

**THE CIVIC AND PUBLIC ROLES OF NEO-PENTECOSTAL
CHURCHES IN KENYA (1970- 2010)**

BY

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Registration No C82/10697/2007

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES, IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

OCTOBER, 2014

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University or any other award. All sources have been acknowledged and cited in full

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DEDICATION

To my late, mother Margaret Ntari Parsitau for inspiring me to be my best and for her love and support throughout my academic journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to acknowledge all those who made this study possible. First, I acknowledge the intellectual support of my supervisors Prof. Philomena Njeri Mwaura and Dr. Zacharia Wanakacha Samita of Kenyatta University.

Secondly, I would like to thank the University of Edinburgh (Centre for African Studies-CAS) for offering me three months Visiting Research Fellowship in which I carried out extensive research and literature review for the study.

I am equally grateful to the University of Cambridge (CAS) that awarded me a six months Visiting Research Fellowship. My six months residency at Wolfson College exposed me to innovative research in my area of expertise.

Thirdly, special thanks to my mentors: Prof Afe Adogame of University of Edinburgh, UK and Prof Elias Bongmba of Rice University, USA for offering new perspectives on this study. Special thanks also go to my friends Ishola Williams, PAC Kapsoot, J.O ole Seriani for their moral support.

Fourthly, leaders and members of JIAM, MMC and FEM who generously gave up time to fill out questionnaires and grant me interviews during fieldwork brought this study to life. Thank you all. Lastly but not least, am profoundly grateful to my children Grace Naiserian and John-Osteen Lemayian for their love and patience throughout this long journey.

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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMS

African Instituted Churches, (AICs) are churches founded by Africans in their quests for religious independence from mission churches. Examples include Legio Maria, African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPC) and the Holy Spirit Church of Africa

Born Again: Theologically, a person who is 'born again' or saved is regenerated or sanctified by an inward feeling of holiness.

Charismatic Christians are members of non-Pentecostal denominations who believe in and practice spiritual gifts. These are normally found within Mainline churches particularly in the older Catholic and Protestant spiritual. Examples of CC include the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement

Charismatic Churches are historically younger Pentecostal, independent and Para church movements, many of which function within non-Pentecostal denominations. They are characterized by their centrality and emphasis on spiritual rebirth, healing, deliverance and exuberant worship.

Charismatic Renewal Movements Charismatic movement is a term used to refer solely to the charismatic renewal within mainline Christianity whether Protestant and Catholic. Examples include the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Groups in Catholic churches

Civic Engagement or civic participation is here defined simply as acts of engaging citizens for the common good whether individually or as a collectively of individuals, organizations or churches in a bid to identify and address issues of public concern

Civil Society refers to the domain of organized social life between the family

and the state, concerned with public or collective goals and needs. For example Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK) and the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK).

Civic Roles: responsibilities of a citizen towards an individual, society, community or organization such as churches or ones' country.

Classical Pentecostal Churches: churches with links to early American and European Pentecostal churches and which stress the importance of speaking in tongues or glossolalia, as evidence of baptism by the Holy Spirit. Examples of classical Pentecostal churches include Pentecostal Assemblies of God, Elim Church, Assemblies of God, and Full Gospel Churches of Kenya and Nairobi Pentecostal Church (NPC).

Crusade: an aspect of evangelistic efforts aimed at promoting through public proclamation of the gospel awareness of and commitment to Jesus Christ. In Kenya, it is characterized by the use of loud musical instruments and attracts large audiences.

Evangelicalism: worldwide movement whose history dates from the early 18th Century and whose origins lie in Great Britain and the United States. Evangelicals believe that God reveals himself/herself primarily through the text of the Bible, which is held to be uniquely inspired and authoritative.

Evangelism: activities involved in spreading the gospel.

Fundamentalism was originally a movement beginning in the 20th century of Christian evangelical conservatives who in reaction to modernism, insisted on adhering to a set of core beliefs or fundamentals of faith such as the inerrancy of the Bible and the infallibility of God, creation of the world, the virgin birth

of Christ and second coming. It has taken on many forms and meanings and is now applied to major world religions but is also increasingly associated with violence, religious militancy and extremism in Pentecostalism.

Fundamentalist Christian is one who holds the Bible to be infallible, historically accurate and decisive in all issues of controversy that the Bible is believed to address.

Globalization, is defined here as the increasing flow of people, information, goods, services and resources across national boundaries

Mainline Churches are former mission founded churches, examples of which are Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist and Lutheran churches. This definition is largely used in the African context.

Neo-Pentecostal Churches or Ministries refers to a stream of charismatic churches that have emerged since the 1970s and 1980s and gained momentum in the 1990s to date. These churches emphasize on healing, deliverance, the gospel of prosperity. They include Faith Evangelistic Ministries, Jesus Is Alive Ministries International and Maximum Miracles Centre.

Pentecostalism is here defined as a worldwide 20th Century Christian movement that emphasizes personal salvation in Christ as a transformative experience brought about by the Holy Spirit, generally evidenced by speaking in tongues (glossolalia) and promotes other gifts of the spirit such as faith healing, prophecy and exorcism.

Pentecostal and **Pentecostalism** are used interchangeably to refer to a wide variety of movements scattered throughout the world that can be described as having family resemblances

Progressive Pentecostalism is a new term used to study Pentecostal churches and is here used to refer to a person of Pentecostal faith who intentionally critiques socio-political structures and values in line with the Christian Scripture or other forms of divine revelation.

Public Life is here used to refer to that collective space of, or pertaining to the people, or relating to or affecting a nation, state or community

Public Roles: these are roles and responsibilities towards the public whether it is one's church, community, country and citizens and include political actions such as voting and non-political actions such as prayer and prophesy that are largely appropriated by Neo-Pentecostals.

Public Space is here understood as the distinct space which is as a result of democratization and liberalization evolves between the forces of the postcolonial state and society. This space has opened up the way to the public manifestation of religion in Kenya.

Public Sphere is here used to refer to an arena in social life where people can get together and freely discuss and identify societal problems, and through that discussion influence political action

Religious Capital: refers to networks of relationships that individuals and faith groups can access for their own religious wellbeing as well as for community development.

Spiritual Capital: an amalgamation or accumulation of the norms, values, language and social practices that sustain and transform a religious community.

Social Capital: social to connections among and between persons or individuals that facilitate productivity.

Televangelism is the use of television to communicate the Gospel. JIAM,

MMC and FEM use televangelism to preach to diverse audiences

Voluntarism: giving time and material items to one's church, Community or organization.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

A.A.C.C	All Africa Conference of Churches
A.E.A	Association for Evangelicals in Africa
A.F.M	Apostolic Faith Mission
A.I.Cs	African Instituted/Independent Churches
A.I.C	African Inland Church
A.I.P.C	African Independent Pentecostal Church
A.I.C N	African Israeli Church Nineveh
A.M.P.N	African Ministries Prayer Network
A.O.G	Assemblies of God
B.B.C	British Broadcasting Corporation
C.B.D	Central Business District
C.B.N	Christian Broadcasting Corporation
C.C.K.	Communication Commission of Kenya
C.D	Compact Disk
C.D.F.	Constituency Development Fund
C.E	Christ Embassy
C.E.O	Chief Executive Officer
C.F.A.N	Christ For All Nations
C.I.A	Central Intelligence Agency
CITAM	Christ Is the Answer Ministries
CoE	Committee of Experts
C.M	Charismatic Movement
C.M.S	Church Missionary Society

C.T.V	Citizen Television
C.T.N	Christian Television Network
C.U	Christian Union
C.W.K.	Christian Women of Kenya
D.C. K	Deliverance Church of Kenya
D.C.C	Deliverance Church Council
D.L.M	Deeper Life Ministry
D.R.C	Democratic Republic of Congo
DSTV	Digital Satellite Television
D.V.D	Digital Versatile Disk
E.A.K.	Evangelical Alliance of Kenya
E.A.R.M	East African Revival Movement
E.F.K	Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya
F.A.M	Faith Apostolic Mission
F.A.I.M	Friends Africa Industrial Mission
F.B.O	Faith Based Organization
F.E.M.	Faith Evangelistic Ministry
F.G.C.K	Full Gospel Churches of Kenya
F.I O	Faith Inspired Organization
FGDs	Focused Group Discussions
F.O.C.U.S	Fellowship of Christian Unions
FIDA-Kenya	Federation of Kenyan Women Lawyers
G.B.V	Gender Based Violence
G.L.H	Gospel Light House

H.O.G	House of Grace
I.C.G.C	International Central Gospel Church
I. C.T	Information Communication Technology
I.M.F	International Monetary Fund
J.C.C	Jesus Celebration Centre
J.C.C	Jubilee Christian Centre
J.C.C	Jerusalem Church of Christ
J.I.A.M	Jesus Is Alive Ministries
K.A.G	Kenya Assemblies of God
K.B.C	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
K.C.	Kenya Church
KCCF	Kenya Christian Constitutional Forum
K.C.L.F	Kenya Christian Lawyers Fellowship
K.D.N	Kenya Data Network
K.I.C.C	Kenyatta International Conference Centre
K.N.B.S	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
K.P.H C	Kenya Population and Housing Census
K.P.P	Kenya's People Party
K.R.P	Kenya Republican Party
K.T.N	Kenya Television Network
K.S.C.F.	Kenya Student Christian Fellowship
L.C.C	Life Celebration Centre
L.E.M	Ladies of Excellence Ministries
LHSF	Ladies Homecare Spiritual Fellowship

M.C.K	Methodist Church of Kenya
M.M.C.	Maximum Miracle Centre
N.A.R.K	National Rainbow Coalition
N.R.H.M	National Repentance and Holiness Ministry
NRM	New Religious Movements
N.C.C.K.	National Council of Churches of Kenya
N.G.Os.	Non-Governmental Organizations
N.P.C.	Nairobi Pentecostal Church
NPCs	Neo-Pentecostal Churches
N.P.	Neo-Pentecostalism
N.R.M. (s)	New Religious Movements
N.T.V	Nation Television
O.A.I.C.	Organization of African Instituted Churches
O.D.M.	Orange Democratic Movement
PAEA	Pentecostal Assemblies of East Africa
P.A.G.	Pentecostal Assemblies of God
PAOC	Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada
P.C.E.A.	Presbyterian Church of East Africa
P.E.F.A.	Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa
PEV	Post Election Violence
P.F.R.P.L	Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life
PLWAIDS	People Living with AIDS
P.N.U.	Party of National Unity
P.O	Participant Observation

R.C.C.G.	Redeemed Christian Church of God
R.G.C.	Redeemed Gospel Church
S.A	Salvation Army
S.A.C.I.M	South Africa Compound & Interior Mission
S.A.P(s)	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SAYARE	Sauti ya Rehema
SLIM	Single Ladies Interdenominational Ministry
S.U	Scripture Union
T.B.N	Trinity Broadcasting Network
T.D.	Transformational Development
TV	Television
VoK	Voice of Kenya
W.C.I	Winners Chapel International
Y.A.C.F	Young Ambassadors for Christ Fellowship

ABSTRACT

Over the last few decades, the Pentecostal movement, in all its varieties has gained an increasing presence in Africa's religious landscapes. Scholars are beginning to interrogate, how and what role(s) Christian churches play in the public sphere. This study analyses the roles of NPCs in Kenya's public life since they shot into prominence from the 1970s and 1980s onwards. It was, however, in the last 15 years that some NPC's clergy and churches became more visible in the public sphere. Through a critical analysis of the activities of three NPCs: Jesus is Alive Ministries (JIAM), Maximum Miracles Centre (MMC), and Faith Evangelistic Ministries (FEM) all in Nairobi, this thesis explores their contributions to Kenya's civic and public life. These churches were not just chosen because of their prominence in the public sphere but also because they manifest themselves publicly through the mass media, engage with social and political issues and have robust gender empowerment programmes. Two of the three leaders, bishop Margaret Wanjiru and Pius Muiru both contested elective politics during the 2007 General Elections. Bishop Wanjiru also served in the Kenyan Parliament from 2008 to early 2013 and as an Assistant Minister for Housing. She also equally contested though unsuccessfully the 2013 General Elections. Evangelist Teresia Wairimu on the other hand is influential not just as a prominent female visionary, renowned for her faith healing and deliverance ministry, but also for leading one of the largest women-centered ministries in the country. Evangelist Wairimu also appears to wield soft power as her church often attracts the politically powerful to mingle with her ordinary followers. Their combined social visibility, public prominence and influence in Kenya's public life necessitate fresh thinking in respect of these churches' roles in Kenya's civic and public spheres. The study approach is multidisciplinary drawing from Sociology, Gender and Theology, and utilizing social capital theories as a theoretical framework. The study employed a case study methodology, with study samples comprising leaders and members of JIAM, MMC and FEM selected based on gender, age, educational background and position in the churches as well as the duration of membership. Data was collected through in depth interviews (150 respondents equally spread within the three churches), participant observation (PO), Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) and content analysis of sermons, texts and televised messages. Findings from the study show that each church constitutes a significant presence in its respective community and engages civic and public life. The thesis contributes to the growing body of literature on religion and public life as well as broadening understanding of how and why Neo-Pentecostal Churches engage in issues in civic and public life.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Since the early 1970s, a new religious phenomenon known as Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity emerged and begun to sweep across the countries of the nonwestern world, particularly Latin America, the Asian Pacific Rim and the African continent. From humble beginnings as an early twentieth century revivalist movement in North America, Pentecostalism has spread across the globe to become what is now broadly believed to be the fastest growing Christian movement in the world today (see for example Dena Freeman 2012; Allan Anderson 2004; Burgess & van der Maas 2002; Walter Hollenweger 1997).

In just over 100 years, Pentecostal Christianity, and its Charismatic and Neo-Pentecostal variants, has won over half a billion souls worldwide (Freeman 2012; David Barrett 2001), representing almost 28 per cent of organized global Christianity (Barrett & Johnson 2002), and constituting what David Martin (2002) has called the 'largest global market place' in recent years. It has further been suggested that these movements are also some of the most dynamic and potentially transformative religious movements in the twenty-first century (Anderson *et al.*, 2010). By far and as already indicated, the majority, comprising roughly about two-thirds of these new Pentecostal and Charismatic converts are found in the Global South, as do most of the nine million who convert to it annually (Barrett & Johnson 2002:284).

Africa alone is estimated to have 126 million Pentecostals and Charismatics, constituting some 11 percent of the continent's total population (Barrett & Johnston 2002:287). The vast majority of them, constituting roughly about 109 million have joined these movements since 1980 (Barrett & Johnson 2002:287). Although the worldwide Pentecostal expansion can hardly be questioned, there are diverging opinions on the actual size of the global Pentecostal community. However, what is not contested is the fact that these different sets of statistics are clear indicators of the shifting contour of the Centre of Christianity from the North to the South (Barrett & Johnston 2002; Philip Jenkins 2002; Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (PFRPL 2006).

Birgit Meyer (2004) has argued that broadly speaking, there has been a shift over the course of the twentieth century from mainline missionary churches that brought European styles of Christianity and rejected traditional African Religion, to African Instituted/Independent Churches (AICs) that creatively interpret Christian and African religious elements, to the newer Pentecostal and Charismatic churches that have mushroomed all over Africa, particularly in urban areas although they are also increasingly growing in rural areas.

Yet there is so huge a variety of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches that it is difficult to generalize across all of them. Nonetheless, it is broadly accepted that globally, there are three broad categories, or waves, of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity, namely: classical, independent and the Charismatic and Neo-Pentecostal church (NPC) types (Freeman 2012; Anderson 2004; Hollenweger 1997). Classical Pentecostal churches are

churches with links to early American and European Pentecostal churches, which stress faith healing, prophecy, exorcism, *glossolalia* or speaking in tongues, as evidence of baptism by the Holy Spirit, spontaneous prayer, exuberant liturgical expressions as well as emphasis on dreams and visions. Examples include the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), Full Gospel Churches, Assemblies of God and the Pentecostal Assemblies of God, among others.

Indigenous Pentecostal churches are those churches founded by Africans themselves as early as the 1950s and 1960s without any relationship with mission Pentecostal churches. They are largely locally founded, self-financing, self-governing and self-supporting, with no or limited links with Europeans or Western founded churches. Examples include the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), the Deliverance Churches (DC) and the Redeemed Gospel Churches of Kenya (RGCK).

According to Asonzeh Ukah (2007), while these churches did not achieve tremendous social visibility early in their emergence, they were significant in appropriating the Christian message in a distinctive way that attempted to provide locally meaningful answers to local problems. Nevertheless, many indigenous Pentecostal churches have today undergone tremendous transformation and metamorphosed into what is now popularly known as the Neo-Pentecostal or the Neo-Charismatic churches.

Charismatic churches generally refer to historically younger Pentecostal, independent and Para church movements, many of which are found within non-Pentecostal denominations. Charismatic movement on the other hand is a term used to refer to the charismatic renewal within mainline

Christianity whether Protestant or Catholic (Asamoah-Gyadu 2004).

They are characterized by their centrality and emphasis on spiritual rebirth, healing, deliverance and exuberant worship. Similarly, Charismatic Christians are those members of mainline Christian denominations-Lutheran, Presbyterian, Catholic, Anglican among others; they began to experience the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the form of speaking in tongues, faith healing, miracles and signs and wonders, among others. This development within the Charismatic church typology commonly referred to as the 'pentecostalization' of mainline Christianity started in the 1960s; there are now Charismatic churches across virtually all Christian denominations (Coleman 1998; 2000; 2002, Csordas 1992; 2007; Freeman 2012; Parsitau 2007, 2008).

The third wave, the Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic church type is the broadest category. It serves as an umbrella term for rapidly growing Charismatic movements in Global Christianity that has exploded onto the scene since the 1970s, through the 1980s, but gained momentum in the 1990s to date. According to Allan Anderson (2002:167), this newer form of Christianity is fast becoming one of the most significant expressions of Christianity on the African continent, especially in urban centres.

The NPCs were founded by individuals in the late 1970s and 1980s, consolidated in the 1990s and are now witnessing tremendous growth and expansion as their founders are opening branches in different parts of the world. In Kenya, these churches designate themselves as Pentecostal. Scholars of the phenomenon prefer to call them African Pentecostal churches or NPCs to distinguish them from classical and indigenous types (see for example

Mwaura 2005). In this thesis, NPCs is the preferred term.

The NPCs espouse specific doctrines that mark them out among groups of Christians. Neo-Pentecostals believe they constitute a special people of God who are 'saved' or 'born again.' Theologically, a person who is saved or born again is regenerated or sanctified by an inward feeling of holiness. Sanctification is believed to purify a faithful believer from sin and all forms of moral pollution following one's spiritual rebirth. This person can then be described as being 'saved' or 'born again.' Of special importance is the teaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit and external manifestation of speaking in tongues. This is both a spiritual and social marker, setting Neo-Pentecostal believers apart as God's elected people (See Ukah 2007; Coleman 2000). These churches also emphasize on other gifts of the Holy Spirit such as divine healing, deliverance, prophecy and the power of church leaders (Parsitau & Mwaura 2012; Deacon 2013).

Apart from these traits, there are certain important social characteristics that distinguish NPCs from others. For example, they espouse, promote and practice the theology of prosperity and abundance also variously known as *Gospel of Prosperity*, the *Health and Wealth Gospel*; the *Name-it-and-Claim-it Theology* or the *Faith Gospel* (Ukah 007; Gifford 2004; 2009). This gospel holds that prosperity of all kinds including good health is the right of every Christian to claim, particularly if one gives generously to the proponents of the prosperity gospel who are also founders of these churches (Gifford 1999: 375). There is a discernibly North American influence on NPCs in both theology and organizational structure and practice, particularly in their appropriation of the

theology of prosperity (Ukah 2007; Gifford 1998; 2004; 2009; Mwaura & Parsitau 2010).

Other distinctive characteristics include a strong emphasis on faith healing, deliverance, miracles, signs and wonders, spiritual warfare as well the roles of dreams, visions and prophecy. At the same time, these churches are run like blue chip companies or organization with the church founders often designating themselves as the President or Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the church. Equally, central to the running of these churches is a heavy appropriation of mass media communication technologies, a trait that has propelled these churches and their clergy into public prominence.

Another defining feature of the NPCs is the enlarged role of women who receive a great deal of social visibility and public prominence. Many are not just decision makers but founders and heads of these churches, a move that has enabled many not just to exercise power and authority but also to contest civic and public life.ⁱ Consequently, many have carved out space for themselves in the religious sphere as well as contesting civic and public life, even political life. Jesus is Alive Ministries (JIAM), Maximum Miracle Centre (MMC) and Faith Evangelistic Ministries (FEM), are leading examples of the NPC typologies that are also prominent in Kenya's public sphere.

Churches from all these three waves are not only flourishing in Africa today, they have also carved out a niche for themselves within the religious map of the modern world. This is manifested in terms of both their demographic composition as well as their geographical spread (Adogame 2010). In Kenya as well as in other African countries such as Nigeria, Ghana,

Benin, Cameroon, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Uganda, the NPCs are not only proliferating but they also cut across various social classes, and urban/rural contexts (Parsitau & Mwaura, 2010). They have also rapidly changed the religious, social, economic and political landscapes of these countries. As Ruth Marshall (1992:7) aptly observes of African Pentecostalism, ‘literally thousands of new churches and evangelical groups have cropped up in cities and towns forming a broad-based religious movement which is rapidly becoming a powerful new social and religious force.’

This thesis focuses on the civic and public roles of JIAM, MMC and FEM, all NPCs founded by charismatic personalities, namely Bishop Margaret Wanjiru Kariuki, Bishop Pius Muiro and Evangelist Teresia Wairimu Kinyanjui respectively between 1985 and early 1990s. They are part of several New Religious Movements (NRMs) that have proliferated all over Kenya and most of sub-Saharan Africa in the last four decades now. Recognition is being given to the increasing role played by this rapidly growing form of African Christianity that is not only flourishing and thriving but also having significant impact in all spheres of civic and public life.

The PFRPL (2006) Survey suggests that renewalists, including Charismatics and Pentecostals account for more than half of Kenya’s population.ⁱⁱ The survey also shows that approximately, seven-in-ten Protestants in Kenya are either Pentecostal or Charismatic, and about one third of Kenyan Catholics surveyed can be classified as Charismatic. The PFRPL’s estimates are further validated by newspaper reports that appear to support this immense growth. Alex Ndegwa (2007:6) for example, reports that ‘the

Registrar General's office is overwhelmed by increasing demands for church registration.'

The former Attorney General, Amos Wako, while speaking in a workshop for church leaders revealed that the Registrar General's office was overwhelmed by increasing demand for registration of churches and that the facility was facing difficulties in processing 6,740 pending applications by various religious organizations.ⁱⁱⁱ Wako also indicated that there were about 8,520 registered churches and that about 100 applications were filed every month (Ndegwa, 2007). According to the Registrar of Societies, pastors and founding clergy registered some churches as private properties co-owned with spouse and family, thereby making it personal property.

This development partly explains the numerous protracted church ownership tussles that are rampant in the Kenyan courts (Gifford 2009). Others are registered as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or Faith Based Organizations (FBOs).^{iv} Although not all of these churches seeking registration have Pentecostal and Charismatic inclinations, most of them are of Pentecostal persuasion.

These different sets of statistics though arguably contested nevertheless point to the tremendous growth of Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Kenya, many of which have sprung up in major urban centres, some within less than three to five kilometers apart. Some are huge churches with large membership while others are too small to be called churches. They nevertheless add to the numbers (Parsitau & Mwaura, 2010; Parsitau, 2011c; Smith, 2007; Droz, 2010). These churches sharply rose to prominence due to a

combination of factors. Scholars and Pentecostal leaders alike have linked this sudden growth of Pentecostalism in Africa with the economic crisis and stagnation of the 1980s and the subsequent Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) that led to the worsening material conditions of life for many people during the 1980s and 1990 (Freeman 2012; Parsitau 2008).

This period was also characterized by political repression as well as authoritarian rule that were widespread throughout much of Africa at that time (Gifford 1999). Consequently, there was a general sense of collapse and despair echoed in many African countries at that time (Akoko 2007; Maxwell 2005; Meyer 1998b). And with the economic situation showing little sign of improvement, coupled with political repression and oppression, it is not surprising that Pentecostal and Charismatic churches continued to grow and flourished from that period to onwards.

It has also been suggested that many African people turn to Pentecostalism because of the problems they face. It is argued that by emphasizing its claims to solve problems of daily life as well as existential problems, Neo-Pentecostalism seduces populations that are faced not just by a decreasing quality of life but also by the insecurities of modernity (Mayrargue 2008). Yet, the exponential growth of Pentecostalism has equally been forged and fueled by aggressive evangelism, church planting, lay mobilization, lively music and the celebratory nature of worship, the use of mass media communication technologies, its attraction of youth as well as women.

Coupled with such factors is the promotion of a healthy gender ideology that appears to grant greater spiritual and ministerial freedom as well

as leadership opportunities for women among other factors (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005; Mwendwa Ntarangwi, 2011; Parsitau, 2010 a; Parsitau & Mwaura, 2010). All these factors appear to have propelled NPCs and their clergy into visible social and public prominence.

Yet, the tremendous growth and impact of Neo-Pentecostal Christianity in the last 15 years however transcends its demographic and geographic growth as well as its existential roles. Its impact and presence is equally felt in Kenyan civic and public life, particularly in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres. However and until the mid-1990s, Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya did not have much impact on significant issues in civic and public life, particularly in the spheres of politics. For decades, Kenyan Pentecostals either kept a low profile or completely shunned politics as well as civic and public life issues.

They also did not speak out on national issues, choosing instead to concentrate on spiritual matters and evangelism, mostly out of a rather negative view of politics, generally seen as corrupt, dirty and sinful (Anderson 2004: Balcomb 2008). This disinterest and overt concentration on the religious sphere went hand in hand with a declared apolitical stance and a respect for those in authority, a stand that was so characteristic of the Pentecostal churches at that time. Because of this view and position on politics, many Pentecostal clergy provided legitimacy to African despots and their oppressive regimes. The clergy would indeed pray for these leaders. In some cases, they would endorse them as 'God's appointed leaders' or 'God's elect' (Gifford 2009:129).

It is such negative view of politics that has led to a number of stereotypes concerning Pentecostals disengagement from the world. According

to Sean O'Neil (2003), Pentecostals worldwide have often been labeled, sometimes vilified, as 'other-worldly' and 'escapist.' They are said to be so more concerned with spiritual matters, so preoccupied with going to heaven that they totally disengage from broader socio-political engagements and concerns. This is indeed because adherents of the faith partake in highly expressive, and sometimes ecstatic, personal and communal religious experiences: including *glossolalia* (speaking in tongues), faith healing, prophetic utterances, and other manifestations of spiritual devotion (O'Neil, 2003), leaving them with little time to engage in non-spiritual matters.

Historically, levels of civic, public even political participation among Pentecostals have often varied all over the world. Some Pentecostals have been politically active, some have been ardently apolitical while others have accepted and legitimized the *status quo* (Sheppard 2006). These patterns are evident in various countries where Pentecostalism has witnessed tremendous growth. In Latin America for example, Pentecostals were historically said to be politically passive, rejecting society and holding an extremely dualistic view of the world (Sheppard 2006).

In Colombia, Flora (1975) for example reports that Pentecostals did not vote until 1970 out of a desire to remain 'unyoked with the world.' In South Africa, Allan Anderson (2001) observed that during the apartheid period, black Pentecostals were apolitical and adopted a sort of escapist spirituality that did not condemn apartheid. In Zambia, during the reign of former President Fredrick Chiluba, Zambia was declared a Christian nation and Pentecostals legitimized his regime (Gifford 1998: 2004: 2009: Maxwell 2006). President

Jerry Rawling of Ghana similarly had the ears of the Pentecostals who equally endorsed and legitimized his reign (Gifford 2004).

In Kenya, Pentecostals played ambivalent though less visible roles in the public sphere in the 1990s. However, even as they played less visible civic and public roles, some Pentecostal and Evangelical clergy supported and endorsed former President Daniel Arap Moi's regime. Evangelical churches such as African Inland Church (AIC), to which Moi is a bona fide member and Pentecostal churches such as the (RGC and the NPC), Valley Road and some AICs such as the African Independent Pentecostal Church (AIPC) all threw their weight behind former President Daniel Arap Moi's regime, particularly during the early 1990s (Gifford 1998; 2004; 2009; Herve Maupeu 2002; Parsitau & Kinyanjui 2009).

Some churches such as (AIC) even withdrew their membership from the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), seen to be opposing Moi's regime (Herve Maupeu 2005; Mutahi Ngunyi 1995; Karuti Kanyinga 1995). For example, as Moi faced increased pressure to lift the ban he had imposed on opposition parties in the late 1990s, he attended an RGC service in which Bishop Arthur Kitonga delivered a forceful pro-Moi sermon.^v

In this sermon, which was televised by Kenya Broadcasting Co-operation (KBC) TV, Bishop Kitonga alleged that Kenya had been like heaven for years under Moi's leadership. He opined that Moi had been appointed by God to lead the country, and Kenyans ought to be grateful for the peace prevailing in the country. He reportedly blasted mainline churches for pressing for socio-political reforms, and termed their clergy/leaders rebels who preached

their own gospel, not that of Jesus Christ (Akoko 2004; Gifford 2009:228).

Other Pentecostal clergy who supported President Moi include the Rev Denis White, who was then the senior Pastor of NPC (Valley Road). Rev White publicly endorsed former President Moi (a frequent worshipper in the church in the 1990s despite being an astute member of the AIC). In his endorsement, Rev. White referred to Moi as ‘God’s elect’ and one whose reign had seen the tremendous growth of Christianity in Kenya because he upheld the constitution, which promoted and respected freedom of worship in the country Gifford (2009: 228). The late Bishop John Gaitho of the (AIPC) similarly fully and explicitly supported President Moi. Moi was also a frequent guest at Evangelist Teresia Wairimu’s FEM Church and crusades even though she never at least publicly endorsed his regime.

Pentecostal clergy supported President Moi for a variety of reasons. Alex Ndegwa (2001) explains that the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches were co-opted by Moi to countercheck the opposition from mainline church clergy who sustained tremendous pressure on the former President to open up the democratic space in the country during the single party state. In addition, they were rewarded for this support.

Many received access to state controlled media and they continually portrayed Moi as a God fearing leader, who was guided by principles of peace, love and unity (Akoko 2004:31; Gifford 1995). It is therefore argued here that former President Moi increasingly used Evangelical, Pentecostal and AICs’ clergy to attract the support and legitimacy of these clergy, whom he would then use to counter the attacks from mainline churches clergy and to legitimize

his reign which was by this time facing a confidence and legitimacy crisis.

Thus, from the aforementioned, it is clear that Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya as was the case in South Africa, Zambia, Malawi, Ghana, and Cameroon had by this period acquired a reputation of supporting and legitimizing Africa's autocrats. This was in stark contrast to the socio-political activism and direct involvement of mainline churches such as Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist and Anglican churches in the 1990s.

While mainline churches' clergy, both as individuals and as institutions fought for the enlargement of democratic space in Kenya in the 1980s and early 1990s, Pentecostal churches and their clergy maintained a more or less neutral position on political issues or as discussed above, provided legitimacy to regimes considered to be autocratic (Gifford 1995, 1999, 2004, 2009; Mayrargue 2008; Maxwell 2006).

It is also important to note that many Pentecostal clergy did not see anything wrong with this stand. Indeed, many believed that their roles were to establish God's Kingdom on earth, not "playing" politics. Besides, many believed and still believe that by praying for the president, the government of the day or those in authority, they were performing both their civic as well as prophetic duty. In the understanding of many Pentecostals, therefore, prayer was a sort of civic engagement and a political praxis where true Christians must pray to God to establish his kingdom on earth. This is a kingdom of righteousness, corruption free and where peace prevails (Kalu 2008). For many Pentecostals, this is even more effective than engaging in a more combative way.

Important shifts however took place towards the end of the 1990s as many Neo-Pentecostal clergy and their churches began to seek ways of engaging civic and public life issues. In Kenya, this shift began to emerge in February 2002, when about forty Pentecostal and Evangelical church leaders converged at the Lake Bogoria Lodge in the Rift Valley Province to seek divine guidance concerning their prophetic voice and calling. Through prayer and fasting, these leaders repented for their complacency and disengagement in civic and public life issues particularly social and political issues, including the HIV and AIDS pandemic, poverty, corruption, nepotism, and bad governance (Samita 2004; Parsitau & Kinyanjui 2009).

They publicly repented for the loss of their prophetic voice and sought God's guidance in their future engagements. Further, they prayed for the recovery of voice and courage in order to play critical roles in the public sphere (Parsitau 2009; Samita 2003:116). More importantly, they also resolved to adopt a policy of full engagement in civic and public life issues as well as to speak for the ordinary citizens and become the conscience of the Kenyan society. This meeting created a paradigm shift from non-engagement to full engagement in respect of Neo Pentecostal Christianity and its role in civic and public life.

Aside from these shifts, other important developments served to usher Neo-Pentecostals into civic and public life, namely: the search for a new Constitution from 2002 and 2005 culminating, therefore, in the first national Constitutional Referendum where Pentecostals helped defeat the Bomas Draft,^{vi} the 2007 General Elections where an unprecedented number (twenty-

three) of Neo-Pentecostal church clergy contested Civic, Parliamentary and Presidential elections and the resultant Post Election Violence (PEV) that wrecked every aspect of Kenyan life.

Other developments that further propelled Neo-Pentecostals into the public sphere include events leading to the publication of the Harmonized Draft Constitution^{vii} from 2008, the subsequent Constitutional Referendum held on August 4th 2010 in which an overwhelming majority of Kenyans voted for its passage, and lastly the Promulgation and Adoption of the New Constitution in late 2010 (Branch, 2010; Mue, 2011; Parsitau, 2009, 2011a, b & c; Ntarangwi, 2011).

An important factor that seemed to have first ushered in Neo-Pentecostals into civic and public life is the search for a new constitution from 2000 and 2005, which gained momentum when former President Mwai Kibaki took over office from Daniel Arap Moi in 2002. President Kibaki's administration came to power on the platform of granting Kenyans a new Constitution. In the run-up to the National Referendum on the New Draft Constitution in November 2005, a section of Christian clergy mainly from Evangelical, Pentecostal and mainline churches opposed the passage of the Draft Constitution though its agenda was narrowly focused on resisting the inclusion of Islamic Courts known also as *Kadhi Courts*^{viii} in the new Constitution (Parsitau, 2011a; Ntarangwi, 2011; Mue, 2011; Branch, 2010).

At the beginning of the referendum, an outspoken segment of the Christian clergy mobilized Christians to reject the Draft Constitution and publicly and forcefully stated their positions (Mue, 2011). Particularly notable

were the roles played by clergy from NPCs led by Bishop Margaret Wanjiru of (JIAM), Bishop Pius Muiru of (MMC), Bishop Wilfred Lai of Jesus Celebration Centre (JCC), and Bishop Mark Kariuki of (DC) among others. These clergy not only vehemently opposed the passage of the Constitutional Draft, they also mobilized their large Christian constituency to defeat the Draft Constitution during the November 2005 National Referendum (Branch, 2010; Ntaragwi, 2011; Mue, 2011; Gifford, 2009; Mue, 2011).

The opposition to the 2005 Constitutional Referendum and the subsequent Pentecostal clergy's mobilization of their constituency to vote against the proposed Constitutional Draft because it allowed for the establishment of the *Kadhi Courts*, (something that irked many Pentecostals) was significant for Pentecostals in a number of ways. First, this gave the clergy from NPCs tremendous confidence that they had a huge and critical constituency that could be easily mobilized to change policy.

Secondly, it provided Pentecostals with an opportunity to not only map out their influence but also to consolidate and organize their constituency into a critical election mass and base. Thirdly, the opposition of this Christian constituency to the new Constitution not only marked the beginning of increased socio-political activities on the part of NPCs, but also bolstered many of their clergy to contest elective politics and engage in civic and public life issues. It was also around this time that Pentecostal Christianity emerged from political oblivion into the centre stage of national politics.

Bolstered by the roles they played in the rejection of the 2005 draft constitution, Pentecostals gained confidence and begun to invade the public

sphere like never witnessed before. Since then, Kenyan Pentecostals have come to constitute a significant force in civic and public life (Gifford 2009). It is telling that Bishop Margaret Wanjiru of JIAM, the first woman to be ordained as a bishop of a Neo-Pentecostal church in Kenya and who emerged as the face of resistance to the inclusion of *Kadhi Courts* in the Draft Constitution in 2005 announced her intention to join politics immediately after the outcome of the 2005 Constitutional Referendum (Parsitau & Kinjanjui, 2009; Parsitau & Mwaura, 2010; Parsitau, 2011a & b).

Opposition of the Constitutional Draft launched a number of NPC clergy, including bishops' Margaret Wanjiru and Pius Muiro of MMC as well as many others into elective politics. This is why during the 2007 General Election, about twenty-three Neo-Pentecostal clergy, contested for civic, parliamentary, even presidential elections (Kavula, 2008; Gifford, 2009; Parsitau & Kinyajui, 2009). Among the host of contestants from the Neo-Pentecostal fold, only Wanjiru was however successfully elected as MP for the Starehe Constituency and later appointed as an Assistant Minister for Housing where she served from 2008 to early 2013. These heightened political activities propelled Neo-Pentecostals into public prominence and enlarged the socio-political roles of many clergy.

At the same time, some Pentecostal and Evangelical clergy founded the National Conscience People's Movement (NCPM) in 2005 to encourage Evangelical and Pentecostal churches to support political aspirants from within their churches in future elections. According to Pastor Stanley Michuki, the chair and founder of the Kasarani based Hope Restoration Church, the

movement was established to encourage Pentecostal and Evangelical churches to field and support political aspirants from within their churches (Parsitau and Kinyanjui 2009).

According to him, Kenyans need God-fearing leaders because secular politicians have proved to be untrustworthy. Michuki further pointed out that God-fearing people will serve Kenyans better because they have a clear conscience unlike politicians who are interested with their own personal developments. The NCPM whose pamphlet *The Voice of Conscience* states; ‘real politics is for the upright’ seemed to advocate for ‘born again’ Christians to vie for elective politics. They were urging churches to raise men and women of integrity to take up leadership both at local and international levels.

It was however, the search for a new constitution and the opposition to the inclusion of kadhi’s courts and clauses on the bill of rights (reproductive health and same-sex relationship issues) during the two national constitutional referenda in 2005 and 2010 respectively, that propelled Neo-Pentecostal clergy into the public limelight (Parsitau, 2011b). Similarly, and in the 2010 National Referendum, many Neo-Pentecostal clergy again and alongside their mainline churches counterparts stood opposed to the passing of the new Constitution because it allowed for the inclusion of the Kadhi Courts.

Prior to 2010 National Constitutional Referendum for example, leading Neo-Pentecostal clergy again led by Bishop Wanjiru, Pius Muiro, Mark Kariuki, Wilfred Lai and others held nationwide campaigns dubbed National Prayer Rallies to mobilize the Christian constituency to oppose the passing of the new constitution citing the contentious clause. Despite their efforts,

Kenyans overwhelmingly voted for the passing of the new plebiscite which was promulgated in August 27th 2010.

During this time, JIAM, MMC and FEM gained tremendous social, political and public prominence. Evangelist Teresia Wairimu opposed the new constitution but also played prominent roles in peace building initiatives and conflict resolution during and after the 2007/8 PEV crisis.^{ix} It seems therefore that from 2000-2010, Neo-Pentecostals had come to view elective politics as Christian projects in which they could rightly participate. A number of factors have been suggested as possible explanations for this sudden shift from non-engagement to full engagement in civic and public life issues, particularly with respect to elective politics.

According to Cedric Mayrargue (2008), Neo-Pentecostalism's new visibility in the political arena was inspired by political liberalizations and the weakening of state control over democratization processes that was taking place at that time. This appeared to favor the development of multiple political alternatives. Religious actors were thus able to develop their activities with minimum restrictions and reoccupy civic and public life. Secondly, the state's loss of credibility, its reduced margins for maneuver and its abandonment of social service (health, education and civic education) accorded religious actors including Neo-Pentecostals more space to engage in these issues.

Aside from this favorable context, new religious actors emerged who accelerated the religion's politicization. Different ideas appeared to further shape this reorientation towards politics. First, was an opportunistic motivation (taking advantage of the situation and eventually, state resources to encourage

evangelization and conversion). Secondly was a strong desire to restore moral principles to politics through promoting their values and norms. Thirdly, a plan to take over the public sphere in order to dominate it totally to the exclusion of other forces.

These explanations appear to have played significant roles in the Kenyan contexts where NPC clergy sought to influence politics and governance by campaigning for 'born again' Christians to join politics to restore morality, root out corruption and influence politics and public policy. The move by bishops Wanjiru and Muiro as well as other aspirants in NPCs to contest elective politics during the 2007 General Elections could be understood and located within the factors discussed above.

