

## East African Journal of Traditions, Culture and Religion

[eajtr.eanso.org](http://eajtr.eanso.org)

Volume 8, Issue 1, 2025

Print ISSN: 2707-5362 | Online ISSN: 2707-5370

Title DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/2707-5370>



EAST AFRICAN  
NATURE &  
SCIENCE  
ORGANIZATION

Original Article

## Addressing and Deconstructing False Theology in Tanzania; Causes, Reasons and Effects

Dr. Ndossi Bitte Samson, PhD<sup>1</sup>\*

<sup>1</sup> ELCT – Elvd Nyakato Lutheran College, P. O. Box 2327, Mwanza, Tanzania.

\* Author for Correspondence ORCID ID; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7087-0341>; Email: [bngwalida@gmail.com](mailto:bngwalida@gmail.com)

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajtr.8.1.3359>

### Date Published: ABSTRACT

21 July 2025

#### Keywords:

Theology,  
Theo-Praxis,  
Misleading  
Theology,  
Vulnerability,  
Social  
Disintegration.

The Lake zone area of Tanzania and the western zone area in the country face acute prevalence of subtle religious sects that lure the society into advent social and economic vulnerability and instability. The study sought to identify the factors that compel many Christians and people around them, accept and practice theological contents that are misleading. Misleading theology as defined in this study is a term of the 21st century that tries to explain the nexus between spirituality and physical manifestations done by some religious leaders using manipulative scripture to exhibit instant solutions to the problems of the believer in areas of “health and healing”, wealth and prosperity, power and authority, blessing and curses. While vulnerability remains at its largest after such manifestations; the survey sought to find out ways of restoration against the current theological misinterpretation surge, the scriptural confusion in the area, and how the Theological institutions address the problem of abuse of scripture. The observed effects of these practices include society’s advent vulnerability, lack of peace, social disintegration and deaths. The survey used questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and document review of seven Lutheran dioceses to obtain data from both Christians and non-Christian respondents. The surveyed area was a deliberate intent owing to the outstanding surge of such practices in the country. The findings revealed factors such as psychological, emotional, economical, faith and religiosity issues as responsible for the acceptance and practice of misleading theologies. The study recommends a common code of ethics for all religious organizations for control of faith practices; Religions impose internal controls for mitigating abuse of theology profession while the Government should impose strict control for registration of Faith based activities and monitor religious education provision in schools and colleges.

#### APA CITATION

Samson, N. B. (2025). Addressing and Deconstructing False Theology in Tanzania; Causes, Reasons and Effects. *East African Journal of Traditions, Culture and Religion*, 8(1), 116-129. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajtr.8.1.3359>.

#### CHICAGO CITATION

Samson, Ndossi Bitte. "Addressing and Deconstructing False Theology in Tanzania; Causes, Reasons and Effects". *East African Journal of Traditions, Culture and Religion* 8 (1), 116-129. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajtr.8.1.3359>.

#### HARVARD CITATION

Samson, N. B. (2025) "Addressing and Deconstructing False Theology in Tanzania; Causes, Reasons and Effects", *East African Journal of Traditions, Culture and Religion*, 8(1), pp. 116-129. doi: 10.37284/eajtr.8.1.3359.

#### IEEE CITATION

N. B. Samson "Addressing and Deconstructing False Theology in Tanzania; Causes, Reasons and Effects", *EAJTR*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 116-129, Jul. 2025.

#### MLA CITATION

Samson, Ndossi Bitte. "Addressing and Deconstructing False Theology in Tanzania; Causes, Reasons and Effects". *East African Journal of Traditions, Culture and Religion*, Vol. 8, no. 1, Jul. 2025, pp. 116-129, doi:10.37284/eajtr.8.1.3359.

## INTRODUCTION

The study sought to identify the causes, reasons and effects that Christians and their society members get by accepting and practicing misleading theologies in the Lake zone and Western zone regions of Tanzania. This paper comes following a baseline survey done towards a pilot project initiated by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania; East of Lake Victoria Diocese at Nyakato Lutheran Bible college- Zonal College in the mapped area. The college is responsible for Theology education, in the Lutheran denomination, a church that stands out to be a strong Christian domain in the country playing alongside the Roman catholic church and the Pentecostals. The church's mission is to propagate a holistic gospel which intends to nurture a holistic man spiritually, emotionally, socially and economically, alongside caring for the environment to have a God loving society, hence fulfilling God's mission in Tanzania. In order to streamline Theology and Theo-praxis, the Nyakato Lutheran College which is among the Lutheran educational establishments in the Lake zone and western zone area of Tanzania, intervenes the current wave of distortion of God's word and purpose on earth by identifying the factors that lead to people's acceptance and practice of misleading theology. The paper is divided in the following subsections: the background, problem statement, research questions, empirical literature review, methodology, findings, discussion and conclusion.

## Background

Badham (1996) defines Theology as simply "Thinking about God" while in Practice it means studying the sources of Christian Belief like the Bible and the creeds, exploring the meaning of Christianity for today" (Badham, 1996.p.101). The author continues to define Theology from classical theologians like St. Anselm who defines Theology as "faith seeking understanding". The classical debates of whether faith should reason or reasoning should precede Faith remains a paradox for many believers. Theo-Praxis on the other hand means how to lead worship and practice spiritual gifts; how to receive God's blessings (Au, 2023). In this contention according to the Pentecostals Faith is about seeking doing. In context the study tries to explore the sentiments of Theology in the eyes of the mainline protestant churches, as experienced in the mapped area.

