Spiritual Goods and Services as Means of Legitimation by a Pentecostal-Charismatic Female Church Leader in Tanzania

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Abstract

Although men continue to dominate leadership positions, descriptions of Pentecost-Charismatic (PC) churches indicate that, gradually, more women are initiating and acquiring top leadership positions. Using interviews, participant observation, and review of church materials, this paper explores the way a female PC leader, Gertrude Rwakatare of Mountain of Fire Mikocheni B Assemblies of God church in Tanzania, is able to maintain legitimacy through deployment of various spiritual goods and services. The meaning of legitimacy generally describe sources of legitimacy and modes of domination. This article describes various spiritual goods and services that Rwakatare established to suggest and maintain legitimacy. The resources she provides and connections she makes are portrayed using Hero's (2014) categories of services offered. Rwakatare employs symbolic capital of naming and institutional arrangements, and generates trust by performative actions. This female PC leader enhances her popularity by providing solutions that are spiritual, social, and economic. Rwakatare's position is practically explained through the views of congregants, visitors, subordinates and neighbours of her church.

Keywords: Female Pentecostal-Charismatic leaders, Pentecostalism, spiritual services, legitimation, Tanzania

Introduction

This paper investigates how Gertrude Rwakatare[1], a female church leader and founder of Mountain of Fire Mikocheni B Assemblies of God, popularly called *Mlima wa Moto* (Mountain of Fire), legitimises her position. The church is located in urban Dar es Salaam, in Tanzania. Rwakatare achieves legitimation by offering spiritual goods and services with social, spiritual and economic benefits through testimonies of followers and intermediaries, by prophesying achievement of wealth, by using a biography of private enterprise showing her success, by demonstrating special difference in a particular way, using subordinate male church leaders to circumvent gender equality, and doing community outreach. Legitimacy,[2] as used here, does not necessarily mean only the internal means by which an individual actor believes that the action he or she is performing is 'acceptable and justifiable' to themselves, it also considers external need, met by supporting people in the environment (Boulding 1967: 299), in this case, Gertrude Rwakatare's followers and the community the church serves.

In this article, I first present background information, which is followed by methods used to conduct the study. I provide a theoretical explanation of the way religious entrepreneurs market spiritual services as a way of legitimising their positions. Following this section, I use Hero's (2014) categorisation of marketing concepts to delineate issues pertaining to the supply side of the various spiritual services Rwakatare offers. In conclusion, I highlight the strategies Rwakatare is using to maintain legitimacy.

Background

This article relates to findings of a case study on Gertrude Rwakatare, a female church leader of Mountain of Fire Mikocheni B Assemblies of God. The church was chosen because of its wide influence in Dar es Salaam, and beyond.

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[1] This aticle is being published in honour of the memory of Bishop Getrude Rwakatare who died on 20 April, 2020.

[2] The idea of 'legitimacy' used here is derived from Max Weber's 'types of legitimate authority' (1962:75-80), Kenneth Boulding's 'sources of legitimacy' (1967) and Pierre Bourdieu's 'modes of domination' (1990:122-134). See also Mhando *et al.* (2018) with the same perspective.

The church, which was established and is run by a woman, is located in the main urban area of Tanzania. I carried out ethnographic fieldwork for six months, from October 2016 to March 2017. My attempts to arrange a one-to-one session with Rwakatare, the top leader of the church, failed. As I will explain below, my failure to meet her demonstrate her use of institutional arrangements to establish and maintain her legitimacy. To gather data, the researcher resorted to conversations and interviews with other administrators, congregants, and small-business owners neighbouring the church. Furthermore, I attended church services and workshops, reviewed materials about or by/of the church, and used social media to obtain more information about the church. I employed Hero's (2014) categorisation of spiritual goods and services offered by religious entrepreneurs, to illustrate how Gertrude Rwakatare legitimises her position as a leader. The information I collected was analysed in view of what the supply side informs us about the spiritual goods and services marketed, and the self-legitimation of the leader in question.

Therefore, this article intends to answer the following questions: How does Gertrude Rwakatare legitimise her position at Mountain of Fire Mikocheni B Assemblies church? What spiritual services does she deploy? What goods, and what kinds of solutions are offered by the church?