However, elective politics is not the only avenue through which NPCs and clergy can exert influence on issues in civic and public life. They still exerted social and political influence indirectly through the issuance of utterances, sermons and symbols such as those of prophecies demonology, spiritual warfare as well as the symbols that they spread. To start with, Neo-Pentecostals seek to exert social and political influence through what is now commonly referred to as the 'Pentecostalization of the Public Sphere.'

The pentecostalization of the public sphere refers to the spread of Pentecostal manners and mores and styles to others who are not necessarily Pentecostal or Charismatic. As Harri Englund (2008, 2010) has so aptly pointed out, the pentecostalization of the public sphere does not simply refer to the increased presence of Pentecostals in civic and public life but also their influence on the manners and mores of others.

Secondly, there is a form of 'pentecostalization of society' from below, which consists of getting involved in areas such as health, education and development projects. This kind of pentecostalization entails the establishment of schools, health clinics and centres either directly by churches themselves or by affiliated religious NGOs as well as through links with well established international Christian NGOs. These services respond to the needs of local populations but are also tools for evangelization.

However, Pentecostal actors also try to perform a kind of pentecostalization from below with the aim of not necessarily taking over political power but at least strongly influencing its uses. They try to convert political elites by putting in place special conversion programmes and platforms such as crusades, ensuring that believers are nominated for important posts, or getting pastors appointed as presidential or ministerial advisors as has been recently witnessed not just in Kenya but in other parts of Africa as well. Examples such as Prophet David Owuor in Kenya and Prophet T.B Joshua of Nigeria.

It is important to point out that there has recently been an increasing pentecostalization of governance through prophecies prayers of national repentance for peaceful elections, and prayer rallies and crusades largely attended by politicians.^x This is raising stakes as far as the struggle to define Kenyan public sphere is concerned, further politicizing religion. Coupled with this is the emergence of mega churches with members running into millions, churches whose leaders not only preach but also mingle with politicians. For these clergy, religion, power and money are important and they use it to their

advantage. These leaders are sought after by politicians who believe in their prophecies and prayers.

For example, towards the end of 2013, Malawians were surprised when their immediate former President, Mrs. Joyce Banda announced that she would make a three-day long private visit to Nigeria's Prophet TB Joshua, the founder of the Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCAONA) International.^{xi} Based in Nigeria but with branches in Greece, the UK and Ghana, the church is said to have millions of members. When Prophet TB Joshua visits any country for a crusade, at least tens of thousands of people are said to turn up.

This mega church has three key pillars, namely: healing, prophesy and deliverance. Although President Joyce Banda's trip was a private visit, it was in the public domain that she was visiting Prophet T.B Joshua. Since she took over office as president, she is said to have visited Nigeria seven times to meet the prophet. TB Joshua had predicted the death of the late former President Bingu wa Mutharika and that Mrs. Banda would take over the presidency according to the prophecy.^{xii}

In Kenya, self-proclaimed Prophet David Owour of the Ministry of Repentance and Holiness would be the Kenyan equivalent of Nigeria's TB Joshua. David Owour has a unique personal style that gives him a certain mystique, a style that includes white outfits with a long coat and a trademark long beard. He has a large number of followers in the country and when he visits a town for a crusade, business is interrupted as his followers arrive in large numbers while others line the streets carrying and waving posters and handbills to welcome the 'Mighty Prophet of God.'

However, his relationship with the ruling elites is intriguing. His association with politicians became known when he baptized former Prime Minister Raila Odinga in 2009 in the full glare of cameras in a highly publicized event beamed live on national TV channels and covered by major newspapers including a special feature of his church magazine. Since then, he has featured in events with a political thrust (Deacon 2013).

In the run up to the 2013 General Election for example, Prophet Owour crisscrossed the country organizing repentance prayers rallies for all the eight presidential candidates and their teams. His repentance prayer rally at Uhuru Park in Nairobi drew nearly all the presidential aspirants and was attended by thousands of Kenyans. Owour laid hands on the aspirants and made them swear to accept the outcome of the election and uphold peace.^{xiii} The crusade was beamed live on TV by all of Kenya's leading media houses. Prophet Owour has sought to image his message with religious rhetoric framed as peace rallies, repentance and holiness prayers, healing and prophetic rallies among others.

Prophets' Joshua and David Owour are in the league of African Neo-Pentecostal clergy who have somehow managed to marry religion and politics. These leaders have learnt to not only wield tremendous power but also use that influence and the power their followers bestow upon them to mingle with the ruling class. Others make friends with politicians who dutifully attend their sermons and crusades and shower them with gifts. This self-style modern day prophets seem to crave for dalliance with politicians. This kind of relationship between clergy in NPCs and politicians has led to a sort of 'pentecostalization

of governance and politics.’ Presidential candidates appeal to religion because that is where the votes are while the clergy appeal to politicians for money, legitimacy, power and access to state resources (David Maxwell 2006; Gifford 2009).

This is hardly unusual as religious rhetoric has been a core part of political discourse in Kenya for decades now. Its impact on political campaign and public opinion is huge. Yet, religious rhetoric is common in Kenya’s public life because Kenyans are and have often been highly religious. Religious discourse is particularly effective in this regard because it is well equipped to resonate with individuals’ emotions and identities, two factors that coincidentally, are central to political persuasions.

Religious appeals are an effective means to gain electoral support among voters. Religious discourses are thus used by politicians as well as presidential candidates because it resonates with the language of the voters, the majority of them being very religious. Gregory Deacon (2013) has so aptly observed that religious rhetoric was largely responsible for actively creating religious constituencies that can drive electoral results, particularly during the 2013 General Elections in Kenya.

There is also a growing appropriation of epistemologies of spiritual warfare, prayer watch, prayer mapping as well as prophetic engagement in the public sphere. These concepts are emerging as tools used by clergy to contest political space. This is connected in recent years with a growing prominence of Pentecostal political rhetoric encouraging forms of social action. Such initiatives in the public sphere reflect contours of politicized theologies in

respect of Kenyan NPCs. Yet, far from fostering a solely inward-looking worldview, Pentecostals try to establish hegemony in public discourses by projections to 'win a nation for Christ.' Diverse 'spiritual mappings' decode the political terrain as a battle between God and the devil. They assign an analytical framework for addressing the complexity of African politics by combating evil. The semantics of intervention into daily political affairs used in strategic prayer conventions illustrate new modes of engaging the public sphere.

Similarly, there is a new sense of the divine destiny in human affairs. At the same time, Neo-Pentecostal constituencies are prone to bringing in their commitments into public debates, with real consequences for processes of government. Neo-Pentecostal Christianity in Kenya now manifests itself publicly, engages with social and political issues and in the meantime reshapes the public and political sphere by its dualistic religious epistemologies in which the world is the scene of a spiritual battle between God and the devil.

Along with this goes an ever-greater readiness to see the intervention of spiritual forces in ordinary events; readiness to see the intervention of spiritual forces in ordinary events, and an ever more audible appeal to absolutist truths. A related aspect of these religiosities is the growing salience of revelation and prophecies as a legitimate basis for truth, action and interpretation of events in time. This has led to an increased role of prophecies in the public sphere and is emerging as a new space and mode of civic and public engagement.

Yet, these are not the only ways in which, NPCs have invaded the

public sphere. Their heavy appropriation of mass media communication technologies is another means through which Pentecostals have sought to invade the public sphere. However, they are not only using the mass media to propagate their messages but also to consolidate their influence and ultimately shape and influence issues in civic and public life.

Thus, NPCs have essentially sought not just public prominence and visibility, but they have also sought to contribute to spheres such as public policy, governance, elective politics, constitutional matters, public morality, the economy and mass media, particularly given the fact that NPCs in Africa, Kenya included own TV and radio stations. Coupled with this is the fact that the sheer demographic growth of the NPC movement has also caused a surge in public activism.

From the discussions above, it is evident that Neo-Pentecostalism has emerged as a transformative force whose impact on civic and public life is growing. These developments have ushered in new changes and shifts in respect of the relationship between Neo-Pentecostals and issues in civic and public life, particularly in the realm of politics which changed both in fundamental and significant ways. These shifts and developments necessitate fresh thinking and interrogation of the larger civic and public roles as well as modes of engagement or disengagement of Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in the public sphere, by asking what its socio-political impact or lack of it thereof portend for Kenyan Christianity.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The core argument of this thesis is that although there is increased socio-political activity with respect to NPCs in Kenya, coupled with increased public visibility and engagement with issues in civic and public life, relatively little is known and appreciated about the engagements or disengagements of leaders and members of these groups. At the same time and although this increased visibility and shifts from non-engagement to full engagement has baffled many scholars, as well as the public, the varied ways in which Neo-Pentecostals are engaging with civic and public life issues has not been explored. This thesis sought to bridge the gap by investigating ways in which these churches engage negotiate and impact on the public sphere in Kenya.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The principal objective of the study was to examine ways in which Neo-Pentecostals engage civic and public life. The specific objectives were to:

- i. To explore the history and development of Kenyan Neo-Pentecostalism.
- ii. Investigate the role of Neo-Pentecostalism in civic and public life and understand its rise to public prominence in Kenya.
- iii. Highlight some doctrinal beliefs and teachings that inform how Neo-Pentecostals understand their roles in the public sphere as well as understand whether they serve as sources of social capital.
- iv. Explore ways in which Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals appropriate the new media to propel them into public life.
- v. Assess the impact of Neo-Pentecostalism on women, evaluating their

contribution in civic and public life.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study sought to address the following questions:

- i. What is the history and development of Neo-Pentecostal Christianity in Kenya?
- ii. What is the role of Neo-Pentecostalism in civic and public life?
- iii. What doctrinal beliefs, teachings, practices and frameworks inform their engagement in civic and public life?
- iv. What is the relationship between Neo-Pentecostals and media and how has the media propelled Neo-Pentecostalism into Public life?

How has Neo-Pentecostalism affected women, and what are the roles and contributions of women to public life?

1.5 RESEARCH PREMISES

- i. Neo-Pentecostalism's engagement with public life has led to its heightened public prominence in Kenya.
- ii. Neo-Pentecostals are unable to contribute progressively to civic and public issues in Kenya.
- iii. Neo-Pentecostals have no theological position concerning civic and public engagement.
- iv. Neo-Pentecostalism's rise to public prominence has been largely propelled by their overt appropriation of mass media technologies.
- v. Neo-Pentecostalism has significantly changed the position of women and propelled them into the public limelight in Kenya.

1.6 JUSTIFICATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

First, the role of Neo-Pentecostalism in Kenya's public sphere is not thoroughly researched compared to other parts of the African continent as will be discussed in the literature review. More importantly, the roles of the Neo-Pentecostal churches in civic and public life in Kenya are largely unknown and unappreciated. This study sought to bridge this gap in the literature by not just researching on Kenyan Neo-Pentecostalism but also in contributing and broadening our understanding of the role of these churches in civic and public life. Further, it adds to an emerging body of scholarship providing a rationale for Neo-Pentecostal engagement in the world and elucidation of the form their response to public issues could take. Here in lies the significance and strength of this study.

Secondly, the study brings new theoretical insights to the discourse on Neo-Pentecostalism in Kenya, Africa and globally and contributes to the growing body of literature on religion, civic engagement and public life. This is especially important given the diversity of issues addressed in civic and public life, coupled with the complexity of how Neo-Pentecostals live out their faith. Thirdly, existing literature on Pentecostalism in Africa hardly explored these churches as sources of social capital. This study contributes to the discourse of social capital, and highlights new ways of understanding Kenyan Neo-Pentecostal churches as religious and social phenomena.

Fourthly, the focus on demographic characteristics, the place and role of women who dominate Neo-Pentecostal communities, and the appropriation of the mass media communication technologies has helped to fill the lacunae in

current African Pentecostal historiography. Lastly, Pentecostalism is reshaping Christianity in Africa and globally hence needs to be thoroughly understood. The case studies helped us better understand how and why NPCs are increasingly engaging with civic and public issues. The thesis is therefore of both academic and policy relevance.

1.7 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was carried out in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya among three major NPCs (JIAM, FEM and MMC) with focus on the period 1970-2010. The 1970s is significant because some of these churches emerged around this period while the new millennium marked the dramatic entry of some of their leaders into elective politics and increasing engagement with public life. Nairobi's cosmopolitan nature affords a resourceful research locale as the three churches are headquartered in Nairobi. They also have larger congregations and diverse programmes and elaborate ritual activities. Such variety is well suited for the analysis of the areas of investigation in this study. Observations in and findings from Nairobi as a locale for the study may therefore be applied to or reflect other NPCs in Kenya. The case studies therefore facilitated in-depth and contextual discussions of Neo-Pentecostalism's engagement with civic and public life issues.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.8.1 INTRODUCTION

In researching on Neo-Pentecostalism's engagement with civic and public life, the thesis undertook an interdisciplinary approach drawing from history, sociology, theology, media and gender studies. This approach is reflected throughout the literature review and conceptual framework. First, the thesis gives an overview of the history, growth and development of Pentecostalism worldwide and then focuses on Kenya in particular. Secondly, the characteristics, beliefs and ritual patterns are critically discussed. Thirdly, literature on the growing recognition of Pentecostalism in public life and their engagement with broader society is reviewed. These studies are nested in a broader landscape of literature on global Pentecostalism. The chapter concludes with a critical discussion of literature review as well as conceptual/theoretical framework used in the study.

1.8.2 AN OVERVIEW OF GLOBAL PENTECOSTAL AND CHARISMATIC MOVEMENTS

The emergence of modern Pentecostalism had earlier been located within religious events at the beginning of the twentieth century. Two interrelated events, one in Topeka, Kansas on 1 January 1901 under Charles Parham, and the other, the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles in April 1906 under a black Holiness preacher, William Seymour were traditionally recognized as the historical origins of these movements (Adogame 2010; Anderson 2004; Synan 2001; Burgess and Van der Maas 2002).

However, scholarship has demonstrated that Pentecostal outbursts occurred in other parts of the world, notably in Africa, Europe, Asia and Latin America contemporaneously and to some extent even well before the twentieth century. Within a few years of the aforementioned 1906 upsurge, Pentecostalism had in fact established itself worldwide. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, it had expanded to various nations (Anderson 2002). Today, majority of Pentecostal believers are found in Nonwestern countries, especially in the Global South. The PFRPL (2006) survey, which has analyzed of the religious demography of ten countries including Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa in the last one decade now, has demonstrated how Africa, alongside with Asia and Latin America are becoming significant global players in the democratization and appropriation of world Christianity (Adogame 2010:449).

Pentecostal and Charismatic movements are identified by their central emphasis on spiritual rebirth (baptism of the Holy Spirit)-evidenced by glossolalia, charismatic (spiritual) gifts, healing, deliverance, prophecy, exuberant worship and a distinctive language of experiential spirituality. (Adogame 2011). Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity has been characterized as a ‘frankly supernatural and experientially robust form of Christianity’ (Robbins 2004:120). It emphasizes on strict moralism, combined with exuberant and ecstatic prayer. At its core are four key doctrinal elements of doctrines, often regarded as ‘Full Gospel theology; that (a) Jesus offers salvation, (b) Jesus heals, (c) Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit and (d) Jesus is coming again (Dayton 1987:19-23; Robbins 2004:121).

While there is a huge amount of variation among different Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Africa today, in various countries and between urban and rural settings, there are, nonetheless a number of characteristics that are shaped by many of these churches throughout the continent. Scholars such as Allan Anderson *et al.* (2010) have distinguished and identified five major characteristics of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement. First, there is the new form the movement has given to the Christian message. This is with regard to emphasizing the role of the Holy Spirit. It has further created an environment in which the gifts of the spirit can be practiced.

Secondly, there is its surprising numerical growth, an achievement by itself that has baffled scholars of religion and social movements. Thirdly, is its flexibility? This is because throughout its expansion, this form of Christianity has shown itself to be gifted with the ability to adapt to the cultural heterogeneity while remaining loyal to its identity. It thereby represents a context in which globalization processes can be observed concretely.

Accordingly, it has produced a rich variety of manifestations, not only in its organization but also in its strategies and use of communication technologies. Fourthly, it has attracted a wide variety of audiences. The presence of a majority of female adherents is an important characteristic of Pentecostal audiences. Each of these characteristics identified above or some combination of them represent an attractive research theme. This study interrogates all of the above themes and much more.

1.8.3 LITERATURE REVIEW ON AFRICAN AND KENYAN PENTECOSTALISM

The literature on African Pentecostalism and Charismatic movements has grown steadily in the past two decades. Until recently, research on the phenomenon in Africa has been dominated by social scientists from Western countries. African scholars have now broken this monopoly to fill in this academic vacuum (Adogame 2010). Shepherd (2006: 33), reckons that, Westerners now seem aware that their monopoly on Pentecostal academia and theology needs to be broken. As such, they are now working to accommodate the work of Asian, Latin American and African Pentecostal scholars.

Paul Gifford is one of the pioneer scholars in researching extensively on African Christianity, particularly the phenomenon of African Pentecostalism (Gifford 1988; 1991; 1992; 1993; 1994; 1998; 1999; 2004; 2009). In these works, Gifford posits that African Pentecostalism is a North American import (Droogers 1999:10; cf Brower, Gifford and Rose 1996). Gifford also privileges external factors and holds the view that African Pentecostalism is both funded and influenced by the religious right of American Evangelicalism a venture that in his views are partly responsible for the exponential growth of African Pentecostalism.

While there is some merit in Gifford's standpoint about African Pentecostalism, his analysis does not point to a correct picture of the phenomenon. First, it is germane to point out that Gifford failed to recognize the colossal diversity and complexity of African Christianity. According to Adogame (2010:507), 'this failure sometimes resulted in wide generalizations

and insensitivity to the historical and cultural complexity of African Pentecostalism.’ This is because Pentecostalism exhibits a complex diversity that must be taken into account in any attempt at assessing its nature, vitality and impact in Africa and beyond.

Secondly, Gifford’s equating African Pentecostalism to North American conspiracy theories and the gospel of prosperity as an American export glosses over indigenous religious creativity and innovation. The perspective of this study is that while there are definitely external/western influences evident in African and Kenyan Pentecostalism, there are also many elements of contextualization, localization and adaptation to the local environment.

Another controversial aspect of Gifford’s thesis is his perspectives on the genesis of the prosperity gospel where he posits that the American origins of the ‘born again’ upsurge, particularly its emphasis on the Faith Gospel or what has come to be known as the ‘prosperity gospel is also an American cultural import. Again, Gifford’s thesis to a large extent is not informed by ethnographic research. This is because while many Pentecostal churches have borrowed the ideas and concepts of the faith gospel from North American Pentecostalism, they have also domesticated these ideologies to suit the local contexts.

Gifford’s works have come under heavy criticism for privileging external factors of African Pentecostalism at the expense of internal factors. He has also been largely criticized because his works largely provided a one-sided, simplistic picture of a rather complex phenomenon (see Hexham and Poewe

1997; Maxwell 1998; 2000; Kalu 2008). Yet Gifford was not alone in this view on African Pentecostalism. There are a handful of scholars who have adopted a similar theoretical approach to religion, thus falling into the academic trap of sociological reductionism (Adogame 2011).

Our perspective on this is that both internal and external factors are germane to the explanation of the Pentecostal phenomenon, but our conclusions must emanate from the data and not because of any outstanding stereotypes. While not denying the fact that some of the 'born again' churches' rely or depend heavily, on some external funding and resources as well as some Pentecostal elements such as the influence of the American Bible belt literature, many examples also abound of several Pentecostal movements in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and South Africa, which are self-financing and which demonstrate a high degree of indigenous religious vitality and innovation.

Some of these movements are very conscious of external influences and its implications for their churches. Field research indicates that Kenyan Pentecostalism while promoting some elements of the faith gospel is domesticated while the bulk of church finances come from local sources. These forms are discussed on chapters four and five.

Other interesting treatments of African Pentecostalism have taken up historical, phenomenological and theological focus, exploring issues of provenance, terminological and typological confusions, statistical evidence and debates, growth, development and global impact within specific African contexts, particularly the South African context (Allan Anderson 1999; 2004;

2005). Anderson (2004), for example adduces both internal and external roots in explaining the origin of African Pentecostalism. He essentially argues that the origins of African Pentecostalism appear to have come from North America and Europe as well as the African continent. The external roots he explains are also “predominantly African cultural features,” evident in the leadership of William Seymour, whose spirituality lay in the African American roots (Anderson 1999:221).

Anderson further contends that one of the most outstanding features of Pentecostals in the third world, Africa in particular, is their religious creativity and spontaneously indigenous character, a characteristic held as an ideal by Western missions for over a century.” However, his combination of AICs and Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, both new and old varieties, as different expressions of Pentecostalism in Africa underscores Anderson’s theological persuasions as opposed to a sociological definition of Pentecostalism. Yet debates on whether AICs are equivalent to Pentecostalism are still ongoing and largely inconclusive.

Other interesting treatments of African Pentecostalism include Karla Poewe (1994), Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe (1997), Ruth Marshall-Fratani(1998), Birgit Meyer(1998), David Maxwell (1998), Harri Englund (1995, 2000), Rosalind Hackett 1998; Gerrie Ter Haar (1999, 2003,2004, 2005), and Ter Haar and Stephen Ellis (2004). These works carried out by historians and anthropologists are more tempered than earlier studies, have yielded tremendous data, and enriched the study of African Pentecostalism, this study in particular.

These works have focused on various dimensions and themes of Pentecostalism in specific countries yielding a lot of data on varied themes. However, one characteristic of these works is that it has been carried out by western-based scholars, mainly anthropologists who were also among the pioneers in the study of African Pentecostalism. Thus, it seems that research on the African Pentecostal and Charismatic phenomenon has grown steadily in the past two or so decades. It was only recently that African scholars joined western-based scholars to seriously engage Pentecostal scholarship, thereby helping fill in this academic vacuum. All these works have greatly influenced this study.

In the late 1990s onwards, a new crop of African scholars sprang up to document rich case studies in various African contexts. West African Pentecostal guru, the late Professor Ogbu Kalu (1998; 2005; 2008), led this small but powerful group of African scholars. His works and mentorship inspired a new generation of scholars who generated tremendous works on the African Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. This has led to the emergence of volumes such as the seminal *African Christianity Series* (2005: 2008) edited by Ogbu Kalu. Other notable works include Mathews Ojo (1988a, 1988b, 2006), Kingsley Larbi (2001); Cephas Omenyo (2002) and Asamoah-Gyadu (2004).

These works are remarkable instances of how African scholars are contributing to the historiography of African Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. They have also shown serious commitment to the study of the African Pentecostal phenomena not just in the African continent but also in the

African Diaspora. Many of these works emphasize on the complex internal dynamics and indigenous creativities that characterize the contemporary forms and structures of the Pentecostal and Charismatic phenomenon. They have also changed the course of the study of Pentecostalism generally.

Mathews Ojo (1988a, 1988b, 2006) is undoubtedly a pioneering figure in the study of Charismatic movements and early Pentecostalism in Nigeria. *The End Time Army* is an in-depth study of charismatic movements in modern Nigeria, a religious phenomenon that emerged in western Nigeria in the 1970s. In this volume, Ojo explores the significant impact of Charismatic movements on the contextualization of Christianity in Africa. He observes that these movements have attained social prominence in Nigeria because of their appropriation of the media, and because of the attention given to them by the secular media as well as their large, mostly educated youth membership.

Similarly and from an insiders' perspective, Kingsley Larbi (2001) dealt extensively with the origins, forms and development of Pentecostalism in Ghana, and explored the continuity and discontinuity between Ghanaian Pentecostalism and the indigenous religious imagination, as well as their peculiarities. Larbi's work was pivotal in privileging African indigenous creativity and appropriation of Christianity in Ghana. Cephas Omenyo (2002) on the other hand explores the Charismatic/Pentecostal phenomenon in Ghanaian Mainline churches as one of the most challenging issues of Christianity in Ghana.

Asamoah-Gyadu's (2005) *African Charismatics* represents a fascinating attempt at reconstructing the complexity of indigenous Pentecostalism in

Ghana. By employing historical, phenomenology, and theological approaches, the book provides sufficient insights into the dynamism of contemporary Ghanaian Christianity. Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) further and aptly demonstrates how some “imported” concepts employed in describing and analyzing new dimensions of African Christianity could be less informing and more concealing.

These works underline the complex internal dynamics and indigenous creativity that characterize the contemporary forms and structure of the Charismatic and Pentecostal phenomenon particularly in West Africa. These works are supplemented by works of non-African scholars such as such as Allan Anderson, who are keen on appreciating African creativity. Their works have advanced theories of the African origin of the movement (Kalu 2008; Asamoah-Gyadu 2005).

From the foregoing discussions, it is evident that rapidly emerging literature by African scholars has served to complement extant literature on the phenomenon, in a way that challenges the dominance of the field by largely European social scientists. Yet despite these seminal works, much research on African Pentecostalism’s origins and developments remains to be done. Some regions such as West and South Africa are better researched than the East and Central African regions.

Notable works in the Southern African regions include works by Harri Englund (2001) and Rijk Van Dijk (1992; 1998; 1997) concentrating on the Southern African states of Malawi and Botswana. David Maxwell (2001; 2002; 2006) concentrated on Zimbabwe while Allan Anderson (1979; 2001; 2002;

2004; 2005) dominated the South African region. In spite of their theological, phenomenological, anthropological and historical perspectives, these works have dealt extensively with the origins, forms and developments of Pentecostalism in Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria, Malawi, Botswana, Zimbabwean and South African Pentecostalism while also exploring Charismatic and Pentecostal phenomena in Mainline churches. The increasing of literature on Pentecostalism particularly by African scholars has yielded tremendous empirical data and has greatly influenced this study.

Unlike West and Southern African regions, the phenomenon of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in the East African region, Kenya in particular, is not very well developed. This is despite its significant growth and proliferation in the last four or so decades. A few scholars including Philomena Mwaura's (2002; 2005a; 2005b; 2008; 2010; 2011) have explored various aspects of the movement especially its gender perspective, relation with the media and its features and orientations.

Similarly, Parsitau (2006; 2007; 2008, 2009, 2010a&b, 2011a & b, 2012 a, b, c, d, e) and Parsitau & Mwaura 2010 a & b; Parsitau & Mwaura 2012 a & b) have discussed the interface and interactions between Pentecostals and music, media and popular culture, gender, politics and trans-nationalism. Other themes covered by these scholars include the pentecostalization of mainline Christianity in Kenya, faith based humanitarianism, and the roles of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) in post conflict situations and more recently, on constitutionalism and Christian-Muslim relations.

Colin Smith (2007) explores the proliferation of Pentecostal churches in

the informal settlements in Kibera while Yvan Droz (2010) examines the upsurge of Pentecostalism in Nairobi. Other significant works include Aylward Shorter and John Njiru (2003) which examines the proliferation of New Religious Movements (NRMs) in Kenya. Travis Kavula (2008); Babere Chacha (2010); Parsitau and Kinyanjui (2009); Parsitau (2011; 2012); Gregory Deacons (2013) all examine the dynamics of Kenyan Pentecostal clergy and their involvement with politics.

However, while there is dearth of literature on Kenyan Pentecostalism particularly with respect of their roles in public life, several unpublished Master's and Doctoral theses address the phenomenon of Kenyan Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. For example, Zacharia Samita's (2004) doctoral thesis provides a rich survey of crusades in Nairobi, its environs, and their contribution to church growth in Kenya. Samita's thesis further delved into the roles of Christian crusades in contributing to evangelism and revival in Kenya. Kasiera's (1981) doctoral thesis documents the origins of Pentecostal Christianity in Western Kenya. This thesis was the first of its kind to document the history of Kenyan Pentecostalism from early in its infancy and how it later on developed and spread in western Kenya.

From the above analysis, it appears that West Africa remains particularly well documented and in this respect, scholars from Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon and the West African Diaspora have ensured that West African Pentecostalism is well documented. The Southern African region is also well documented with scholars such as Anderson (2005) being the lead scholar in this field. The East African region is not very well researched as we discuss

here below hence the significance of this study.

1.8.4 LITERATURE REVIEW ON PENTECOSTALISM IN CIVIC AND PUBLIC LIFE

The last 20 years or so have seen an increasingly growing body of literature on Christianity and public life in Africa. Particularly notable is literature on Christian churches in relation to politics, democracy, civil society and socio-economic development, social capital, civic engagement and other significant issues in civic and public life. The explicit involvement of Africa's churches in the public sphere was drawn to the world's attention in the late 1980s and 1990s when clergy from mainline churches began to hold national conferences to question the excesses of dictatorial regimes.

During this period, general scholarship including works by Gifford (1998; 1999), David Martin (1990), James Dodson (1997) and Paul Freston (1998) among others tended to focus on Christianity in relation to politics and the democratization process. Many of these studies also attempted to shed light on the churches involvement such as in Africa's second liberation. Leading in this field especially in Africa were perspectives from Paul Gifford and John Lonsdale (2005) who researched on the roles of African Christianity in politics at that time.

Gifford (1995:5) for instance extolled the salient role and involvement of mainline churches in Africa's second liberation, particularly in countries such as Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi and Zambia. Gifford notably praised the remarkable roles of church clergy in Benin, Madagascar, Malawi, Zambia, Uganda, and Kenya. He argued that these clergy challenged the political *status*

quo of the day and created space for masses to hold their political leaders to account. Gifford contrasted the role of mainline churches that have challenged Africa's dictators to what he calls the newer Evangelical and Pentecostal churches that opposed political reforms and supported dictatorial regimes.

Gifford was however dismissive of the role of Pentecostalism in the democratization process and tended to privilege churches at the expense of the Pentecostal churches mainline. Indeed, in his identification and analysis of the three areas of the public sphere—the political, the economic, and cultural—in which churches could contribute to strengthening civil society, Gifford is highly dismissive of the roles of Pentecostal Christianity but approving of the roles of mainline Christianity as custodians of democracy and as leading social providers.

Taking a political economy approach, however, Jeff Haynes (1996:123-125) argues that mainstream religious leaders in Africa actually collaborate with the state to achieve a hegemonic ideology that diffuses or reduces any serious political challenges to the status quo. Rather than being this alternative voice that is being presented of Christianity in Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi and Zambia, Haynes understood these as exceptions rather than the norm. Indeed, Haynes avers that Paul Gifford's (2004) analysis of the church in Liberia during the reign of Sergeant Samuel Doe shows that the Church was often complacent and appropriated by Doe's government to serve its ulterior motives. The perspective of this study is that while mainline churches played salient roles in Africa's second liberation, Pentecostals also played significant though ambivalent roles and exerted influence through prayers and spiritual

warfare rhetoric.

At or after the strand of scholarship discussed above, new scholarship emerged that revolved around these churches as key elements within civil society.^{xiv} This is because religious groupings are widely accepted to be the strongest form of associational life in contemporary Africa. Civil society is also assuming an increasingly critical role in the creation of modern democratic states in Africa according to Gifford (1998). While majority of these studies focused on Africa's churches, particularly mainline churches, recent Pentecostal historiography has focused on the contributions of these churches in the public sphere as groups within civil society (Ojo 1998).

Many of studies argued that despite the tremendous growth and expansion, the NPCs as key elements within civil society their precise contributions are largely unknown. Paul Gifford (1999) further points out that Pentecostalism helps to build strong, autonomous civil societies. This is because in these churches, individuals learn how to function democratically. They elect their own officials and they learn to exercise leadership themselves, thus developing leadership skills.

They also learn to participate in and run meetings, to conduct business, to handle money, to budget, to plan, to compromise, to formulate and own a course of action, to implement it, to critic results and to change direction in the light of experience. Beyond that, they inculcate norms of behavior and educate members in such matters as household budgeting, social comportment and table manners. Gifford, however, does not see all these skills acquired by Pentecostals translating into socio-political action except that it nurtures socio-

economic skills and ideals that can help them in the running of their lives, homes, finances and even churches.

Gifford (1999) further adds that in NPCs people learnt the bottom line skills of a modern market economy. They also learnt to communicate a simple message; to organize promotional efforts, make lists, use telephones, to solve personality clashes in task-orientated groups, to coordinate efforts, both horizontally and vertically. They also learnt to set goals and reach them, and to come to meetings on time, run them efficiently and then implement decisions made there. Accordingly, this training constitutes a concentrated crash course in what millions of others who fill the lower and middle echelons of modern corporations learn at business schools and sales institutes

Other scholars have concentrated on how these churches contribute to socio-economic skills and ideals. Harvey Cox (1996: 234-36) for example shows how these churches inculcate economic skills to their adherents, and points to the transformation brought about by Pentecostal churches in South Korea. These skills and many other Pentecostal practices according to him have implications for civic culture.

Taking into account Pentecostalism's western origin, and looking back to Max Weber's (1946, 1958) and Thompson's (1966) works on Methodism, scholars have speculated on the extent to which the Pentecostal culture can drive converts into modernity, introducing them to individualism and preparing them for lives in the global economy (Robbins 2004; Martin 1990, 2001). One of the key questions regarding the impact of Pentecostalism as groups within the civil society and particularly on social and economic developments is

whether or not it can be seen to bring a 'Protestant Ethics' to its followers. For example, Bernice Martin has called the spread of Pentecostalism in Latin America a new mutation of the Protestant Ethic' (Martin 1995; 1998; 2006; and Comaroff & Comaroff 2000; 2001).

Coined by the German Sociologist Max Weber 1864-1920), the term *Protestant Ethics* refers to an ethic that directly and indirectly, gives spiritual sanctions to the rational pursuit of economic gain. As set out by Peter Berger (1993), the Protestant Ethics is characterized by a this-worldly or worldly accepting ascetism; a disciplined and rational approach to work and to social activity, including family life alongside this is a deferral of gratification and instant consumption. These habits he suggests, promoted savings, capital accumulation and economic advancements. Berger further adds that Max Weber also emphasized the education of children and the propensity to create voluntary associations of non-elites people as characteristic of the Protestant Ethics.

Central to this ethics was a particular theological interpretation of salvation that needs to be further explained here. Max Weber argued that the 'Protestant Ethics' was a major driving force behind the development of capitalism. After this considerable initial impact, the Protestant Ethics gradually declined, and today, is present only in some form in Protestantism. In Pentecostalism, however, there is at least a parallel interpretation, namely that the Holy Spirit, after baptism, can display gifts of mercy and salvation and that signs of these gifts are also found in demonstrations of exemplary behavior, propensity, and progress in this world (Berger 1993).

According to Berger (1993:30), contemporary Pentecostalism in Latin America is associated with a desire for education, a strong work ethic, individualism, and an affinity with democratic politics. Berger refers to 'the wildfire expansion of Pentecostalism as a cultural revolution that promotes personal discipline and honesty, proscribes alcohol and extra marital sex, dismantles the machismo culture and teaches ordinary people to create and run their own grassroots institutions.' The roles and contribution of women in society are recognized and expanded, as the importance of education of children. Women take on leadership roles within the family, domesticating their husbands.

Regarding Africa, several African scholars have claimed that Pentecostal Christianity leads to increased entrepreneurial activity and saving, as Weber's thesis would suggest (Cf Garner 2000; Maxwell 1998; Meyer 1998; 2007). A study carried out by CDE 2008 in South Africa found out that the social and moral of conversion to Pentecostalism are important. The ethos of what Max Weber calls the 'Protestant Ethics' shows itself to be remarkably helpful to people in the throes of rapid modernization and the 'take off stage' of modern economic growth.

The same ethos also continues to evince its time-honored affinities with the spirit of capitalism, with individualism, with a hunger for education and last but not least with a favorable disposition towards democratic politics. These affinities though unintended, are the result of the unanticipated behavioral consequences of both doctrine and religious experience (Peter Berger 1993).

Recent studies now focus on the roles of NPCs on national economies

particularly the informal economy (Meagher, 2009). By fostering an ethics of accumulation through skills and hard work, it is suggested that Pentecostalism recreates an alternative economic strategy for its members and society. It is further suggested that Pentecostalism is shaping economic ethics and political possibilities in Africa, and points to the emergence of new forms of agency from below (Meagher, 2009).

To start with, NPCs focus on disembodiment of believers from spiritual and economic pressure of communal obligation, and embedding them in an ethics described by Ruth Marshall (1998:282) as ‘a doctrine of morally-controlled materialism.’ Accordingly, Pentecostalism’s strict moral norms contribute to processes of accumulation and social cohesion in a context of intense hardship and social disruptions. Conversion to Pentecostalism, therefore, appears to shape alternative ethics of economic conduct.

All these perspectives have greatly influenced this study by providing rationale for understanding the implications of conversion to Pentecostalism for civic and public engagement particularly its theoretical orientation on the discourse on social and spiritual capital. The perspective of this study is that many elements of the Protestant Ethics have influenced the creation of social and spiritual capital in JIAM, MMC and FEM all the three churches as will be discussed in chapters five and six.

The studies discussed above were followed by another wave of studies that focused on the socio-political roles and significance of Pentecostal Christianity. Partly, this reflects historical developments after the second liberation of the 1990s (Ojo; 2004). Scholarly interests have focused on the

social and political roles and impact of African Pentecostalism.

Ogbu Kalu (1998, 2000, 2002, 20003, 2006, and 2008) is undoubtedly the pioneering figure in this field and has extensively researched on the social implications of African Pentecostalism. Kalu also writes extensively on the role of African Christianity in the public sphere. Many of his works have focused on a broad range of issues such as identity, agency, gender and authority, media and popular culture, political discourses, and Pentecostal immigrant religiosity. He concludes that African Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity, has had an enormous social and political impact on the African continent.

Anthropological studies have also important perspectives of the roles of Neo-Pentecostals in civic and public life. These works have argued that religion and politics cannot be treated as different entities in Africa. Mathews Ojo (1998; 2004; 2005); Ellis and Ter Haar (2004); Harri Englund (2011); Marshall (2009); and Barbara Bompani (2011) all intimate that politics is not only about the formal activities of elected representatives of government servants, but is also integral to informal activities and less analyzed organizations. In other words, ordinary people also generate politics from below, through the creation of the political discourses that are integral to religious community life at local level. This does not necessarily imply engaging with institutions but rather, they seek instead to promote democratic values such as citizenship, social justice and civil rights.

Stephen Ellis and Ter Harr (2004) argue that there is need to enlarge African political practice to include non-political practice especially its

ideological significance. They note that much academic work on religion and politics in Africa focuses on institutions and not on religious ideology or religious ideas. They suggest that greater attention needs to be paid to understanding religious thought in Africa, and the way it shapes and explains political action.

According to these scholars, popular stories about witches, prophets, miracles, or the use of witchcraft, spirit mediums or diviners, are part of the political vernacular in different parts of Africa. Furthermore, a definition of religion as the belief “in an invisible world of spirits” spirits that have the power to make changes in the visible world is enacted or understood. These scholars used examples from across the continent to illustrate how religious thought is intertwined with political practice and how notions of political power are embedded in religious ideas. These perspectives have greatly shaped this study.

The importance of understanding Pentecostal political practice is demonstrated in the study by Harri Englund’s (2000) of Pentecostalism in Malawi. He argues that while some Malawian Pentecostals are apolitical, this does not represent the reversal of democratic achievements. Rather, he suggests that the ideas of spiritual and corporeal unity contain their own tools for an effective critique of power.

This helps to point to the complexity of interpreting Pentecostal understandings of democracy and other forms of engagement. Harri Englund (2011) adopts the notion of public culture in the study of religion and politics in Africa because it is broader in perspectives. This study borrows from this

perspective in respect of the notion of public culture.

Ruth Fratani-Marshall (1998:278-315) insists that Pentecostal discourse on current economic and legitimacy crisis perceives power as being under-girded by a spiritual force and entails a fairly bold attack on the states. She posits that in its engagement with local forms of knowledge and practice, Pentecostalism develops an ongoing critical debate about government, one that not only indicts the immorality and inequality at the heart of domination, but also does this by using a language and imagery that resonates with the imagination of the dominated.

According to her, Pentecostalism is a political force not merely because of successful competition within the religious field, providing the spiritual and material benefits others did not. Its radical success in conversion has as much to do with the fact that it re-conceptualizes the moral order, claiming a redemptive vision of citizenship in which the moral government of the self is linked to the power to influence the conduct of others

Similar arguments have been fronted by Dena Freeman (2012) who focused on the political dimension of African Pentecostalism, which she claims reflects contours of political theologies. In addition, the diverse spiritual mappings undertaken by Pentecostals coupled with the rhetoric of spiritual warfare decode the political terrain as a battle between God and the devil. Pentecostals assign an analytical framework for addressing the complexity of African politics by combating evil. These semantics of intervention into daily political affairs used in strategic prayer conventions illustrate a self-image as a political force. Also and in the last one or so decades, Africa has witnessed the

emergence of self-styled prophets who are having real social and political influence in Africa through prophecies, prayer, values, peace-building and social mobilization

Ruth Marshall (2009) offers a study of the political significance of NPCs in Nigeria along similar lines. The key question in her work and similar scholarship are not so much whether or not and how Pentecostalism contributes to democracy but how democracy itself is appropriated and renegotiated and how Pentecostal Christianity and its political spirituality reimagine the political. Marshall's analysis specifically focuses on how the Pentecostal programme of born again conversion is concerned with moral subjectivity, that is, the transformation and control of individual conduct and the creation of a particular type of moral subjects.

