

The Problem of Dyslexia among East African Children: Calvin's Creatio Imago Dei Imago Christ for Invitational-Inclusive Education, Faith and Life

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Abstract

The spirituality of children can be explained by their being and existential limits. Childhood itself is an open divine mystery. At the center of their spirituality, is their Creatio Imago Dei Imago Christ. This study focuses on dyslexia among children in East Africa. It offers doctrinal position for authentic care. Dyslexia is a pediatric problem, perhaps unrecognized in East Africa, a silent tragedy of gigantic proportion. Dyslexia in children is a learning disorder and/or disability involving difficulty reading and writing due to problems identifying speech sounds and learning how they relate to letters and words (decoding). Dyslexia specifically affects areas of the child's brain that process language. Dyslexia awareness is limited, which is the other added problem. If as Church, we want to be true to ourselves, we better admit not only insufficient parenting-child-educational psychology, but also insufficient educational ethics in East Africa. The Church is chief facilitator to proper knowledge-information-education to parents, doctors, and nurses on handling dyslexia. The dyslexic child is an Imago Dei. If the doctrine of creation is taught properly, we will gain consciousness and increase care for all children. The objectives of the study include to: i) mention the seven types of dyslexia in children: phonological, surface, rapid-automatic-naming, double-deficit, dyscalculia, dysgraphia and, left-right confusion. ii) Avoid generalization: the child is not a general child, cared for from a generalization; a tendency common in East Africa; but instead, the child is a unique being who comes not only with own gifts, talents, possibilities; but also, with difficulties, problems and challenges as well. It is important to address individual child challenges. iii) Renaming: Dyslexia is not a mental illness as many have wrongly held. It is a neurological disorder or problem instead, but people with dyslexia are rather typical when it comes to emotions, learning and social interaction. Stigma attached indeed may lead to a mental illness in the adult life in the future of the child. The method used is Calvin's qualitative Creatio Imago Dei Imago Christ.

Keywords: Child- theology, *Creatio Imago Dei-Imago Christ*, Dyslexia, Ethics, Disability, Medicine, Psychology.

1.0 Introduction

This study focuses on dyslexia among school children in East Africa. It offers doctrinal position for authentic care. To achieve authentic care interdisciplinary approach is needed (Adler, 1930, Calvin, 1960, Jean Piaget, 1965, Erik Erikson, 1963; Schutz, *et al.*, 1972, Urie Bronfenbrenner, 1981 & 2004, Santrock, 2000, Selman, 2003; Snowling, 2008, Santrock, 2013, Bunge, J. Marcia, *et al.* 2021). In seeking to help, children should not be defined by their situations like dyslexics or disabled; but they should be defined by who they are, what they can be and what they can do. Who they are, what they can be, and what they can do is a theological question. Children are an *Imago Dei*, and God has a divine purpose for each child in the world regardless of any situation. Unfortunately, in East Africa, if it happens that the dyslexic is a girl child, the situation is even worse, and she goes her way suffering in silence, only because she is a girl child. A proper philosophy would first of all strike a balance that all children are equal, and important. All children are the same *Imago Dei Imago Christ*. The philosophy of childhood has recently come to be recognized as an area of inquiry analogous to the philosophy of science, the philosophy of history, the philosophy of religion, etc. Philosophical study of related topics like parental rights, duties and responsibilities has flourished in recent years. The philosophy of childhood takes up philosophically interesting subject about childhood, changing concepts over time about childhood and attitudes toward children, theories of cognitive and moral development (Piaget, 1965; Erikson, 1963). Peace and the co-existence of human beings is something serious we need to learn in the 21st century. We have two types of a Church, i) a Church which is ticking in the box for too long, and ii) a Church which is happening. The Church which is happening is prophetic and pilgrimage. It is a Church where orthodox praxis of action is inclusive and alleviates suffering. This is the Heart of the Gospel, or *The Golden Chain* (Parcker, 1993:179, Perkins, 1952:177). Theology begins with admiration (Capon, 1982:163). So orthodox is about worshipful living. What is missing is four-fold: i) first, the doctrine of God and music, ii), early identification and intervention for dyslexia is a contemporary view; iii) interdisciplinary, and multisensory Scientific and psychology research is not encouraged, and iv) ethics, and especially professional ethics for teachers and parents. With ethics we will be able to operate under the five pillars of human existence which are i) *homo sapiens*, *homo ethicus*, *homo aestheticus*, *homo economicus*, and *homo politicus*.

