the poor because in his days, some powerful class of people "coveted fields and seized them; and houses, and taken them away; they oppressed a man and his house, a man and his inheritance."<sup>58</sup> Ambrose was typically inspired with the prophetic message

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<sup>50</sup> MacArthur, *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically*, 22.

<sup>51</sup> Peter Walker, *Jerusalem in the Early Christian Centuries: Jerusalem Past and Present in the Purposes of God* (Cambridge: Tyndale House, 1992), 89.

<sup>52</sup> Josef Lössl, *The Early Church: History and Memory* (New York: A&C Black, 2010), 120.

<sup>53</sup> Anthony Colin Ellis, *Academic Theology and Christian Growth: An Exploration into the Use and Potential of Theology as a Resource in Christian Faith and Living* (United Kingdom: The University of Manchester, 1980), 26.

<sup>54</sup> Gabriel Mumba, "Placing the poor within the current [prophetic] ministry of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God of Zambia (PAOG (Z)) Pastors" (MTh Thesis: South African Theological Seminary, 2017), 45.

<sup>55</sup> Walker, *Jerusalem in the Early Christian Centuries*, 92.

<sup>56</sup> Lössl, *The Early Church: History and Memory*. 127.

<sup>57</sup> Lössl, *The Early Church: History and Memory*. 127.

<sup>58</sup> Mumba, "Placing the poor within the current [prophetic] ministry", 55.

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of the prophets of speaking for the less privileged who were being oppressed by the few privileged religious leaders. The situation called for a leader to denounce the injustices on the poor.<sup>59</sup>

Peter Walker claims Ambrose's days called for a prophetic voice to address the government officials who took advantage of the poor. Ambrose thinks that God is not reconciled and sins are not forgiven by thousands of rams and goats or by the fruits of transgression, but through God's grace and by the good life of helping the vulnerable.<sup>60</sup> Basil the Great was considered an advocate of both social concern and monastic life; he vehemently denounced the evil practices and encouraged the wealthy to be good stewards of the wealth God has placed in their hands.<sup>61</sup> Basil yearned for spiritual and social action because prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are practical means for one's spiritual move in the direction of our Savior, but one should not end with just these.<sup>62</sup>

Evans G. Malaty acknowledges Basil the Great made an interesting observation concerning the practices of the church in times of injustice, the elite and privileged leaders were to consider the poor. For Malaty, this could be done through dignifying man and the fear of the Lord.<sup>63</sup> Salisbury, a great theologian of an African descent was concerned about Christians' attitude about their community. He held that, spiritual reform and truth were to be found in the revelation of God in Christ; and by walking humbly before Him and living in obedience to His Word. He strongly fought for the rights of the poor Christians oppressed by the privileged Roman officials.<sup>64</sup>

Mike Aquilina was a sensitive teacher for moral life among Christians and spoke for the poor women who were being segregated. He also attacked rich rulers who were known for their luxurious life at the expense of the poor.<sup>65</sup> Aquilina sensitively advocated the ascetic life and condemned the luxurious and wealth-seeking among the clergy as he addressed the misuse of power by religious and government leaders.<sup>66</sup> Malaty explains that all the religious and civil leaders, rulers and priests, agreed on one issue, namely the love of money and no place for the poor in their administration.<sup>67</sup> For example, Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage was considered the greatest bishop of the third century who forsook the world and sold his estates for the benefit of the poor.<sup>68</sup>

Joyce E. Salisbury identifies Cyprian Bishop of Carthage as a rich and cultured Christian destined for government to represent people of various needs as he opposed the injustices within the church through his important work, 'The Unity of the Church', and was disheartened at the crumbling morality of the church in Africa because of the social evils of segregation and division.<sup>69</sup> Cyprian Bishop of Carthage proposed that Christians should desire to put themselves in others' place, as a single body, as that demonstrates a genuine motive to help and reach out to fellowman.<sup>70</sup> Cyprian Bishop of Carthage's courage and inspiration to speak for the poor was drawn from the message of the church to treat the poor men and women, and rich men and women the same regardless of status to enhance and foster the unity, love and justice in the body of Jesus Christ.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Mumba, "Placing the poor within the current [prophetic] ministry", 55.