It is essential to their broader political projects, because the transformation of individuals is considered key to healing the land and building a Christian nation. As much as Pentecostalism is concerned with individuals, it presents a political theology, which considers a primary field of cosmological battle between God and the devil. Hence, the discourse on spiritual warfare as a way to combat the influence of Satan in the life of the nation enters the public domain for example debates on prayer, spiritual mapping and deliverance services. More fundamentally, it reshapes the public sphere itself into the spiritual domain, challenging classic sociological distinction such as between the public and private religion and the secular.

This study is premised on the understanding that Pentecostal political practice is broader and transcends direct political engagement. The study also

focuses on the roles of prayer, prophesy and the rhetoric of spiritual warfare as opening new vistas for understanding Pentecostal political practice. From the aforementioned, it is clear that Pentecostal studies are now widened into a broader interest in the role in the public sphere.

The civic and public roles and impact of Pentecostal Christianity in Africa has been the subject of recent scholarly investigations (Anderson 2004; Asamoah-Gyadu 2004; Gifford 2009; Deacon 2013; Millar & Yamamori 2006; Meyer & Moors 2006; Adogame 2008). These studies have argued that the tremendous growth of African Pentecostalism seemingly go together with an increased influence of religion in the public sphere. Gifford (2009) delve into the roles of Kenyan different Christianities in civic and public life.

On their civic and public roles, he argues that these new churches have a rather unique agenda, one element of which is to walk the corridors of power. However, he also censures them for not having a conscious social agenda. He argues that one reason why Neo-Pentecostals are not contributing meaningfully to issues in civic and public life is their lack of a 'sound biblical theology of social concern' as well as lack of proper theological training.

While there is some truth to Gifford's analysis, his perspectives on the roles of NPCs in public and civic life is not only dismissive but also inadequate and simplistic too. Although he has been able to produce more nuanced accounts of Pentecostal diversity and socio-political initiatives, he has continued to find Pentecostalism problematic in its impact on political debates about the need for structural change in Kenya's governance and social economic developments. In chapter five, we shall examine these dynamics and

show how and to what extent neo-Pentecostals in Kenya are socially, economically and politically engaged in issues within civic and public life domains.

Gregory Deacon (2013) postulates that Neo-Pentecostalism provides Africa's elites with an avenue for legitimation of authority and wealth and to some extent, bolsters power and authority. Simultaneously, ordinary people look for control over their lives; -realities that help explain the explosion of Neo-Pentecostal beliefs across sub-Saharan Africa. Deacon argues that Pentecostal pastors have developed the doctrine of the personal or individual predestination through divine revelation, which promises candidates of election victory.

According to Deacon, the religious dimension has, therefore, become a register of legitimation of political power with an impact on popular imagination. However, this also leads to the question of not just the role of NPCs in election but also how politicians seek legitimacy from Pentecostal clergy. Another question is how these clergy particularly self-styled prophets cultivate the persona that makes them well sought by politicians. In so doing, they forge new relations, symbiotic relationships in which both exploit each other for power, legitimacy and respectability and influence for financial privileges, access to state power and personal interests.

According to Deacon, while Neo-Pentecostalism can offer defence mechanisms or strategies that assist with survival, it rarely leads to meaningful socio-economic or political change. Instead, it tends to detract from a class-based identification of and opposition to structural violence, inequality,

corruption and oppression, and often contributes to a general sense of uncertainty and insecurity regarding relevant and appropriate responses. The outcome is an unsteady reinforcement of unequal relations of power and wealth.

This is further reinforced by the fact that political elites regularly reach out to and are influenced by Neo-Pentecostal and Evangelical churches as they seek to emphasize the legitimacy of their position and policies, and be or at least be seen to be good Christians (Gregory 2013). This development will be expounded further in chapters five and six when we interrogate the way in which religion informs the spaces and symbolism that are available to politicians and vice versa.

Other studies have focused on the Pentecostalisation of the public sphere and governance. The pentecostalization of the public sphere draws attention to the processes of negotiations and transformation within Neo-Pentecostalism. It also highlights the multiplicity of public spheres in contemporary societies. It is related to different levels at which Pentecostalism goes public-not just the level of what usually is called politics in the narrow sense of the word but much broader and more diverse from public space to the mass media and the digital blogosphere.

Alongside scholarship on the pentecostalisation of the public sphere is a new focus on these churches as sources of social and spiritual capital. In this respect, scholars have studied religious congregations and social capital. For example, Putnam (2000) has argued that a vibrant civic life is important in maintaining democratic society. Researchers who have studied social capital

argue that religious organizations have certain characteristics that give them the capacity to strengthen civil society.

Arguing that civil society “is a site of negotiation and contestation of social existence” Elias Bongmba (2006: 231) has claimed that “religion serves as a vital element in a constellation of groups that form civil society and that is has the potential to contribute significantly to transformation in Africa.” This is because in religious organizations, congregations learn civic skills such as the art of public speaking, committee work that they can use in other social arenas.

Greenly (1997) has observed that religious congregations also possess dense social networks that facilitate civic behaviors such as community volunteerism; they foster bridging social capital that encourages members to become more engaged in their communities. Another institutional characteristic that religious organizations possess and one that is likely to have an influence on the strength of civil society is their tendency to collaborate with other service organizations.

These characteristics of the NPCs and other religious organizations can contribute significantly to our understanding of the civic virtues of Neo-Pentecostalism in Kenya. It provides further insights into this complex interaction among Pentecostals, civic engagement and the democratization process in Kenya.

1.8.5 REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON NEO-PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGIES OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Scholars have also sought to understand the rationale for Neo-Pentecostal engagements with issues in civic and public life. Many have

advanced emerging theologies of engagement and social action. Examples include Ogbu Kalu (2006; 2008; Ojo (2004) and Asamoah-Gyadu (2004). Kalu (2006) advances the emergent Neo-Pentecostal Theology of public engagement and argues that Pentecostals are involved through prayers and prophecy.

Earlier Kalu (2003) documents the political activities of Nigerian Pentecostals particularly those of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN). Using the example of Nigerian Intercessors for Africa, Kalu points out that Pentecostal churches have a mission to change the lives of nations through prayer. Kalu further observes about the emerging roles of prophecies as a new form of engagement and argues that prophecies are used by Pentecostals to engage the public sphere.

Kalu remarks that African Pentecostal political practice has become more socially engaged in many parts of Africa. He contends that such churches are not only engaging in politics today but are also attacking social, political structures using non-political activities such as prayer and prophesy while also embracing a multi-faceted and holistic response to the human predicament using the resources of the gospel. Here Kalu propagates the emerged Pentecostal theology of engagement. He perceives this trend as an emergent exponent of a political theology that could soon flow into mainstreams of the movement. His perspectives have enhanced our understanding of Pentecostal engagement with public life in Africa.

African Pentecostal scholars such as Ojo (2004) and Asamoah-Gyadu (2004) share Kalu's views and Adogame (2005b) who have propagated a Pentecostal theology of engagement in which prayer and prophesy are used as

political praxis. Asamoah-Gyadu (2004, 2005) writes about the theology of transformation of Pentecostals in Ghana in which they have elasticized and transformed their engagement with public space in a conscious attempt at coping with the country's socio-economic and political realities. This theology keenly emphasizes personal transformation and individual empowerment.

It is based on the notion that the constitutive act of the Pentecostal movement as Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) points out is the offer of a direct and particularly intense encounter with God that introduces profound changes in the life and circumstances of the person who experiences it. "The Pentecostals argue that the Holy Spirit, who is God's empowering presence, is the one who facilitates the direct character of encounter. A sense of transformation consequently takes place at the personal and communal levels, including a new dynamism in worship inspired by the Holy Spirit. The foremost theological emphasis of this Pentecostal theology is therefore the trans-formative encounter with God who is "holy" and who is spirit."

Mathews Ojo (2004) was among the first African scholars to attribute a public role to African Pentecostalism and has always insisted that Pentecostals contribute to public life even through such activities as prayer and intercession. In an article on "Pentecostals and Public Accountability in Nigeria", Ojo (2004) argues that as major elements within the civil society, Pentecostals have become active actors when it comes to the interplay between religion and politics. He argues that Pentecostals in Nigeria are civically engaged in the Nigerian public sphere; the church has produced a huge Christian constituency that can influence socio-political issues in the country.

Other theologies that have emerged in Asia, Latin America Miller & Yamamori (2007) and Africa (Kalu 2003; 2005; 2008; Asamoah-Gyadu (2004) and Ojo (2004) complement these works. These diverse efforts to develop praxis for social action appear to have created space for considering Pentecostals responsibilities in public life. Since then, the academia has witnessed a real boom in Pentecostal studies particularly literature on how these church engage in the public sphere using spiritual resources. This is one of the objectives of this study.

1.8.6 PENTECOSTALISM MEDIA AND PUBLIC LIFE

Scholars of African Pentecostalism have observed the dominance of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in the public sphere, particularly in the public media where they actively broadcast their religious messages on radio, TV, the print media, world wide web and social media among others (De Witte 2003; Meyer 2004; Adogame 2005; Asamoah-Gyadu 2005; Hackett 1998; Gifford 2004; Ukah 2007; Mwaura 2008 and Parsitau 2008). Televised church services, radio sermons and phone in-talk shows, audio taped sermons and gospel music now occupy a central place in most countries' mass media-scenes (Parsitau 2006; 2008). In so doing, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches have successfully used mass media to establish a prominent presence in the public sphere.

Scholars have begun to examine the role of the media in the construction of identities, which extend beyond the nation state and even reject the notion of nation-states (Marshall 1998). More recent works by Ukah (2003) and Gifford (2004) have explored the growing fixation of West African Pentecostals with

success and material prosperity. However, scholarship on Pentecostals and their obsession with consumption and appropriation of mass media have overlooked the role of the mass media in propelling the Pentecostals into the public sphere.

All these perspectives on Pentecostalism and mass media and public life have greatly informed this study, which considers the implications of Neo-Pentecostal Christianity in Kenya appropriation of mass media communication technologies for civic and public life. Central to the argument is the view that Neo-Pentecostalism heavily appropriate mass media communication technologies to pervade the public sphere.

However, while the scholars mentioned above have all recognized the empowering potential of mass media for Neo-Pentecostal Christianity, few examined the implications of this heavy appropriation for issues in civic and public life and how this has propelled these churches and their founders into the public sphere. The present study sought to bridge this gap by examining the heavy appropriation of mass media communication technologies by NPCs and how this has propelled them into the public sphere. This is very critical in this study given that all the three case studies under focus heavily appropriate mass media communication technologies.

1. 9 PENTECOSTALISM, GENDER AND CIVIC AND PUBLIC LIFE

Several studies have highlighted the challenges of and successes of female participation in NPCs in Africa. In the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, many studies document the view that Pentecostalism has transformed gender relations in Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana (Bolaji Bateye 2001; 2002; Diedre

Crumbley 1992; Brigit Sackey 2006; Ruth Marshall-Fratani 1998; Olayinka 2000; 2010; Spinks 2003; Jane Soothill 2006; Isabel Mukonyora 2007; Mwaura 2002; 2005; 2008; Mwaura and Parsitau 2010; 2012; Parsitau 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013).

Sackey (2006) examines the changing gender relations in Ghanaian Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, bringing out some of the salient themes that show how women have managed to make a breakthrough in the religious sphere in spite of the challenges created by gender hierarchies prevalent in patriarchal cultures. She also demonstrates how women are gaining strong social popularity and pervasive influence in Ghana in particular and West Africa more generally through their role as church founders, religious leaders, healers, mothers, social workers, politicians, prophetesses as well as partners in development. She also emphasizes the ways in which women are reclaiming leadership in some Western African societies. Among the several examples she cites is Grace Tani, who founded the church of the Twelve Apostles, the first Ghanaian spiritual church.

Jane Soothill (2006) who examined the gendered, social and spiritual power in Ghanaian Christianity shares similar view. Soothill introduces the concept of gender complementarity with Ghanaian Pentecostalism arguing that although the woman is subordinate to her husband in the home, he has responsibility to respect her and treat her with consideration because married couples are encouraged to work together as partners in the domestic sphere. The author further postulates that Ghanaian Pentecostal Christianity is transforming gendered discourses on men, marriage and family life, thereby

transforming the spheres of family, society and politics as well as the role of spiritual power in interpreting gendered social change.

Mwaura (2005) stresses the positive impact of AICs and Pentecostal Christianity on women in Kenya. Her key observation, echoed in many other studies, is that women are crucial to the founding, expansion and sustenance of these churches. The gist of her argument is that Pentecostals stand out in this respect because they have been particularly adept at using female talent. Consequently, they have opened up space for women to serve in a variety of religious roles.

David Maxwell (2006) contends that in Southern as well as Central Africa, Pentecostalism has given women legitimate reasons to challenge patriarchal authority. Assessing the impact of Pentecostal Christianity on women in Africa, Spinks (2005) argues that it offers women an alternative community, a particularly significant feature in unstable states dominated by churches that subscribe to patriarchal messages. According to Spinks, the opportunity for everyone to access gifts of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostalism provides a source of human dignity and spiritual purpose in the face of often-degrading circumstances and potent forms of activity and leadership denied in other spheres of life.

The work of Ruth Marshall-Fratani (1998) observes that 'born again' doctrine and practice are transforming the spheres of marriage, family and sexuality in ways that are attractive to young urban women in Nigeria. She explains that the Pentecostal discourse constitutes a powerful resource in the hand of women because born again women are more likely to be able to escape

the exchange of sexual favor, for example, and thereby regain a degree of control over their sexuality. A consistent finding of all these studies is that Pentecostal Christianity contains within its theology and practices the power to transform gender relations and gender specific behavior.

Studies by Anne Drogus (1994); Cornelia Flora (1975); Bernice Martin (1990); Mariz (1994); Campos (1998); Cox (1996); Cleary (1997) and many others have argued that in developing parts of the world, and Latin America specifically, the family tends to be critically important and is the main source of security for many women. For example, Brusco (1993) who conducted fieldwork in Colombia found out that Latin American Pentecostal churches have changed the position of women enormously.

Brusco found that Pentecostal conversion transformed traditional gender relations by giving women a moral authority in the home to challenge their husbands' drinking, gambling, or adultery (behavior that is collectively referred to as machismo in Latin America). This machismo behavior was cited by many women in her study as a big impediment for their families' well-being. Brusco's claims are corroborated by other scholars such as (Cleary 1999; Gill 1990; Martin 1990; Cox 1996) among others.

Works from North America, Southern Europe, the Asian Pacific Rim and Africa have shown that the relationship between Pentecostalism, women and patriarchy is more complex than was previously thought and that women have had to circumvent and navigate this structure for their own benefits. Examples of these works include (Griffith 1997; Cucchiari 1996; Chong 2006 and Crumbley 1992).

Griffith's (1997) study of Women Aglow Interdenominational Fellowship illustrates the meaning and multiple interpretations of the concept of submission. She describes how submission can domesticate a husband and channel his power into wise and tender protection of his wife. In this most radical sense, submission is a strategy to help the relatively powerless recover their power and create space within which they can feel both fulfilled and free.

To Pentecostal women, therefore, submission is a meaningful source of religious and social power. Griffith documents how the ways in which women's engagement in prayer and religious practice enables them to reframe their narratives and identities, leading to healing and transformation. For Women Aglow Interdenominational Fellowship, surrender and obedience to God ultimately leads to freedom.

Other studies also reveal ways in which Pentecostalism is giving women voice in the public sphere (Espinosa 2002; Parsitau 2011, 2012; Hollingsworth & Browning 2010). For example, Espinosa (2002) shows how Pentecostal Latino women living in America often exercise public, vocal and official leadership in their churches. His findings highlight how women have been encouraged to exercise official spiritual leadership and to give prophetic voice through formal ministerial and theological training and ordination.

He concludes that these women believe they have real power to transform lives and communities. Others have argued that what did influence changes in social relations and the ability of women to assume public roles and responsibility was the knowledge and skills that Pentecostal women learnt through their involvement in the movement (see for Parsitau & Mwaura 2010

and Parsitau 2011; 2012).

All these perspectives on Pentecostalism and gender have greatly informed this study, which considers the gender implications of Neo-Pentecostal Christianity in Kenya. Central to the argument is the view that Pentecostalism appeals to women because it provides women an opportunity to contest civic and public life. However, while the scholars mentioned above have all recognized the empowering potential of Pentecostal Christianity, few examined the implications of the massive growth of Pentecostalism for not just gender empowerment but also their contributions in civic and public life in Africa. This is very critical in this study given that two of the three case studies focus are founded and led by women.

1.9.1 THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Although this study could have been informed by psychological, sociological as well as theological theories, social capital theories were found most suitable. This section, therefore, explores social capital theories in relation to other forms of capital-human, social, cultural and religious. We attempt to tease out the public, civic, social and economic consequences of social capital. A growing body of research underscores the continuing social, political and economic impact of religious beliefs, activities and institutions, most of which can be analyzed with reference to various forms of capital (Coleman 1988; Putnam 1993; 1995; 1996; 2000; Adogame 2010).

In the last three and a half decades, social and spiritual capital theories have gained tremendous importance in the study of social movements (see for example, (Coleman 1988; and Robert Putnam 1993; 1995; 1996; and 2000).

Robert Putnam particularly pays attention to the unique character of religion in building and sustaining social capital. The said scholars view the concept of social capital as a resource for social action.

According to Coleman (1988) for example, social capital manifests itself in the relations among and between persons, and like other forms of capital (e.g. cultural, human, physical), it facilitates productive activity. In particular, he argues that social capital can develop both within and outside families (i.e. social networks such as churches and civil society groups) and highlights, the role that social capital plays in creating human capital.

Religious capital is similar to the more general concept of social capital because it is a resource based on relationships that individuals and faith groups can access for their personal wellbeing, but it can also denote a gift to the wider community. As a subset of social capital, spiritual capital may be understood as people's ability to access resources believed to reside in an invisible world, which can be mobilized for the common good.

Spiritual capital can thus be understood as the amalgamation of the norms, values, language, and social practices that sustain and transform the religious groups in relation to the specific contexts they find themselves (Adogame 2010). It is also understood as the investment an individual makes into his or her religious faith. The investment is in terms of time and physical work involved with the religious faith, as well as the personal investment in ideology, doctrine and practice. Social and religious capital both includes investments and participation in networks and activities.

The impact and influence of social networks within religious

communities is large indeed. Neo-Pentecostalism particularly, allows the formation of new spaces for social networks and recreates ideas of community. The multiplication of places of worship, for example creates new places of socialization, places where new kinds of social relations and networks can form and where individuals can join social networks.

Three kinds of activity in NPC allow these social networks to form. Firstly, the purely religious events that takes place regularly-Sunday services, prayer fellowships, evening services and deliverance sessions. This set of rituals and ceremonies give rise to religious socializing. In NPCs, for example, new comers introduce themselves to the congregation during services. Here, they are warmly welcome hence integrated them into the group. This act makes them feel part of the congregation and as if they have found a new family.

Secondly, more established churches such as JIAM, MMC and FEM have internal groups aimed towards different categories of worshippers, which also provide spaces for socialization. For example, in all the three churches, there are youth, women and men groups where these different categories of worshippers meet for fellowship, prayer, Bible study, planning and special celebrations. The women's movement is an interesting example for it provides them with a place to meet and talk about various issues they grapple with in life.

Equally, most churches have choirs or musical groups that provide the youth with space and forum for socialization and even opportunities for forging new relationships and networks. Finally, places of worship can also be places to associate with other worshippers before and after the service. Here, members

forge new relationships and networks build on trust, normally groups of persons who are bound together by common faith or their 'born again' experience. Merry-go-rounds for women, also popularly known as '*chamas*' have been born out of these networks.

Thus, an overall measure of social and spiritual capital is not only evident in the three NPCs but is also particularly useful in the context of Neo-Pentecostals and civic and public life engagement. This is because issues pertaining to civic and public realms cut across network boundaries, the public and civic realm (people in local communities, church groups and *chamas* among others), institutional realm (affecting peoples relationships with social institutions and democracy).

Through POs and interactions with members of the three churches, we explored how these churches build and sustain social and spiritual capital. This was observable in at least three areas. First, there was involvement in social issues. Second, there was participation in community development and thirdly, participating in civic and public life issues. Pentecostals initiate and develop a sense of community as they gather in churches for worship, in homes for cell groups and midweek Bible study fellowships. Corporate meetings are also central to the life of NPCs. They provide an opportunity for people to hear from God, experience God for themselves and enter into a relationship with God.

Pentecostals are also heavily involved in church life as well as in their personal devotion. In material and spiritual ways, believers provide informal support for one another as well as visitors to their churches and people in their

local local community. Neo-Pentecostalism therefore allows for the formation of new spaces for social networks and recreates ideas of community. More importantly, these churches act as communication networks that foster religious and civic volunteerism.

Church spaces also create voluntary associations of believers with new organizational styles. Here, they learn to forge new identities and make personal decisions that translate to better citizens. They learn leadership roles as men, women and youth leader's skills that can eventually translate into civic/public roles. After learning skills and competencies they can then exert control in the wider sphere they learn how to function democratically, understanding their roles in society through cell groups.

Thus Neo-Pentecostals create social capital by mobilizing its followers to be involved in civic/public issues as well as providing them with spaces and infrastructure to do so. Pentecostals design and operate formal ministry programmes to reach out and care for people inside and outside the church. These local programmes bring local church members into contact with the wider community, both nationally and internationally.

Prayers, donations of money, goods, relational networks, formal counseling, and training services are among the ways that Pentecostals support individuals and groups in their communities. Because of their involvement in religious networks, Pentecostals have been able to develop networks with other believers, which they use to help themselves. Religious networks generated by Pentecostals are generally wider geographically and socially than traditional networks and this is especially so for the poor.

Thus, Pentecostal churches have become a source of kinship networks and overall support for people living in urban areas. Because of their involvement in church life, believers can create social bonds, which are a source of economic and emotional support during difficult times. In FEM, for example, the church equips believers not only so that they are successful in daily life. It does so, so they can contribute to the development of the country and the larger world. This is also true for many NPCs whose vision statements are filled with the language of empowerment and engagement and not disengagement. They encourage people to adopt a standard of excellence in every area of their life.

NPCs provide ample opportunities for Kenyans to develop and forge new relationships, friendships and network support. In these churches, members learn to create a sense of community for themselves as they participate in midweek church services and other church based activities. NPCs also operate social services such orphanages, old peoples' homes, prison outreach, out of a desire to reach people not only with practical assistance and solutions but also with the gospel message of good news. For these reasons, the social capital theoretical framework was deemed fit for this study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study combines both descriptive and qualitative research methodology with a case study research design. According to John Best (1981:93);

A descriptive study describes and interprets what is. It is concerned with conditions or

relationships that exists, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident or trends that are developing. It is primarily concerned with the present, although it often considers past events and influence as they relate to current conditions.

Field research provided an understanding of the public and civic roles of JIAM, MMC and FEM. The case study design was deemed most suitable for this research for various reasons. First, the importance of the three churches was not just in their increasingly prominent roles and engagements in public life but also because of the gender dynamics at play. Second, a case study design allows the application of such research instruments as interview schedules and FGDs as well as PO checklist.

Third, its flexibility allows for thorough examination of the research question. Fourth, case studies the ability to yield empirical data. The three churches or ministries are hardly homogenous, although they are all under the firm grip of their founders. We focused on these case studies based on three criteria: their roles in creating conditions conducive to the emergence of democratic ideals, their place and position in public life and their mode of engagement or disengagement. Their individual clergy were also chosen based on a number of reasons.

First, they were, or had been, leading figures whose intervention in politics have shaped, influenced or continue to influence the Kenyan socio-political scene. All the three clergy, for example played significant roles in the constitution review process between 2003 and 2010; participated either directly or indirectly in elective politics and used the media for broad social and religious influence. Second, they all were Neo-Pentecostals but occasionally

represented diverse modes of civic and public engagement and political intervention.

Third, they were viewed to be broadly representative of wider and important groupings within Kenyan Neo-Pentecostalism. Yet while the study focused particularly on these three NPCs and clergy, we also draw from the larger Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic church movements. The combination of both qualitative (descriptive) and a case study methodology helped the researcher to answer most of the questions raised in this study.

1.10.1 STUDY AREA

This study was carried out in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and the 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census (KPHC), Nairobi's population was estimated at about 3.6 million people making it one of the most populous cities in East Africa. This population was heterogeneous mainly comprising of migrants from rural areas. This has given Nairobi its cosmopolitan character. The study area was chosen because all the three churches under focus had their headquarters in Nairobi. This was not withstanding that they had smaller branches spread in other urban areas across the country.

FEM for example has significant numbers of followers in Nakuru town, mainly female followers, the majority of whom were single women^{xv}. The Nakuru Single Ladies Fellowship served as a significant base for meetings held every month. One characteristic of the Nakuru informants was that they had been partners of FEM for over two decades. They, therefore, provided firsthand information about this female led ministry, its founders' life and history, its

development, foundations and theological orientations.

The founders of the three churches also resided in Nairobi. At the same time, the programmes offered in these churches were more diverse while the founders presided over most activities. Nairobi also had the highest number of followers and clients who patronized these churches in search for spiritual and personal wellbeing. Other church branches in Nairobi and Nakuru were studied. MMC had more two branches in Nairobi suburbs and its environs many of which were studied.

1.10.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The study population composed of leaders and members of the three churches. These three churches held services throughout the week with major worship services carried out on Sundays. On Sundays, there were two services. The first service would begin as early as 7 am, attracting predominantly youthful populations. Most first services were held in English. The second services would begin at 10.30 am attracting mainly families with children.

The average attendance at these first and second services was Sunday services in all three churches were between 200 and 300 and 300 and 500 congregants respectively. Weekday meetings attracted between 50 and 100 worshippers. Questionnaires were largely issued during both first and second services in all the three churches. An average of 20 questionnaires was issued during first services and 30 during second services. Questionnaires were issued on a random basis by the researcher and her research assistants. Overall, an average of 150 questionnaires were issued, about 50 for each church. This

number was deemed as sufficient sample to collect credible data to answer the research questions.

1.10.3 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The sample selection was based on several criteria such as gender, age, educational levels, status and length of period in the church. It was assumed that these variables would influence respondents' attitudes towards engagement or disengagement with issues in public life. The researcher sampled leaders and members of the three churches. Traditionally, big churches such as JIAM, MMC and FEM have actual membership of comprising approximately between 1000 and 1500 members. Field research appeared to suggest that each of the three churches have a membership of about 1500. The researcher then took 10% of that average number to arrive at a sample of 150 people. The sample size therefore was 150, 50 members from each church.

1.10.4 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The thesis utilized both secondary and primary sources for gathering data. Using qualitative and descriptive methods of data collection, the researcher collected and analyzed data as follows:

1.10.5 SECONDARY SOURCES AND DESKTOP/RESEARCH

The secondary sources explored include library and archival materials. The researcher visited the libraries of Kenyatta University, University of Nairobi, Egerton University, University of Cambridge (Main library and the Centre for African Studies Library), University of Edinburgh, and the Andrew Walls - Centre for the Study of World Christianity. The researcher also had access to the libraries of the University of Copenhagen (Centre for African

Studies), and University of Birmingham's virtual library at the Centre for the Study of Global Pentecostalism. Materials gathered in these libraries helped in the review of recent, innovative literature on Kenyan, African and Global Pentecostalism.

1.10.5.1 PRIMARY SOURCES

Primary data was also obtained through questionnaires, interviews document analysis participant observation (OP). Research spanned several phases. Fieldwork was conducted in several phases. The first phase entailed pilot study and literature review carried out from 2006- 2007 culminating in the writing of the research proposal. The second phase (2008-2009) was spent close to the leadership, providing a rich harvest of behind-the-scene participant observations and access to the movements' literatures, texts, sermons, TV broadcasts, and church publications. POs entail observing congregants and leaders in worship and prayer services, crusades, fellowship and church settings.

The researcher examined relevant church documents and extracted information from field notes. Primary data was also found and gathered from churches' newsletters, magazines, pamphlets, posters, handbills and other such literature. The perusal and analysis of church documents yielded a lot of field notes and data. These churches had produced a host of tracts, pamphlets and most importantly, spiritual autobiographies that revealed a lot of information, particularly personal details, the founders' underlying thoughts, ideologies, theologies and perceptions of reality, their roles in shaping the lives of their members and the making of their histories.

The case studies produce monthly magazines that yielded substantial information. Other leading Christian magazines feature these churches or their activities. Their founders are frequent contributors or columnist in magazines such as *Revival Springs* and *The Shepherd* among others. These Christian magazines and papers yielded tremendous information. Some information such as church constitutions and registration certificates were obtained from these churches' personal libraries or websites.

Mainstream print media particularly the daily newspapers such as the *Daily Nation*, *The Standard*, and *Kenya Times* frequently feature these and other churches, their theologies and leading personalities. A lot of data was obtained by analyzing these documents. Besides, the churches often carried out religious advertisements of church crusades, conferences, symposia or other such events. A wealth of information was gathered from this large stock of newspaper cuttings that feature not just Neo-Pentecostal churches but Kenya's leading and diverse religious organizations as well.

Given that the churches heavily appropriate new media technologies, this provided access to a wide range of online resources including church websites, you tube, online sermons and others. They have intensified the production of audio-visual materials such as audio cassettes, videos tapes, CDs and DVD tapes. Many contained sermons preached by the leaders. All these materials are sold, distributed, or loaned from these church's libraries and bookshops. They are also sold online, a venture targeting international audience and branches. Field notes taken during sermons, radio and TV phone conversations between leaders and viewers, and the relevant texts in audio-

visual materials were transcribed and analysed. A catalogue of CD, DVD and Video tapes used are listed in Appendix 4.

Books published by church founders/leaders yielded tremendous information. For example, Evangelist Teresia Wairimu in 2010 published a personal autobiography that documents the story of her life, her background and history, her calling, vision and mission, her evangelistic undertakings, faith healing and deliverance ministry, her understanding of female religious leadership and her philanthropic undertakings.

Aspects of belief systems and teachings were gleaned through televangelism, radio evangelism, online stores, You Tube and others. Over a 100 televised church sermons of JIAM and MMC and about 20 of FEM were viewed during the research period. Fewer FEM televised sermons were viewed since the television ministry only begun in late 2010. A list of the televised sermons viewed can be found in Appendix 5. The researcher listened and took notes of all sermons recorded on television, CD and DVD tapes.

Most Kenya's Pentecostal churches have established internet websites that not only serve as a critical source of information but also as evangelistic tools for their audiences. The websites consist of colourful graphics and text mainly pragmatic statements such as the founders' life histories, mission and vision statements, belief systems and rituals, foundational histories and prerequisite for membership, information on the various programme of events or links to branches and several other related groups or networking bodies.^{xvi}

1.10.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS AND TOOLS

The study employed four research methods instruments: questionnaires

and interviews; P Os; (FGDs) and Content Analysis.

1.10.6.1 QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires are as good in collecting data as face-to-face interviews or discussion group methods would do as they gather opinions, perceptions, and attitudes. Questions and propositions sought to understand Neo-Pentecostals views and perceptions about their roles in civic and public life. Open and close-ended questionnaires were administered to respondents, and target groups such as women, youth, long-time members, church leaders and ex-members. This was done with the help of junior pastors, youth pastors who were available and willing to help. The closed-ended questions were used to gather information while open-ended questions were designed to give respondents freedom to express themselves using their own words. Questions sought to find out leaders and members understanding of civic and public issues. Interviews were conducted with either senior church members or their assistant pastors or administrators.

All three churches hold first and second services. Attendance varies for each service but range between 200 and 300. First service begins 7am and attracts few but younger members. 150 questionnaires were issued to members of the three churches. A total of 15 questionnaires were issued during this service randomly, every 10 people. Second service attract more people mainly families.

A total of 20 questionnaires were issued. A total number of 15 questionnaires were issued during mid-week services (prayer fellowships, youth or women meetings) which attract between 50 and 100 people. Overall,

135 questionnaires were returned and were deemed as an adequate sample out of the 150 sample.

Purposive sampling was also used especially in FEM Nakuru where we already knew many members or someone who knew another. 25 questionnaires were issued during FEM's monthly meetings. All questionnaires were returned hence in FEM a total of 50 questionnaires, 25 in Nakuru and 25 in Nairobi. Nakuru respondents were almost all women. Only one man was sampled in FEM Nakuru.

In respect of church leaders, we interviewed Rev Teresia Wairimu and two senior pastors: the head of FEM Nakuru Branch and his assistant who is female. In JIAM, the researcher interviewed the former immediate personal assistant who revealed so much information. In MMC, the researcher interviewed the head of Nakuru Branch. A total of six leaders were interviewed three women and three men. Face to face interviews were also carried out. Twenty five interviews were conducted in FEM, fifteen in JIAM and fifteen in MMC Nairobi and five in Nakuru, totalling to sixty face to face interviews. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents in JIAM and MMC. Only those considered as having information relevant to the study were selected.

Firstly, those who gave information on the history of the three churches were supposed to have been founders, contemporaries of the founders, or they joined the churches from the beginning of these churches. Secondly, to get information on their engagements with issues in public life, church leaders and founders were selected because of the positions they occupied and their role in guiding the church, developing and shaping their theologies, particularly their

theology of public engagement.

Some of these leaders or their close associates as well as members were able to supply appropriate information pertaining to the history and development of the churches and their founders, teachings, practices and their views about the churches' engagement or disengagement with issues pertaining to public and civic life. Longtime members of these churches, even ex-members, as well as clergy and members from other NPCs were selected with the help of church leaders to help validate or invalidate some of the views given by the leaders/founders.

At the same time, church adherents were sampled to give the views of the laity concerning these churches engagement with issues in public life. Using this criteria and a purposive sampling procedure, therefore, one hundred and fifty informants—with fifty from each church, were interviewed within duration of one and a half years.

Informal conversations also yielded a lot of data. Some information was written down as field notes to ensure that nothing was lost. Follow up visits to church meetings afforded an opportunity to listen and to engage in informal conversations with members of the three case studies. The questions were framed in relation to the objectives and research questions. After data analysis, the answers to the five research questions came out. The answers enabled the researcher to discuss the research findings. Samples of questionnaires and interview guides are appended in appendix 1 and 2. A participant observation schedule is also provided in the appendix.

1.10.6.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION (PO)

PO was undertaken among the three churches. This technique is appropriate in a research that investigates how Pentecostals engage with issues in public life. PO was used with the intention of assessing and validating data from questionnaires, interviews as well as content analysis of sermons and texts. The researcher observed church meetings such as prayer groups, lunch hour meetings, morning glory, bible study, women meetings, men's fellowship and conferences and seminars, youth meetings and other programmes.

Given that major churches hold at least 2-3 services on Sundays and several meetings during the week, the researcher participated in about 60 such meetings. It was possible to visit at least three churches every Sunday and two-week day meetings. In total, we attended more than 60 church services, about 20 for each church as participant observer.

Follow up meetings as a participant observer affords the opportunity to listen and later engage in informal conversations with members. In Nakuru Town, where FEM holds women prayer fellowships once a month, we attended more than 25 of such meetings. We were able to directly observe people and activities in all the churches from 2009 to 2010. These observations have shaped my interpretation of the case studies.

1.10.6.3 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGDs)

Focus Group Discussions were directed by an interview guide that was used in discussions conducted in the churches. Each comprised about 7-10 people of diverse backgrounds and competence. Three FGDs were carried out in each church church totaling to nine FGDs. Each comprised about 7-10

people of diverse backgrounds and gender. The discussions aimed at identifying ways in which Pentecostals engaged with issues in public life. They also aimed at evaluating how members themselves understand their roles in society.

1.10.6.4 CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SERMONS

An important research instrument used in analyzing data is the content analysis. This is a resourceful tool used for investigating peoples' beliefs, perceptions and attitudes, as well as the life of any organization (Neumann 2000; 30). Neo-Pentecostal theology generally is largely oral in nature. Oral rather than written forms are primarily used to transmit beliefs. This is consistent with most Pentecostals globally (Hollenweger 1994; 1997).

Thus, Sunday, weekly and midweek sermons and televised programmes was the focus of our content analysis. More than 60 sermons/messages 20 from each church were analyzed. Besides, the Sunday sermons were easily accessible as they are always recorded on CDs, DVDs and audio tapes. These recordings were later previewed at the end of the fieldwork period. More than 60 sermons and 20 messages from each church were analyzed.

Content analysis was suitable for answering questions about how often various themes occurred in the sermons; for pinpointing patterns in the preaching, content and styles that might not be observed just by attending weekly services. The value of content analysis is evident, for example, when it comes to exploring the churches engagement with theological beliefs and issues in civic and public life as discussed in chapters four and five. We also transcribed relevant messages as shown in the list of televised religious

programmes and CD tapes in Appendix D.

1.10.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of the three case studies was guided by an overarching approach to understand the roles of these churches in civic and public life. The in-depth interviews and questionnaires, POs, FGDs, pilot survey and content analysis of sermons all complemented one another in the task of discussing how the three churches engage in civic and public issues. Data collected was analyzed in respect to the objectives of the study. Responses obtained from questionnaires, POs, FGDs, content analysis of texts, sermons and televised religious programmes enabled the researcher to discuss the findings.

1.10.8 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING THE RESEARCH

As already, noted, church founders such as Wanjiru and Muiro were unavailable and inaccessible for interviews. Suspicions about the motive of the research and its immediate value to the church were partly responsible for this. Secondly, the research proved very expensive for the researcher owing to the fact she did not have any scholarship or funding. The researcher sponsored herself for the study and this proved very stressful financially. The study area was also vast, spanning three huge churches with branches in other parts of the country. In spite of all these problems, the data that was collected was adequate and relevant.

1.10.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical consideration was necessary since the study dealt with participants who live out their religious lives in the three NPCs. The researcher interacted with respondents in their religious and social settings. The researcher

therefore ensured that ethical issues of honesty, objectivity, integrity, carefulness, openness, social responsibility, informed consent, and confidentiality were maintained throughout the course of the study. Permission from all relevant bodies and respondents was sought to carry out the study. The objectives of the research were explained to participants, interviewees and focused group discussions. Confidentiality was also upheld for all information received. This section discussed the research methodology: the nature of the research design, how the population was targeted, sampled and data collected. The next chapters deal with data presentation, analysis and interpretation.

ⁱ In this study issues in civic and public life are broadly conceptualized to include social, economic, and political issues or all issues concerned with the public good such as elective politics, constitution making, governance, human rights, peace building, conflict resolution, building social/spiritual capital, and gender empowerment among others

ⁱⁱ <http://pewforum.org/survey/pentecostals/africa> accessed on July 7/2010.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ndegwa, A., 2007. Over 6,000 Churches Awaiting Registration, *The Standard*, Tuesday September 4 2007.

^{iv} Both JIAM and FEM are registered as faith based organizations not churches.

^v Pew Forum on Religion and Public life documents: Historical Overview of Pentecostalism in Kenya www.pewforum.org/doc.

^{vi} The Bomas Draft was the basic document during the drafting of the new constitution and was adopted by the National Constitutional Conference in March 2004.

^{vii} The revised harmonized draft constitution was a document prepared by the Committee of Experts (CoE) comprising the recommendations and views from different stakeholders.

^{viii} These courts are based on Islamic Sharia laws meant to adjudicate cases of pertaining to marriage, divorce and inheritance. They are only applicable where both couples are Muslims and have no jurisdiction over non-Muslims.

^{ix} While Evangelist Wairimu did not contest elective politics, she is considered as one of the most influential religious leaders in Kenya. Her FEM ministry attracts the rich and the powerful including hosting former presidents as well as President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto in her church for thanksgiving services after their election to office in early 2013.

^x In the 2007 and 2013 General Elections, there have been increased National Prayer Rallies, Peace Election Prayers Rallies, National Repentance and Holiness rallies, Thanksgiving Prayer Rallies and Services and many others. These are largely also graced by politicians, presidential aspirants who then form symbiotic relationships with religious leaders

^{xi} Peter Oduor, Power and Religion: a Clever Mix of Religion and Politics, *Daily Nation*, Friday 24/1/2014 pages-1-3

^{xii} *Ibid* pages-1-3

^{xiii} *Ibid* page 3

^{xiv} This is what David Maxwell (2006: 6) defines as ‘the domain of organized social life between the family and the state, concerned with public or collective goals and needs.’

