

ABSTRACT: THE CONFERENCE ON MISSION AND MONEY –

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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 encourage 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.

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