ABSTRACT: THE CONFERENCE ON MISSION AND MONEY –
3RD - 6TH APRIL 2014 AT HELSINKI FINLAND

PULLING OUT OF POVERTY: TRACING THE VITALITY OF AFRICAN
PENTECOSTAL BELIEF IN ALLEVIATING UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY
AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES IN URBAN TANZANIA AND
ENGLAND.

The Use of prayers in dealing with issues of poverty by Pentecostal churches in urban
Tanzania and England has attracted much attention amongst unemployed young people and
graduates of African ethnicity in cosmopolitan cities of Dar Es Salaam and London. The
churches have been avenues for preaching the role of prayers in combating unemployment
and poverty. Indeed, the effective use of prayers seems to be the most important explanation
for young people’s economic failure and growth as well as unemployment. Thus, the use of
prayers by youthful members resonates with Pentecostal spirituality and beliefs in addressing
social problems such as unemployment and poverty. In so doing, Pentecostal churches
courage their youthful members to believe in God’s power or prayers (religiosity) to lift
them out of dire unemployment and poverty; hence youthful members flock to churches to
seek answers to questions relating to individual unemployment and poverty raised within
their interiors of the primal worldviews. The implication is that some Pentecostal churches
and leaders are becoming rich whilst sizeable number of youthful members remains
unemployed and poor but continue to live on hope of God’s miracles. Therefore, in this
paper, I answer the central question: How do Pentecostal churches engage with the young
people’s unemployment and poverty alleviation agenda? To answer this question, I draw on
Qualitative in-depth interviews and participant observation data from a PhD fieldwork carried
out in Tanzania and England in 2010/12. The paper will focus on two measures: prayers
support for the poor and unemployed and provision of socio-economic supports to the poor
young people and families as well as the role of urban African Pentecostal churches in
appropriating their preaching to suit urban cultural practices and associated social problems.

Frederick Longino
PhD Candidate
The University of York
Department of Social Policy and Social Work
United Kingdom
Emails: fredlongino@yahoo.co.uk, or fkl500@york.ac.uk