^{xv} In both Nakuru and Nairobi branches, field research was indicative that majority of women

who patronized FEM were single women, many of whom have been members of FEM since it started in the 1980s and 1990s as a fellowship for single ladies. Nakuru was then home to FEM Single Ladies Fellowship.

^{xvi} <http://www.jiam.org>; evangelistwairimu.org, femevangelsiticministries.org, kunanurugizani.org

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF KENYAN NEO-PENTECOSTALISM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the history and development of Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in Kenya since their emergence in the early 1970s. This provides the context for a more detailed investigation of the rise and developments of JIAM, MMC and FEM and their roles in civic and public life. The chapter is primarily based on secondary data derived from archival sources as well as library research but also on primary research. The purpose of the chapter is to locate Kenyan Neo-Pentecostalism in historical perspectives and provide a context for a full discussion on the civic and public roles of NPC in Kenya.

2.2 THE KENYAN RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

Kenya is a nation with a rich religio-cultural diversity. With its population of 38.6 million people (KPHC, 2009); the country is an embodiment of historical, cultural, ethnic, religious, social, political and linguistic affinities and diversities. Indeed its religious landscape is quite complex, dynamic, and diverse including African Indigenous religions, various strands of Christianity and Islam as well as smaller groups of Hinduism, Buddhism, Baha'i and Judaism among others.

Demographically, Kenya is predominantly Christian. The KPHC (2009) revealed that Christians constitute about 31.8 million of Kenya's 38.6 million. What this essentially means is that about 82.6% of the population in Kenya is

Christian constituting a significant majority compared with other faiths. It is further estimated that 4.3 million of the population are Muslims.¹ The Hindus are estimated at about 500,000, coming mainly from the Indian sub-continent having settled in Kenya before and after colonialism. There are even fewer Sikhs, Buddhists, Confucians, Baha'is, and Judaists among other minority faiths. The non-religious population exists though small but significant.

Accurate statistics for minority faiths are difficult to access and are largely a matter of conjecture. However, the major religious traditions in Kenya are Christianity and Islam although both have been influenced by indigenous African religious traditions. All these religious traditions to use Adogame's (2010:479) words 'have mutually enhanced and transformed each other in a highly competitive context.' Besides, they serve as significant sources through which many Kenyans seek to understand their complex reality and existence.

For these reasons, religious ideas and worldviews continue to shape the ways in which Kenyans explain, predict, and control the events and life circumstances that surround them. It can correctly be argued that religion and spirituality have served as a significant source through which many Kenyans seek to understand both their complex reality and existence and serves as a panacea for their various existential problems of day-to-day living.

2.3 DIVERSITY OF AFRICAN (KENYAN) CHRISTIANITY

There is significant diversity in what is generally referred to as 'African Christianity.' The differences often illustrate the degree of vitality and innovative approaches to local appropriation of Christianity. There are three

broad strands of Christianity in Kenya, each internally variegated, namely: Mission/Mainline Christianity; African Initiated/Instituted Christianity; and African Pentecostalism.

The first category, mission Christianity, was established by Christian missionary agencies primarily from Europe and North America in the 18th and 19th centuries. Usually, these churches came with the advent of European colonialism (Mugambi, 2009). Mission Christianity comprises the Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Adventists, Quakers and Salvation Army among many others.

Mainline churches have contributed significantly to socio-political developments in Kenya, particularly in the areas of education, the health sector, politics and economic development (Gifford 2009). According to the (2009) National Housing and Population Census (NHPC), Roman Catholics are the single biggest denominations in Kenya accounting for nine million people. Protestants stand at 18 million people whereas other Christians account for 4.5 million.

African Indigenous/instituted Churches (AICs) then followed Mission or Mainline Christianity. These are churches that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, and either broke away from mission churches, or was founded independently of European missionary activities and is headed by Africans. They are generally described as movements representing an African response to the missionary movement in Africa (Adogame 2005; Asamoah-Gyadu 2005; Mwaura 2005).

According to John Padwick (2009), the earliest manifestations of AICs were the foundation of churches around 1880s and 1890s, but the most prominent growth came from the 1920s onward, when the first churches were established in Kenya.ⁱⁱ Such churches emerged where the missionary presence was strongest, and where scripture was translated into African languages. The AICS have responded to the existential needs in the African milieu.

According to Anderson (2005:65), they have also offered a personal encounter with God through the power of the Spirit, healing from sickness and deliverance from evil in all its manifestations, whether spiritual, social or structural. However, most of these churches do not major on the social and structural manifestations of evil. Mwaura (2005; 2002; Mwaura and Parsitau 2012), argue that these churches have also offered an enlarged ritual space for women who were prominent in faith healing and deliverance rituals. Early (AIC) growth was partly political and partly religious.

In Kenya, AICs first emerged in the western and central regions of the country, and remain especially strong in Nyanza and Western Provinces. Examples of AICs in Kenya include Legio Maria, the Jerusalem Church of Christ (JCC), Nabii Christian Church of Kenya, African Independent Pentecostal Church (AIPC), African Israeli Church Nineveh (AICN), the Akorino/Ahonoki Churches of Central Kenya among others. (Padwick 2009: Mwaura 2002).

Until recently, AICs in Kenya with an exception of those from Central Kenya, kept a low profile both politically and socially. This is because some AICS from Central Kenya have played a significant role in the provision of

education. The African Independent Pentecostal Church (AIPC) popular in Central Kenya has run many schools before and after independence from colonialism. This particular AIC imbued the values of African nationalism and was often a source of tension to the then Colonial administration (Padwick 2009) because of its stand against colonialism.

However, there is a paradigm shift under the leadership of the relatively newly constituted Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) that is increasingly getting involved in issues in civic and public life. For example, AICs are now involved in participatory and community-building developments at the grassroots level. They are also involved in HIV/AIDS, prevention campaigns, welfare, and micro-finance. They are also involved in humanitarian work. However, one of the biggest challenges facing these churches today is not just that most of their leaders lack education but also that there is scant documentation of their theologies and features (Padwick 2009). Research on AICs and their role in civic and public life is however scanty.

2.4 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: ORIGINS OF KENYAN PENTECOSTALISM

The most recent development within Kenyan Christianity is the emergence of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches that have proliferated all over the country in the last four decades now. Since the 1990s to date, the NPC and CM groups have become perhaps the fastest growing movements in Kenya today. Similarly, they have attracted thousands of followers, mainly young educated youth, women and other such social groups. However, four distinct strands and phases are identifiable in the Kenyan Pentecostal scene although

some of these overlap at significant points. These are Classical, Indigenous/independent and the Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic types.

i) Classical Pentecostal Churches

The first identifiable trend within Kenyan Pentecostalism is the classical type, which appeared as early as the 1920s in the Kenyan and African religious landscape. Mwaura (2005) argues that Classical Pentecostalism was already visible in Kenya as early as the 1920s when Pentecostal missionaries from America and Canada came into the country. Mwaura further indicates that as early as the 1920s, revival had occurred in the Friends Africa Mission (FAM) and Quakers in Kaimosi, in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) mission in Nyang'ori in Western Kenya as well as in Central Kenya (see Kalu 2008; Kasiera 1981; Samita 1996).

Other sources also suggest that early Pentecostal missionaries arrived in the East African region much earlier than was previously thought (See for example Derek Peterson 2001). According to Justin Mugambi (2009:2), missionaries from the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) pioneered missionary work not just in Kenya but also in other East African countries as well. Mugambi further posits that PAOC pioneer missionaries found their way to these countries as early as 1918 when the Rev Otto and Marion Keller first arrived in the region. The roots of PAG Church in Kenya are therefore traced back to the early 20th century.

The Kellers were credited as the pioneer founders of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) in Kenya. Through the Kellers, the PAOC work in Kenya developed two distinguishing characteristics in its outreach: education

and evangelism. While the Kellers endeavored to spread Christianity, they also embarked on providing education to the communities around them. In 1927, PAOC work in Kenya was officially registered as Pentecostal Assemblies of East Africa (PAEA), with the Rev Keller as its first General Overseer (Mugambi 2009).

During his tenure, the PAEA mission witnessed tremendous growth and spread particularly in Western Kenya. The Kellers also planted churches, opened up schools and training centres including pastoral training centers for church ministers. This great pioneer missionary whose work spanned over three decades played significant roles in evangelism and the transformation of communities especially in western Kenya. By the 1930s, there were indicators suggesting that the gospel had spread among the Maragoli, the Tiriki and the neighboring Kalenjin and Luo ethnic groups. In the 1940s, further work was established in Kisii land with substantial growth in the 1950s and 1960s.

In 1950's the gospel was spread to the Great Rift Valley region and Nairobi. Soon it reached Central Kenya and later the Coastal region. With time PAOC, work had spread to most parts of the country. Mugambi (2009: 10) further reports that in 1908 Claude Miller, an independent Pentecostal missionary purchased the Nyang'ori land on which the PAG headquarters and the Nyang'ori Pentecostal Bible College stand today. In 1948, Bethel Bible Institute was officially opened in Nyang'ori.

A major ministry of PAOC's work in Kenya is the PAG, which is the mother of the Nairobi Pentecostal Church (NPC) also known as Christ Is the Answer Ministries (CITAM), which traces its roots to (PAOC). John and Ella

McBride, who in the 1950s conceived the idea of an English-speaking church, started CITAM in 1959 and the NPC Valley Road was borne. From the 1950s to the early 1990s, missionaries from mother church in Canada led CITAM.

The Rev Denis White and his wife Esther who served in this ministry for 14 years were credited for steering the church into tremendous growth and development in the 1980s and 1990s.ⁱⁱⁱ When the Whites left for Canada after 14 years of service, the leadership was passed on to Africans. Bishop Boniface Adoyo took over the leadership of CITAM and steered it into greater heights until he retired and passed over leadership to Bishop David Oginde, its current presiding Bishop. On 6 September 2009, the church celebrated its Golden Jubilee.

Today, CITAM has grown to become an established religious organization with varied ministries and development works. Fifty years after its inception, CITAM has a registered membership of 45,000, eight churches spread in Nairobi and Kisumu, three schools, children homes, a radio station (Hope FM) and catering services.^{iv} The church also has interests in education, health and even hospitality. In this sense, the Nairobi Pentecostal Church (NPC) can correctly be described as a middle class church (Gifford 2009; Mugambi 2009; Owojaiye 2011). Out of PAOC, there evolved the more indigenous Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) churches now spread across the country, both urban and rural areas (Mugambi 2009).

Other Classical Pentecostal denominations in Kenya today include the Pentecostal Fellowship of Africa (PEFA), Elim Church, The Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG) and the Full Gospel

Churches of Kenya (FGCK). Despite making inroads in various parts of Kenya, especially in Central and the Western regions much earlier, fewer Classical Pentecostal churches with the exception of CITAM have made significant socio-political impact until the outbreak of the Charismatic revivals later in the 1970s and 1980s (Gifford 2009).). CITAM is socially and politically engaged and has played significant roles in public life in the country.

Classical Pentecostals stressed the experience of Holy Spirit baptism. This movement was therefore distinguished by the emphasis placed on the Holy Spirit, usually manifested through speaking in tongues, divine healings, visions, trances, ecstasies, uncontrollable weeping, prophesy and feeling the presence of God corporeally (Sheppard 2006). It is also accompanied by a notion of holiness and sanctification that emphasizes dress code and taboos with respect to smoking, drinking, and dancing among others. Other characteristics include public confessions of sins, fasting, night vigils and spiritual emotionalism (Mwaura 2005).

Initially, as a reformist movement that championed a new spirituality and a deeper understanding of Christianity that was redemptive and progressive, this explosion of Classical Pentecostalism was first identified with certain youths who labeled themselves as pastors and evangelists although they lacked pastoral and theological training. Their proselytizing activities was remarkable and daring, calling on other Christians to repentance from all kinds of evil association with phrases such as are you born again? “You must be born again” was a common way to approach their listeners (Freeman 2012).

Yet, many classical Pentecostal churches today are increasingly witnessing important shifts in their beliefs and a number are metamorphosing into entirely new churches as the example of the (NPC) shows. The NPC that started as a Classical Pentecostal Church has over the years metamorphosed into something new and spawned Neo-Pentecostal and charismatic ministries such as CITAM which has in turn spawned eight new branches in various parts of the country today (Mugambi 2009). Other classical Pentecostal churches have undergone tremendous shifts and acquired new traits and characteristics of their own such that many are virtually unrecognizable today.

ii) The East African Revival Movement

The origins, nature and characteristics of the East African Revival Movement (EARM) also commonly referred to the *Tukutendereza Yesu* Movement or the *Ahonoki* (saved ones in Gikuyu), as the *Balokole* (saved ones in Luganda), has been widely studied and documented (Warren 1954; Mambo 1973; Ayanga 1986; Winters 1983; Samita 1996; Mwaura 2005; Peterson 2002; Kalu 2008). This movement evolved within missionary churches (Mwaura 2005:248).

Predominantly, a lay movement and believed to have originated in Rwanda, this movement is thought to have entered Kenya in 1937, through teams of Christian evangelists from Uganda (Samita 2004). It was largely a revival-within-the church movement. It was especially felt in the western and central regions of the country, within primarily Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist and to some degree Seventh Day Adventists (SDA).

The East African Revival was an informal and spontaneous mass movement initiated by both African laity and clergy. Secondly, it cut across denominational, gender, ethno-cultural, geographical and spatial boundaries. However, most of its members were older adults with fewer youth. Thirdly, it emphasized on the need for being born again as a personal encounter with Jesus Christ (Samita 2004). It also emphasized personal holiness and public confession of sins to attain forgiveness, moral rectitude among its members, cleansing and power for believers through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was therefore both moralistic, conservative with a strong emphasis laid on preaching and evangelism.

What was new about the East African Revival was it ushered in a newness and freshness that called upon people to publicly repent of their sins. The EAR also promoted evangelism through literature, crusades, camp meetings, Holy Ghost fire and power conferences, door-to-door evangelism, healing and deliverance crusades and services. Members also advertised on conspicuous signboards in the cities and utilized the media and emerging media technologies to promote themselves and enlist new members (Kalu 2008).

A fifth distinguishing feature of the movement involved holding frequent revival fellowships or meetings in churches throughout the country. Consequently, there were national conventions including the East African Conventions held regularly. During such meetings and fellowships, converts read the Bible, testified, confessed their sins publicly, repented of their sins and cleansed themselves of sins of immorality and were prayed for.

Mark Winters (1983:69) defines the movement as a revival in which nominal Christians or 'backslidden' Christians were 'revived' in their commitment to the faith. Revival meetings were marked by converts' public admission of adultery, theft, drunkenness and other such vices. Sixthly, amongst believers, the habit of exchanging pleasantries, testimonies, spontaneous singing, dancing and clapping, prayers fellowships, Bible study were emphasized and have remained pillars of Neo-Pentecostalism today.

Peterson (2001:471) observes that the public confession of sins served both social and public purposes for the saved ones, more so women who used their conversion stories to argue about and interrogate social and political problems. This movement thereby empowered the laity, literate and illiterate, to testify for Jesus. Lastly, it had an impact on the evolution of doctrines and theological practices. Mwaura (2005:249) points out that, it had an impact on the evolution of patterns of ministry that were different from those of mainline churches.

According to Kalu 2008, the EARM was largely perceived to have had a direct influence on the Pentecostal Movement in East Africa. Kalu (2008:94) argues that the massive *balokole*, a movement of "saved ones," set the stage for the charismatization of Eastern Africa in later years. The movement produced a revival that had two foci: attack on lukewarm mainline churches that compromised with indigenous cultures. Thus, it was essentially a revitalization movement indicating that traditional ways of being church are no longer appropriate and inconsistent with the gospel message (Kalu, 2008:94). The movement challenged Mainline Christianity, radicalized theological colleges

and created a vibrant, ecumenical, interracial, inter-ethnic and inter-denominational missionary movement (Kalu 2008; Mwaura 2005; Anderson 1977: 168-69; Anderson 2004:112-132).

The EARM had some profound influence on Christianity in Kenya from the 1920s onwards (Kuipers 2011:85), as well as the larger East African region. For example, leading clergy of Kenya's Pentecostal churches such as Rev Teresia Wairimu, Bishop Joe Kayo, Mark Kariuki of DC, Bishop Kitonga of RGC and many others are products of the revival movement. Their theologies and worldview were largely shaped by the key teachings and aspects of the revival movement. Scholars have also suggested that the EARM had a direct influence particularly from the 1950s and may have spawned the Kenya Students Christian Fellowship (KSCF) and bred Christian Union (CU) types (Kalu 2008) which are now well entrenched in institutions of higher learning in the country (Parsitau 2007).

iii) Indigenous/Independent Pentecostal Churches

The third distinct phase that is discernable in the Kenyan Pentecostal scene, the indigenous/independent Pentecostal church movements that emerged in the 1960s and early 1970s. These movements benefitted from the work of visiting evangelists. According to Mwaura (2005) American evangelists such as Billy Graham, Oral Roberts and T.L Osborn visited Kenya between 1957-1960 and sparked off a series of charismatic revival movements throughout the country. T.L Osborn had set up a healing mission in Mombasa in 1957, a venture that sparked off another series of revival meetings in Mombasa and Kisumu.

According to Bishop Mark Kariuki and Rev Paul Mwakio both of Deliverance Church Nakuru who attended these healing crusades, ‘these meetings were accompanied by charismatic gifts such as faith healing and other miracles which had a huge impact on a number of people who attended these meetings.’^v Similarly, Billy Graham evangelized in the 1960s in Nairobi and Kisumu and drew huge crowds to his meetings. These meetings drew large groups of students who ‘caught the fire’ of these revival meetings (Wairimu 2010). The tradition of public preaching and outreach invigorated the young secondary school students who came from mainline churches.

According to Kalu (2008:20), ‘the youth were filled with the Holy Spirit expected to experience miracles in everyday life including divine provisions of their needs, healing, raising the dead and especially a moral change in lifestyle (see also Kuipers 2011:86). During school and college breaks, they youth spend time attending charismatic camp meetings, where miracles and faith healing even cases of raising the dead were reported to have taken place (Kalu, 2008).

Kalu (2008) further shows that Margaret Wangare, a product of the revival period, returned from a prayer camp in Njoro High School in Nakuru District in 1974 to find her grandmother dying. She placed a blanket that was anointed in the camp meeting on her grandmother, and she was immediately healed. The Banana Hill Community in Kiambaa District broke loose as sick people gathered near her for healing. Wangare later studied in Benson Idahosa’s Christ for All Nations seminary in Benin, Nigeria, and founded the Church of the Lord, a predominantly rural evangelistic church in the Kiambaa

District of Central Kenya (Kalu 2008). To date she is still the presiding Bishop of this church (Mwaura 2005).

In many African countries, some of the radical youth spawned student fellowships while many would rise to become leaders in their churches. The Fellowship of Christian Union (FOCUS) brought together the students from the Eastern and Western regions of the continent. In Kenya, FOCUS facilitated the spread of these beliefs and teachings throughout Eastern Africa. Mathew Ojo (2004) traces both the impact of a FOCUS training course held in 1974 and the role of Kenyan University students in promoting the movement in the rest of the region. As Kalu (2007:21) further argues, the strong evangelical zeal shown by the new converts and committed heart to the actualizing of missions, allowed the young Pentecostals to carry out mission work across Kenya and throughout Eastern Africa, seeking to convert people and bring about spiritual transformation in their lives through the infilling of the Holy Spirit (see also Kuipers 2011:86).

In East Africa, revival work was further undertaken by the KSCF, a body that was largely responsible for conducting revival programmes throughout institutions of higher learning in most parts of the country. This body carried out revival work in universities, mid-level colleges, teachers colleges and secondary schools. A network of hall prayers and bible study sessions were planned to enhance Christian nurture to university students and communities. In high schools and junior colleges, Christian Unions were organized in key regional schools to train students on holistic spiritual growth (Parsitau 2007).

Today, FOCUS is an interdenominational fellowship with a membership comprising not less than 20,000 college students drawn from 62 institutions of higher learning throughout the country. Its mandate is to make graduates models of transformation in church and society. Today, many secondary schools and all universities in Kenya have Charismatic fellowships, comprised of young people from various denominations (Parsitau 2007). These include University Inter-Denominational Fellowships, Christian Union (CU) fellowships, and Weekend Challenge, which are all formidable interdenominational groups that have become entrenched in institutions of higher learning in the country.

An established trend in most secondary schools and colleges across the country is a phenomenon popularly known as Weekend Challenge. This refers to a weekend of revival meetings usually held in March of every year and organized in a school or college by born-again Christians from Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. The weekend challenge is aimed at reaching students from all denominations in these institutions with the 'born-again' gospel message. These meetings, which are usually quite intense and emotionally charged, have become firmly entrenched in institutions of higher learning (Parsitau 2007).

Leaders of the revival were generally nonprofessionals and women who had little theological formation or training, but they worked tirelessly to involve schools and colleges. Many lay people who were involved in the revival later became leading personalities and even founded churches and Parachurch organizations: Examples of these leading personalities include Joe

Kayo, the founding father of Deliverance Church (DC). Others include David Kimani, founder of Bethel Mission, Bishop Margaret Wangare of the Church of the Lord, Banana, among others (Mwaura 2005; Parsitau 2007).

Other leading Kenyan Pentecostals include Bishop Mark Kariuki, the current General Overseer of Deliverance Churches of Kenya, Bishop Arthur Kitonga, founder of the Redeemed Gospel Church (RGC), Bishop Wilfred Lai of JCC, an affiliate of RGC and Evangelist Teresia Wairimu of FEM are all products of this revival times. The churches they founded are some of the largest indigenous Pentecostal churches in Kenya today, spread widely across the country and beyond.

For example, Bishop Arthur Kitonga the founder of the RGC based at Huruma in the expansive Mathare Valley in Nairobi is a product of the revival movement. The church, which is estimated to have about 15,000 members,^{vi} was founded in 1974. Four decades since its inception, RGC has recorded tremendous growth and spawned both local and diasporic congregations. Over five hundred branches of the RGC have sprung up in Kenya, with many in Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Africa and Minnesota, USA.

Indigenous Pentecostal church movements in Kenya just as the EARM, the student revival movements, and the missionary activities of North American evangelists and revivalists influenced both their predecessors, the Classical Pentecostal churches. However, Kalu (2008) credits the East African Revival Movement for the pentecostalization and charismatization of the East African region, instead of external influences and evangelists from North

America. Mwaura (2005) on her part privileges both factors as having influenced the emergence and evolution of Kenyan Pentecostalism.

We suggest that Kenyan Pentecostalism evolved from multiple pathways and that no single factor necessitated its emergence. Yet, these movements have acquired their own character and adapted its local environment, even contextualized. Nevertheless, each congregation is independent of the other with no central authority. Only the (EFK) unites them under one body. This body that represent all Evangelical, Pentecostal and charismatic church movements is gradually emerging as a mouthpiece that speaks on behalf of these groups, even though it remains largely divided. This came out quite clearly during the 2007/8 post-election crisis when its presiding head, Bishop Wellington Mutiso is said to have issued conflict statements concerning the post-election crisis (Parsitau 2009).

Although indigenous Pentecostal churches did not have social visibility in the 1970s and early 1980s, they have over the last two decades metamorphosed into active religious organizations whose presence is now being felt in all areas of public life in Kenya. In Kenya, a shift from Classical and Indigenous Pentecostalism to Neo-Pentecostalism is taking place.

iv) The Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements

The fourth phase discernable in the Kenyan Pentecostal scene, and which is the focus of this research, is the contemporary period, which constitutes the rise of the Neo-Pentecostal, and Charismatic church types that exploded into the scene from the 1970s onwards. These movements have steadily grown from the 1980s, and established hundreds of churches all over the country.

Indigenous Kenyans founded some while international evangelists from Europe, Asia, America and other parts of Africa, established others.

Neo-Pentecostalism in Kenya is a multi-faceted-movement that enjoys the support of people from all occupations. Historically, the movement attracted the poor and the marginalized, but this is no longer the case. Neo-Pentecostalism tends to attract significant numbers of students as well as educated young professionals. They have adopted a faith focused on this worldly blessings and a deliverance theology (Gifford 1998:320; Mwaura & Parsitau 2012). Like other Pentecostals, Neo-Pentecostals identify with the central act of conversion in which the individual consecrates his/her life to Christ, atones for past sins and becomes 'born again' or 'saved' (Marshall 1994:244).

However, Neo-Pentecostals also exhibit many new characteristics that make them distinctively different from other Christians. They overtly display a rejection of African culture although their theology, particularly deliverance theology is informed by African worldview and cosmology. They attract the youth, are mostly urban congregations, display an ardent desire to appear successful, reflect a modern outlook, and portray an international image (by indicating that their movements are international), the appropriation and use of mass media communication technologies, the use of English as the medium of communication, emphasize the manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and have prominent roles for women and youth (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005; Anderson 2005; Adogame 2005; Mwaura and Parsitau 2012).

However, while scholars have examined the Neo-Pentecostal movement as if it is one homogenous movement, throughout fieldwork, we discerned that it was even more fragmented than was previously thought. We were able to identify four levels or types within the Neo-Pentecostal churches in Kenya. The first aspect includes those churches that emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s. These were founded by local people although a few have international ties or mother churches abroad. Many of these churches have grown to become huge religious organizations founded and run by a charismatic leader usually with his or her family and close friends. For example, the founders and their families run both JIAM and MMC.

The founders often describe themselves as the ‘presiding bishops’, ‘the president’ or ‘executive director’ or the ‘founding president.’ Examples of these churches include JIAM, FEM, MMC, JCC, LCC, Neno Evangelism, and Charismata Ministries among many others. In Kenya, both the founders as well as their members refer to their churches simply as ‘ministries. Most are registered as nonprofit NGOs or FBOs.

Many of these ministries have invaded public spaces in towns and cities, places hitherto considered unconventional for worship purposes. Public spaces such as parks, bus stations, markets and any other places where people congregate are targeted for evangelistic crusades, lunch hour meetings, revival meetings, prayer meetings or Bible study. Other spaces include stadia, cinema halls, theatres, nightclubs and conference halls of hotels. In Nairobi’s Central Business District (CBD), for instance, there are breakfast, lunchtime and

evening prayer meetings in cinema halls, hotel conference rooms and other buildings.^{vii}

Majority of Neo-Pentecostal leaders have also been influenced by either North American Pentecostalism or West African Pentecostalism or both. For example, Bishops' Wanjiru, Muiro, and Ng'ang'a deliverance theologies have influences from West African deliverance ministries while Evangelist Teresia Wairimu has been greatly influenced by Evangelist Reinhardt Bonke. Other theological influences can also be discerned in most of these preachers who have spiritual mentors from West, South and Central Africa, as well as from North America, Europe, and Asia.

The second aspect discernable in the Kenyan Neo-Pentecostal scene is the establishment of ministries, quasi-religious structures within Neo-Pentecostal congregations that emerged in the late 1990s. These became increasingly visible in the public sphere after thereafter. They include House of Grace International (HOG), World Harvest International Ministries, Jubilee Christian Centre (JCC) all in Nairobi, and Kingdom Seekers in Nakuru among others.

Some of the ministries were started by people who were directly mentored by founders of the first generation of Neo-Pentecostal preachers mentioned above. This category was set free and allowed to go start their own ministries while others just emerged on their own. For example, the founders of Jubilee Christian Centre also known as (JCC), Allan and Kathy Kiuna, both served at Faith Evangelistic Ministries (FEM) before they were anointed to go and start their own ministry.^{viii} To date they regard Evangelist Teresia Wairimu

of FEM as their spiritual mentor and mother (Parsitau 2011; Wairimu 2010).

Our research also indicate that these second generation of the Neo-Pentecostal movements are not radically different in their theology or teachings except that their leaders are much younger than the 1980s and 1990s generation. They also attract big numbers of youth, particularly university and college students. Their music is also much more current, dynamic and with a strong appeal to the youth. They use the latest musical instruments and incorporate language normally used by youth such as sheng and other slangs that is appealing to the youth (Parsitau 2009; 2011c).

The third level is the proliferation of smaller congregations that have sprouted all over urban centres particularly in informal settlements, residential areas in both major and smaller urban centres and towns. Collins Smith (2007) refers to these newer groups as informal Pentecostals churches. Throughout field research, we came across many smaller Neo-Pentecostal and charismatic ministries that have emerged in townships, residential estates and in informal settlements in Nairobi and Nakuru.

These ministries also display incredible creativity when it comes to naming of their organizations. Some have creative names such as the “Finger of God’s Ministries,” ‘Helicopter Ministries,’ “Water brook Church,” “Priesthood of Christ Gospel Church,” “Glory Tabernacle,” “New Beginnings Church,” “World Harvest,” “World Over-comers,” “Rivers of Joy,” “Oasis of Love and Peace Sanctuaries” “Sword of the Spirit,” “Kingdom Seekers,” “The Power of Jesus around the World Church,” “Destiny Worship Centre,” “Rock Ministry,” and “Glorified Body of Christ Evangelism.” In most cases, these are

splinter groups from larger and relatively more established Neo-Pentecostal churches mostly due to leadership related disputes.

A fourth level discernable within the Kenyan Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic scene are the Neo-Prophetic movements. These movements constitute a new manifestation of prophetism in contemporary African Christianity. They exemplify a high degree of hybridity, grounding their beliefs and practices in African worldviews while combining practices of the older AICs, the Classical Pentecostal churches and the Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. A good example is David Owuor of the National Repentance and Holiness Ministry, which he started in 2004.^{ix}

Lastly, an increasingly visible development within Kenyan Neo-Pentecostalism is the emergence of smaller church congregations that specialize in the selling of anointing oil, anointed salt, cards and other ritual paraphernalia.^x Such churches and ministries include the Helicopter Ministries, Around the Globe Deliverance Ministries and God's Power around the World Ministries. A visit to these churches during fieldwork between 2009-2010 revealed interesting findings.

In the Helicopter Ministries as well as Around the Globe Deliverance Ministries in Nairobi, we found that these churches' reception desks have shelves full of 'anointing oil,' 'anointing water' and 'anointing salts' that are sold according to the nature of one's illness. The items also vary in price depending on the nature of illness. Serious illnesses such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, tumor and high blood pressure would require one to pay more for the anointed items unlike say for example, a cold or flu.

The above shows that Kenyan Neo-Pentecostalism is not a homogenous movement but one that has different characteristics. At present, Kenyan Neo-Pentecostalism represents the most visible evidence of religious renewal as attested by its social and public prominence. They also constitute the fastest growing group of churches (Parsitau & Mwaura 2010). A 10-nation survey by US based Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (PFRPL 2006) reckons that Kenya was the most Pentecostal nation in Africa with 56 percent of its Christian population claiming to belong to Pentecostal and Charismatic movements.^{xi} The survey also found that approximately seven in ten Protestants in Kenya are either Pentecostal or Charismatic, and about a third of Kenyan Catholics surveyed can be classified as Charismatic.

The Neo-Pentecostal churches begun to manifest themselves in the public sphere in the 1990s. This period also saw the introduction of ideological issues surrounding modernity and the media in church (Kalu 2007, 21) while the new millennium signaled a shift from disengagement with society to full engagement with society, politics, public life and civic engagement (Parsitau 2010, 2011).

From 2000 to 2010, prophesy and the role of the prophets is increasingly assuming prominence while prophetic engagement is emerging as a new mode of civic and public engagement. Four decades since its emergence, Pentecostalism can be described as a social and political force not just in Kenya, but also in many African countries alongside the established churches.^{xiii} For example, recent statistics appear to suggest that significant high

numbers of African Christians see a clear connection between their faith and politics. A 2008 PFRPL survey of Pentecostal in ten African countries shows that 83% of Christians in Kenya, 75% in Nigeria, and 63% South Africa, see a clear role for religion in politics and public life. We will further expound on this in preceding chapters.

2.5 THE IMPACT OF PENTECOSTAL CHRISTIANITY ON THE KENYAN SOCIETY

The flourishing of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Kenya has had a significant effect on the social-political landscape. It has also largely upset the religious equilibrium of the country. In addition to establishing its own churches and carving out a niche for itself in the Kenyan society, Pentecostalism has deeply influenced sectors of mainline churches Protestant and Catholic churches. Perhaps the largest impact of Pentecostal Christianity in Kenya may be found in mainline Churches and other religious organizations.

From the sixties and seventies onwards, the so-called Charismatic Renewal Movement emerged within established churches, first in Protestantism and subsequently in the Catholic Church (Omenyo 2002; Parsitau 2007; Kibue 2002; Anderson et al 2010). These charismatic movements within mainline churches gave a new boost to Pentecostal expansion and growth not just in Kenya but in other parts of the African continent as well. Members of the charismatic movement are commonly viewed as an integral part of Pentecostalism despite being part of mainline churches.

At the same time, mainline churches as well as AICs have been significantly impacted and forced to adapt and embrace Pentecostal spirituality and ethos in a bid to survive and remain relevant. The impact of the Pentecostal movement in Kenya extends beyond its pentecostalizing tendencies on mainline Christianity, the public sphere and its burgeoning demographic numbers. It has affected other religiosities and redesigned the country's socio-religious landscape.

2.6 THE RISE TO CIVIC AND PUBLIC PROMINENCE OF KENYAN NEO- PENTECOSTALISM

One of the most remarkable trends and recent development in Kenya's social and religious history has been the rapid rise to religious, social, public and civic prominence of the Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. They have achieved this either by seeking favor from the political class, being co-opted or contesting public and civic offices during general elections.^{xiii} The interplay between religious groups and government is changing in ways that open new avenues for Pentecostal religious voices to influence public policy. Many Pentecostal churches have broadened their political agenda and embraced elective politics, democratization, constitution making and human rights as something that they can rightly participate in.

In addition, as key stakeholders and important elements within civil society, Pentecostal groups have become more aggressive in fighting for their interests. Their mouthpiece, the Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya, has become an active medium through which Pentecostal concerns and interests are channeled and articulated. They have also emerged as significant service

providers like mainline churches.^{xiv}

Many huge churches such as FEM, JIAM and others have tremendous human and material resources and claim to affect the lives of communities around them. The resurgence of Neo-Pentecostalism and other social movements in the public sphere in Kenya has increased the social space they occupy and this has nurtured a culture of civic engagement. In fact, throughout the continent, Pentecostals have increasingly become important social and political actors particularly in the last ten years.^{xv}

In Kenya for example, Pentecostals actively campaigned against draft constitution in 2005, largely because it provided for the establishment of the *Kadhi Courts*.^{xvi} Besides the Pentecostal clergy who are the case studies in this research, others have emerged as leading opinion shapers in Kenyan politics (Parsitau 2010a; 2011b).^{xvii} Bishops' Mark Kariuki of DC, Arthur Kitonga of RGC, Wilfred Lai of LCC, Jonah Obonyo, and Boniface Adoyo both of CITAM, are all examples of socio-politically engaged leaders (Parsitau 2011).

At the same time, Pentecostal Christianity has emerged as a critical force in public life and national debates on abortion, same sex marriages, human rights, elections and constitution making.^{xviii} However, beyond electoral politics, Pentecostalism has penetrated important sectors of Africa's public and civic life. This is especially so since Pentecostals are adept at using mass media technologies to propagate their messages and invade the public sphere. In Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda for example, Pentecostals own radio and TV stations.

Yet, the effects of religious ideas on politics have been little studied, mainly because many academics and journalists did not take these churches seriously while academics preferred to study the more organized mainline churches. In fact, Pentecostalism has gradually shifted its focus to setting a social agenda through assumption of political power.^{xix} We shall examine this in more details in chapters four, five, six and seven.

2.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have attempted to locate Kenyan Pentecostalism within its social context; examined the history and origins of Kenyan Pentecostalism and identified its different manifestations. While Kenyan Pentecostalism has often been presented as an imported religion, such views need to be tempered. Although Kenyan Pentecostalism has been influenced by external factors, it has equally been domesticated to become a local movement. We highlighted how Pentecostalism is now the new driving force of Christian revival in Kenya, spreading and changing the social, religious, economic and political landscapes. We explored its impact on the public sphere but also to other religious organizations especially as discussed in the text. The next chapter will focus on the life histories, origins and developments of JIAM, MMC and FEM.

ⁱStatistics for Kenyan Muslims have been deeply politicized and highly contested with some Muslim groups suggesting that the Muslim population is anywhere between 10-30 percent of the population. This claim is however not supported by demographic data as was evident in the 2009 Population Census.

ⁱⁱ John Padwick (2008), Focus on African Instituted Churches and Development in Kenya, in Global Development and Faith-Inspired Organizations in Europe and Africa: Berkley Centre Report, Hague, June 24-25, 2008, p. 17

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- ⁱⁱⁱErick Wamanji, The Return of Kenya's Pioneer Televangelist, *The Standard*, September 5/2009.
- ^{iv}Ibidem
- ^v Interviews with Bishop Mark Kariuki and Paul Mwakio of Deliverance Church Nakuru on 10/9/2009, in Nakuru Town
- ^{vi} *Revival Springs Magazine*, May 2010, Issue No 10 p.11.
- ^{vii} Lillian Alunga, O' come al ye Faithful, Genesis of Pentecostals take over in Nairobi, *The Sunday Standard*, July 20/2008
- ^{viii} Both Allan and Kathy Kiuna describe the Evangelist Wairimu as their spiritual authority, mentor and guide; see Sunday Nation Advert, The History of Jubilee Christian Centre, Celebrating 11 years of God's Faithfulness, 30th January 2011, 20
- ^{ix} Beatrice Obwocha, the Life and Times of the Man of Visions, *the Standard*, Saturday 11/4/2009. See also *Arise Africa Magazine* 2009 Special Edition, The Man who baptized Raila, Exclusive interview.
- ^x The Shocking World of Anointing Oil, Miracle Cards, *The Shepherd*, Issue No 33, June 2011
- ^{xi} <http://pewforum.org/survey/pentecostals/africa>
- ^{xii} <http://pewforum.org/survey/pentecostals/africa>
- ^{xiii} *The Standard* Team, Exodus from Pulpit to Parliament, Thursday, July 26, 2007. See also Maore Itula, Churches Keen to Sponsor Clerics in Elections, *the Standard*, October 2,2006, Mwangi Githahu, From Pulpit to Power: Clerics' Dream of taking Government, *the Sunday Nation*, October 15/2006: Otumo Ongalo, From Pulpit to Politics: it's a race to Usual Greed, *the Standard*, January 26/2007: From Pulpit to Parliament, *the Standard* Thursday, July 26/2007: Jeff Otieno, Quit First, Tutu Urges the Clergy, *Sunday Nation* Jan,20,2007. Gathenya Njaraba, Evangelicals New Kids on the Political Block, *The Standard*, Thursday November 30, 2006
- ^{xiv} For example, Evangelical Kabarak University, Daystar University and The Pan Africa Christian University(Pentecostal Assemblies) and African Christian University(formerly Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology(NEGST), and The International Leadership University(formerly Nairobi International School of Theology(NIST). At the same time, many own media houses: for example, NPC owns Hope FM. Others own schools, colleges, and tremendous human and material resources.
- ^{xv} Mwaura Samora, Onward arching Evangelical Churches Shake Up the Social Order in Africa, *Daily Nation* Friday October 30, 2009, p 18-19
- ^{xvi} *Sunday Standard* Team *Churches Campaign Against The Referendum*, *The Sunday Standard* Aug 21, 2005
- ^{xvii} Exodus from Pulpit to Parliament, Thursday, July 26, 2007. See also Maore Itula, Churches Keen to Sponsor Clerics in Elections, *the Standard*, October 2,2006, Mwangi Githahu, From Pulpit to Power: Clerics' Dream of taking Government, *the Sunday Nation*, October 15/2006: Otumo Ongalo, From Pulpit to Politics: it's a race to Usual Greed, *the Standard*, January 26/2007: From Pulpit to Parliament, *the Standard* Thursday, July 26/2007
- ^{xviii} See also Maore Itula, Churches Keen to Sponsor Clerics in Elections, *The Standard*, October 2,2006, Mwangi Githahu, From Pulpit to Power: Clerics' Dream of taking Government, *the Sunday Nation*, October 15/2006:
- ^{xix} Mwaura Samora, Onward arching Evangelical Churches Shake up the Social Order in Africa, *Daily Nation* Friday October 30, 2009, p 18-19.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HISTORIES AND DEVELOPMENT OF JIAM, MMC AND FEM

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the origins and development of the three churches: JIAM, MMC, and FEM. It also examines the life histories and biographies of each of their founders, the churches' key features; the social and demographic characteristics of church members, leadership styles, corporate structures and organizational skills among others. This helps us to understand factors and beliefs that shape how these churches engage with civic and public issues. This is because no two churches are the same, even though they share broad characteristics. We begin with JIAM, followed by MMC and FEM respectively.

