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Introduction to the Papers and Workshops

Bongani Khoswe

An investigation of how agency, faith and self-reliance intersect to create a survival theology A case study in the context of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia in northern Malawi.

This study explores the role of the church in the socio-economic empowerment of women in Malawi, examining both the contribution of the church and the agency of women themselves in processes of economic empowerment and wellbeing. Drawing on qualitative data from three

congregations of the Church of Central African Presbyterian (CCAP), Synod of Livingstonia, in Northern Malawi, the study investigates women's lived experiences of faith, self-reliance, and socio-economic engagement. The study argues that women in these church spaces have developed "Survival Theologies" in the midst of tough economic climate. "Survival theologies" here refer to the creation of a locus for a holistic approach to socio-economic challenges that the women experience that encouraging agency and the theological meaning making that is enabled in these spaces. The findings from this study reveal that faith and spirituality as important sites through which women negotiate socio-economic challenges. The findings of the study also indicate that the church is a space where these women learn various skills through formal training and in other cases learning from their peers on various issues related to socio-economic wellbeing. The study also highlights some of the constraints that these women experience in these initiatives such as the hostile economic climate in Malawi which makes it difficult for them to engage in small scale businesses and challenges pertaining to gender relations and family life.