



ISSN 2278 – 0211 (Online)

A Negotiation Process between Postmodern Worship Practices and Traditional Worship Practices in Selected Anglican Churches in Muranga County, Kenya

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Abstract:

Religious postmodernism is a philosophical method that attempts to analyze the present as it occurs on matters of doctrine, faith and practice particularly the view that no religion or religious view is absolutely right or wrong. This philosophy has entrenched itself in today's society and threatens to disrupt the social order especially in churches which strictly stick to the Bible and the church traditions like the Anglican Church of Kenya. Postmodern worship practices are a great challenge to the unity Anglican Church as they threaten the traditional worship practices which are a pillar of the church. A study was carried out in Makuyu Archdeaconry of Murang'a South Diocese ACK to assess the effects of postmodern worship practices on Christian Worship between May and August 2014. Worship elements including music, prayer, and general church leadership, role of women, worship facilities and homosexuality were investigated. The theoretical framework that guided the study was the deconstruction theory first developed by Jacques Derrida in 1976 which holds that where philosophical opposition exists, you can never encounter a peaceful coexistence and thus you have to deconstruct the two opposing sides by assuming first that none is right or wrong. Data was corrected through self-report questionnaire, interview guide and observation guide. Descriptive survey was used and data analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 17). Interpretation of meaning of findings was based on objectives and existing literature. The study found that postmodernism has affected worship in the mode of dressing, music played in church and the church leadership. The findings of the research are important to Christians and religious leaders whose religions have been affected by postmodernism.

Keywords: *Postmodern worship practices, traditional Anglican worship practices.*

1. Background to the Study

Christianity is one of the largest religions in the world. It has been in existent for about 2000 years, having been started by the disciples of Jesus Christ 50 days after his ascension after receiving the Holy Spirit, (Acts: 2). From around 300 AD Christianity spread throughout Europe and was exported to the America after the discovery of the continent late 15th century. It was later to be brought to Africa during the great evangelical period after 1500. In Kenya, it was introduced by the European missionaries in the 18th century. There was no room for the African idea of religion and whatever the African held sacred was forcefully discarded in favour of this new religion. It was not until after the Second World War that the African started questioning the sanctity and the infallibility of the Christianity that was taught and sought to find his own identity. After independence African Churches grew to four or five thousands (Baur 2005). These were Christian churches but with an African touch. They catered for those Africans who were excommunicated from the mainstream churches and those for one reason or another objected to the imperialism overtures of the mainstream churches. Apart from this challenge to the church, Christianity in Kenya has been smooth with the church doctrines held holy. The mode of worship has been constant consisting mainly of prayer, hymns, sermons and chanting of holy verses. This to every Christian has been accepted as the will of God and the only way of worship.

The Anglican Church was introduced in Kenya in the mid-19th century by Anglican missionaries. The first African bishops were consecrated in 1955. ACK became a part of the province of East Africa and in 1970 became a province of the Anglican Communion. By 2012, the church had 5 million adherents in 30 dioceses (Hawkins, 2013). The church is still growing.

From the late twentieth century change has gradually found its way in Anglican worship in Kenya. Young people have challenged the religiosity of orthodox Anglicanism and opted for what they believe is their way to spirituality and salvation. This has been widely referred to as postmodernism. For a long time both pastors and the faithful have overlooked this problem but it is now threatening to tear the church asunder.

2. Biblical and Theological Foundations of the Anglican Worship Practices

From the time the Anglican Church split from the Roman Catholic Church in the early years of the 16th century, the church has leaned towards the Bible to develop all her doctrines. This began by translating the bible into English in 1539 and then the formulation of the Book of Common Prayers ten years later which was based on the Bible.