3.1 BISHOP MARGARET WANJIRU

Bishop Wanjiru is the founder and presiding bishop of Jesus Is Alive Ministries International (JIAM), one of the most prominent Neo-Pentecostal churches in Kenya. JIAM is located in the expansive Starehe constituency. Bishop Wanjiru served in the Kenyan Parliament, as the Member of Parliament representing Starehe Constituency from 2008 to early 2013. Starehe Constituency is one of Nairobi's largest and most significant constituencies. Bishop Wanjiru also served as an Assistant Minister for Housing, as member of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) that formed a coalition government with the Party of National Unity (PNU) after the highly contested and largely discredited 2007 general elections in Kenya. She was also a member of the Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC).

In 2007 Wanjiru was voted by *True Love*, a leading women Magazine in East Africa as one of the 50 most influential women in East Africa for spearheading spiritual empowerment of thousands of women and for being the first ordained female Neo-Pentecostal Bishop in Kenya. Thus, she combines various roles as preacher, televangelist, entrepreneur, a former legislator and a public figure (Gifford 2009; Kavula 2008; Parsitau 2012a).

JIAM occupies a unique position within Kenyan Neo-Pentecostal churches. Although JIAM shares much in common with other Neo-Pentecostal churches in Kenya, it stands out from others for a number of reasons: the first distinct trait is its engagement and openness to national politics. Wanjiru was the only female Bishop of a Neo-Pentecostal church who served as a politician, legislator, a civil servant and the head and founder of a major religious organization.

JIAM's affiliation, openness and engagement with politics has challenged other Neo-Pentecostal churches and equally ushered in a new chapter and trend in the Kenyan socio-religious history where Neo-Pentecostal churches are now freely mixing and contesting public life. Secondly, JIAM is also unique because its founder and presiding bishop is the first ever-ordained single female bishop of a Neo-Pentecostal Church in Kenya.¹ She is in fact among the first women to found and head a church of such magnitude in a society that frowns on single women (Parsitau 2011a).

Thirdly, JIAM probably remains the only church that has not been involved in an aggressive and expansionist policy of church growth and church planting all over the country. For almost two decades and until 2007, Wanjiru

concentrated much of her efforts on consolidating and making JIAM a successful church both locally and internationally and avoided planting in the country.ⁱⁱ Fourthly, Wanjiru's adept use of mass media and communication technologies stand out.

As a visionary leader, she recognized quite early the impact and significance of mass media for evangelism and begun appropriating this critical tool long before others realized its importance (Mwaura 2002; 2008, Mwaura and Parsitau 2010). Indeed, she was among the first Kenyan televangelist to embrace the new media as an evangelistic tool. She started a TV ministry "The Glory is here" in 1998. All these factors make JIAM a unique charismatic ministry. We now turn to the life history of Bishop Wanjiru and JIAM International.

3.2 The Early Life of Margaret Wanjiru

Margaret Wanjiru, a single mother of two sons and an adopted daughter was born in 1961 into a polygamous family and to peasant parents, the late Samuel Kariuki and Mrs. Loice Wanjiku Kariuki of Kiambu County in Kenya. Wanjiru describes her childhood as one characterized by extreme poverty and hardships (Parsitau 2011; Parsitau & Mwaura 2010; Mwaura 2002; 2005; 2008). While she was growing, her parents moved to the sprawling Kangemi slums in Nairobi where her mother brewed and sold illicit liquor to maintain the family and pay school fees for Wanjiru and her siblings (Mwaura 2002).

Wanjiru describes her father as a hopeless drunk who could not provide for his family, thus leaving her mother as the sole breadwinner (Mwaura 2002; Mwaura & Parsitau 2010; Parsitau 2011). Despite the hardship and the abject

poverty surrounding her upbringing, Wanjiru attended a local primary school and later proceeded to secondary school. However, many hurdles and challenges would stand on her way of getting an education. At 16, she claims she got pregnant;

“By a man she hardly knew and had to drop out of school. He ducked soon after and reappeared a year later, but before I could figure out what was eating me, I was pregnant again despite all the counseling and cautioning by my mother.” The man disappeared out of the picture and resurfaced later only to impregnate her a second time. (Sunday Nation 17/6/01:3).

Wanjiru’s personal revelations of her past life, a story framed as a testimony of how far God had brought her from abject poverty to a successful religious woman visionary, became the subject of her political campaigns in 2007 even as it emerged that Wanjiru was not entirely honest about her past life. Media revelations indicate that Wanjiru appears to have been married or cohabited with the late James Kamangu (a cobbler from a small rural village called Gachie in Kiambu County).

James Kananga claimed to have married Wanjiru according to Kikuyu traditional marriage rites. He also claimed to have fathered the bishop’s sons but Wanjiru vehemently denied all these allegations (Mwaura 2002; Mwaura & Parsitau 2011; Parsitau 2011; Gifford 2009). Yet, the story points to an unstable upbringing and a life of tremendous challenges that this woman encountered as she tried to navigate life in an obviously hostile socio-economic environment.

However, Wanjiru, a teenage mother of two boys eventually went back to finish school while her mother took care of her sons. After her secondary education, Wanjiru got a job as a house servant in Nairobi, a job she explains

in her own words, 'she undertook in order to feed her children' (Mwaura 2002:202). Later she was hired to clean toilets in a private company Philip Harrison and Cross-field in Nairobi. While the salary was meager, she says she persevered as she was used to a hard life. However, she harbored ambitions to change her life and circumstances.

She later on enrolled for a sales and marketing course where she acquired a diploma. Armed with a diploma, she rose through the ranks in the same company to become a sales girl and later went into marketing. Within a short time, her fortunes changed for the better. To date, Wanjiru portrays an image of a brave, bold, determined and ambitious woman, traits that evidently propelled her from 'rags to riches' (Mwaura & Parsitau 2010; Parsitau 2011a).

Wanjiru describes her adult and career life as one that oscillated between periods of tremendous success to periods of extreme poverty, failure and hardship. She claims that after accidentally spilling hot tea on her boss, she was sacked but immediately found another job in a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) as a senior manager. It was while working with this NGO that she was lured into Satanism and the Occult due to her ambitious desire to change her life for the better. Her insatiable ambition for more wealth made her quit her job to venture into self-employment and joined the world of business and entrepreneurship. Soon she was involved in exporting curios to South Africa.

It is in the business world that she honed her entrepreneurial skills and business acumen, traits that she credits today for the successful running of her ministry. Over two decades since its inception, JIAM is run like a blue chip

company while Bishop Wanjiru portrays herself as a shrewd businessperson and an entrepreneur. However, even in the world of business, she faced myriads of challenges, which she blamed on witchcraft and her early involvement with the occult. Her religious background, just like her early childhood, appears complex and unstable (Mwaura 2002).

3.2.1 Involvement in Witchcraft and Subsequent Deliverance

Wanjiru claims that she was unwittingly initiated into witchcraft at a tender age of ten when a wizard convinced her mother to subject her daughter to witchcraft rituals for protection from evil spirits. This was especially important because her sister was sickly and needed help and protection (Mwaura 2002). This is what she said in a newspaper interview:

My younger sister was chronically ill. One day, the little girl fainted and our mother thought she was dead. My mother was weeping when a man appeared carrying a huge umbrella. He said he had been sent by the spirits to help. He started chanting gibberish and waving the umbrella and...my sister regained her strength! The man screamed: you see, she is raised from the dead. I was sent to raise her. That is my mission to this home. From then on, the stranger visited us regularly (Sunday Nation 17/6/01:3).

According to Wanjiru, their involvement with the occult ensured that they got into a covenant relationship with witchcraft, a venture that tormented her later in life and one that in her own words 'would take the intervention of God to break'.ⁱⁱⁱ Her earlier involvement with witchcraft has obviously had a huge but ambivalent impact on much of her adult life and is evident in her struggles to make a life for herself and a complete break with these evil forces of darkness (Mwaura 2002; Paristau & Mwaura 2010).

This is evident not just from her narratives and testimonies about her engagements with witchcraft but also in her deliverance services where the themes and the subject of demons, spirits, and witches dominate in her

theologizing. However, her earlier involvement with witchcraft would leave a huge mark in her Christian life and would later on become the subject of countless sermons, teachings and testimonies. This subject has over the years come to constitute a great deal of her theology. An analysis of her teachings and sermons in recorded audio tapes, CDs and magazines and other such literature revealed that there is a strong emphasis on themes such as witchcraft, sorcery, demonology and deliverance.^{iv}

At the beginning of her ministry, the topic on witchcraft and the occult was the main subject and she taught on demons, spirits, and witchcraft quite often. Later on, these teachings were replaced by teachings on success and prosperity although the spirit world still looms large (Gifford 2009). She also frequently gives testimonies about her involvement with witchcraft and the occult and how she was delivered from this. Her favorite line is how she got so deeply involved in witchcraft that she graduated from one level of the occult to the next until she reached the apex.^v To outdo her business rivals and enemies, she got so deeply ingrained with the occult that she graduated from black magic to white magic:

One woman tried to play poker with my business enterprise, the same woman who actually introduced me to Black Magic? I bewitched her and she went bonkers. She was roaming the streets of Nairobi in rags, picking up dirt and eating garbage from dustbins (Gifford 2009:116).

Wanjiru claims to have ascended to the highest level of witchcraft symbolized by the color red. The colors signify the depth of the occult not necessarily that witchcraft is black, white, or red. This venture saw her fortunes change and she grew very wealthy, travelled a great deal but she was also restless and insatiable. In one sermon, Wanjiru had this to say about her

involvement with the occult:

My wardrobe was full of evil concoctions and I had built altars for the devil in my home, office and business premises. I had graduated from black magic to white magic and then to red magic and my business fortunes multiplied as I went up the ranks of Satanism⁷

In this sermon that drew largely on the books of John 1:4-4 and Wanjiru delves into the avenues ‘used by the devil to reign in and control people’. Yet, she also became increasingly uneasy with the devil and witchcraft and needed help. It was at this point in her life when she desperately needed to be rescued that she attended a weeklong crusade in Uhuru Park, Nairobi where the Nigerian Evangelist Emmanuel Eni was preaching in March of 1990. The Evangelist preached against Satanism and Witchcraft a sermon that Wanjiru could relate with from her personal encounters with the spirit world.

Wanjiru’s dalliance with witchcraft is closely connected to ideas that are common in Africa’s cosmological worldviews that divides the universe into the material world and the invisible world. The physical world is the abode of human beings while the invisible world is the world of spiritual beings both good and evil. The invisible world is just one aspect of a rich field of religious experiences in Africa. Visions, dreams, revelations, witches, demons and the underworld or the occult are notable elements of African religious experience that play a role in all traditions of Africa, including Neo-Pentecostalism (Ter Haar 2003; Ellis and Ter Haar 2004).

The language of witches, demons, the occult and Satan are prevalent not just in JIAM but in many other Neo-Pentecostal Churches. They are also an accepted part of the religious experience. However, they are also and to a large extend a source of fear, awe and power. Nethertheless, it is a language that

helps African Christians decode and understand their world and environment.

According to Ellis and Ter Haar (2004) popular stories about witches, prophets, miracles, or the use of witchcraft, spirit mediums or diviners, is part of the religious and political vernacular in different parts of Africa. However, they also demonstrate the way religious thought is intertwined with political practice and how notions of political power are embedded in religious ideas. Political as well as spiritual power is widely perceived as originating in the invisible world. Religious activity is also understood as a search for spiritual power

Wanjiru's testimony of her dalliance with the underworld further serves to legitimize her claims to salvation and her ability to deliver others in similar situations. This is because although ideas about demons and witchcraft are prevalent, they are also feared and frowned upon. However, when one is 'born gain' and delivered from these powers of darkness, it is viewed as an illustration of God's power working to defeat the powers of darkness. This is why deliverance theologies and rituals are common in churches such as JIAM, MMC and FEM. It is within this framework of African religious cosmologies that tends to divide the universe into two that Bishop Wanjiru's engagements with spiritual powers could be understood and interpreted.

3.2.2 Her Spiritual Journey to Salvation

At Uhuru Park, Wanjiru claims that the sermon by Evangelist Eni made her uneasy and she felt like the preacher was talking about her. This is especially because Evangelist Eni talked about women who were involved in witchcraft and Satanism. This sermon only left her more restless and deeply

convicted and she desired a complete break and transformation. Before the end of the crusade, on 18 March 1990 she approached the evangelist, confessed and acknowledged her sins and was prayed for. This prayer marked a complete spiritual turn around and ushered in a new phase in her life. She denounced witchcraft and the occult and begun a new life in Christ. Thereafter and upon receiving salvation, she began preaching in the streets of Nairobi and at Jevanjee Gardens with a group of South African evangelists. She sharpened her public speaking skills as an itinerant preacher at Jevanjee Gardens, a common public space for street preachers and job seekers in the city.

From street preaching, she later on moved to the Mang Building in the city centre where she held meetings until she had a significant audience. In 1998, she moved to a new premises situated along Haile Selassie Avenue, within the Central Business District in Nairobi. On 28 June 1997, Wanjiru was ordained as a pastor by Bishop Arthur Kitonga of RGC. Six years later, on 5 October 2002, she was consecrated bishop by Bishop Kitonga.

This was a long journey for Wanjiru, as she became the first Pentecostal woman in Kenya to be ordained to the pastorate (Mwaura 2002). Thus, from a humble beginning in 1993 with only 30 members, JIAM has grown tremendously to become a successful household name in the Kenyan Neo-Pentecostal scene. In Nairobi, the church has a Bible School, a recording studio and a bookshop. The ministry is also engaged in the transport business, publishing, a microfinance agency called Glory Development Fund and a Good Samaritan project (Mwaura 2002).

This section has retraced the life and spiritual journey of Margaret

Wanjiru from birth to a religious visionary. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that while analyzing the history of the founders of Neo-Pentecostal churches, what comes out clearly is the tension between the biography of the founder and by extension the history of the church and how this intersects with the personality of the founder. This is because in many Neo-Pentecostal churches all over the world, the history of the church is often linked to the biography of the founder.

This is also because the founders are individuals who claim authentic visions, missions, dreams and calling. Their personal stories, narratives and experiences intersect not only with the history but also shape the very history of their churches. The church is the founder and the founder is the church. Thus, churches like JIAM, MMC and FEM are personality depended with barely any plan for succession. The churches are also family property sometimes registered in the name of the founder, his spouse and children where applicable or a close trusted relative. This is reflected in all the three case studies.

3. 2. 3 Vision and Mission of JIAM

Like many other religious visionaries, Wanjiru had a vision that was to transform her completely and served as another second turning point in her Christian life. According to biographical data published in her church website,^{vi} Wanjiru claims that she had a vision at home while relaxing on her coach. This vision according to Wanjiru lasted about nine hours. She narrates that God took her through the gospel of Luke and the story of Mary the mother of Jesus Christ and said to her:

I chose Mary because she was God fearing and humble. Because you are obedient in addition, humble, I will send you to restore my church.⁹

God then took her through the book of Nehemiah and said to her “you will bring souls and rebuild the church like Nehemiah.” After this, God showed her a black book with writings inside but no title. God touched it with a finger, drew a map of Africa, and wrote on it, “Revival for Africa.” This was then rubbed and replaced with the words “The Glory is here: Africa shall be saved.” The mission statement of JIAM according to her ministry’s website is “to reach the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.” Wanjiru considered this experience her inaugural vision, an experience that not only transformed her Christian life but one that would become the vision and mission statement of her ministry.

This vision marked the beginning of a new life for the bishop, as it left no doubts in her mind about God’s call and purpose for her life. Visions and dreams are an integral part of the life of Neo-Pentecostal church founders. Like witchcraft and demons, dreams play the role of providing church founders with legitimacy that their churches or ministries are ordained by God who clearly spoke to them in the form of dreams and visions to begin the said ministries or churches.

Again, this emanates from the belief in an invisible world inhabited by spiritual forces including God himself who legitimized their calls through dreams and visions. These spiritual forces are deemed to have effective powers over the material world. Moreover, they provide a framework and rationale for justifying the foundation of these churches, which resonates well with popular beliefs and ideologies prevalent all over Africa.

Following this inaugural dream and vision, Wanjiru felt compelled and energized to fulfill God's commission of preaching the gospel in all the corners of the world (Mwaura 2002). Mwaura (2002; 2008) further suggests that Wanjiru's concern for cross-border evangelisation can be traced to this inaugural vision in the mid-1990s, when God revealed his plan for the salvation of Africa and the world, and her role in that work. Armed with new confidence and energized by this vision, she started preaching on the streets, in churches and went around the country evangelizing. In her own words, she says:

We are called to bring salvation, deliverance, prosperity, redemption in addition, righteousness to all nations of the world (Gifford 2009:116).

Her vision for global evangelism is based on *Matthew 24:14*, which says:

All the gospel shall be preached in the entire world for a witness unto the Nations and then shall come the end. ”

3. 2. 4 JIAM International

During JIAM's tenth anniversary celebrations in 2002, Wanjiru disclosed a plan for the evangelisation of Africa and the world and even launched special buses for this endeavour (Mwaura 2002). Thereafter, she felt called upon by God to establish JIAM International, a branch of JIAM, Kenya meant to bring all international locations together under the vision “Africa Shall Be Saved.”^{vii} Within two decades, JIAM has grown to become a huge church with diasporic branches in South Africa, Britain, USA, Uganda, Tanzania and Malawi.

Since its inception, JIAM has grown to become a multifaceted ministry that encompasses programmes for spiritual deliverance, evangelism, social

welfare, outreach programmes and varied ministries for children, women, men, and youths. Youth Aflame International for example is a youth programme meant to nurture the youth spiritually and physically.^{viii} There are also prison ministries and outreach, rehabilitation of drug addicts and other such vulnerable groups such as members of the proscribed Mungiki group. Wanjiru also has media ministries and a studio that reaches a wider audience both locally and internationally. Her church could rightly be described as a holistic ministry that strives to meet the social, economic, spiritual, rehabilitative and psychological needs of all its members and non-members alive.

On a spiritual level, JIAM runs a bible school and *Faith Digest Magazine*. Although Wanjiru has no theological training, she has taken advantage of seminars, conferences both local and international, leadership training workshops and induction courses over the years. As stated on her church website, on July 13, 2003 the Vineyard Harvester Bible College in the United States awarded Wanjiru a Doctor of Theology degree.

Seven years later, on October 26, 2010, she also received a Bachelor's degree from the Graduate College and Seminary International on the subject, "Christian Leadership."^{ix} These claims cannot be substantiated but were a subject of public debates when she unsuccessfully contested for the Nairobi Senatorial seat during the 2013 general election.

3. 2. 5 Wanjiru the Televangelist

Wanjiru is an astute televangelist who is keenly aware of the power of the media for evangelism. Besides, Wanjiru is a good communicator who has learnt to use all kinds of communication skills to communicate with her

audience. JIAM is a modern church with great deal of organization necessitated by its heavy appropriation of mass media communication technologies, namely books, pamphlets, tracts, magazines, handbills, posters, radio, television, video, You Tube, emails, face book, Twitter and others. Wanjiru was among the first Neo-Pentecostal female clergy to venture into televangelism. In 1998, as already mentioned, she started her half hour televised religious programme the *Glory is Here*, that was first aired by KBC and Family TV and later by KTN. Asked why she ventured into televangelism, Wanjiru had this to say:

I had never ministered on TV before except for very few appearances in the Joy Bringers Programme. Then the Lord appeared spoke to me about TV Ministry. My worry was about the sources of finances. I started praying to The lord to bring forth finances. The lord has since been faithful and we have Never missed any programme due to nonpayment (Faith Digest 1999 No 4. 20).

JIAM's TV and radio ministry has spread to other parts of the world. Its engagement with mass media communication technologies has greatly increased its public visibility. From a humble beginning, Wanjiru's ministry boasts of some twenty thousand members locally and internationally, with a strong local congregation and a television broadcast that reaches as far as the UK and the Bahamas. Wanjiru's ministry is multifaceted and encompasses ministries. Her organization as already stated also provides business and leadership training for entrepreneurs (Parsitau & Mwaura 2010). This church and its leadership have carved out a niche for itself not just in the Kenyan Neo-Pentecostal scene but also in the public sphere. We shall discuss this in details in chapters six.

3.2.6 Bishop Wanjiru and Public Life

From 2003, Wanjiru began to spread her influence beyond her ministry

into public life. In 2005 and 2006 she led and mobilized the larger Pentecostal constituency to reject the Bomas constitutional draft. In 2007 she contested and won Parliamentary elections and was elected Member of Parliament for Starehe Constituency, Nairobi in December 2007.^x Her election to Parliament and subsequently her appointment as an Assistant Minister for Housing provides strong evidence against two myths and assumption: that single women cannot lead and found churches nor successfully contest politics in a society dominated by males and one that frowns upon female leadership; and that African Pentecostalism and politics do not mix.

According to Wanjiru, she joined politics because God instructed her to do so. Instructions to join politics came through dreams and visions as well as prophecies issued by other prophets both within and without the country. We shall discuss this in details in chapter five. Since her election to Parliament between 2007 to 2013, Wanjiru emerged as a leading public figure and an opinion shaper in the country. She empowered women spiritually and economically. Nonetheless, her ministry is not a women's ministry but a church with followers across gender, ethnic and age divides. All these experiences shape her life not just as a religious visionary but also as a teacher, preacher and evangelist and public personality.

In the next section, we examine the life history and developments of MMC and its leader, Bishop Muiru and his wife Lucy Muiru.

3.3. BISHOP PIUS AND LUCY MUIRU

3.3.1 Pius Muiru's Early Life

Bishop Pius Muiru founded Maximum Miracle Centre International

(MMC) in 1995. Pius Muiru was born in 1968 to a family of eight children in Murung'a. His father, who was a schoolteacher died when Muiru was only three years old. According to biographical data on his church website, he enjoyed a relatively modest and comfortable upbringing, as his parents were wealthy business entrepreneurs. He helped his mother run the family wholesale business in Murang'a after high school and before he joined the ministry.^{xi}

Pius attended Karega Primary School in Murang'a District where he sat for his Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) in 1983. He also attended Gituru Secondary School in Murang'a from 1984 until 1987. He later on joined Muguga High School where he developed great interests in sports, particularly football (The Standard 16/9/2007:23). He also showed talent in the debating club and in the church choir.

There is no existing evidence to suggest Muiru acquired college education after high school, however, his church website indicated that in 2007 that the bishop was pursuing a doctorate Degree in Christian Ministry through a distant learning programme offered by Florida College in the US. It was also indicated that Muiru was the holder of a diploma from Nations Theological University in California.

3.3.2 Muiru's Spiritual Journey

Muiru was just an ordinary boy who used to help his mother run the family business. He describes his life before he was saved as one full of emptiness:

After high school, I used to feel empty spiritually. I used to go to Church every Sunday as I wanted to be good but I felt empty and I continued to seek for the real meaning of life. I was always interested in the word of God and desired to have a deeper relationship with him (The Standard 16/9/2007:23).

He claims that he developed an interest in preaching and evangelism in 1989. It was at this point that he started following the preaching of other evangelists on radio and television.

I used to pass by Jevanjee Gardens on my way to University to see my elder brother. The preaching of Evangelist Gladys Ngunyi who used to preach at the Jevanjee Gardens attracted me. I was attracted by her metaphors, phrases and statements

By 1991, Muiru started preaching at Jevanjee Gardens, where he used to translate sermons to English for a group of Tanzanian evangelists. Together with his Tanzanian colleagues, they criss-crossed the country preaching the gospel. He worked with them for three years before they left the country. Muiru took over and began preaching at Jevanjee Gardens from 1993: He explains:

I called people to Christ every day. Large crowds started coming. That is when I knew God wanted me to serve him, Oral Interview (16/9/2007:23).

For the next three years, he preached at Jevanjee Gardens. In 1996, he took his message to Nairobi's estates. Like many of his contemporaries, Jevanjee Gardens became a sort of training ground for any preacher keen on sharpening his/her public speaking skills. After a while, he established Maximum Miracle Centre (MMC) church at Odeon in Nairobi.

He has a monthly magazine *Maximum Miracle Times*, a TV programme screened in Kenya and South Africa and runs a children home. In 2010, he moved his ministry to a larger sanctuary at Ruaraka in Nairobi but immediately embarked on plans to buy an even spacious building at the heart of the city centre.^{xiii} To date, service is held at the Embassy House and Ruaraka Sanctuary.

Biographical data on his website indicates that MMC has over 200 branches countrywide, and has now established branches beyond the country in Botswana, South Africa, the UK and USA.

Muiru like Wanjiru had no theological training before he started preaching. Many Neo-Pentecostal clergy rely on the gifts of the spirits that many claim enables them to preach the gospel with power and anointing. Many Neo-Pentecostal frown upon theological training arguing that the Holy Spirit is the best teacher not theological training. Information gleaned from his website; however indicate that the bishop is undertaking Bible correspondence courses with an American university towards a degree in theology.

3.3.3 THE REV LUCY MUIRU

Pius Muiru is married to Lucy in 1997, a widow with three children, who are all involved in the church's ministry. Rev Lucy Muiru occupies a seemingly prominent role in the ministry where she serves as a pastor and co-founder of the Ministry. She also serves as the head of the Ladies of Excellence Ministry (LEM), which represents the women caucus of MMC. She has contributed many sermons in their church magazines, *Maximum Miracle Times*, and during church services. This ministry has obviously enlarged her role not only as a wife and mother but also as a bishop and co-founder of MMC ministry. Together with her husband, they oversee the day-to-day running of the ministry. Lucy describes him this way:

Muiru is a loving husband, a father and a pillar of strength. He believes in what God can do for those who believe in Him. He is a source of inspiration to our children and me. Besides, he is a man of his words. He does not back down even if things become tough (Oral Interview 16/9/2007:23).

3.3.4 MMC International

Almost two decades since inception, MMC has grown significantly to become a thriving Neo-Pentecostal church whose headquarter is in Nairobi, with branches across the country and beyond. It is estimated that there are about 70 local branches spread across major urban centres in the country, particularly in Nairobi. Bishop Muiru himself claims on his church website to have over 20,000 members in his congregations and over 270 local and international branches spread across the globe.^{xiii} While the number is contestable, it is not in doubt that MMC constitutes a significant presence in the country's religious and socio-political landscape.

Muiru has established MMC International in Nottingham UK and Botswana (Parsitau & Mwaura 2010). Preachers from outside the country such as USA, Britain, West Africa, Tanzania and Uganda are frequently invited to MMC especially during annual conferences and crusades. Bishop Muiru and his wife undertake frequent travel to foreign countries to speak at seminars, crusades and conferences. MMC has a strong internet presence, thereby transcending geographic and spatial boundaries.

3.3.5 Bishop Muiru the televangelist

MMC's presence is felt in the mass media as Muiru has been a televangelist since 1998, when he launched his weekly TV programme *Kuna Nuru Gizani*, (*There is Light in the Darkness*) aired by the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC). In 2002, he established an orphanage, Maximum Miracle Centre Children's home at Kahawa Sukari, Nairobi. Besides being a televangelist, he is a business entrepreneur. The Muiru's own Mt. Harmon

Beauty Salon at the Nairobi's CBD, *Maximum Times* Magazine, a musical production outfit and an online store that retails branded DVD, VCD and CD tapes (Paristau & 2011a). This is important as the use and appropriation of mass media is broadly used by Neo-Pentecostal clergy for socio-political influence. A strong media presence helps Pentecostal clergy become known and can propel them into the public sphere.

3.3.6 Muiru's Political life

Since he began his ministry in 1998, Bishop Muiru concentrates much of his time on evangelism. He clearly shunned politics, concentrating on the consolidation of his church. In January 2007, Muiru baffled many when he declared plans to run for Kamkunji parliamentary seat and the presidency. He contested unsuccessfully for both presidential and parliamentary elections on a Kenya's People Party (KPP) ticket. Although he was unsuccessful, Muiru had come to be defined by his successful ministry and religious empire, but also by the fact that he was the first Neo-Pentecostal clergy to contest both parliamentary and presidential elections in Kenyan history (Parsitau & Kinjanjui 2009).

Together with Wanjiru, they ushered in a new dispensation in Kenyan politics where the Neo-Pentecostal clergy came to view politics and democratization as not mutually exclusive domains. As such, he emerged as a leading opinion shaper in political and religious terms. Like Bishop Wanjiru, Muiru joined politics on a platform of prophecy in which a Prophet Thomas Manton prophesied to him that God wanted him to join politics.

He explained that God wanted born again Christians to join politics to

help people who are suffering from corruption, poverty, diseases and all manner of evil. Prophecies, dreams and visions are therefore used to legitimize entry into politics and public life.

In this section, we have briefly highlighted the history and developments of MMC. We also examined the ministries of MMC and analyzed Bishop Muiru's move to public life. There are a number of similarities between MMC and JIAM as is shown by these two ministries' openness and engagement with politics and appropriation of mass media communication technologies. In the next section, we shall examine Faith Evangelistic Ministries (FEM).

3.4 FAITH EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES (FEM)

3.4.1. The Birth of a Visionary: the Early Life of Teresia Wairimu

Kinyanjui

Wairimu was born on 5 November 1957, in Waithaka, on the outskirts of Nairobi, to Catholic parents, James Kinuthia Kinjanjui and Jane Njeri Kinyanjui. She was baptized Teresia. She explains that the name 'Teresia' comes from the Greek name:

Theresa means 'a reaper, kind and patient with others, an acute person, sharp and keen. One who knows style, comeliness and polish or brilliance, is held in high esteem by all who know her, her eyes carry a magical glow, a girl who improved her surrounding, is a hard worker and never gives up.' (Wairimu 2010:100).

Wairimu who obviously takes pride in her name believes that all the qualities and attributes described above fit her character and personality. She believes that her name not only describes and sums up who she is but has also influenced what she has become. Whether this is true or not, what is not in

doubt is that Wairimu's very persona epitomizes much of the above attributes and traits described and associated with the name Teresia. Her friends, followers, and admirers describe her as an incredible woman, a woman of valor, integrity and honor and many others (Wairimu 2010).

Evangelist Wairimu cuts the image of a dignified woman who loathes controversy and keeps away from the public limelight, a trait that has earned her a lot of respect and admiration (Parsitau & Mwaura 2010; Parsitau 2011a). Wairimu describes her father as a loving but firm disciplinarian and a successful businessperson (Wairimu 2010:99; Manana 2002). Because of this family background, Wairimu and her siblings had a privileged upbringing. She explained in an interview:

My childhood was reasonably comfortable. We were all provided for, we could even afford a few luxuries. In the 1930s my dad could even afford a car and built us a spacious, stoned walled modern house.¹⁶

Her parents being strict disciplinarian fostered an environment of hard work, taking responsibility, kindness and honesty in her, and developed traits and skills that she would later require in ministry as well as in public life.

3.4.2 Her Educational Background

Wairimu attended Mukarara primary school from 1964-1970, and secondary school from 1971-1975 at Gujarat, Ngiriyambu and Gatanga where she acquired her Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) certificate. Wairimu claimed that she was not a very bright student but endured school because it was compulsory. She further claimed that she was more interested in humanities, religion, literature, languages, and social skills (Manana 2002).

Wairimu argued that she was gifted with words and could talk herself out of any sticky situation.^{xiv} Her wits helped her evade the wrath of her father who one day told her:

Wairimu, the reason why I see no point in beating you is because that gifted mouth of yours will earn you a decent living in future (Wairimu 2011: 131).

She explained that her father sensed that her daughter's gifts of oratory and social skills would place her in a position of authority in future. What she did not know at the time of these utterances in her own words:

'Was that his observations were prophetic utterances regarding her? Voice to the nation of Kenya many years to come'(Wairimu 2011:132).

Wairimu did not allow her personal limitations to hinder her because she managed to finish both primary and high school and further studied at Kindergarten Headmistress's Association of Kenya graduating with a teaching diploma for Kindergarten. Thereafter, she taught in several schools before she was called to ministry. Her nuclear family unit expanded when her father took a second wife. This according to her presented new challenges and tensions to what was a stable and loving family.

3.4.3 Marriage, Family Life and Divorce

Wairimu grew up nurturing dreams of meeting a handsome prince, get married and starting a happy family. She met Mr. Nielson, a Swedish national and social worker in 1977 during her grandmothers' funeral. Nielson belonged to the same church congregation as her grandmother and had attended the funeral as a church member. The family was totally opposed to the relationship that ensued. Wairimu stubbornly refused to listen to her father's concerns, a

decision she claimed to have regretted later on. She fell in love with the man despite her parents' disapproval.

Wairimu and her fiancé traveled to Sweden for a summer camp in late 1977. While there, 'she accepted Jesus Christ as her savior.' The couple traveled back to Kenya after a few weeks and got married in 1978. In 1980, she gave birth to a baby boy whom they named Robert. The birth of her son brought her much joy and happiness. Wairimu reflects about her marriage:

We were well provided for, comfortable and enjoyed an affluent lifestyle. We could afford both basics and luxuries. I could not complain about lack of physical provisions. However, emotionally, things were going very wrong (Wairimu 2010:36).

She begun to suffer terrible abuse but she endured as she could not turn to her family because they did not consent her marriage to Nielson. The marriage came to an abrupt end leaving her to fend alone. She narrated this experience in details in her autobiography:

I had nothing to show for except disgraces. I ended up with a broken marriage, a broken heart, broken dreams and a broken life. I was disoriented, life hurt. I was tormented by never-ending sorrow. I left with nothing, no clothes, no money, no documents, and no name. In addition, no place to go. However, the most painful of all my loss was that of my son who was also taken away from my custody. Had it not been by the grace of God and my solid faith in him, I would not have survived through the 80s (Wairimu 2010:38-39).

Wairimu further revealed that she suffered deep rejections, felt unworthy, despised and hollow. She posed in her book:

What chance did a divorced woman, a single mother to one, and an estranged? Mother of another, have? What opportunities existed for me in a harsh society? That mercilessly stigmatized and ridiculed people like me? How about the church? Would it be less or more in judging me than the rest of the society? Would my son ever understands that I did not abandon him.

These questions tormented her until she had a spiritual encounter at Uhuru Park in 1988, which transformed her life completely.

3.4.4 Uhuru Park Crusade- the Place of Divine Encounter

It was against this heartbreaking background that Wairimu attended a huge crusade held by German Evangelist Reinhardt Bonnke of Christ for All Nations (CFAN) in June 1988. Wairimu attended this crusade while she was going through a very difficult period. Yet, it turned out that this very meeting and venue would be the place for her divine encounter with God and as it turned out, she would later hold her own massive crusades for more than a decade. At Uhuru Park, she witnessed things she had never encountered or imagined. She narrates in her autobiography (2010):

Everywhere in the park, signs and wonders began to manifest beyond peoples wildest imaginations.' I received my own miracle, a touch from God. My broken heart began to melt. My wounded heart was experiencing an electric current of hope, healing and restoration. I knew beyond a shadow of doubt that my life would never be the same again. At that moment, I dared to believe in a loving and caring God who had so much in store for me.' I felt empowered, energized and encouraged.

Wairimu admired the German Evangelist for his supernatural power and she wanted to preach the gospel to the masses just like Bonnke. It was there at Uhuru Park that she prayed to God to give her that power and anointing so that she could do for God what Bonnke did for Him. She also prayed to God to connect her to Bonnke so that 'he could lay his hands on her, anoint her and impart her with God's power.'

In 1988, she traveled to Oslo to attend a meeting where Bonke was speaker. At this meeting, Bonnke prayed for Wairimu. When he laid his hands

on her, she narrates that she was slain by and filled with the Holy Spirit, and received power and anointing, traits that would later enable her to perform miracles (Manana 2002). The encounter with Bonnke as she explains in her autobiography transformed her life totally.

Following the 1988 experience, she started preaching at Uhuru Park for over fourteen years. She also preaches in open-air crusades, churches, schools and other institutions of learning throughout the country and beyond. In 1998, together with Bonnke, they held a well-attended gospel crusade at Uhuru Park. She teamed up with Bonnke and set out to evangelize Africa from Cairo to Cape Town (Gifford 1995; Samita 2004).

Both have continuously worked together in ministry and evangelism for over three decades, holding crusades in Nairobi, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, Botswana, Uganda, and other parts of the continent. They have also preached alongside in the USA, and Europe particularly in the Euro-Fire Conferences in Germany (Wairimu 2010:52; Parsitau & Mwaura 2010; Parsitau 2011).

Wairimu who describes Bonnke as her friend, spiritual father and mentor, ordained her as a minister of the word of God in August 16, 1996. He has featured and retold her story and works in many of his worldwide newsletters. After the Uhuru Park experience and many years after Bonnke prayed for her, Wairimu claims that her ministry took a dramatic turn.

She experienced a new zeal, passion and power to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. In her own words: Energized by her spiritual encounter at Uhuru Park coupled with prayer and anointing impartation by Bonnke, Wairimu set

out to evangelize around the country with her prayer group and fellowship members.

Their small prayer fellowship experienced a great move of God. Great manifestations of the power of God through signs and wonders began to take place. Miracles were reverberated throughout the nation of Kenya. From schools to prisons, university halls, slums, churches and Uhuru Park, I preached under renewed anointing, greater power in addition, sharper gifts. I moved from small to bigger halls as the crowds continued to grow in size (Wairimu 2010).

3. 4. 5 Visions and Dreams

According to Wairimu, following the encounter with Bonke, God began to speak to her through dreams, visions, prophecy, and other supernatural happenings. She narrates one such vision as an ‘earth shattering visitation.’^{xv} (See also Manana 2002). She interpreted this to mean that her ministry would experience better growth and blessings in the future than in the past. Energized and transformed by this vision and anointed by the Holy Spirit, Wairimu set out to evangelize throughout the country and abroad.

In another vision, she describes how God took her on a spiritual journey to heaven. She explained:

To know that heaven is fully backing me, propelling me through
The journey-up the mountains, down the valleys and across the
rivers-has given me great strength (Wairimu 2010:16).

These experiences left her totally convinced that God has truly called her to ministry. Wairimu claimed that she was given various gifts such as word of knowledge, prophecy, faith healing and deliverance (Wairimu 2010:17). For example, during one Sunday service attended by the researcher, she claimed that she received a word of knowledge that there was a childless couple that

had been praying for a child for a long time. She called them forward, prayed and laid hands on them and nine months later, they had a baby girl whom they named Faith, after her ministry. A childless woman in Nakuru described to the researcher how she got a baby boy named Joshua after the Evangelist prayed for her.^{xvi}

3.4.6 The Birth of Faith Evangelistic Ministries (FEM)

FEM started as a twelve women prayer fellowship comprising mostly of single women who met at Huruma residential estate for prayer and fellowship in 1985. Soon the house was too small to accommodate them. Word went around and many more women and men joined the group, thus forcing Wairimu to look for a bigger venue.

After her encounter with Bonnke, Wairimu claims that the home fellowship meetings were transformed completely and members were filled with a renewed zeal and strength. Instead of being a mainly women prayer group, the meetings expanded. Many people across gender divides were attending, thus ceasing to be a single women fellowship and assuming an interdenominational dimension.

In 1989, she reorganized the activities of her ministry, founded FEM International and registered it at the Office of the Registrar of Societies the same year. This marked the birth of her ministry with meetings taking place once a month. Later, they moved to city hall but the crowds swelled and broke the door prompting the City Council to black list her church (Manana 2002). Wairimu moved to the Kenyatta International Conference Centre (KICC), the largest indoor conference hall in Kenya but were only there for a month as it

was also filled up. The ministry grew tremendously such that there was a constant search for adequate facilities.

Wairimu herself attributes the tremendous growth of FEM to the work of the Holy Spirit who empowers her to preach with power and anointing that attracts masses. In addition, her deliverance sessions, miracles and signs and wonders that accompany her crusades and other meetings are said to attract many people in need of prayers and miracles.

In the early 1990s, Wairimu decided to hold regular meetings and crusades at Uhuru Park in Nairobi. She became the first female preacher to hold regular revival crusades at Uhuru Park grounds. It was estimated that the venue was home to an audience of not less than 300,000 people every month. One writer describes her as possessing an electrifying demeanor and a crowd puller (Manana 2002; See also Parsitau 2011 and Parsitau & Mwaura 2010).

Over the years, FEM has metamorphosed into a large church with its headquarters based in Nairobi. In 2009, Wairimu began to construct a state of the art sanctuary in Karen that can seat over 30,000 people. Many church activities now take place at the Karen sanctuary tent, as the sanctuary is not yet complete while administrative work is still located at the Ngara offices. Yet, despite metamorphosing into a fully-fledged church, the ministry is still largely known by her household name FEM while its other local branches in Nakuru and Mombasa remain active.