<sup>60</sup> Walker, *Jerusalem in the Early Christian Centuries*, 94.

<sup>61</sup> Walker, *Jerusalem in the Early Christian Centuries*, 94.

<sup>62</sup> Walker, *Jerusalem in the Early Christian Centuries*, 94.

<sup>63</sup> Evans G. Malaty, *The Fathers and the Early Councils: A History of Pastoral Care* (Great Britain: Cromwell, 2000), 59.

<sup>64</sup> Joyce E. Salisbury, *Church Fathers, Independent Virgins* (New York: Verso, 1992), 34.

<sup>65</sup> Mike Aquilina, *The Fathers of the Church* (U.S.A: Our Sunday Visitor, 2013), 22.

<sup>66</sup> Aquilina, *The Fathers of the Church*, 22.

<sup>67</sup> Malaty, *The Fathers and the Early Councils*, 59.

<sup>68</sup> Malaty, *The Fathers and the Early Councils*, 59.

<sup>69</sup> Salisbury, *Church Fathers, Independent Virgins*, 38.

<sup>70</sup> Salisbury, *Church Fathers, Independent Virgins*, 38.

<sup>71</sup> Aquilina, *The Fathers of the Church*, 29.



## **7.0 MINISTRY FOR MONEY, WEALTH AND FAME AMONG SOME GHANAIAN PASTORS**

In contemporary Ghana, a notable trend among some pastors involve a heightened emphasis on prosperity theology, where financial success and material wealth are promoted as signs of God's favor and faithfulness.<sup>72</sup> This shift often prioritizes charismatic preaching styles, social media savvy, and elaborate church services aimed at attracting large congregations. Some Ghanaian pastors frequently leverage these strategies to cultivate a personal brand, seeking fame and financial gain through their ministries. This approach has sparked debate within both religious and societal circles, questioning the balance between spiritual teachings and material aspirations in modern Ghanaian Christianity.

In Ghana, as in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the concept of prosperity theology has gained significant traction among younger pastors. Prosperity theology, often associated with the belief that financial blessing and physical well-being are the will of God for believers, has become a central theme in many evangelical churches across the region. Some Ghanaian pastors, influenced by both local and global evangelical movements, have embraced and adapted this theology in their ministries.<sup>73</sup> Ghana, like many African nations, has a complex socio-economic landscape with significant income disparities. The appeal of prosperity theology lies in its promise of financial success and betterment, resonating with individuals seeking economic stability and social advancement.<sup>74</sup>

The spread of prosperity theology in Ghana has been facilitated by global televangelists and their ministries, which reach a wide audience through satellite television and the internet. Young pastors often emulate these charismatic figures, adapting their messages to local contexts. Prosperity has been instrumental in the rapid growth of some churches in Ghana.<sup>75</sup> Some pastors utilize this theology not only to attract new members but also to retain them by offering hope for economic improvement and personal transformation. Isaac Boaheng, Clement Amoako, and Samuel Boahen have studied the impact of prosperity theology on African Christianity, including its manifestation in Ghana. They have highlighted how younger pastors reinterpret traditional Christian teachings through the lens of prosperity, often emphasizing giving, faith, and positive confession as pathways to financial blessing.<sup>76</sup> Such studies often reveal a blend of traditional spiritual practices with modern interpretations of prosperity, showcasing the dynamic nature of religious expression in contemporary Ghana. While prosperity attracts followers with its promise of material success, critics argue that it can lead to spiritual neglect and overlooks the structural inequalities that perpetuate poverty. However, whether prosperity theology adequately addresses broader social and economic challenges in Ghana still remains an issue of debate.

