



The Loss of a Clan: Abandoning Ethos of the East African Revival by the Contemporary Kenyan Christian

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Abstract

This study investigated two practises of the East African Revival (EAR) movement; the public testimony of one's salvation and the public confession of all known sins. The study further sought to know the attitude of the contemporary Christian on the same. The study was qualitative in strategy with a phenomenological design. Criterion based purposive sampling was used to select the participants. The tools for gathering data were In-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions, and Document Review. Thematic Coding Analysis was used to analyse the data. The EDNA model for practical theology was applied as the theological framework. Findings show that the EAR members held the public testimony and public confession of sin as foundational to their doctrine and practice. The two practices helped them to create a unique identity and cohesiveness, after separating from their familial clans at conversion, hence forming a new spiritual clan of their own. The contemporary Christian on the other hand finds these two tenets of the EAR, intrusive and unacceptable. With no alternative ways of building cohesiveness and a unique identity, the younger believers are left without a clan hence becoming spiritual orphans. Traditional Anglicanism, with its focus on sacraments and liturgy, and African Traditional Religions are among the formations fighting to adopt these spiritual orphans. The study recommends that the church and society revisit these practices and apply them appropriately

in the fight against corruption and tribalism, among other ills in Kenyan society.

Keywords: East African Revival, Public Testimony, Public Confession of Sin, Cultural Discontinuity, Spiritual Orphans

Introduction

The beginning of the East African Revival (EAR) and its strong connection with the Anglican Missionary fraternity is traced back to 1930 (Church, 1981, p. 79). The revival sustained its momentum for “three generations” (Hooper, 2007, p. 71) and contributed greatly to the “growth of the Church in East Africa” (Hooper, 2007, pp. 71, 89). The members of the EAR held together in a tightly knit spiritual clan (Kevin Ward, 1991, p. 134) and this enabled them to stand for righteousness against many odds. Over time, however, the influence of the EAR on the Anglican Church in Kenya has been waning. In the “Chronology of Faith Building Events” (Ogutu, 2017, pp. 188–189) scanning the period between 1844 and 2016 for the All Saints Cathedral (ASC) Church, Nairobi, the EAR does not feature (Mwangi, 2022). The omission of the EAR, whether accidental or intentional, is a major pointer to the disconnect that has come between the EAR movement and the contemporary Christian because it shows that the EAR is no longer significant at the ASC.

Kenya has long been known to be over 75% Christian (Dyrness, 1992, p. 118) and in the 2019 national census, 85.5% Christian (Kamer, 2019), yet it is also amongst the world’s leading nations in corruption (Transparency International, Kenya, 2020). Normally Christians should have a penchant for holy living especially drawing from the command in Leviticus 19:2, to be holy because God is holy. The spirituality of this Christian ultimately becomes “a web of relationships in which we practise holiness” (Wolfteich, 2014, p. 331). If a huge percentage of the Kenyan population was practising holiness in daily life, then their impact would have gradually grown enough to suppress, if not totally eliminate, major societal vices rampant in this nation, such as tribalism, corruption, domestic violence, illicit sex among the youth, alcohol and drug abuse, hence linking Christian spirituality and ethical action.

With the understanding that “the study, critical assessment, and creative retrieval of ... traditions of Christian spirituality are important tasks of practical theology” (Wolfteich, 2014, p. 329), this study picked the EAR movement as one group whose spirituality can be representative of the Kenyan spiritual heritage. This study investigated the retention, or loss, of two practices established by the EAR in its heyday, and which had set its members apart, as people of a high moral standing. These were the public testimony of salvation, and the public confessing of all known sins (Ward & Wild-Wood,

2011, p. 7). In keeping with Practical Theology's tradition of dealing with practices which have been motivated and established by religious commitment (Immink, 2014, p. 127), the researcher sought to know the motives and reasons behind their establishment; whether the same practices have been passed on to the contemporary Christians by those who practised them, and whether contemporary Kenyan Christians find these practices theologically sound and/or relevant.

Choice of the Field

The investigation looked at two groups of people. First the active members of the EAR. These have first-hand experience of participating in the activities of the EAR, and are the current custodians of the practices and doctrinal positions held by the EAR. The second group is the contemporary and influential Christian in the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), ASC diocese. Here the focus was mainly on middle aged believers holding positions of responsibility in the Church and society and therefore influencing policy and ethos in contemporary Kenyan society. These were chosen to represent the younger generation (younger in comparison to the much older members of the EAR) of believers because the EAR was largely incubated in the Anglican Church (Kevin Ward, 1991, p. 129). The ASC church in Nairobi is also significant for this study because it is seen as the "model Cathedral for other dioceses"(Ogotu, 2017, p. XV) in Kenya to emulate.