The dressing for both the clergy and lay Christians for instances is based on the Biblical teachings in Exodus 40: 13-15 where God directed Moses to put upon Aaron and his sons the holy garments so that they may minister unto him. To date the Anglican Church prescribes a black cassock, a white surplice and a black stole for the priests (Wandera, 2012). Paul in 1 Cor 11, 4-6 gives guidelines on how men and women should dress in worship. Men should not worship with their heads covered while women should cover their heads. Women are also discouraged from wearing jewelry. 1 Tim: 2:9-10 says that women should adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety: not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls or costly array. Deuteronomy 22: 5 forbids women worship leaders wearing trousers into church ...a woman shall not wear that which pertained unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment This has not gone down well with postmodernists who Kayser (2009) observes detest the idea of a dress code for the church with a passion.

The church has used music as a form of worship since its inception. This music however is not meant to be enjoyed. According to Klukas & Keyes (2004), sacred music is directed towards God rather than human beings and does not try to anesthetize or arouse its hearers. Music in the bible was meant for worship or soothing of the spirits like in the case of Saul in 1 Sam 18 and 19. Whenever it was misused, the consequences were dire as seen in Exodus 32 when the Israelites drank and danced for the golden calf. Moses ordered a massacre. Today there is a very thin line between the sacred and the secular music. Drunkards in bars love the gospel tunes while secular tunes are used in churches with a slight change in wording.

The role of women in the Anglican Church has been that of the Bible where women were ever behind men. Paul is adamant that women should not speak in church. The Anglican Church has thus remained Patriarchal and it is not until the Lambeth Conference in 1978 when the issue was raised. In 1980 the Anglican Province of Kenya agreed in principal that women could be ordained as priests (Gathogo, 2013)

3. Statement of the Problem

From the above background it is evident that the church of Christ should follow the bible if it were to reflect a true Christian religion. The practices that Christians engage in are a mirror through which we see the inner faith of a Christian since it is not possible to see the Christian's heart. As such these practices must be based on biblical teaching. The Anglican established her church traditions basically from the Bible after it was translated to English. These traditions have been used together with the Bible in all the Anglican Practices.

With the entry of postmodern worship practices in Kenya, a lot of changes have been witnessed in the way Christians relate and worship. Orthodox Christians believe that the proponents of postmodernism are negating the core values of the Christian religion. To them postmodernists are diluting the sanctity of the church for their own individual gains. They strongly feel that whatever these postmodernists, who are mainly young people are doing is running away from the "truth".

Between October 21st and 26th 2013, over 1300 Anglican leaders from 38 countries congregated in Nairobi under the umbrella of Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) as a follow up to the 2008 Jerusalem declaration. Their main agenda dealt with postmodern religious practices particularly marriage and family, Islam, theological education, children and youth, women and Gospel, and culture. The subject of homosexuality was deeply debated upon and the post modern view of gay and lesbian rights as human rights declared ungodly. They vowed to follow the truth according to the written word of God (Bible) and tradition.

Postmodernists on the other hand do not believe in this "truth", to them there is no absolute truth. Something could be right for one and wrong for another. Simply put "if it works for one it is his/her truth and if it works for others again it is their truth". The universality of the Christian truth is therefore denied by this school of thought. This scenario threatens to split the Anglican Church in the middle and unless it is checked, the Church as it is known will not survive the twenty first century.

Many researchers have concentrated on urban centres on for their research on postmodernism. However, a pilot study has showed that postmodernism has rapidly spread into the rural areas. Makuyu archdeaconry is one ACK division in the rural areas in which postmodernism is evident. Already there has been a tussle between the bishop's office and one of the churches which prefers a glass pulpit to the traditional wooden one. This rise of postmodernism in Makuyu may be attributed to her proximity to major towns like Thika and Nairobi and the good communication network as the dual carriage way from Nairobi through Thika which ends at Makuyu. This study sought to identify the worship practices establish the traditional worship practices that have been affected by post modern practices in selected Anglican churches in Makuyu. The study also sought to establish the Christian response to the changes in worship practices and the consequences of these changes. These were contrasted with the biblical teachings and the church traditions of the church which form the pillars on which the Anglican Church is built.