Legally, the term *child* may refer to anyone below the age of majority or some other age limit. The UN defines child as “a human being below the age of 18 years” (UN, 2010)¹. Adolescence is usually determined to be between the onset of puberty and legal adulthood: mostly corresponding to the teenage years (13-19). However, puberty usually begins before the teenage years. Although biologically a child is a human being between the stages of birth to puberty (O’Toole, 2013:345), adolescence is accepted by some cultures as a part of social childhood, because most adolescents are considered minors under the law. The onset of adolescence brings about various physical, psychological and behavioral changes. The end of adolescence and the beginning of adulthood varies by country and by function, and even within a single nation-state or culture there may be different ages at which an individual is considered to be mature enough to be entrusted by society with certain tasks.

¹ General Assembly Resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989.

2.0 Literature review

This literature review examines data and findings of other authors relative to a specified research question or questions. It is just one research methodology that is here-in used to address the problem of dyslexia.

Romanticism is one of the most important historical events of all times which produced good ideas about children. Unlike a lot of what gets called history, romanticism is not a war or a piece of technology or a political event. It refers to the new birth of a new set of ideas. It is about a mindset and a way of feeling. Romanticism began in Western Europe in the mid-18th century, in the work of artists, poets and philosophers. And it subsequently spread all over the world. Changing how millions of people look at nature, children, love, sex, money and work. This was about 1750-1900. We are all now more or less in some aspects of our sensibilities romantics. We love movies, TV programs, smart-phones, computers and many new things. Romanticism is best understood as a reaction to the birth of the modern world. Some of the key features of romanticism include (but not limited to): i) industrialization, ii) urbanization, iii) secularization, and iv) consumerism. What follows, are some of the central moments in the history of romanticism (Davies, 1998, Rüdiger, *et al*, 2015).

In Marais, Paris May 1762 Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau published a book about the raising of children: *Emile or On Education* translated by Alan Bloom. Rousseau contains diatribes against the oppressive world of adults². He praises the natural goodness, spontaneity, and wisdom of little children. It is a point extremely anxious to get mothers to breast-feed their offspring, the first sustained argument for this practice in Western civilization. The world around Rousseau had been growing even more rational, scientific, and technologically based today. It is increasingly sensible, planned, sterile, and bureaucratic. Against all these, Rousseau rightly emphasized the child, the original rebel, the representative of everything that is pure, unschooled, and outside the adult discipline. The child for Rousseau is the seat of creativity and genius. For the first time in Western history, glamour is directed not at the attainment of reason and adult self-control, but at the freedom from tradition and their natural, innocence and the sweetness of children.

We can take *Emile or On Education*, Rousseau's masterpiece on the education and training of the young, as the first in more than many years. The result is a clear, readable, and highly engrossing text that at the same time offers a wholly new sense of the importance and relevance of Rousseau's thought to us. The book relates the structure and themes of the book to the vital preoccupations of our own age, particularly in the field of education, but also more generally to the current concerns about the limits and possibilities of human nature. Thus, *Emile or On Education*, is a long time classic in the history of Western thought and educational theory in the world, becomes something more: a prescription, fresh and dazzling, for the bringing up of autonomous, responsible—that is, truly democratic—human beings. The general weakness of romanticism is that romantics did not believe in God.