Methodology

This study was qualitative in strategy and phenomenological in its research design. It sought to gain an understanding of what meanings the different participants attached to their experiences in relation to the EAR ethos. Phenomenology "searches for reasons for any irregular development as the possible result of tensions in human existence..."(Heitink, 1999, p. 189). This approach was deemed fit to dig out the underlying perceptions and occurrences in this situation. The inclusion of two different groups of people also made this study comparative. Bryman observes that where "two or more cases"(Bryman, 2016, p. 70) are involved in interviews conducted for a qualitative research, then the study becomes comparative. The comparative component was vital because it highlights the changes that have occurred over time, regarding perceptions on public testimonies and public confessions of sins.

Bloomberg and Volpe observe that while "Methodology refers to how research proceeds...Methods commonly denotes specific techniques, procedures, or tools used by the researcher to generate and analyse data"(Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p. 157).The tools used for this study were In-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions, and Document review.

Criterion based purposive sampling was used to select the participants. The main criteria was the individual's level of interaction with the EAR and, or the ASC Nairobi.

The In-depth interviews were central to this study because they availed opportunity for the researcher to interrogate the participants, particularly the older members of the EAR, who required patience and ample time to remember and articulate their experiences. The data from the interviews thus became sufficiently "rich, thick descriptions" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p. 229). The prevalence of the COVID 19 pandemic during the period when the interviews were conducted meant that some of them had to be done via telephone. 20 interviews were conducted involving 24 individuals. 4 interviews had 2 interviewees each where 3 were married couples and 1 case had 2 members of the EAR sitting together. Ages ranged from 50 to 101 years. Focus Group Discussions (FGD), which in some cases are referred to as group interviews, were conducted mainly with the younger members (younger in relation to the older EAR respondents) of the ASC. These group discussions have a special place in qualitative research because they bring in what the respondent has observed as an individual and also give the researcher the opportunity to interrogate these observations just as in an interview (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p. 126). Four FGDs were held and all of them were conducted online using the ZOOM virtual conference tool. This was again made necessary by the prevailing COVID 19 containment measures in place at that time. Ages ranged from 20 to 65 years. One group was made of a neighbourhood Bible-study cell. Another group was made of young professionals at ASC who meet together regularly to encourage one another. The other 2 groups comprised of individuals holding leadership positions at ASC and available at 2 different times. In total the FGDs had 32 individuals participating. The researcher would give a brief introduction of the discussion ahead and then allow the discussion to flow while guiding it with the already prepared questions. All the participants were comfortable with this technology and would quickly log in again where the link was interrupted for any reason.

All the interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder and later transcribed by a research assistant. Some interviews were done in the Kikuyu language in cases where the respondents were not comfortable with English but most were done in English. The researcher, who is also the author of this article, personally conducted all the interviews and this made the processing of data easier. The respondents are identified with the letters of the Alphabet and where a married couple was involved the man has the number 1 and the wife the number 2 alongside the letter identifying them.

10 books were reviewed for this study. These were selected on the basis of their content and its relevance to the study. Among them were 5 autobiographies.

Three research questions were then used to guide in the formation of themes resulting in the emergence of two major themes and two sub-themes. The EDNA model for doing research in Practical Theology was used as the theological framework. This model has four stages namely: Exploratory, Descriptive, Normative, and Action, forming the acronym EDNA (Woodbridge, 2014). The Exploratory stage, which covers the background of the study, is covered in the introduction while the Descriptive is covered under the research questions. The Normative stage, which emphasises the place of scripture, overlaps in both the research questions section and the conclusion. The Action stage is under the conclusion.

Research Questions

1. What was the significance of Public Testimony in the EAR ?
2. What was the impact of Public Confession of sin in the EAR?
3. How does the contemporary believer in the ASC view Public testimony and public confession of sin?

Themes

1. Conversion, Cultural Discontinuity, and Public Testimony
2. Repentance and Public Confession of Sin
 - I. Restitution
 - II. Delineating sin

Findings and Discussions

Significance of the Public Testimony

Under research question one, the theme Conversion, Cultural Discontinuity, and Public Testimony revealed that the public testimony was one of the fundamentals in the EAR movement.