Apparently, some young Ghanaian pastors often approach ministry with a focus on gaining fame through various strategic means. This phenomenon reflects broader trends in global evangelicalism where pastors utilize media, technology, and entrepreneurial tactics to expand their influence. Meyer emphasizes how African Pentecostal pastors engage with media and popular culture to build their personal brand and attract followers.<sup>77</sup> These pastors often leverage social media platforms, television, and charismatic preaching styles to create a public persona that resonates with

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<sup>72</sup> James Lawrence Marshall "The Relationship between Contemporary Evangelical Church Leadership and Church Discipleship Formation" (EdD thesis: Ralings School of Divinity, 2021), 46.

<sup>73</sup> J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "Spirit and empowerment: The African initiated church movement and development," in *African Initiated Christianity and the Decolonisation of Development* (Routledge, 2020): 38.

<sup>74</sup> James Lawrence Marshall, "The Relationship between Contemporary Evangelical Church Leadership and Church Discipleship Formation." (2021): 48.

<sup>75</sup> Viateur Habarurema, "Succeed Here and in Eternity": The Prosperity Gospel in Ghana, written by Wilfred Asampambila Agana", *Exchange* 46, no. 4 (2017): 399.

<sup>76</sup> Isaac Boaheng, Clement Amoako, and Samuel Boahen. "A Critique of Prosperity Theology in the Context of Ghanaian Christianity," *Journal of Humanities Arts and Social Sciences* vol 4, no. 11 (2023): 135

<sup>77</sup> Bryant Myers L, "Progressive Pentecostalism, development, and Christian development NGOs: A challenge and an opportunity," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 39, no. 3 (2015): 115-120.

their audience. They may also employ marketing strategies commonly found in business contexts, such as branding, promotion, and advertising, to enhance their visibility and attract followers.

Moreover, the pursuit of fame among young Ghanaian pastors can be viewed through the lens of globalization and neoliberalism. In this context, success in ministry is often equated with numbers of followers, prosperity, and influence. Pastors may participate in conferences, workshops, and other events both locally and internationally to network, gain recognition, and further enhance their fame. However, the pursuit of fame can lead to concerns about authenticity, materialism, and the commercialization of faith. In this sense, the emphasis on prosperity and success in ministry may overshadow traditional values of humility, service, and spiritual growth.

## **8.0 THEOLOGICAL AND MISSIONARY CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY GHANA**

Ghana, with its rich cultural heritage and religious diversity, provides a unique backdrop for theological exploration. Indigenous Ghanaian beliefs, such as ancestor veneration and spiritual interconnectedness, often inform theological perspectives among pastors. These beliefs intersect with Christian theology, creating syncretic expressions of faith. Johnson Asamoah-Gyadu argues that the concept of spiritual warfare, deeply rooted in Ghanaian culture, influences how pastors engage in deliverance ministries and confronts spiritual challenges within their congregations.<sup>78</sup> The Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have experienced significant growth in Ghana, shaping the theological landscape and ministry practices. Ghanaian pastors draw heavily from Pentecostal and Charismatic theology, emphasizing the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, and divine healing. This theological orientation manifests in vibrant worship experiences, prophetic ministry, and an emphasis on prosperity gospel teachings.<sup>79</sup>

George Appiah-Sokye claims that the prosperity gospel, with its emphasis on material blessings and financial prosperity, has gained traction among Ghanaian pastors. Rooted in both indigenous beliefs in spiritual causality and Western notions of success, prosperity theology shapes preaching, prayer, and fundraising strategies within Ghanaian churches. Pastors often articulate a theology of abundance, promising divine favor and wealth to faithful believers who sow seeds of faith.<sup>80</sup>

Asamoah-Gyadu argues that the theological landscape in Ghana reflects syncretism and hybridity, as pastors navigate between indigenous beliefs, Christian doctrines, and global influences. This dynamic interplay results in diverse expressions of faith and ministry practices. Some pastors incorporate elements of traditional African spirituality, such as ritual practices and symbolism, into Christian worship, fostering a sense of cultural continuity and relevance.<sup>81</sup> While theological diversity enriches the Ghanaian church, it also presents challenges and critiques. Critics argue that the emphasis on prosperity gospel neglects the holistic message of the gospel and perpetuates materialism. Additionally, syncretic expressions of faith raise theological questions regarding orthodoxy and doctrinal purity. However, proponents of contextualized theology argue that such diversity reflects the dynamic nature of African Christianity and its ability to engage with contemporary issues.<sup>82</sup>

Preaching in Ghana is deeply rooted in theological and missionary principles that guide the interpretation and communication of biblical truths. Ghanaian theologians, such as Kwame Bediako and John S. Pobee, have emphasized the contextualization of Christian mission and doctrine within

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<sup>78</sup> Johnson Asamoah-Gyadu, *African charismatics: Current developments within independent indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 32-33.

