

Umuhimu wa Biblia:

**An investigation into how Tanzanian Christians perceive
and engage with God's Word**

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ABSTRACT

Umuhimu wa Biblia: An investigation into how Tanzanian Christians perceive and engage with God's Word. Katherine O'Donnell, August 2013

This study examines both what Tanzanian Christians think about the Bible and the way they engage with it, through a review of the literature on Bible use in Africa and primary research in the Mbeya-Iringa Cluster Project of SIL International. Data was gathered through a mixed method approach using questionnaires (with respondents selected through purposive sampling across four language areas) and a group interview (with the Literacy/Scripture Use Coordinators who administered the questionnaires).

The research revealed that Tanzanians commonly see the Bible as the Word of God, though what they mean by this is less clear. Preaching, prayer meetings, Bible seminars and songs were most commonly ranked as very important for growing in faith. Further, respondents most frequently engaged with the Bible by reading or listening to it at church (80%), reading alone (55%), singing (47%) or praying (45%). There was a clear discrepancy between their level of Bible engagement and the importance they ascribed to it. Only 63% owned a complete Swahili Bible, while far fewer used mother-tongue Scriptures. Most people seemed to interpret the Bible simply and directly, but not always contextually or accurately, and saw the Bible's central message as being one of judgement, sin or salvation. Variations were sometimes found between genders, denominations and language areas.

Amongst other things, the findings suggest that Scripture Engagement workers should use methods appropriate for oral and communal societies, provide training for pastors and lay Christians in hermeneutics and other Bible engagement tools and facilitate the distribution of Christian literature.

PREFACE

After five years working in Mbeya, Tanzania, the place and the people became very close to my heart. In my role coordinating Scripture Engagement work in the area, I was often moved by people's faith in God, their enthusiastic participation in workshops and their thirst for more training, while yet saddened by their limited Bible knowledge and ability to carefully interpret and apply Scripture. Therefore, it became my desire to come to a deeper understanding of how my brothers and sisters in Christ in Tanzania view the Bible and how they engage with it, in order that Scripture Use workers might more effectively meet their needs and help them engage with God's Word at a deeper level. My dissertation sought to do this both through a review of the existing literature and primary research in the Mbeya and Iringa regions of Tanzania and led not only to interesting findings but also to forming recommendations for anyone involved in Scripture Engagement work. Although the primary research focused specifically on the four language areas of Bena, Malila, Safwa and Vwanji, the findings resonated with literature from across sub-Saharan Africa and as such may be of value to people working beyond these four places.

This research would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of many people. Though it is not possible to name everyone, there are a few whom I would like to particularly acknowledge. Firstly, my thanks go to everyone in the Uganda Tanzania Branch of SIL, for the privilege of working with them and for allowing me to conduct this research, with particular thanks to the Mbeya-Iringa Cluster Project and my colleagues and friends in the Literacy and Scripture Use Departments who went out of their way to help me fulfil my research aims. Thanks also go to my supervisor, Maik Gibson, who encouraged and guided me along the way, as well as to my mother who has been a patient proof-reader throughout my MA studies.

I am also indebted to my family, my friends and churches who have supported me in prayer and financially, both during my time in Tanzania and throughout this period of further study. Particular thanks go to my brothers and sisters in Christ at The Lees Chapel, Lapworth, who first sent me to Tanzania and have sacrificially supported me in every way ever since. And finally, I give thanks to God, who has been both my reason for doing this work and the one who has enabled me to do it.

May it go some way towards helping His children in Tanzania and beyond fulfil the words that are in many ways the motto for all Scripture Engagement work:

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (2 Timothy 3:15, NIV)

Bwana asifiwe!

Katherine O'Donnell

CHAPTER 1 Introduction

1.1 Scripture Engagement defined

The vast majority of church leaders in the world would say that their faith is based on the Bible. They would also say that it is important for their church members to read and understand the Bible. But what is the reality? Few ordinary church members in any country study the Bible and apply its truths to their lives. Why is the reality so different from the ideal? (Hill and Hill, 2008, p.1)

This statement made by Harriet Hill, former SIL International¹ Scripture Use Coordinator, and Margaret Hill, the current SIL Africa Area Scripture Use Coordinator, in their book “Translating the Bible into Action”, sums up the urgency and heart of Scripture Engagement and the challenge that drives this thesis. It is for this reason that my work is entitled “*Umuhimu wa Biblia*”, which is Swahili for “The importance of the Bible”.

Their concern was echoed at the most recent Lausanne congress, Cape Town 2010, which focused in on this worldwide issue of ‘Bible poverty’:

What are the signs of Bible poverty? It is present where people are hindered by barriers from having access to the Scriptures in a language they understand well and engaging with them in ways that transform their lives. It cuts across economic levels, social status, religious identity, ethnic groups and languages. (The Scripture in Mission Multiplex Resource Team (SMMRT), 2010a, n.p.)

The 4000 Christian leaders, representing 198 countries, who constituted the congress, made a united called for the eradication of Bible poverty (The Lausanne Movement, 2010). Achieving this remains a huge challenge, but Scripture Engagement work has a key role to play, so what is Scripture Engagement all about?

The Center for Scripture Engagement at Taylor University (TUCSE), Indiana, defines Scripture Engagement as follows:

Scripture engagement is interaction with the biblical text in a way that provides sufficient opportunity for the text to speak for itself by the power of the Holy Spirit, enabling readers and listeners to hear the voice of God and discover for themselves the unique claim Jesus Christ is making upon them. (TUCSE, 2013, n.p.)

Scripture Engagement does not happen automatically when someone has access to a Bible (Dye, 2009, p.90). Rather, it can be seen as a process which can be arrested at any point along the way. Harriet Hill (2010, pp.1-2) outlines five steps in this process, each one filled with numerous

¹ “SIL International is a faith-based nonprofit organization committed to serving language communities worldwide as they build capacity for sustainable language development.” (SIL, 2013, n.p.)

challenges: Bible availability, Bible awareness, Bible use, Bible understanding and Bible engagement. While every Christian, from theologian to lay person, has a part to play in this process, a specialised field of work has emerged known as “Scripture Engagement” (SE), “Scripture Use” (SU)² or “Scripture Impact” (SI), which seeks to address the challenges in order to counter Bible poverty. While SE “is primarily the responsibility of the local church... [SU workers] have an important role in encouraging the church to take its responsibility” (Thwing, 2003, p.4).

As such, SU workers are committed to helping people use the Scriptures in their language in life changing ways and in partnership with the local church and mission agencies (Dye, 2009). As the challenges are so many and varied, SE looks very different from place to place and is often defined in terms of specific activities that seek to encourage and facilitate Bible use.

1.2 Personal experience

For approximately five years, I acted as the SU Coordinator for the SU department of the Mbeya-Iringa Cluster Project (MICP)³ in the south-west of Tanzania, an SIL International project currently translating the Bible into nine of Tanzania’s 126 living languages (Paul, Simons and Fennig, 2013, n.p.). The books of Jonah and Ruth are now available in all nine languages and several New Testament books are available in most, though when I started in 2007 very few books had been published.

In working for SIL International, it was understood that the primary focus of any SE work was to promote the use of mother-tongue⁴ Scriptures, for SIL exists to the end that:

In this and every generation, language communities worldwide have access to adequate Scriptures and related materials in the languages that serve them well, and motivated members of those communities are able to use them for personal growth. (SIL, 2011, n.p.)

However, in Tanzania, Swahili often acts as the language that serves people well, for compared to other national languages, Swahili “has penetrated much more into all levels of communication,

² Although Scripture Engagement is the preferred term to describe this field of work today, many practitioners are still described as Scripture Use workers. As this was the case in Tanzania, I will continue to use the term ‘Scripture Use’ to refer to personnel and departments, but will use the term ‘Scripture Engagement’ to refer to the work in general.

³ MICP is one of several projects operating within the Uganda-Tanzania Branch of SIL International. More information is available at: www.thetask.net

⁴ I have chosen to use the term ‘mother-tongue’ to express someone’s birth language. Elsewhere mother-tongues may be referred to as ‘vernaculars’, ‘local languages’ or ‘African languages’ or some combination of these. Although Swahili is the mother-tongue of some people in Tanzania, for the purposes of this thesis Swahili will not be classified as a mother-tongue due to its function as the country’s national language.

even supplanting vernacular languages in the home, and exhibits characteristics of mother-tongue languages” (King, 2000, p.361). Therefore, due to the lack of mother-tongue Scriptures and the prevalence of Swahili, SE work in MICP has operated predominantly in Swahili, though increasingly in mother-tongue as more Scripture has become available.

Within this context, SE work has consisted of developing resources (Swahili and mother-tongue) such as Bible study guides, resources for Sunday school teachers and mother-tongue non-print media (such as audio Scriptures and radio broadcasts), training Sunday school teachers and Bible study leaders and employing and equipping Tanzanian Literacy/Scripture Use Coordinators to supervise and develop the work in their own language areas.

1.3 The research question

Personal experience in Tanzania echoes the concern of Hill and Hill that was noted at the outset, for while I frequently heard church leaders advocate the importance of the Bible, there was less evidence of regular engagement with and application of the Scriptures in ordinary people’s lives. It is this observation that led me to question the relationship between people’s perceptions of the Bible and their engagement with it and to wonder whether the former might affect the latter (cf. Beine, 2010). A lack of literature on this topic added impetus for researching this further, both through a review of the literature that *does* exist and by gathering primary data.

In seeking to understand this relationship, there was also a need to determine how Tanzanian Christians currently use the Bible and what emphasis they put on engaging with it in the practice of their faith. Again, a look at the literature revealed that how “ordinary Africans either at church or at home utilize the Bible is not well researched” (Gifford, 2008, p.205), therefore this became an important part of my investigation. Further, due to my involvement with SIL, I have particular concern for the use of mother-tongue Scriptures in accessible forms (whether written, audio and/or visual), so this factor was also considered in the research. All things considered, it was my expectation that Tanzanians would place high value on God’s Word but demonstrate very little engagement with it, particularly at the individual level, and I hoped to determine to what extent this hypothesis might be grounded in reality.

Although the reasons why people may or may not engage with the Bible vary from person to person and it was beyond the scope of the research to investigate these, I expected that some

indicators would emerge that could help inform the work of SE. Therefore, my motivation for conducting this study was that by understanding Tanzanian Christians' perceptions of God's Word, its centrality (or lack of) to their faith and how they currently engage with it, SU workers might be able to help Tanzanians understand and engage with the Bible more effectively.

At this point it is necessary to define a few terms and acknowledge some generalisations. Firstly, in referring to Tanzanian Christians, I will be referring to Tanzanians who go to church. Secondly, though speaking generally of 'Tanzanians', the research focuses specifically on the Mbeya and Iringa regions of Tanzania, in particular the Bena, Malila, Safwa and Vwanji language areas, as this is where I had personal experience and contacts for conducting the research (see Appendix A for a map defining these areas). However, though Tanzanian culture is not uniform, I have observed enough consistency to believe that any findings will be more or less applicable across the country and even beyond. Thirdly, the literature review draws on anything relating to sub-Saharan Africa, as very few writings focus exclusively on Tanzania. While Africa is a diverse continent that does not share an identical worldview (Molyneux, 1993, p.372; cf. West, 2000, p.30), "the history and culture of Black Africa have a fundamental unity which permits us to face the values, problems and perspectives of this huge part of humanity as if it were one body" (Salvoldi and Sesana p.12, cited in Ezeogu, 1998, p.27). Therefore, though attempting to make clear any particularities that distinguish Tanzania, I will also apply to Tanzania observations from other parts of Africa.

CHAPTER 2 Literature review

2.1 The biblical perspective

2.1.1 The precedent of Psalm 1

Before turning to look at the place of the Bible in the lives of Tanzanian Christians, it is important to consider what the Bible itself says about its place in people's lives in order to see where Tanzanians may hold a similar or different understanding.

Psalm 1:1-3 (New International Version) proclaims:

Blessed are those...who delight in the law of the LORD,
and meditate on his law day and night.
They are like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.

This Psalm proclaims the law of the Lord to be of central importance. 'The law' (*tôrâ*) is "the teaching of the Lord in person, imparting his word and his will, his guidance and his grace" (Eaton, 2005, p.62; cf. Goldingay, 2006, pp.81-84), and thus today can be taken to mean the whole Bible. This teaching is to be meditated on constantly, delighted in and should lead to growth. These truths are at the heart of SE work and are repeated throughout the Bible in different ways. We shall explore these briefly in the same broad categories that are addressed in the questionnaires, to allow for some comparison.

2.1.2 The place of the Bible amongst other means for growing in faith

There are many means to growing in faith, for God makes himself known in multiple ways, not just through the Bible, indeed we "are confronted daily with the reality of God simply by inhabiting the planet (Rom. 1:20)" (Wright, 2006, p.406; cf. Psalm 19). One of the primary means God uses is interaction with other people (Eph. 4:11-16, 1 Cor. 14:26), such that multiple aspects of Christian community are important for Christian maturity. However, the Bible acts as a yardstick by which we judge behaviour and revelation within the Christian community to see whether its meaning is acceptable (Kraft, 1979, p.187; cf. Heb. 4:12). Thus central to growing in the faith, through creation and community, is the Word of God, as the apostle Paul makes explicit throughout his second letter to Timothy (cf. Motyer and Motyer, 1999, p.32), for it is in the Bible, "that God's revelation finds permanent form and so is given immediacy, catholicity and durability" (McDonald,

1979, p.32). This is coupled with the Holy Spirit's revelatory work (1 Cor. 2:9-12), such that the Word and the Spirit work together in synonymous union (McDonald, 1979, p.124; cf. Heb. 3:7).

2.1.3 What the Bible is

"Evangelicals take the Bible as the Word of God written under the inspiration, but not dictation, of the Holy Spirit by chosen people who employed their own words and literary styles (2 Peter 1:21 and 2 Tim. 3:16)" (Wildsmith, 2011, p.130). In being the 'Word of God' (a description frequently used in the Bible, for example in 1 Pet. 1:23-25), it is how God speaks to us (cf. Ex. 34:27-28) and is the means by which his message can reach further than the first recipient but still with his authority (cf. Jer. 36). The Bible describes itself in multiple other ways with metaphors such as 'light' (Ps. 119:105) and 'honey' (Ps. 119:103) as well as by what it does. Psalm 119 in particular offers a wealth of descriptions, such as it strengthens, is truth, gives hope, is eternal, keeps us from evil, lights our path and gives understanding. Thus Jesus could say, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4). However, this does not mean that the Bible in and of itself, or even studying it, will give us eternal life. Rather, Scripture makes it clear that it points us to the one who *does* give us life (Jn. 5:38-40), and it is for this reason that the things of God have been written down (Jn. 20:31).

In addition, by frequently referring to the Scriptures, our Old Testament, Jesus validates their unity, historicity, divinity and authority (McDonald, 1979, pp.84-92) and shows how they point to himself (cf. Luke 24:27). In his appointment of the apostles he also opened the way for new covenant teaching to become part of authoritative Scripture:

It was the oral message which created the saved communities in which the apostolic word was regarded as authoritative...As time passed, however, it became necessary to embody the apostolic message in permanent form. Thenceforward for the church the written word became equivalent to the spoken word, and thus the normative expression of the church's faith and its absolute authority in all things that pertain to life and godliness. In this way the New Testament is to be regarded as the true successor of the apostles. (McDonald, 1979, p.98)

2.1.4 Using the Bible

There is an underlying assumption in Jesus' teaching that God's people should know the Scriptures, for he spoke from them as if he expected his audience to be familiar with them (cf. Lk. 24) and rebuked the Sadducees for not knowing them properly (Mt. 22:29). However, there are many means by which we may know and use Scripture.

The most obvious way to use the Bible is to read it, indeed God's people are frequently admonished to do this and on a daily basis (cf. Deut. 17:18-20). Further, there are repeated references to meditating on God's Word (cf. Ps. 1:2, Josh. 1:8), in which the Hebrew word translated 'meditate' suggests the murmur of recitation and is analogous to reading, though also connotes the idea of mulling something over and would be mingled with formulae of praise and prayer (Broyles, 1999, p.42; Eaton, 2005, p.62; cf. VanGemeren, 1997, pp.1006-1008). However, reading is but one means of engaging with the Bible that we find cited in Scripture.

As well as *individually*, we find that the Scriptures are to be *publicly* read, preached and taught (1 Tim. 4:13) in a way and language that the people can understand (cf. Neh. 8). In so doing, they are to be handled with care (2 Tim. 2:15) as they are used to train God's people in righteousness to serve God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). They are also to be at the heart of family and community life – impressed on one another and talked about (Deut. 6:4-9). Further, we should be familiar with the Scriptures in order to use them in evangelism (cf. Acts 17-18) and teaching others (cf. Acts 18:24-25). These uses can be bolstered by the memorisation of Scripture, which is both encouraged (cf. Deut. 11:18) and practised (cf. Ps. 119:11) in the Bible. We also see multiple examples, particularly in the Psalms, of using Scripture in prayer and song. Finally, it should be noted that being illiterate does not preclude Scripture engagement in these ways, in fact the Bible itself was predominantly set amongst oral communities and Jesus' ministry was predominantly oral in nature (Brown, 2004, p.126; Klem, 1982, p.182). Therefore, the Bible can be engaged with effectively through listening as well as reading.

2.1.5 How the Bible affects us – interpretation and application

As we use the Bible, we face the issue of how to interpret it in order to apply it to our lives, that it might make us wise for salvation and equip us to serve God (2 Tim. 3:14-17). The interpretive challenge lies in balancing both God's authority and man's authorship (cf. 2 Pet. 1:20-21). Some would maintain that as Scripture is inspired we can receive the biblical text as if directly from God, to be understood without reference to context (Sargent, 2012, p.260), while others argue that though the text may be inspired our interpretation is not and so we should pay careful attention to the historical-cultural context while yet acknowledging that there is no such thing as an objective reading of Scripture (Liem, 2002, p.71; Wright, 2009, p.11). There is a wealth of literature which debates this and other interpretation issues and methods, though it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss them. However, I believe that with the help of the Holy Spirit

(cf. Jn. 16:13) the whole of Scripture can be meaningful for us and speak clearly to us (cf. Deut. 30:11-14), and though our reading will inevitably be culturally conditioned we should yet apply a contextual reading of the text in which we read it through the lens of the whole Bible's story of redemption and within its historical-cultural and literary context, and from this point seek understanding for today's context and as part of a Christian community (O'Donnell, 2013a; cf. Countryman, 1994).

Finally, SE must move beyond using and interpreting Scripture to real engagement with and application of Scripture to people's lives, as exemplified in the Scriptures themselves, such that believers experience Christ-like transformation and grow in sincere faith (SMMRT, 2010b, n.p.).

2.2 The African reality

2.2.1 The history of the Bible in Tanzania

"Africa has a long association with the Bible... [Even at] the time of Jesus, the Bible was being read in Africa" (Mbiti, 1994, p.27). However, Christianity expanded most rapidly in the first half of the twentieth century, predominantly due to the colonisation of Africa by European powers (African Studies Centre, n.d., n.p.; Mbiti, 1990, p.232). At this time, many missions established schools and becoming a Christian was closely related to becoming literate (Mugambi, 2005, p.524; cf. Mbiti, 1990, p.232). Further,

The missionary was known as 'the man of the Book' and by the high order of priority given to both the translation of the Bible into many of Africa's vernaculars and to the establishing of Bible schools at every level, the centrality of the Bible was ensured and pertains in large sections of the African Church to the present. (Molyneux, 1993, p.73)

However, while much literature describes missionary activity in translating the Bible into local African languages (cf. Schaaf, 2002) and highlights this as a key factor in the emergence of African independent churches (cf. Barrett, 1968) and vital for shaping the church and African theology (cf. Schaaf, 2002, p.205; Mbiti, 1986, p.28), the situation appears to be somewhat different in Tanzania.

In Tanzania, government policy insisted on Swahili being the lingua franca and opposed the use of mother-tongues. The first Bible portions were translated into Swahili in the 1840s (Schaaf, 2002, p.64; cf. Mojola, 2000, p.511), and in the early 1890s the first complete Bible was printed in Swahili (Schaaf, 2002, p.64; cf. Wycliffe Global Alliance (WGA), 2012; Mojola, 2000, p.515). The Union version, the most commonly used version in Tanzania, was completed in 1952 (WGA, 2012;

Mojola, 2000, pp.518-521) and more recently, in 1996, the Habari Njema (Good News) version was completed, "the first major Kiswahili translation for which East Africans themselves have been wholly responsible" (WGA, 2012, n.p.; Mojola, 2000; p.521). These Swahili translations hold near monopoly, in large part replacing any mother-tongue translations that existed (Mojola, 2000, p.522), and although mother-tongue Bible translation has reasserted itself and increased its pace in Tanzania in recent years the effects are yet to be seen. One outcome of this is a much weaker presence of independent churches than in other countries (Barrett, 1968, p.132; cf. Sanneh, 1989, p.223).

2.2.2 The place of the Bible amongst other means for growing in faith

The value of Christian community as a means to growing in faith is particularly significant in Tanzania's predominantly communal culture. Indeed, with literacy proficiency in Tanzania being so poor (Uwezo, 2011), there is greater reliance on learning about God through others. Therefore, while the Bible may be central (as we shall explore below), the ordinary African's knowledge of it is mostly oral and "comes from socialization in the churches themselves as they listen to prayers and sermons" (West, 2000, p.44). This issue, coupled with prevailing attitudes towards authority and big man syndrome encourage "passivity and conformity with little inner understanding" (Molyneux, 1993, p.387; cf. Ommani, 2009), for within African worldview a preacher will be listened to "because of their authority, not because of what they say... truth is measured by the authority of the giver, not by the truth itself" (Arensen, 1995, p.1). As a result, divine legitimacy often rests with pastors in the same way that it rested with the authority figures of traditional religions in the past, as research in Uganda shows (Williams, 2012, p.30). This is a dangerous tendency, in light of the Bible being our yardstick as we noted earlier, but is not entirely unbiblical, for the Bible frequently acknowledges the value of those in authority over us for growing in the faith, be they older people or spiritual leaders (cf. 2 Tim. 3:14, Phil. 3:17; Arensen, 1995, p.2).

2.2.3 What the Bible is

Though the body of literature on African perceptions of the Bible is very limited, there is consensus that African Christians highly value the Bible (cf. Ezeogu, 1998, p.25; Mbiti, 1986, p.27). This was evident in Tanzania, where I observed that the only books many people possessed were a Bible and hymnal, an observation supported by similar findings in other parts of East Africa (cf. Mbiti, 1978, p.18; Kanyoro, 1999, p.18). Many understand the Bible to be 'the Word of God', though what they mean by this phrase is not clear (Ezeogu, 1998, p.28; West, 2000, p.47;

Magomba, 2004, p.156). Mote Magomba's research in Tanzania found that for some people it just meant, "what is contained in the Book, the Bible" while others said it is "God's revelations to all people" and "others added that through... 'His Word', God has explicitly shown us the way of salvation and how we can reach him" (Magomba, 2004, p.156).