Theoretical Framework

Depending on the requirements of her church members, a religious leader can dispense goods and services that satisfy followers' needs (Bourdieu 1999: 22). Bourdieu (1987) positions 'religious entrepreneurs' in the social-structural context of the 'new petty bourgeoisie', by considering both supply side and demand side arrangements. This article considers the supply side. Weber's theory of charisma (1978) differentiates between the institutionalised and the spiritual aspects of Christianity (Fabian 1971: 4). In response to Weber's definition of religious legitimacy, Bourdieu (1987) divides it into personal charisma and that which arises from institutional or office charisma. Bourdieu's work (1991) on the way religious specialists use symbolic power through the 'esoteric market', with new types of 'treatment for body and soul' (1992:223) links well with how church leaders provide various spiritual services, goods, and solutions in an attempt to ensure legitimacy. Religious authority 'depends on the ability of the institutions that possess it to make known (legitimacy) to those who are excluded from it' (Bourdieu 1991: 25).

In this study, Rwakatare, through her church, circumvents the dominant patriarchal hierarchy, which is fundamental to religious pursuit in Tanzania. If couples take leadership roles in Pentecostal-Charismatic (PC) churches, the husband is usually the senior pastor, while the wife fills a junior pastoral position, or assists with other activities in the church, for instance, as a member of the choir, teaching Sunday school and/or acting as women's group leader. Nevertheless, it has been noted that, gradually, women are establishing churches and filling the most senior positions (Mhando, Maseno, Mtata & Senga 2018).

In order to legitimise her position, the leader has to strive to achieve a degree of monopoly and be competitive in offering services, to distinguish yourself from other religious providers (Redden 2016: 232). This view sees church affiliation as a matter of choice for followers, who choose the various services they wish to receive. Religion is viewed as market-like (Stark & Finke 2000), the 'exposure of multiple consumption options between participants and providers' (Redden 2016: 232). Therefore, people who wish to satisfy their religious needs search for options among various innovative, competitive churches that provide a variety of spiritual goods and services. Religious leaders in any given context have to deploy these goods and services in competing for and in order to monopolise followers and gain legitimacy. This article will contribute to the view that understands the market as involving the 'production of spiritual goods and services as processes intimately tied up with contextual relations and cultural contingencies' (Redden 2016: 236). Individuals give meaning to life in ways shaped by the 'social, cultural, and economic environment in which they live' (Wood & Bunn 2009: 299).

It is important to determine how spiritual goods and services have succeeded in providing religious entrepreneurs with increasing or lasting popularity (Hero 2014). I refer to Hero's work to provide an explanation of how a religious leader deploys religious goods and services, which enables her to acquire a distinct identity, to stand out from the competing mass of suppliers. Although Hero writes about religious leaders from a mainly conceptual point of view, this article utilises ethnographic research data on a female church leader to analyse some of the marketing concepts Hero proposes. Hero proposes three categories of spiritual goods and services: symbolic capital of naming, institutional arrangements, and generating trust by performative actions.

To start with, the symbolic capital of naming places symbolic strat-

strategies at the forefront. Therefore, it involves things that a spiritual entrepreneur who wants to stand out uses to attract consumers' attention (Hero 2014: 79). The brand name needs to be catchy, and must indicate the special service that is being offered in a meaningful way. Moreover, the suppliers and business name must relay positive associations/cognitive identification and differentiation. Religious leaders opt to use concepts 'which hint at their proximity to the social institutions that are recognised as legitimate' (Hero 2014: 79). Thereby, religious leaders reinforce their credibility or integrity to followers, to achieve legitimacy.

Institutional arrangements refer to the structure between religious leaders and their followers. Under institutional arrangements, relationships and regulations assist followers to collaborate, and transform situations of inadequate trust into ones of adequate trust, so that followers are willing to cooperate with the institution. Arrangements include normative rules, which have the potential to impose sanctions. Institutional arrangements also accommodate intermediaries and brokers, such as forums, communal events, and internet platforms. Within the institutional arrangements, long-term relations may develop, leading to a 'reciprocal expectation structure' between religious leaders and followers (Hero 2014: 79).