Africa in the sub-Saharan Africa has experienced growth of Christianity than any other continent (Johnson, Zurlo & Crossing, 2018). Africa has at the same time many people who believe in god(s) apart from believing in the two world religions, Christianity and Islam, and these beliefs have been pre-conditions for the growth of Christianity in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century (Adamo, 2011). In support for this robust growth several mission programs have taken place in the 19<sup>th</sup>- 20<sup>th</sup> C that has contributed to the growth of Christianity in Africa, (Keshomshahara, 2010). The author highlights the world political economy during the cold war as a

major contribution to the rise of charismatic movement in the global south.

Christianity for decades have played a major contribution in socio-economic development as Bauer, Platas & Weinstein (2022) contends that during the colonial era, areas which were dominated by the Islamic religion showcased a lesser socio-economic development rate compared to other religions; Christian dominated areas on the other end revealed a better socio-economic progress. The aftermath of Independence from colonial rule, many Christian missions changed into established churches of a particular denomination in the respective countries. In Tanzania particularly The Protestant church and the Roman Catholic had strong establishments until towards the last quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century when the charismatic- Pentecostal movements gained precedence (Keshomshahara, 2010). The charismatic movement added to the growth of Christianity in Tanzania, but has also added to a variety of Theological teachings that are unregulated. This situation has provided a fertile context for production and consumption of confusing and misleading religious teachings as far as Lindhart (2012) is concerned.

The All African Council of Churches (AACC) in 2019 coined the word “misleading theology” to mean all knowledge and practice that “undermine the sovereignty of Christ fundamental Biblical doctrines and sound theological ethos”; but evidently exploit and violate the God given dignity of vulnerable Christians. The history of church development from the early centuries according to Lukonge (2016), experienced heresies. The author recalls on the story of Tetzel, the Pope’s “sales manager” for the indulgences in Luther’s Germany- of the medieval church, who claimed that as soon as the indulgence purchaser’s coin dropped into the money chest, souls of the persons on behalf of whom the indulgences were purchased popped out of purgatory into heaven. Similar situations are currently happening in the region whereby the

context has slightly taken a sliding shift encouraged the prosperity gospels.

Tanzania’s diverse religious landscape with both established prophets and those who claim prophetic roles, operating within various faiths including Christianity, Islam and traditional belief systems have made Theology and Theo-Praxis as popular research area. Emphasized by the digital technology, Faith perpetrators have led the propagation of religious information and evangelism achieving a multitude of followers and gaining populace at a spontaneous effect almost globally. Kaale and Bazira (2023) talk on how televangelism has grown popular in Tanzania. They explain how the so-called prophets, apostles, and pseudo “men of God” deploy a great use of media both traditional media and social media channels to carry out their evangelical duties. In this many of whom due to a lack of theological knowledge; fabricate stories of achievement made out of “spiritual interventions” and people simply believe. They quote Chifu Wazagi, Bishop of the Last Church in Tanzania, who says that the lack of Christian theology education and the mixture of African cultural practices have resulted in some neo-televangelists who misuse the media to spread distorting gospel while instilling hatred among people, and encouraging idleness!

Misleading Theology as defined by Ngige and Eala (2020) is the practice which give advantage to the clergy for manipulating faith and exploit followers economically, sexually, physically and spiritually in return for popular promises of prosperity, blessings and prayers of favor. After such an encounter with this kind of theology, the subscribers are left in advent vulnerability and some even socially disintegrated from their families and society. Tanner (2022) describes social disintegration as a situation that occurs out of a genuine theological disagreement – here not only a sociopolitical one but the shift in ideological belief. In a situation where union and community brought societies

together, ideological stances may cause people to disintegrate.

The term misleading theology also intends to identify the abuse of religious freedom as Floyd (2023) notes, abusing the liberties to worship entails the unjust and coercive imposition of religious beliefs and practices on individuals or communities by religious institutions, suppressing the genuine exercise of faith.

The Lake zone and western zone areas of Tanzania notably the regions of Mwanza, Kagera, Geita, Shinyanga, Mara, Simiyu, Tabora and Kigoma has its fair share of adversity done in the name of religion. From the traditional chiefs cum prophets of the Sukuma land to a slightly change of naming goddess “Mfalme Zumaridi”, and the like, the area has had its share of unpleasant stories of life adversities caused by faith in the name of religion. While the Government deals with the effects of such practices, this survey intended to find out the reasons compelling people to accept and practice misleading theology in the area.

The Nyakato Lutheran Bible College (NLBC) at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania East of Lake Victoria Diocese (ELCT-ELVD) is a college responsible for training theologians and Lutheran church workers. In responding to the situation, the college developed a project titled “Dialoguing and Deconstructing Misleading Theologies in the Lake and Western Zones of Tanzania targeting the grassroots levels of the problem. This move is a call to attend to the situation of prevailing misleading theologies effects upon a good section of the population in the lake zone and western zone regions of Tanzania. The bigger question that the project aimed to address; is to find out why after almost a century of religion and educational revolution still people succumb to heresies in the mapped area.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The prevalence of subtle faith and “spiritual healing” ministries across the Lake zone and western zones of Tanzania has a significant popularity in the lives of civilian population. While immerse vulnerability remains at its largest among the subscribers after their encounter with spiritual perpetrators, this survey intended to identify the reasons and causes for the widespread acceptance and practice of misleading theologies in the mapped area.