FEM has become a household name in Kenya particularly because of its initial monthly crusades at Uhuru Park in the 1990s and for Wairimu's ministry to single women. Barely three decades of its inception, the ministry

metamorphosed into a fully-fledged Neo-Pentecostal church now known as the Church of Four Square. Wairimu herself has grown to become a respectable spiritual leader, a leading public personality and a significant voice in Kenya's public sphere.

3.4.7 Teresia Wairimu Evangelistic Ministries International (TWEM)

FEM is also a global ministry with international networks and offices. Wairimu is also described as the founder and president of FEM International. The ministry has headquarters and branches in the USA and UK. The UK chapter based in London doubles as the main ministry headquarters covering several other branches in Europe. Wairimu also has a US-FEM chapter called Teresia Wairimu Evangelistic Ministry (TWEM), based in Dallas, Texas.

TWEM was founded in 1998 and coordinates her trans-national networks in Europe, the USA and other locations. The objective of the ministry, according to her website, is to reach out to people in the United States "by facilitating conferences in various cities throughout the USA and to provide outreach to partners throughout the United States through our office in Dallas, Texas."^{xvii} In November 2006, FEM held meetings in the UK and among Kenyans living in Britain.

FEM recently held mission outreaches in Israel, India, Austria, Canada, Jamaica, Denmark, Norway, Germany, Poland, and Portugal. Teresia claims to have preached in over 20 countries of the world (*The Standard*, 2008). Wairimu speaks several languages, including Gikuyu, Swahili, English and Swedish. Her ability to speak these languages has been a great advantage to her missionary activities both locally and abroad (Mwaura & Parsitau 2010). In her

website, she is described as an anointed woman of God with an international prophetic and healing ministry.

3.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have highlighted the life histories, spiritual journey and developments of Bishop Wanjiru, Muiru and Evangelist Teresia Wairimu and their individual churches. Although FEM shares some characteristics with both MMC and JIAM, it is different in a number of ways. Yet, despite these differences, there are also points of convergences. In the next chapter, we examine the theological beliefs and practices of the three case studies.

ⁱ Eric Omondi, Kenya is First Woman Bishop! *Faith Digest* 2002, p .4

ⁱⁱ She has recently opened up branches in Thika, Ruiru and Kiambu all in Kiambu County. Plans are underway to open a branch in Mombasa.

ⁱⁱⁱ In *this Miracle Magazine* Dec 2002 Issue, p.18, Bishop Wanjiru delves into her past involvement with witchcraft in a sermon entitled three Levels of Witchcraft.

^{iv} *ibid*

^v *Ibid*

^{vi} For details, see JIAM's website, www.jiam.org (accessed 9 April, 2009).

^{vii} *Ibid*

^{viii} Participant observation 2007-2009

^{ix} <http://www.jiam.org>

^x She contested parliamentary election in 2007 and was controversially elected as MP Starah and was also appointed an Assistant Minister for Housing and Shelter. In 2010, the High Court nullified her election but she recaptured her seat and now serves in parliament and cabinet.

^{xi} Athman Amran and Boniface Gikandi(2007), The Village Boy Who became a global Preacher, *The Standard*, September, 16/2007, 22-23

^{xii} <http://www.mmcmmin.org>

^{xiii} <http://www.mmcmmin.org>

^{xiv} This information was cleaned from excerpts in her 2010 autobiography.

^{xv} <http://www.evangelistwairimu.org>(accesses 8/4/2009)

^{xvi} In the course of doing fieldwork, this researcher came across eight such claims from barren women who got children in early the 1990s when the evangelist prayed for them. Two such women in Nakuru are persons well known to the researcher and whom I interviewed.

^{xvii} Faith Evangelistic Ministry website: www.evangelistwairimu.org (accessed 8 April, 2009). See also Teresia Wairimu Evangelistic Ministry (USA) website: <http://www.twem-usa.org> (accessed 8 April, 2009).

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 BELIEFS, TEACHINGS AND RECURRENT EMPHASES OF JIAM, MMC & FEM

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines some key teachings, doctrines and emphases evident across the three case studies. This serves several purposes: first, it allows the researcher to explore how the churches' doctrinal beliefs and teachings converge on issues of public and civic life. Second, what philosophical and theological frameworks underpin Neo-Pentecostal churches' engagements with broader society? To answer these questions, we make two assumptions: one that Neo-Pentecostal practices and beliefs influence how they engage with civic and public issues; and two, that these doctrinal beliefs and teachings coupled with certain emphases provide the context for a discussion of the churches' broader engagement with society.

All three churches have certain basic teachings that are also common to most Pentecostals. They share the following central doctrines: the Bible as God's revelation and eternal message, belief in the Holy Trinity, believers' baptism in the Holy Spirit, prayer, salvation, holiness and sanctification, the Kingdom of God, eschatology and the Second Coming of Christ. Their engagement with issues in civic and public life is largely shaped by these doctrinal beliefs. Similarly, the congregants' worldviews are also largely shaped by the weekly preaching and teachings of their clergy.

They also share recurring themes and emphases such as the faith gospel, faith healing, deliverance, demonology and spiritual warfare, miracles,

signs and wonders, prophecy and prophetic engagement, prayer, prayer watch and prayer mapping among many others. While these teachings are common in all the three churches, they are interpreted and understood differently depending on the individual leader. Here below, we discuss some of the major doctrines and teachings of the case studies.

4.2 Salvation

A particularly salient doctrinal teaching characterizing the three churches, namely JIAM, MMC and FEM is that they are all centered on the Christian message of salvation. The three churches identify with the central act of conversion to salvation in which the individual consecrates his or her life to Christ, atones for past sins and becomes ‘born again’ or saved (Marshall 1995:244; Asamoah-Gyadu 2004; Mwaura and Parsitau 2012a). Neo-Pentecostals must undergo a conversion experience, ‘being saved’ or being ‘born again.

According to Mwaura (2005: 254), ‘salvation starts with repentance, restitution, justification and sanctification. Sanctification enables one to be Christ-like in character, attitude, disposition, motive, character, speech and other such traits and virtues.’ One must also vigilantly guard their salvation at all time because the devil is always preying on Christians. Being born again and sanctified gives the Christian special powers to resist temptations and sin from the devil and other such malevolent beings.

The born again Christian is supposed to be transformed totally both spiritually and morally, a venture that is expected to translate to good behavior, morals and mores. In fact, one way to discern the doctrinal orientation of the

three churches is to listen to the testimonies of participants, the songs they sing and the emphases of the messages preached. Personal testimonies are also cherished as important indicators of how radical personal salvation is expected to be. People testify of being saved from death, addiction from intoxicating substances such as (cigarettes, drugs, and alcohol), sex, prostitution and other anti-social habits. As the testimony of Mary Wambui of FEM attests:

Before I became saved, I was a wreck, addicted to sex, drugs and all manner of dangerous substances. I slept in the drains and lived dangerously. However, when I met the Lord Jesus, I became a new creature. My life was completely transformed. I have been washed by the blood of Jesus and now am completely again. No more alcohol, drugs and sex! Halleluiah.

In all three churches, there is stress on the need for individuals to enter into a personal relationship with Christ through an act of salvation and they are provided with appropriate moral and spiritual guidelines on how to attain it and sustain their salvation.ⁱ Salvation is meant to lead to positive personal transformation. Salvation is understood as both an encounter and experience of Christ and seen as something to be experienced and lived. All sermons in the three churches also incorporate an ‘altar call’ where people are given the opportunity to make a ‘personal commitment of faith,’ to receive Jesus Christ as ones’ personal Savior. In this case, salvation is understood as a personal affair.

The theme of salvation is discernable in most of the sermons preached in JIAM, MMC and FEM. Sermons are referred to as ‘messages’ or the ‘word of the Lord.’ The preachers like to emphasize that they are delivering a message inspired or pressed upon the heart of the preacher by the Holy Spirit. It is also evident in their mission statements. For example, JIAM’s mission and

vision statement renders: Africa shall be saved.ⁱⁱ This mission statement reiterates the mission of JIAM, which begins with calling Africa to repentance from sin and conversion to God. FEM also preaches the gospel message of salvation and this theme informs many of the ministry's undertakings especially its evangelistic engagements both locally and internationally. MMC mission is not different as Bishop Muiru preaches the gospel of salvation in his church, on TV, radio, in crusades and in other evangelistic missions.

It is generally believed that salvation helps individuals by granting them a moral and spiritual framework to guide them in this earthy existence. In the understanding of JIAM, MMC and FEM, salvation is synonymous with a new birth, a new beginning at particular moment in the life of the recipient, a process that guarantees one's eternal life. These churches also allow the formation of new spaces for social networks and recreates ideas of community, a community of the saved and born again.

In these churches, there is a multiplicity of places of worship and religious activities and rituals like those of salvation and healing which in themselves create new places of socialization, places where new kinds of social relations can form and where individuals can join social networks. These kinds of activities allow the formation of social networks bound by religious ideas to form. Firstly, the purely religious events that takes place regularly-Sunday services, prayer fellowships, evening's services and deliverance sessions.

Here, those bound by their born again experience forge new identities and communities of the saved, the transformed and become sisters and brothers bound by their born again experience. In this sense, the doctrine of salvation

fits into the context of the civic and public roles of Neo-Pentecostals because it influences not just how Neo-Pentecostals understand the world but also how they engage the world to change it through preaching the gospel of good news to all.

4.3 The Holy Spirit

Another salient belief evident in the three churches is the belief in the person of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Holy Trinity and occupies a critical place in the religious life and practice of Neo-Pentecostals. Most Neo-Pentecostals believe that through such baptism of the Holy Spirit they can be empowered to engage in certain ‘supernatural’ acts—such as speaking in tongues,ⁱⁱⁱ faith healing, prophesying and performing miracles. A stress is placed on Matt. 3:11.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire’ and (Acts 1: 8)
‘But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you,’
And you shall be witnesses to me.”

Within the three churches, there is emphasis on the Holy Spirit and on ecstatic experience as a way of experiencing Jesus personally. Manifestations of baptism of the Holy Spirit include speaking in tongues also known as *glossolalia* and experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit,^{iv} subsequent to conversion. The Holy Spirit endows Christians with various gifts such as divine healing, visions, ecstasies, and prophecy.

All the three clergy claim to have had some kind of encounter with God through the Holy Spirit as discussed in the previous chapter. They also point to God’s direct work through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Members also speak of being filled by the Holy Spirit who empowers them spiritually. For

example, Rev Wairimu claims to receive power, authority, word of knowledge, even the ability to perform miracles because of the power of the Holy Spirit. Wairimu equally privileges the role, place and centrality of the Holy Spirit in her both personal life and ministry. Muiru also privileges the Holy Spirit for his ministry and calling. As such, it is common to hear these preachers claim, ‘the Holy Spirit spoke to me about this and that!’

Asamoah-Gyadu (2004, 2005) writes about the theology of transformation of Pentecostals in Ghana in which they have elasticized and transformed their engagement with public space in a conscious attempt at coping with the country’s socio-economic and political realities. This theology keenly emphasizes personal transformation and individual empowerment. It is based on the notion that the constitutive act of the Pentecostal movement as Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) points out is the offer of a direct and particularly intense encounter with God that introduces profound changes in the life and circumstances of the person who experiences it.

The Pentecostals argue that the Holy Spirit, who is God’s empowering presence, is the one who facilitates the direct character of encounter. A sense of transformation consequently takes place at the personal and communal levels including a new dynamism in worship inspired by the Holy Spirit. The foremost theological emphasis of this Pentecostal theology is therefore the trans-formative encounter with God who is “holy” and who is spirit.”

In Neo-Pentecostalism, there is at least a parallel interpretation, namely that the Holy Spirit, after baptism, can display gifts of mercy and salvation and that signs of these gifts are also found in demonstrations of exemplary

behavior, propensity, and progress in this world. NeoPentecostals thereby seek personal transformations, which have a multiplier effects and consequently issues in civic and public life. When individuals are transformed spiritually, they in turn transform society. NPCs are therefore people in a mission to transform individuals and communities resulting in a transformed country.

4.4 The Kingdom of God

Neo-Pentecostals understand the Kingdom of God as both the reign of God as well as a geographical kingdom. As a geographical kingdom, its ruler is Jesus Christ, who is king and its subject are Christians. Common phraseologies used to describe God are the ‘Lord of Lords’, King of Kings, ‘the lord almighty’, ‘reigning king’, and ‘warrior’ who fights and wins all battles. The church is identified as God’s instrument for demonstrating the kingdom today. Evangelism is central in realizing the Kingdom of God. All three churches are involved in aggressive evangelism to win as many people to the kingdom. The Kingdom of God is also understood as both spiritual and physical. Although the kingdom of God is spiritual, it has material implications so poverty is deemed undesirable by Gods’ standards.

All clergy depict heaven as the ultimate place to go to at the end of this earthly life, a place of final rest. Wanjiru and Wairimu both claimed to have been to heaven and back through visions and dreams, some lasting nine to twenty hours. All three clergy’s emphasis on the Kingdom of God has influenced their congregants’ worldviews. Based on their understanding of the Kingdom of God, members talk clearly about the need for believers to act in every sphere and at every level of society to forge practical change.

Members of JIAM, MMC and FEM focused on changing the world by helping individuals find answers to problems. Individuals engage with other sections of society through the prism of a personal relationship with God and convictions about being a good steward and a generous person. Church members repeatedly explained how they sought to change peoples' hearts and character so that changed individuals could go on to positively influence organizations or policies.^v In JIAM church, a banner is displayed with the phrase 'we are world changers' inscribed on it.

In FEM, the church equips believers so not only they are successful in daily life but also so, they can contribute to the development of the country and the larger world. Vision statements of the three Neo-Pentecostal churches are filled with the language of empowerment and engagement and not disengagement. They encourage people to adopt a standard of excellence in every area of their life to impact on issues in civic and public life.

4.4 Centrality of the Bible

Another salient feature is the centrality of the Bible as God's revelation and eternal message. For most Neo-Pentecostals, the Bible is the source of faith and doctrine, authority and power, revelation and prophecy, urgency and promise. All three churches assign to the Bible a unique authority and importance. The scriptures are understood as the inspired word of God. The Bible is unerring in every single detail and is to be taken literally. Both clergy and laity lay tremendous emphases on the centrality of the Bible which is captured by this statement, 'the Bible says' a statement that gives both finality and urgency to everything. The clergy and laity both use the Bible as a law

code and this leads to a legalistic theology (Mwaura & Parsitau 2012b).

Believers rarely question the Bible, as doing so would seem to suggest lack of faith in the authoritative word of God. These churches also take the Bible as the pivot upon which their entire belief code and ritual world is anchored. The Bible is accorded supremacy in matters of doctrine, faith and ritual (Adogame 2012:100). This has led to distinct and novel ways of reading, interpreting and understanding scriptures.

For Neo-Pentecostals, the Bible is full of God's promises and pledges, which they can pronounce, name and claim. For this reason born again Christians read scriptures with a certain element of urgency and expectancy. Some of the things that they claim from God are wealth, health, deliverance from sickness and evil spirits/demons, success, victory, divine favors, restoration of broken family relationships, spouses, jobs, visas, cancellation of debts. The major biblical motifs in these churches are those that stress on themes such victory, success, hope, achievement. God's promises to the children of Israel are imaged as God's promises to the people, to members of the church, service attendees and the country at large. At the same time, major prophetic themes are picked and expounded.

Another salient feature in the centrality of the Bible is that it is revelatory and prophetic. The Bible is full of revelations, which can be applied to everyday life. It is common to hear clergy and members claim that God revealed to them an issue normally in the form of dreams, visions and others. Revelations can also be warning about certain happenings such as floods, earthquakes, drought, even death of high profile individuals. Sometimes clergy

can pronounce a revelation about the healing of somebody in the congregation or a miracle that is about to take place in the life of a church member(s).

Bishop Muiro and Evangelist Wairimu have sought to image themselves as prophets/prophetesses/watchmen/watchwomen/messengers and voices of God. Since 2007, Bishop Muiro has increasingly imaged himself as a prophetic voice that God uses to speak to the nation. In a series of elaborate prophecies issued every year, Muiro attempts to lay down his own reading of the world through biblical imagery and hermeneutics. In these prophecies that will be discussed in detail in chapter six, Muiro engages in social, economic and political issues affecting the country and the world.

Wairimu equally images herself as ‘a prophetess’ and ‘a voice to the nation of Kenya,’ ‘a watchman/woman’ who watches over the country in prayer, guarding it from evil and other such undertakings. In addition, she has acquired this reputation of being a spiritual voice to the nation of Kenya. Wanjiru does not claim to be a prophet but frequently refers to prophecies issued about her life by this or that prophet or prophetess (Parsitau 2010a). It is suggested here that all the three clergy use prophetic imageries and idioms of the supernatural to legitimize their positions in public life. However, they also use the Bible to understand, interpret issues in civic and public life. For example, prophecy is used to engage civic and public issues, as we shall discuss in the next chapter.

4.5 Faith Healing

A dominant theme and emphasis of the three case studies is faith healing and deliverance.^{vi} Faith healing can be described as the heartbeat of

their liturgy and the entire religious life of JIAM, MMC and FEM. As Kalu (2008) so aptly points out, ‘practice of faith healing and general wellbeing is a very important aspect of religious life in Africa that it probably accounts for the growth and popularity of both AICs and Pentecostalism in the continent. Faith healing relates to the regaining of health of an individual through prayer. Prayers for healing are usually accompanied by some form of touch, or the laying on of hands or anointing with oil. The causes of sickness may be natural or brought about by evil spirits.

Wairimu has successfully imaged FEM as a faith healing ministry where hundreds have sought healing and wellbeing. In its formative years, Wairimu held consistent monthly healing crusades at Uhuru Park in Nairobi in which FEM ministry drew throngs of masses in search of faith healing and miracles. Women are particularly attracted to FEM because it holds out possibilities for their healing and personal wellbeing. At conferences, meetings, and church services attended by the researcher, hundreds of people flock in for healing and deliverance.

Women’s annual conferences and fellowship have recently become Wairimu’s new locus for healing. Women interviewed revealed that they attend these meetings because they hold out hope and promise for healing. Faith healing therefore emerges as space for engaging social and health issues that affect people. By bringing healing and wellbeing to people, particularly women these churches illustrate how spiritual resources such as faith healing are appropriated by the three churches to bring health both spiritual and physical to their followers.

Other teachings related to this theme include miracles, signs and wonders.^{vii} Miracles receive a great deal of emphasis in all the three churches. In MMC, some significant time is slotted for testimonies that recount miracles, signs and wonders. A sermon preached in MMC during field research was titled 'One miracle for all your problems.' People are said to receive miracles related to money and success such as businesses blossoming, visas secured to America and other countries, a better paying job, an estranged husband coming back, and a single woman finding a husband.^{viii}

We sampled some of the testimonies here: Teresia gave a testimony that she got a scholarship to study in the US after planting seed money to the church. Three others testified about healing, getting promotions, jobs and visas to various places but mostly to the USA. Two women holding babies testified that they were barren, but through the ministry of the church they have now become mothers. One single woman found a husband, while two struggling marriages were restored and healed.^{ix}

Miracles are part of a rich religious life in Africa where power is understood to reside in the spiritual world. By tapping this invisible spiritual power, these clergy not only engage with a raft of social, political and economic issues such as health, sickness, poverty, and others, but they also use the promise of miracles to attract audience to their churches. But they also use the promise of miracles to legitimize their powers that they claim to come from God.

4.6 Deliverance, Demonology and the Rhetoric of Spiritual Warfare

Deliverance is another doctrinal teaching of the three case studies. Deliverance suggests the deployment of spiritual capital and resources (the name of Jesus Christ), to provide release from demonic possession, oppression and sickness in order to return the victim to a state of abundant health and wellbeing. In this sense, healing and deliverance ministries seek to provide healing, wellbeing and relief from demonic oppression and affliction to many thereby engaging in civic and public issues such as healthcare, wellbeing and freedom from oppressive forces(demonic). Deliverance rituals are the heart and bedrock of JIAM, MMC and FEM and illustrate how these churches engage issues using spiritual resources.

All three leaders portray their ministries as deliverance ministries, delivering people from the manifold evil forces that thwart their personal wellbeing and success. From its inception in 1993, JIAM imaged itself first as faith healing and deliverance ministry. Deliverance is such a central theme in JIAM that prayers for deliverance are often conducted during not just most Sunday services but also during midweek service.^x Prayers of deliverance can go on for up to 30 minutes in any given church service.

Sermons on deliverance also fill pages upon pages of the church magazine, *Faith Digest* and other publications. Sermons on the subject are also often preached on television and during crusades, seminars and conference. Very often Wanjiru holds annual conferences on the subject of deliverance. For example, every August of each year, Wanjiru holds an international conference on deliverance at JIAM church also known as Nairobi Miracle Centre. During

such services and conferences, Wanjiru teaches on the subject of deliverance, which is largely understood in terms of demonology.

Special prayers often follow teachings on deliverance. At a service, the Bishop would normally invite people in need of deliverance for special deliverance prayers to step forward to the pulpit. Here, other clergy and ushers surround them as praise and worship goes on at the background. Songs like '*oh the blood of Jesus, it washes white as snow*' are song. When prayers begin, the praise and worship team stops the music as the bishop conducts intense prayer. Many times, prayers of deliverance are accompanied by the laying on of hands. Sometimes, it is accompanied by anointing with oil, other times only intense prayer would do. Deliverance begins with the diagnosis stage where a range of symptoms attributed to those in need of deliverance centers around lack of success and various illnesses.

JIAM, MMC and FEM engage vigorously with anxieties about witchcraft, though they all treat witches as minions of the devil and vestiges of tradition. In JIAM for example, healing is perceived solely in terms of demonology, witchcraft, sorcery and Satanism. Spirits are a constant source of danger and a threat in a persons' life. The emphasis on deliverance theology is well evidenced in the abundant literature available in sermons, testimonies, magazines and letters available for purchase on the subject. This subject has over the years come to constitute a great deal of Bishop Wanjiru's theology. Wanjiru emphasizes the need for delivering people from a manifold of evil forces that thwart the wellbeing and success of their members and general audiences. Throughout field research, we noted that sermons on deliverance

and demonology occupy significant space in her sermons and theology. Wanjiru's preoccupation with deliverance may be attributed to her personal encounter with and experiences of witchcraft practices before her conversion.

MMC like JIAM is a ministry that specializes in deliverance. Like in JIAM, deliverance in MMC is understood in terms of demonology, witchcraft, economic and financial issues or what they call economic bareness. Muiru preaches frequently of the inability for people to reap due rewards in life in relation to one's job, family, marital problems, sexual addiction or inability to have sex with spouse issues and poverty. In MMC, deliverance takes centre stage than faith healing. There are prayers and deliverance from family curses, witchcraft and poverty. The projected outcome of deliverance is freedom from oppression. Deliverance rituals are equally prominent in FEM where deliverance rituals take place very frequently.

In short, all three churches represent a typical example of Neo-Pentecostals that have their epistemological thrust and doctrinal emphases on deliverance. As proponents of deliverance theology, Wanjiru, Muiru and Wairimu advocate a more proactive, than reactive, approach to human ills thereby suggesting engagement with issues that affect their followers. They advocate a local ontology of engagement to the human predicament using a language of demonology. Neo-Pentecostals engage social, national, civic and public life issues through the idioms of deliverance, witches and the spirit world

In addition, the diverse spiritual mappings undertaken by Neo-Pentecostals coupled with the rhetoric of spiritual warfare decode the political

terrain as a battle between God and the devil as discussed in the previous chapter. They assign an analytical framework for addressing the complexity of challenges facing them by combating evil. These semantics of intervention into daily socio-political affairs used in strategic prayer conventions illustrates the diverse roles of a range of spiritual powers and imagery. This study is premised on the understanding that Pentecostal political practice is broader and goes beyond direct political engagement. The study also focuses on the roles of prayer, prophesy and the rhetoric of spiritual warfare as opening new vistas for understanding Pentecostal political practice.

4.7 The Gospel of Prosperity

An increasingly controversial feature of JIAM, MMC and FEM and a majority of Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals is their promotion of the gospel of prosperity. The leaders of JIAM, MMC and FEM are known for promoting the doctrine of success and prosperity although it receives more emphases in JIAM and MMC than in FEM. Success and prosperity are primarily demonstrated in the lavish lifestyle of the church leaders themselves. To start with, the founders of these churches all live in the most exclusive of residential estates in up market Nairobi. They also drive luxurious vehicles and dress very expensively.

Within these churches, the financial wealth of the church leader and its members are a sign of God's favor. Prosperity messages receive tremendous emphasis in all three churches. However, in JIAM and MMC it can be described as central to their teachings. Below are a few examples how these churches emphasize, teaches and presents the prosperity gospel. In a sermon entitled, 'We are poor by choice', Bishop Muiro teaches:

The scripture makes it clear that if we turn to God in Obedience, His blessings Shall come upon us Job 36:11-16. This clearly shows you can choose your lot in life. Obedience to God will lift you from the ashes of poverty and lead you to wealth. Health and riches. God is true to his word. He does not discriminate. Anybody who obeys him will surely be lifted. Poverty and prosperity are therefore Not matters of luck or destiny. You can choose one over the other (P.O 8.9. 2009)

Bishop Wanjiru of JIAM is a strong proponent of the prosperity gospel. The key terms used in her church are about victory, success, achievement, favor, blessings, breakthroughs, promotions, wealth creation and financial prominence. These recurring themes are the buzzwords in this ministry and they receive emphases. The key ingredients of the gospel of prosperity in JIAM are tithing, offerings and other sacrificial giving.

These are words used to cajole members and TV audiences to give or donate money to the church. Tithing and giving are critical sources of the church finances. These are collected during and after church services, during midweek services, crusades, conferences, symposia and any other such gatherings. Tithes and offerings accounts for the bulk of church finances although the amounts received are never made public nor are they accounted for. This is further substituted by all manner of offerings, which can be in many forms: seed and faith offering, and thanksgiving offering.

Money and financial donations are sought aggressively from members and non-members, the public, television and online viewers, international audience and others. During televised church sermons, mobile phone numbers are displayed on the screen where people can send in their donations through Mobile Money Transfers. On the websites, viewers and audiences can make online donations. The church website accepts major credit and debit cards.^{xi} There are also Partner Forms for those who wish to collaborate with the

bishops through monetary donations. These forms come with complete and easy instructions on how to become a partner.

Bishop Muiru of MMC is also a leading proponent of the gospel of prosperity. His teachings and theologizing are heavily laced with this theme. The same themes and recurrent emphases evident in JIAM such as success and wellbeing, healing, miracles, faith, deliverance, anointing, victory, divine favour, promotion, power, prosperity, financial breakthrough and others are replicated in MMC church services.

These themes are repeated over and over again and justified by use of scripture. Again and like in JIAM, success, victory, promotion, prosperity, wellbeing are all tied to giving. ‘The more you give the more blessed you will be and the more breakthrough you get, they are taught.’^{xii} No sermon ends without an emphasis on giving to the work of God. In more than half the sermons preached in this church, there was tremendous emphasis on the miraculous power of God to heal incurable diseases and to bring wealth to those who faithfully support the ministry through giving.

This church emphasizes the ‘seed faith principle of sowing and reaping’. The preachers have various ways of persuading people to give. They admonish their adherents to give a variety of offerings: covenant offerings, thanksgiving offerings, breakthrough offerings, seed faith offerings, success offering, expectancy offering and many others. Frequent biblical passages used in MMC to legitimize the message of prosperity are “God loves a cheerful giver” “Cast your bread upon many waters and you will find it in due time,” “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Malachi 3:10).

FEM is slightly different from both JIAM and MMC. While the theme of giving is also evident in FEM, it does not receive the kind of emphases it does in the other two churches. Instead, Wairimu concentrates on evangelism, healing and deliverance, ministry to the youth and women and humanitarian undertakings. While there is, also tremendous emphasis on victorious Christian living and the spiritual empowerment of the laity, teachings on prosperity are not as emphasized. In addition, even when she teaches on giving and miracles, it is often to stress that God provides for His children all the time whenever they ask and irrespective of whether they give or not.

From the foregoing, the three churches can be described as prosperity churches although teachings on the same receive tremendous emphasis in JIAM and MMC than it does in FEM. Throughout field research, leaders repeatedly stressed that their emphasis money was necessary if they were to maintain and expand the movements' numerous ministries particularly the TV ministries that are quite costly.

4.8 SUMMARY

This chapter has considered some doctrinal beliefs, teachings and recurrent emphases and rituals of the three case studies namely, JIAM, FEM, and MMC. The sketch of beliefs highlighted above provides sufficient information to raise the question of what these beliefs and practices imply for public and civic engagement. How do these beliefs, practices and rituals inform or impend neo-Pentecostal engagement with issues in public life?

These doctrinal beliefs and teachings not only set Neo-Pentecostals

apart from others but also how the appropriate these beliefs and teachings as well as the doctrinal emphases but also how they use these spiritual resources to engage with issues such as poverty, health and wellbeing, economic prosperity and many other such themes. The doctrinal beliefs and teachings provide them with the language and tools for engaging issues of concern to many Kenyans. Yet, it acknowledges the existence and powers of spirits, demons, and witches. In the next chapter, we focus on concrete ways in which Neo-Pentecostals engage with social and economic issues in Kenya.

ⁱ In each of the three churches there are new converts classes that are held every Sunday of the month immediately after the alter call. New converts are taught about Christian principles and issued with small booklets about how to live a spiritual life.

ⁱⁱ www.jiam.org

ⁱⁱⁱ Speaking in tongues also called *glossolalia* is a term that Pentecostals use to refer to a practice where they speak in words and sounds they do not understand themselves.

^{iv} The term 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' is used to refer to the release of the Holy Spirit's power, which can be expressed either as an end or as part of a process.

^v In the course of field research, I came across respondents who expressed views that suggest they are world changers, agents of change and society.

^{vi} Faith healing is a holistic attitude involving spiritual, physical, emotional and psychological aspects of wellbeing.

^{vii} In common parlance, a miracle is defined as extra-ordinary something that amazes people, they cannot explain. A miracle is also seen as the manifestation of a special power that is different from or even in contrast with what might normally be expected.

^{viii} Field notes 2009

^{ix} Series of testimonies noted by the researcher during church services in MMC in 2009

^x Every Tuesday evening, they have what is called miracle and deliverances service her Bishop Wanjiru ministers most of the times.

^{xi} [http// www.jiam.org](http://www.jiam.org)

^{xii} Field notes

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 PUBLIC AND CIVIC ROLES AND ENGAGEMENTS OF JIAM, MMC AND FEM

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we examine two important themes: first, we focus on the social and economic roles and engagements of JIAM, MMC and FEM. This is important given the fact that a key question of this research is to find out the social-economic impact of these Churches not just within their respective communities but also within the larger Kenyan society. We attempt to unravel this against the backdrop of prevailing perceptions that Neo-Pentecostals are socially disengaged, otherworldly and bereft of social action or even lacking in social vision or concern.

Drawing on research findings we show how the three churches are responding to various socio-economic issues within their respective communities; and challenges in practical ways both at the local and national levels, through the provision of social, economic and spiritual services. We suggest that these churches offer potential and concrete contribution that is sometimes undermined.

To understand Neo-Pentecostal engagement with socio-economic issues, we posed a number of questions to respondents: how are the churches addressing problems related to social welfare, humanitarianism, poverty, health care, drug and alcohol abuse, HIV/AIDS, and other social issues? What is their impact on family, marriage and kinship relations? What are their impact on the social fabric and moral formation of individuals and religious communities and

the larger Kenyan society?

How are Neo-Pentecostals developing social networks of trust and spiritual capital? Do these networks of 'social/spiritual capital' facilitate or retard economic and social cooperation? What are some of the social, economic and moral consequences of conversion to Neo-Pentecostalism? What skills and life competencies have you learnt? Lastly, what potentialities and untapped possibilities need to be explored?

Second, we examined the socio-political roles, activities, civic and public, roles, and engagements of JIAM, MMC and FEM. We particularly focus on the political activities, modes of engagement and interventions of the individual clergy: Wanjiru, Muiro and Wairimu and the churches they founded and continue to lead. To interrogate and understand the growing participation of Neo-Pentecostals in politics and civic life in Kenya, a number of questions that we put across to some of these leaders, their members and non-members alike guided us. For example, what has caused this shift from non-engagement to full engagement? How do Neo-Pentecostal clergy explain their entrance to politics? How do they conceptualize their newfound interests? How have these clergy in their sermons from pulpits and mass media reconfigured the relationship between the preacher and the politician?

How are they explaining these shifts, a call from God, divine calling, or prophetic role? How do the regular members within Neo-Pentecostal churches conceptualize their clergy's involvement in politics? Do they argue that they are uniquely qualified to lead because they know how to deal with corruption, governance and all? Why is electoral politics suddenly seen as a

Christian (Neo-Pentecostal) project?

These are important questions whose answers not only helped us unpack the changing theology of Neo-Pentecostals and politics but also made sense of Neo-Pentecostal engagement with broader society. Through an in-depth analysis of the three case studies: JIAM, FEM and MMC, we present a conceptual framework for understanding Neo-Pentecostalism's political culture in Kenya. From information culled from interviews, participant observations, analysis of the three movements, we present findings from field research to show how the three churches are socially engaged. These are examined below.

5.2 BROAD FEATURES OF SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT IN JIAM, MMC AND FEM

Pentecostals have been portrayed often as otherworldly in orientation, more concerned with spiritual matters and preoccupied with going to heaven that they totally disengage from society. Yet, data from field research, participant observations, interviews and a close scrutiny and analysis of the three case studies yield a wealth of information on how the three Neo-Pentecostal churches are socially and economically engaged. These responses are diverse and do not necessarily suggests sameness among all the three churches but tend to be *ad hoc* and embodied rather than formalized or consistent responses.

5.2 SOCIAL MINISTRIES

a) A Practical Gospel of Social Inclusiveness

All three churches are socially engaged as they help people on the margins of society, including drug addicts, the poor and vulnerable groups such

as street children/families, the sick and the homeless. They demonstrate their ability to be socially inclusive, a strong building block of a sustainable society. At a micro-level, the three churches have made strong impact. The churches constitute significant presence within their respective communities. The many social programmes and humanitarian undertakings they engage with have attested to this.

Prayer and deliverance rituals are part of their efforts to treat people affected by diseases and infirmities. All the three churches hold elaborate prayer rituals for healing and deliverance for those afflicted by various infirmities. Kyle Sheppard (2006); Mathews Ojo (2005) and others have noted the roles of African Pentecostalism in social welfare; in the setting up of social welfare networks, sponsoring educational or business activities and linking church members into international networks of solidarity and advancement.

b) Social Welfare and Humanitarian Undertakings

The three churches are engaged in varied social, welfare and humanitarian ministries. During field research, we came across the story of Virginia Wanjiku of FEM, a former street girl who was rescued from the streets, and taken to foster care at Huruma Children home in Nairobi. Wanjiku was first taken to FEM church where she received salvation but also counseling and rehabilitation. When she was totally reformed, she received a scholarship to train at a leading hair and beauty salon, Ashley Beauty College and Salon based in Nairobi. By 2009, Wanjiku was a qualified beautician, who volunteers for FEM's social ministry by helping in the rehabilitation of former street children and families.¹ When asked why she takes special interest in mercy and

humanitarian undertakings Evangelist Wairimu explained:

The religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is to look after the poor, orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself

The desire to preach a holistic and practical gospel appears to be the motivating factor that drives Neo-Pentecostal clergy and their churches to meet the welfare needs of their members and communities. The social programmes are designed to care for the welfare of the vulnerable. Many vulnerable groups have therefore found themselves welcome and join these churches because of potential benefits. However, FEM engages in more social programmes than JIAM and MMC.

b) Rehabilitation

All three churches are prominently involved in the rehabilitation of vulnerable members of society who are struggling with various types of addictions and substance abuse such as alcohol, drugs, illicit brews, sex, crimes, prostitution and many other social ills. Wanjiru is prominent in the rehabilitation of members of the outlawed *Mungiki sect*.ⁱⁱ In 2008, Wanjiru gave compelling stories of how she has helped rehabilitate drug and alcohol addicts and members of the group, many of whom she claimed to have been totally reformed and are now law abiding citizens (Paristau 2011a).

Muiru is also prominent in the rehabilitation of street children. He runs *Maximum Miracle Children Home*, which was established to give homeless street children a place to live. Its motto is “helping the needy achieve their personal best”. The home is built on Christian principles and is referred to as a Faith Based Organization. It is located at Kahawa Sukari Estate off Thika road

on the outskirts of Nairobi and two and a half kilometers from Kenyatta University.ⁱⁱⁱ The home is a mixed boarding institution with adequate facilities.

The centres' programme and activities are conducted in three phases: rehabilitation, institutionalization and re-integration. During rehabilitation, the children are taught skills, counseled and introduced to salvation. This is then followed by a period of learning in which they are taken to school or mid-level colleges such as technical schools. After, this the children are integrated into the broader community. Yet the centre largely depends on external funding from donors and well-wishers. Currently it is holding children from nursery to tertiary levels. It is claimed that one student is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Law at Moi University. More than twenty students are said to be in other schools in various places. Besides, these kids play soccer, are involved in drama and other musical performances. This is so far the only humanitarian based programme undertaken by the church.

JIAM's website also indicates that the ministry is involved in a raft of welfare programmes although the researcher did not come across humanitarian or welfare programmes.^{iv} However, the ministry it is involved in a raft of spiritual and economic programmes meant to empower vulnerable groups. For example, JIAM runs a micro-finance facility or a revolving fund called Glory Development Fund, from which members and nonmembers can access credit facilities to run small to medium scale business.

Of the three churches, FEM has perhaps the most elaborate social welfare and humanitarian undertakings. FEM established humanitarian missions and charities to the less fortunate members making it the most

prominent and most socially engaged in the larger society. For example, FEM undertakes a feeding programme that provides free meals to the poor in the slums of Nairobi and Mombasa. There are also special feeding centres for orphans in Nairobi. Sometimes during Christmas, street children and families are given free meals, clothes, blankets and medical supplies. Street children and sometimes families are taken to foster care. The homes provide food, shelter and care. Some homes are affiliated with FEM while others, mainly private collaborate with the FEM in the provision of shelter for the homeless. Other social welfare and humanitarian programmes in this ministry include prison ministries, hospital, and old people's homes.

Evangelist Wairimu's FEM ministry is equally involved and other mercy ministries and relief undertakings. For example, since 2005 and 2006, FEM has been operating a feeding programme for famine stricken victims in Kilifi and Kwale Districts at the coastal region in Kenya. This area is particularly prone to perennial drought, famine and hunger. Evangelist Wairimu opened a feeding centre for these communities, a centre that has evolved into an education centre and a rescue centre for the girl child.

Again, because of the numerous challenges cited above coupled with ignorance and the absence of basic education facilities, communities leaving around this area have a tendency to marry off their girls before they attain legal age of marriage. Wairimu has not only rescued girls from early marriage and oppressive cultural practices but has also helped changed the prevailing cultural mindset and attitudes about girl-child education. For these reasons, she can be regarded as a crusader for the girl child rights.

Evangelist Wairimu equally has a reputation for rehabilitating dangerous criminals, robbers, rapists and other social misfits. In the course of field research, we came across testimonies of people who claimed their lives were totally reformed through the efforts of their churches. In one of FEM's services I attended, one man gave a compelling story that has been retold many times and one that is also referenced in Wairimu's autobiography.^v

Stephen Mbugua was saved from a gangster to a preacher. Mbugua was born and bred in abject poverty in the famous Korogocho slums in Nairobi. He grew up surrounded by crime, violence, prostitution, drugs and many other social ills. His father was a hopeless drunk and his mother sold illicit brew to support the family. Due to poverty, he dropped out of school and roamed the streets scavenging for food. Stephen got into drugs and was introduced into gangsterism by other criminals, and became an armed robber. He engaged in serious crimes and became notorious and feared.

One day in 2000 as he and his peers, following a tip off, were planning to rob a wealthy businessperson who was carrying large sums of money, he chose to hang around Uhuru Park waiting for the opportune time. There at the park, Wairimu was holding a crusade. While preaching, she suddenly paused and said that there was a dangerous armed criminal at the park who was planning to commit a serious crime later in the day and asked him to surrender his life to God. Mbugua hesitated for a while thinking that his drunken state was responsible for what he was hearing.

However, Wairimu would not give up and kept calling him to surrender but he hesitated. She finally called him by his name saying that the Holy Spirit

had revealed his name to her. Mbugua had no choice but to surrender. He stepped forward, surrendered his gun, was prayed for and he gave his life to Christ. That evening TV stations aired a story of three gangsters who went to rob a man at Serena Hotel in Nairobi and were all killed by security agents. This experience not only shook Mbugua but also marked a complete turnaround of his life. Following rehabilitation, counseling, prayer, training in ministry as well as spiritual and material support from Wairimu, he became a pastor of FEM.