Finally, regarding generating trust through performative actions, religious leaders communicate directly with followers in order to create an impression of trustworthiness. Performative implies 'the creation of an appearance of trustworthiness, through acts of self-presentation with which the trust-giver tries to persuade the trust-taker of the sincerity of his intention to cooperate' (Beckert 2006: 319). Marketing spiritual services (credence goods) requires sophisticated processes of assuring clients of the trustworthiness of services (Jafari 2014). Trust is 'the expectation of the trust-giver that his one-sided advance concession in the exchange relationship is not exploited by the trust-taker, even though the latter could achieve a higher utility by choosing to defect' (Beckert 2005: 5). Trust can either be fulfilled or violated by a trust-taker; it is identifiable as a social expectation and trust is placed in the trust-taker (Beckert 2006: 319). Religious leaders create trust and loyalty by fitting the portrayal of their own religious biographies with followers' expectations.

Hero's (2014) first and second strategies explained above are observable, non-religious, and service economies. The last strategy, generating of trust by performative trustworthiness, links directly to religion. I agree with Bourdieu (1999), and Boulding (1967), that the process by which religious

leaders seek legitimacy is often a subconscious pursuit. However, in agreement with Mhando *et al.* (2018), I am not suggesting that the female religious leader discussed here, Rwakatare, is cynical, cunning, scheming and unscrupulous actor in the religious field.

Deployment of Spiritual Goods and Services
Biography of a Religious Entrepreneur

Gertrude Rwakatare was born in 1950, and received her calling in the early 1990s. By 1995, she had founded her church, Mountain of Fire Mikocheni B Assemblies of God, a Pentecostal church. After initially using a classroom, the church moved to a building in Mikocheni B, a residential area in the Kinondoni district of the city of Dar es Salaam. In addition to the main church and head office in Mikocheni B, there are five other branches in Dar es Salaam. By 2009, the church had grown, from an estimated of 7 000, to 10,000 members (Dilger 2009: 98). Her followers increased further at her main church and its branches, and followers attended special workshops held at her church grounds. Rwakatare's ministry emphasises material wealth, community development, and spiritual and bodily healing. Dilger (2009) notes that, although the church is identified as a 'church of the rich', members are mainly female, and come from poorer social backgrounds.

Rwakatare owns a group of schools, from nursery to high school, she founded in 2009, and a teachers' college. Initially, the schools were constructed with the support of Christian Working Woman, a United States-based organisation (Dilger 2009). Rwakatare was nominated by the ruling party, Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) through special-seat in parliament for women for the period 2007-2015 and 2017–2020. By entering politics, she is able to interact and mingle with political dignitaries, and to access state resources and other associated benefits. Moreover, being a politician enhances her recognition among followers, and beyond – it promotes her status.

Rwakatare manages and administers the church, schools, and college, which makes her a difficult person to access. Currently, the church provides French and English-language training, and members, especially women, benefit from Rotating and Savings Credit Associations (ROSCAs). One of the church choirs owns *bajajs* (three-wheeler vehicles), which are used to generate income for the church.

At the top on the church's hierarchy is Gertrude Rwakatare herself,

who is referred to as honourable, reverend, doctor, mother, bishop, and senior pastor. Six pastors, four men and two women, assist her. Next down the hierarchy are nine evangelists, followed by six senior elders, and then 29 church elders. In its administration, the church has one male and two female secretaries (one of the latter works for the church, and the other the personal assistant to the bishop, and a female administrator. Pastors and ministers from Tanzania and beyond are invited to preach or teach at main services and other events at the main church, or at other venues in Dar es Salaam.