Rampant misleading theologies in almost every region in the country has affected lives of people in insurmountable levels, spiritually, socially, economically and physically. The situation has made some religious institutions question the legitimacy of current faith trends in the society. Mahali (2019) cautions on the missing paradigm in the contextualization of the Bible messages thus it was time for the mainstream churches notably the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT), come up with initiatives to address the problem.

The situation remains alarming as many vulnerable Christians and their close relatives (whether Christians or not), fall prey to prominent preachers who hardly possess any professional education in theology. In the same line of thought it is learnt that many of the prominent faith leaders have a mixture of some kind of spiritual knowledge of god(s) and traditional or cultural practices that appeal to spirituality of the people. In the light of this contention, Mathew (2013), explains how the complexity of African traditional worship is mixed in Christianity, thus showcasing some failure in contextualization of western evangelism movement in the African traditional dogmas.

The author contends that in many cases when western experiences and definitions of Biblical messages, based residence and reference of their missionary lives and could hardly translate them into the lives of people they intended to evangelize, is the reason for the misconception. Such

misconceptions still remain large in the current era, whereby a combination of some kind of traditional worship prevail in African Christian worship. Many other factors may have contributed to a particular state of affairs in a given situation and not tradition alone as this study unveiled.

The survey aimed to identify the causes, reasons and effects of misleading theologies even at the expense of losing their money, health and lives. The study suggests the of dialogue and deconstruction of misleading theologies basing knowledge on the historical complexity of African Christianity as it struggles to liberate believers and their immediate communities from the yoke of injustices done in the name of religion.

### Research Questions and Scope of the Study

The survey used the questions below to explain about the situation in perspective:

- What are the causes that lead people to accept and practice misleading theologies?
- What are the reasons for prevalence of misleading theologies in the mapped area?
- What evident effects do misleading theologies cause?

The scope of the survey involved seven (7) out of twenty-eight (28) Lutheran church dioceses. Notably the Lake zone and western zone regions of Tanzania- Mwanza, Mara, Simiyu, Shinyanga, Geita, Kagera (Bukoba and Karagwe), Tabora and Kigoma. This is an area which covers more than a quarter of the whole country. According to the administrative unit's population distribution report of the Population and housing census -PHC- of Tanzania (2022) the mapped area comprises 39.4 % of the land coverage of the country.

The methodology deployed was mixed method- both quantitative and qualitative, as the study searched for the factors leading Christians and people around them accept and practice theology or

theological contents that are misleading. Purposive interviews were carried with selected respondents who are conversant with the problem in the area.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Spirituality and faith related practices are part and parcel of human lives for decades and countless of authors have tried to explain the relationships of theology with social sciences, humanities and ethics. Peters (2017) draws out implications for theological understanding of human nature and human freedom. The author contends that the commodification of human life stems out of unethical practice of uncontrolled freedoms and responsibility checks of humans themselves.

In another reflection the kind of gospels which in most occasions are misleading are the ones that subject the reality of theological historical context; Lumpp (2024) is of the opinion that it is a sad experience that the dominant emphases of these prosperity gospels misunderstand the gospel itself and are typically a theology of glory rather than theology of the cross. The perpetrators routinely confuse law and the gospel, promising temporal rewards for some human performance.

Harries (2017) talks of the different perspectives in Christianity between the westerners and African global south whereby according to Africans the key human values originate in faith in god(s), that the spiritual underlies and precedes the material. This is quite different from the westerners whereby values originate based on secular initiation. This contention may offer an explanation on the vulnerability that many people face in the name of religion in Africa. The author is of the opinion that contextually the sentiments and ways of lives of the people written in the Old Testament draws on many contemporary African traditions. In this the author feels that many religions in Africa still comprehend well the Old Testament values because they reflect their ways. In the same line of thought this contention offers a deeper reflection to some of the reasons why Christianity has an exemplary growth



in African lives showcased by deep spirituality and practice of the laws in the Old Testament Bible that contrasts with “remnant spirituality” prominent in the west.

Togarasei (2020) talks about the growth of African Christianity going beyond the confines of the Holy Bible. The author explains his confusion over African Christianity that their knowledge of God is mixed with other sources of Theology about “gods” such that there seems to be an over emphasis of the other sources of theology even as they claim *Sola Scriptura*. The author affirms that some of the problems faced in African Christianity are a result of the way Christians use the various sources of Christian theology.