The experience of respondent S who got saved as a 15 year old primary school boy on the 8th of September 1956 is telling. His teacher had evangelized him and then invited him to an upcoming EAR convention. As the meeting progressed with the initial announcements, introductions and testimonies, he became impatient. He stood up and shouted “I came to get saved and you are keeping me waiting!” He was immediately given the opportunity to publicly declare his salvation. The response was overwhelming. There was a spontaneous singing of the EAR theme song *Tukutendereza Yesu*, translated “We Praise You Jesus”(Kevin Ward, 1991, p. 113).

As the singing went on the people lined up to hug him. He had not undergone the rite of circumcision by then and was therefore considered a “*kihii*” in the Kikuyu tradition. The status of a *kihii* in the Kikuyu cultural setting is such that he can only have a close interaction with others in the same category. As Kenyatta observes, “The difference in standing of the

circumcised and the uncircumcised is tremendous”(Kenyatta, 1965, p. 104). S recalls how his *kihii* status seemed to have disappeared immediately he made the public confession of salvation. Adult members of the revival treated him as a friend right away. Under no circumstances would he have expected his teacher, elders in the community, and women of his mother’s age to hug him, a *kihii*, but they all lined up to do so.

This acceptance gave new converts a new identity and purpose. It was enough to make one a faithful disciple of the EAR. It also changed the worldview of the convert whereby they would begin to see themselves as Christian first then Kikuyu, as opposed to being principally Kikuyu, then Christian. The fellowship members would then become the new convert’s clan as opposed to the traditional clan made up of ones relatives. This was the epitome of the cultural discontinuity associated with the revival.

Despite his relatives declaring him a lunatic because of getting saved, S performed well in school up to university level and later became an ordained minister with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) and a theology scholar holding a PhD. In retrospect, he has no regret for belonging to a group which upon “their conversions they put distance between themselves and communities that claimed them in the name of ethnic identity”(Peterson, 2013, p. 76).

Respondent D remembers the concept of salvation being introduced in his Embu locality for the first time in 1940. He could not recall any mention of salvation prior to that. Christianity as was known then entailed baptism as marking the start of a Christian life, followed by involvement in Church activities. He got saved in 1942 at the age of 23. The small numbers responding to the Gospel seem not to have been a bother to the EAR members. They focused more on the veracity of the conversion than on the numbers of those getting saved. The EAR members did not fear losing a convert on the basis of being scrutinized. The quantitative approach to evangelism popular today, where the numbers of those who get saved are the measure of success as opposed to the depth of conviction, was not part of the EAR approach. On cultural discontinuity, respondent D had to change not only his spiritual affiliation but also his friends and regular companions. The members of the EAR fellowship became his regular companions and friends.

Respondent G got saved in an EAR convention at Thogoto in 1949 at the age of 15 years. He had been ailing during the interview. On 5th July 2021 he died. The researcher was involved in the funeral arrangements and observed some details relevant to this study, especially concerning the actual burial which happened on 13th July 2021.

The community uses a group of young men to dig the grave whenever someone dies in the village. This group consists of young, unemployed, and largely delinquent men. Their main interest is to get a meal after the work and

also earn some little money to buy the local alcoholic brew. They have nothing to do with the Church.

On the eve of the burial the young men came and dug the grave. They smoked their cigarettes and talked in their foul language as they did the work. Most of them had never entered that compound before. After they were given their money and food they went away. The standard expectation is that the next day after the church ceremony is over they would be there to refill the grave with soil. They never came back. This caused a bit of suspense after the church ceremony but the many people who had attended the funeral took up the work and filled the grave with soil. It was later reported that the young men felt no obligation to complete their mission as this was a home where they were not properly recognized.

This incident demonstrated the incompleteness of cultural discontinuity for the current members of the EAR in some parts of central Kenya. The local church and the local EAR fellowship were not able to demonstrate what Wild-Wood calls “a cohesive system of social obligation”(Wild-Wood, 2016, p. 130) by availing enough of their own young men to do the work around the grave. This left a gap for the young men of the village to fill. It also created a feeling that the Christian remains vulnerable to the dictates of the non-Christian members of the community at least at the end of his/her life. The “new clan”(Wild-Wood, 2016, p. 130) initially formed by the EAR and well known for meeting the social needs of the group is no more. It may also explain why some Christians have joined the *withike wi muoyo* (bury yourself) groups (Mwangi, 2022, p. 33). The inability of both the Church and the EAR to raise enough social capital within their members to cater for their social needs of all kinds makes the same members vulnerable and cultural discontinuity risky. Death is a significant rite of passage and community values are generally communicated during rites of passage. When the Church is unable to take full control during this rite of passage, Christian values are lost and cultural values prevail as the default position.