In addition to her role as a church leader, Rwakatare's accomplishments in entrepreneurship activities are exceptional. Her biography is that of an entrepreneur. She generally spends time in her church office during weekends and, on weekdays, she manages her properties and businesses outside the church in and around Dar es Salaam. One of her male assistants described Rwakatare as a very hard-working leader, a successful entrepreneur, and a model to her subordinates and followers. He explained:

> *You know that today mother is sick, but she does not want the followers to know. She pretends to be okay, attending the service as usual. The truth is that these two weeks have been challenging for her. How can any follower be lazy while you see her manage business and the church events when she is sick? That is why she has successful business and many followers are working hard hoping to be like her.*

Her successful entrepreneurship, and commitment to her church leadership position, is implicit in her physical display of affluence, through her dress. Her display of status is vivid, as she is always dressed expensively, in striking, colourful clothes. As she enters and leaves church, she is escorted by some of her well-off church members (also dressed in dazzling clothes), subordinate pastors, church elders, and male bodyguards (dressed in formal suits and wearing dark glasses), carrying belongings for her.

At the end of the church service, she is escorted out to her office, which is big, and furnished expensively. She takes up her seat, located in the front centre of her office, with guests sitting closer to the door and to the side. One guest after the next approaches her, kneeling or sitting on a chair facing her, as she listens to each of them. Close to the door are her assistants, who receive guests as they enter, and serve them with soft drinks. Her bodyguards stand outside the front door of her office. This arrangement displays her high

representational status in the leadership of the church symbolically. Not everyone can visit her office, as only privileged followers and guests are welcome here. One day, as I was talking to a female follower whom I had met several times during my attendance of church events, she informed me tiredly that she was waiting for the assistant pastor, as she could not see the bishop at her office. She said,

> *I have to wait for pastor Johnson [pseudonym]. He promised to meet me today and pray for me. I cannot leave the church vicinity before he comes. I have no transport allowance to return home. He will give me money after prayers. I cannot see the bishop, she has power and has to deal with bigger issues for the church. I have tried several times to see her, unsuccessfully. The mother is powerful and I get her blessings while in church service. When I have issues during the week there are pastors to assist.*

Upon hearing her narrative, I compared it to mine: After several endeavours to meet the bishop I had still not had success. I ended up with audiences with the church secretary, and with other assistants and followers. I realised then that my failure to secure a meeting was not just because I was an outsider – a researcher, as I always presented myself to her and others. Furthermore, I realised that many followers spent their time in the church vicinity, waiting for an audience of the assistant pastors, and hoping that, one day, they would get an audience with the bishop. I succeeded in seeing her only once, and we spoke briefly on the phone, but I was not granted an audience for an interview. I was informed she is very busy with business, political and church work in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma regions. This inaccessibility portrays Rwakatare's high position relative to the other pastors and church elders, which gives her legitimacy as the top leader of Mountain of Fire Mikocheni B Assemblies of God church.

Furthermore, the property and businesses that she manages privately, known by her followers, provide her with a symbolic advantage, and gives her the respect of her followers. A subordinate pastor justified Rwakatare's wealth while preaching from the pulpit; he said, 'The Almighty Lord will save people from cheap mentality, people will build houses as if they are not going to move out of this world'. The networks she maintains, the size of her office, church and house, and her outfits project the religiosity she 'propagates with strong

connections to self-referential, subjective patterns of interpretations' (Hero 2014: 86).

Her privileged position is also seen in the position she takes up at the pulpit, and the display of material comfort. During the main service, she occupies the front platform. When infants are brought to her for blessing during church services, she remains seated, holds infants, prays, blesses, and openly presents them with money, which is placed on the babies' foreheads. Usually, she presents at least TZS 10,000 (Tanzanian shillings, equivalent to USD 4.4) (this is the largest note in Tanzania). Congregants often offer her gifts in kind and/or money while she is seated in front of the congregation, as a sign of appreciation for prayers and blessings. Such symbols display her power and affluence.