On the question about the complexity of topic of salvation in African Christianity Ngong (2020) offers an opinion that salvation in the western societies’ circles around the means and how salvation took place while with the sub-Saharan African theology, salvation means evidence in the overall transformation of human life – spiritually, personally, socially, politically and economically. This huge divide in the conception of salvation as the author tries to explain; define the view of salvation between Calvinistic or puritanical sense of transformed morality and church life by the westerners versus the physical here and now manifestations deployed by sub-Saharan Christians.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey deployed a mixed method of data collection. Owing to the nature of the topic, which was a mission of identifying factors leading to social behaviors; the study used interchangeably both methods to attain the scientific objectivity requirements. As far as Maher and Dertadian (2017) are concerned; a study of behavioral pattern require the use of more eclectic qualitative method to fish out the complex set of factors situated within a social context to challenge stereotypes about certain social behaviors of people. The methods used in qualitative research aim to develop a deeper

understanding of particular social behaviors which are somehow hidden, or hard to research in understudied populations to provide foundations for significant record in scientific knowledge. In this survey the aspect of a person’s spirituality is a delicate matter that requires a deeper engagement with the respondents to unveil their deep feelings that implicate their behaviors.

On the other hand, the juxtapose in the two research methods always override each other as they represent two different world views. Hammarberg, Kirkman and Lacey (2016) commend that in situations whereby opinions, attitudes and values are studied it is important to present a percentage that agrees or disagree to the variables of the study to avoid researcher opinion. Thus, in this study there are sections whereby the survey had to obtain statistics by percentage of the respondents confirming the problem under study. Quantitative data was purposely drawn from forty (40) church leaders, eighty (80) congregations of various age groups and six (6) local government authorities in their stratified categories of administration. Focus group discussion was carried with lay leadership groups (women groups, youth groups and choir members of the seven Lutheran headquarters congregations visited. Data from documents review, included the data of congregation’s attendance in that particular church on a normal Sunday service, but also data from security offices confirming the cases reported by family members about a particular trend of the person criminalized for perpetrating some kind of abuse. This data was confidential and respondents required confidentiality from the researcher. Media reports of people being abused in the name of religion was also documented.

## Data Analysis Plan

The answers are arranged to themes related to the research questions to identify the influence of political, social, economic religious/faiths and leadership factors for misleading theology prevalence in the surveyed area. Similar responses

were statistically described and numbers of people with similar opinion from questionnaires and interviews and are triangulated. Archived data from the security offices are intentionally omitted from this report owing to the nature of the cases that are still prevailing in the court. However, inferential numbers are used to show tendencies of people's opinions. The results from the presentations were triangulated to validate written, spoken, and discussed themes in groups. The findings from the outcome of study were finally compared with existing assumptions from different theologians who have discussed the matter at length. The interface of psychological and social, economic, religious/faith and ecclesial factors as orientations towards influencing people to accepting misleading theologies guided the extracting and approximating the levels of complexity of the problem.

The analysis grouped the themes in the following categories:

a. Psychological and social factors

Under psychological and social theme, questions to discover individuals' self-awareness and identities, factors for socializing and their related benefits to the individuals' wellbeing were probed.

b. Economic factors

The study also explored economic factors by knowing the economic livelihood status of individuals and whether what they owned came miraculously or through superstition. Such probing aimed at what people believed in the background in relation to poverty and wealth.

c. Faith and religious factors

The questions aimed at finding out people's religious/faith orientation was to see the multifaceted religious/faith profile of an individual that could bring confusion when the same person

tried to upload religious paradigms and practices meaningful to his or her life.

d. Mission and Pastoral Factors

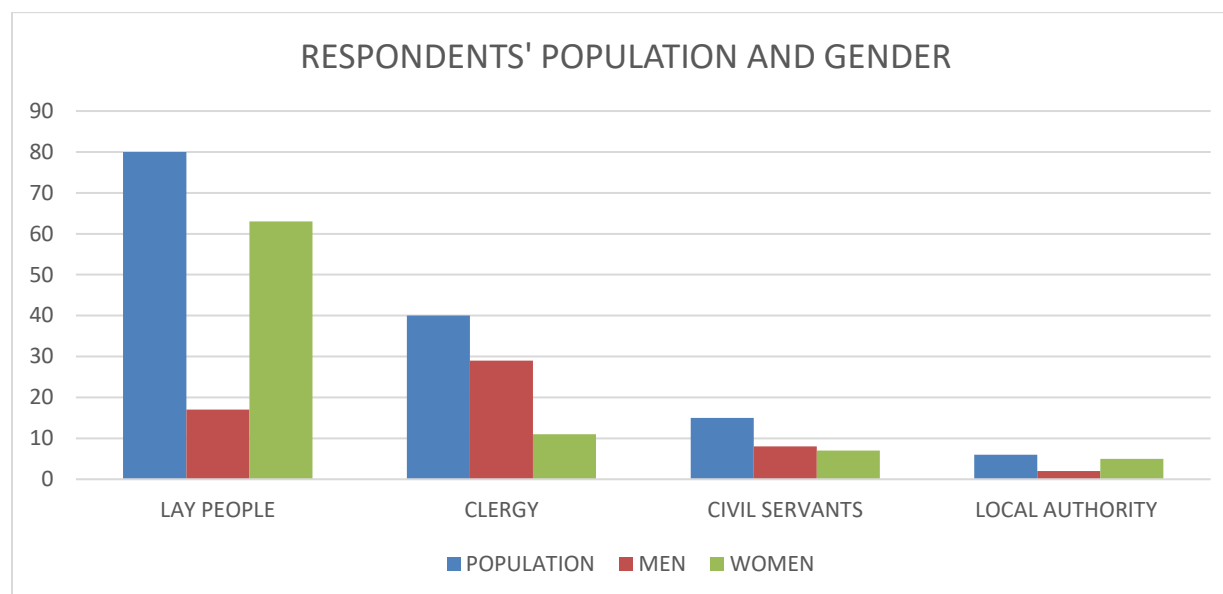
The last theme was about "missional and pastoral factors" leading to vulnerability of church ministers and members to misleading theologies. The aim was to have an overview on whether the established churches have biblical-theological and practical tools for response to the present challenges of misleading theologies