For some, their reverence of the Bible and their belief in its divine inspiration has led to it acquiring magical dimensions:

The bible is used to ward off evil spirits, witchcraft and sorcery, it is placed under the pillow at night to ensure God's protection against the devil, it is put in handbags and cars when travelling to ensure a safe journey, it is used in swearing to bring God's wrath upon culprits. (Ukpong, 2000, p.587; cf. Ezeogu, 1998)

That the above observations are also true for Tanzania is affirmed by Magomba (2004, p.4), who describes how it is common practice for Christians in Tanzania to keep Bibles in their homes or to walk around with them, even if they cannot read them, sometimes placing them on sick people for healing, putting under their pillows or burying them with the dead. He further comments:

People's reference to the Bible as a symbol of divine presence and the power of God suggests an understanding of the Bible as an object with efficacious power; its presence as a text is not just that of a mere book. It is a presence of the power of the divine Word of God; indeed, it is the presence of God through his...Spirit. (Magomba, 2004, p.156)

Others view the Bible quite differently. Paul Gifford identifies that Africans in Pentecostal churches understand the Bible as:

a record of covenants, promises, pledges and commitments between God and his chosen... It is not primarily a historical document at all. It is a contemporary document; it tells of God's covenant with and commitment to me, and to me now... The major biblical motifs in this emerging Christianity are thus those stressing victory, success, hope, achievement. (Gifford, 2008, p.203)

I likewise observed these prosperity motifs to be increasingly prevalent in Tanzania, and not just in Pentecostal churches.

There is little else in the literature on Africans' views of the Bible. Malawian prisoners identified it as "the word of God...comforter, guide, and source of inspiration" (Mijoga, 2000, p.381) and research in Nigeria found it was revered as God's word to be "a book of devotion, a rule of life and norm for morality" (Ukpong, 2000, p.588), all of which are valid biblical perceptions.

2.2.4 Using the Bible

The use of the Bible in African churches and in private African reflection is poorly documented (Gifford, 2008, p.205), and the little that is written provides divergent observations, though this should be expected to some degree as it is natural to find different Scripture engagement

practices between individuals, families and church denominations. John Mbiti, a Kenyan, and one of East Africa's most prolific writers and theologians, recalls how the Bible was read in his childhood home, how praying and singing were daily family activities and every opportunity was taken for speaking about Christ and opening the Bible with visitors (Mbiti, 1986, p.9). In much of his writing he expresses the prominent place of the Bible in African Christianity, however based on my own observations and those of others working in Africa, I believe he tends to be over positive (cf. Parratt, 1995, p.56), perhaps due to his own spiritually-privileged upbringing.

In contrast with Mbiti, other research shows how the only time many people open their Bibles is at church on Sunday (Kuwornu-Adjaottor, 2012, p.128), and there was no evidence in the literature to show that Africans spend time personally pondering God's Word. Instead, the biblical precedent of meditating on God's Word day and night seems to be far from the norm for many African Christians, even when the Bible is available in their mother-tongue (cf. Maxey, 2010; Kuwornu-Adjaottor, 2012). However, we should remember that reading the Bible is not the only method of engaging with it. Many Africans have a limited reading ability or desire to read, but will know the Bible from hearing it read aloud in church or at home (Mbiti, 1994, p.30; cf. West, 2000, p.44).

Thus, the main context for hearing and engaging with the Bible for most African Christians is the church, particularly through the sermon, which is often the climax of a service (Molyneux, 1993, p.247). Mbiti (1986) writes about how the whole Bible is of central significance in African preaching and is contextually engaged with, however once again my observations do not match his positivity. Though the research undeniably illustrates that a broad range of Scripture is read and expounded in churches (Mbiti, 1986, pp.33-40; Mijoga, 2000, p.379), it is harder to analyse the content and quality of the preaching for sermon content is rarely recorded (Molyneux, 1993, p.375). My observations from attending a range of Tanzanian churches match those of Gifford:

In the mainstream churches... a text (or texts) provide a springboard for reflection on ideas which may in fact be only loosely linked to the text. Also, the frequency of reference to the text or texts varies considerably, with many preachers floating quite clear of the text once launched on their reflection. Africa's evangelical churches... work the other way; sermons usually begin from a theme... adopted independently of the Bible, but during the sermon the preacher will feel bound to refer to biblical texts, often quite frequently. (Gifford, 2008, p.205; cf. Molyneux, 1993, p.247)

Therefore, it is sometimes questionable as to whether a preacher is fulfilling the mandate to handle the Word carefully (2 Tim. 2:15). Some pastors have little or no Bible training, many possess only a Bible (Arensen, 1995, p.3) and some lay preachers seek to explain the Christian message even though they cannot read or write (Mbiti, 1986, pp.43). While these points do not

preclude responsible handling of God's Word, they are a cause for concern, and the issue is exacerbated by the quality of theological training that is available, which various scholars identify as Eurocentric (King, 2000, p.361), poorly taught (Molyneux, 1993, p.381) or failing to communicate deep truths clearly by being taught in Western languages rather than in the mother-tongues of students (Wildsmith, 2011, p.127).

When this problem is coupled with the authority issues we identified earlier, I believe the spiritual growth that is so desperately needed in African churches (cf. Para-Mallam, 2013) is greatly hindered. It has even been observed that African theologians are not well grounded in the Bible, and although there has been a positive change to a more biblical emphasis, "there is equally some way to go before the affirmation of the basic role of the Bible in African theology becomes a practical reality" (Parratt, 1995, p.58). Further, serious theological thinking and writing in African languages (at least those in which the Bible has been translated) "is still largely stillborn" (Wildsmith, 2011, p.127; Mbiti, 1986, p.61; cf. Molyneux, 1993, p.273), while theological thinking at the oral level, though a vital part of relating Christian faith to African experience, remains largely unrecorded (Molyneux, 1993, p.378; Mbiti, 1986, pp.47).

The above-mentioned oral theology, takes place "through song, sermon, teaching, prayer, conversation, and the like" (Mbiti, 1986, pp.46-47). These illustrate other ways in which African Christians use the Bible. According to my observations, song is a principal form of SE in Tanzania, with many churches having multiple choirs. Fergus King (2000, p.367) analysed the songs of Tanzanian youth choirs, and found that "Biblical texts are used as the starting point for giving information or encouragement", a finding supported by Magomba (2004, p.165-167) who reported that source texts for songs come from the whole Bible and the songs are both contextual and relevant, touching on issues such as witchcraft, AIDS and corruption. However, I agree with Gordon Molyneux that although songs may do this, "the teaching of these songs is [often] too vague and general to be arresting or penetrating" (Molyneux, 1993, p.247) or engages with a very limited number of themes. Mbiti (1986, p.84) also notes "the direct use of the Bible in prayer", particularly the Psalms, providing another example of active SE in African Christianity.

Finally, although the benefits of using mother-tongue Scriptures have been persuasively argued (cf. Bediako, 1995), we have already noted that the Tanzanian situation is different to many other African countries, which has led to a lack of Bible translation and engagement in the mother-

tongue. It is yet to be seen whether SE in the mother-tongue will increase in step with current Bible translation efforts, and how this might impact the spiritual growth of Tanzanian Christians.

2.2.5 How the Bible affects us – interpretation and application

The majority of African Christians hold a fundamentalist view of the Bible and therefore interpret it literally (cf. Parratt, 1995, p.62; Ezeogu, 1998, p.28; Maluleke, 2005, p.483; Kanyoro, 1999, pp.19-20; Ukpong, 2000, p.587). In confessing it to be the Word of God, they forget that it is in the words of men, such that “every statement in the Bible is held to be literally backed up by God's own authority and therefore not subject to re-examination on the grounds of scholarship, common sense, or experience” (Ezeogu, 1998, p.28). Musimbi Kanyoro (1999, p.20), a Kenyan theologian, goes so far as to say that for Christians in rural Africa, to “be critical of the Bible is literally a sin”. It has been suggested that this view is due to a fundamentalist approach by early missionaries (Parratt, 1995, pp.62) or the natural result of traditional African worldview where authority, particularly religious authority, is accepted without question (Ukpong, 2000, p.587). I would add that illiteracy and a lack of mother-tongue translations were also factors, both of which left the African vulnerable to a mission's or church's claims from the Bible. With the development of mother-tongue translations, there was “a drive to recover a more biblically-based religion” (Barrett, 1968, p.134) and thus a literal understanding of the Bible continued, but now based on the Africans' own reading, rather than on what they were told it said.

A literal reading of the text in turn affects application:

African Christians hold the Bible in awe as the word of God written directly to them and specifically for them... they see the text as intended to provide them with a framework to look at their own lives. They immediately appropriate a particular text and situate themselves inside of it, trying to understand what it expects of them. (Kanyoro, 1999, p.21; cf. Ukpong, 2000, p.588)

Therefore, although “African readers of the Bible do value its historicity, they are more concerned about relevant narratives that connect their reality with the one presented in the biblical text” (Merz, 2010, p.121). Relevant narratives abound, for there are many similarities between biblical and African culture, such that Africans identify with the Bible at many points (Mbiti, 1986, p.119; cf. Parratt, 1995, p.59), particularly recognising themselves in the Old Testament's all-inclusive way of thinking (Schaaf, 2002, p.192) and seeing in the Jewish people a confirmation of their own cultural, social and religious life (Mbiti, 1986, p.26). However, although Africans seem to naturally locate themselves within the biblical narrative, scholars express concern over whether they really understand what they are reading or hearing. Instead, they may misinterpret the Bible's message

as they are unconsciously influenced by their worldview and culture (Wendland and Hachibamba, 2000, p.554; Wildsmith, 2011, p.131; Upkong, 2000, p.591). Relatedly, Magomba observes in Tanzania:

Vernacular language, indigenous religion, community values, oral narratives, songs, wise sayings, symbols, rituals, drama, dance and general life experiences are significant interpretative resources for the engagement with the Bible among Tanzanians. These are part of the socio-cultural context of the ordinary "readers" that facilitate their reading of the Bible. (Magomba, 2004, p.140)

However, whether they are consciously aware of these interpretive influences or make much use of these various cultural forms to resource their engagement with the Bible is unlikely, for research in Nigeria found that "80% of the research population claimed ignorance of cultural influences in their approach to the Bible" (Ukong, 2000, p.591).

This disconnect between the Bible and culture may partly be the result of missionaries who failed to "sympathise with or relate to the spiritual realities of the traditional world-view" (Bediako, 1995, p.69), such that Africans did not learn to make this connection themselves and, if anything, were taught to disregard their cultures and traditions as bad (Ezeogu, 1998, pp.29-30). I would suggest that this disconnect is exacerbated by language issues, where a failure to use mother-tongues in churches and theological institutions has led to a failure in confronting culture with God's Word (cf. Bediako, 1995).

The literature goes on to make divergent observations on the way the issues above affect the application of Scripture in African Christianity. Some propound that there is a huge Bible-culture dichotomy in African Christianity, which says "yes" to the Bible and "no" to African culture resulting in heavenly minded Christians with little concern for or interaction with the social order (Ezeogu, 1998, p.31). In contrast others observe how, on receiving mother-tongue Scriptures, "local Christians threw themselves into projects of social change and renewal, unburdened by the suggestion that they deny their old traditions in order to claim the promise of Abraham" (Sanneh, 1989, pp.227-8; cf. Schaaf, 2002, p.183). Additionally, the questions being asked in African biblical scholarship and amongst ordinary Christians are shaped by life issues, such as AIDS, as well as contextual theological and ethical issues (West, 2000, p.43; Schaaf, 2002, p.202) and there is evidence that "African Christians are engaging creatively with the biblical texts and applying them to their current situations and needs" (King, 2000, p.372). Finally, I have observed that in many African churches the Scriptures are applied especially (even exclusively) in terms of healing, exorcism and salvation (cf. King, 2000, p.370; Gifford, 2008).

Thus the literature gives evidence for a range of interpretive methods and patterns of application amongst African Christians, shaped by various views on and uses of the Bible. Therefore, we will now turn to look at how the research in MICP compares to the above findings.

CHAPTER 3 Research methodology

3.1 The topic

As has been established, the primary questions under consideration for research were:

- How do Christians in the Mbeya and Iringa regions of Tanzania view the Bible?
- How do they engage with Scripture?

The investigation also allowed for some comparisons between different language areas, denominations and genders and between those who have or have not attended SIL workshops.

3.2 Stance and strategy

One's research strategy is affected by one's epistemological stance. By researching experiences relating to matters of faith, I was dealing with ideographic knowledge, in that people learn about God through unique, non-replicable experiences (Swinton and Mowat, 2006, p.43). Recognising this, I held to a constructivist epistemological position, believing that the meaning of situations and actions is constructed such that various interpretations can be made of the same phenomena (Swinton and Mowat, 2006, p.35; cf. Gray, 2009, p.18). Further, I maintained an interpretivist theoretical perspective, acknowledging that my research would not uncover objective facts but would rather look for the "culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (Crotty, 1998, p.67). This was particularly important in light of my research question, which sought to uncover people's *perceptions*, which are highly subjective.

Such an epistemological stance is best supported by qualitative research, which seeks to describe reality (Swinton and Mowat, 2006, p.44). However, it does not rule out the use of quantitative research, which is particularly appropriate for addressing the second of my research questions on how people engage with the Bible. Rather, mixed method research, which involves using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, can provide complementary views of the phenomena under investigation, leading to greater levels of clarity in understanding them (Cupchik, 2001, n.p.) In light of this, and bearing in mind the constraints of time and finances (being based in England and unable to travel to Tanzania to conduct my research), I identified questionnaires and interviews as being the most suitable research methods.

This mixed approach is particularly important when considering that what people say is not necessarily what they do, especially for socially charged topics like Christian living such as I was investigating. Further, in an African context, where group values can override individual preferences (Araali, 2011, p.43; cf. Obeng-Quaidoo, 1985), this issue could hold particular sway as individuals may say what they believe they should be doing based on group values, rather than reporting their actual behaviour. However, by interviewing those who administered the questionnaires I was able to draw on their observations of reality, further supplemented by my own observations in Tanzania, in order to assess whether what was said matched actual practice.

The mixed method approach is not without criticism. It cannot be assumed that an agreement in the results of different research methods demonstrates validity, indeed confusing and even conflicting findings can emerge that bring complexity rather than clarification (Gray, 2009, p.215), however from a constructivist perspective this need not be seen as a disadvantage. In general I believe the mixed method approach I adopted helped counteract the weaknesses of the different methodologies used. In addition, by engaging in a process of reflexivity, a self-conscious awareness of my own biases, personal interpretations and context (Grant, Rohr and Grant, 2012, p.234), any disadvantages were exposed and minimised. Finally, by thinking carefully about whether the questions I used indicated the intended concept by means of checking them with others who had knowledge of the issue (a test of 'face validity') and by comparing the results with expectations derived from theory (a test of 'construct validity') (Seale, 1998, p.134), I believe that useful and authentic data was gathered.

3.3 Questionnaires

Questionnaires facilitated the gathering of data from a fairly wide sample of people, including those in rural environments. There are many ways of administering questionnaires, but due to the poor literacy levels in Tanzania (Uwezo, 2011), coupled with postal unreliability and limited internet access, questionnaires that could be either self or interviewer-administered were the most suitable. This method also improved the response rate and reduced response bias by ensuring that participants were not limited by literacy ability. The questionnaires consisted of mostly closed questions (with categorised answers) or simple open questions (with short answers), in order to limit variation in administration by different people or self-administration. As this restricted the possibility of probing and clarifying, the questions were carefully designed in

order to minimise misleading questions, though different people may yet have interpreted the questions differently.

There were a number of things to consider in writing clear questions, including knowledge of the target group and using understandable and appropriate vocabulary, together with avoiding prejudicial language, ambiguity and imprecision and questions that are leading, double, assumptive, hypothetical or sensitive (Arksey and Knight, 1999). Further, as many phenomena or concepts were multidimensional, it was important to break them down in order to design different questions for each dimension. Avoiding more than one idea per question was particularly important for my research context, as personal experience developing Bible study guides in Tanzania has illustrated that when two concepts are addressed in the same question, one usually remains unanswered or the question is not understood.

There are a number of drawbacks to the approach I chose. In providing categorised answers for the respondent to select from, one risks “imposing categories that do not reflect the realities of people’s lives” (Seale, 1998, p.127) and assuming that people “have clear and well-formed opinions... know what they feel or believe, and are able to transform them into the categories offered by the instrument [and that] the instrument is actually able to accurately capture all those views, opinions, or feelings in their complexity” (Galasinski and Kozłowska, 2010, p.271). While this was a risk, my personal experience in Tanzania assisted me in developing appropriate categories, and the closed questions were supplemented with some short open questions to allow for elaboration. Further, the questions were checked and edited by two Tanzanians, experienced in proof-reading, for both accuracy and naturalness.

Another issue is that though respondents may have given the same reply to a question, they may have interpreted the meaning of that reply differently (Gray, 2009, p.165). Although this makes quantitative analysis hard, it is an acceptable reality from a constructivist perspective, which accommodates varying interpretations rather than seeking to quantify and explain. Further, as individuals experience life in cultural categories, described through cultural genres of speech and public categories of representation (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont, 2003, p.137), cultural idioms have to be interpreted with care. Finally, the influence of my own personal interests and social and cultural background are hard to avoid, but by adopting a reflexive stance I did not consider them to be a barrier. Therefore, despite their drawbacks, I believe questionnaires were appropriate for the research I was doing and were able to provide valuable data.

3.3.1 Design

The questionnaire (see Appendix B) was designed to address both research questions, though closed and short-answer questions could only offer limited insight into the issue of perceptions. The initial biographical questions were included to construct a picture of the individual that might help interpret their later responses, as age, gender, language, literacy, education, church denomination and involvement with SIL were all factors that could impact respondents' views on and engagement with the Bible. Choice of vocabulary was made carefully, such as using the word "*kablia*" (tribe), which is an acceptable term in Tanzania. Determining age category by asking for their year of birth was also culturally determined, as people often respond to the question of how old they are with the year that they were born. Further, biographical questions are a natural part of greetings and introductions in relational Tanzanian culture, making them an appropriate way to start the questionnaire.

The remainder of the questions fitted the four broad categories used in the literature review (though with some overlap): The place of the Bible amongst other means for growing in faith (question 12), what the Bible is (13, 16-17), using the Bible (14-15, 18-22) and how the Bible affects them (23-24). A final question was included (25) inviting the respondent's input on what might help them to engage with and understand God's Word better, in order to assist in developing practical recommendations from the research. Various other factors affected the order and style of the questions, as outlined below.

As question 12 aimed to uncover how important direct engagement with the Bible is compared to other factors, I chose to put it first (after the biographical questions) so that respondents would not feel caused to rank Bible engagement options as 'very important' by seeing that this was the focus of the rest of the questionnaire.

Questions 13 to 19 were predominantly closed, categorised questions, as the nature of the data lent itself to this approach. This format also provided some structure to help respondents in answering and made the data easier to analyse (cf. Gray, 2009, p.349).

Questions 7 and 18 involved quantifying actions in the past week or two of the respondent's life, in order to get a clearer picture of real practice. The categories were left purposefully broad (for example, question 18 avoided asking how many times per week they had used the Bible in various ways) to minimise the risk of unreliable or inaccurate recollections that may occur when referring

to past experiences (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont, 2003, p.107). Therefore, as precise quantities were surplus to the goals of the questions, detailed recollections were not asked for.

The remainder of the questions sought to address the Bible engagement issue in more depth and also gain some insights into their views on the Bible and how it impacts their life, and were therefore more open in style. As has been noted, such insights are hard to determine through a questionnaire but the interview was able to add depth to the questionnaire responses.

3.3.2 Sample

Four of the nine language areas covered by the Scripture Engagement work in MICP were selected to represent the whole project area. Due to the limitations of time and finances, purposive sampling was employed to achieve a good cross-section of the population, though this may inadvertently have led to omitting vital characteristics or biasing the sample (Gray, 2009, p.152).

The Literacy/Scripture Use Coordinators for these language areas (henceforth to be referred to simply as 'Coordinators') were each requested to administer the questionnaires to at least 25 people. In order to allow for some comparison between the responses of people who attend different denominations, the Coordinators were instructed to select approximately one third of respondents from Pentecostal churches (such as Tanzanian Assemblies of God), one third from other non-liturgical yet established churches (such as Baptist or Salvation Army) and one third from liturgical churches (such as Lutheran, Moravian or Anglican). Each denominational group also had to be represented by respondents from at least two different churches. Further, the sample had to have a fair gender distribution. Within these sampling requirements, respondents were then selected on the basis of convenience.

While these relatively small samples did not allow for detailed statistical analysis, this was not the aim of the research, as from a constructivist stance I was more interested in descriptive rather than quantitative results.

3.4 Interview

In order to explore the issue of *perceptions* more closely and to dig deeper into any issues that arose from the questionnaires, a semi-structured group interview was also conducted, in Swahili, with the Coordinators who administered the questionnaires. Semi-structured interviews enable a researcher to ensure all the necessary topics are discussed while allowing the interviewees to raise

issues they perceive as important. Further, the interviewer can probe to elicit detailed responses and “challenge the respondent to make explicit their taken-for-granted norms” (Stephens, 2007, pp.205-206). While such interviews come under criticism for the qualitative data they provide as lacking reproducibility, transferability and generalisability, these are not critical issues when coming from a constructivist epistemology, which embraces variety and multiple interpretations. In addition, qualitative interviews enable *theoretical generalisation* in which the researcher can develop perspectives which, while not statistically generalisable, may yet have theoretical potential in situations beyond those being examined (Swinton and Mowat, 2006, p.49).

Two unique challenges had to be faced in my particular context: Firstly, conducting the interview at a distance, for which I used Skype. Research into phone interviews has shown them to be a valuable mode of data production that “should not be considered ‘second best’” (Holt, 2010, p.117). Although being unable to read one another’s body language⁵ can limit the flow of interaction (Stephens, 2007; Holt, 2010), Skype partially overcame this difficulty through the use of video and in addition I sought to articulate clearly and use verbal cues and repetition where necessary.