Rwakatare is a PC preacher who insists that God intervenes, and requires immediate action through community service, speaking in tongues, performing spiritual warfare, and healing miracles, and provides economic prosperity. When she takes the stand to preach in church, she does not need hours of preaching and prophesying , as her subordinate or visiting pastors usually do. She uses her time to introduce visiting pastors and guests, and then uses the remaining time for preaching and prophesying. During Sunday services, she preaches that believers can only gain wealth through God, work, and inheritance. In a sermon, she stated that, 'God answers from the things we proclaim for ourselves. He [Jesus] took on the human body so that we may be rich. Greet your neighbour and say 'meet a millionaire'. Congregants then walked around shaking hands, while repeatedly saying to each other, 'Meet a millionaire'. She continued, 'From now, there is no poverty. Be ready to receive blessing. Rich people sit with rich people, those who are spiritual sit with spiritual people'. In another sermon, she explained, 'Repeat out the words I say, for I see the future, for you believers, you will live a financially prosperous life'. The congregants repeated the words she said. Her sermons are accessible on YouTube, Facebook and radio, through online television show, in newsletters, and through digital television.

From the above narratives it emerges that Rwakatare challenges the legitimacy of other leaders who do not accept that thriving is at the core of the Christian gospel (Anderson 2013; Jones & Woodbridge 2011; Koch 2009) – this is a tenet emphasised by the teaching at Mountain of Fire church. However, the aim of this paper is not to support or criticise the prosperity gospel, but to explain that, through Rwakatare's entrepreneurship biography, she deploys

followers' needs for prosperity, linking them to the gospel. Hence, her biography is a means of legitimation.

Her ministry is directed at vulnerable people, of which women are the majority, though her ministry also embraces wealthy people. She asserts her beliefs in eschatology, often preferring to juxtapose 'the already' and 'not yet' wealthy believers. This is demonstrated by 'the already' wealthy taking up the front places in church, receiving special treatment, and being given status and admiration; while those 'not yet' prosperous illustrate the opposite. Rwakatare deploys strategies that sell herself, along with her spiritual goods and services, as model for her products. The religiousness she propagates, with its 'strong connections to self-referential, subjective patterns of interpretation', is her own (Hero 2014: 86). Therefore, mobilising willingness, so that followers cooperate (Beckert 2002), is communicated through a religious narrative of Rwakatare's personal biographical representation.

Institutional Arrangements

Rwakatare's position as an exemplary and model leader of the church is also endorsed by institutional arrangements that structure her relationships with her followers. The structural seating arrangement during church services at Mountain of Fire Mikocheni B Assemblies of God confirms the emphasis given to 'the already' and 'not yet' prosperous believers. When you enter her church for prayers, the way you are received depends on your physical appearance, which projects success or lack of it. Those who have already succeeded economically occupy the front seats, close to the front stage, followed by the less affluent, and, next, poor people, who are the majority and occupy the back seats. When congregants enter the church hallway, those who appear affluent, as perceived by their outfits, offerings, and support of church activities, are received by church elders, who assist by carrying these congregants' bags and other belongings. Church elders escort these people as they walk to the front seats, while those who appear less successful do not receive this reception. Thus, what the prosperity message say about the 'here and now and Christian's immediate future or hope' (Anderson 2013), is confirmed at Mountain of Fire.

When it is time for prayers, wealthy congregants are called up first. Congregants are called to make a prayer offering, popularly called *kupanda mbegu* in Swahili, meaning sowing seeds according to your monetary capacity;

offerings start with those who can give TZS 100 000, then 50 000, then 30 000, then 20 000 to 10 000, then last are those who give less than TZS 10 000 (one USD is equal to about TZS 2 300). In return, prayers for success are given in hierarchical order, with the highest seed sowers receiving more prayers for more blessings and forthcoming success than the next group of seed sowers, who contribute less. The structural seating arrangement indicates congregants' responsibility for seed planting, and communicates a message to followers. Followers who are wealthy, have a greater responsibility to return benefits to the church and community. There is no alternative route to becoming prosperous. Followers have to climb the ladder step by step. Being wealthy does not guarantee that a follower will fulfil a top leadership position, though it does bring a follower closer to benefits obtained through spiritual goods and services.