## RESULTS

The survey distributed two hundred (200) questionnaires with an intention of collecting a representative response of the problem under study. Only 140 equivalent to 70% of the total intended respondents filled and returned the questionnaires. The following data is analyzed and presented according to the themes that were identified to guide the mapping of the causes, reasons and effects caused by misleading theologies. The separation of themes is for the purpose of making clear classification of factors, but they are not boundaries for not interrelating the themes and the other inherent factors such as politics.

Forty (40) clergy and evangelists filled in questionnaire questions. The total number of participants from women, youths, choir, fellowship, and church elder groups who filled and returned questionnaire was eighty (80). Respondents from civil community (medical doctors, teachers, medicine men and women) who responded to questionnaire were fifteen (15), and six (6) local authority leaders at the ward level, responded to the questionnaire, among these; two were district commissioners. The interviews were purposefully conducted to the group leaders identified in the participants list where the questionnaires were administered.

**Figure 1: Respondents' Population and Gender.**

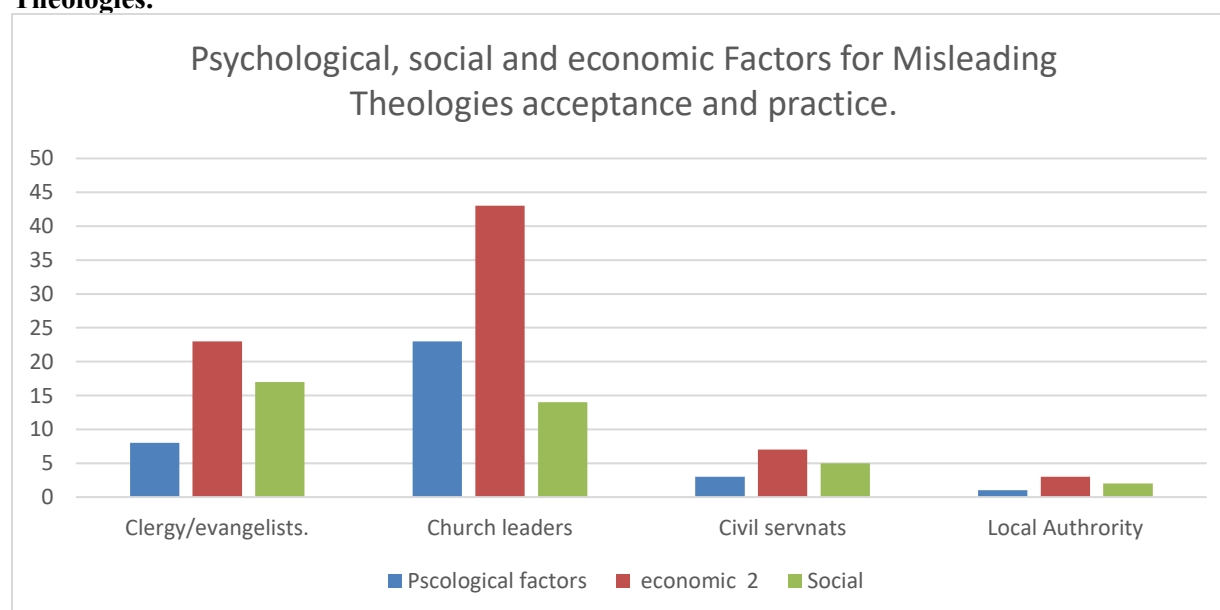


**Source:** Field Data December 2022- January 2023

The subthemes indicate that the aspects of life are extremely dependent on each other and they affect the human being holistically, and so also affect his or her orientation of faith and also the way faith impacts his or her life. Thus, there is a thin line between the four factors that lead people to

misleading theologies. The following subthemes appeared to be supported by majority respondents or even when one-third of respondents supported them, the nature of respondents was considered, and the results for each theme are given below:

**Figure 2: Psychological, Social and Economic Factors Leading People to Accept Misleading Theologies.**



**Source:** Survey data Dec 2022 - January 2023



The data above affirms economic factors as an overriding reason for people acceptance and practice misleading theology. Most of the perpetrators for misleading theology promise fortunes and riches to their subscribers something which makes them very popular. However, in varying responses the Clergy, evangelists and church leaders offered their opinion on the aspect of psychological factor as another outstanding factor and they think the two factors are closely interlinked to one another.

**Responses from Interviews** The following were the responses from focus group discussions held with the groups of lay – women, Youth and choir members.