J got saved in 1974 while in secondary school. She has all along believed in the public testimony and public confession of sin. She refers to Psalm 107:2 where it says “Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story” (NIV), as the springboard for public testimony of salvation. She emphasized the need for the newly saved to publicly state what God has done for him or her. Her experience is that these public testimonies have also witnessed to other observers and listeners who realized that the testimony given identified with their private predicament hence showing them that there is a solution. They then proceed to accept salvation because they heard the testimony. Testifying in public is therefore seen as a way of evangelizing by members of the EAR.

Respondent P got saved in a Kenya Anglican Youth Organization (KAYO) camp at age 33. He takes the position that initially the EAR members took him up because they saw leadership potential in him and they also wanted the youth to join them. However, he asserted that they held to a particular mold in their Christian faith and anyone who did not totally fit in was not welcome. His experience resonates with Gatu's opinion where the latter accused the EAR of trying to fit the younger Christians into their "old mold" (Gatu, 2006, p. 49). Respondent P described himself as one who gradually failed to fit in the EAR mold until he could no longer be counted as one among them. His wider interest in the growth of the church and theology are some of the things he said disconnected him with the EAR. He thought them to be inward looking while they saw him as too accommodative.

His analysis of the EAR is that they segregated themselves from the society and became "ultra-Christian" seeing all others as not measuring up to their standard. He called them sectarian and expressed the opinion that they would have had a bigger impact in the society if they had been more accommodative. This concerns were also expressed by Max Warren in his journal (Kevin Ward, 1991, p. 133), and more directly supported by Gitari, who opined that the EAR became an "introverted ministry" (Gitari, 2014, p. 12), a state that weakened it and diluted its impact.

Respondent N was a retired Anglican Bishop who rose through the ranks in the church, having started as a parish priest after attending Bible school. He got saved in 1957 at about 21 years of age. His conversion and spiritual growth all happened in the EAR fellowship. He observed that at the time of his conversion the EAR was emphasizing *Thama* (shift) which implied moving away from "your sin, your people, your culture, your country and your everything". He credits the EAR fellowship with nurturing him at spiritual infancy, calling himself a child of the fellowship.

Looking at the EAR fellowship in the present time, N had harsh words. He said it has "outlived its usefulness" and sustained a shallow approach to theological issues. He could no longer fit in when he ventured out for more and broader theological training and understanding. He saw the public testimony as epitomizing this shallow theology.

On cultural discontinuity N raised a motion in his Anglican diocese when he was the Bishop, to the effect that no one would be elected into the church council without first giving the village elders the *Mburi ya Kiama*, a ritual explained by Kenyatta as a young man paying "one male goat or sheep and then he is initiated into a first grade of eldership" (Kenyatta, 1965, p. 193). The motion was passed. He argued that there exists no relationship between the blood of Jesus and the blood of goats (Mwangi, 2022, p. 28). Asked how he reconciled the fact that some of the village elders were not even Christians yet he wanted the Christian man to submit to their authority, he said that he

saw no problem. He further argued that the Kikuyu man who becomes a Christian is first a Kikuyu then a Christian.

The thinking of respondent N does not seem to resonate well with Paul's assertion that "he who is in Christ is a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). It may also undermine the fellowship of Christians made up of believers from all walks of life. One would wonder how a Kikuyu Christian man will ever accept a man from another community as a complete and respectable Christian man, if the former is trained that the rituals of his community are what first makes one a man. The unity of the believers, even as exemplified by the early church seems to be totally discarded by this thinking. While Christian fellowship and brotherhood have the potential of being a strong antidote for tribalism, which remains a big problem in Kenya, the position taken by N totally sabotages this potential.

Respondent T1 asserted that preaching normally tells people what should happen in certain situations but testimony tells them if and how it is happening. Testimony therefore carries an element of mentoring. This is true especially considering the corruption crises in Kenya where faithful Christians who resist corruption lack a podium on which to proclaim what they have experienced. Some have been arrested by police for traffic offences they have not committed and the police demanded a bribe but they resisted and ended up being charged in court and fined. They have lived to tell their friends about the inner peace with God they experienced because of doing the right thing but a public testimony on the same would encourage many more people to resist corruption and trust God for their needs.