4. The Key Questions which guided the Study were

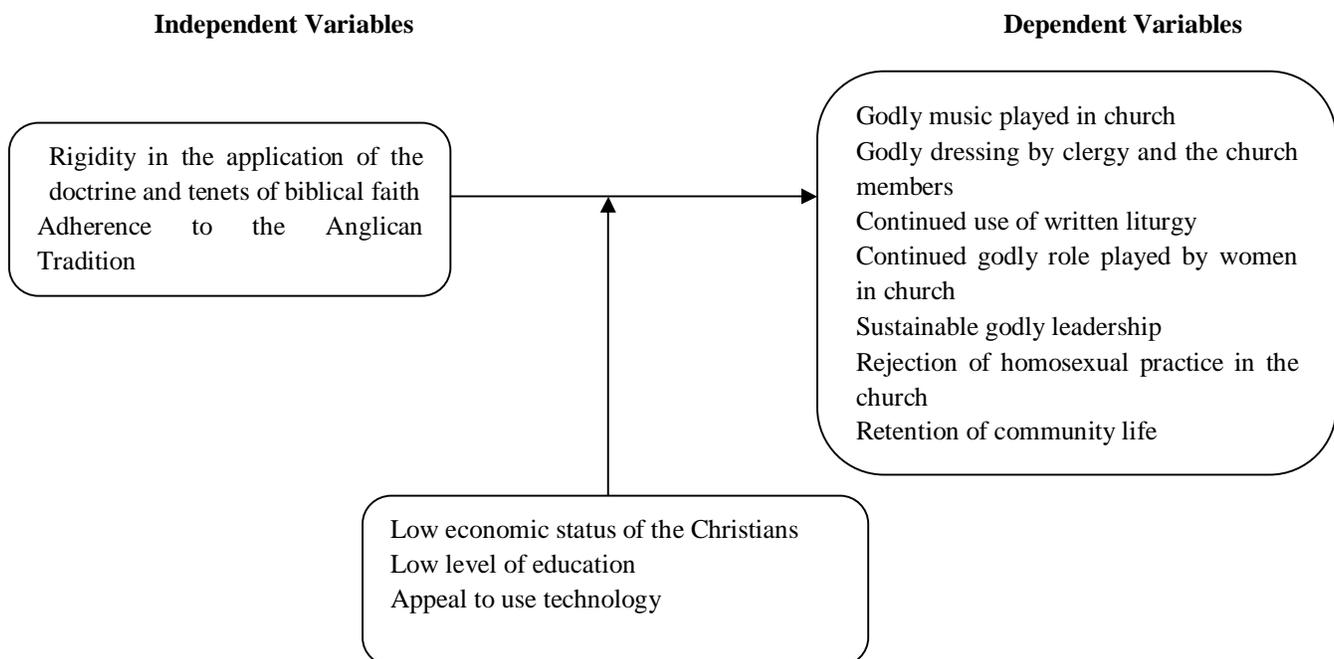
- Establish the status of worship practices among participants in selected churches
- Establish variety of responses among participants in selected churches
- Find out negotiation-oriented challenges among the participants in selected churches
- Implications of findings on the participants in selected churches

5. Theoretical Framework

The study was based on the deconstruction theory as propagated by Jacques Derrida (Derrida, 1976). According to Derrida when encountering classical philosophical opposition, one never encounters peaceful co-existence from the two opponents but rather a violent hierarchy. To begin the deconstruction, one must break the link between the two opposing concepts. A deconstruction approach assumes that neither side is right or wrong; therefore by analyzing both elements of the dichotomy we may discover what is fundamentally true. Post Modern Christians believe that their worship practices are a true translation of the bible. They feel that the bible must be interpreted from a hermeneutic social perspective. To the orthodox Anglicans, the Bible is the only parameter through which all worship practices must be measured. Anything that is not in line with Biblical Teachings should not be practiced in church whatsoever. Postmodern Christians therefore feel that these Christians are rigid for their insistence that the bible must be interpreted verbatim.