**Research Question one about the Reasons and causes:**

*“Families were stressed because of having alcoholic men who did not care for their families and this led to instability of faith of many women, and hence migrated from one church to another, from one preacher to another to look for solutions of the complex situation.”*

*“Many youths are in difficult conditions and economic hardships because of being unskilled and therefore not employable. Hence, many young people look for short-cuts, including consulting misleading preachers and prophets for quick fix of their problems”.*

Respondents indicated that in the past the church provided social support in terms of material and medical help to people living in poor conditions,

*“but now when one goes to the church, responsible personnel don't even pray for the needy. When someone is healthy and gives contributions to the church is he is praised, but when they fall sick the church and people forget to care, pray and counsel the sick”.*

Some interviewees said

*“those claimed to be misleading, in fact they are not because they use the Bible carefully to teach people, and people understand the teaching, and they correctly use the objects of healing such as water, salt, oil, etc, and people become healed”.*

There was an aspect about the church services of established churches. The respondents complained about the value of spiritual interventions done by the “big churches” they said;

*“Pastors use their church service to demand countless contributions through offerings and they may seem like the revenue authorities demanding taxes. Actually, the church is indulging people when it demands excessive offerings and contributions without the consent of the members of the church”.*

They commend the church to establish a desk/room for pastoral/ spiritual one to one service, as the attendance to Sunday services proves not to be sufficient for personal spiritual healing for everybody. Furthermore, the church service on Sunday alone has all necessary teachings of the Word of God, but fewer initiatives are taken to counsel the congregants’ spiritual needs and mostly do not offer a chance for people to pour out their personal concerns to get spiritual help.

Some interviewees from the lay community indicated that when they struggle to make profit for their business, they use every means possible to reach that goal –

*“so if there are objects that attract customers, we will flock to take those objects and try if they bring customers. If by good luck customers increases, then we spread the news about prophets who bring good fortune in the business. When prophets demand a huge sum of money even from poor families, people offer, they are like bewitched, and they think only that they will be blessed in multiple ways”.*

Respondents also said the reason for being attracted to prophets and false preachers is the

*“poor economic conditions, so people want quick solutions for their problems. They look for help through prayers and when they have persistent problems which are not solved or cured”.*

Although the situation is as confirmed by many respondents, there were some respondents who had a varied perspective about the theology trends, and they think the society and its leadership may lack vision when they said;

*“the solution for poverty is hard-working and not going for false prophets and preachers to seek help. When you seek help from such charismatic preachers you may end up manipulated and even the little property you own might be taken by the preachers in form of offerings”.*

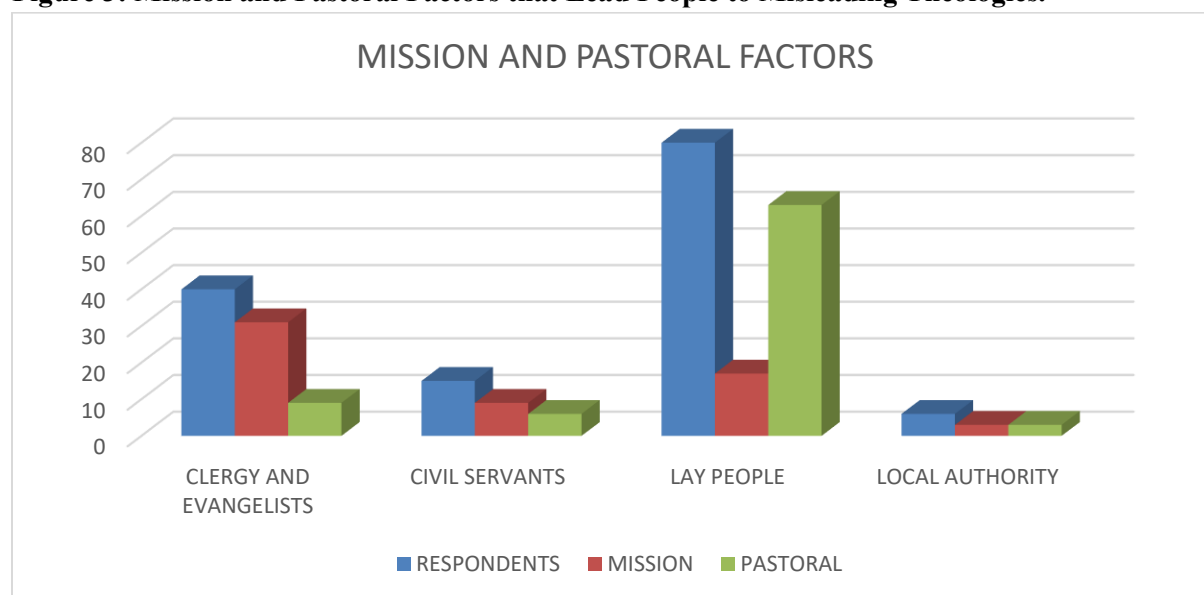
This group is of the opinion that those people who look for preachers who perform miracles, become obsessed by those preachers to the point of not trusting their own pastors or evangelists.

Talking about the effects for people to succumb to such ministries the respondents said

*“Unlike these prophets, the established churches have church order something which is peculiar and institutional. Many of these prophets and charismatic preachers have occasional services and looking for situations that threaten or worry people; and due to vulnerability, they corrupt people using Biblical scripture to instill more fear and deceive people”.*

The local medicine practitioners who were interviewed said their service is very helpful to the community since people who have chronic diseases that cannot be cured in the hospitals or prayers in the church, they turn to them for treatment- they boasted that they could treat even cancer and Covid 19. They said their medicine is cheap compared to what they pay in hospitals or give as offering to prophets and charismatic preachers. So, the poor come to medicine persons, and the rich who have persistent ailing also come to them.