Comparing the testimonies of the EAR gatherings and the testifying done today in many other meetings that Christians have, T1 lamented that today's testimonies are mainly success stories. While this may be blamed on the prosperity gospel, it actually introduces an element of dishonesty, in the sense of exaggerating the positive occurrences while ignoring the negative ones and the continuing challenges of life. The testimonies given in the EAR fellowship meetings played a huge role in the way EAR taught its members how to walk with God. If a testimony was given publicly and it carried some exaggeration or a misleading message, it would be corrected on the spot by one of the fellowship leaders to avoid propagating an error.

Respondent T 2 was born in 1956 and got saved as a young primary school girl. She narrated how a young man who had been very faithful in church and even taught the young children every Sunday in their morning class, caught the attention of the EAR members. They paid for him to attend an EAR convention. Upon his return, he was to deliver greetings from the conference in the Sunday meeting. He told the local fellowship that he had brought them greetings from "*aari na ariu a Ithe wanyu*" (meaning your brothers and sisters in Christ). But the words in Gikuyu, *Ithe wanyu*, which

directly says “your father” left him disturbed and asking himself why God was not his father also. By the next meeting he came back to get saved and start having God as his father. T 2 emphasized a positive aspect of the public testimony here in that the young man could not have used any different words, since everyone knew that he was yet to get saved, and the truth of needing to have God as his father dawned on him when he called God “your father”. For her it has nowadays become difficult to know who is saved and who is not in the absence of testimonies. She said that she asks her saved children how they tell who among their friends is saved and she does not get a clear answer. The concept of personal salvation (Musalia, 2001, p. 42) is being strongly eroded. Public testimonies helped the members of EAR to have a unique group identity and sense of belonging. Having declared in public that one belonged to the EAR carried a responsibility of allegiance to the ethos of the fellowship. The Revivalists had no choice but to form themselves into a unique clan, not founded on a common ancestry but a common destiny, with its own rules and guiding principles (Peterson, 2013, p. 48). The experience of the EAR movement in this study resonates with the “pilgrim principle... not fully at home in this world, so that it comes into tension with its society from its loyalty to Christ.”(Walls, 1996, p. 54). This created Social Capital and the “new clan” (Wild-Wood, 2016, p. 130).

Contemporary Views on the Public Testimony

Respondent V who has served as a youth Pastor at the ASC for more than ten years presented the youth of ASC diocese as totally unaware of the existence of the EAR and its ethos. They view the public testimony as a sharing of progress in life and in the walk with God but they would not expect any template to come along with the testimony. For them the testimony must be relevant to their contemporary world and not historical. It must also be authentic and therefore as unique as every individual would be. The young people have their own stories which they love to share among themselves and they have their own way of telling these stories. They do not expect the testimony to be demanded from them at any one point.

One participant in FGD 4 referred to his background in the Full Gospel Church, before joining ASC. He noted that testimony in the Full Gospel setting was about answered prayers or victory over sin. Struggles with sin or unanswered prayers were not given publicity.

The FGD participants largely saw public pronouncement of salvation as unnecessary and outdated. Many in the younger generation were not sure of the exact date of their salvation as opposed to the EAR members who always pronounced it. One participant in the FGD 3 expressed the fear of being labelled a “bigot” by his peers. His argument being that if the Christians of his

age group adopted the practise of sharing their testimonies whenever they met, they would be “stigmatising” those who are not saved.

The unequivocal and jealous devotion to Christ typical of the EAR members is missing here. Peace with fellow man has evidently become a competitor against peace with God, the same God who tells his followers not to be ashamed of him (Luke 9:26). In such a case acceptance by the wider community takes precedence over the demands of the body of believers.

Impact of the Public Confession of sin

Under research question two, the theme Repentance and Public Confessions of sin revealed that repentance has always been at the center of the message of the EAR movement. The conversations the researcher held with those who have been in the fellowship for many years would always be steered by the respondent to repentance which to them is the starting point for the spiritual journey of a Christian. Repentance in EAR would be followed by the new convert publicly testifying about the change that has occurred in his or her life, and also confessing all known sins up to that point at the earliest possible opportunity. This public confession was considered incomplete unless and until specific sins were mentioned, acknowledged, and renounced.