<sup>79</sup> Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity, New Edition: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004), 45.

<sup>80</sup> George Appiah-Sokye, *Enough to Be Shared: a Purpose-Driven Name: A Vivid Life Story Application of George Appiah-Sokye* (New York: AuthorHouse, 2021), 67.

<sup>81</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 34.

<sup>82</sup> Cephas Narh Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism: A Study of the Development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Churches in Ghana* Vol. 32. (Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 2002), 31-32.

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African cultural frameworks.<sup>83</sup> This approach to theology and mission underscores the importance of relevance and applicability to the lived experiences of congregants. Thus, preachers in Ghana often draw from indigenous wisdom and cultural symbols to convey theological messages effectively. Theological education institutions in Ghana, such as the Christian Service University, Trinity Theological Seminary and the University of Ghana's Department of Religions and Theology, equip pastors with a solid theological and missional foundation. Through rigorous theological training, pastors develop exegetical skills, hermeneutical competence, and a nuanced understanding of missional and doctrinal tenets. This theological acumen enables them to craft sermons that resonate with congregants while remaining faithful to biblical truths.

Theological and missional insights profoundly shape pastoral care practices within Ghanaian churches. Drawing from the biblical concept of shepherding, pastors in Ghana view pastoral care as a holistic ministry that addresses the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of congregants. The theological emphasis on the *imago Dei* (image of God) informs pastoral care approaches by affirming the inherent dignity and worth of every individual. Mercy Amba Oduyoye, a Ghanaian theologian advocates for a theology of liberation that addresses societal injustices and empowers marginalized communities. Pastoral care, informed by this liberationist theology, involves advocating for social justice, promoting gender equality, and addressing economic disparities within congregations and communities.<sup>84</sup>

In Ghana, church administration is deeply intertwined with theological principles of stewardship, accountability, and servant leadership. Theological perspectives on ecclesiology, or the doctrine of the church, inform the organizational structure, decision-making processes, and governance mechanisms within Ghanaian churches.<sup>85</sup> For instance, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, influenced by Reformed theology, emphasizes the priesthood of all believers and congregational participation in decision-making. This theological emphasis on the priesthood of believers underpins democratic practices within the church, where elders and congregational representatives collaborate in administrative matters.<sup>86</sup>

Kwaku Boamah emphasizes the importance of contextual theology and mission in church administration, advocating for indigenous models of leadership and governance. This contextual approach to church administration recognizes the cultural distinctiveness of Ghanaian congregations and seeks to integrate traditional values with biblical principles.<sup>87</sup> Theology serves as the guiding framework for Christian mission, preaching, pastoral care, and church administration in Ghana, providing a cohesive vision of faith and practice that informs the life and ministry of the church. Christian ministry during Ghana's Independence period was multifaceted, encompassing education, healthcare, social justice advocacy, cultural preservation, and political engagement. Through their actions and teachings, Christian missionaries and leaders played a significant role in shaping the trajectory of the nation, laying the groundwork for a free and independent Ghana.

In response to socio-political challenges and economic disparities in Ghana, some pastors adopt a contextualized liberation theology. Drawing inspiration from the biblical narrative of liberation and justice, these pastors advocate for social transformation and empowerment of the marginalized. This theological and missionary context inform churches focused on poverty alleviation (vulnerable),

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<sup>83</sup> Robert Owusu Agyarko, "Libation in African Christian Theology: A Critical Comparison of the Views of Kwasi Sarpong, Kwesi Dickson, John Pobee and Kwame Bediako," (PhD diss., University of the Western Cape, 2005), 97.