**Figure 3: Mission and Pastoral Factors that Lead People to Misleading Theologies.**



Source: Survey Data December 2022- January 2023

A total of Thirty one (31) out of 40, respondents among clergy and evangelists deny mission factors are a cause for misleading theologies while nine confirm to the fact. They say the church offers sound theological teaching, conducts seminars, they are of the opinion that giving offering to be rich is misleading Christians, but also giving offerings to be blessed is also misleading. This is a direct effect about the confusion of Biblical texts.

The lay people whose responses point out directly that there are mission factors that contribute to misleading theologies when a total of sixty-three (63) out of eighty (80) respondents confirm the causes for problem of false theology being attributed by mission factors. This group represent the majority who also complained about the formal church establishments that do not appeal to pastoral care services but rather stand for institutional purposes. This is the group that think teaching about the magical power of objects are misleading, but they are done by some of the big members of the church. They want the church to intervene by putting emphasis on sound theological-biblical teachings and that the government should intervene by regulating, verifying leaders (theological training and awards) of institutions and deregistering institutions that mislead people.

Nine out of Fifteen respondents from the civilian community confirms the mission effects of misleading theologies among their relatives and society at large. They say such theologies emphasize the use of faith objects rather than faith in God. This situation later turns out to have people hungry for these objects such as common salt, oil water and sand from so called “holy places”.

As for the local authority which is a hands-on entity at the grassroots level, suggest more scrutiny of faith related practices. They highlight the difficulty of intervening in these spiritual establishments which have proper registrations, unless there is a calamity reported of them. They signaled that until when a calamity is reported many other victims

have undergone humiliation. This group’s responses were split in half between the mission factors and pastoral factors.

### **Summary of the Key Findings.**

The study found that there are misleading theologies/teachings in the mapped area and that they have ideally affected people negatively. However, people differ in perception of understanding them. Some even go further to say that what is considered as misleading is actually a true reference from the same Bible’s true teaching. The survey comes timely at the moment where the proliferation of communication and information technology has assisted the fast flow of information globally. Enhanced by the use of social media technologies prophets and self-proclaimed men of God deploy a good use of media to promote their activities with no or minimal regulation from theological institutions or government interference.

The situation has called for alert in the theologian profession whereby spiritual interfaces differ in reception such that no single religious entity can regulate the other. The monitoring of religious activities has been left for particular denominations to regulate their actions and it requires a consensus of theological understanding across all denominations to reprimand an entity. This loophole has made it easier for perpetrators to carry out their actions knowing it is next to impossible to be stopped or even questioned.

Sound vision and mission of the church and leadership could help in the process of dialoguing and deconstructing misleading theologies/teachings, since the study has also pointed out some weaknesses of the church in its teachings and pastoral engagement. The church in its daily reforming could promote its models for good governance, especially its doctrine of priesthood of all believers to promote effective organizational institutions and governance. Good leadership is key to mobilizing gifts and resources for a healthy church that serve a person holistically.

Such a service to the community could place the church in constant and positive interaction with the community.

A huge population of people in the mapped area still have strong believe that having faith can change lives, and for Christian's faith in Jesus Christ through the teaching and the power of prayers and communion changes life and could bring about physical, spiritual, social and environmental healing. It is not a crime to believe in a faith and to have responsible stewardship, the problem is the misuse of innocent believers' faith and commitment.

## DISCUSSION

People believe faith changes life, and for Christians, faith in Jesus Christ through the teaching and the power of prayers and communion changes life and could bring about physical, spiritual, social and environmental healing when people serve God as responsible steward. While the situation pf false theologies came in this era as an alarming concern, it is the responsibility of all people concerned to restore human dignity as God had intended for his people. Bible knowledge has for decades been left for denominations to regulate and offer what was suitable for their doctrine. Minimal or no regulation was applied to the theology profession as it seemed for the chosen few who GOD uses for doing his work among nations.

The situation has taken a drastic turn among societies where confusion is high basing on social economic forces in the civilian population. People are forced to look for solutions in all aspects of life from seeking jobs among the youth to healing among the sick. The "prophets" use all kind of scripture to promise people for solutions of all the problems. In as much as Lukonge (2016) is concerned heresy has been a huge domain in spirituality. This is so because faith and reason always challenge each other as far as Peters (2017) is concerned; when science seeks to understand, faith on the other hand seeks social ethics and

responsibility. The aspect of responsibility of faith actors is a matter of concern in this study. The Lake-zone area and western zone of Tanzania is an area which has experienced the surge of false theological trends. The study appeals to the theological and doctrinal authorities to uphold the professional grip for social accountability.

## CONCLUSION

This study feels that it is important to see that faith may impact people's life positively; if accompanied by sound theological teaching and practical experiences that promote the Omnipresence of God in life since human creation. Misleading theologies lead people to quick secularization because it bases emphasis on instant manifestation of physical change admired by people, but when they fail to achieve what they have been promised they see GOD as not helpful in their situation. This is what Dobson (2012) commends about teaching people to hold on to faith even during the hardest of times. This kind of teaching is not popular with notable prophets in the mapped area.