Anker-Peterson expounded on the role of public confession in the EAR as exposing “common experience and shared struggle” among believers, anchoring “theology in experience”, highlighting the place of fellow believers in ones walk with God, availing the “humiliation and pain” needed to identify with Christ in his suffering, and demonstrating God’s “grace in extending forgiveness” (Reed, 2007, p. 116). The words of the EAR respondents in this study agree with this summary. Reed further adds that “the whole area of public confession was integral to the revival, reflecting a culturally appropriate expression of Christian faith” (Reed, 2007, p. 116).

Respondent B1 traced back the practice of confessing sins in public to the Bible in Acts 19:17-20, where, in the early church, believers openly confessed their former sins, publicly burned items associated with sorcery, and the whole occurrence was credited with the wider and faster spread of the Gospel. He further saw confession of sin as “employing guards” in the form of public witnesses who henceforth hold the believer accountable because of the public proclamation of a changed life.

Respondent B2 narrated how her mentor, the late Bishop Obadiah Kariuki, taught her and other young believers that the sin which is not mentioned publicly returns to visit the person who used to practice it. This was a concept of the EAR where public confession of sin meant treating specific sin as a personal enemy henceforth.

Respondent L had been raised up by members of the EAR since childhood but he had strayed away from the Christian faith for many years. He got saved at age 50 and publicly renounced his former life. He described public confession as a liberating experience. He used a Kikuyu proverb “*Ndithuire mumioni ta mumianiriri*” (a wild animal is not angry with a person who just sees it and leaves it alone, it gets angry with the one who shouts and alerts other people about its presence hence exposing it to the danger of being attacked). This “*kuanirira*” (shouting and screaming) about specific sins further explains Public Confession of sin as a concept in the EAR. It meant exposing the devil, the tempter, and the actual sin thereby leaving both the sin and the source with no place to hide. The renouncing of sin in public calls attention to the end of certain actions and affiliations meaning that even old friends get to hear publicly that their friend is no longer with them, no longer taking alcohol or attending night parties, etc. It hence triggers a sense of accountability to the new life, for the convert, in the public arena.

Respondent D remembered getting saved together with his parish priest. He referred to his repentance as “*gutemburanga ngoro*” (tearing open his heart) which springs from Joel 2:13 which elevates the rending of the heart in repentance above the rending of the garments. He confessed the sins of adultery, anger, and lying publicly but his highlight remained repentance in the sense of changing the direction of his life. This visible change was greatly emphasized in the EAR as opposed to simply making a public statement of change.

The parish priest confessed that he had been misappropriating church money. This was money given as offertory during Holy Communion and dedicated to feeding the hungry, ministering to the sick, and generally helping the poor. He would use it to buy tobacco for himself, which in itself was another sin in that context. The public testimony and confession coming from a priest was a major statement on what true Christianity meant in the EAR. Many ordinary church attendees would hence wake up to a different level of practicing the Christian faith.

Respondent J referred to James 5:16 “confess your sins to each other...” (NIV) as the reason for the practice of confessing sins publicly in the EAR. She mentioned that when an individual faces another and confesses a wrong done in the past it is like “vomiting” the sin hence it is no longer resident in the culprit and loses its grip on them. This resonates well with the discovery made by the colonialists that “the power of a Mau Mau oath could be removed if the partaker confessed to taking it” (Peterson, 2013, p. 236). Something about acknowledging and disowning evil in public tends to bring relief. The respondent also expressed the conviction that “Jesus was crucified naked” hence the need to be naked about sin without feeling ashamed.

On the other hand J acknowledged that public confession can go wrong. She preferred confession being made to the person who was wronged or who conspired in the act. This has been a concern because of cases where an individual confessed to having been involved in sexual sin with another individual and the name was mentioned publicly. It caused a lot of pain as in the case mentioned (Gitari, 2014, p. 76)

Other pitfalls concerning public testimonies include the glorification of sin as it was publicly described. Some kind of romantic relationship with sins of the past appeared. In addition the habit of always going back to the past to tell of sins committed hindered growth in the believer's life. The emphasis on confessing sins publicly has over the years put off many people who would otherwise have responded to the Gospel, because they could not bring themselves to the place of announcing in public what their lives were.

Contemporary Views on the Public Confessions of Sin

The issue of public confessions of sin elicited debate in FGD 1 with a focus on the lack of confidentiality. Participants felt that in the present world of social media it is totally untenable. The digital era has brought in "the end of privacy", they said. The personal issues raised in a public confession of sin could find their way into social media and reach the whole world in minutes. The benefits mentioned by the EAR members did not resonate with members of FGD1. The latter focused on the individual walk with God with not much thought being given to cooperate walk and responsibilities shared by believers. The stand of the scriptures on this issue was not given much attention. This is another major difference between the two groups. The older revival members never left the scriptures behind in their articulation of what they believed.