Secondly, speaking in another language obviously holds potential for misunderstanding, though I am confident that my Swahili was adequate as I used it in a variety of domains for five years. Further, it has been observed that “there is something to be said for allowing for and embracing moments of misunderstanding as an ethnographic tool” (Winchatz, 2006, p.94) and that being a non-native interviewer makes it easier to elicit information from native interviewees (Chen, 2011, p.119). Indeed, not being fluent can even aid the interview as the interviewer has to let the interviewees define their concepts, ultimately leading to deeper understanding and clarity. The interview was also digitally recorded so that I was able to check my written notes for accuracy.

Finally, many of the challenges that apply to questionnaires, regarding the nature of the questions and the interpretation of the responses, apply equally to interviews, thus the same precautions were taken.

3.4.1 Design

By conducting the interview after the questionnaires were completed, I was able to design primarily open questions to complement the data gathered from the questionnaires, investigating

⁵ It is thought that body language accounts for 50 to 70 per cent of all communication (Cherry, n.d., n.p.)

areas that needed clarification and filling in gaps. I was also able to use vocabulary and expressions used by questionnaire respondents in order to avoid “‘controlling’ the interview through language” (Arksey and Knight, 1999, p.100) and to ensure I was using language that was accessible to my audience (Gray, 2009, p.381). My interview guide (see Appendix C) provided a structure for the interview while yet allowing me to probe and prompt for elaboration and clarification (Arksey and Knight, 1999, p.97).

The first group of questions were designed to allow the interviewees to reflect on their research experience and to give me insight into how people engaged with the questionnaires. The remainder of the questions were structured around the four broad categories I have used throughout: the place of the Bible in growing in faith, what the Bible is, using the Bible and how the Bible affects us. The questions sought to both gather the Coordinators’ own opinions and discuss their observations on what other Tanzanians may think and do. The interview concluded with an opportunity to think about how it all applied to their work and any final thoughts. By drawing on my own background knowledge I was able to identify incomplete replies or gaps in what was said and either probe or make note of this, as what is left out of a conversation can be as important as what is included (Arksey and Knight, p.101).

3.4.2 Sample

The interview was conducted with the four Coordinators who administered the questionnaires to allow me to probe deeper into the specific contexts and issues I was researching. All four Tanzanians were former colleagues with whom I had worked for several years, so the relationship of mutual trust we had developed hopefully helped the respondents to feel open in their responses. The interview was conducted as a group, as this approach is particularly suitable for a communal African context (Obeng-Quaidoo, 1985, p.115) and facilitates gathering differing or corroborating perceptions and a fuller picture (Gray, 2009, p.388) as well as allowing the Coordinators to hear each other’s experiences. Although the Coordinators’ answers were not representative of Tanzanian perceptions of the Bible, due to working with SIL and having all been trained in various aspects of SE, the questions sought to accommodate this and the analysis also took this into consideration.

3.5 Ethics and informed consent

Ethics committees require the informed consent of participants in order to demonstrate that they have a clear understanding of what the study requires of them and to confirm that they have participated free from external pressure, aware of any potential risks and benefits of participation. (Araali, 2011, p.39; cf. University Research Degrees Committee, 2008). However, research in sub-Saharan Africa has shown that the act of signing a consent form can be misunderstood for a variety of cultural and historical reasons (from values of group cohesion to issues of money) and arouse unease or suspicion and an unwillingness to participate (Araali, 2011, p.41). However, by using members of the community to administer the questionnaires, I was able to minimise these misunderstandings as they could help to negotiate informed consent (Araali, 2011, p.45). Further, “Africans should be allowed to express their consent in culturally appropriate manners. A Western concept of legal capacity should not be imposed on people from other cultures if by so doing the researcher is transgressing local norms” (Araali, 2011, p.48). Therefore, as advised by Araali (2011, p.45), I used informal verbal consent, which for the questionnaires was noted by the Tanzanian researchers and for the interview was recorded by myself.

CHAPTER 4 Research analysis and discussion

4.1 The research sample

A total of 91 questionnaires were available for analysis with a 100% response rate being achieved in the Malila, Safwa and Vwanji language areas (25 to 26 questionnaires per area) though only 14 questionnaires were returned from the Bena language area. A total of eight respondents marked their tribe as different from the language area in which they lived, with only the Malila research sample being made up exclusively of Malila people. For this reason, I use the term 'language area' throughout to define the four groups that made up the research sample, as 'people group' or 'language group' would misrepresent the situation for all but the Malila. The questionnaires represented a good cross-section of the population with an almost equal gender split and a varied age range, the majority (72%) being 20-49 years of age. Further biographical information is described below. Altogether the quantity and range of data was adequate to allow for helpful comparisons between various groupings of people.

Although the Coordinators reported some hesitancy on the part of respondents to fill in the questionnaires, particularly amongst those attending Roman Catholic churches, people were happy to do it after the purpose had been explained. Most respondents filled in the questionnaires themselves (rather than being interviewed by a Coordinator) which led to some people leaving questions blank. However, Coordinators were available to help when needed, which proved most necessary for multiple choice questions. The interview with the Coordinators was also conducted successfully, with all four making helpful contributions to the discussion. A summary of the original interview can be found in Appendix D, however the amount of data gathered through the questionnaires was too large to include in its entirety, instead relevant aspects have been incorporated where appropriate.⁶ We will look first at the biographical data from the research sample to provide the setting for analysing and discussing the remainder of the findings.

4.1.1 Language and literacy

The majority of respondents included a local language (which in most cases will have been their mother-tongue) and Swahili amongst the languages they spoke well, with only three people not

⁶ The original questionnaires, a summary spreadsheet of the responses and a recording of the interview are available upon request. Please contact the author at: katherine_odonnell@wycliffe.org

including Swahili. Only seven people claimed to speak English well. Likewise, most people said that they could read Swahili well, with only one person saying they could not read any Swahili. However, when I asked the Coordinators about this, they felt that in reality a much higher percentage of people are unable to read, which is confirmed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2012) statistics for Tanzania, which reported an adult literacy rate of 73%. Therefore, the questionnaires are biased in this respect as the Coordinators will have mostly targeted people who were able to fill it in themselves. In addition 36% of the respondents in the Bena area, 69% in the Malila area, 60% in the Safwa area and 85% in the Vwanji area could read their mother-tongue. When I questioned these statistics, the Coordinators felt that they over-represented the situation in the wider population. Although almost everyone stated that they could read at least one language, a smaller number stated that they had read anything in the past week (86%), with the most popular piece of literature, mentioned by 75%, being the Bible. A few also mentioned reading song books (27%) and newspapers (12%) and less mentioned story books and school books. This affirms the observation that the vast majority of the population of sub-Saharan Africa have an oral as opposed to literary communication preference (Lovejoy, 2000, p.8).

4.1.2 Education

Formal educational attainment was relatively low across the sample, as Figure 1 illustrates, and was similar between language areas, though the Safwa and Bena groups overall reached slightly higher levels of formal education. The results showed lower levels of school attendance than in the nation as a whole, for UNESCO (2012) reported a net attendance ratio of 25% for secondary school and about 80% for primary school. This may be due to the fact that my research did not include large towns or cities, where educational levels are generally higher (Uwezo, 2011).

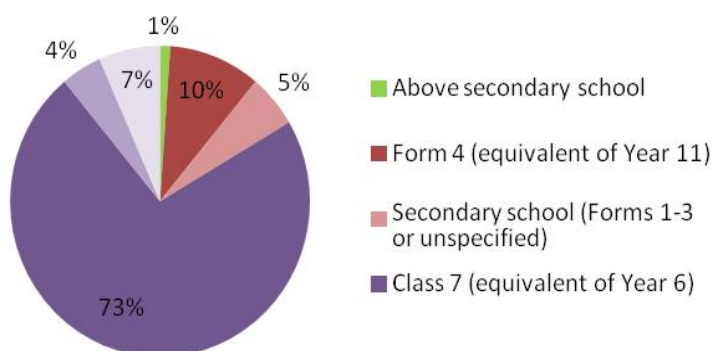


Figure 1 Educational level attained

4.1.3 Church denomination

A wide range of church denominations were represented (Figure 2), the spread of which is fairly representative of the existence of those denominations within the language areas.

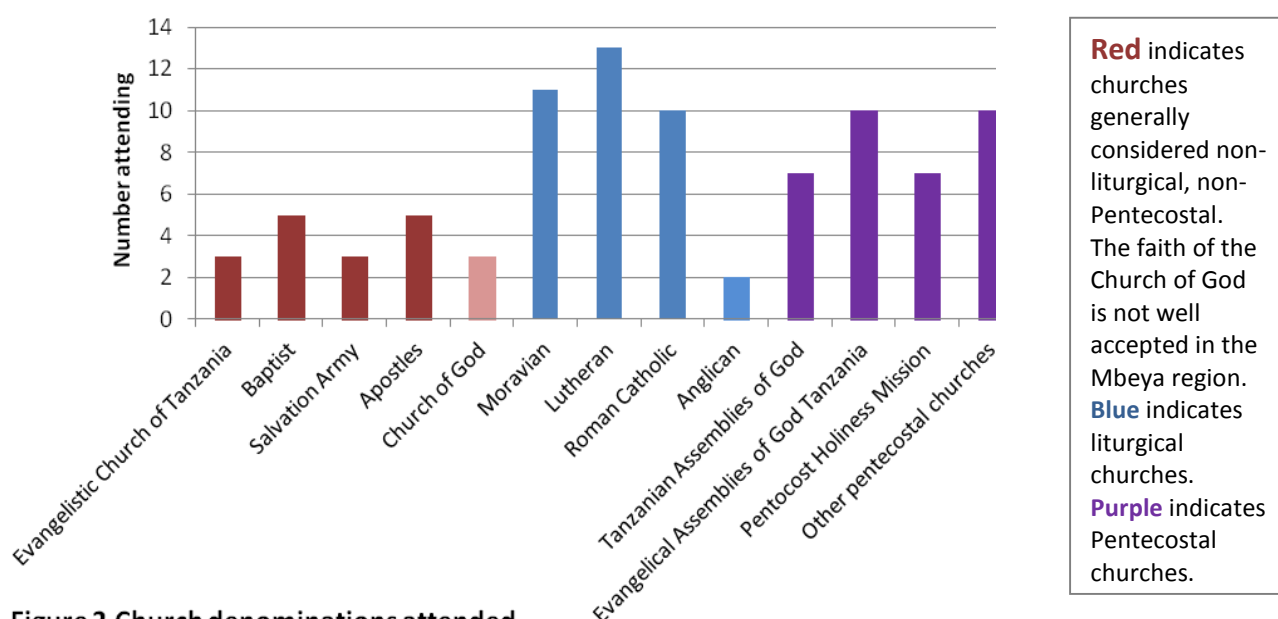


Figure 2 Church denominations attended

4.1.4 SIL workshops

40% of respondents had attended SIL workshops of one kind or another, which is likely to over-represent the situation of the general population as questionnaires were more likely to have been administered in areas that the Coordinators had already been actively at work. Approximately the same proportions of respondents had attended literacy workshops in the Malila, Safwa and Vwanji language areas, while a much higher proportion had attended Sunday school teacher training workshops in the Safwa area and more had attended Bible study workshops in the Bena and Vwanji areas than in the other areas.

4.2 The place of the Bible amongst other means for growing in faith

4.2.1 Data analysis

When asked what was important to helping them grow in their faith as a Christian (question 12), the factor most commonly marked by respondents as being very important was preaching in church. Songs, prayer meetings, reading the Bible alone, family devotions and Bible seminars also stood out as being important (Figure 3). Coordinators noted that when options were left blank, this most likely meant that the respondent had never done it or did not consider it important.

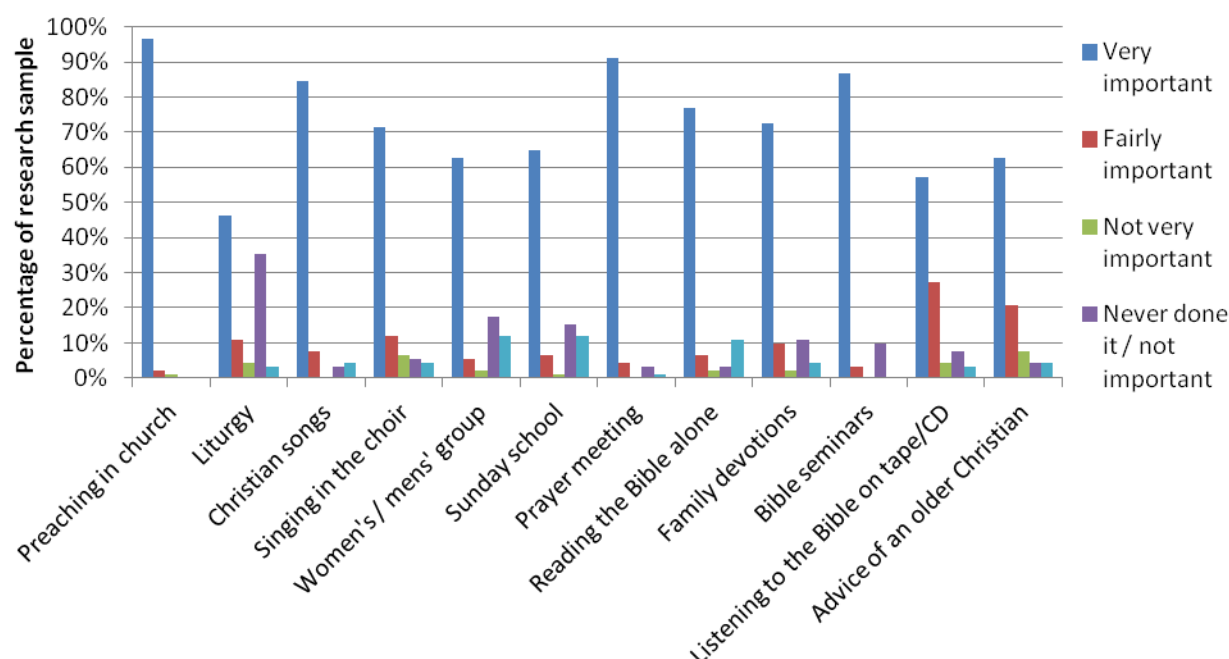


Figure 3 Which things are important to you in helping you to grow in your faith as a Christian?

These findings were reinforced by the Coordinators who also identified family devotions, Bible reading, prayer, Bible seminars and songs as important for their growth in faith. Although they did not mention preaching in church, one identified that in his role as a Bible teacher he grows in faith as he himself prepares lessons.

Some of the response patterns differed according to gender, language area and denomination. For example, 93% of women, compared to 82% of men, noted Bible seminars as being very important. Listening to the Bible on tapes or CDs was also noted by 91% of women as being very or fairly important, compared to 80% of men. However, there was little difference in gender response for other factors.

Concerning language areas, Malila respondents consistently ranked everything as more important than people from other areas, except for liturgy (which reflects the fact that less people from liturgical churches were surveyed in the Malila area as such churches are less dominant there). Women's and men's groups and singing in choirs stood out in particular. The latter (ranked by 92% of Malila respondents as being very important) was reiterated by the Malila Coordinator (his statement in Swahili is followed by an approximate English translation):

"Uimbaji tusiache kabisa...nasikia uniingia... pia naipenda sana."

We mustn't forget singing...when I hear, it enters inside...I also like it a lot.

In contrast, respondents in the Vwanji area more frequently ranked things as unimportant/never done compared to other areas, particularly family devotions, though many more in the Malila and

Vwanji areas marked reading the Bible alone as very important compared to the Safwa and Bena areas. An overview of the data can be found in Appendix E, Figure E-1.

Finally, as would be expected, much less importance was placed on liturgy by respondents from Pentecostal and other non-liturgical churches. Further, those attending Roman Catholic churches placed less importance on preaching in church and prayer meetings than those of other denominations. Any other differences were less clearly marked.

4.2.2 Discussion

The data from the questionnaires seems to reflect the findings of the literature review (see section 2.2.2), with community facets of worship ranking highly across all groups. Although independent reading of God's Word was also marked as important by a majority of people, it was still out-ranked by preaching, prayer meetings, Bible seminars and songs (in that order). The Bible's emphasis on community for developing spiritual maturity (see section 2.1.2) affirms these practices as important, however it is vital that the way these practices are conducted and the biblical message that is delivered through them should reflect the truth of the Bible. Therefore, it is necessary to consider how the Scripture is being used and interpreted in these situations, which will be discussed further when we turn to look at 'Using the Bible' (section 4.4) and 'How the Bible affects us' (section 4.5).

As the activities ranked most important for growing in the faith generally involve dependence on authority figures in the church (such as preachers, teachers and choir leaders), we should be concerned about whether Christians are critically comparing what they hear from such people against the Word of God. Sadly the low educational levels indicated by the research suggest this may not be happening, for while people who have received secondary education have a more questioning mind, those who have not reached this level "are generally happier following directives 'from above'" (Molyneux, 1993, p.386), suggesting that Tanzanian Christians are likely to uncritically accept what they hear, especially if they cannot read. Indeed, discussion in the interview affirmed that this was an issue. The Coordinators commented that many people do not have a Bible or are too lazy or just not used to reading it due to Tanzanian culture not being highly literary. They informed me that those who came to spread religion in the first place did not want people to read the Bible, but rather to just listen to them, particularly in Roman Catholic churches but also in Moravian and Lutheran churches. This has only begun to change in recent years. All these factors combined mean that the majority of Christians will follow what their pastor says

(indeed, some would not even fill in the questionnaires without first receiving their pastor's permission), looking to him more than to God's Word. All the Coordinators agreed with one who said:

"Wanaangalia mchungaji Jumapili amesema nini...wanangalia mtu zaidi... watu waliowengi wanaangalia sana yule ambaye anawaongoza...wanasahau kwamba tunayo Biblia ambayo ni mwongozo mkuu..."

They look to the pastor on Sundays to see what he says...they look to the person more...many people watch the person who leads them...they forget that that we have a Bible that is our main leader...

These observations are supported by the literature review, suggesting that attitudes surrounding authority and big man syndrome (Molyneux, 1993; Ommani, 2009; Arensen, 1995; Williams, 2012) are all factors to be contended with in the churches of the Mbeya and Iringa regions of Tanzania, as well as in Africa at large.

Finally, the differences, observed here and throughout the remainder of the findings, between genders, language areas and denominations are indicative of the fact that different categories of people will hold different views and behave differently.

4.3 What the Bible is

4.3.1 Data analysis

When asked how they would describe the Bible to someone (question 13), most people (particularly men) defined it as "*Neno la Mungu*" (Word of God) or some variation on this (such as 'words of God' or 'holy word of God') and a number of others called it 'holy writings' or 'holy writings of God'. Others (predominantly women) included in their description something about how it teaches or guides us and one or two said about how it helps us grow spiritually or helps us know God (a fuller list can be found in Appendix E, Table E-I).

The reasons people gave for having a Bible (question 16) also indicate how they perceive the Bible. Figure 4 summarises the reasons they selected (with seeming differences between genders, which can be viewed in Figure E-2). Additional answers were also given (see Table E-II for a full list), with the reason that it helps or guides them being the most common (particularly among women). Any differences between denominations appeared too small to be of note.

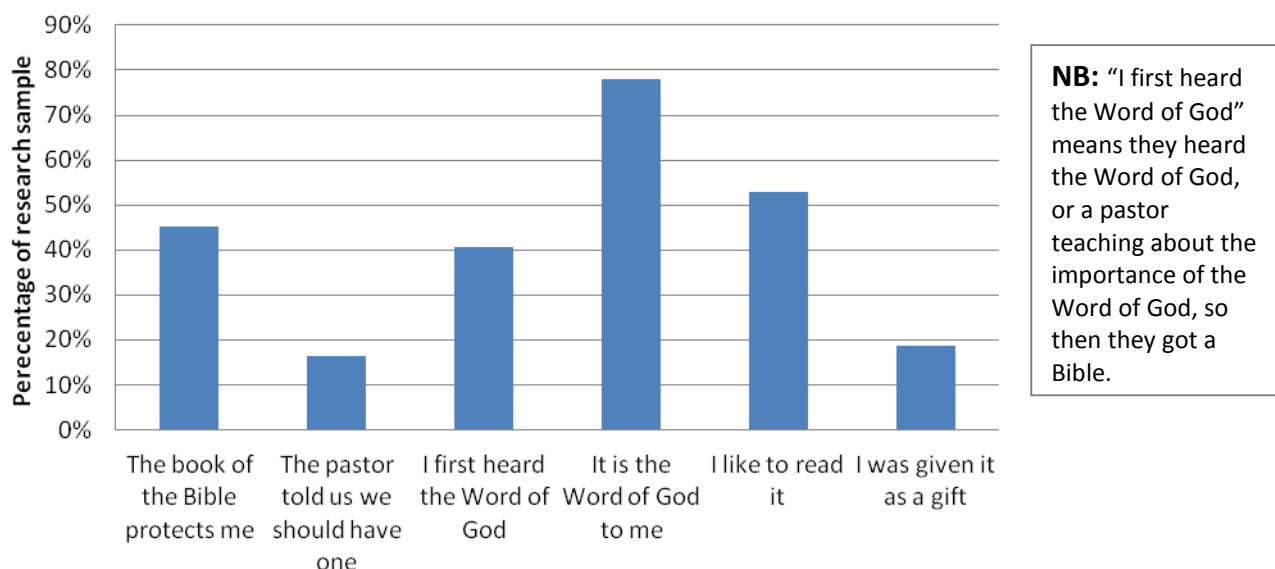


Figure 4 If you have a Bible, why do you have it?

The main reason given for not having a Bible was that it is too expensive, though two people said it is very difficult to understand or that they cannot read and one person said they had not made it a priority.

4.3.2 Discussion

The data affirms the findings of the literature review (see section 2.2.3) by showing that most people view the Bible as the Word of God. In the interview the Coordinators provided clarification on the use of this term, saying that some people would not be able to explain what they meant by this phrase, but would just have learned to say it, an observation also supported by the literature (cf. West, 2000, p.47). They added that many do not realise that the Bible was written by human authors, and would not believe it if you told them, but instead think that it came straight from God (cf. Ukpung, 2000, p.587), with some even believing that the Bible just fell from the sky:

"Biblia ilidondoka tu hivi...hawezi kueleza vizuri"

The Bible just fell like this...he is not able to explain well [what Word of God means]

In addition, almost half the respondents considered that the Bible protects them. When I asked the Coordinators what people meant by this, they explained that some people will mean that when they read the Bible it removes doubts and in that sense protects them, but others will think the book itself protects them:

"Na kwa kuwa wanaamini kwamba ilitoka moja kwa moja kwa Mungu wana hakika itamlinda tu akaweka kama mto kichwani"

Because they believe that the Bible came directly from God they are sure that it will protect them, so he will put it like a pillow at his head

These findings are consistent with the literature and reveal a very mixed understanding of what the Bible is and how it came to us, affirming that both “the open Bible (as text) and the unopened Bible (as sacred object and icon) are powerful in much of Africa” (West, 2000, p.48). While the Bible is indeed powerful, the many misconceptions about its power indicate a poor biblical understanding of what the Word of God is amongst Tanzanian Christians. The perception of the Bible as literally being God’s words may also have implications for Bible translation, having the potential to impact acceptance of the Bible translation process and therefore the translated Scriptures. However, whether there is a direct correlation between perception and the use of mother-tongue Scriptures is not possible to determine from the current research.