<sup>84</sup> Oredein Oluwatomisin, *Word and Witness: A Theological Account of the Life and Voice of Mercy Amba Oduyoye* (TdD thesis: Duke University, 2017), 67.

<sup>85</sup> Daniel Nii Aboagye Aryeh, "Inductive biblical interpretation and mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics: A proposal for Pentecostal/charismatic ministries in Ghana today," *The Journal of Inductive Biblical Studies* 3, no. 2 (2016): 6.

<sup>86</sup> Kwaku Boamah, "The Persecution and Martyrdom of the Early Christians and the Prosperity Theology Today," *E-Journal for Religious and Theological Studies* 3 (2019): 35.

<sup>87</sup> Boamah, "The Persecution and Martyrdom of the Early Christians and the Prosperity Theology Today", 38.

community development, Christian advocacy for human rights,<sup>88</sup> empowerment and liberation, education and skill development, socioeconomic and psychological empowerment and compassion and justice.

For instance, the nature of injustice in Ghana appears to have gained grounds in many areas. Arguably, injustice in Ghana is seen in the church, politics, courts, education, health, society, marriage and employment. In some areas in Northern Ghana for example, many women face intimidation, including witchcraft, economic hardship, psychological and sexual assault. They are sometimes regarded as objects to be purchased and utilized for sex work and child labor. Even though injustice is a global issue, it remains a pervasive and a complex issue with its moral, religious, cultural, social, economic and psychological impact in the Ghanaian context.

## **9.0 IMPLICATIONS OF LUKE 4:18-19 FOR GHANAIAN PASTORS IN MISSION AND MINISTRY**

### **9.1 Focus on the Vulnerable**

Jesus prioritized the needs of the poor, the imprisoned, the blind, and the oppressed.<sup>89</sup> Similarly, Ghanaian pastors should pay attention to the marginalized and vulnerable in their communities. This might include the economically disadvantaged, those in prison, individuals with disabilities, and those facing various forms of oppression. Petersen who asserts that young pastors should pay attention to the marginalized and vulnerable in their communities is grounded in both ethical and practical considerations. In many religious traditions, including Christianity which is predominant in Ghana, there's a strong emphasis on compassion, social justice, and care for the marginalized.<sup>90</sup> This emphasis is often derived from sacred texts and teachings (Matthew 25:31-46). This text underscores the importance of caring for the marginalized as a central aspect of Christian discipleship.

Moreover, James S. Damico & Ted Hall emphasized the role of pastors and religious leaders in promoting social justice and addressing the needs of the marginalized.<sup>91</sup> L. Joseph Celucien and James H. Cone discussed the importance of the church's involvement in confronting racism and advocating for the oppressed and argued that, Christian faith demands solidarity with those who are suffering and marginalized.<sup>92</sup> In the context of Ghana, where poverty, inequality, and social exclusion are prevalent, the role of pastors becomes even more critical. According to a report by the Ghana Statistical Service, about 23% of Ghanaians live below the poverty line, with rural areas and marginalized communities being disproportionately affected.<sup>93</sup> In such circumstances, pastors who are embedded within these communities have a unique opportunity to address social issues, provide support, and advocate for change. Additionally, there's a growing recognition among scholars of the importance of community-based approaches to addressing social problems. Alexia argues for the integration of faith and social action within local communities, emphasizing the role of religious leaders in mobilizing resources, building networks, and empowering communities to address systemic injustices.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Sigurd Bergmann, and Mika Vähäkangas, *Contextual Theology: Skills and Practices of Liberating Faith* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 53.

<sup>89</sup> Schmidt, "Towards a strategy for achieving a biblically faithful understanding of and response to Luke 4: 18-19 at two congregations of the Nederduitse Gerformeerde Kerk in South Africa", 98.

<sup>90</sup> Darian Marlo Petersen, "Reading Luke in Impoverished Communities: A Social-Scientific and Feminist Hermeneutical Approach to Luke 1: 39-56 and 4: 16-30" (PhD diss., Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University, 2013), 45.