In Tanzanian context and the Lake-zone & Western zone area in particular; the dyadic relationship between faith leaders and their followers is still very strong. This is evident in this study when people still balanced their individualistic interests and social interests. This indicates a very good sign that the church may help to develop responsible communal solidarity through the theology of promoting different gifts in building the body of Christ, God's people and creation.

The economic crisis for many individuals and families is regarded as a major cause for frustrations and led them to accept misleading theologies. Therefore, emphasis of hard working should go hand in hand with the concepts of market economies. The announcement that God blesses people should not be taken materially that God increases wealth without hard working. God's blessing should be taken holistically in the thinking that God is the life-giver, who gives us health and

peace to participate as stewards in keeping and sustaining his creation.

Glorifying poverty and stigmatizing wealth have been a persistent problem in Africa. The ethics of the two is crucial in discussing prosperity gospel and the right way of thinking about the two concepts. People have to be thankful to God and offer their life and wealth to make sure that God's work and mission continues. In short, despite the study having considered psychological-social, economic, religious/faith, and missional/pastoral aspects that lead to accepting misleading theologies/teaching, it has found that these aspects relate to each other and could affect the human being and creation both negatively or positively. These features should be thought holistically in the discussion of misleading theologies in order to exhaust and find solutions for the problem.

### Recommendation

The study recommends a dialogue to discern what is misleading and what is not according to specific religious doctrine. For Christianity the traditions and common understanding of human life and source of human creation, should be emphasized. Notably to deconstruct misleading theologies should go hand in hand with defending faith in the world of science and technology, whereby spirituality is always gauged against scientific knowledge.

There is a dire need for the religious services act under the Ministry of home affairs in the country to restructure the societies registrations and regulation policy to ensure sound theology, Doctrine and vision of the profession and its umbrella organizations. This will be a proactive policy framework and responsibility of religious institutions in the country, to ensure safety and dignity of the citizens and not wait to counteract after disasters have been reported.

### REFERENCES

- Adamo, D.T (2011). Christianity and the African Traditional Religion (s). The Post colonial round of engagement. *Verbum Eccles.* (Online) vol.32 n.1 Pretoria 2011  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ve.v32i1.285>
- Au C. (2023). Theo-Praxis: Emerging theologies from the Global south. In Raheb. M & Lampart M (Eds) *Pentecostal*.
- Badham P (1996). *What is Theology*. Sage Journals
- Bauer V, Platas M.R & Weinstein J.M (2022). Legacies of Islamic rule in Africa: Colonial responses and contemporary development. *World development Journal* Vol 152.
- Dadoo S, Hubers, J.M, Kuttat J, Lukonge M, Mahali F.L. (2021). *Christian Zionism in Africa*. Google Books.
- Dobson J.C. (2012). *When God doesn't make sense. Holding on to your faith during the hardest times*. Tyndale House Publishers. Carol stream Illinois.
- Floyd T. (2023). Playing the Unfair Game: Apostates, Abuse & Religious Arbitration. *Wm. & Mary L. Rev.*, 65, 223.
- Hammarberg K, Kirkman M, de Lacey S (2016). Qualitative research methods: when to use them and how to judge them. *Oxford academic journals*. ESHRE.
- Harries, J. (2017). *Western Theology in Africa: Christian Mission in the light of the undermining of scientific hegemony*. Wiley Online.
- Johnson T.M., Zurlo G.A. & Crossing P.F. (2017). *The world by Religion. Year book of International Religious Demography*. Brill publications NV Lieden.
- Kaale.K & Bazira J. (2023). *The impact of Televangelism on Christian beliefs and Cultural*



- Values in Tanzania. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication.
- Keshomshahara A. (2010). The challenges of charismatic movements to the mainline historical churches in Africa. Regnam Books.
- Lindhart M. (2012). (ed.), Practicing the Faith: The Ritual Life of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians. Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011, vi + 344 pp. ISBN 978-1-84545-770-9.
- Lukonge M. (2016). The Reformation as relevance in contemporary African Christianity: An exploration of the theological Milieu Theo praxis. Tumaini University Dar es Salaam.
- Lummp.D (2024). The Lure of False Gospels. Global South Theological journal 3 (1):22-33.
- Mahali F.L. (2019). The impact of Lutheran theology in the formation of church and society in Tanzania. The journal of Theology Dialog. Wiley online library.
- Maher L & Dertadian G. (2017). Qualitative Research. Society for the addiction. Wiley Online Library
- Mathew M. (2013). Christian Theology and African Traditions. Lutterworth Press.
- Ngige, N.J & Eala B. (2020) addressing contextual misleading theologies in Africa today. Oxford: Regnum books International.
- Ngong T.D. (2020). Rumors of salvation: perspectives of salvation in Christian thought. Routledge handbook of African Theology. First edition.
- Peters T (2017). Science, Theology and ethics. London Routledge.
- Tanner K. (2022). The Politics of God. Christian Theologies and Social Justice. 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition. Fortress Press.
- Togarasei L. (2020). Bible and Theology in Africa. Routledge handbook of African Theology. First edition.