Finally, the apparent differences between how men and women viewed the Bible were interesting to note. Although it was hard to draw any particular conclusions from these findings, it is the first time that gender differences have been recorded, thereby extending the current body of literature. Further, these differences warrant additional investigation for their anthropological and sociological significance, as well as having the potential to affect how SE is approached between genders.

4.4 Using the Bible

4.4.1 Data analysis

4.4.1.1 *Owning a Bible*

Figure 5 illustrates that many people did not own a complete Swahili Bible, while 12% had no Bible at all. These figures are skewed by the Safwa language area, where 22% of respondents did not own a Bible (compared to 5-7% in the other three language areas). Despite their daily interaction with local Christians, even the Coordinators were surprised at how many people did not possess a Bible as well as at people’s ignorance over the content of the Bible, as several respondents did not realise that Bible books sold separately (such as Matthew or Jonah) were still part of the Bible.

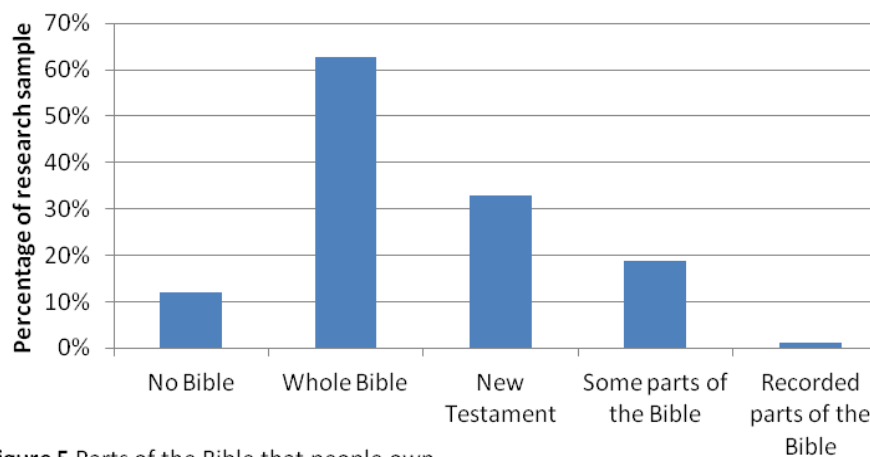


Figure 5 Parts of the Bible that people own

Figure 6 goes on to illustrate ownership of Scripture portions in people's mother-tongues, with levels being very low in the Safwa and Bena areas but significantly higher in the Vwanji and Malila areas. Vwanji people were also most likely to have recorded versions of the Bible in their mother-tongue.

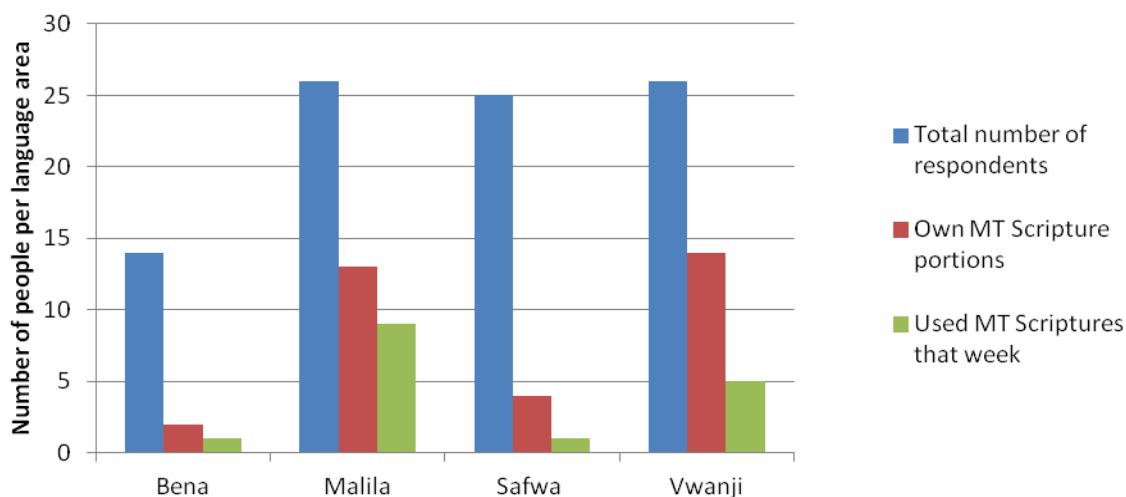


Figure 6 Ownership and usage of mother-tongue (MT) Scriptures according to people group

This data is a reflection of the situation in these areas, as there are more mother-tongue Scripture portions available in the Malila and Vwanji languages and they have been available for longer. Further, these two language areas are smaller so it has been easier to develop good distribution and sales strategies, enhanced by the particular dedication of the Coordinators for these areas. However, although a number of people possessed mother-tongue Scripture portions, far fewer people had actually used them in the past week (Figure 6). Highest usage was amongst the Malila people, which personal observation would support, as it was evident during workshops I conducted that there was much stronger use of mother-tongue in this language area than

elsewhere. Additionally, that the research sample for the Malila language area was made up exclusively of Malila people may also be a contributing factor.

4.4.1.2 Ways of using the Bible

Figure 7 illustrates how people used their Bibles in that week (question 18). By far the most common use was reading or listening to it in church, though 9 people said they never use it this way or left it blank. Further, over half the respondents said that they read the Bible alone, although 14 people said they never use it this way or left it blank. When I checked this latter finding with the Coordinators they commented that this does not match their observations and that in reality less than half of Christians are likely to read their Bibles on their own, with many people only using them on Sundays. The ways in which people were least likely to use the Bible were listening to it alone or listening to it or reading it with family, friends or neighbours – 40-52% of people said they never use their Bible in these ways.

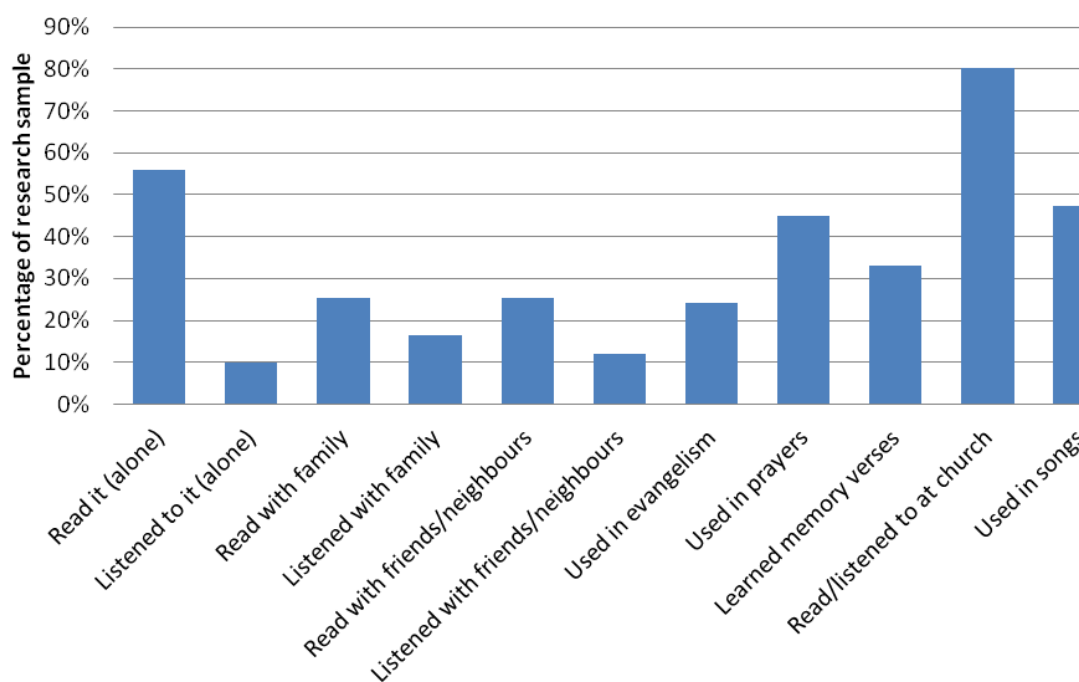


Figure 7 How have you used the Bible in the past week?

There were some differences between genders in using the Bible. Men seemed more likely to use their Bible in every way than women. Further, the data suggests that men are more comfortable using the Bible in book form and are more likely to read other books that will help them understand the Bible (as data from question 25 showed, see Appendix E, Figure E-3) while women showed a preference for listening to the Bible (see section 4.2.1).

Variations were also evident between language areas, though it was not easy to determine any clear patterns (Figure 8). Respondents in the Safwa area were much more likely to have listened to the Bible with their family that week. However, Figure 8 shows a level of consistency amongst the number of Safwa respondents for each activity that may suggest respondents gave less considered answers than those from other language areas, where more variation is evident between activities. Respondents in the Malila and Vwanji areas were much more likely to have read the Bible on their own, which reflects the findings from question 12 (see section 4.2.1). Malila people were also more likely to have used the Bible in evangelism and read or listened to it at church, suggesting higher regular church attendance, while people in the Vwanji area had used it more in singing.

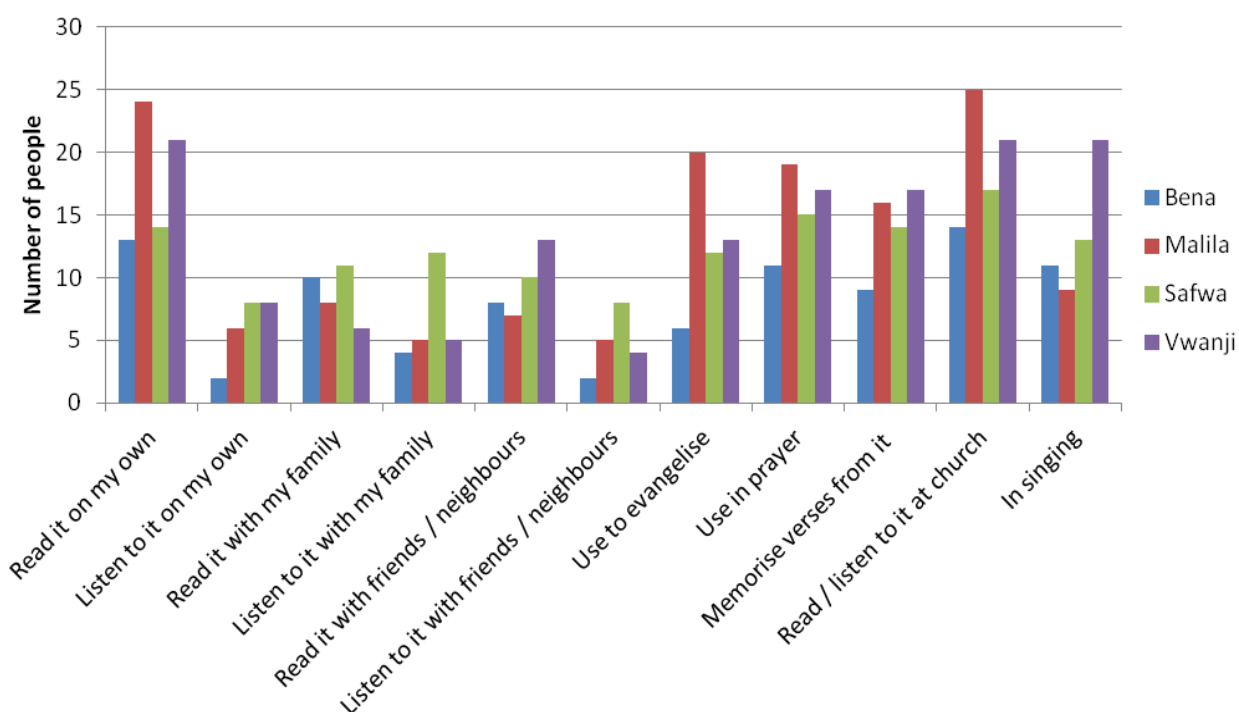


Figure 8 Used the Bible this way (either this week or sometimes), according to language area

There seemed to be little difference between most denominations for reading the Bible alone, reading/hearing at church and using in song in the past week or sometimes. For the other forms of Scripture engagement there was slightly more variation, with the greatest difference being that those attending some Pentecostal denominations were more likely to have read the Bible with their family (67% versus 48% for Moravian/Lutheran and less for other denominations). However, those attending Roman Catholic churches seemed less likely to have used the Bible in *all* ways compared to others, with the differences becoming more marked when just looking at the past week (see Figures E-4 and E-5 for more information).

The Bible was consistently used more in every way by people who had attended SIL workshops of any kind, except for reading the Bible with friends or neighbours (Figure 9). The difference was particularly marked for listening to God’s Word, whether individually or with family, friends or neighbours. While these differences may have been affected by denomination or people group, I think the consistency of the findings suggests that attendance at SIL workshops still stands out as a significant influence in SE.

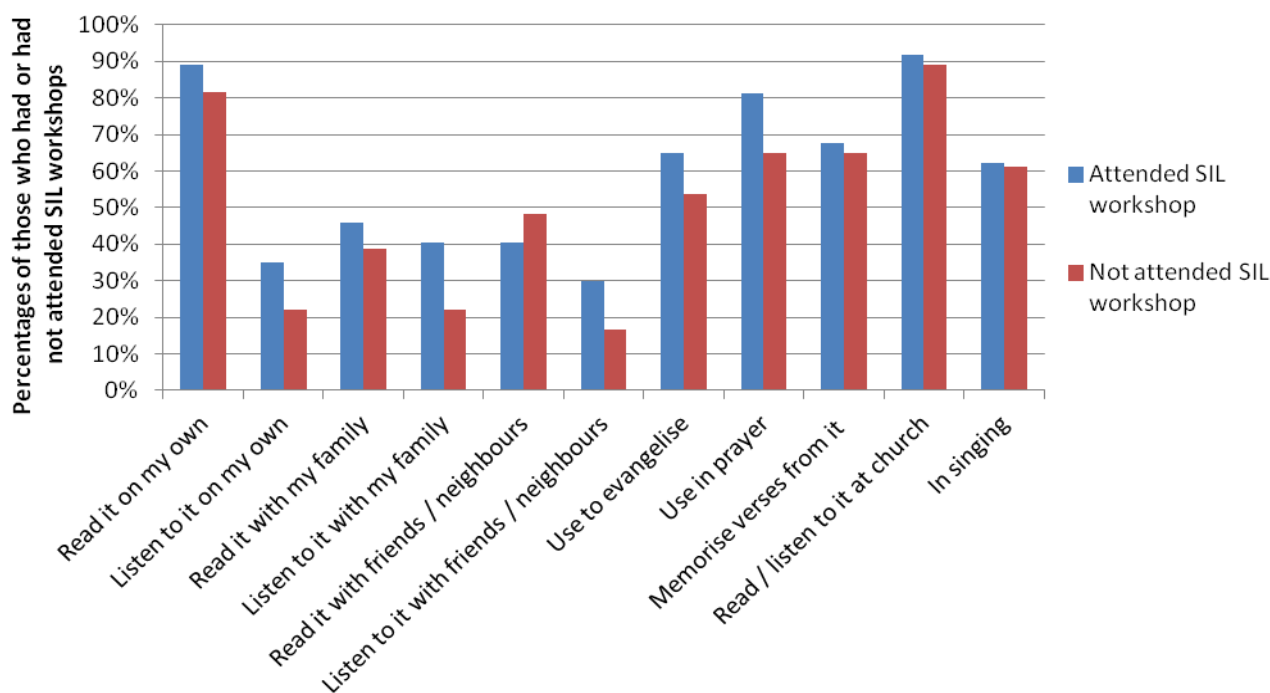


Figure 9 Used the Bible this way (either this week or sometimes), according to SIL workshop attendance

Scripture memorisation was particularly taught in workshops for Sunday school teachers, which seems to have borne fruit, for those who attended these workshops were more likely to have used Scripture this way in the past week or sometime compared to those who had attended other SIL workshops (76% versus 56%).

4.4.1.3 Why people read the Bible and what they read

The Coordinators commented that people found it hard to answer *why* they read the Bible (question 20), however a wide range of responses were received and some common themes emerged, the most prevalent of which are found in Table I. The most recurrent response relates to the Bible being God’s Word and clearly correlates with the results of question 13 (section 4.3.1). A number of other reasons were also mentioned (see Appendix E, Table E-III).

Table I Why do you read/listen to the Bible?

Reasons given	Number who said this
Because it is the Word of God / to learn/understand the Word of God	25
To grow spiritually / in faith	13
To know God's will / what he wants from us / how to behave	10
To learn the things of God / who He is	7
Way to Salvation	6
Comforts / strengthens	5

A wide selection of scriptures was given for favourite parts of the Bible (questions 21 and 22). Overall 52% of people referred to the Old Testament and 76% to the New Testament, which comes to a total of more than 100% as some people mentioned several passages or the whole Bible. 19% did not cite a particular Scripture but instead said “whole Bible” and a further 35% made reference to the gospels. The reasons given were mostly quite general and varied widely, but Table II attempts to group most of them, revealing that the most common reason was because it teaches them how to live a godly life (see Table E-IV for the full range of responses).

Table II Why are these your favourite parts of the Bible?

Reasons given	Number who said this
Teaches me to lead holy/righteous life / Christian life / commandments	11
It is the Word of God - all important	9
Contains message of salvation, good news, life, grace	8
Strengthens, encourages, builds	8
Is about the life of Jesus	7
Is about history / lives of people	7
Learn about end times	5
Get to know God	3
See patience in suffering	2
Promises healing & prosperity	2
See victory over trials/temptations	2

4.4.2 Discussion

While the research has made clear how important many people consider the Bible to be, we now find some discrepancy between what is said and what is done. Firstly, we observed that less than two-thirds of respondents owned the whole Bible in Swahili and many less owned any Scripture portions in their mother-tongue. A number of factors may contribute to this. The Coordinators highlighted distribution as an issue, such that people do not know where they can buy a Bible. Respondents named affordability as the main problem, though the Coordinators felt that if people could be helped to see that it is good to have a Bible then cost would not be prohibitive.

Secondly, we saw that use of mother-tongue Scriptures was much lower than ownership, an observation reflected by others elsewhere in Africa who have noted a disinterest in translated Scripture (Maxey, 2010, p.179). When I asked the Coordinators why this might be the case, they suggested two main reasons. Firstly, that an individual might not be able to read their language but had bought the mother-tongue Scripture portion thinking that they would learn later. Others have likewise suggested literacy to be a significant factor for people not reading mother-tongue Scriptures (Kuwornu-Adjaottor, 2012, p.12), however there appears to be a lack of real evidence to support this as being an issue. The questionnaires showed that in the Malila, Safwa and Vwanji language areas 60-85% of respondents claimed they could read their mother-tongue, while a much smaller percentage actually used mother-tongue Scriptures. Instead, there is more evidence to suggest that the problem lies in their oral communication preference, for as we saw from the biographical data, people demonstrate little concern for reading, only accessing a very limited range of literature. This is supported by an increasing body of literature on the issue of orality, its prevalence, practical implications and the effect this has on Christian discipleship and the resultant need for adopting oral communication strategies in engaging with the Bible (cf. Lovejoy, 2009; Slack, 2003; Moon, 2010). Similar observations in Cameroon led James Maxey (2010, p.180) to comment that Bible translation, and I would add Scripture Engagement, “has been severely handicapped by a literacy bias”. This is of particular concern in light of the important role mother-tongue plays in truly understanding and responding to God (Kuwornu-Adjaottor, 2012, p.123), preventing syncretism by seeing how God’s Word confronts culture (Bediako, 1995; Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and International Orality Network (LCWE & ION), 2005, p.24) and for developing an authentic African theology (Bediako, 1995, p.73) amongst other benefits (cf. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, 2012, pp.123-4). The importance of using oral communication strategies coupled with the necessity of accurately transmitting God’s Word in people’s mother-tongue led a group of scholars and practitioners in the field of orality to the conclusion that:

a Bible translation program that begins with the oral presentation of the Bible through storying and continues with a translation and literacy program is the most comprehensive strategy for communicating the word of God in their heart language. It offers a viable possibility of making disciples of oral learners while at the same time providing the whole counsel of God. (LCWE & ION, 2005, n.p.)

The second reason Coordinators gave for the lack of mother-tongue Scripture engagement was that initially people may have been motivated to use the mother-tongue translation but after seeing that leaders in their churches are not using it, they are discouraged and do not continue. The issue of churches not using mother-tongue translations is significant and yet complex and

beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss in any detail. However, research by Anicka Fast (2009) offers interesting insights as to why churches may not use local languages in multilingual countries with one important reason being unity. Further, within Tanzania the government's policy on Swahili usage will have impacted the language choices made by churches (see section 2.2.1). Despite this, Fast (2009) reveals that pastors may be willing to use local languages for certain components of church services and activities including songs, testimonies and children's Sunday school.

A third way in which the discrepancy between what is said and what is done becomes clear is when comparing the data from questions 12 and 18. For example, 70% of respondents marked reading the Bible on their own as very important (Figure 3), however only 55% of respondents had actually used the Bible in this way in the past week (Figure 7) and the Coordinators considered even this figure to be over-optimistic. Similarly, 66% said that family devotions are very important but only 25% said they had read the Bible with their family that week. That meditation on God's Word individually or as a family is not practised much is supported by the literature review, which revealed similar findings elsewhere and affirms doubts over some of Mbiti's claims about the prominence of the Bible in African Christianity (see section 2.1.4). This should be of concern to SU workers considering the emphasis the Bible places on these ways of engaging with Scripture. The Coordinators suggested that a contributing factor to this issue is that some people see the Bible as the pastor's book, and not for their own personal reading (an issue also raised in section 4.2.2), though this view may vary from church to church.

A further discrepancy was evident for songs. Although 77% of respondents (Figure 3) considered them very important for growing in faith only 47% (Figure 7) said they had used the Bible in song in the past week and 25% said they never use it this way (see Appendix E, Figure E-6). This disparity is particularly surprising considering their commonly recorded popularity in African churches and the research showing how songs apply Scriptures to relevant life issues (see section 2.2.4). This suggests that the findings may not truly reflect the situation but may rather have been affected by how they understood the question, perhaps not recognising that many of the songs they sang in church will have used Scripture.