This ministry commonly known as FEM Korogocho is a unique ministry composed of reformed people-robbers, gang members, drug addicts, prostitutes, street children. Its goal is to reach out to former criminals with a view of transforming their lives, helping many of them overcome addiction and other human conditions and giving them alternative means of livelihood and skills. The ministry also aims to empower these vulnerable groups through the gospel message and the acquisition of skills and a new source of livelihood.

FEM Korogocho also runs a rescue centre, Faith Rescue Network, whose sole objective is to 'teach, equip and support slum dwellers with a formal vocational training to provide knowledge and skills to help them earn a decent living'. In this ministry, the reformed persons are taught courses and skills such as tailoring, carpentry, mechanics and hair care among others. Wairimu and the larger FEM ministry as well as various corporate bodies including Coca-Cola and Haco industries support the ministry.^{vi}

All three churches are involved in rebuilding the broken lives of their members by foraying into the social context and tackling issues such as

robbery, crime and healthcare. FEM and JIAM hold crusades in informal settlements like Kibera and Mathare, spaces that are the locus of poverty, violence, crimes and unemployment. Thus, the churches are therefore performing important roles in the reformation of people facing tremendous challenges such as poverty, unemployment, family and societal breakdown. In so doing, they are performing their civic and public roles using spiritual resources.

c. Psychological Counseling, Stress Relief and Emotional Wellbeing

Free spiritual and psychological counseling are a prominent and standard practice in all the three churches. Socio-psychotherapy or counseling services and prayers are provided for those going through emotional turmoil and psychological stress. During TV sermons, phone numbers are displayed on screen with counselors standing by to pray for and counsel people. Prayer and counseling services are also advertised online.^{vii}

In FEM for example, counseling and guidance services are key ingredients for mental and emotional wellbeing. Drug addicts, prostitutes, criminals and all other social misfits who need counseling are provided with free services. More than half of my respondents in FEM revealed its significance and contribution to peoples' emotional and psychological wellbeing. Wanjiku, a former street girl, drug addict and a commercial sex worker who was rescued and rehabilitated by FEM described how her mental and physical wellbeing visibly improved after undergoing many counseling and prayer sessions:

My physical appearance changed, my self-esteem equally received a great boost. I learnt to value myself, that I have a reason to live, I saw worth in me as a human being and as a child of God.⁶

Wanjiku further revealed how FEM's ministry transformed her life not just spiritually, emotionally and psychologically but also practically as well. She said:

At FEM, I was given physical, emotional, mental, spiritual even financial resources. As a former street girl, I had neither education nor skills. I was taken off the streets, placed in foster care, received training as a hair specialist at Ashley Beauty College now I earn a decent living. Glory is to God Almighty and may God bless Mum (As Evangelist Wairimu is fondly referred by her congregants) and FEM family in addition, church.⁷

Again, these testimonies are personal accounts and narratives of people who validated and demonstrated how their lives were transformed through prayer, therapy, counseling, advice and the follow up care provided by these churches. Such services provided members with a relief from the stress of poverty, crime, disease, family and social breakdown. Twenty-five respondents from FEM, fifteen from JIAM and twenty from MMC reported recovering from a range of problems because of the personal relationships they forged with other Neo-Pentecostals, and through participation in Bible study, prayer and sometimes financial and material support from fellow congregants.

These narratives demonstrate how Neo-Pentecostals not only create social capital but also how they use it to bring about meaningful social transformation to their followers. The theological foundation for this kind of engagement is driven by a believer in the gospel of social action and engagement. However, it is also driven by compassion and care where Christians are to love, care and show mercy to those who are hurting. This is what scholars as if Miller and Yamamori (2008) call the ministry of social engagement.

5.3 SOCIETAL AND COMMUNAL TRANSFORMATION

a) Social Fabric and Moral Framework

Aside from protecting the individual, family and communal spheres, these churches seek to protect members from moral and social decay, thereby acting as a social fabric and glue that hold society together. A majority of the respondents explained that one significant benefit or motivation for joining these churches is that it provided them with a moral strategy or framework to help them survive from what they perceived as a morally bankrupt and decaying society. This is because the churches promote Christian and moral principles such as fidelity, truthfulness, uprightness and many other such virtues. Similarly, they condemn drunkardness, sexual immorality, marital infidelity, adultery, corruption, and ethical living.

Individuals claimed that these churches insulated them from the evils of alcohol and substance abuse, extra and premarital sex, corruption in public life, divorce and separation, witchcraft and all manner of social ills. The narratives of Neo-Pentecostals on moral issues suggest that their new communities offered them protection from worldly temptations and that many are transformed. It would seem that these churches at least granted some of its members a moral strategy and framework for living.

b) Protecting the Family Sphere

Neo-Pentecostal churches strive to protect and redeem the family sphere through transforming the family unit. The focus and continual stress on the family as the basic unit of society and as an institution ordained by God is significant. For many Pentecostals, the family is sacred because God instituted

it and they try to protect the sanctity of the family

All three churches are active in redeeming, promoting and building families arguing that meaningful societal and communal transformation begins with families. In all churches, there is a strong emphasis on family life and values. Marital counseling and family disputes are handed by clergy or trained counselor, all in a bid to protect and restore the family unit. Generally, they focus on the family in three ways: namely through character and moral formation, a focus on children, the youth (both male and female), and lastly and more importantly, a focus on the institution of marriage and family stability.

A standard phrase in all the three churches is that when one gives their lives to Christ will never be the same again. They will be transformed individuals, men and women of character, integrity and honor.^{viii} In church services and crusades, believers and non-believers alike are often reminded of the importance of moral formation and character building. Secondly, the Neo-Pentecostal teachings of sexual sobriety, discipline and morality all translate to healthier and more harmonious families. The churches encourage, promote and practice abstinence before marriage and marital fidelity and faithfulness after marriage. Yet, the stress on abstinence is not just aimed at disciplining youth's sexuality but also to protect them from HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). Young men are also urged to work hard, and become men of honor and integrity.

Thirdly, in all the three churches, fidelity within marriage is encouraged. Monogamous marriage is the preferred type of marriage while

polygamy frowned upon. Fornication, infidelity and adultery are unacceptable. Similarly, couple who abuse their spouses, drunkards, smokers, fornicators and adulterous are not just frowned upon but can sometimes be subjected to church discipline. The preferred type of discipline is suspension from the church. There is a strong emphasis on the nuclear family although couples are urged to respect their parents and in-laws. The nuclear family therefore takes precedence over the extended family. Neo-Pentecostals aim at rebuilding new forms of kinships and communities of believers bound together by the love of God and their Christian identity. In this sense, the churches' become the believers' extended family.

The researcher attended three family meetings in MMC where spouses were taught how to satisfy each other sexually and intimately, thereby resulting in better marriages. In one such meeting, men were taught to respect their wives, love them and treat them like queens and princesses. They were asked to dress their wives well and help them groom and clean out well so that they can be sexually attractive to their husbands. Gender Based Violence (GBV) was frequently and totally condemned while couples but especially men were taught to treat their spouses with respect and dignity and treat them as equal partners. In one such couples' meeting, the preacher told the husbands:

If you are here and you still hit your wife or disrespect her in front of the children, shame on you! You must only use your hands to embrace and hug your wife. Those strong arms God gave you must not be for hitting her but for protecting her. There is no room for violence in a born again home."⁷

At the same meeting, the preacher exhorted couples to consult each other and engage in dialogue, traits that are healthy for the family wellbeing.

Male interviewees spoke about how they stopped mistreating their wives and started providing for their families and children. Many reported improved relations in the work place, others revealed that they forgave easily and let go off resentments and bad feelings.^{ix}

5.4 SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

All the three churches help to build and generate spiritual and social capital. Benefits of spiritual/social capital are evident in the form of support that members receive not just from their churches but also from each other. Respondents suggested that the spiritual and social support they receive from their communities are spiritual (prayer, encouragement), and social or material support (solidarity, trust). Through their involvement, people have been able to develop networks with other believers. These networks are generally wider geographically and socially than traditional networks of family and kinship and are often based on social trust.

a) Social/Religious Networking and Trust

Social trust and networking is one obvious form of social capital evident in all the three churches. Social trust is vital because relations are largely supportive in most kinds of human enterprise, business or otherwise. Because of their involvement in church life, believers can create social bonds, which are a source of economic and emotional support during difficult times. All the three churches have formed elaborate social and spiritual networks among themselves. There was sufficient evidence to suggest that all the three churches initiate and develop a sense of community as they meet together in their churches for worship, cell groups in mid-week Bible study fellowships.

Communal meetings are central to the life of Pentecostals churches and are an opportunity for people to hear from God, experience God for themselves and enter into a personal relationship with God.

Pentecostals are heavily involved in both church life and their own personal devotion. In material and spiritual ways believers, provide informal support for one another as well as for visitors to their churches and people in the local communities. The churches design and operate formal ministry programmes to reach out and care for people inside and outside the church. Mission programmes bring local church members into contact with the wider community both nationally and international. Prayer, donations of money and goods, relational networks and formal counseling and training services are among the ways that Pentecostals support individuals and groups in the community.

Members also benefit from material support of the church community. Upon joining the church, a member is immediately supported by a system of informal networks, small-scale welfare groups, cell groups, male groups, female and youth groups. The churches urge members to help one another, pray for each other and facilitate business networks to assist people to find work and mentor those starting new families, jobs and careers. Thus, an immediate social/spiritual resource is the local congregation as a vital source of social capital.

Many members narrated how they often receive support from fellow congregants in times of need, especially during weddings, childbirth, sickness, bereavement and others. Many interviewees claim that fellow members stood

by them in solidarity when faced they challenges. Other forms of support members receive from each other are prayer, encouragement and fellowship. One consequence of such networking is the women business groups popularly known as *chamas*^x that are solely built on social trust. For decades now, Kenyan women have operated small to medium investment groups popularly known as ‘merry go-rounds’ or Chamas. These Chama’s are not only popular but have also become integral aspects of female entrepreneurship throughout both rural and urban Kenya.

The Chama phenomenon is so pervasive that it has permeated many aspects of Kenyan life. The Chama concept is based on relations of trust between friends, family members, colleagues, church cell groups and other such relationships. Members come together and agree to contribute a certain amount of money either weekly, monthly or quarterly which will form an initial capital from where members of the group can borrow in a rotating cycle until everyone one in the group has benefited.

Initially, members used the monetary contributions to furnish their homes, feed their families and pay school fees for their children and relatives. Women in Kenya have always displayed innovative creativity in not just how they do business but also in how they pull their collective resources together to help each other. It is inconceivable to think of any woman and increasingly men too, rural and urban, young and old including campus students who do not belong to one, two, or more Chamas.

These prominent but largely female centered investment groups display tremendous creativity, innovation and women’s collective energies coupled

with a weaving together of traditional, social and cultural resources to weave a thriving and gendered way of doing business and entrepreneurship in a country where women have traditionally been socially, economically and politically marginalized for decades. It is a fact that women historically have been both poor and marginalized not just in Kenya but also in the larger African continent. Besides, few have less access to the formal banking sector than do men (Parsitau 2012).

In time, these Chamas have transformed from small women groups to medium businesses to huge business with many now engaged in real estate, the stock market and property buying. While the Chama concept was initially a women's affair, men have also borrowed it and others are joining their wives, families and friends to pull their collective resources, energies and social/cultural capital to improve their lives. Today, Chamas are used as platforms to raise, contribute, save, borrow and loan money to others and themselves as well as alternative investment clubs.

Chamas have therefore emerged as ways in which women in Kenya organize themselves to gain some financial independence and empowerment and they have been successful to some extent. To start with, the efforts and activities of these Chama's are already having deeply transformative effects not just on the Kenyan economy but also on gendered and social transformation as well. Besides, they have put women at the centre of business and entrepreneurship thereby empowering a constituency that has largely been viewed as disempowered and marginalized.

Churches are the locus of Chamas as many are made of church members, friends and family. The social and spiritual impact of the chamas is also significant. In these small informal groups, the qualities and features that bind these women and increasingly men together are qualities of trust, faithfulness, integrity, ability to keep promise, discipline and ethics. In all three churches, the chama phenomenon is prominent. JIAM actually runs a revolving fund, which is built on the chama ideal, and principles from which church members can access credit facilities (as they borrow from each other). Members can access small, medium and large sums of money to improve their economic wellbeing. MMC and FEM also have similar groups and facilities.

b) Building Self Esteem/Self Confidence

All the three churches are involved in helping their members build and develop self-esteem and confidence through daily, weekly or monthly sermons and teachings. To start with, there is incredible affirmation during sermons. Affirmative language used during sermons and teachings are positive and inspiring too. Some popular phrases used include: ‘you are a child of God,’ ‘you are the favored of the Lord,’ ‘daughters and sons of the most high God’, ‘daughters and sons of the King’, ‘princes and princesses’.

The most common verse often quoted by JIAM, MMC and FEM leaders to affirm their members is one Peter 2. 9, ‘You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood.’ This portion of scriptures gives them a sense of value and importance, reaffirming them as a chosen people and a royal priesthood. Many people we interviewed revealed that belonging to these churches has helped them develop self-esteem and confidence.^{xi} Ruth Wanjiru of FEM had this to

say:

When I joined a ministry I had sunk so low, I felt so depressed, alone, hopeless and miserable. But slowly, I was taught that God values me and loves me just the way I am and that I should value myself the way God values me. Today, I feel good about myself. I have learnt that I have self worth and value and that I am a Daughter of the king.¹³

Respondents indicated that they joined churches with low self-esteem, feeling wretched, despised and abused but this changed immediately they joined the churches. As soon as they entered these churches, they acquire a new identity of the saved: they are a chosen people ‘called by name, a people that is holy and set apart’. In one of Wairimu’s sermon, she reminded the congregation:

God knows your names and addresses! You are fearfully and wonderfully made! So begin to value, love yourself as God values, and loves you! Do not walk like chicken that has been rained on. Walk tall because you are special, you are created in his image and likeness!”¹⁴

The sermons and messages normally revolve around the theme of self-worth and positive engagement with life. Thus, there is a lot of spiritual inspiration and motivational talks in these churches. This kind of teaching holds potential to empower the disempowered. In these churches, they are taught that their lives have meaning, value and agency.

5.5 SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

Below we discuss some findings observed in the three churches in respect of socio-economic issues namely, entrepreneurship, business culture and mindset, promotion of work ethics and culture, provision of skills and competencies.

a) Entrepreneurship and Business Development

Two salient features in the three churches emerged during fieldwork, namely entrepreneurship and a business culture. This is significant in a number of ways: first, each of the founding leaders is relatively successful. The three clergy often narrate stories of how they started their churches in humble beginnings to become successful religious organizations. Secondly, they all model themselves in the image of the CEO of a corporate multinational organization. They drive expensive cars, sometimes with chauffeurs; they have smart, spacious, modern offices with personal assistants as well as at least one secretary; they use marketing techniques to market their churches. Many members aspire to be as successful as their clergy, thereby serving as a motivating factor for harder.

Thirdly, some clergy such as Wanjiru and Wairimu are from an entrepreneurial background. Wanjiru has always imaged herself as a successful businessperson and an entrepreneur. JIAM views business as an important part of the church's vision: businesses are for not only making wealth and ensuring personal wellbeing but also to serve the overall purpose of advancing the Kingdom of God (Parsitau 2010). In the late 1990s Wanjiru held an early morning Sunday service specifically designed for business professionals and entrepreneurs.

She continues to hold annual business and entrepreneurship seminars and conferences where born again Christians are taught business ideals and how to build a business using Godly ideals and principles. These meetings are organized around motivational speakers and successful businessmen/women

locally and internationally, on themes such as: ‘How to Grow Rich using Kingdom Principles,’ ‘Kingdom Economics,’ ‘wealth that brings joy and add no sorrows, and “Grow rich and serve God with your money”’. This practice is heavily borrowed from North American Pentecostalism (Gifford 2009).

FEM trains its most active members called ‘Harvest Partners’ who have committed themselves to support this ministry financially. FEM in return of this gesture prays for them and trains them in leadership and business ideals. More importantly, being entrepreneurs who extol business ideals, they attract entrepreneurs into their congregations. Professionals, business people, and students populate the pews most Sundays, although there are also poor people in the congregations.

b) Inculcating Work Ethics and Virtues

Another salient feature is how the churches nurture and inculcate better work ethics and values that have benefits for the workplace. Such values and virtues include self-improvement, honesty, integrity, hard work, positive ambitions, unshakable faith and belief that it is possible to succeed, self-discipline, aspirations, confidence and self-esteem all of which help them become better workers and help improve their economic wellbeing.

JIAM, MMC and FEM members are re-socialized into a church society that emphasizes literacy, moral probity and industriousness, reintegrating volatile youth into productive forms of social engagement. This re-socialization seems to make the born again believer more industrious and socially mobile. Through the teachings of skills, life competencies and a promotion of talents, these churches also promote a culture of business and

entrepreneurship. Women as we discussed above seem to be open to this kind of teachings and many have benefited from skill training and small to medium micro-finance enterprises.

c) Employment, Skill Developments and Life Competencies

Another significant feature of the three churches in respect of economic development and engagement is that they are good employers. The sheer number of Pentecostal churches that have proliferated all over the country has had a multiplier effect of generating a new category of church employees who work as drivers, tutors, computer technicians, tailors, clerks, secretaries, personal assistants, administrators and cleaners. Skills and other life competencies such as computer skills, tailoring, and baking, detergent making are taught in these churches.

Besides, these churches' media ministries and departments have accorded youth with skills in photography, video editing, film shooting, and producing church media and TV programmes. Some youth also help in the setting, running and maintaining of church websites. Sports and sporting events are also organized by these churches to nurture sporting talents among the youth. Thus, they reintegrate potentially volatile youths into productive forms of social engagement.

JIAM and MMC operate programmes in the broader community to develop people's skills. These include computer, programmes, dressmaking, detergent making, business training, skills, and acumen acquisition. Self-help aids are taught at special seminars and conferences. Business seminars, empowerment classes are common where skills and other life competencies are

taught and encouraged. People are also encouraged to work hard irrespective of their present circumstances. Interviews with workers from the three churches suggest that Neo-Pentecostal spirituality helps equip people for success in the work place. This seem to be validated by studies carried out in other parts of Africa as well as Latin America that suggest that Neo-Pentecostal churches contribute to socio-economic ideals.

5.6 THE CIVIC AND PUBLIC ROLES AND ENGAGEMENTS OF JIAM, MMC & FEM

In this section, we consider the socio-political, civic and public roles and engagements of JIAM, MMC and FEM, focusing on the political activities, modes of engagement and interventions of the individual clergy who are increasingly emerging as leading opinion shapers and voices in the Kenyan socio-political scene. All three churches have been engaged in two ways, namely: direct and indirect engagement. Here below we examine these varied modes of engagement.

5.6.1 POLITICAL ENGAGEMENTS

Historically, levels of political participation among Pentecostals have varied from one country to another. Some Pentecostals have been politically active; others have been ardently apolitical while others have accepted the status quo either willingly or by default. These three patterns are evident in varying degrees in Kenya. Until the late 1990s, most Pentecostals in Kenya shunned political involvement as sinful and worldly. However, at the dawn of the new millennium, some Neo-Pentecostal clergy and faithful seem to have undergone some changes to adopt at least some measure of political

involvement. Many have moved on from non-engagement to full participation and engagement. Since then, some Neo-Pentecostal clergy have developed increased interest in elective politics and constitutional matters, as we shall discuss below.

5.6.2 DIRECT POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

i) Bishop Wanjiru and Muiru's Move to Politics

Following the hotly contested 2005 Constitutional Referendum the previously disengaged Pentecostals, who also vehemently opposed the passage of the plebiscite in Kenya began to seek new ways of engaging in civic and public life issues. The Pentecostal clergy had urged their huge Christian constituency to vote against the Bomas Constitutional Draft citing concerns that it appeared to give leeway to same sex relationships and also the *Kadhi Courts* controversy among other contentious issues (Parsitau 2008: 2011; Mue 2011). After, the defeat of the Bomas Draft, the Pentecostal clergy realized that they had a huge Christian constituency that wields power and numbers to change public policy and hold government to account.

Bishop Wanjiru as already said alongside others played significant roles in mobilizing the Pentecostal constituency to reject the Bomas Draft. Shortly after this victory, Wanjiru in November 2006 announced on national television that she would contest elective politics during the 2007 General Election.^{xii} Wanjiru imaged her move to contest politics as a call from God. This is how she e

when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice, but when the wicked beareth rule, the people suffer ¹⁶

Wanjiru's decision to join politics was further legitimized on grounds that she had received a divine revelation from an African-American Prophetess, a claim she announced to jubilant church supporters during a church service. On 25 December 2007, a ceremony dubbed "a prophetic and anointing ceremony" was held at JIAM in which Wanjiru was anointed and prayed for in readiness for politics.^{xiii}

This is what the Prophetess Brenda Todd an African-American female clergy told the bishop during this anointing service:

God has prodded you severally to join politics but you hesitated, time has finally come and you can no longer run away from the Voice of God.

On this Christmas service, Wanjiru was anointed with oil by this prophetess in a highly politicized sermon attended by international guests who accompanied the prophetess and which had been advertised in the local dailies. She was not just anointed with oil but also anointed for victory as the prophetess claimed that God sent her all the way from America for this God ordained calling. Oil is significant in that it is a metaphor for blessings and release to go ahead and carry out the task ahead. It is also used to legitimize the move to politics by essentially releasing the Bishop as well as imparting her with power to enter the political arena. During this anointing service, the Prophetess likened Wanjiru to King David who was chosen by God and anointed by Samuel (1 Samuel 8:4-9).^{xiv}

After the anointing service, Wanjiru explained that she would contest for the Parliamentary seat in Nairobi's Starehe Constituency. Wanjiru however claimed that she had been harboring political ambitions for some time but that

the Constitution Review Process from 2003-2005 proved to her that she is a capable leader and that she eventually hopes to become president of Kenya (Parsitau 2011 a & b; Parsitau & Mwaura 2010).^{xv} The announcement was met with loud shouts of applause from the crowd. Buoyed by this prophesy and anointing, she took to the pulpit and asked the crowd to vote for her, saying:

When the righteous are in authority,, people rejoice. When the wicked are on the throne, people suffer. God has called me because am clean. Kenya needs clean people to tackle corruption in this country(Proverbs 29:2).

Thus in the understanding of Neo-Pentecostal clergy like Bishop Wanjiru, the motif of righteousness is considered as a theological justification for contesting politics. Yet while this motif is not pursued further, it seems to provide a critic of the state of the nation's politics, one where corruption is rife and where citizens are reeling with the pain of corruption. Following this logic then NPC clergy believe because they are saved and uncorrupt, they are well positioned to lead the country to alleviate peoples suffering.

She later claimed that she was 'taking this seat for Jesus' and that 'Starehe will be a walk over.' She openly used her pulpit to exhort church members to register and send her to parliament. What clearly came out from participant observation was that Wanjiru used her pulpit as an important tool for mobilizing her members for political involvement and engagement. Again, social and spiritual capital comes in handy in how NPC clergy not only use their churches social networks but also the infrastructural spaces they have created for political mobilization.

In December 2007, Bishop Wanjiru contested for the Starehe Parliamentary seat on an Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) ticket. Despite

being violently assaulted and beaten up during her political campaigns and rallies, she rose above physical, verbal even emotional abuse (Parsitau 2010). She was then declared the “winner” of the Starehe Constituency having “defeated” Maina Kamanda of PNU by 895 votes. She garnered 29, 496 votes against Kamanda’s 28,601(Kavula 2008; Parsitau & Kinjanjui 2009).

Her election to Parliament was greeted by joyful celebrations especially at her JIAM church. After her election, she proclaimed her success as a sign that God materially rewards his believers. Wanjiru's religious and political speech was aligned in a mutually reinforcing rhetoric premised on the material rewards promised by both (Kavula 2008). After the protracted negotiations between her sponsoring party (ODM) and the party of President Mwai Kibaki, Wanjiru was made the Assistant Minister for Housing where she served for more than two and a half years (Parsitau & Mwaura 2010; Parsitau 2010). Occasionally and while preaching, Wanjiru in her sermons would refer to her victory as an act ordained by God.

Her JIAM congregation also saw the victory as God’s stamp of approval and a confirmation of a prophecy previously issued through the American prophetess. Yet, her election provides strong evidence of how that prophecy actually works (Kavula, 2008). Scholars such as Travis Kavula (2008) and John Lonsdale (2005) have argued that such prophecies had the effect of mobilizing people to support certain candidates. For instance, Kavula (2008) observes that Bishop Wanjiru began her campaigns based on a prophecy made by the said visiting African-American prophetess.

Wanjiru herself justified and explained her entrance into politics by

likening herself to Queen Esther in the Bible who rescued her people from destruction. However, it was the use of biblical imagery to legitimize politics that sheds light on how Neo-Pentecostals conceptualize politics. In a sermon on Christmas Eve in 2007 attended by the researcher, she explained:

The Bible says that when a nation was about to be destroyed because of the wickedness of Haman, Esther was already in place and prepared for the task of redeeming the situation. When God says yes, no man can say no.

To further legitimize her move to politics, Wanjiru also likened herself to Samuel, Moses and David all of whom were both spiritual or prophetic and political leaders (Kavula 2008).

About the same time, Muiro also announced that he would be contesting both Parliamentary (Nairobi's Kamkunji Constituency) and Presidential elections in the 2007 General Elections. Until, the late 1990s when he started preaching on (KBC), little was known about the head of this Charismatic ministry and his activities. However, Muiro burst into the public limelight in the late 1990s when he started his televised programme, *Kuna Nuru Gizani* (There is Light in Darkness) about 1998.

Before then, Muiro clearly shunned politics and concentrated much of his time and effort on evangelism, soul winning and consolidating his church activities and business ventures. However, by 2006, it was becoming increasingly clear that the bishop was nursing political ambitions. His church magazine *Maximum Times* had been giving hints concerning his political interests for months beforehand, advocating that Christians come forward to play a role in national politics (Gifford 2009:165).

After a series of sermons laced with biblical imagery and Pentecostal

rhetoric, he announced his decision to contest elective politics both Parliamentary and Presidential in January 2007. This announcement attracted many criticisms from the media, politicians, fellow clergy (both from mainline churches and Pentecostal ones) as well and the public.^{xvi}

Just like his counterpart Wanjiru, Muiro legitimized his interests in politics by framing the move as God ordained. Like, Wanjiru, he claimed he decided to seek political office after receiving a prophecy from an English Prophet called Thomas Manton who told him that President Mwai Kibaki would be replaced by 'a man of righteousness'. Manton commands tremendous respect among Neo-Pentecostal clergy and laity in the country and has a reputation for his prophetic proclamations.

Prior to the 2007 general election, Manton had earlier on prophesied about the unanimous election of President Mwai Kibaki in 2002. Manton also previously prophesied about the 2007 Presidential elections, the resultant post-election violence, the Kreigler Report among many others (Gifford 2009). Yet, Manton was not the only one to prophesy about developments in the country at that point in history.

Between November and December 2007 there were a number of prophecies issued by various Pentecostal and Evangelical clergy that included predictions of tremors experienced in the country in July 2007, flash floods, drought, road accidents, air crashes, fire tragedies and many others. Some of these happenings were often interpreted and framed by both clergy and laity as God's judgment on a sinful nation (Chacha 2010; Parsitau 2012).

Muiro launched his campaign claiming that a prophetic vision he

received promised a new political dispensation in which the righteous will rule and the country will prosper. He argued that because he was ‘born again and righteous’, he was uniquely placed to lead the country and eradicate corruption. Like Wanjiru, Muiru used scripture and biblical imagery to justify his political ambitions. He explained:

When the righteous are in authority, the nation will prosper in addition, this will mark the beginning and establishment of order and sanity in the country (Isaiah 2; 2-3; Prov 29:2)

After announcing his intention to join politics, he printed and distributed campaign cards quoting (Proverbs 29:2) that reads, ‘when the righteous are in authority, people rejoice’ (P.O Oct 2007). The televangelist compared himself to King David who defeated mighty Goliath. After the announcement legitimizing his move to politics, Muiru set out to find a political party to sponsor him. He declared that he would be a candidate for the Republican Alliance Party (RAP), only for the senior leadership of the party to denounce him the next day. A few weeks later, he announced that he would run on a Kenya People’s Party (KPP), but even this was laden with controversy. He finally ran on this party but failed to secure neither the presidential nor a parliamentary seat.

On the campaign trail and throughout 2007, the bishop made proclamations framed as prophecies to legitimize his campaigns. Some of these proclamations included the claims that:

The year 2007 is the ‘year of the Lord’ a year in which The righteous would be placed in political offices so as transform the country from a corrupt nation to a free nation of righteousness(Isaiah 2:3f).

Commenting on the socio-political scenario in Kenya, Bishop Muiro for example held the view that:

It would take a man called of God to steer Kenya in the Right direction! I am the man called of Godhim for this task.²²

The Bishop also fought off critics including the late retired Anglican Archbishop David Gitari and the visiting Archbishop Desmond Tutu who had advised Pentecostal clergy to keep off politics (Gifford 2009). Defending himself against warnings of the two senior clergy, Muiro compared himself to Martin Luther King Jr., without whose involvement in politics, African-Americans would still not be free (Gifford 2009). In a bid to correct the notion that religion and politics do not mix, Muiro explained that ‘scripture is full of examples of spiritual leaders who were also secular leaders.’

He dismissed the argument that church and politics do not mix as a fallacy and further cited the example of Queen Elizabeth of England who the bishop argued is both the leader of the Commonwealth, a political entity as well as the head of the Anglican Church. The bishop explained that both offices have intertwined and worked just fine for the queen and so shall it be with Kenya. He argued that the church has been asleep for so long listening only to the arguments that stress the separation of Church and State. Bishop Muiro further cited the Pope who is the head of a religious organization and the Vatican, a secular organization. When questioned how he could run a church and political offices at the same time, Bishop Muiro had this to say:

The Vatican is a country with its own army and currency. The leader of Vatican is also the leader of the biggest church in the world- the Roman Catholic Church. If it has worked for the Vatican and with the

Outlining his vision for a new Kenya during a trip to US cities of

Delaware and Massachusetts, Muiru interrogated all these issues and attempted to lay down solutions for these challenges. He particularly discussed issues facing the youth and observed that job creation for thousands of youth who are suffering should be prioritized.^{xvii}

He equally addressed issues of rampant crime and insecurity and argued that easy acquisition of firearms was to blame for insecurity in Kenya. Bishop Muiru further discussed economic issues such as trade, free markets, wealth creation, agriculture, infrastructure, high taxation, bilateral relations, foreign policy, inter-faith dialogue, arms of government such as the Legislature, Parliament and the Executive, human rights issues, governance and management of state resources.

In an exclusive interview with the Kenyan Empowerment Newspaper and speaking to Kenyans after preaching at the New Life (Kenyan) Worship Centre), where he also appeared on a local television programme in Lowell, Massachusetts, Muiru promised to grant dual citizenship to Kenyans in Diaspora should he be elected president. He noted that Kenyan's in Diaspora's continued remittances to the country was a clear indication that they cared about their motherland and their desire to invest in their country was an indication that they want to participate in building their country. According to Muiru, the Kenyan Diaspora needs not only to be appreciated but also incorporated in governing the country. Muiru had this to say in the interview:

Kenyans in Diaspora have the knowledge, comparative experience and resources to bring about quick development. We have to recognize this in addition, take advantage of their renewed interests in being part of the new Kenya. If am elected president, I will make this as one of my priorities.

Thus throughout the campaign trail and in TV and newspaper interviews both locally and internationally, Bishop Muriu displayed tremendous knowledge about social, political and economic issues and challenges facing the country. While he was well received by Kenyans in Diaspora with his perception of challenges facing the country, he failed to impress the local voters who took him seriously. Although he failed in his political bid, Muiro managed to invade the public sphere and altered the prevailing view that Pentecostals are apolitical and socially disengaged. While he largely remained silent on political issues since his failed attempts, Muiro has continued to expand his religious organization and business ventures.

After the first national constitutional referendum in November 2005, an unprecedentedly high number of clergy from a variety of Pentecostal Churches contested various civic and parliamentary positions during the 2007 General Elections. At least 23 clergy declared their interests in Civic, Parliamentary even Presidential elections. Besides Wanjiru and Muiro, other Pentecostal Church clergy who contested elective politics include Pastor Mike Brawan of Metro Church International based in Nakuru, and former US based preacher Moses Ole Sakuda, current Member of Parliament for Kajiado North County among many others (Parsitau and Kinyanjui 2009).

While many of them lost, the move created a paradigm shift in which Pentecostals for the first time in Kenyan history participated in elective politics not just as citizens but as aspirants. Nevertheless, the move to contest politics opened these clergy to greater public scrutiny and they came under severe criticism. A section of the public questioned their motives and interests even as

this move attracted a backlash on the new churches, their leaders, activities and personal lives.

Wanjiru and Muiru came under increased public media scrutiny. Bishop Wanjiru's past personal life particularly her marital status and her earlier engagements with witchcraft came back to haunt her. While some of the media and public criticism were a little too harsh, it damaged the credibility of not just these two clergy but that of many televangelists who were now viewed with suspicion by a section of the public. However, these clergy denied these claims, arguing that theirs was a call by God, often legitimized by some prophecy normally issued by a self-proclaimed prophet from abroad.

Wanjiru and Muiru argued that they were uniquely placed to contest politics because they are born again, corrupt free and understand peoples' needs and challenges. JIAM members believe that Christians are particularly well positioned to lead because they are clean and not involved in corruption, a view reiterated in JIAM's website where it stated that:

‘With leaders being mentioned in scandals over and over again, the electorate would be looking for a clean person such as Bishop Wanjiru, who is not likely muddled in the corruption that has defined Service delivery in the city and elsewhere in the country.’

This also came out very clearly during field research and interviews with church members, the majority of who appear to have strong views on politics. With respect to JIAM's impact on Kenyan politics and public life, it is evident that Wanjiru has become a vocal voice and an opinion shaper in Kenyan politics and as a leader of a Neo-Pentecostal church. Her church strongly encourages its members to become engaged in the transformation of society, equipping members with skills and opportunities.

Evangelist Teresia Wairimu unlike Wanjiru and Muiru did not contest elective politics. Nevertheless, she is considered influential politically for the ability to attract influential political personalities into her church to mingle with her ordinary believers. Influential personalities who frequent her church include the former President Arap Moi, former Vice President the Hon Kalonzo Musyoka, Deputy President William Ruto and President Uhuru Kenyatta. Others include ambassadors from various embassies and High Commissions for example Israeli Embassy (P.O-2007-2013). Yet, Wairimu as we shall discuss shortly prefers to engage politics and civic and public life issues through prayers and prophecy.

iii) The Constitution Review Process (2000-2010): The Kadhi Courts Controversy

The move to contest elective politics was not the only direct mode of socio-political engagements and interventions that Neo-Pentecostal clergy have made. They also played important, though controversial roles during the Constitution Review Process from 2002-2010. Bishop Wanjiru joined other Pentecostal clergy to clamor for constitutional reforms during around the advent of the new millennium.

During this time, there was a clamor for a new Constitution and many FBOs: Christian Churches (Mainline Protestants, Catholics, Evangelicals and Pentecostals) as well as Muslim and Hindu FBOs spearheaded the search for a new Constitution. Several drafts, notably the Bomas Draft emerged and was debated upon. Yet there was no consensus on which draft would represent the interests of the ordinary citizens. The government proposed a Draft

Constitution called the Wako draft and a National Referendum was held in November 2005.^{xviii}

It was during debates on the Boma's Constitutional Draft right from the Ufungamano Initiative^{xix} in 2000 to 2005 that Wanjiru became quite vocal in advancing the Pentecostal opposition to the draft, a venture that is largely thought to have launched her quest for politics. Throughout 2006-2010 when work resumed on the Constitution Review Process, Wanjiru emerged as the face of opposition to the Harmonized Draft Constitution. It is suggested that she became the face of the opposition to the Draft Constitution because she was the only Neo-Pentecostal clergy who was also a Member of Parliament and served in the cabinet, hence she had power and authority as well as backing from other NPC clergy.

This happened at a time when most Pentecostals and Evangelicals in Kenya actively opposed some clauses of the then proposed Harmonized Draft Constitution particularly the chapter on bill of rights and those that allowed for the inclusion of Kadhi's courts in the new constitution. Other clauses opposed by these clergy and their churches include moral and ethical issues such as clauses that appeared to permit abortion and homosexuality that Pentecostal clergy identified as contentious and disagreeable in the new constitution (Parsitau 2011b).

Pentecostals considered these clauses too liberal as they appeared to give leeway to issues such as abortion and homosexuality that many Pentecostals consider sinful and against the will of God. Wanjiru alongside other Neo-Pentecostal, Evangelical and Mainline clergy sought to have these

controversial clauses expunge. Pentecostals like other Christians display a conservative approach to social, moral and ethical issues such as abortion, same sex relationships as well as many others that touch on personal liberties. They fear that too much liberty and freedom of choice would affect Christian values such as marriage between one man and one woman among others.

Aside from the bill of rights, Pentecostals, Evangelicals and some mainline churches, were fiercely opposed to clauses that supported the inclusion of the *Kadhi Courts* in the plebiscite. One of the provisions of the new constitution allowed Muslims their own *Kadhi Courts*, known elsewhere as Islamic courts, meant to adjudicate cases pertaining to Muslim personal law and have no jurisdiction over non-Muslims. Further, these courts also adjudicate private issues in respect of marriage, divorce and inheritance as it affects Muslims.

Opposition to the *Kadhi's Courts* first emerged during the Bomas Constitutional Conference in 2005 when some Evangelical and Pentecostal delegates launched a campaign to oppose their inclusion. Media reports have linked this development to an American Evangelist and a Director of a Nairobi Health firm who is said to have orchestrated a campaign against the inclusion of the *Kadhi's Courts*.^{xx} This preacher, who is said to have been at Bomas as an observer, is believed to have circulated literature opposing the existence of *Kadhi Courts* in the Constitutional Draft. The preacher was opposed to the courts because he like many other Pentecostal clergy equated them to the expansion of Islam and a possible Islamic takeover of a predominantly Christian nation. This position though widespread was not based on any facts

but created a lot of propaganda, fear and fueled tension between Christians and Muslims.

From that time, till August 4/2010 when the second National Referendum on the Harmonized Draft Constitution was held, the issue became controversial, eliciting and generating huge public debates and discourses among most Pentecostals and others. The Pentecostals and Evangelicals seemed more aggrieved than other Christian denominations by these courts and they employed all manner of strategies including hate speech, mass media technologies, exaggerations, distortions and their pulpits to drum up support for the rejection of these courts (Parsitau 2012).

The inclusion of *Kadhi Courts* irked Pentecostals most, hardly surprising as they have had a long history of suspicions towards Muslims. The Pentecostals whose relationship with Muslims has been less than cordial argued that the inclusion of these Courts in the Constitution amounted to an elevation of Islam that is a minority religion in Kenya.^{xxi}

The Christian clergy led by Bishop Wanjiru advocated for a secular Constitution that would treat all religions equally. It was at this point and against this background, that Wanjiru rose to prominence in Kenya's public life. Wanjiru emerged as the face of opposition to *Kadhi Courts* backed by other like-minded Pentecostal clergy who argued that Kenya is about 82 percent Christian^{xxii} and if any religion should be favored, and then it should be Christianity because it is the religion of the majority (Parsitau 2011;2012).

In alliance with Catholics and Mainline Protestants, Pentecostals in 2005 formed a body called the *Kenya Church* to oppose the establishment of

the *Kadhi* Courts as envisaged in the proposed Constitutional Draft. Wanjiru was influential in the formation of this body and even chaired most of its sessions, giving frequent press updates and statements. While most Pentecostal clergy argued that the Constitution should be secular, the Pentecostal Assemblies of God responded to the *Kadhi* Courts provision by supporting a proposal for Christian courts in the constitution.

Indeed, in June 2005, a coalition of Christian churches unveiled an alternative Draft Constitution, supported by most Pentecostal leaders, which excluded *Kadhi* courts (Gifford 2009). Back in May 2004, 34 Protestant church clergy filed a case in court challenging the existence of *Kadhi*'s courts in the old Constitution and sought to have them expunged. In July 2010, the court ruled in favor of the clergy and argued that it was unconstitutional to allow for the inclusion of the courts.

This ruling caused a stir, as the timing was suspect, coming only a few weeks to the August 4 2010 Constitutional Referendum. These created tremendous debates as the public questioned the motive for this seemingly unpopular ruling by the courts (Parsitau 2012d). While Christians in the initiative opposed the *Kadhi Courts* provision in the new Constitution, the Muslims condemned these developments and at one point walked out of the Ufungamano Initiative in protest.