According to Marcec (2004), deconstruction points out the misunderstandings between the pre-modern religious beliefs and post-enlightenment rationality, rather than seek to disapprove either side's argument. This study held that neither orthodox Anglicans nor the postmodernists can posit to be absolutely right; neither side can dismiss the other's worship practices as wrong, thus it was vital that both were researched without prejudice.

6. Conceptual Framework



7. Intervening Variables

In the conceptual Framework, the tenets of faith/doctrine guide Christian worship in general, in the Anglican church the church's doctrine dictate the behaviour and actions of the Christians for instance in the dressing code. The traditions are based on the Hamilton Conference of 1911 which borrowed from the Bible's books of Deuteronomy, Leviticus and Hebrews. These variables are directly affected by the intervening variables like the economic status, level of education and urbanization. The result is the dependent variables; the way they dress, the music they play, leadership, homosexuality and the roles given to women in worship practices.

8. Critical Review of Theories and Gaps in Theories

This research analyzed several theories that were relevant to the study. Among these were; Edmund Husserl's theory of epoch (bracketing) (1913) Ninian Smart's seven dimensions of religion (1989) and Jaques Derridas theory of deconstruction (1976).

According to Husserl (1913), to describe an object, event or phenomenon objectively, one must clear the mind of all presumptions and prejudices about the causation, consequences and wider significance of phenomena. This he called 'epoche' or bracketing. This study

was phenomenological and thus this theory created a good approach in which all prior knowledge of orthodoxy and postmodernism were bracketed to give the researcher a chance to establish both the orthodox Anglican worship practices and the postmodern worship practices within the Anglican Christians in Makuyu objectively.

While this approach was plausible, it could only apply to the researcher, it was difficult to make the participants relinquish their traditional stand on the subject. This was especially difficult for the orthodox Christians who strictly stick to the Bible and the traditions of the church. It was also important to review what others had covered as well as the main pillars of the Anglican Church, namely the Bible and the Church tradition. The researcher therefore had to have prior knowledge of the church and it was difficult to put a realistic bracket.

Ponty (1962) posits that the subjectivity of the observer is determined less by the nature of the object in itself and more by the form of the object as perceived; thus the subject doing the perceiving determines the essence or meaning of a thing more than the object being perceived. This means that the researcher had to maintain epoch however difficult, for the data collected to be authentic.

It is for this reason that Ninian Smarts' seven dimensions of religious experience which approach religion from a secular perspective was applied. Smart brings out seven dimensions of religion; the ritual (forms and orders of ceremonies), experiential (emotional and experiential), mythological (Narratives and myths often regarded as revelation), doctrinal (Philosophical systematical formulation), ethical (legal, philosophical and coherent form), social (belief systems and attitudes practiced by a group) and material (ordinary objects and places that are deemed sacred and supernatural).

According to Gary Peller, as quoted by Mercec (2008) "Postmodernism suggests that what has been presented in our social-political and our intellectual traditions as knowledge, truth, objectivity, and reason are actually merely the effects of a particular form of social power, the victory of a particular way of representing the world that then presents itself beyond mere interpretation, as truth itself." This is contrary to Smarts view to the mythological dimension of religion. According to him the myths and the revelations of a religion answers the ultimate questions of a religious group. Orthodox Christians hold the Bible as true and the stories especially of creation which smart would refer to as myths as actual revelation which should be held as true.

Smarts approach enriches this research in that, all the aspects of the Anglican church are covered in one of the seven dimensions. However this appeared to lean more towards orthodoxy than postmodernism. It would be difficult to identify which group should change or maintain the dimensions as seen by Smart.

When thinking of orthodoxy and postmodernism, the aspect of social hermeneutics cannot be ignored. According to Lee (2009) since the orthodox Christian says that scripture communicates truths about objects and situations in the external world, which we can know through reading of it, hermeneutics is the key to epistemology. Therefore, the discussion on epistemology and especially postmodern - epistemology, would not be not complete without hermeneutics.