Kumburu, A. Salvius wrote in 2011 a book called *The Effectiveness of Short-Term Literacy Skills Intervention on Children at Risk of Reading and Writing Difficulties in Tanzania: A Study of Grade One Children with Dynamic Assessment Approach*. He is very successful in that he addressed his problem of dyslexia without mentioning the term dyslexia. His interest was to create and evaluate an intervention program for Tanzanian children from a

² A diatribe is a forceful and bitter verbal attack against someone of something.

low-income area who are at risk of reading and writing difficulties [dyslexia] (Kumburu, 2011). Kumburu well says that, the learning difficulties, including reading and writing difficulties are likely to be behind many of the common school problems in Tanzania, but [these problems] are not well understood, and research is needed.

Nsanzabiga, 2013 offered a study on “Six Years of Inclusive Education at the University of Rwanda-College of Education: Evaluation and Perspectives” In *Rwanda Journal of Education*, Vols. 2 – Issue 1. He addressed dyslexia as a reading disability or learning disability, and or generally disability. He writes about especially on inclusive education and with regards to students with severe disabilities – (SwSDs). As we have agreed with Cheruiyot *et al*, chances for success in the future are limited for children with disabilities, including dyslexia. Nsanzabiga writes very well on limited and low awareness of staff, staff are not trained, and not informed. Nsanzabiga rightly writes on lack of guidance and counseling as one of the many added problems to the current problem. Nsanzabiga also mentions the problem of testing and diagnosis and diagnostic facilities, inappropriate standards, norms and follow-up mechanisms to support graduates as they join the labor market.

Nsanzabiga successfully writes that:

Statistics from the World Bank reveal that 12% of the global population consists of persons with disabilities - (PwDs), and 186 million of this population comprise of children (Mugenda, 2012). The World Health Organization – (WHO) puts the number to 15% of the world population (World Report on Disability, 2012). Nyirahabiambere (2012) notes a disability prevalence of 5% in Rwanda, and the Rwanda National census reports 446, 453 persons with disabilities aged 5 and above, out of which 221,159 (49.53%) are males and 225,303 (50.47%) are females (Nsanzabiga, 2013:30).

The ‘shortcomings’ with Nsanzabiga’s study include: i) one is left with assumptions that with disabilities he also means dyslexia. It is not seriously clear that for his study dyslexia is included, although from the English word dyslexia the definition disability comes out clearly. ii) In his research aims, his study only is made to pay attention to those who have graduated, but nothing on those who were not successful; this makes his study to forget inclusive education (Nsanzabiga, 2013:36). iii) One would expect from a study like this to see also some more attention is done to trace what would exist in previous levels of Education, where perhaps the broad problem disabilities would include very little about dyslexia so that one does not miss the target of helping (Nsanzabiga, 2013:38). Iv) The study did not recognize that any study of a broad subject called disabilities including dyslexia, would automatically call for an interdisciplinary approach as is the tradition for all cross-cutting problems.

Strengths include: i) beneficiaries of the Inclusive Education (IE) were happy that they are recognized, and something is done about their lives (Nsanzabiga, 2013:39). The study successfully defined Inclusive Education – (IE). ii) The study mentions dyslexia at least (Nsanzabiga, 2013:38). iii) The study referred to experiences from other institutions worldwide (Nsanzabiga, 2013:37). iv) A good research relationship with Kenyatta University in Nairobi validates the study and makes it addressing a problem in East Africa.

Cheruiyot, *et al.*, University College of London, and Nairobi in 2015 wrote *Prevalence of Dyslexia among Children Aged 7 to 9 in Nairobi, Kenya*. The study is very successful in that he managed to write on areas ranging from screening testing or diagnosis, psychological assessment, and clinical evaluation of dyslexia. In their recommendations, they rightly recognized rapid intervention, early identification of children at risk for dyslexia, mentioning screening and assessment to be done in all early years academic programs. Their study was very successful in recommending training to all teachers by the ministry of education in Kenya. It was well said and in good faith that the concern was that children with dyslexia do not lose out during a learning discourse. They were further successful in recommending provision of appropriate reading instruction programs and accommodation for children who are at risk for dyslexia. Our study starts with weakness found in the study.

