Summary of Team Reflections (Dar es Salaam):

At the completion of the Dar es Salaam discussions, Adam and Adriaan reflected on their experience and some key observations.

Key Takeaways:

1. **Language and Participation**: The discussion underscored the importance of conducting conversations in local languages, like Swahili, to improve engagement. Energy levels and participation increased significantly when leaders were able to express themselves in their own language. The use of a professional translator facilitated the flow, but the language barrier still presented challenges for facilitating nuanced conversations.

2. **Internal Divisions Among Leaders**: One notable reflection was the presence of internal ideological divisions among church leaders. A particular participant continually challenged the role of the church in addressing crises, focussing solely on preaching the gospel, which contrasted with others advocating for broader community involvement. This division created tension and limited the collaborative potential of the gathering.

3. **Hierarchy and Influence**: The reflections revealed that hierarchical structures among the church leaders potentially influenced the dynamics of the discussion. Senior leaders exerted a notable influence, leading some participants to withdraw from engaging openly. The influence of higher-ranking individuals shaped the discourse, limiting broader participation.

4. **Political and Religious Sensitivities**: The context of political and religious sensitivities in Dar es Salaam, including concerns about faith-based discrimination and political persecution, played a role in shaping the discussion. These issues likely contributed to participants' hesitancy to share their names or have their contributions recorded, reflecting concerns about security and exposure.

Key Points for Further Reflection:

- **Cultural and Technological Sensitivities**: Understanding the cultural context and sensitivities to modern technologies like AI is crucial in future discussions. Explaining the rationale for using such tools transparently can alleviate concerns.
- **Language as a Tool for Engagement**: Future meetings should prioritise the use of local languages, facilitated by translators familiar with both the research objectives and the local culture. This will foster better participation and ensure that the conversations are more inclusive.
- **Navigating Internal Divisions**: Handling ideological differences among leaders will require careful facilitation. Ensuring that all voices are heard while maintaining the focus of the discussion, will be key to achieving productive outcomes.
- **Hierarchical Dynamics**: Recognising the power dynamics within church leadership and adjusting engagement strategies to include lower-ranking leaders more effectively may enhance the quality of dialogue and collaboration in future gatherings.