Although smart tries to capture this in his Social and Institutional dimension where he says belief system is based on what is shared and attitudes practiced by a group, the postmodern approach of individualism negates this core element. Most postmodern Christian groups begin in an individual's home before spreading to rented space and the "mega church" only comes on when there are enough members of the congregation to constitute a church.

The material dimension as seen by smart also appeals more to orthodox Anglicans than the postmodernists. The orthodox has a church in a certain architectural design, with traditional facilities, certain books, a cross, wooden pews and many other traditional materials. These are core materials for true Christian worship practices. For the postmodernist, anything will work for worship and no particular material can be associated with postmodern worship practice.

Thus relying wholly on Ninian Smart's theory of dimensions of religious experience is therefore likely to result to a skewed research that would definitely be favourable to the orthodox Anglicans at the expense of postmodern Christian worship practices.

It is for this reason that the research adapted the deconstruction theory as propagated by Jacques Derrida (Derrida, 1976). As mentioned earlier, Derrida argues that when encountering classical philosophical opposition, one never encounters peaceful co-existence from the two opponents but rather a violent hierarchy. It would be thus difficult to merge the orthodox and postmodern Anglicans worship practices in the same church at the same time. To begin the deconstruction therefore, we must break the link between postmodern worship practices and orthodox Anglicans worship practices. This would assume that neither side is right or wrong; therefore analyzing both elements of the dichotomy and discover what is fundamentally true. Orthodox Christians believe that what they hold true is true while the postmodernists believe that what they believe is true. It is therefore paramount that their ideals are deconstructed in order to get at the right point.

According to Marcec (2004), deconstruction would point out the misunderstandings between the pre-modern religious beliefs and post-enlightenment rationality, rather than seek to disapprove either side's argument. This study holds that neither orthodox Anglicans nor the postmodernists can posit to be absolutely right. Neither side can therefore dismiss the other as wrong, thus it is vital that both are researched without prejudice.

The two opposing ideologies were therefore studied without prejudices. The data was compared to variables that are consistent with Biblical Christian Teachings and conclusion drawn.

9. A case in Empirical Literature

A detailed review of empirical literature was carried out from the world over; from America, Britain, and Africa and in Kenya. It was realized that postmodern worship practices have completely eroded orthodoxy in America. Mercer (2008) found out that Contemporary Christian Music (CCM), is very close to rock and roll relics and the only difference is in the Christian themes and ideas in the relics. These songs however include subjects like alienation, rebellion and counter-culture. On worship leadership Fisher (1999)

observes that postmodern worship leaders are lay people dressed casually and may even include pregnant women. This is in contrast with the biblical teachings mentioned earlier and the Anglican tradition as written in the Book of Common Prayer.

10. Methodology

This was an exploratory study that used a descriptive survey design to interrogate traditional worship practices and postmodern worship practices within the Anglican Church of Kenya. Probability and non-probability procedures were used to select the sample size and sampling procedures. According to K'Okul (2012) in probability sampling each member of the population has a known non-zero chance of being selected in the sample. This method was used to choose from the members of the ACK in Makuyu archdeaconry but since there are only 7 parishes and 7 vicars, non-probability sampling was used to select the churches and the vicars to ensure all the parishes participated. In total seven vicars, from seven parishes, 2 churches from each parish and 2 elders from each church participated making a total of 35 participants.

The instruments used were self-administered questionnaire, interview guide and observation schedule. Data collected was presented in charts, graphs, tables and pictures.

11. Data analysis and Interpretation

This is the presentation of data collected from six vicars, and 25 elders. Analysis was done using SPSS 17 and interpretation of meaning of findings based on objectives and existing literature. Questionnaire, observation guide and an interview schedule were the main data collection tools. The findings represent the Anglican Church in Makuyu archdeaconry on: the status of worship practices, variety of responses among participants in selected churches, negotiation-oriented challenges and implications of findings on the participants in selected churches

The participants were sampled through probability and non-probability sampling. At the beginning of the study, there were only seven Parishes in Makuyu Archdeaconry, hence all the seven vicars participated. Two churches were selected from each parish and two elders from each selected

The findings indicated that postmodern worship practices have taken root in the Anglican Church and are spreading quickly. It also showed that orthodoxy is still strong and that Orthodox Christians will not take everything that is introduced to them without serious interrogation. 100% of the vicars would not solemnize same sex marriages, the same number would not accord gays or lesbians leadership positions in their churches, yet they would accept women leaders, postmodern music and liberal dressing in church.