The study had the following ‘shortcomings’ : i) the window 7-9 is too small and leaves out a lot to be desired. The 3-13 window though now outmoded would have been the best window selection, or the 4-14 windows that replaced the 3-13 windows would have been effective. Child psychology and educational psychology, and perhaps parenting psychology are need as they may help in setting up an agenda for years of children under study. ii) The site was in Nairobi Urban, but the subject has an African application, or at least East Africa. Three more cities of East Africa would have made it apply effectively to the wider population when it comes to generalization of results. iii) The sample under their study was a private school, so they were very much aware that their results may not be easily generalized to a public school, or to schools in Kenya. iv) The study became very much aware that the site being urban Nairobi, results may not be generalized to rural areas. v) They were very much aware that the tests having been conducted in English, results may be biased, although this may or may not sound as a weakness, but it can be mentioned, the study has obvious weaknesses.

The ‘shortcomings’ of the study are as follows: there was failure recognizing dyslexia as an interdisciplinary problem that might welcome the religious, the sociological, and the pastoral attention as there would need a psycho-socio-religious dimension. The dignity of children is perhaps well addressed from a theological ground of *Creatio Imago Dei Imago Christ*. Even the human rights approach for children is grounded in the doctrine creation. There is no link of children in their study to women who come as the mothers of these children, a dimension this study is addressing. There was no mention of families as there could be need for family therapy as homes and families where these children come from. The study creates the glaring gap necessary for the current study.

The strengths are as follows: very successfully indeed the study has thoroughly elucidated the problem of dyslexia very well, that it is a spectrum of disorder with symptoms ranging from mild to severe, and may co-morbid with other learning difficulties such as ADHD, and dyscalculia. When it comes to human learning (Santrock, 2000:184) and human development (Santrock, 2000, pp. 318), by observation, learning process can be classified as normal and abnormal, faster or slow. When it comes to language or thinking and language (Santrock, 2000:252), learning can still be faster or slow according to differences of children in the classroom. Children with dyslexia need noticing, diagnosis, examination, and investigation. Dyslexia is linked with genes, which is why the condition often runs in families. A child is likely to be dyslexic if the parents, siblings, or other family members are dyslexic. The condition stems from differences in parts of the brain that process language. Dyslexia as a disorder present from birth cannot be prevented or cured, but it can be managed with special instructions and support. Early intervention to address reading problems is important. Early

assessment results in better results, especially if done in early years (Eastham, 2021:1). Dyslexia has gone undiagnosed for years in East Africa, and it may remain unrecognized in adulthood (Griggs, 2021). The following are causes, symptoms, and some outlines on what is typical about dyslexia.

Causes of dyslexia include: i) genes and heredity: dyslexia often runs in families. About 40 percent of siblings of people with dyslexia also struggle with reading. As many as 49% of parents of kids with dyslexia have dyslexia too. Scientists have also found genes linked to problems with reading and processing language. ii) Brain anatomy and activity: brain imaging studies have shown brain differences between people with and without dyslexia. The brain (Crocco, 1927:643) and the brain base (Crocco, 1927:645) display these differences. These differences happen in areas of the brain involved with key reading skills. Those skills are knowing how sounds are represented in words, and recognizing what written words look like; but the brain can change. Studies show that brain activity in people with dyslexia changes after they get proper instruction, mentorship or tutoring.

3.0 Research Methodology

John Calvin argues that God is comprehended in Christ God-child alone until such time as we shall see God as He is. God cannot be known apart from Christ because all thinking about God outside Christ is a vast abyss which immediately swallows up all our thoughts. Since Calvin's theology is based on faith, not on reason, the Christian life is not linked by chains of reasoning but guided by faith in Christ, which is the principal work of the Holy Spirit. The study employs Calvin's *Creatio Imago Dei Imago Christ* doctrine as a methodology to resolve the problem of dyslexia. The central argument this study sets out is that, although children have not featured in all main theologians, they are however silently present in each page of any theological work. **Jesus' famous words**, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belong" (RSV), is often used to underline the importance of *Child Theology*, *Child Evangelism*, *Authentic Care of Children*, *Children's Rights*, *Inclusive Schooling*, *Invitational Education*, and *Child Protection*.