Members of FGD 2 expressed concern with loss of integrity among church leaders emanating from the secrecy surrounding sins. They opined that contemporary Christians fear judging others or being judged. The result then is that many people continue in their sin and at the same time offer leadership in the church with no one to confront them.

None of the FGDs brought out a strong inclination towards evangelism. Neither did they show a sense of intercessory responsibility concerning the sins of this nation, Kenya. The evangelistic component inherent in public confession of sin, as demonstrated by the EAR members, was rejected by the FGD participants with the argument that one needs to be convinced intellectually to change their ways and get saved rather than being convicted by the confessions of another person.

The younger generation at the ASC, especially those raised by staunch members of the EAR, represented those the study has found to be EAR orphans because they are now falling back to traditional Anglicanism, which emphasizes sacraments and liturgy more than the evangelical group, since they

see the former as the only structure still standing. One of them suggested the Roman Catholic way of confessing sins to a priest as being better than the public confession of sin. The episcopal administrative structures of the Anglican Church as well as the traditional rituals in the Anglican worship services provide a seemingly more solid ground for the EAR orphans since they appear perennial.

Restitution

Respondent B1 brought in the element of restitution with the mention of a case in Murang'a where a new believer removed the barbed wire surrounding his farm and took it to the district commissioner's office because he had bought it with money gained from corruption. Respondent I also felt the conviction to return some items she had stolen. She picked this conviction from the testimonies of EAR members and also from their teaching concerning Zacchaeus in Luke 19. The teachings emphasized "*Kutubu na kutengeneza*" which is Swahili for repenting and fixing, in which case fixing is restitution. She recalls having been employed as an untrained teacher in Nakuru where she was teaching young people embroidery. The government used to supply the necessary implements for this project. She had on some occasions carried away for herself some two meters of cloth, thread, and thimble. She went to a shop and bought the equivalent of these items and then sent them to the school. Her confession and the items were all received and acknowledged and that gave her great peace.

On his part, Ondeng had been evading paying tax. The members of the EAR helped him to see this act as stealing. In spite of holding the senior position of School Principle, he went to the authorities and confessed what he had been doing. He wrote "I trusted that God would honor my obedience"(ONDENG', 2015, p. 28). He was forgiven. He also felt convicted of the sin of gossip. He had been speaking "ill of many of the missionaries" (ONDENG', 2015, p. 28) EAR members encouraged him to seek the forgiveness of those whom he could find. He did so and it brought him a lot of peace(ONDENG', 2015, p. 28). Similarly, he openly returned some books he had taken from the school library with the intention of keeping them as his own. Doing so openly helped all the people working with him to be witnesses of the great change that had occurred in his life (ONDENG', 2015, p. 29).

Respondent G, narrated how he returned a "Parker" pen to the shop of an Asian businessman where he had stolen it before getting saved and the shop owner just accepted it with no threat of calling the police on this self-confessed thief.

In all these cases there is no reported instance in which a confession or an act of restitution led to prosecution or any kind of legally sanctioned punishment. This pattern of restitution without negative repercussions appears

to have built confidence among the EAR members that it was the right thing to do and that God always protected those who honored the conviction and returned what they had stolen. Restitution also played an evangelistic role because the recipient of the items being returned always got to know that the culprit had been convicted by God and that must be a power to reckon with.

The FGD participants could not identify with restitution made public. For them restitution should end with the parties concerned and not risk damaging the reputation of the penitent. Members of FDG 3 termed the EAR as a small group of people who could maintain confidentiality. This is however not accurate because most of the confessions and acts of restitution were done in the full view of the wider public. Personal image was not a concern for the EAR member as it is for the contemporary Christian.

Delineating Sin

One significant result of the public confession of sin was that sin got clearly delineated, both to the members of the EAR and to the surrounding communities wherever this fellowship thrived. The delineation of sin in this case was largely communal. It was not necessarily born out of an exegetical or hermeneutical undertaking but a product of personal convictions being embraced by the fellowship and slowly becoming dogma. The preaching in the EAR gatherings “defined certain previously uncontroversial actions as sins”(Peterson, 2013, p. 183). What a converted member had earlier considered normal action, like taking away small pieces of utensils from an employer became part of the “hard evidence of their iniquity in the inventory they made of their lives”(Peterson, 2013, p. 183). This practice of isolating, defining, and disowning sin became an important part of what an EAR fellowship meeting entailed.