These findings are an indicator that postmodern worship practices can neither be ignored wholesomely nor be accepted fully in the Anglican Church. Every church has a right to choose what to harbor and what to discard. These findings can be generalized to other Christian denominations as well as other religions which have been affected by postmodernism.

12. Postmodern Worship practices in the Anglican Church in Makuyu

The participants response on the postmodern trends in the church are shown in the table below

	Women should be ordained as Bishops		Gay and lesbian have a right to lead worship		Anglican priests should solemnize same sex union	
	Vicars	Elders	Vicars	Elders	Vicars	Elders
Strongly Agree		48.0	0%	48.0	0%	8.0
Agree		48.0	0%	48.0	0%	4.0
Disagree		4.0	20%	4.0	0%	20.0
Strongly disagree			80%	48.0	100%	68.0
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 1: Post modernism opinion summary by participants

- Discussion of Findings

When asked the highest office of ministry that a woman should achieve. Priest, Arch dean, Bishop were the offices mentioned while others stated the office should be equal to ones spiritual gift and not different with that of a man. When elders were asked the same question but different way; weather Anglicans should ordain women bishops, 48% strongly agreed with similar number agreeing and only 4% disagreeing. This shows majority have no problem with women being ordained as leaders in the church.

Other postmodernism trends that were discouraged included: Gays and lesbians have right to lead in worship, vicars response were 20% of disagreed, 80% strongly disagreed. As for the elders, 76% strongly disagreed, 16% disagreed, 4% agreed and other 4% strongly agreed. On weather Anglican priest should solemnize same sex union, 100% of the vicars disagreed while for the elders, 68% strongly disagreed, 20% disagreed, 8% strongly agreed and 4% agreed. Though the response of those who agreed and strongly disagreed were minimal, it shows the features of post modernism among the elders as indicated in the above table.

	Strongly recommended	Recommended	Discouraged	Strongly discouraged	Total
Wearing miniskirt in church	0%	0%	40%	60%	100%
Right for men to wear stud	0%	0%	60%	40%	100%
Men wearing head gear	0%	0%	60%	40%	100%
Women shaving their head	0%	20%	80%	0%	100%
Women not covering their head	0%	60%	40%	0%	100%

Table 2: Vicars’ Opinion on congregations emerging trend in church.

• Discussion of findings

When asked on their response on wearing miniskirts in the church, men wearing studs, men wearing head gears, women shaving heads, and women not covering their heads, the respondents opinions were different as follow: wearing miniskirts in the church (40% and 60%), men wearing studs (60% and 40%), and men wearing head gears (60% and 40%) the percentage representing discouraged and strongly discouraged. Women shaving their heads was recommended by 20% and discouraged by 80%. Only the opinion on women not covering their heads highly recommended at 60% and discouraged at 40%. The table above summarizes this findings.

Element	Act Mentioned
Dressing	‘Dressing is not controlled’ ‘Women no longer wear head scarfs as they used to do’ ‘Girls and Women attending the church in trousers’ ‘The church has kept quiet on mode of dressing’
Music	‘Guitar playng, movements when worshipping,’ ‘Musical instruments-keyboard, amplifiers, loud speakers.’ ‘Playng guitar, responding to hymns/songs by dancing and’ ‘Praise and worship in the service’. ‘They sing dancing unlike the old time days’ ‘Using modern music instruments’. ‘Worship with instuments.’ ‘Dancing’. ‘Dancing in the church’
Groups	‘Personal performances: there before churches did not consider groups like youth group, yet today its allowed’ ‘Women leadership’
Questions	Questioning do's and dont's in church’
prayers	‘Praying in tongues’ ‘Vigorous praising and loud praying’. ‘new ways of praise and worship’ ‘written preaching’

Table 3: Tradition and Modernity

• Discussion of Findings

On comparing the tradition and modernity, elders were asked to state things that the church allowed that had been prohibited in the church traditionally. The commonly mentioned were; dressings, music and musical instruments, preaching, groups and freedom in the church. The table above shows the mentioned act clearly indicating the most commonly mentioned act.