Children take on a 'largely symbolic character' in most of Calvin's writings wherein children are viewed as metaphor for the religious life of adult Christians (Pitkin, 2001, pp. 161). Calvin was not indifferent to children:

[Calvin's] writings, along with the social and ecclesial changes he participated in and sought to effect, bear witness to the importance of children in church and society. Serious implications for children's lives and important assumptions about their nature emerge in his radically theocentric theology of grace, especially in his understandings of providence, covenant, baptism, and human nature as created and fallen. Moreover, when one takes into account the full range of his reforming activity, especially his preparation of ordinances for regulation of the Genevan church (1541), his two catechisms (1537 and 1541-2), and his promotion of school reforms in Geneva, it becomes clear that Calvin, like many intellectuals and reformers of his day, was intensely interested in children and child rearing (Pitkin, 2001:161-2).

Calvinism has been immortalized in the acronym TULIP:

Table 2: TULIP

Calvin's five essential doctrines	
T	Total depravity (despite the ability of people to outwardly uphold the law, there remained an inward distortion which makes all human actions displeasing to God, whether or not they are outwardly good or bad. Even after regeneration, every human action is mixed with evil).
U	Unconditioned election (sovereign election, actions and motives of God prior to His creation of the world).
L	Limited atonement (sometimes called general atonement or universal atonement - is a doctrine in Protestant Christianity that is normally associated with Amyraldism (four-point Calvinism), as well as Arminianism and other non-Calvinist traditions).
I	Irresistible grace (also called effectual grace, effectual calling, or efficacious grace) is a doctrine in Christian theology particularly associated with Calvinism, which teaches that the saving grace of God is effectually applied to those whom he has determined to save (the elect) and, in God's timing, overcomes).
P	Perseverance of the saints (also called preservation of the saints – is a Christian teaching that asserts that once a person is truly 'born of God' or 'regenerated' by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, they will continue doing good works and believing in God until the end of their life).

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Calvin is very careful proof of predestination from the scriptures, his careful doctrine, and his pastoral care seen in his doctrine. *The Institutes of the Christian Religion shows how John Calvin upholds and applies the doctrine of election.* With respect of dyslexics, Calvin exemplified a pastoral use of this doctrine, patterned after Christ and the apostles, who used this doctrine in two chief ways - to humble the proud and to comfort the humble.

The ministry of the Word thus required more than the public exposition of Scripture: it also entailed the declaration and application of God's Word to individual women and men, girls and boys, through the sacraments, corrective discipline, catechetical instruction, household visitations, and spiritual counsel and consolation. As Calvin noted in his liturgy, 'the office of a true and faithful minister is not only to teach the people in public, which is he appointed to do as a pastor, but also, as much as he is able, to admonish, exhort, warn, and console each person individually (Scott, 2012:256).

According to this study, all children are fully human, they have values because God created and creates them. God willed and wills them to be. God made and makes them human beings as partners in the realization of divine purposes. This realization takes into accounts human failures that God redeems and transforms into the divine loving purposes. All children are dependent on and related to God in the following three ways: (i) bestowed with a unique sanctity and dignity, (ii) have sanctity, value and dignity, (iii) but it is their sanctity, dignity and values. The sanctity, dignity and values of children as human beings are given to them as gifts of God during creation.

The best Christians approach to dyslexia is *Creatio Imago Dei Imago Christ*. The Bible teaches that all humans are in some way 'like' God. That, since He made us in His image, there is a 'family resemblance'. What the Bible says is final. *Imago Dei Imago Christ* means a quality, a characteristic, a role. In short, Christians across (and even within) denominations and traditions disagree, and according to Calvin to disagree with the doctrine of God is to measure God in human standards. What Christians do agree on is that God's image grants all humans sanctity, dignity and worth.