A final discrepancy lies between the oral communication preference in Tanzanian culture and the small number of respondents who said they listen to the Bible (as opposed to reading it). This may partly be caused by practical reasons as less audio Scriptures are available and the Coordinators

added that many people do not have the means to listen to tapes or CDs though they may have a radio and could therefore listen to radio broadcasts.

Instead, the data revealed that by far the most common way that people use the Bible is reading or listening to it in church, which correlates with 'preaching in church' being considered the most important factor for growing in the faith (Figure 3), a finding again supported by the literature. If the reading of Scripture and preaching in church is so central to faith, then the way that this is done becomes of primary importance in SE as it will be the principal influence on people's lives as Christians, particularly when coupled with the issues of authority that we noted earlier.

A few studies have looked at the sermon content of particular churches in different African countries, revealing a broad use of Scripture that is explained and applied to people's lives (cf. Turner, cited in Mbiti, 1986, pp.36-40; Ross, p.86, cited in Mijoga, 2000, p.379), though the preaching is rarely consecutive or expository in nature (Molyneux, 1993, p.247) and the ideas in the sermon have a rather tenuous link with the Scripture reading (Gifford, 2008, p.206), all of which I have experienced to be true in Tanzanian churches. However, as the researchers themselves acknowledge, these studies have mostly not assessed the quality of exposition or the way that Scripture has been interpreted (Turner, pp.74-77, cited in Mbiti, 1986, pp.36-40; Ross, p.86, cited in Mijoga, 2000, p.379), making this an important area for further research.

All the above observations may vary according to church denomination, although this was not clear from my research except for lower levels of most kinds of Scripture engagement by those attending Roman Catholic churches. Differences also existed between genders, which perhaps reflect the traditional stereotypes in which men are more likely to be educated and therefore exhibit more of a literary preference than women. However, the biographical information showed little difference in educational attainment between genders, so there may be other sociological reasons affecting this difference that are beyond the scope of this dissertation to investigate. The differences between language areas would benefit from further investigation to uncover the sources of the variations, which may then inform work in different areas.

Despite the differences, it is encouraging to see that across borders of gender, educational ability, language and denomination, the Scriptures are being used and in the many and varied ways that we find in the Bible, though the necessity for more regular and deeper engagement by the majority of Tanzanian Christians needs urgently addressing. Therefore, the different levels of

Scripture engagement between those that have attended SIL workshops and those that have not, together with finding that teaching on how to use a specific SE method leads to an increased use of that form of engagement (for example, Scripture memorisation) should be an encouragement to SU workers to continue investing in these events.

When it comes to *why* people read the Bible, it was interesting to find that the majority simply referred to it being the Word of God. This could be cause for concern, for as many people do not know what they really mean by 'Word of God' (see section 4.3.2) this means they may also not have any real understanding of the relevance of God's Word to their lives, which in turn may influence how much they will read the Bible. However, many other reasons were given that reflect the biblical reasons for reading God's Word such as knowing God's will for how to live (cf. Ps. 119:105) and it being the way to salvation (cf. 2 Tim. 3:15). These reasons were mirrored in the reasons given for why they liked certain parts of the Bible.

The research indicated that many people liked the Old Testament and many other writers have also noted the "African predilection for the Old Testament" (Dickson, 1984, p.146). Ype Schaaf writes that if you speak to an old man in an African village he "feels at home with people of flesh and blood...He is fascinated by the Old Testament stories...In the Bible's Book of Proverbs, he discovers proverbs like his own" (Schaaf, 2002, p.192; cf. Kanyoro, 1999, p.21). Indeed Philip Jenkins notes that "one of the great strengths of the Bible in African Christianity and one of its dangers... [is] that the Old Testament seems to speak so directly and familiarly to local conditions" (Jenkins, 2006, p.42). The danger comes when the apparent similarities between Old Testament and African culture lead to Christians directly applying what they read to their own life, without careful consideration of the context, which may be what is happening with the respondent who selected the story of Abigail in 1 Samuel as one of her favourite passages, with her reason being, "I learn about how to build a marriage". We shall discuss the issues of interpretation and application in more depth later.

However, though the Old Testament was popular, the majority of people chose New Testament passages. Research in Nigeria found the same, and the reason given for this preference was that the New Testament was "more powerful than the old Testament" referring to the power of Jesus expressed in miracles (Ukpong, 2000, p.590). Conversely, my research found that although some respondents chose New Testament passages because they were about the life of Jesus, this was not the primary reason given (see Table II). This preference may also be affected by practical

reasons as 21% of respondents only possessed a New Testament. Nevertheless, it is clear that the whole canon of Scripture is valued by Tanzanian Christians.

4.5 How the Bible affects us – interpretation and application

4.5.1 Data analysis

A wide variety of themes were suggested for the main message of the Bible (question 23), which I tried to group where possible (Table III). The most common theme that emerged (mentioned by nearly one fifth of respondents) related to sin and warning us against it.

Table III What do you think the central message of the Bible is?

Central messages proposed	Number who said this
Stop sinning / shouldn't have sin / warn us not to do bad things	17
Redemption / salvation	13
To come to know God / see God / be close to God	9
Eternal life/ reaching heaven	9
Love / peace	8
To follow the commands of God / do what pleases God	6
Holy Word of God / message of God	6
Make us grow in faith / spiritually	6
To serve God / worship him	5
Mankind should return to God / fear God	4
Be holy / pure like God / have pure heart	3
Death / Resurrection / ascension	2
God is here	2
To depend on God	2

When asked to mention a particular passage that had affected their understanding of God and how to live (question 24), a wide selection of verses were given, including 20 references to the Old Testament, 51 to the New Testament and 12 unspecified, while 10 people did not answer the question at all (a full summary of responses can be found in Appendix E, Table E-V). The most commonly referenced verses were Matthew 5:8 and John 3:16. People's explanations of how the verses touched them varied according to the passage, however a few issues stood out. Many commented on how the verse had changed their life and brought them to salvation while other common themes were related to judgement, salvation or endurance and a number of others mentioned specific things a verse had taught them such as to love others, how to pray and that they should stop drinking. Several people just repeated the main point of the verse, by citing it directly or reiterating in their own words, without offering any particular explanation or interpretation and others gave an explanation that seemed unconnected to the verse signifying

that they had misremembered the biblical reference or misunderstood the verse itself. This suggests that many found it a hard question to answer, thus caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions from the responses given, though simple, confused or blank responses are significant in and of themselves, possibly indicating that they do not normally engage with Scripture in the terms that the question outlined.

A couple of the responses seemed influenced by the health and wealth gospel and demonstrated a direct and physical appropriation of the text for their lives. For example, one man, who attended a Pentecostal Holiness Mission church, cited Deuteronomy 28:1-7, saying it touched him because:

“Kwa kushika ahadi za Mungu kwa sababu nikitii ahadai zake nitafanikia”

By holding onto God's commands, because if I obey his promises I will be successful

Another, a young lady also attending a Pentecostal church (EAGT), was unable to remember the reference but wrote it touched her because:

“Niliguswa sababu niliona Yesu anaponya nikaamua kuokoka ili Yesu aniponye”

I saw that Jesus heals so I decided to be saved so that I could be healed

The discussion of Malachi 3:6-12 in the interview added weight to this observation. In describing what the passage means to us today, the Coordinators talked about faith and actions and doing God's will, commenting that God will bless you if you are obedient. Further enquiry led to a discussion in which one coordinator (A) questioned whether this passage means the same for us under the new covenant, asking whether it is only when we give offerings that we are blessed. He suggested that as Jesus Christ was the ultimate sacrifice, the passage should be applied differently today, that we should give ourselves to God and he will work in our lives. In response, one Coordinator indicated agreement but still went on to say:

“Tutakapokua watii mbele ya Mungu...basi tutabarikiwa”

When we are obedient before God...we will be blessed

This statement was followed by referring back to the verses and the different ways that God will bless us physically. Other Coordinators agreed, adding:

“Hata sisi leo kwenye Agano Jipya, mtu yeyote ambaye akimtii Mungu utaona mafanikio...kwanza...katika familia, au katika mashamba au katika mifugo yake”

Even us today in the New Covenant, if anyone obeys God he will see success...firstly...in the family or on the farm or amongst his livestock

Coordinator (A) responded:

“Watu tumeangalia ustawi wa kimwili zaidi kuliko ustawi wa kiroho”

People look more to bodily/earthly welfare than spiritual welfare

He went on to suggest that we should apply the passage more spiritually today, but seemed to remain the only one truly advocating this interpretation.

A couple of other questionnaire respondents also made interesting statements about Old Testament narratives that touched them. For example, one lady wrote:

"Ilinigusa jinsi Sara alivyo geuka baada ya kuzaa mtoto wake mweyewe na kumfukuza kijakazi na mtoto wake – tuone namna ya kuwafanyia wengine"

It touched me how Sarah changed after getting her own child, how she chased away the servant and her child - we see what to do to others

However, such examples were in the minority, instead the majority of replies were simple but appropriate comments on the verses in question, though it was hard to learn much from them about how Tanzanians interpret the Bible. The interview enabled me to explore this issue further, both through the interpretation and application discussion on Malachi, and through additional questions. When I asked the Coordinators how they decide what a passage means they outlined appropriate hermeneutical steps for a contextual reading, though the discussion on Malachi indicated that these steps are not always applied carefully. They said that they had learned how to do this by working with SIL, as well as from Bible college and books, but that most people are unlikely to read the Bible in this way, unless they have been to Bible college. Instead, they said most people do not know where different books in the Bible are or how to use Bible helps and will appropriate passages directly for themselves. Further, even pastors will read and teach the Bible without touching on the context. One Coordinator explained:

"atakaposimama katika Neno la Mungu huko kusoma pale atasoma tu kama alivyoelewa Neno lakini kufahamu mazingira hata sema wala utamaduni wale watu...hawezi akaelekeza...je sasa kwa wakati huu ina maana gani Neno hili kwa wakati wetu, hawezi akaeleza..."

when he stands to read the Word of God, he will just read it as he understood it, but he won't explain the context, or the culture of those people...he isn't able to explain... asking what does it mean for us today, he isn't able to explain...

4.5.2 Discussion

Although it is difficult to draw conclusions from the limited data on interpretation and application, the questionnaires and interview provide some insight. It appears that the average Tanzanian Christian interprets the Bible simply and directly, but not always contextually or accurately, an observation that finds echoes in the literature. Kenyan theologian, Musimbi Kanyoro, states that "the way we read the Bible in Africa... [is to] appropriate the words of the scriptures and assume that we are the intended audience" and that both in the pews and among the theologically trained, "only a handful of Africans are comfortable with challenging the biblical text by applying the "hermeneutics of suspicion" to it" (Kanyoro, 1999, pp.18-19; cf. section 2.2.5).

The above observations may be partially due to the literal way in which we saw people understand the Bible to be the 'Word of God', for if they believe it to be directly written by God, without a clear understanding of human authorship and all that this affects, then there will naturally be a reluctance to apply critical hermeneutics to a passage or they may simply not see the need. Therefore, others working in Africa have commented that while the Bible may be widely used by African Christians, "what people actually comprehend from their Bible in terms of sufficiency and accuracy of information is at times open to serious question" (Wendland and Hachibamba, 2000, pp.539-540).

It is issues such as these that contribute to the influence of the prosperity gospel in African Christianity, hints of which were seen in the questionnaires and interview, as well as being more extensively reported in the literature (Gifford, 2008). Further, the interview discussion suggests that these interpretive issues are not only applicable to lay Christians, but also to preachers and teachers in churches, therefore affecting whole congregations. However, as a whole the literature on these matters, as well as my own research, remains inadequate and it was hard to determine from my limited findings whether the situation in Tanzania mirrors what others have found (see section 2.2.5).

Nevertheless, discovering what people saw as the main theme of the Bible helps indicate the lens through which Tanzanian Christians may be reading and interpreting the Bible. Indeed, the fact that sin and salvation were the most commonly cited themes was reflected in the way people said the Bible had touched their lives, where we also saw common themes of judgment, sin (sometimes spoken of generally and sometimes about specific sins) and salvation. This is supported by personal observation from workshops conducted in Tanzania, in which participants would frequently interpret and apply passages according to a limited number of concepts, often focusing around those same themes of judgment, sin and salvation.

This limited way of interpreting the Bible, coupled with the number of people who were unable to remember Bible references or did not answer the question, could suggest poor general knowledge of the depth and breadth of the Bible, as well as perhaps reflecting a limited range of teaching from the pulpit or through other means (such as Sunday schools). However, it may also be reflecting something of their worldview, in which salvation or deliverance from the forces of evil is much sought after (Appiah-Kubi, 1987, p.72; cf. Ukpong, 2000, p.592), so that the Ghanaian sociologist, Kofi Appiah-Kubi (1987, p.72), observed, "this traditional notion of God's intervention

to rescue people...is firmly maintained by the African Christians in their experience of the Saviour, or Redeemer.” In addition, the common theme of sin that arose may also reflect a worldview in which God “delivers man from objective evil...but does not atone for human sin” (Appiah-Kubi, 1987, p.73), so that heeding the Bible’s warnings against sin becomes of paramount importance.

That people struggled to recall verses may also be affected by the way in which the Bible has been presented. In oral cultures there is usually a greater ability to recall than in literary cultures, but only when engaging with the information in easy to remember forms, such as songs, poems, stories, parables, proverbs, repetitions and the like (Lenchak, 1994, p.463). Therefore, if the Scriptures are being used and taught in churches following more literary thought-patterns, perhaps as a result of missionary influence (cf. Lovejoy, 2000, p.8), people may fail to absorb or make sense of the information (cf. LCWE & ION, 2005).

4.6 Other findings – using and understanding the Bible more

The final question asked respondents what would help them to understand and use the Bible more. A range of suggestions was given, which I sought to group where possible (Figure 10), though additional answers included faith, Bible colleges, cross-references in the Bible, the catechism and prayer book, one’s brain and the help of a spouse who can read better. However, the most common suggestions were to have books about the Bible (men in particular suggested this, see Appendix E, Figure E-3), to pray and to attend Bible seminars.

In reflecting on how the research may affect the way they work, the Coordinators also mentioned a number of things they had come to realise were important in helping people to use and understand their Bibles. These included teaching people to read, making more books available about the Bible, Bible seminars, using radio stations and training pastors. These findings will not be discussed at this point but have been used to inform the recommendations outlined below.

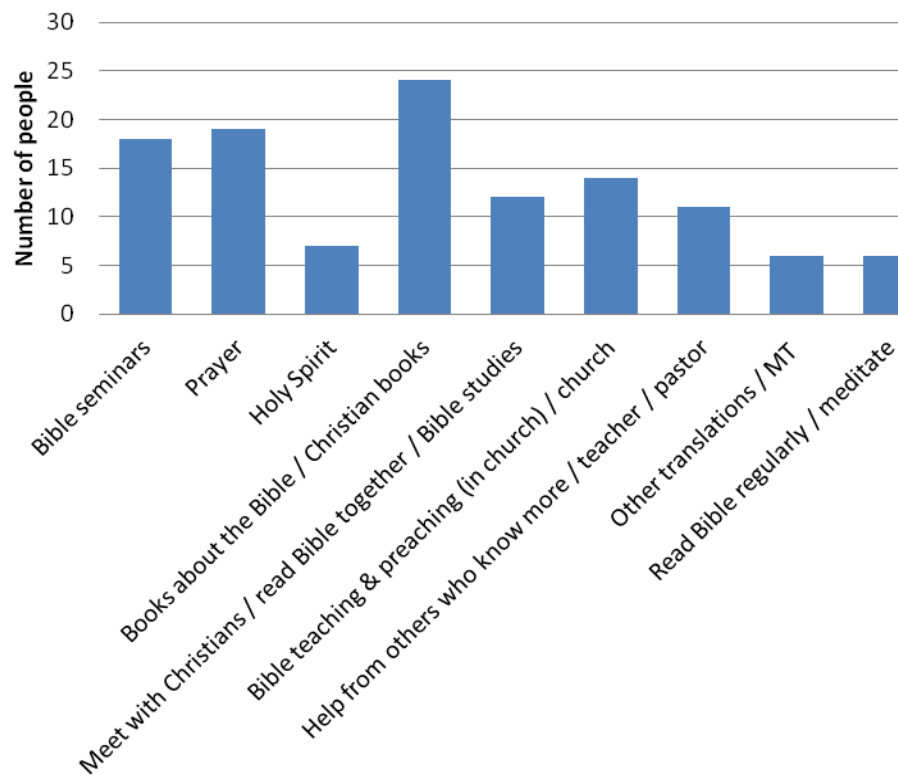


Figure 10 What do you think would help you to use and understand the Bible more?

CHAPTER 5 Recommendations and conclusions

5.1 Recommendations

Although it was beyond the scope of this research to uncover why people may or may not engage with God's Word, the findings from both the primary research and the literature review yet make it possible to offer a number of suggestions for improving the breadth and depth of SE amongst Tanzanians. Although I have separated these ideas out for the sake of clarity, the reality is that an integrated approach is needed.

1) *Make greater use of oral communication strategies*

As the research sample demonstrated a low preference for reading and an increasing amount of literature propounds the importance of using oral communication styles in oral cultures like Tanzania (cf. LCWE & ION, 2005), it is clearly imperative that SE happens primarily at the oral level. Therefore, SU workers, in partnership with churches, should facilitate engagement with the Bible through storying, drama, dance, poetry, proverbs, songs, Scripture memorisation, public readings of Scripture, oral Bible studies and the like (cf. Mbiti, 1994, p.30; Moon, 2010; LCWE & ION, 2005), according to the culture and language preference of the people group in question. In particular, the popularity of singing means that the composition of more songs based clearly on Bible texts would be beneficial. Also, the increasingly popular oral approach of Chronological Bible Storying seems to be a highly appropriate SE tool for discipling oral learners in Tanzania (cf. O'Donnell, 2013b; LCWE & ION, 2005). Finally, as many people do not have the appropriate equipment to use tapes and CDs, SU workers should look to take advantage of other ways of using audio Scriptures such as uploading onto mobile phones, facilitating listening groups or oral Bible studies that use the recorded Scriptures and airing on local radio stations.

2) *Improve literacy skills*

While using oral communication styles is important, people still showed a desire to read the Bible. However, we have seen that literacy ability and general educational achievement are limiting factors to people engaging with the Bible effectively through reading. Therefore, SU workers should partner with literacy workers to improve people's reading skills. This is not just about learning to read, but also about how to critically engage with a piece of literature such as the

Bible, so that people have the confidence and ability to judge whether what they are being taught by preachers lines up with God's Word.

3) *Encourage churches to deeper levels of SE*

As the primary location for the ordinary Tanzanian Christian to engage with Scripture is in the church, more should be invested in helping leaders of all kinds within the church (from pastors to choir masters) to carefully handle the Word of God (see Recommendation 4). Further, oral communication forms should be encouraged within church life (see Recommendation 1) together with the use of people's mother-tongues where appropriate. SU workers should particularly seek to engage with Roman Catholic church leaders to facilitate greater SE amongst their congregants, as there appeared to be particularly low levels of SE in this denomination.

4) *Provide training for pastors / church leaders*

Considering the authority that pastors hold in the Tanzanian context, and the value that people place on preaching and teaching, it is critical that pastors, evangelists and others with teaching responsibility are well trained so that they can teach their congregations effectively. This should involve both partnering with Bible colleges to help them deliver appropriate training and training people on the field. The training should include a number of critical topics:

- Hermeneutics – teach pastors the tools they need to carefully read, analyse, interpret and apply the Bible.
- Scripture Engagement – help pastors to become SE facilitators, enabling the Christians in their churches to engage with the Scriptures for themselves (through means such as Bible studies).
- Oral forms of communication – explore with pastors how they can make more use of oral forms of communication within the life of the church.

5) *Hold Bible seminars / workshops*

Many research participants said that Bible seminars would help them use and understand the Bible and the research also showed SIL workshops to have a positive impact on Scripture engagement. Therefore, SU workers should look for opportunities to partner with churches in holding such events, which should teach practical skills for engaging with the Bible. Based on the findings of the research the following issues might be particularly relevant topics for such seminars:

- What the Bible is – learn what it means that the Bible is the Word of God, written by human authors (and what happens in the Bible translation process).
- How to use your Bible – learn where the books of the Bible are, how to read and interpret the Bible in its historical, cultural and literary context and apply to today and how to use Bible helps.
- Understanding the big picture of the Bible – as Tanzanians exhibit an appreciation for the whole canon of Scripture, and as the whole Bible is useful for equipping God’s children, they should learn how it all fits together as one story, and how to interpret the old covenant in the light of the new.
- Different ways of engaging with the Bible – in a practical way teach SE tools such as meditating on God’s Word and family devotions and demonstrate ways to do this that fit their oral communication preference (such as using stories and songs).

In conducting such seminars the other recommendations should also be considered and integrated, such as using oral learning styles in teaching. The seminars should also include Bible teaching as this is what people will be expecting and it gives an opportunity to model the other things being taught. Further, while cross-denominational seminars are to be encouraged and enhance unity between believers, it may sometimes be necessary or more appropriate to hold seminars for particular denominations according to their particular needs. Further, as variations between men and women were often noted, both in how they viewed the Bible and how they engaged with it, gender specific approaches may also be appropriate. For example, as men were more likely to view the Bible as the Word of God while women often saw it as a guide or teacher, the intellectual approaches most suitable for studying the Bible may differ. Likewise, the desire amongst men for more books to help them understand the Bible suggests a more literary approach may be taken with them than with women.

6) *Make Bibles and Christian books available*

Over a quarter of respondents said that books about the Bible / Christian books help them to understand the Bible better (see Figure 10), however we also saw that some people claim they cannot afford to buy a Bible. Therefore, creative ways of making the Bible available and affordable need to be found. Personal experience shows that buying Bibles and other books from organisations such as Soma Biblia, Kanisa la Biblia and The Bible Society of Tanzania and making

them available at cost price in seminars and workshops is one way that works well, but multiple other methods need to be employed if every person who wants a Bible is to get one.

7) *Different approaches for different groups*

As SU workers develop strategies, they should take into consideration the differences observed between genders, language areas and denominations, as different approaches may be necessary to work effectively with different groups (as seen in Recommendation 5).

8) *Learn from one another*

As SE in some language areas seems to be happening more effectively than in others, SU workers may benefit from regular conversations and even visits to see how they might learn from one another.