Due to a long-term affiliation between the church arrangements and followers, members at Mountain of Fire church have various responsibilities bestowed on them. Church members have church cards, they pay tithes, participate in community zone prayers, attend various church services and workshops, and participate in ministries and charitable services to the community. This reciprocal expectation structure is maintained between Rwakatare, her assistants (intermediaries, including singers, followers, visitors, pastors, church elders, evangelistic and the like) and Mountain of Fire church (as an institution). This reciprocal expectation structure does not guarantee elimination of all doubts on trustworthy by some followers who leave the church unsatisfied by the institutional arrangement. What is important, is the way Rwakatare generates trust through the strategies communicated by her actions, and connected directly to religion (Hero 2014).

Another means of legitimation is through intermediaries who acknowledge Rwakatare's authority by praising her and the church at events. The entertaining sermons include Sunday main service, morning glory, and bible study, Monday bible study, Wednesday revival service and fire prayers, Friday night prayer service, and other special events held within and outside the church grounds. Followers remark how the bishop has 'power', and justify the claim through stories of healing, obtaining property, and conquering witches. PC services promote the achievement of material success, positive possibilities in life, prosperity and healing (Asamoah-Gyadu 2000; Tazanu 2016), hence, representing a shift, from saving the soul for the afterlife, to

redeeming this worldly body (Asamoah-Gyadu 2007). Followers are attracted to Rwakatare's aspiration for 'immediate solutions to their problems' (Daswani 2011). As a female singer explained before a performance,

> *Bishop Rwakatare is a powerful healer, and defeater of poverty. She conquers witches, defeats poverty, and awakens talents among us. Lets sing to praise the Lord Almighty for the blessings given to us through Bishop. We will all receive prosperity.*

A female follower testified to have given birth to a baby after a long struggle to fall pregnant. She explained that the 'bishop is power, she is powerful, she is fire. Through her prayers my womb opened and I now have a baby boy after many years of moving from one medical doctor to another, one traditional healer to another, without success'. A male follower testified during a revival workshop that he had received a revelation regarding the powers of Rwakatare. He said,

> *I was struggling for my shop business to flourish and decided to go see a witch doctor for help. That night, as I was sleeping, I found myself climbing a mountain. As I reached the top of mountain I saw Bishop Rwakatare with Juliana [pseudonym for a famous gospel singer] and someone who I could not recognise in white clothes. The one wearing a white cloth, an angel of God, instructed me to come to Mountain of Fire church and see the Bishop and all my problems will be solved.*

A male pastor from Kenya told the congregants during a bible study session, 'When you have money, you will be a leader and gain respect. You will sit among those highly respected people in office, government, and community'. Another male pastor from central Tanzania confirmed Rwakatare's position, by explaining three means of acquiring wealth: work, inheritance, and God. The pastor continued by saying,

> *It is important for people of God to work hard. Laziness is not going to bear any fruit in your life. By prophesy one may become rich. You need to believe and miracles will happen. We all have to work hard so the prophesy for ending poverty in our lives become reality. It is upon*

> *working hard that we can have property to pass on to others. I declare the grace following the bishop to also follow you. Mountain of Fire is highest above all other places. When you are up the mountain the whole of Dar es Salaam is visible. You will receive property, a higher position in office, and your business will expand.*

The above narrative is similar to earlier explanation by Rwakatare's assistant about her being a hard-working leader. Despite being sick, she continued carrying out her church responsibilities, without letting followers notice that she is not well. Moreover, we note narratives validating her legitimacy through an ability to do spiritual and physical healing, enable people to gain wealth, gain leadership and respect, and end poverty.

Rwakatare's legitimation is also achieved through the church's administrative arrangements, which are dominated by male assistants who affirm her link to her followers. Most of her immediate assistants are male pastors (one woman and four men), evangelists (nine men), and senior elders (six men). Usually, Rwakatare manages the most important services, with key backup being provided by male pastors. The female pastor working in the church headquarters mainly leads praise and worship sessions, with some preaching responsibilities. Pastors who visit the church again and again refer to Rwakatare, which reminds congregants that Rwakatare is their leader and pastors are there to support her. These pastors are from within and outside the country, and have outstanding preaching abilities that address the hearts and needs of congregants.