4.0 Results and Discussion

It is estimated that about 10% to 20% of any population maybe dyslexic. The *British Dyslexia Association* is the voice for the 10% of the population that are dyslexic. The percent of the population are believed to be dyslexic, but it is still often poorly understood. With the right support, the strengths and talents of dyslexic people can really shine. In the USA, dyslexia is a learning disorder that involves difficulty reading due to problems identifying speech sounds and learning how they relate to letters and words (decoding). Also called reading disability, dyslexia affects areas of the brain that process language. Given what we know now, many famous people may have had dyslexia, including Leonardo da Vinci, Saint Teresa, Napoleon Bona Parte, Winston Churchill, Carl Jung the psychologist, Albert Einstein, and Thomas Edison. Thomas Woodrow Wilson, (1856-1924), 28th President of the United States from 1913-1921 is known to have had a (learning disability) (dyslexia). A lot of dyslexics, like Apple founder Steve Jobs, are reported to be highly intelligent, even gifted. Although there may be some co-occurrence of autism and dyslexia, these are different disorders and they are not closely linked. Autism is a developmental disorder, while dyslexia is a learning disability, which is a term encompassing various struggles with the learning process. In fact, despite reading ability, people who have dyslexia can have a range of intellectual ability. Most have average to above average IQs, and just like the general population, some have superior to very superior scores.

In addition, most of the people with dyslexia in Africa are not aware of it because very little is known about dyslexia in Africa, and both adults and children who maybe dyslexics are struggling in silence. In schools, 1 in 5 students are likely to have dyslexia which means that teachers are much more likely to identify students with the disorder, but to them again, very little is known about the problem. Now, more than ever, we need to create awareness for people to know about dyslexia and other related learning difficulties. Dyslexia is a learning disability in reading and people with dyslexia have trouble reading at a good pace and without mistakes. They may also have a hard time with reading comprehension, spelling, and writing. But these challenges are not a problem with intelligence. Dyslexia is a common condition that makes it hard to read. Kids with dyslexia do not outgrow it, but there are teaching approaches and strategies that can help people with dyslexia improve their reading skills and manage the challenges. People of any age can be tested for dyslexia, although the tests are different for adults than for kids. According to the school context, especially when considering the current student-teacher ratio, especially in public primary schools, there are no chances of even noticing that a child has dyslexia. This study creates awareness for the problem, and acknowledges that the problem exists. Any successful study of children today will perhaps accomplish much with the religious dimension which so far is missing. Dyslexia being an interdisciplinary problem needs the necessary attention from medicine, ecclesiology, psychology and culture. This study is a contribution from systematic theology where few or no efforts in East Africa have been conducted to address children's problems.

There are at least three-fold problems in East Africa concerning children: i) the Church and society in the East African region is not a child-centered church system, ii) psychological assessment is missing in the school systems in East Africa, and iii) guidance and counseling is also insufficient in East Africa. Parents, politicians, guardians, teachers, the medical personnel, communities and the general public in East Africa in general need to care for children who must be in one unity of personality (Adler, 1930:28). According to the American Psychological Association, parenting practices around the world share three major goals: ensuring children's health and safety, preparing children for life as productive adults,

and transmitting cultural values (APA, 2018). Some of the said processes is done when the child is at school (Adler, 1930:166). Sound ecclesiology is that which stands in solidarity with children and young people. In the 21st century sound study of children and young people recognize women. This is so because one cannot study children and young people in a vacuum and timeless context. The context for studying children and young people is women. The Church in acting in solidarity with children and young people is to be always reminded of the rapidly changing world. The notion that children are gifts to their parents and therefore gifts to the Church is outmoded and at best redundant today as it reduces the divine purpose in the life of the child. Children and young people are an *Imago Dei* and with a divine purpose, the Church, the family and all professionals are there to keep, direct, supervise what is in the children and young people. Being gifts to the family and to the Church might be a secondary consideration, but these children and young people stand on equal footing with everybody else in God's creation. Lack of child dignity is not the problem for children and young people, but a problem of the adult members of the society generated in their mindset.