<sup>91</sup> James S. Damico & Ted Hall, "The Cross and the Lynching Tree: Exploring Religion and Race in the Elementary Classroom." *Language Arts* 92, no. 3 (2015): 189.

<sup>92</sup> L. Joseph Celucien and James H. Cone, "The vocation of Christian theology and the Christian church today," *The Journal of Pan African Studies (Online)* 12, no. 7 (2018): 15.

<sup>93</sup> Ghana Statistical Service, "Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS 7) 2017," (2018): 35.

<sup>94</sup> Alexia Salvatierra, *Faith-Rooted Organizing: Mobilizing the Church in Service to the World* (New York: Inter varsity Press, 2013), 45.

## **9.2 Christian Advocacy**

While preaching is important, action is equally vital. Pastors should not only proclaim the good news but also actively engage in practical efforts to uplift and empower those in need. This might involve initiatives such as community outreach programs, social welfare projects, and advocacy for justice and equality. Certainly, the idea that pastors should not only preach the gospel but also actively participate in practical efforts to uplift and empower their communities is gaining significant traction in contemporary religious discourse. This approach reflects a broader shift within religious communities towards a more holistic understanding of ministry that encompasses both spiritual and tangible forms of support for congregants and society at large.<sup>95</sup>

According to Dorn, one relevant aspect of this discussion is the concept of “social gospel” or “applied Christianity” which emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.<sup>96</sup> Advocates of the social gospel argued that Christianity should not be confined to individual salvation but should also address social injustices and alleviate human suffering. Walter Rauschenbusch and Washington Gladden were instrumental in articulating this perspective, which influenced numerous religious leaders and movements.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, the theology of liberation, particularly in its Latin American context, emphasizes the importance of actively engaging in efforts to promote social justice and address systemic oppression. Gustavo Gutiérrez and Leonardo Boff have underscored the biblical mandate for Christians to stand in solidarity with the marginalized and work towards the transformation of unjust structures.

In contemporary literature on pastoral ministry, Shane Claiborne, and Tony Campolo have advocated for a “holistic” or “integral” approach to ministry that integrates proclamation and social action. They argue that effective pastoral leadership involves not only preaching the gospel but also embodying its principles through acts of compassion, justice, and service.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, studies on the role of pastors in community development and social change highlight the significant impact that religious leaders can have when they actively engage with issues such as poverty, education, healthcare, and human rights. In this regard, Mulder demonstrates the transformative potential of faith-based initiatives in addressing social challenges and fostering community well-being.<sup>99</sup>

## **9.3 Empowerment and Liberation**

According to Isaac Boaheng and Justice Korankye, Jesus’ mission was about empowerment and liberation. Young pastors should aim to empower individuals to break free from cycles of poverty, injustice, and oppression. This empowerment can take various forms, including education, skills development, and fostering a sense of agency and dignity among the marginalized.<sup>100</sup> Empowering individuals to break free from cycles of poverty, injustice, and oppression is a noble and essential goal for young pastors and indeed for any individual or institution committed to social justice and human flourishing.<sup>101</sup> This approach aligns with various theological and ethical perspectives, as well as with broader societal goals of equity and human rights.

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<sup>95</sup> Stuart Blythe, “The Place of Preaching in the Church’s Mission: Luke 4: 16-30.” *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* 19, no. 2 (2019): 56.

<sup>96</sup> Jacob H. Dorn, “The social gospel and socialism: A comparison of the thought of Francis Greenwood Peabody, Washington Gladden, and Walter Rauschenbusch.” *Church History* 62, no. 1 (1993): 95.

<sup>97</sup> Dorn, “The social gospel and socialism: A comparison of the thought of Francis Greenwood Peabody, Washington Gladden, and Walter Rauschenbusch”, 95.

<sup>98</sup> Shane Claiborne, and Tony Campolo, *Red Letter Christianity: Living the Words of Jesus No Matter the Cost* (Hachette: UK, 2012), 67.