9) *Conduct further research*

The research revealed a number of areas that would benefit from closer investigation. Particular priority should be given to looking at how ordinary Africans, as well as pastors, interpret and apply the Bible as there is a dearth of literature on this matter (c.f West, 2000, p.43). It is important that we develop a better understanding of this in order to develop appropriate training. Other areas for investigation may include why people do or do not use the Bible in certain ways and making further comparisons between denominations so as to inform how SU workers might best support SE in these different contexts. Further research into the different views and methods of engagement between genders may also help inform relevant gender specific SE approaches.

5.2 Concluding summary

This dissertation set out to investigate the way that Tanzanians perceive and engage with God's Word through both a review of the literature and primary research amongst Tanzanian Christians in the Mbeya and Iringa regions. The study has shown that Tanzanians perceive God's Word to be very important for growing in the faith, both through individual engagement with it and through the corporate life of the church. However, it is the latter that takes precedence with preaching, prayer meetings, Bible seminars and Christian songs being marked as the most important factors for growing in the faith. Further, most people would describe the Bible as holy and as the Word of God, but what they mean by this is less clear. Some take the description to literally mean that the Bible contains God's words that fell from the sky, while others understand that it was written by

human authors. For a few the book itself also takes on magical dimensions, acting to protect the believer.

However, the research also confirmed my expectation that what people say is not necessarily what they do as actual use of the Bible did not match the apparent importance they gave to it. The first finding of significance in supporting this was that many people did not own a complete Bible and many less owned Scripture portions in their mother-tongue, although the unique language situation in Tanzania noted in the literature review may be affecting MT Scripture engagement. Secondly, only a quarter of respondents said they had read the Bible with their family that week and just over half said they had read the Bible alone, which was much less than the number who said that these activities were important for their faith. This is of concern in the face of repeated biblical exhortations to meditate on God's Word day and night and to teach it to your children, although these commands can be fulfilled in ways beyond personal Bible reading and family devotions.

Indeed, what the research did reveal is the significance of communal aspects of Scripture engagement, in particular the preaching of the Word in church, which was by far the most frequent way that people had engaged with the Bible that week. This finding proved to be particularly important in light of what the literature and interview revealed about the authority ascribed to pastors, for these two realities combined mean that the way most Tanzanian Christians perceive, engage with, interpret and apply the Bible will be primarily shaped according to what their pastors or other preachers tell them. In addition, the above findings together with the low levels of literary engagement amongst the research sample highlighted the oral nature of their culture and the need to use oral communication forms in Scripture Engagement work (from singing to storying), while yet also equipping people to grow in their literacy skills to be able to critically engage with the text.

Further, the study gave partial insight into the way that Tanzanians interpret and apply the Bible in their lives, revealing a somewhat simplistic and limited approach primarily influenced by reading the Bible through a lens of sin, judgement and salvation, which were the main themes that emerged for both the key message of the Bible and how the Bible had touched their lives. The interview in particular, supported by the literature, also identified a literal and physical application of the Bible to today to be prominent, sometimes containing hints of prosperity theology. Although it was beyond the scope of the study to critically engage with this issue, which needs

further research, the findings were sufficient to reveal a need for more training in how to carefully handle and engage with the Word of God, for both church leaders and lay Christians.

The research also revealed often small, but sometimes noteworthy, variations between language areas, church denominations and gender. In general there seemed to be a higher level of Scripture engagement in the Malila and Vwanji language areas, particularly in the mother-tongue but also in Swahili. There were less marked differences between denominations, though those attending Roman Catholic churches consistently used the Bible less than others. Finally, between genders there appeared to be a preference amongst women for listening to God's Word compared with willingness for a more literary engagement with the Bible amongst men. These differences should be used to shape appropriate Scripture Engagement programs for different groups and warrant further investigation in order to do this more effectively.

Finally, several limitations to the study should be considered, perhaps the most important of which was the methodology employed. Due to the constraints of time and finances, the majority of data was gathered through questionnaires that were filled with varying degrees of competence, whereas the matters under investigation would have benefited from more in depth qualitative research. This means, for example, that while the research might have uncovered the ways that people do or do not use the Bible, it was not able to explain *why* this was the case. Further, as sampling was partly convenience based and participants were chosen by SIL employees, some bias will have been introduced, the most likely of which is that a higher percentage of respondents will have been influenced by the work of SIL compared to the population at large. It also appears that the research sample had higher literacy levels than the general population and that participants may have over-reported their use of the Bible.

Despite these limitations, the research adds weight to the emerging body of literature on Scripture engagement in Africa, as well as proving that much of what has already been written also applies to Tanzania. In addition, it brings fresh perspectives to issues that have been little researched, and while findings are based on one particular area of Tanzania, they are likely to apply in a large degree to the rest of the country and even beyond. It is therefore hoped that the insights from the research and the various recommendations given will benefit not just the work of MICP, but also anyone else involved in helping our brothers and sisters in Tanzania and beyond to engage with God's Word. It is my desire and prayer that together we may delight in the law of the Lord and meditate on it day and night, becoming like trees planted by streams of water (Ps. 1).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Map of MICP

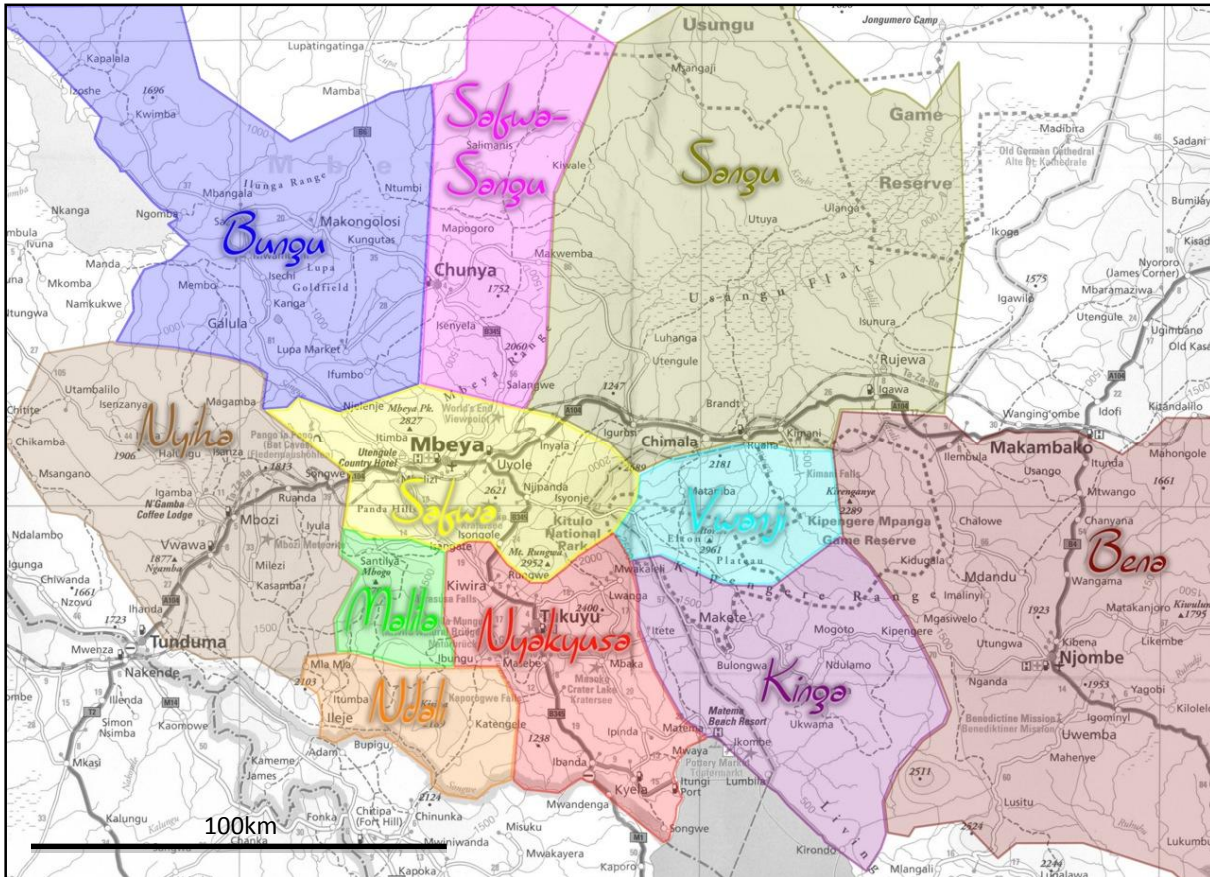


Figure A-1 Map of the Mbeya-Iringa Cluster Project, SIL (adapted from Reise Know-How Verlag, 2003)

Figure A-1 represents the approximate boundaries of the Mbeya-Iringa Cluster Project (locally known as “*Huduma ya kutafsiri Biblia na kuendeleza lugha za asili katika mkoa wa Mbeya na Iringa*”). Scripture Engagement work is active in all of the language areas shown, with the exception of Bungu.

The area covered by MICP is to be found in the south-west of Tanzania (encompassed by the red box in Figure A-2).



Figure A-2 Map of Tanzania (adapted from World and City Maps.com, n.d.)

Appendix B – Questionnaire

Original Swahili version

Mhojaji: _____

Tarehe: _____

Salaam!

Nimesomewa utangulizi na ninakubali kushirikiana kujibu ☐

1. Makazi: _____
2. Jinsia: ☐ Mwanaume ☐ Mwanamke
3. Mwaka wa kuzaliwa: _____
4. Kabila: _____
5. Lugha unazoongea vizuri: _____
6. Ni lugha gani ambazo unaweza kuzisoma? _____
7. Katika wiki mbili zilizopita, umesoma maandiko gani? (K.m. Kitabu cha hadithi, gazeti, Biblia, kitabu cha nyimbo, tenzi n.k.)

8. Kiwango cha elimu: _____
9. Je, shule uliyosoma ilikuwa inamilikiwa na kanisa / kikristo?
Shule ya msingi: ☐ Ndiyo ☐ Hapana
Shule ya sekondari: ☐ Ndiyo ☐ Hapana
10. Wewe ni muumini wa kanisa gani? (Kanisa / dhehebu) _____
 - a. Ni kwa muda gani umehudhuria kanisa hilo? _____
11. Je, umewahi kuhudhuria warsha/semina yoyote ya SIL (MICP)? ☐ Ndiyo ☐ Hapana
Kama ndiyo, semina au warsha gani? (Weka alama ya ✓ sehemu inayofaa)
☐ Kisomo (uandishi, kisomo cha mpito, kisomo cha msingi, uchoraji n.k.)
☐ Mafunzo kwa walimu wa shule ya Jumapili kwa ajili ya watoto
☐ Mafunzo kwa viongozi wa Masomo ya Biblia
☐ Vinginevyo (Andika: _____)

12. Ni vitu gani vilivyo muhimu kwako ili kukua katika imani yako kama Mkristo? (Kwa kila mstari, weka alama ya ✓ kwenye kisanduku kinachofaa)

	Muhimu sana	Muhimu kiasi	Siyo muhimu sana	Sijawahi kufanya/siyo muhimu
Mahubiri kanisani	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Liturgia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nyimbo za kikristo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kuimba kwaya	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kundi la Akina Mama / Baba	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shule ya Jumapili	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ibada ya maombi	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kujisomea Biblia (peke yako)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ibada ya nyumbani (pamoja na familia)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Semina za kujifunza Biblia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kusikiliza Biblia kupitia kanda/CD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ushauri wa mkristo mkubwa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vinginevyo (andika)_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vinginevyo (andika)_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Mtu akikuuliza, “Biblia ni nini?”, ungemuelezea kwa namna gani? (Kwa sentensi fupi)

14. Unazo sehemu gani za Biblia katika Kiswahili? (Weka alama ya ✓ kwa kila jibu linalofaa)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sina yoyote | <input type="checkbox"/> Sehemu / vitabu kadhaa vya Biblia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biblia (nzima) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sehemu / vitabu kadhaa vya Biblia vyenye kanda |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agano Jipya | |

15. Je, unazo sehemu za Biblia (zilizoandikwa au kurekodiwa) katika lugha zingine (Kilugha au Kiingereza)?

- ☐ Ndiyo ☐ Hapana

Kama **ndiyo**, tafadagli uandike:

Lugha: _____ Sehemu za Biblia: _____ Zilizoandikwa ☐ Zilizorekodiwa ☐

Lugha: _____ Sehemu za Biblia: _____ Zilizoandikwa ☐ Zilizorekodiwa ☐

16. Kama **una** Biblia nzima / Agano jipya: Je, ni kwa nini unayo? (Weka alama ya ✓ kwa kila sababu inayofaa)

- ☐ Kitabu cha Biblia kinanilinda
☐ Mchungaji alitumia tuwe nayo
☐ Niliambiwa kwanza habari ya Neno la Mungu
☐ Ni Neno la Mungu kwangu
☐ Ninapenda kuisoma
☐ Nilipewa kama zawadi
☐ Vinginevyo (elezea) _____

17. Kama **huna** Biblia / Agano jipya: Je, ni kwa nini? (Weka alama ya ✓ kwa kila sababu inayofaa)

- ☐ Sitaki Biblia
☐ Biblia ni ngumu sana kuielewa
☐ Biblia ni ngumu kusoma / siwezi kusoma
☐ Ni gharama kununua
☐ Nimepoteza Biblia yangu
☐ Vinginevyo (elezea) _____

18. Umetumia Biblia yako kwa namna gani katika wiki hii? (Kwa kila mstari, weka alama ya ✓ kwenye kisanduku kinachofaa)

	Nimetumia kwa namna hii wiki hii	Nimetumia kwa namna hii wakati mwingine, lakini siyo wiki hii	Situmii kwa namna hiyo
Nimejisomea (peke yangu)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nimeisikiliza (peke yangu)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nimeisoma pamoja na familia yangu	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nimeisikiliza pamoja na familia yangu	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nimeisoma pamoja na marafiki / majirani	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nimeisikiliza pamoja na marafiki / majirani	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nimeitumia katika uinjilisti	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nimeitumia katika maombi	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nimejifunza mistari ya kukariri	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nimeisoma/sikiliza kanisani	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nimeitumia katika nyimbo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vinginevyo (andika)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. Umetumia Biblia (wiki hii) katika lugha gani? (Weka alama ya ✓ kwa kila lugha inayofaa)

- ☐ Kiswahili ☐ Kiingereza ☐ Lugha zingine (andika): _____

20. Ni kwa sababu gani unaisoma / sikiliza Biblia? (Kwa sentensi fupi)

21. Ni sehemu gani za Biblia unazozipenda sana?

22. Ni kwa nini unazipenda sehemu hizo? (Kwa sentensi fupi)

23. Kwa maoni yako, ujumbe mkuu wa Biblia ni nini? (Kwa sentensi fupi)

24. Kuna wakati katika maisha yako ambapo ulisoma mistari fulani ya Biblia iliyokugusa na kubadilisha mawazo yako katika kumfahamu Mungu na kuishi kama mtoto wake? Tafadhali, elezea.

a. Mistari ya Biblia: _____

b. Ilikugusa kwa namna gani na kwa sababu gani: _____

25. Ni nini ambacho kingekusaidia unapoitumia Biblia ili uilewe vizuri zaidi?

Original English version

Interviewer: _____

Date: _____

Greetings!

Tell me about yourself

1. Where do you live? _____
2. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
3. Which year were you born? _____
4. Tribe: _____
5. Languages spoken well: _____
6. Which languages can you read? _____
7. What written material have you read in the past 2 weeks? (E.g. Story book, newspaper, Bible, hymn book etc.)

8. Educational level: _____
9. Did you attend a Christian / church school?

 Primary school: ☐ Yes ☐ No
 Secondary school: ☐ Yes ☐ No
10. What church do you attend? (Specify the denomination) _____

 a. For approximately how long have you attended it? _____
11. Have you attended any SIL/MICP workshops? ☐ Yes ☐ No

 If yes, which kind? (Put a ✓ for as many as apply)
 ☐ Literacy
 ☐ Sunday school
 ☐ Bible study
 ☐ Other (please specify)

Tell me about your faith

12. Which things are important to you in helping you to grow in your faith as a Christian? (For each line put a ✓ in the appropriate box)

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important / never done it
Sermons at church	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Liturgy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian songs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being in a choir	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Akina Mama / Baba group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prayer meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading the Bible on your own	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family devotions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bible seminars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening to an audio Bible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The advice of an older Christian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. If someone asked you, "What is the Bible?", how would you explain it to them? (In a short sentence)

14. What Scripture portions do you own in Swahili? (Put a ✓ in the appropriate boxes)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't have any | <input type="checkbox"/> Portions/individual books of the Bible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Bible | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio Bible portions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Testament | |

15. Do you have Scripture portions (written or audio) in any other languages (local languages or English)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If **yes**, please list:

Language: _____ Scripture portions: _____ Written ☐ Audio ☐

Language: _____ Scripture portions: _____ Written ☐ Audio ☐

16. If you **have** a whole Bible / New Testament: Why do you have it? (Put a ✓ for as many as apply)

- ☐ The book of the Bible protects me
- ☐ Pastor said we should have one
- ☐ I heard the gospel and so I wanted a Bible
- ☐ It is God's Word to me
- ☐ I like to read it
- ☐ I was given it as a gift
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

17. If you **don't have** a Bible / New Testament: Why don't you have one? (Put a ✓ for as many as apply)

- ☐ Don't want a Bible
- ☐ It's too hard to understand
- ☐ It's too hard to read / I can't read
- ☐ It's too expensive
- ☐ I lost my Bible
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

18. How have you used the Bible in the past week?

	Used it this way this week	Use it this way sometimes, but not this week	Never use it this way
Read it on my own	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listen to it on my own	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read it with my family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listen to it with my family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read it with friends / neighbours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listen to it with friends / neighbours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use to evangelise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use in prayer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Memorise verses from it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read / listen to it at church	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In singing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. Which language did you use it in? (Put a ✓ for as many as apply)

- ☐ Swahili ☐ English ☐ Other (please specify): _____

20. Why do you read/listen to the Bible? (In a short sentence)

21. What are your favourite parts of the Bible?

22. Why are these your favourite parts? (In a short sentence)

23. What do you think the central message of the Bible is? (In a short sentence)

24. Is there a time in the past when you read a particular passage and it affected your understanding of God and how to live? Describe.

a. Bible passage: _____

b. How and why it affected you: _____

25. What do you think would help you to use and understand the Bible more?

Appendix C – Interview guide

****They will need Bibles****

Intro

- Welcome them, greetings etc.
- Explain aims of interview: to find out a bit more than I could through the questionnaires and to hear your opinions on the results of the questionnaires and your experiences of conducting the questionnaires.
- Are you happy to take part in this discussion?
- Are you happy for me to record this discussion so that I don't forget anything?
- Please feel free to ask questions at any time. I have some questions, but I want it to be a discussion rather than an interview, so I hope that you can imagine that I am there drinking a soda with you and talking about life!

How they found the research

1. What did you think of this research?
2. Were people willing to answer questions or were there any questions they hesitated to answer (if so, what kind)?
3. Did they normally fill out themselves or did you guide them through the questions?
 - a. Any particular areas they struggled with that you had to give input?
 - b. When people haven't filled in a category on the multiple choice questions (Safwa & Bena) - what is this likely to mean? That they haven't done it?
 - c. What is 'Matamba Christian Community' (type of church?) & Apostles (Mitume), PRT (is that Pentecost Revival)?
4. Did any of the answers surprise you, and in what way?
5. Was there any discussion with them that went beyond the questionnaires? What kinds of things did they say?
6. How true do you think this is: 60% of people in Safwa area can read their MT; 69% of people in Malila area; 36% people in Bena area; 85% people in Vwanji area
 - a. Only 1 person can't read at all - is that representative, or did you try to select people that could read so that they could fill in questionnaire more easily?

Growing in faith – place of the Bible

7. If you think about your own life as a Christian and the answers of others, what things do you think are most important in growing in the faith?
 - a. Would you say any of the things listed are more important than others?
 - i. Questionnaires – the things that got 85% or more were (in the following order):
Preaching in church, Prayer meetings, Bible seminars, Christian songs
8. When people are making decisions about how to live and behave - do you think those decisions will be affected more by what the pastor or preacher says, or by what they read in the Bible, or by something else (what?)? Why?

What the Bible is

9. Most people identified the Bible as 'Neno la Mungu'. What do you think it means that the Bible is 'Neno la Mungu' - what does that mean for you?

10. When we asked why people have a Bible, nearly half of them said that “Kitabu cha Biblia kinanilinda” – what do you think they meant by that?
11. What does it mean that “Niliambiwa kwanza habari ya Neno la Mungu”?

Using the Bible

12. Over 50% said they have read the Bible themselves at home in the past week. Does what they say match your observations?
13. Malila & Vwanji – over half said they have MT Scripture portions, but in Vwanji only 5 of the 14 said they used their MT Bible that week, in Malila 9 out of 13. Why do you think that is the case?

How the Bible affects us – interpretation and application

One thing I would like to understand more is how people understand / interpret (fasiri) the Bible. So I'd like us to look at a couple of passages together.

Malachi 3:6-12 – Breaking covenant by withholding tithes

⁶ 'I the LORD do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. ⁷ Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,' says the LORD Almighty.

'But you ask, "How are we to return?"

⁸ 'Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.

'But you ask, "How are we robbing you?"

'In tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are under a curse – your whole nation – because you are robbing me. ¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,' says the LORD Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. ¹¹ I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,' says the LORD Almighty. ¹² 'Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,' says the LORD Almighty.

14. What do you think this passage says to us today? (Unafikiri inasema nini kwetu sisi leo – ina maana gani kwetu?)
 - a. Why?

A number of people chose Matthew 5:8 as one of their favourite verses...

Matthew 5:8 – Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

15. What do you think this passage means?
 - a. Why?
16. When you read a passage, how do you decide what it means? (Any questions you ask yourself?)
 - a. Do you think this is how other people do it?
 - b. Is this how you used to do it?
 - i. If not, why has your approach changed?

- ii. Has this affected your understanding of the Bible? Any examples of where it has changed your understanding of something you have read?

17. Do you see a difference between what people say they believe and what they do?
 - a. For example, if their child is sick, what would they do?

Final thoughts

18. Did you discover anything that will affect the way you do your work? What and how?
19. When people were asked what would help them to understand the Bible better when they read it – the most common response was to read other books. This surprised me, when comparing it with how little people read. What do you think about this?
 - a. Any other ideas from what they said in answer to that question?
20. Anything you would like to add?