The continent of Africa is understood as a 'young continent' because the majority of its citizens are children, young people and women. More than any other region, Africa's children lie at the heart of its demographic and social transition. Almost 47% or more of Africans are children under 18 years of age. In 15 African countries, including the countries of East Africa, more than half of the total populations are children under 18 years of age (*Generation 2030*, 2014, pp. 7). Africa's present and future, therefore, is tied not only to how fairly and justly it treats its children, its young people and also how fairly and justly it treats the mothers of the children and young people.

In 2010, there were 411 million children aged 0-14 years in Africa (155 million children aged 0-4 years and 256 million children aged 5-14 years). By 2030, under the Low fertility variant there will be 486 million (170 million aged 0-4 years and 316 million aged 5-14 years) but 626 million (227 million aged 0-4 years and 399 million aged 5-14 years) under the High fertility variant. By 2050, under the Low fertility variant there will be 520 million children aged 0-14 years (174 million aged 0-4 years and 346 million aged 5-14 years) but 839 million (302 million aged 0-4 years and 537 million aged 5-14 years) under High fertility variant, that is 329 million more ... In both cases, the number of children will continue to increase, but it will increase much faster under the High fertility variant. These differences raise the following question: What are the advantages, if any, of the Low the fertility variant (*Africa 2050 African Demography*, 2010:34-5).

According to Meassick, in their USAID Gender Fact Sheet,

Despite great strides in economic growth and increased women in leadership in the region, significant gender gaps remain. Gender inequality remains a significant impediment to growth and well-being across East Africa. Women face differential barriers in access to markets, capital, training, and technologies; and they are underrepresented in—if not restricted from—decision-making spheres at all levels. This limits them from reaching their full potential and fully contributing to their countries' economies. USAID increases economic empowerment opportunities and closes gender gaps in participation between women and men. Through its programs, USAID links women to access credit, engage in international trade, and access global markets. The regional economies are shifting away from primarily farming economies towards services and industries. However, 96% of women in Burundi, 76% in Kenya, 84% in Rwanda, 71% in Tanzania and 77% in Uganda still work in agriculture. Women's contribution to home and childcare, which is time-consuming, unpaid work,

limits their ability to get paid work. Women's land tenure remains low in many countries. Only 35% in Kenya and Uganda own their own land and 46% in Rwanda (UNCTAD, 2018). Few women have bank or mobile money accounts and even less can borrow money. When women face sexual harassment and violence or they are denied their property rights, inadequate measures exist to protect them.

What this means, if we want to study children and young people, we must first respect women, and treat them with the dignity they deserve, short of this, it will be an empty sound, or voiceless trumpets. Ecclesiology has to be concerned with the doctrines, roles, and functions of the Church, not only especially in relations with the world, but with children as well. The Church today has to be friendly to the children and young people and their mothers. The Church has to be a child-centered Church, and youth centered Church, and a Church with a changed gender narrative. A Church needed to this situation is a Church which clearly contributes to ethics in the public square (Meassick, 2021).

The problems of this study are two-fold: (i) human sin, and (ii) negligence of dyslexics. Human sin is the primary problem which the secondary problem emanates from. In other words, negligence of dyslexics is a problem secondary to the problem of human sin. Children are not less human; all children are created in the image and Likeness of God - *Imago Dei*. From the sin of man, that through original sin, humankind became *privatus boni (deprived of good) and vulneratus in naturalibus* (wounded in their natural human existence, marred in their relationships, including human relations to and with children) and, therefore, humanity is in need of redemption. Sin, that is, deprivation of original holiness and justice, necessitates the use of the doctrine of God as the engine for professional ethics for teachers, educational psychology, and parenting psychology to resolving the problem of negligence of dyslexics in our communities.

Few years ago the 'special needs' umbrella attempted to address the problems, needs and wants of children, but data is still inadequate about children's problems. Way before this, Charles Dickens had tried to fruitlessly spell out the hardships of children. To date, there has been no adequate functioning school-based system of assessment and intervention programs for children with special educational needs in pre-primary and primary schools in East Africa. As it is partially indicated in the introduction above, by definition dyslexia is a general term for disorders that involve difficulty in learning to read or interpret words, letters and symbols, but that does not affect intelligence. It is a learning disorder characterized by difficulty reading due to problems identifying speech, sounds and learning how they relate to letters and words (decoding). It is sometimes called reading disability, as it affects areas of the brain that process language.