13. Recommendations

This study recommends that the dress code within the Anglican fraternity be defined. This will help the Church define her position in matters of dress code so that her orthodoxy is maintained.

On the issue of homosexuality, which included same sex marriages and gay and lesbians’ leadership in the church, the research recommends that it should not be forced to the Anglicans of Makuyu because they have rejected it.

This research recommends that Anglicans should be allowed to sing, dance and enjoy music in their churches during service. The use of musical instruments is also encouraged. However the music must remain relevant to biblical teaching and only music that help in spiritual growth should be encouraged.

From the findings of the research, this researcher recommends that more women be ordained as priests. It also recommends that a woman be elected as a bishop in the Anglican Church of Kenya.

This research recommends that the Anglican Church invests more in the training of its worship leaders. This includes lay leaders and people who qualify to offer worship leadership. They should be offered training in seminars or by correspondence. This will increase the number of trained worship leaders and discourage the leadership of non-trained members and preachers from other churches.

14. Summary of Findings

This research found out the following;

The Anglican Church in Makuyu, Murang'a has been affected by post modern worship practices. Some of the post – modernistic activities found out in this archdeaconry include, the mode and style of dressing. This was mainly practiced by people who were fairly educated and from towns such as Nairobi and Thika.

Same sex marriage is a concept that is practiced in some Christian denominations that accommodate postmodern worship practices. However, in the Anglican Church in Makuyu, this is not practiced. The Christians in Makuyu find homosexuality disgusting.

Music was found to be an important part of the church service in Makuyu archdeaconry. Both the clergy and the faithful responded well and enjoyed music. Where instruments were used expertly, the rhythm created enabled enjoyable participation by the congregation who sang and danced joyously. This is evidence that postmodern worship practices have taken root in Makuyu.

The Anglican Church in Makuyu has accepted women as clergy and actually ordained one as a vicar. She has been accepted by most of her congregation and performs all the duties that should be performed by an Anglican Vicar.

The Anglican concept of called and trained clergy has been negated. With some parishes having more than four churches and only one ordained priest, the clergy has resulted in allowing none trained people to take the pulpit.

15. Conclusion

Based on the above findings, on the question of dress code, this research concluded that the Anglican Church is mixed in its approach. There are those who are not disturbed by the so called town dress code, whereas there are other Anglicans who remain Orthodoxy.

On the same sex marriage, this study concluded that it was not practiced among the Anglicans in Makuyu. This is because both clergy and laity did not support the practice based on the biblical interpretation they held.

The study concluded that the orthodoxy form of music is no longer appealing to the Anglicans of Makuyu. Even where the songs from the hymn books are used, a postmodern touch is added to make it more joyful. This has been accepted by both the clergy and the congregation.

Although the Anglican Church has accepted the ordination of women as priests and bishops, there is very little to show that this has been put into practice. It would be therefore paramount that more women are ordained as priests and even elected as bishops.

The church in Makuyu will continue using none trained people to preach in their churches although it is against the church's traditions. This could continue unless the church invested more in the training of the clergy.

16. Areas for Further Research

This research was undertaken in Makuyu, Muranga South Diocese; because Anglican Dioceses are autonomous, this study suggests that a similar study be done in other Diocese within Kenya so that the findings can be generalized. Otherwise the findings of this research may only apply within Muranga South.

This research suggests that another study be undertaken to evaluate the extent which the postmodernism has affected retention of members in Anglican Church.

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