<sup>99</sup> Mark T. Mulder, “Mobility and the (in) Significance of Place in an Evangelical Church: A Case Study from the South Side of Chicago,” *Geographies of Religions and Belief Systems* 3, no. 1 (2009): 25.

<sup>100</sup> Isaac Boaheng and Justice Korankye, “Soteriology as Empowerment in the Gospel of Luke: Implications for Ghanaian Christianity,” *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review* 5, no. 12 (2022): 93.

<sup>101</sup> Petersen, “Reading Luke in Impoverished Communities”, 54.

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One relevant aspect of this discussion is the concept of liberation theology. Originating in Latin America in the 20th century, liberation theology emphasizes the Christian imperative to address social and economic injustices. It advocates for solidarity with the poor and oppressed and calls for action to transform unjust social structures.<sup>102</sup> Liberation theologians like Carroll argue that faith should not only be concerned with individual salvation but also with collective liberation from systemic oppression. This perspective resonates with the idea of empowering individuals to break free from cycles of poverty and injustice.<sup>103</sup> *The process of empowerment encompasses various aspects such as education, skill development and* Fostering a sense of agency and dignity.

## **9.4 Education and Skills Development**

Access to quality education can equip individuals with the knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities necessary to challenge oppressive systems and improve their life circumstances. Moreover, education can foster a sense of agency and self-efficacy, empowering individuals to advocate for themselves and others.

Providing marginalized individuals with opportunities to develop practical skills does not only enhance their employability but also boosts their confidence and self-worth. Skills training programs can empower individuals to pursue economic opportunities and become active participants in shaping their own destinies. Education and skills development is crucial for empowering individuals to break free from cycles of oppression. Often, marginalized individuals are made to feel powerless and inferior by oppressive systems. Pastors can play a vital role in affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every individual, regardless of their socioeconomic status or background. By promoting a theology of human dignity and agency, pastors can inspire hope and resilience in those facing systemic barriers.

## **9.5 Compassion and Justice**

Jesus' ministry was characterized by compassion and a commitment to justice. Pastors should cultivate a heart of compassion for the suffering and marginalized while advocating for justice and equity in society. This might involve speaking out against injustice, standing up for the rights of the oppressed, and working towards systemic change.<sup>104</sup> In recent years, the role of pastors in fostering holistic transformation within individuals and communities has garnered significant attention. The notion of holistic transformation encompasses various dimensions, including spiritual, social, economic, and psychological aspects. Hence, understanding the interconnectedness of these dimensions is crucial for pastors aiming to facilitate meaningful change. This literature review explores the multifaceted nature of holistic transformation among young pastors, drawing on relevant literature to elucidate key concepts and provide insights into effective strategies for fostering holistic development.

## **9.6 Socioeconomic and Psychological Empowerment**

Economic empowerment enables individuals to achieve financial stability and pursue their aspirations.<sup>105</sup> Ghanaian pastors often integrate economic development initiatives into their ministries, recognizing the interconnectedness of spirituality and material well-being.<sup>106</sup> This often involves entrepreneurship programs, vocational training, and microfinance initiatives which are common strategies employed by pastors to uplift marginalized communities and alleviate poverty.<sup>107</sup> By

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<sup>102</sup> Rebecca S Chopp, and Regan Ethna, "Latin American liberation theology," *The modern theologians: An introduction to Christian Theology since 1918* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 469.

<sup>103</sup> Denis Carroll, *What is Liberation Theology?* (California: Gracewing Publishing, 1987), 56.

<sup>104</sup> Nathan B, "Social Justice in the Bible: Exegesis of Luke 17: 11," 8, accessed, C:/Users/Hp/Downloads/SocialJustice-in-Luke.pdf

<sup>105</sup> Phillip Musoni, "African Pentecostalism and sustainable development: A study on the Zimbabwe assemblies of God Africa, forward in faith church," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention* 2, no. 10 (2013): 77.

<sup>106</sup> Peter Mutua Maurice, "The Impact of Christianity on the Social-Economic Life of Sub-Saharan Africa," *ShahidiHub International Journal of Theology & Religious Studies* 2, no. 1 (2022): 84.