- Thank you 😊
- Pray together for the work
- Send greetings to their families

Appendix D – Written summary of interview

How they found the research

1. What did you think of this research?
 - *They were happy to do it – after looking at it and doing it saw that it was good, it touches every part of our lives, including our spiritual lives.*
 - *Enjoyed hearing people's testimonies (in the latter questions)*
2. Were people willing to answer questions or were there any questions they hesitated to answer (if so, what kind)?
 - *There were some challenges – in some places people weren't immediately ready to respond – they weren't sure why they were asking these questions, wondered if they were hiding something, but after explanations everyone was willing to participate.*
 - *Particular problems with some churches, especially Roman Catholic – people more reluctant.*
 - *Ng⁷ used photos of me to show people.*
 - *It took a lot of time, so people were worried that they wouldn't have time to fill them in.*
 - *Didn't like being asked their year of birth (Bena)*
3. Did they normally fill out themselves or did you guide them through the questions?
 - a. Any particular areas they struggled with that you had to give input?
 - *They struggled with multiple choice questions in tables*
 - *Found Q20 & 23 hard*
 - b. When people haven't filled in a category on the multiple choice questions (Safwa & Bena) - what is this likely to mean? That they haven't done it?
 - *Yes, they haven't done it.*
 - c. K - What is 'Matamba Christian Community' (type of church?) & Apostles (Mitume), PRT (is that Pentecost Revival)?
 - *MCC separated from the Lutheran church in recent years, and are now are independent. They probably resemble Baptist more than liturgical churches or Pentecostal.*
 - *PRT – Pentecostal Revival.*
 - *Mitume – Same kind of category as Last Church / Baptist etc.*
4. Did any of the answers surprise you, and in what way?
 - *Surprised by answers to Q14-16 – have they got a Bible? Surprised that many didn't have any, and that they couldn't understand the question!*
 - *They didn't realise that individual books (e.g. Matthew, Jonah etc on their own) were part of the Bible – they saw them as separate books!*
 - *There was a difference between the books that people said they liked (Q21) and verses that touched them (Q24) – so they may say they liked the OT, but then they quoted a verse from the NT.*

⁷ Ng, N, M and K refer to different Literacy/SU Coordinators

- *One person said that when he wants to read the Bible, he would just open the Bible and see where the pages fell, and say that God had guided him to that bit. Just one person.*
5. Was there any discussion with them that went beyond the questionnaires? What kinds of things did they say?
- *(Vwanji) – Found that many thought they worked as Lutherans. But when he explained they understood better, especially true with RC. So after understanding, they were willing to participate.*
 - *(Safwa) – People thought it was an exam!*
 - *(M) – Q25 – people wanted to know where they will be able to get more books that will help them to understand Bible better when they read. He was able to explain where they were available.*
6. How true do you think this is: 60% of people in Safwa area can read their MT; 69% of people in Malila area; 36% people in Bena area; 85% people in Vwanji area
- *Across the whole area, the % may be lower than is represented by the questionnaires*
- a. Only 1 person can't read at all - is that representative, or did you try to select people that could read so that they could fill in questionnaire more easily?
- *Don't think this is representative – many more than 1% can't read.*

Growing in faith – place of the Bible

7. If you think about your own life as a Christian and the answers of others, what things do you think are most important in growing in the faith?
- a. Would you say any of the things listed are more important than others?
- i. Questionnaires – the things that got 85% or more were (in the following order): Preaching in church, Prayer meetings, Bible seminars, Christian songs
 - *(N) – His family (he came from a religious family); doing family devotions with his family; reading the Bible and memorising it; prayer; his SU work is also helping him*
 - *(M) – When he reads Bible helps, he sees where he hasn't understood/got something yet and sees where he needs to do something else; Stories of Biblical characters / servants of God – compares himself to them to see where he falls short; Talking to his children about spiritual things – how to pray etc; And of course we mustn't forget songs – they enter inside,*
 - *(K) – These days it is in serving others – when he prepares lessons to use for example in church services, Bible studies etc. he learns too.*
 - *(Ng) – Through seminars, as he practices prayer etc.; when he serves he himself is built up; songs.*
8. When people are making decisions about how to live and behave - do you think those decisions will be affected more by what the pastor or preacher says, or by what they read in the Bible, or by something else (what?)? Why?
- *There's people in both groups – those who will look to the Bible and those who will look to the preacher / pastor.*
 - *Many are lazy to read the Bible or don't have a Bible, therefore they will follow more what the pastor says / their leader – they will look to him more than the Bible, they'll follow him. They don't think about how the word of God advises the pastor, they just look at the pastor. They look at the one who leads them.*

- *“Wanaangalia mchungaji Jumapili amesema nini...wanangalia mtu zaidi... watu waliowengi wanaangalia sana yule ambaye anawaongoza...wanasahau kwamba tunayo Biblia ambayo ni mwongozo mkuu...” (Nsolelo) – others agreed.*
- *Many just don’t have a Bible*
- *Others just don’t know the importance of using /reading the Bible. Partly a result of culture – people aren’t used to reading, so they don’t think to do it. People just come home from the shamba, eat and go to sleep.*
- *In order of preference – people like first to see, then listen and finally read.*
- *Those who spread religion in the first place didn’t want people to read the Bible, to just listen to them. That’s only changed in recent years. It was just the leader who had a Bible. Especially true for Roman Catholic, but also for Moravian and Lutheran – they did the same at first.*

What the Bible is

9. Most people identified the Bible as ‘Neno la Mungu’. What do you think it means that the Bible is ‘Neno la Mungu’ - what does that mean for you?
- *People’s understanding differs. Some wouldn’t be able to explain.*
 - *Some might think the Bible just fell from the sky – they can’t really explain why it’s the Word of God. They don’t realise it’s written by humans, rather it came straight from God.*
 - *“Biblia ilidondoka tu hivi...hawezi kueleza vizuri” (K)*
 - *They have just learned to say it’s “The Word of God”.*
 - *Lots of people think this – that it comes directly from God, not written by human authors. Because they’ve learned to say ‘the Word of God’ they don’t believe you if you say it’s written by human authors.*
 - *Probably about 50:50 in those who think it comes directly from God and those who think it was written by humans.*
10. When we asked why people have a Bible, nearly half of them said that “Kitabu cha Biblia kinanilinda” – what do you think they meant by that?
- *Some think that the book itself protects them. They will put it by their head when they sleep to protect them (because they think it is the Word of God, directly). “Analala usiku, anaweza kuweka Biblia kichwani huku” (N) “Na kwa kuwa wanaamini kwamba ilitoka moja kwa moja kwa Mungu wana hakika itamlinda tu akaweka kama mto kichwani” (M)*
 - *Some understand it to mean that when they read the Word of God it removes doubts, and in that sense it protects them.*
11. What does it mean that “Niliambiwa kwanza habari ya Neno la Mungu”?
- *They heard the Word of God, or a pastor teaching about the importance of the Word of God, so they then got one.*

Using the Bible

12. Over 50% said they have read the Bible themselves at home in the past week. Does what they say match your observations?
- *In reality probably less than 50%. Many people will only use on Sundays.*
13. Malila & Vwanji – over half said they have MT Scripture portions, but in Vwanji only 5 of the 14 said they used their MT Bible that week, in Malila 9 out of 13. Why do you think that is the case?
- *Can’t all read their language – they buy the book thinking they will learn later.*

- *They may be motivated at the beginning to use it, but when they see that leaders in the church aren't using the MT translation, they are discouraged and don't carry on with it.*

How the Bible affects us – interpretation and application

One thing I would like to understand more is how people understand / interpret (fasiri) the Bible. So I'd like us to look at a couple of passages together.

Malachi 3:6-12 – Breaking covenant by withholding tithes

⁶ *'I the LORD do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. ⁷ Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,' says the LORD Almighty.*

'But you ask, "How are we to return?"

⁸ *'Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.*

'But you ask, "How are we robbing you?"

'In tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are under a curse – your whole nation – because you are robbing me. ¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,' says the LORD Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. ¹¹ I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,' says the LORD Almighty. ¹² 'Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,' says the LORD Almighty.

14. What do you think this passage says to us today? (Unafikiri inasema nini kwetu sisi leo – ina maana gani kwetu?) Why?

- *God can't be compared with man – what God says will be done, not so for man*
- *We've been deceitful before God, haven't said the truth*
- *It's about how faith and actions compare – what people say isn't the same as what they do*
- *Relationship between us and God – we shouldn't destroy our relationship by not doing the will of God*
- *When God called us he loves us, but he also wants us to do his will*
- *If you obey God, he'll do what you need – he'll bless you if you are obedient*
- *(K) – But does this mean the same in the New Testament? That it's only when we offer we are blessed? Jesus Christ was the sacrifice. So the words of Malachi perhaps mean that we need to give ourselves to God and he will work in our lives.*
 - *(M, in response) – We agree. But when we obey we will be blessed. We'll get all that God intends us to get – in our farms etc.*
 - *(N) – From the OT to the NT, there isn't a great difference in the issue of obedience. Even for us today in the NT, if someone obeys God he will see success – in his family, in his farm and with his animals. See Abraham for example. But it's not because of my brain, it's God alone who does it. It's just like this, if you obey, you will be blessed.*
 - *(K) – People think more about bodily welfare than spiritual welfare ("Watu tumeangalia ustawi wa kimwili zaidi kuliko ustawi wa kiroho"). When it talks about the harvest and bugs, what is it talking about for us? Is it about our farms, or about our spiritual life? If he obeys God, his spiritual life won't be destroyed.*

A number of people chose Matthew 5:8 as one of their favourite verses...

Matthew 5:8 – *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

15. What do you think this passage means? Why?

- *Those who are 'pure' are those who do the will of God – they will see God*
- *Relationship between being pure of heart and knowing God*
- *Word of God purifies our hearts*
- *Seeing God is to see the work of God in our lives every day or, for example, in creation – we see God in these things with the eyes of faith (pure heart)*
- *People will see God, so it is talking about what's ahead. (K)*

16. When you read a passage, how do you decide what it means? (Any questions you ask yourself?)

- *Read whole thing, and maybe some of what comes before, then ask myself what I can understand from it. Might look in other books. Look for foundational things such as the author's aim, times etc. If it's an OT passage, then check against the NT. Also learn through other people.*

a. Do you think this is how other people do it?

- *No, only those who have been to seminars or Bible college*
- *Most people don't do this. Instead they would:*
 - *Even in churches, read it & teach it without thinking about / explaining about the environment and applying it for today ("...siku ya Jumapili...leo ufanye huduma hii, sasa, atakaposimama katika Neno la Mungu huko kusoma pale atasoma tu kama alivyoelewa Neno lakini kufahamu mazingira hatasema wala utamaduni wale watu...hawezi akaelekeza, yeye atasoma Neno kama alivyosoma na atapeleka kwa watu hivyo hivyo, lakini je, kuliza mambo, je sasa kwa wakati huu ina maana gani Neno hili kwa wakati wetu, hawezi akaeleza..." (N))*
 - *People don't know how to use Bible helps*
 - *Don't know where the books of the Bible are*
 - *Malachi – most people would understand that passage as being: you've disobeyed, you need to give offerings to be blessed. They appropriate it directly for themselves.*
 - *Really depends from church to church and the leader's reason for being starting a church/group (for some it's a business, or about miracles and therefore his teaching is able to be different etc. People move churches according to what they want)*
 - *Some see Bible as pastor's book, not for reading themselves – depends on church procedures/styles.*

b. Is this how you used to do it?

i. If not, why has your approach changed?

- *All said that it was through working with SIL mostly that their approach has changed (N also mentioned Bible college, and M mentioned books)*

ii. Has this affected your understanding of the Bible? Any examples of where it has changed your understanding of something you have read?

- *Faith has matured. Thinking has changed.*
- *Learn more through Bible studies than by listening a long talk*
- *(M) – Thought God was one, didn't understand trinity*
- *Camel through eye of a needle – now understand context*

17. Do you see a difference between what people say they believe and what they do?

- a. For example, if their child is sick, what would they do?
 - *Don't do what they say they believe.*
 - *People will go to a local medicine man, but usually as a last resort.*

Final thoughts

18. Did you discover anything that will affect the way you do your work? What and how?

- *Through doing these questionnaires have seen where there are deficiencies. Firstly, thinking about those who can't read, including adults, they can be shown that they can read etc. Secondly, everything in the world is God's, many say they can't afford a Bible, but if they are helped to understand that all is God's they will see it's good to have. Thirdly, need to make more books available and be able to tell pastors where books are available. Also seminars and various teachings should be available.*
- *Many people don't have Bibles, and when interviewed, they want to know where they can get Bibles. (The program of making Bibles available has stopped).*
- *Seminars are really important, and using radio stations.*
- *People really believe their pastors. Therefore the pastors should be taught more so that they can teach their congregations. (Some wouldn't even fill the questionnaires without their pastors' permission). Need seminars etc for pastors – these kinds of seminars have more success.*
- *When it comes to audio means – there is the problem that many people don't have the means to listen to tapes, and especially not CDs, though many can hear radio.*
- *When I asked about CBS, they seemed positive about the idea.*

19. When people were asked what would help them to understand the Bible better when they read it – the most common response was to read other books. This surprised me, when comparing it with how little people read. What do you think about this?

- a. Any other ideas from what they said in answer to that question?
(Didn't ask this)

20. Anything you would like to add?

- *Thanked me for not forgetting them.*
- *Didn't see doing the research as a problem, rather it was helpful.*
- *Want me to go back.*
- *They want the Bibles and other books that we were distributing to made available again.*
- *Were happy to see me – once I left they didn't think it would be possible to see me again.*
- *Closed in prayer together.*

Interview conducted 14th May 2013

Appendix E – Supplementary data

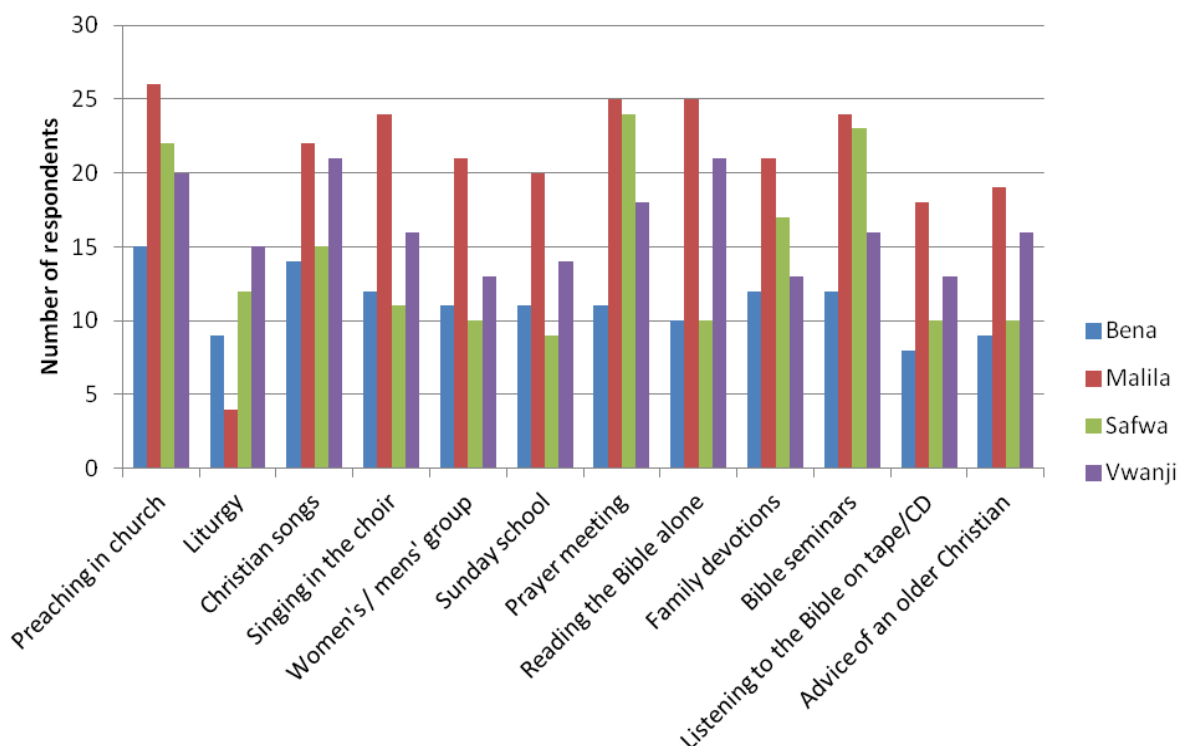


Figure E-1 Factors ranked 'very important' for growing in faith, according to language area

Table E-I Descriptions given for the Bible (in addition to the common responses relating to 'Word of God' or 'Holy writings')

Book of God	Where the holy words of God are available
Breath of God	Book which helps to know God
Word of God breathed by the Holy Spirit	Message of God
Word of God which teaches us so that we may have faith	The Word which teaches us about the things of heaven
It is a compilation of books that contain the teaching of the Word of God	Book which was written by God and which teaches us the word of God
Holy writings that teach life	Is teaching for the Christian
Teaches us the Word of God	The Bible is a walking stick for Christians
Teachings of the Word of God	It is the book of words about God
Holy Word which teaches us the truth about God	It is the Word of God that helps us to grow spiritually
Word of God that takes someone to eternal life	Something which helps us grow spiritually
Words of God written for us to follow	Light to learn the Word of God
The guide in the life of a Christian	To accept God and walk in faith
Guide in the Word of God	Book of prophecy
Guide in the life of mankind	Sword of the Christian
Guides my soul	Spiritual guide and to tell me about sin
Guide	Holy writings which join God and man

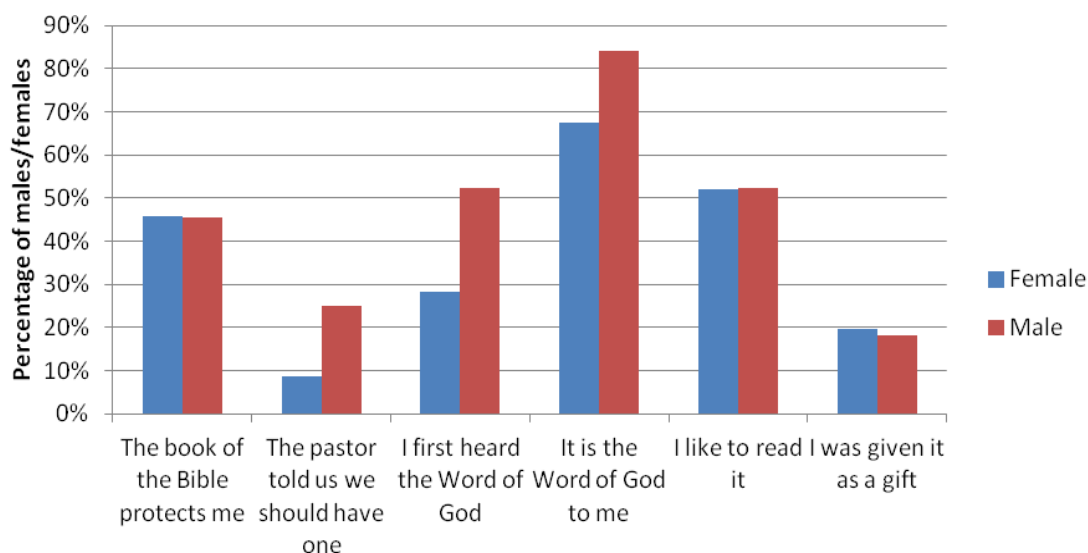


Figure E-2 Reasons selected for having a Bible, according to gender

Table E-II Additional reasons given for having a Bible

To see what others did and know what I should do	Because I can help even others to know about God
I am taught the word of God	So I may teach others the Word of God
I have attended many seminars	Shield and protection to me
Because it's writings with the breath of God	Has lots of things which help me
Inside are the words of eternal life	Helps us in spiritual and worldly life
It teaches me about [eternal] life ⁺	To help me
Word of God that will take me to eternal life	Helps me know how to live
Foundational word of the Christian	To learn, to get guidance
It's the foundation of holy faith	It guides me spiritually
I liked to buy one	Helps me grow spiritually
It's important to have a Bible	Having a Bible is to grow spiritually
I knew the importance of having a Bible	Lamp for my feet
Likes to listen to tapes to learn the language and get the Word of God	It helps me to understand the Word of God

⁺ Word used for 'life' was "*uzima*", which usually refers to eternal life.