Most of the Assemblies of God churches in Tanzania are administered by men, but the Mountain of Fire church, which is a subdivision of this denomination, is led by a woman. As noted by Mwaura (2008:279) women can be mediums of the Spirit and obtain spiritual presents, just like men can. Mwaura (2008) refers to Asamoah-Gyadu (2000:21) and observes, 'the charismatic ministries do not impose any Levitical or traditional taboos on women. They regard these as being inconsistent with New Testament teaching, particularly with the missionary experiences that followed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts'. Rwakatare being a single mother does not disqualify her from God's anointing, since she has been reformed in Christ. She is pleasing to those who are vulnerable to witchcraft, misfortune, suffering, and economic difficulties. Therefore, one may argue here that there is element of gender in ministry (Mwambura 2008: 280).

The Symbolic Capital of Naming

Another legitimacy of Rwakatare is located in the church's brand name, Mountain of Fire. The brand name links with the church's mission, 'to bring fire of the mission of power of God in people's lives', and to a range of services and revival ministries that are marketed. These services and revival ministries attract guest speakers from within and outside the country, and play a vital role in attracting many followers. The 'Encouragement Hour' is a service aired weekly on television, and 'Shiloh' is a conference conducted annually; furthermore, there are mid- and year-end Cross Over Seminars, and Women Economy Conferences. Usually, attendees of the various events are provided with free transport on buses stationed at various pickup points within Dar es Salaam city. The church's radio station (Praise Power Radio) attracts followers through discussion of topical issues and repeated advertisements for Mountain of Fire Church, which distinguishes it from other Assemblies of God churches. For example, in 2016, Shiloh was held from 4 to 11 December. In 2017, 22-29 January, a seminar was conducted for renewal and blessings for wealth creation. Such events are characterised by instant healing, public exorcisms, performance of miracles, and prophetic promises.

The church has a Facebook page, blog spot, and online television and YouTube channels, with information on workshops, church services, special events, and community development work. Followers are supplied with flyers and brochures, and buy blessed items, such as handkerchiefs, badges, water and oil. One of the advertisements for a Sunday service read, 'Come and receive a car, house, health, plot, trip, permit, job, children, healing, etc. Believe and take action. The storm you experience will end, Jesus will defend you'.

Moreover, the church has different ministries targeting particular members, whether male, female, married, single, youth, and teenagers. There is a group called Women for Christ Alliance, who conduct outreach services to families and communities. These ministries support and facilitate followers and non-followers with specific issues relating to marriage and relationships, provide guidance and solve problems. The ministries also tap into other expertise, beyond religious specialists, to cover topical issues on leadership and management, entrepreneurship development, and language training. Some of the services that are offered generate income for the church. Other social services are for the needy and sick, which establish legitimacy beyond Rwakatare's congregation.

Conclusion

This article described Rwakatare, the leader of Mountain of Fire Mikocheni B Assemblies of God church, who, through supplying spiritual goods and services, legitimises her position. The resources she deploys were analysed using Hero's (2014) categorisation of spiritual goods and services. The first category is generating trust by performative actions, which are communicated through Rwakatare's biographical self-portrayal. Secondly, she provides institutional arrangements that structure the relationship between her and her followers. Lastly, she deploys the symbolic capital of naming through an outstanding brand and concepts that create positive associations. Thus, Rwakatare's legitimacy is achieved through adopting and patenting suitable names, to construct and maintain her reputation. By embracing credible intermediaries, she presents herself to doubtful followers. Moreover, she maintains a strong autobiography, as proof of her capability, legitimacy, authenticity, and conviction regarding what she offers.

Therefore, Rwakatare communicates a religious and entrepreneurial biography that guarantees followers products on the basis of her own, personal career history. Her designation (bishop, honourable, doctor, reverend, and mother) and political and economic positions, generate trust and loyalty from the interface of system and person (Beckert 2002:37).

Rwakatare provides social and economic solutions to her followers and non-followers. These solutions consist of promoting entrepreneurial action, especially among poor women; bailing prisoners; offering employment; and supporting youth and the underprivileged. In particular, she uses her experience as a woman entrepreneur and mother to support and offer solutions. This shows gender difference in her position as the leader of the church, to win acceptance, hence, affecting gender relations in the religious field and community at large.

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