<sup>107</sup> Koech, "The Spirit Motif in Luke 4: 14", 156.

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promoting economic self-sufficiency and financial literacy, pastors empower individuals to break the cycle of poverty and build sustainable livelihoods.

Vivian Afi Dzokoto, Annabella Osei Tutu and Lily Kpobi argue that the psychological dimension of holistic transformation encompasses mental health, emotional well-being, and psychosocial support.<sup>108</sup> Pastors frequently encounter individuals facing various psychological challenges, including depression, anxiety, and trauma. Therefore, pastoral counseling, support groups, and mental health education initiatives are instrumental in addressing these issues and promoting psychological resilience.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, pastors play a vital role in reducing stigma surrounding mental illness and fostering a culture of compassion and acceptance within their congregations and communities.

It is evident from the above that, the dimensions of holistic transformation are deeply interconnected, each influencing and reinforcing the others. Spiritual growth enhances pastors' capacity for social engagement and economic empowerment, enabling them to address complex issues holistically.<sup>110</sup> Conversely, social activism and economic development initiatives contribute to spiritual renewal and psychological well-being, fostering a holistic approach to ministry and community development.<sup>111</sup> Recognizing the synergies between these dimensions, young Ghanaian pastors are better equipped to facilitate comprehensive transformation in individuals and communities.

## **10. CONCLUSION**

The text, Luke 4:18-19 implies that, Christian mission and ministry should focus on the underprivileged and advocate for their cause while treating them with decency. In Ghana, some women experience intimidation, economic hardship, witchcraft, and psychological assault. They are frequently viewed as commodities for sale and utilized for sex work and child labor. Jesus requires that such individuals be recognized as equal human beings with their abilities honored. Pastors must be in solidarity with the people they serve, offering hope, relief, and freedom to the downtrodden. They must strive for justice while also being kind, empathetic, and compassionate toward those in need. The study urges Ghanaian pastors to embrace Jesus's mission of bringing good news, liberation, and restoration to their communities. By following Jesus's example of compassion, advocacy, practical ministry, empowerment, and spiritual healing, pastors can make a meaningful impact in the lives of those they serve, ultimately bringing about positive transformation in Ghanaian society.

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<sup>108</sup> Vivian Afi Dzokoto, Annabella Osei Tutu and Lily Kpobi, "Representations of Mental Illness in a Ga Community in Southern Ghana," *Journal of Black Psychology* 49, no. 4 (2023): 445.

<sup>109</sup> Eugene Lucerna, and Lisa Anna Gayoles, "The effect of pastoral counseling on the psycho-spiritual well-being of seminarians," *Philippine Social Science Journal* 1, no. 1 (2018): 138.

<sup>110</sup> Bryant L. Myers, "Progressive Pentecostalism, development, and Christian development NGOs: A challenge and an opportunity," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 39, no. 3 (2015): 120.

<sup>111</sup> Charles Gyasi, "Responses of African Pentecostal churches to African refugees in Düsseldorf between 2015 and 2020: a case study of mission and migration" (PhD diss., Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University, 2022): 72.

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## **About the Authors**

**Paul Kang-Ewala Diboro** is a PhD Candidate at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). He holds Mphil in Religious Studies (KNUST), Bachelor of Arts in Theology with Administration (Christian Service University, Kumasi). He is a lecturer in the Department of Theology, Faculty Examinations Officer and Assistant Chaplain (CSU). Diboro's research interest lies in New Testament Studies, Biblical Studies, missions and African Christian Theology. Diboro is an author of four and a co-author of three academic articles in renowned journals. He is the founder and Head Pastor of Rock of Praise Church, Obuasi.

**Christian Addai** is a seasoned Minister of the Gospel with a strong foundation in theology, leadership, and Christian education. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Theology with Administration from Christian Service University, Kumasi. His ministry is marked by a deep passion for sound biblical teaching, spiritual growth, and pastoral care. He currently serves with the Presbyterian Church of Ghana – Oyoko Preaching Point, where he continues to impact lives through preaching, teaching, and mentoring.