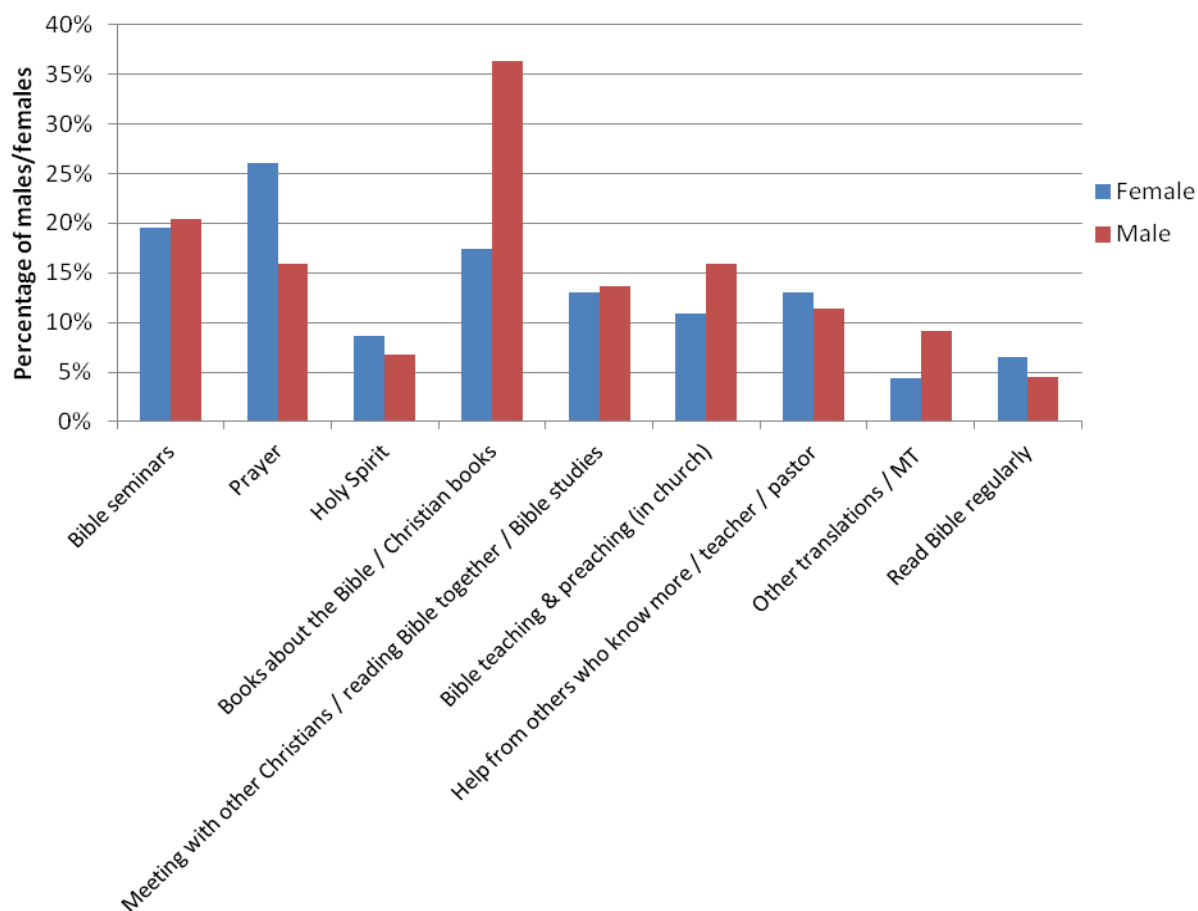


Figure E-3 Suggestions given for what will help them to use and understand the Bible better, according to gender

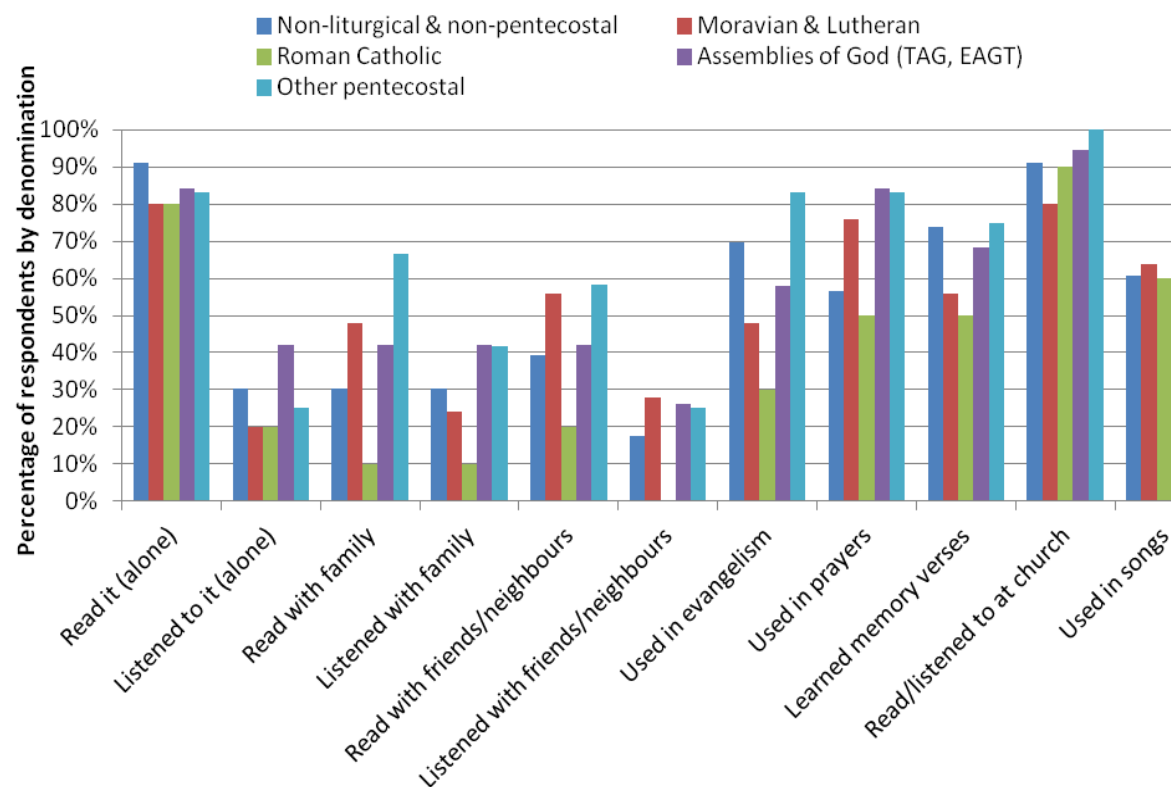


Figure E-4 Used the Bible this way this week or some other time, according to denomination

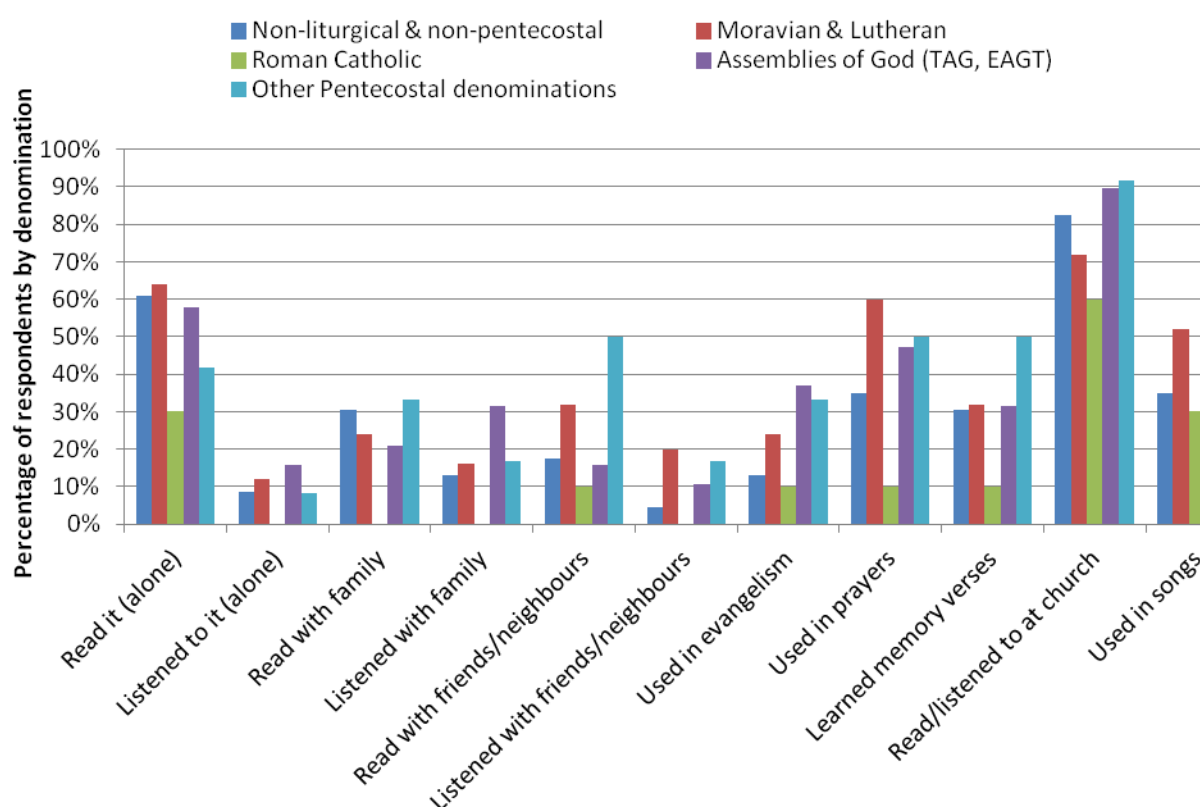


Figure E-5 Used the Bible this way this week, according to denomination

Table E-III Additional reasons given for reading/listening to the Bible

That I might be purified from the evil of sin	Gives me the message of God and guides me
The Bible comforts and encourages me to live this life with peace and love	Bible protects me, teaches me, guides me and directs me in the things of God
It teaches me when I read it draws me near to God in my heart	To get all kinds of knowledge, a guide for life, to draw near to God
I like reading it because it has healing	To learn
I like teaching	To investigate the truth of the Bible
Because I know the work of God	To get help
It teaches me when I read and to draw near to God in my heart	So that I don't backslide in the faith
It awakes me / don't forget myself	Teaches me many things
It enables me to know God and his power in my life	That I remember to do right and not to do wrong
To look for God	Gives me strength to stand against temptation
Because the Word of God is life, salvation, strength and power	To know how to get spiritual life, in order to fight against temptations
Because my life depends on the Word of God	Helps me grow spiritually and teach others
I benefit from reading the Bible	I talk to God
It has bought a relationship with God	I talk with God
It awakes me / don't forget myself	Because I am saved, I am in Jesus
Bible is the life of a Christian, God's Word is the food of life	Because I'm a Christian

Table E-IV Favourite passages and why

Passage	Reason
Whole Bible	They strengthen me on good things that God has done for me
Whole Bible	Because all parts of important and different teaching
Whole Bible	I learn how people lived during war, when there was no peace (OT), and how it is to be under Jesus' reign of redemption
Whole Bible	To know that God is there
Whole Bible	Because every part has a particular message or meaning
Whole Bible	Whole Bible is the word of God and helps us
Whole Bible	I like them because I like to know the writings well
Whole Bible	Because they enable me to know how to serve God
Whole Bible	Teaches me the Word of God
Whole Bible	Teaches me
Whole Bible	Because it teaches me to know God
Whole Bible	Because it is the Word of God and I have been commanded that I shouldn't take from it or add to it
Whole Bible	Whole thing is Word of God
Bits of OT & NT like: Is., Prov., Gen., Lk., Mk., Jn., Jas.	Helps me grow spiritually and informs me about how things were in the past
Gospel and prophecy	These books remind me of many things of the past and to come
Rev., Jn. Ps., Lk.	Images of what's ahead
Rom., Is., Lk., Prov., Ps., Acts	They touch a large part of my life
Deut., gospels	Deut - see how God saved the Israelites, Gospels - learn how Jesus saves us
Gen., Job, Gospels, Acts	Teach me the main acts of God
Prov., Ps., Gospels	I get wisdom and grow in faith
Rev, Job	Explains being patient in trials
Mt., Lk., Jn., Gal., Prov., Gen, Ps.	Get a weighty message, warnings
Prov., Mt.	Gives me great wisdom
Jn., Esth., Job, Ps., Jer.	They encourage me in prayer and to have confidence that I am able.
Mt., Jn., Lk., Acts, Gen.	The help me spiritually and lead me in God's way
Jn., Deut.	Because every time I read, it strengthens me
NT	I like to learn about Jesus Christ after he was born
NT	Because it's good news for me
NT	Because I learn the good news of Jesus' birth
NT	Get the news of how Jesus lived on the earth
NT	When I read I understand better
NT	Because it is written what Jesus did and we are to follow him
NT	Learn all about what Jesus did
NT	Teaches me how to live with salvation
NT	Get news of how Jesus lived on earth
NT	Easy to read
Gospels	They show me the end times and I should prepare myself.
Gospels	Because they talk about the life of people
Gospels, Peter	These parts explain lots about God
Mt. 5:8 (NT and some OT)	Because it tells me blessed are those with a clean heart for they will see God, also to love Jesus and what he did
Mt. 5:8, Is. 53:4-5	To know how I, as a Christian, am to do good.

Mt. 12:33, Jn. 3:16 (gospels)	Comfort me, how to know more the Word of God
Mt., Jn.	Because of the warnings of Jesus about the end times of the world
Mark	It's about healing, and therefore I too am healed by Jesus
I like the tape of Mark to listen to	I like the bits about the death of Jesus cos it reminds me that he died for us.
Luke	I learn the life of Jesus
Luke	Many times when I open the Bible I pass over other things and come to Luke
Jn 3:16	Strengthen me spiritually
Jn 3:16	How Jesus gave himself for us
Jn. 14:6	Because Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
Jn. 15:1-8	Teaches me that I am the branch, Jesus is the trunk and God is the farmer
Parables of Jesus	Helps me understand the teaching
Jn. 1, Eph. 5, 2 Cor.	Because they hold the message of the Word of God
Acts	It explains how they acted
Acts	Because the story of the disciples is like mine so it is easy to identify with them
Acts	When Jesus was teaching people
Acts 9:36	It shows me to be faithful, obedient, to be a giver, to have wisdom
Paul's letters	Because they teach me to be patient in suffering
Rom. 3:23	It shows me that, wow, I live by his grace
Rom. 12:1-2	Because I am the temple of God
Jas., Mk., Mt.	They encourage and make me strong in Jesus Christ.
Gospels, Timothy	In the gospels I get a guide for my life, Timothy - it says drink a little wine for your stomach.
Lk., Mt., Rev.	They build
Revelation	Teaches us how the last days will be
Mt. 7, Phil. 4	Promise of God in those words
OT	If you follow the laws in these books you will be very blessed, for example if you give a whole tithe like those people did they were very blessed in the herds etc.
OT	They change how I used to act and make me new (OT laws are clear)
Ex. 2:11	Cos it teaches me that God is everywhere
Ex., Ps.	Help me to understand that God is able to give me victory over my temptations
Deut.	They remind me of the commandments of God
Deut., Num.	Because it reminds me of the history of the people of Israel and history
Stuff about the last days	I like how I will be later
Daniel	Cos of the courage of Daniel
Ps. 116:1	God hears me
Books of the prophets	Because every time I read them I see how what was prophesied is fulfilled
Books of the prophets	They explain the events that we see now
Gen., Ex., Jonah	To understand the Word of God better
Jonah, Ruth	Teach good things
Haggai	It's about serving God and building his house
Parts that talk about salvation	Because they explain about Jesus who is the source of salvation for mankind
About Abigail	I learn about how to build a marriage
	It helps us know how to live a Christian life.

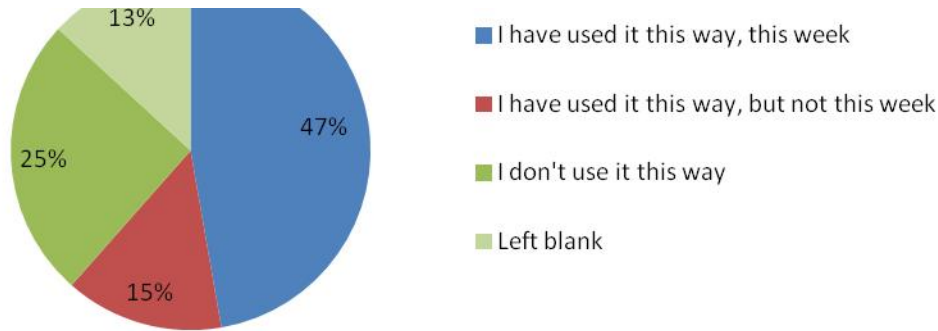


Figure E-6 Percentage of research sample who used Scripture in songs in the past week

Table E-V Passages that have affected respondents' understanding of God or how to live and why

Bible verse	Text (New International Version)	How did it touch you and why?
About Sara		It touched me how Sarah changed after getting her own child, how she chased away the servant and her child - we see what to do to others
Gen. 24:58	<i>So they called Rebekah and asked her, "Will you go with this man?" "I will go," she said.</i>	If someone isn't able to live with his parents, rather he will leave them and have a life with his wife.
Ex. 20		To change my life
Deut. 28:1-7	<i>If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God...</i>	By holding onto God's promises, because if I obey his promises I will be successful
Neh. 1:9	<i>but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.</i>	Nehemiah asked for news about Jerusalem, and when he heard, he asked God to forgive them
Is. 5:11	<i>Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine.</i>	Because I used to drink alcohol, but when I read this I stopped.
Is. 30:27	<i>See, the Name of the Lord comes from afar, with burning anger and dense clouds of smoke; his lips are full of wrath, and his tongue is a consuming fire.</i>	I was caused to fear God because, wow, if you sin God will be angry with you and destroy you
Is. 43:1	<i>But now, this is what the Lord says – he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: 'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.</i>	When I face hard trials, this verse enables me to know God is with me
"He is cursed who trusts in man to be his protection"	<i>*Maybe something like Jer. 17:4-6? 'Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the Lord.</i>	If I trust in man, I won't succeed.
I am the God of all people, is any word too hard for me?	<i>*Maybe Jer. 32:27</i>	Tells me that God is a God of power
Jer. 33:3	<i>'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'</i>	If I call to God in my troubles he will help me and make for me a way where there is no way

Jer. 33:3		Because it says you call, and I will and show you great and difficult things that you don't know
Job 14:1-5	<i>Mortals...are of few days and full of trouble. They spring up like flowers and wither away; like fleeting shadows, they do not endure. Do you fix your eye on them? Will you bring them before you for judgment? Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one! A person's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.</i>	Reminded me that man borne of woman does not have many days to live.
Job		Help to strengthen me in depending on God with giving up
Job		The way he endured suffering encourages me to also endure
Ps. 23:1. Acts 3:1-6	<i>Ps. 23 - The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. Acts 4:1-6 – Lame beggar healed at Gate Beautiful</i>	If I am with God, I will lack nothing
Ps. 23:4	<i>Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.</i>	Because he is my protector and good shepherd
Prov. 19:1	<i>Better the poor whose way of life is blameless than a fool whose lips are perverse.</i>	
Prov. 28:13, Mt. 10:32, Is. 43:25, Heb. 10:25	<i>Prov. 28:13 - Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. Mt. 10:32- Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. Is. 43:25 - I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more. Heb. 10:25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.</i>	If I repent of sin, honestly in front of witnesses, I will succeed; to set apart time every day to learn the Word of God as was the custom of others
Malachi		It's about giving to God - sometimes we don't give to God as he deserves
Matthew		Because it says that he who endures to the end will be saved, which makes me patient so that I might receive eternal life.
Mt. 5:1-10	<i>The Beatitudes</i>	I must be saved and return to God
Mt. 5:8	<i>Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.</i>	If I have a clean heart I will see God
Mt. 5:8		That I might have a clean heart that I might see God
Mt. 5:8		If I have a clean heart I will get to heaven and be welcomed by God
Mt. 5:8		If I follow the things of God I will have a clean heart and in the last days I will be accepted by God
Mt. 5:8		It lets me know that those who love will inherit the kingdom of God
Mt. 5:8		To stop sinning
Mt. 6:8	<i>Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.</i>	Because God knows my needs, what I need
Mt. 6:8		Touched me because I didn't know how to pray
Mt. 7		God is able to help us if we believe in him
Mt. 7:1	<i>Do not judge, or you too will be judged.</i>	If someone sins against me I should be quick to forgive

Mt. 9:6	<i>But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.' So he said to the paralysed man, 'Get up, take your mat and go home.'</i>	Teaches me about giving, to give myself and all I have to the work of God so that I may be blessed.
Mt. 11:28	<i>'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.</i>	I know who called me and Jesus Christ so that I may serve him
Mt. 11:28		I know I was called by God to serve Him
Mt. 12-12-13	<i>How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other.</i>	Jesus healed on the Sabbath and in other ways Jesus answered the questions of the Jews
Mt. 16:5-12	<i>When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. 'Be careful,' Jesus said to them. 'Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.' They discussed this among themselves and said, 'It is because we didn't bring any bread.' Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, 'You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.' ...</i>	To grow in faith
Mt. 20		If I don't use the talents God has given me I will be punished.
Mk. 15:1	<i>Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, made their plans. So they bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate.</i>	He came to save us which is why he died for us
Lk. 9:23-27	<i>'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. 'Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.'</i>	Because I remain behind
Lk. 17:1-4	<i>Jesus said to his disciples: 'Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied round their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble. So watch yourselves. 'If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying "I repent," you must forgive them.'</i>	There are things that I can do which have bad results because of not obeying God.
Jn. 3:1-10	<i>Jesus & Nicodemus – you must be born again</i>	Because of the judgement of God
Jn. 3:16	<i>For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life</i>	For God gave his only son that so that no one should perish but have eternal life
Jn. 3:16		Encourages me spiritually not to give up

Jn. 3:16		Every time I read John, I get peace in my heart. As I read I understand the importance of reading the Bible and knowing the Word of God
Jn. 3:16		I have been made free through the beloved Son, Jesus Christ
Jn. 3:16		That, wow, Jesus gave himself that people may not perish, if someone is lost it's from his own stubbornness.
Jn. 3:16		God has loved us so we must accept him
Jn. 15:4	<i>Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.</i>	True choice of faith is to remain in Jesus
Jn. 17:21	<i>that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.</i>	To have unity of Christ
Romans		I learned that to be someone with a fleshly nature isn't able to speak with the Spirit, so I decided to adjust myself
Rom. 3	<i>God's righteousness upheld; No one is righteous; The righteousness of God through faith.</i>	I must be concerned with God's plan for salvation, because if I don't, I will perish.
Rom. 6:23	<i>For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.</i>	It is because of the love of God that I live. Also that I deserve to be here until today.
Rom. 6:23		To leave sin, because the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord
Rom. 7:24-25	<i>What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!</i>	It reminds me of my regret over this body which makes me do bad things.
Rom. 10:10	<i>For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.</i>	It changed my life.
Rom. 16:16	<i>Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings.</i>	It touched me to believe baptism and to be saved spiritually, also to have authority over other created things
1 Cor. 3:9	<i>For we are fellow workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building</i>	I am able to work with God if I trust in him alone
1 Cor. 13:1-7	<i>Love passage</i>	Because one is able to forgive, help and have faith. To do bad isn't possible.
1 Cor. 14:4-5	<i>Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. 5 I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified.</i>	To be changed in character from worldly to more spiritual
Gal. 10:23	<i>*Doesn't exist!! Is it Gal. 1:23? Could it be Gal. 3:28</i>	Taught me to live a life of learning the Word of God together
Eph. 5:2	<i>and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.</i>	It touches me to love others
Eph. 8:	<i>*Doesn't exist!!</i>	Teaches me to use time well.
2 Tim. 3:15-16	<i>and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,</i>	It touches me because it says "and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus"

Heb. 10:25	<i>not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.</i>	It tells me that we should not give up doing the work of God as others did in the past in worshipping God.
James 3:13	<i>Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.</i>	I want to have wisdom about things of earth and heaven
Rev. 3:20	<i>Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.</i>	I didn't have the door opened for me. Later I was very blessed
Rev. 22:12	<i>'Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.</i>	Because after doing good on this earth he will come to pay me according to what I have done
All of Paul's writings		To stop fighting
Be close to God		I came to ask God that he help me be near to him, he shouldn't leave me in times of trouble
Love one another		Want to live with others in love
Repent and believe the Good News		We should not be deceived by the things of this world for they pass away
God says we shouldn't sin		I saw that I was a sinner and went for help to pray the prayer of repentance
Can't quote the verse		How to serve Him, because it's God's command that we serve Him
Forgotten		Love others
Forgotten		I saw that Jesus heals so I decided to be saved so that I could be healed
		Because of how God took me from being a slave to sin I see every reason to serve Him
Forgotten		You shouldn't love God while you are angry with your neighbour, therefore taught to have love for everyone
Forgotten		
Forgotten		About his coming in the last days and that I must make an effort to pray with tiring
Forgotten		I shouldn't do bad things to others, rather I should love them and love God

* My suggestions as the texts respondents gave did not fit