Respondent R narrated a case concerning a woman whose daughter had given birth outside of marriage. This woman, a member of the EAR, felt the conviction and confessed that she had been supporting the illicit relationship between her daughter and the father of the child by receiving his support. She called it the sin of accepting “*watoto wa zinaa*” (children of immorality). This gradually formed a tradition where daughters of EAR members would be ostracized from the home if they became pregnant outside of marriage. Respondent D, mentioned earlier, stands as an example of some who rejected this position. Though remaining a staunch member of the EAR to his death, he encouraged his pregnant daughter to get married to her boyfriend after establishing that they loved each other.

The long serving Youth Pastor and mentor to many young adults, respondent V, observed that the youth at ASC look up to their “influencers” who are their pastors, peers, and mentors, to tell them what is sin and what is not. Scripture or the fellowship of believers are not their immediate reference

when isolating sin. Asked about the place of the Ten Commandments among the youth, Y noted that they depend more on the interpretations of the same influencers rather than a literal reading of what the scriptures say.

Members of FGD 1 expressed strong reservations to rules barring men from, keeping a beard or wearing jeans and ladies from plaiting hair, wearing short or sleeveless dresses, wearing earrings. Whereas these rules had their many shortcomings, the challenge for the contemporary believer is having for themselves a way of delineating sin in their context.

Conclusion

This study has shown that the EAR movement accumulated valuable theological lessons and experiences. Over time these special lessons and values have been fading out and some are almost sounding abstract to the younger generation. The EDNA model refers to scripture as the normative position for Christians. The EAR members quoted scripture every time they explained their practices. The contemporary believer reasoned out when reacting to these practices rather than using scripture. The Anglican Church community represented by the ASC, Nairobi appears to have come full circle from the time the church in Uganda was accused of not being “sufficiently nominal” (David Zac Niringiye, 1997, p. 77) to a time when the younger generation at the ASC, Nairobi is accusing the EAR of not being sufficiently nominal. Though expressed at very different times, these two separate voices portray serious discomfort with some demands of the Gospel. This study posits that the existence of an overwhelming majority of Christians in the Kenyan population and their failure to impact the society with an overall Christian ethos may be partially explained by the losses incurred by the Kenyan church, over time, as listed below.

The New Clan

The younger believers at ASC Nairobi lack a faith based clan to belong to and clan rules to follow. Using the “Evangelical theological perspective, which holds that Christianity is not a religion but a way of life” (Gathogo, 2021, p. 39), one then sees the need for a clear set of rules guiding all who subscribe to this way of life in a particular context. This is the void created by the absence of the new clan.

Clear Identification of Who is saved and who is Not Saved

The EAR had managed to shape and define “what it means to be Christian” (Ward & Wild-Wood, 2011, p. 8) in the local context. With the gradual dropping of its ethos in general and the public testimony in particular, many believers are not sure who is saved and who is not saved.

Proper Disconnection with Sin

The enhanced commitment that used to be produced by public proclamation of sin is lost amongst the younger believers because they are not accountable to a strong fellowship with “evaluative relationships” (Peterson, 2013, p. 48) where rebuking one another is accepted.

Delineation of sin

The contextual delineation of sin that the EAR was availing is now lacking at the ASC Nairobi diocese and by extension in the wider Church in Kenya.

Evangelical Anglicanism

The EAR may not have had evangelism as its strongest point but its love for God and hunger for righteousness resulted in significant evangelistic efforts to the extent that Anglicans in East Africa were categorized amongst the world’s evangelical Anglican communities (Reed, 2007, p. 85). With the younger believers at ASC fearing to be labelled “bigoted”, Evangelical Anglicanism is now another casualty of the change represented by the theological shift away from the EAR ethos.

Recommendation

In line with the fourth step of the EDNA model, Action, this study recommends that action be taken by the ASC Nairobi diocese and the ACK leadership in general to stem the continuing loss of the valuable theological lessons espoused by the EAR. This can be done by giving the remaining members of the EAR opportunities to share their experiences on the pulpit, through the electronic media, and also helping them to write and publish their memoirs. Efforts should also be mad to encourage the younger generation of believers to share their experiences in the form of testimonies so that they can learn from one another.

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