

Table of Contents

Preface	5
Acknowledgments.....	6
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	8
Chapter 1: Introduction	15
1.1 Statement of the Problem and Aim of the Study.....	15
1.2 Method	17
1.2.1 A Short History of IR-VICOBA	18
1.2.2 The Geographical Set-Up of the IR-VICOBA in Rungwe District.....	18
1.3 IR-VICOBA in the ELCT-Konde Diocese	19
1.4 Background and Context.....	21
1.4.1 Liberation in Tanzania.....	21
1.4.2 The Poor in Rural Tanzania and Bible Reading.....	26
1.5 Liberation Theology Perspectives	29
1.6 The Critical Reflection on Praxis	30
1.6.1 The Poor in the Theology of Gutierrez and Sobrino	33
1.6.2 Liberation Theology in the Theology of Gerald West	47
1.7 Sources and Bible Study Participants.....	55
1.8 Organization of the Study.....	55
Chapter 2: Facilitating Participant-Centered Contextual Bible Study with the IR-VICOBA Groups: Methodological Perspective	57
2.1 The Methodology	57
2.2 Why I Chose to Research on Participant-Centered Contextual Bible Study.....	62
2.3 Meeting with the IR-VICOBA Leaders: Meeting Amani IR-VICOBA Leaders in Tukuyu Town	66
2.4 Traveling to Itete: Meeting the Leaders of the Upendo Agape IR-VICOBA Group.....	69

2.5 Meeting with the IR-VICOBA Members Amani	
IR-VICOBA.....	71
2.5.1 Upendo (Agape) IR-VICOBA.....	72
2.6 Research Ethics, Power Dynamics, and Positionality	73
2.7 Facilitation of the Participant-Centered	
Contextual Bible Study in IR-VICOBA Groups	76
2.7.1 The Facilitator's Task During the	
Participant-Centered Bible Study	78
2.8 The Problems Raised Within the IR-VICOBA	
Participant-Centered Contextual Bible Study	79
 Chapter 3: Presenting the IR-VICOBA Members' Reading of	
the Synoptic Gospel Texts and the Poor	83
3.1 Introduction	83
3.2 Discussion of Matthew 5:1-12 by Two Groups of	
IR-VICOBA	86
3.2.1 Participants and Their Discussion on Texts.....	86
3.2.2 Characters Review within the Text	87
3.2.3 The Context Assessment	92
3.2.4 Response of the IR-VICOBA Group Based	
on the Reading of the Beatitudes	96
3.3 The IR-VICOBA Members' Reading Intellectual	
Activity: Mark 10:17-22	98
3.3.1 Introduction.....	98
3.3.2 Character Assessment during the Reading Process	99
3.3.3 The Contextual Assessment.....	101
3.3.4 The Response of the IR-VICOBA Based on	
the Reading Intellectual Activity	105
3.4 Discussion on the Reading Intellectual Activity:	
Luke 16:19-31	107
3.4.1 Introduction.....	107
3.4.2 Character Assessment.....	108
3.4.3 The Contextual Assessment.....	111
3.4.4 The Response of the IR-VICOBA Based on	
the Bible Study Reading Intellectual Activity.....	115
3.5 Conclusion	119
 Chapter 4: Analytical/Thematic Interpretation of the Reading	
of the Synoptic Gospels About the Poor by the	
IR-VICOBA Groups.....	123
4.1 Introduction	123

4.2 Assessment of Characters by the IR-VICOBA	
Members in Their Contextual Bible Study	124
4.2.1 Jesus, the Poor, and the Rich	125
4.2.2 The Downtrodden and the Blessings (Gifts)	128
4.2.3 Classes of People Within the Context:	
The Last Judgment and Serving God Now	132
4.2.4 Jesus, the Giver of Sight to the Blind	133
4.2.5 Jesus, the Announcer of Freedom to Captives	135
4.2.6 Jesus, the Teacher of Knowledge (Good News)	136
4.2.7 Jesus and the Commandments	137
4.3 Contextual Assessment of the IR-VICOBA	
Members in their Participatory Bible Study	139
4.3.1 The Issue of Exploitation and Injustice in	
Society and the World at Large	139
4.3.2 The Rich People, the Use of the Power of	
Money, and the Overriding of Justice	142
4.3.3 Disrespect Among Believers Because of	
Differences in Faith and Social Status	144
4.3.4 The Issue of Gender as the Cause of Disrespect	147
4.3.5 Environmental Degradation and Poverty	148
4.3.6 The Gap Between the Rich and the Poor and	
Business Injustice	152
4.3.7 Lack of Knowledge as a New Blindness in	
the World Today	153
4.4 Conclusion	155

Chapter 5: The Analytical Interpretation of the Reading of the IR-VICOBA Groups: Their Responses Based on

Their Contextual Bible Study	157
5.1 Introduction	157
5.1.1 Self-Reliance and Empowerment	158
5.1.2 The Dominating and Exploitative Nature of	
the Rich People in Society and the World	162
5.1.3 Taking Care of the Needy: The Power of the	
Social Capital	163
5.1.4 True Love Means Serving the Needy Neighbor	165
5.1.5 Loving Wealth More Than Loving God and	
Neighbors Is Sin	165
5.1.6 The Best Use of Resources: Empowering	
Through Teaching	166
5.1.7 Laziness as a Cause of Poverty	168

5.2 Conclusion 169

Chapter 6: The Profile of the IR-VICOBA Members' Bible
Reading in Tanzania: See-Judge-Act 171

6.1 See-Judge-Act 171

6.2 IR-VICOBA Participant Bible Study
 'See-Judge-Act' Is for Liberation 175

6.2.1 The Fight for Economic Justice 178

6.2.2 Social Justice and Gender Inequality in Society 181

6.2.3 The Issue of Ecology and Environment Conservation .. 187

6.2.4 The Issue of Caring for Others: Diaconia by
 the Victims of Poverty 189

6.3 Conclusion 191

Chapter 7: See-Act-Judge: Theological Reflections on the
Reading of the IR-VICOBA Groups 193

7.1 The Theology of Love..... 194

7.2 Christological Approaches..... 195

7.2.1 Jesus, the Empowerer and Liberator 198

7.2.2 Jesus, the Teacher..... 201

7.3 The IR-VICOBA Members' Theology on Poverty 202

7.4 The Theology of Solidarity..... 204

7.5 The Struggle Against Money-Theism..... 206

7.6 Salvation Includes Human and Nonhuman Living Beings.... 208

7.6.1 Enhancing Life 208

7.7 Conclusion 210

Chapter 8: Liberation Theology of the IR-VICOBA Members
and the Tension Between the First and the Second Act 211

8.1 IR-VICOBA Members Do Liberation Theology
 from Below..... 211

8.1.1 The Relationship Between the Text and the
 Bible in the IR-VICOBA Groups 211

8.2 From Local Perspective Liberation Theology to
 the Broad Perspective..... 220

8.3 A Call for Further Research 224

Bibliography 225

Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter from NSD 233

Appendix 2: The Consent Form of the IR-VICOBA Groups 236

Index 238