Dyslexia is a neurobiological disorder that affects ... all learners with learning difficulties. It is a disorder that cuts across all socio-economic classes and exists in all cultures although the prevalence may vary ... it is identified in childhood and persists through adolescence and adulthood. Failure to identify the disorder early enough and [failure] to identify early intervention, leads learners to struggling with poor academic performance coupled with low self-esteem, emotional trauma, and increased chances of school dropout (Cheruiyot, *et al*, 2015).

It is from the above neurobiological disorder where the classroom teachers or lecturers may observe difficulty behaviors manifesting dyslexia as it will be shown below. And all this is present in East Africa. On potential underlying biological and cognitive aspects of dyslexia, it is also important to recognize how these factors may result in displays of different behaviors

in the classroom. The following table below presents the characteristics that dyslexia people may show at different ages.

Table 1: Dyslexia characteristics over and through development

Development phase	Characteristics of dyslexia
Preschool	Delayed speech Poor expressive language Poor rhyming skills Little interest in learning letters Poor letter-sound knowledge
Early school years	Poor phoneme awareness Poor word attack skills Idiosyncratic spellings Problems copying Slow reading
Middle school years	Poor decoding skills when faced with new words Phonetic spelling Poor reading fluency
Adolescence and adulthood	Slow speed of writing Poor organization and expression in written work

(Adapted from Snowling, 2008).

These characteristics can also be considered to be present for all those experiencing difficulty with literacy, and may be a sign that additional intervention is needed. When using the Nairobi School example, we can generalize results to the East African countries.

5.0 Conclusion

This study recommends a three-fold praxis: i) doctrine of God and music. Calvin's *Imago Dei Imago Christ* is a foundational facilitator of a conducive context where educational psychology, invitational education, inclusive schooling, children rights, child protection and professional ethics are applied well-being of all. Dyslexics are created in the *Image and Likeness of God*, and that they have sanctity and dignity. For Calvin, "the law reflects divine Image of God" (Calvin, 1960:3.21.5). Dyslexics in the framework of *Imago Dei Imago Christ* are children with destiny. ii) Early identification and intervention for dyslexia is very important, and iii) interdisciplinary, and multisensory Scientific and psychology research is encouraged. Research on dyslexia has burgeoned during the past 50 years, and a great deal is now known about its nature, etiology and psychological assessment, but what is not done is: data dissemination, continuing medical education – (CME), continuing education – (CE), special teacher workshops, update workshops on teaching methods, educational psychology, professional ethics for teachers, seminars, and community parenting trainings. The Christian Education Department of the Churches and even the Theological Education by Extensions – (TEE) lag far behind in this educational reality. Evangelism Departments of the Church are artless on dyslexia. African ecclesiology which is *inward looking and too parochial* is losing its usefulness on account of its failures to address scientific problems of the day. Against this

backdrop, it should be possible for educators to recognize the signs which suggest that a child is at risk of reading failure. Such early identification should allow interventions to be implemented before a downward spiral of underachievement, lowered self-esteem and poor motivation sets in. This study with full awareness of the changing nature of the world, recommends new ways of being Church, not only within *the preferential option for and to the poor*, but special needs education. Application of psychological assessments, new proposals for the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual's (DSM-V) definition of dyslexia and proceeds to examine whether children with dyslexia and related literacy difficulties can be identified based on their response to good quality reading instruction (Beach, *et al.*, 2006). This aspiration is not new, it was at the core of the recent independent review on dyslexia for UK government, conducted by Sir Jim Rose (Rose, 2006 & 2009). The review British-centric, advocated a three-tier system beginning with high-quality mainstream teaching delivered to all, proceeding with adaptations and catch-up programs for those 'at risk' and finally individualized teaching for those at greatest need in the United Kingdom. A growing evidence base of effective interventions suggests that this aim could become a reality in East Africa.

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