In November 2005, amidst heightened political activity and anxiety, the public voted against the draft Constitution (Gifford 2009). Following this Constitutional defeat, opposition leaders held a breakfast meeting with the Kenya Church bishops to celebrate the defeat of the draft Constitution. At an

opposition rally in Nairobi, Pentecostal clergy led the crowd in prayer. In August 2006, top representatives of KANU and the then Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) officially registered the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), as a political party. It was composed of those who opposed the passage of the new Constitution.^{xxiii}

Leading Pentecostal churches that opposed the Draft Constitution include JIAM, MMC, FEM, CITAM, RGC, DC, Neno Evangelism, JCC Mombasa, and many other religious organizations including the Kenya Christian Lawyers Fellowship (KCLF). The opposition to the inclusion of the *Kadhi Courts* in the new Constitution launched a number of Pentecostal clergy alongside Bishop Wanjiru' such as Pius Muiru of MMC, Arthur Kitonga of RGC, Mark Kariuki of DC, Wilfred Lai of JCC, Jerry Kibarabara JCC, and James Maina Ng'ang'a of Neno Evangelism into the public limelight and with a combative zeal.

Others include Bishops' David Mureithi of House of Grace, Boniface Adoyo of CITAM, David Oginde (CITAM), Wellington Mutiso of Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya (EFK) and many others. These clergy and the churches they represent mobilized the Pentecostal constituency to vote against the proposed Draft Constitutional during the two national referendums in November 2005 and August 4th 2010 respectively.^{xxiv}

However, it was Wanjiru who soon became the face of resistance to the *Kadhi's Court* controversy. She vehemently and ably positioned herself alongside Neo-Pentecostal clergy mentioned above to oppose the *Kadhi courts* in the 2005 and 2010 National Referenda respectively. In 2005/6 Bishop

Wanjiru therefore got heavily involved in constitutionalism and referendum politics clearly playing a vocal and leading role especially in opposition to the proposed Draft Constitution.

It was also around this time that Pentecostal Christianity emerged as a critical socio-political force, where a significant number of clergy from these churches begun to show increased interest in elective politics. Asked why she opposed the draft, Bishop Wanjiru said it was because of the arrogance of the government.

We have tried our best to negotiate with all parties ever since 2002. We have put our demands on the table, that the constitution should be made neutral when it comes to religious matters, but for some strange reasons the government is still insisting on including the kadhi courts in the constitution. Time has come for us to show the government that we have a constituency that cannot just be ignored. They have ignored our pleas, now it is time to tell our people to ignore them.⁵⁰

Asked why she was so irked by the inclusion of the *Kadhi Courts*, Wanjiru argued that it was because the constitutional draft ‘gives an Islamic legal system to the Muslims at tax-payers money’. She said:

We are told in the Bible if God be God serve Him! Why should our money be used to subsidize a system we know is an error? We do not hate Muslims, we pray for their conversion to the truth that is in Christ, but neither should we support untruth. The Christian majority 80% was not mentioned even once, yet the words Kadhi courts, Muslim, Islamic and other allied words are used over 60 times. Ones’ religion is ones choice but truth cannot support untruth. God reminds us in Hosea not to forget his laws. ‘My people perish because of lack of knowledge,’ says the Lord in Hosea 4.6.³¹

To explain her position further and that of her church, Wanjiru had this to say:

We urge all Kenyans to read this document carefully, thoroughly and prayerfully for themselves and consider its implications for themselves, their families, personal liberties, for the unity of the Republic of Kenya and their own religious freedom. Having studied this document ourselves, we are concerned about the many contradictions, ambiguities and loopholes that could have far-reaching implications for Kenya’s future. As a church, we are particularly concerned about the contradictions related to the subject of religion in the new constitution.³²

In regards to the 2010 Constitutional Referendum, Wanjiru was a prominent member of the side that opposed the passage of the New Constitution which was popularly known as the “No” campaign, spearheaded by the former Minister of Higher Education, and now Deputy President William Ruto the de facto official leader of the ‘No’ campaign., Wanjiru attended many political and prayer rallies where she vehemently opposed the new constitution. Wanjiru also frequently criticized the Committee of Experts (CoE) for giving Christians a raw deal by failing to include *Kadhi Courts* as one of the contentious issues. Despite her sometimes-controversial positions and a combative zeal, the Wanjiru’s determination and vocal lead against all odds endeared her to many, particularly women who felt inspired by her courage.

In addition, she was also quite instrumental in the formation of the Kenya Christian Constitutional Forum (KCCF), a mouthpiece through which Pentecostal clergy and others from mainline churches used to articulate their voice and position regarding the new constitution. Her position on the *Kadhi’s Courts*, which resonates well with other Pentecostal churches, has created a sort of ‘Islamophobic’ attitude towards Muslims and may help stoke religious tensions and violence (Parsitau 2010).

Although she has twice refuted claims, during televised church sermons, that she is anti-Islam and reiterated that, she has respect for people of non-Christian faiths, her opposition on the *Kadhi’s Courts* points to the contrary. While many political observers thought that her opposition to the new constitution would seriously diminish her re-election to Parliament, she

surprised all by being successfully re-elected. The re-election of Bishop Wanjiru as MP for Starehe despite the unpopular stand she took on the Draft Constitution shed more light on Kenyan Christian political behavior and culture. This is because it is largely believed that her development record, connection with the poor at the grassroots, and support from her church members played a significant role in her re-election.

Christian leaders are politically influential and capable of mobilizing their followers on certain issues such as constitutional matters. This is because of the social capital that they have created in their own churches where they have massive following. It is this massive following that can be socialized and mobilized to become an electoral base. Wanjiru obviously exploited her church influence as well as mass media to get herself reelected.

However, Christian groups can sometimes support or go against the advice and wishes of their clergy like witnessed in the 2005 and 2010 national constitutional referendums respectively. While Christians voted against the 2005 national constitutional referendum as advised by their clergy, the majority of Christians went against the same advice to resoundingly vote for the passage of the new Constitution in August 2010. Bishop Wanjiru clearly played a leading role in the Constitutional Review Process through civic education, articulating the church's position on the draft and by engaging in debates and discourses about the new Constitution with government and other stakeholders and ably representing the conservative Pentecostal its position regarding the controversial clauses in the Draft Constitution.

By so doing, she started a conversation about interfaith dialogue and

helped the church to regain its voice as far as social and moral issues are concerned. It also raised tremendous debates and complex conversations about faith, politics and the role of the clergy in civic and public life. Though her position on the draft could be considered controversial, her position and indeed that of many Christian churches and clergy to constitutional reforms is partly rooted in a new and disturbing hostility to Islam (Branch 2010). It also revealed deep-seated tensions and suspicions between Christian churches particularly Pentecostal Churches and Islam.^{xxv}

However, it also portrayed Pentecostals as a group that is not adequately placed to interrogate interfaith dialogue and human rights issues. This is because Pentecostal rhetoric in both sermons and conversations as is highlighted above^{xxvi} shows a lack of pragmatic engagement with issues in public life. For example, Bishop Wanjiru referred to Islam as untruth. This emanates from the Pentecostal belief that their God is the only true God and is other religions are false. In addition, Pentecostals like to engage issues through the prism of scriptures. This is hardly surprising, as Pentecostals tend to spiritualize non-spiritual issues therefore helping stalk embers of religious tensions and conflict. This can only be prevented when Christian faiths learn to respect people who are non-Christian (Parsitau 2009).

However, even more importantly, the opposition of Christian churches to Constitutional reforms also marks a significant retreat from the churches' past role in Kenya democratization. This is in stark contrast to the roles of mainline churches in the early 1990s when they fought fiercely for the enlargement of democratic space and spearheaded the search for a new

Constitution. During the 2010 Constitutional Referendum, Mainline church clergy led fiercely opposed the passage of the new plebiscite.

However, the search of the new Constitution launched Neo-Pentecostal Clergy Bishop Wanjiru specifically into the public limelight irrespective of the position she took. This in itself interesting in a number of ways. This is because, the majority of Kenyans (unlike the 2010 national referendum), angered by government manipulation of the reform process rejected a much watered down Bomas Constitutional Draft as it failed to deliver the widely demanded devolution of power and limits on the president (Branch 2010).

In this perspective then Christian churches rode on the public's frustrations with government to overwhelmingly reject the Bomas draft. Things were however different during the 2010 National Constitutional Referendum in which an overwhelming majority of Kenyans (almost 70%) approved the document. In this perspective therefore, the most striking feature of the referendum was not the results. Rather it was the stance taken by Kenya's churches, the majority of whom vehemently campaigned against the constitutional draft. This was in contrast to the 1980s and 1990s when Christian churches, particularly mainline churches were at the forefront of sustained campaign not only for constitutional reforms but also for human rights and the enlargement of democratic space.

In the 2010 referendum, Christian churches stood accused of attempting to block the path of reform on the grounds of the inclusion of *the Kadhi Courts*, clauses related to abortion, same sex relationships and land issues. Religious opposition to the draft was led by the NCCK, the main umbrella body of the

protestant churches, the Catholic hierarchy in the country and some of the largest Pentecostal churches led by Bishop Wanjiru and others. Church leaders rallied behind the NCCK General Secretary Cannon Peter Karanja to actively campaign for Christians to vote 'No' in the referendum. Not all clergy opposed the new constitution. Some veterans of the democratization struggle such as Presbyterian retired clergy, the Rev Timothy Njoya and the late Anglican Bishop David Gitari as well as individual independent churches supported the draft.

This strained relations between the Church and State. The Pentecostals were angered by what they perceived to be the elevation of Islam that Pentecostals love to hate while the Catholics were opposed to provisions that appear to allow for abortion and clauses surrounding learn ownership that the Catholic Church appeared to oppose. This is hardly surprising, as the Catholic Church owns huge tracts of land in the country (Branch 2010; Gifford 2009; Parsitau 2012 d).

Aside from Bishop Wanjiru, Pius Muiro also played important roles during the Constitution Review Process, especially between 2008-2010. It is germane to mention that after his defeat in the 2007 General Elections, Bishop Muiro shunned the public limelight for some time but then resurfaced in 2010 to oppose the passage of the new Constitution. Bishop Muiro joined the rest of Kenya's leading televangelists in numerous public meetings and rallies to campaign and fiercely oppose the Harmonized Draft Constitution because of the contentious clauses already discussed.

During the 2005 constitutional debates, Muiro was not very vocal in his

opposition to the Bomas Draft despite the fact that he shared similar views with opponents of that draft on issues such as abortion, homosexuality and the Kadhi's courts. In 2010, he used considerable resources and his airtime slot on KBC to campaign and to move his church members and the general Christian constituency to oppose the draft because of the clauses on kadhi courts (Parsitau 2011). He argued that he opposed the passage of the new Constitution because it elevated Islam and he had a moral duty to protect Christianity for posterity.

Thus on one level, he has emerged as a leader who is not well equipped to interrogate and navigate interfaith dialogue and peaceful co-existence between different religious traditions. One could make this claim because during his failed attempt to be elected as a politician in Kenya, he had also argued that Kenya is a multi-religious nation with significant numbers of Muslims and Hindus who must be incorporated in the running of the country. However, he changed his mind on this during the Constitution Review Process particularly in 2010 when he viewed Islam as a menace and a competitor to Christianity that must be tamed.

Like Bishops' Wanjiru and Muiru, Wairimu also fought the same cause in 2005 when Kenyans debated the new draft Constitution. Wairimu supported Neo-Pentecostal conservative messages about what they called the corrosive effects of same-sex unions and abortions, while both were also alarmed by the Draft Constitution's apparent elevation of Islam.

In addition, with a conservative Christian approach to the above issues, together with other Pentecostal church leaders she mobilized the Pentecostal

constituency to reject the draft. Like many of the other Neo-Pentecostals, she offers vigorous social and theological commentary on issues such as homosexuality, abortion as well as issues touching on interfaith dialogue and the *Kadhi Courts*. Her position is not surprisingly, as most Pentecostals and evangelicals share the same conservative positions particularly on moral and ethical questions like those mentioned above.

Although she played critical but behind the scene roles in mobilizing Pentecostal and Charismatic churches to oppose the Draft Constitution, Wairimu was never publicly seen in the huge prayer rallies held by Kenya's leading televangelists to drum up support for the rejection of the Draft Constitution. Although her influence is not directly political, in many ways it addressed social and political issues affecting people. We will expound on this in preceding pages.

From the foregoing analysis, it can rightly be argued that it was the search for a new constitution and the opposition to the inclusion of the Kadhi's courts in the proposed Draft Constitution that propelled Bishop Wanjiru and to some extent Pius Muiro as well as other Neo-Pentecostal clergy into national politics and public life. The roles she played, particularly in campaigning for the rejection of the 2005 Draft Constitution and secondly that of the 2010 Harmonized Draft Constitution that a majority of Kenyans gave overwhelming endorsement and was eventually adopted and Promulgated in August 2010 were significant even though unpopular. At least the roles she played are credited for having propelling her further into the public lime light.

Yet the clergy's stand on the Constitutional debate has enhanced its

influence on the Kenyan political scene regardless of their position. This is because Christian clergy have become legitimate political actors, maintaining that they have a right to discuss the rights of their members and the welfare of the country, which gives them the authority to address those issues together with politicians. Yet, the precision of the suggestions, orientations, and propositions of the churches on the Constitutional debate significantly illustrates the input they can have in determining the future of the country and the seriousness they attribute to this task.

iv) Peace Keeping and Promoting National Cohesion

Another significant area in which Neo-Pentecostal churches have played a significant role in public life is in the area of peace building and national cohesion. All the three churches preach peace, good neighborliness, and national cohesion. They also preach against ethnicity and tribalism, seeking to promote a brotherhood and sisterhood of believers. Yet, it is in this area of peacekeeping, building and national cohesion works that Evangelist Wairimu church seems more prominent than JIAM and MMC.

Evangelist Wairimu has sought to build a concern for peace and national integration into her evangelistic undertakings and social ministries. During times of crisis such as the Post-Election Violence was witnessed during the 1990s and early in the new millennium, Wairimu was prominent in efforts to build and nurture peace and cohesion among warring groups. For example, during the 1997 and 2007 general elections which were also followed by fatal clashes and massive displacements of thousands of peoples, Wairimu did not only carry out humanitarian assistance efforts to all those in situations of

conflicts and displacements but she also preached messages of peace urging all parties to live harmoniously with each other (Parsitau 2011c).

During this period, Wairimu addressed the whole nation through a press conference and urged Kenyans to choose the path of peace instead of war and love instead of hatred, forgiveness and tolerance. She pleaded with the warring factions to shun violence and bloodshed and urged all people to dwell in unity, peace and liberty, just like in the national anthem (Wairimu 2010). Her message was ‘we can live together’ irrespective of our ethnic and political differences. Asked why she got so passionately involved, she said:

As far, as am concerned, the gospel I am called to preach also included peace and reconciliation. We had to be at the forefront. From the inception of FEM, I have endeavored to imitate the ministry of our Lord Jesus-preaching a practical and wholesome gospel. The Holy Spirit revealed to me that as a preacher, I could not just preach the gospel and ignore the pressing needs of the people. The gospel has to be presented in a real world, which is full of real needs. I came to know that the good news include spiritual warfare, physical provisions, peace, healing and also mental and emotional wellbeing.³⁵

During these times, she carried out humanitarian and relief services to the victims of post-election violence and visited different IDP camps preaching the message of peace. In this sense, she assumed the role of mediator and peace-builder listening to women and men recount their ordeals and traumatizing experiences, offering humanitarian relief, prayer and counseling, hope, promoting forgiveness and healing among many others. She also visited all IDP camps irrespective of the ethnic composition. This is because during the crisis, communities were ethnically segregated. She argued that her Christian obligation goes beyond ethnicity. She said,

‘God sees beyond tribe, race and creed. All he sees is people
And he loves them all equally.’(Oral Interview 14/3/2009)

It is this kind of reasoning that underlines all her humanitarian efforts

and response to crisis. Wairimu is known as a peace-nurturing individual who has severally preached against negative ethnicity as exemplified in one church service when she advised her members to shun ethnocentrism and embrace national unity (Parsitau 2001c). Her efforts to bring lasting peace and initiate reconciliation between warring communities, in the Rift Valley Province have been particularly significant. For these reasons and on May 9 2008, Evangelist Wairimu was honored with the Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Award for her humanitarian service during the post-election violence as well as her vocal campaign to promote forgiveness and national cohesion among Kenyans- and interfaith dialogue and unity among church leaders.

She was again recognized for her peace building and reconciliation initiatives in 2008 when the African Ministers Prayer Network (AMPN) in conjunction with Watchers for Africa conducted a nationwide search in a quest to identify and honor an exceptional person who the nation regards as a spiritual mother (Francis Manana 2002). They recognized Rev Wairimu as a protector and defender of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and as a peace builder and voice for the nation. She was awarded with the Golden Eagle Award for her roles not just as a spiritual mentor to women, youth and children but also for promoting national cohesion (Parsitau 2011c).

Her peace building efforts also put women at the centre of peace-building especially using religious resources to promote national cohesion and integration. Her humanitarian and social ministries that remain the bedrock of her religious organization's works on peace building are lucid examples of how Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) are working to promote peace, national

cohesion and integration.

v) Leadership Training and Mentorship Programmes

Another important public and civic role played by the three churches and their clergy is in leadership training and mentorship programmes. All the three churches undertake leadership training and mentorship programmes and often organize leadership conferences and workshops. Wairimu often organizes major leadership and integrity conferences and meetings in her church that are meant to nurture and train leaders to become men and women of integrity and accountability. However, she also makes efforts to bring together leaders from various denominational backgrounds. These efforts are not only hailed locally but are also testimony to her thirst to promote ecumenical dialogue and a cooperative spirit among clergy from different Christian denominations.

She is particularly well placed to do this because she enjoys the respect and admiration from other clergy including those from both mainline and Pentecostal church traditions. In this sense, the Evangelist is credited for striving to promote interreligious harmony and respect among various Christian groups. Yet, she is not only keen at bringing ecclesiastical leaders together but is also rather keen to influence politicians as well as public figures. This is because Wairimu has always hosted former and current presidents such as Daniel Arap Moi and more recently President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy, William Ruto for church services and crusades. For this reason Wairimu is considered influential in the sense that her church attracts the high and mighty to mingle with ordinary members of her congregation.

5.7 INFORMAL POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Besides the direct modes of engagements made by Neo-Pentecostals in civic and public life, there are also indirect interventions undertaken by these churches that are not necessarily political but point to how these churches conceptualize their roles in public and civic life. These include prayer, intercession, and prophecy among others.

i) Prayer and Intercession as Civic Engagement

One important mode of engagement that is popular and common in all the three churches is that of prayer and intercession. All the three clergy are engaged in civic and public issues through prayers. Evangelist Wairimu is for example engaged in the public sphere through elaborate prayers and intercession. Prayer is understood as communication with God through supplications. The understanding employed by all the three churches as well as most Neo-Pentecostals in general is that there are evil forces operating in the air, land and sea and can cause myriads of problems and challenges, not just for Christians but nations as well (Kalu 2008).

These forces include Satan, demons, witches, wizards, sorcerers and others who are out to destroy the land. These evil forces hover around the sky, the seas, oceans and other water bodies, the land, forests and even inhabit people. For these reasons, Christians must keep watch over their land through prayers of intercessions. The rhetoric of 'spiritual warfare' as well as 'redeeming the land' are therefore common idioms and imagery used by not just by JIAM, MMC and FEM but also by most Neo-Pentecostals in Africa.

Evangelist Wairimu and her congregations are involved in weekly,

monthly even yearly prayers of intercessions to redeem the land of Kenya. Wairimu is also an active and founding member of Africa House of Prayer and the Kenya House of Prayer respectively, both interdenominational groups whose sole purpose is to pray for the nations of the world. She is also a member of other regional prayer groups such as 'Prayer Watch' and 'Fourth Watch' all tasked with praying over the country with a view of ridding it of the malevolent spirits.

Such prayer meetings take place in the church grounds or in home cell meetings. However, Wairimu also mobilizes and rallies Christians across the country to pray for their nation. Prayer and intercession are critical tools used by all the three clergy and their churches to contest public life. Through prayer and fasting, these clergy engage themselves and their followers in a sort of spiritual warfare against what they perceive as the work of the devil who is out to destroy Kenya (Parsitau & Kinyanjui 2009). Again this is a good illustration of how Neo-Pentecostal clergy use spiritual resources such as prayer and social capital such prayer groups and networks to contest civic and public life).

ii) Prophecy and Civic Engagement

Apart from prayer and intercession, prophecy is also emerging as a new medium and space for civic and public engagement. The term prophecy has several meanings in contemporary Neo-Pentecostal usage, most of them totally unrelated to the common understanding of prophecy as prediction of the future. It includes a foretelling of the futuristic events, or fore knowledge or foretelling or conveyance of message with or without the predictive element (Asamoah-

Gyadu 2004). Yet, prophecy also offers a different paradigm for describing the man or woman of God.

This paradigm supplies a narrative theology found in the biblical writings and one that legitimizes the place and role of the prophet. It serves several purposes and functions. Prophecy is for example recognized as a function to edify, encourage and comfort, to provide correction and warning, rebuke, and give direction and as an agenda for prayer. However, prophecy is also a religious experience that offers believers an alternative worldview where people consider, even perceive of themselves as co-actors with the divine, often receiving messages of leading and guidance. As such, prophecy has recently become part of a deep religious experience and engagement. In this study, prophecy in Neo-Pentecostal churches is therefore broadly conceptualized.

Yet, prophecy can also be viewed as an action of the Holy Spirit using a human vehicle to speak a divine word. Bishop Muiro images himself as ‘a voice, a messenger and a vessel. He has also cast himself as the prophetic voice used by God to directly speak to the nation through the medium of prophecy and prayer. He writes:

Whatever has come to a standstill in your life, will be moving again. All it takes is a prophetic word from God’s anointed prophet. Every Act of release is now committed to prophets to execute (2009 prophetic calendar).

Prophetic revelations may come through visions, dreams, impressions, divine coincidences, verbal proclamations or even just word of knowledge. Yet, the emergence of prophecy and its increasing popularity is also an attempt to restore the office of the prophet to the Christian church. Just as if priests and

bishops are believed to be replaced by teachers, evangelists and bishops, a new level of authority appears to be emerging to replace that of bishops with that of the prophet. The prophetic once again is aroused, refashioned and expanded in community of believers.

Yet, even though the office of the prophet is becoming increasingly popular, it is also susceptible to abuse. It can be used to promote a position of power and prestige by leaders who are at best naïve and unscrupulous. The genius often enters in the form of creative individuals who will sometimes create profound revelations. When a prophecy happens, it becomes both a hope and a mode for increase prophetic activity.

When it fails to happen, it can become a source of disappointment in many believers thereby casting a shadow of doubt in its efficacy. A case in point is that of Bishop Muiro and explanations about the efficacy of the prophecy he received from the English prophet and which he relied on heavily to justify his political ambitions. The failure to launch of this prophecy has not been adequately explained and this has cast doubts into the roles of prophesy in public space.

Belief in the prophetic is integral to all the three churches. However, it is also becoming popular in many other Pentecostal churches in Kenya. As the present millennium ends, it appears that the prophetic is increasing in importance bringing about a new shift in how ministers of the word are perceived by their followers and the public. There is not only an increasing interest in the prophetic broadly understood but also in the roles and status of the prophet. This is not only peculiar to the three churches but a trend that is

increasingly gaining prominence in the African religious landscape.

A new prophetic movement quietly begun Africa in the late 1990s, it gathered momentum by the end of the millennium (Gifford 2009). Today, prophecy is becoming entrenched in Kenya's Neo-Pentecostal churches while almost clergy image themselves as prophets and prophetesses. Yet prophecy is merely a religious language used to understand and make sense of social issues. Religious language in the form of biblical texts and imagery coupled with prayer and prophecies not only legitimize and provide rational for making sense of socio-political issues but also gives people a moral language that many of them share (John Lonsdale 2005).

This explains why prophecies are popular and easily acceptable to born again Christians but the public as well. This is hardly surprising given that Kenya is a deeply religious nation and religion plays a major role in the way many people perceive particularly social, moral, ethical, and political issues. This can be attested to by the fact that the country has had a long tradition of a powerful mix between religion and politics or church and state. Religion has equally played tremendous social political roles in this country.

At the same time, religious discourse but especially discourses about Satan, devil worship, occult, demonic spirits, forces of darkness, and witchcraft, are widely present throughout Kenyan society, surrounding and even enveloping politics (Gifford 2009; Lonsdale 2005). In addition, while these debates and discourses can be seen as part of ongoing debates about the morality or immorality of power, they became more pronounced in the wake of the 2007 general elections. Since the advent of the new millennium, the

growing prominence of Pentecostal political rhetoric is encouraging social action.

In a bid to understand the roles of prophecies, visions and religious language as a new space for interrogating socio-political issues we sought answers by framing a number of questions to respondents: what is prophecy? What role does it play in the lives of Christian communities? How do both clergy and laity conceptualize prophecy? What is the actual impact of Neo-Pentecostal projections in directing such political processes and in what ways do they contribute to political discourses? What are the significant and pragmatic mobilizing parameters of their political theologies, and how can we describe the local approaches to politics within the political discourses of prophetic Pentecostal networks?

We attempted to answer some of these questions by analyzing some of Bishop Muiru's and Evangelist Wairimu's prophecies. This is because these two churches and their clergy are increasingly socially and politically engaged through spiritual resources such as prayer, intercession and prophecy. Such initiatives in the public sphere reflect contours of politicized theologies and challenge long-standing assumptions among researchers who assumed a quietist or apolitical posture among Pentecostals, who were supposedly suspicious of worldly ventures and focused upon otherworldly matters.

Yet far from fostering a solely inward-looking worldview, Pentecostals try to establish hegemony in public discourse by predictive prophecies, 'spiritual warfare rhetoric such as 'winning nations for Christ', 'redeeming the land', 'claiming nations for Christ' and others. Individuals and prayer bodies

such as 'Prayer Watch' The Fourth Watch, 'Intercessors for Christ' and many others, carry out these prayer rituals.

These diverse groups are engaged in spiritual mapping and rhetoric of warfare that decode the political terrain by framing and casting it as a battle between God and the devil. The semantics of intervention into daily political affairs used in strategic prayer conventions illustrates the affirmation of one's self-image as a political force. In so doing, they assign an analytical frame and a religious language for addressing the complexity of the task of combating evil in Africa.

Since Bishop Muiro failed attempt at elective politics in 2007, he has had a significantly reduced public profile. Yet, he continues to engage in politics in his sermons, prophecies and teachings. His mode of engagement was transformed from active socio-political engagement to prayer and prophetic engagement as his new modes of civic and public intervention. He has increasingly cast and repackaged himself as a prophetic voice and begun a sort of prophetic calendar where he records all future happenings especially those related to socio-political events.

In this sense, the Bishop has sought to cultivate this new role and office for himself probably in a bid to carve out space for himself in the public sphere. Some of the prophetic messages by Bishop Muiro at the beginning of 2009 and are also printed in the church's calendar these prophecies are also recorded on CD, DVDs and Video tapes. They are clearly spelled out in his church magazine, *Miracle Times Magazine*, January 2009 Issue and published on his church website and online store. Here below, we present some of the

prophetic messages by Bishop Muiro at the beginning of 2009. The prophecies given here are not specific and particular to any month but he claimed that they could happen any time before the end of 2012. He explains:

In another series of prophecies, the Bishop gives more predictions.

The year 2009 is a very interesting year full of twists and turns which defy prophetic prediction. Nevertheless, the prophetic insights can discern the following events: There is a lot of wrestling which looks very energetic yet none of the wrestlers is going down. In April, the anger that has been concealed will manifest itself-watch this space. I see a problem that people had thought and wished had gone away rearing its head to the dismay of the majority. Somebody will survive by a lie, which will be detected when the person has already had his or her way. I see people in uniform who look like students (majority being female) pulling something like a sheet from another group and they succeed from getting it. I see an event happen that brings leaders together to one location but while there, it is either like the event is repeated or something else strange happens because I see everybody running for safety. Prophetic symbols are sometimes literal while other times they are symbolic. I see threats at every level, which are the order of the day this year. Domestic threats, threats at workplace, financial threats, political threats, divorce threats. Am not here to dampen your spirit but this could be the year when you will face the greatest threat to your career, family, health, finances, salvation, ministry, integrity, etc. trust in the lord to help you because he is able to do it for you.

There is one more event remaining to hit Kenya which is not political but which will shake the country and many who live in this country will be baffled. Spiritually speaking Kenya is not under UN but Kenya occupies a special place in God's plan Even a more superior position than Bahamas. There shall come a time in this country When donors will be competing to fund projects in this country. After several birth Pangs and refining, many global organizations will shift their headquarters here. Let People pray against all attacks in schools and other institutions of higher learning. I see the elites going to exiles, as they fear for their lives. Also, pray against road accidents. After 3 years, I see chaos of a national magnitude once again. The smell of over 2000 people who died during the post election violence yet nobody cared to atone for their death is hovering over Kenya. The country will not come back to where it was only through prayer alone but all people, have to be involved. Peace with one another but not with God is not peace but self-deception. The current painful upheaval is going to unleash gangsterism and serious crimes that this country has never experienced before. Many Kenyans are going to relocate to other countries in pursuit of greener pastures. However, what the country is going through is a refining by fire in addition, pain. After, this Kenya will be a great nation and foreigners will flock to this country with their wealth.

Evangelist Wairimu also uses prophecies to engage public and civic

issues. In a series of sermons preached during crusades, Wairimu attacks the politics of corruption, ethnicity, nepotism, and patrimonialism. Speaking out against the sins of corruption and tribalism, Wairimu has preferred a prophetic voice to party-political rhetoric. She has warned:

“When politicians plot to devour the sheep, preachers have a God-given responsibility to protect the sheep.”

During a sermon at Uhuru Park in 2005, she went on to declare:

“The Church must be the voice in Kenya. If you don’t want to hear what the Church is saying, move your citizenship elsewhere, because? Kenya will be a God-fearing nation. Our nation is set apart for Jesus Christ. Kenya is a springboard for revival.”³⁶

Among the epithets Wairimu has adopted are Prophetess to the Nation and Watchman (watchwoman) to the Country. Quoting Ezekiel 33:1-9, she insists.

“God has called us to be ‘watchmen/women,’ we are to watch over our city, we must watch over our nation. And for this reason I prophesy to Kenya every day. Kenya, you are great and you shall do great things for Jehovah.”

Addressing her words more directly to politicians, she observes:

“God has not called these politicians to be watchmen. They do not have the mandate. That is why they scream and shout, even when they are tearing the nation apart.”³⁷

Since God has called her as a watchman/woman to the nation, God’s prophetic word about the country’s politics is channeled through the praxis of prayer. One of her favorite messages is that the church must take over her position to pray for the nation and prophesy peace and she ‘possesses’ Kenya as well as other nations through prayer and prophesy:

God has called us to be guards, we are to watch over Our city, we must watch over our nation. And for this reason prophesy to Kenya every day. I say, Kenya you are great and you shall do great things for Jehovah (Ezekiel 33: 1-9)

The church must take its position as the watchman/woman of the nation

In addition, must pray without ceasing. On another occasion, she had this to say about politics:

God has not called these politicians to be watchmen they do not have that mandate. That is why they scream and shout, even when they are tearing the nation apart. However, for you and me, God has called us to be watchmen. As we vote believers, must position them across the entire country and pray.³⁸

Through a series of prophecies issued for 2012, Wairimu engaged various issues. This is what she said in a long prophecy:

No stone will be left unturned in the year 2012. The economy will be shaken and the standards of living will continue to go high and the poor will be greatly affected. The gap between them and the rich will persist. There will be some changes and they will not be comfortable for this country. As believers, avoid unnecessary borrowing because banks will entice people to borrow but when the economy shoots up, interests will escalate and the cost of living will be so high, therefore avoid living beyond your means. Kenya has chosen to become a secular nation. We Kenyans have been pushing God out of our nation so that we become a society without God because of accommodating different faiths to make them comfortable and if we continue with the trend, then we will adopt new doctrines. The lord also gave me a warning pertaining to the education sector, which may be problematic. It is therefore imperative for Christians to pray for the same. The war which is in Somalia will take us too far than we needed to go to get Al-Shabab out of Kenya because their leaders are already in the country. This calls for relentless prayer. Al-Shabab are still intending to bring the buildings down, thus it is vital to prayer for God's divine intervention. Also, pray for schools for they will be a target for evil. Parents should watch over their teenage children because they will be recruited into awful vicious groups whereby some of them are religiously based. Parents should make a point of praying and laying hands on their children before sending them to school. There will be death of three prominent leaders. If Kenyan leaders would be listening to prophecies and prophets of God, some of the mistakes/problems in this country would not be experienced. Most of the political leaders will do more harm than good by dividing the country along tribal lines. Strife will continue and confusion will be the order of the day. Selfishness and greed will continue. There will be false merging of parties in pursuit of power. They will collectively appoint one person not because of love but fear of war. The church of Kenya wake up and prepare to vote. The church will be given the last opportunity. You will live with what you choose for ten years. Unity is the key thing because it will stop every non-sense since God commands a blessing where there is unity. Politicians must love Kenya more than they love themselves. Tribalism in churches will be witnessed but if the church gives God a chance, there will be purging. There will be hunger for God and the Holy Spirit. God will protect his people from wolves and many who have given up the faith are discouraged. God will draw them to himself, the weak will be strengthened and people will be restored. In these days, you will call upon the name of the lord and he will answer. You will be warned of things ahead. For preachers who want to build the church, you will see the fruits of your labor. However, you must build the church on the foundation of the lord Jesus Christ. Throughout 2012, God has given Kenyans space to build their country and marriages, but after this, God will leave you to be what you want to be. As churches your foundation must be right.....the church should also rebuild the alter of repentance³⁹

Through this long winding prophecy, Wairimu engages with various issues of public and civic importance such as the economy, inflation, poverty, social justice, politics, leadership, governance, inter-faith dialogue, constitutionalism, church state relations, family issues, tribalism and ethnicity, peace, violence and national cohesion, education, youth, vigilante groups, war and many others. Through her prayers of intercessions and prophetic pronouncements, Evangelist Wairimu seeks to add her voice to Kenyan politics and she speaks out against the issues she perceives to be vices. As already said new Pentecostals use prophesy as a new space for civic and public engagement. In addition, as Ruth Marshall (1999) has observed of Nigerian Pentecostalism, prophecies, prayers, intercessions and the rhetoric of spiritual warfare offers and effective critique for the state and issues in civic and public life.

While these prophetic messages have brought many consolations to anxious people, they have also created new theological and ideological discourses by bringing in the concepts of evil and spiritual warfare onto the agenda of political discourse and thus consolidated new forms of religious expression and political understanding (Ojo, 2004), exemplified by political interventions of both bishops.' Wanjiru and Muiru and to some extent, Evangelist Wairimu. While it is impossible to tell if prophecy actually takes place, what is not in doubt is that there is a significant majority of Kenyans NPC clergy and laity who believe that they are in dialogue and interaction with God and that their definition of the situation has real social and political consequences.

For these reasons, Wairimu seeks to influence national issues indirectly through the mediums of prayer, prophecy and the rhetoric of spiritual warfare. She uses her pulpit and sermons to interrogate these issues, a venture that is important for two reasons: firstly, it enables the socialization of opinions of the religious leaders and secondly, increases their influence in national politics as well as become the voice of reasons in the national scene.

This has the ability to transform congregations and Christian communities into civic blocks that can critically interrogate national issues that affect them both as Christians and citizens. This approach also creates a network of Christian relations that can easily translate into socio-political activists. What is clearly emerging in the Kenyan Pentecostal scene is that the network of religious relations has developed into a powerful network of political and that these Christian faithful are learning the importance of political-religious activism (Machado 2002).

Because of her stand and prophetic utterances on politics, she is considered and respected as a prophet to the nation in Pentecostal church circles. With prophetic utterances, she would speak the ‘nation to its destiny,’ God has sent me to tell the church to speak with boldness against sins of tribalism ethnic clashes, corruption and so for.

The church must be the voice in Kenya. If you don't want to hear what the church is saying, move your citizenship elsewhere because? Kenya will be a God fearing nation.’ Our nation is set apart for Jesus Christ. Kenya is a springboard for revival (her sermon on 13/April, 2003 at Uhuru Park)

In another occasion, she told off politicians who tell preachers to keep off politics whenever the preachers address issues touching on the nation. This is

what she had to say:

What politicians don't know she said, is that preachers are excellent politicians, because they have the wisdom of? God and God's hand is on them. And if there is one thing that preachers share with politicians; we share people. When politicians plot to devour the sheep, preachers have a God given responsibility to protect the sheep. We must stand up as the voice of God to tell the people to reject the proposed constitutional draft.

5.8. ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIO-POLITICAL ENGAGEMENTS OF JIAM, MMC AND FEM.

This section has clearly demonstrated the various modes of socio-political engagements of JIAM, MMC and FEM. Several conclusions can be drawn from the three churches. First, there is strong evidence to suggest that shifts have occurred in the last one decade where Neo-Pentecostals are now contesting politics and issues in public life. These include the attention they pay to social and political issues as well as making political pronouncements in electronic church broadcasts.

Others include an increase in efforts by the EFK, the Christian Constitutional Forum, The Kenya Church and active participation in electioneering process. The examples of JIAM and MMC and their founders' move to contest elective offices and the roles they played in Constitutional debates are lucid illustrations of these developments. Others include a concern for social and family issues such as abortion, homosexuality, and freedom of worship and many others as exemplified by the three churches opposition to the new Constitution.

Secondly, it is argued here that the political field and the range of

political activities and modes of engagements in a pluralistic public sphere are not only broad, but they are also complex and varied in character. There is no gainsaying that the three churches have not only served their communities in significant ways, they are also all publicly and civically engaged on a national sphere. Yet, there are varied levels of engagement as is demonstrated by the three churches. For example, both JIAM and MMC are overtly and directly engaged in politics, either by commenting on issues of governance, electioneering processes, human right issues, gender empowerment, constitutionalism and policy change.

Others like MMC are civically and publicly engaged in these issues but are also indirectly engaged through prayer and prophetic engagements. FEM prefers prayer, spiritual warfare and prophetic engagement to issuing political statement or even discussing electoral politics. If we follow these criteria, especially engaging in electoral politics, FEM could be said to be apolitical, preferring indirect modes of engagement as opposed to a direct one.

Yet, this has proved equally effective just as direct engagement. Commentators have argued that being apolitical should not be construed as being anti-political. This is because, as the case studies demonstrates, a church like FEM is not overtly political but is indirectly involved in issues in public life through spiritual resources and the building of social and spiritual capital cast in idioms, imagery, and moral language that directly speaks to significant issues in public life.

Both intercessory prayer and the rhetoric of spiritual warfare, coupled with prophetic engagements as Kalu (2008; 197) observes, could be viewed as

a form of political praxis, attacking the immorality of secular leaders, insisting upon individual ethics as the basis of political morality, focusing on the family as the basis of political practice and defining the shape of the new environment. For these reasons, it is suggested here that it is imperative to enlarge the boundaries of understanding of socio-political engagement beyond overt activities such as political protests, party politics, the electoral process, human rights, governance, policy and constitutionalism.

Rather scholars and commentators should be attentive to non-political modes such as prayer, spiritual warfare and other idioms, imagery and language that are equally important. For instance, many researchers are hardly aware of the wide range of religious movements operating on the African continent, including Kenya such as ‘Intercessors for Africa’, ‘Africa House of Prayer’, ‘Kenya House of Prayer,’ ‘Prayer Warriors’, ‘The Fourth Watch,’ ‘Watchmen/watch women,’ ‘the Gatekeepers’ and many others.

These prayer groups are tasked with the mission of ‘Redeeming the Public Sphere for Christ’ through fervent prayers, prayer mapping and spiritual warfare to protect nations from evil spirit. These groups are not political groups but they have a clear and elaborate political vision as this short text message received by the researcher illustrates:

Bishop David Oyedepo (Winners Chapel Nakuru)-Nigeria has sternly warned again that Kenya is under siege. The three months prior To the 2013, general elections will intensify. All intercessors are to rise as an issue of urgency and raise a cry for the nation. If you cannot pray, then cry for your country. Send this message to all

As illustrated by this text, it seems that Neo-Pentecostals respond to socio-political issues through both direct and indirect modes of engagement.

The indirect engagement as espoused by FEM and to some extent MMC prefers to perceive issues with spiritual spectacles that are also largely framed or cast as idioms, imagery and religious language. In fact, the Neo-Pentecostalism critique of socio-political issues and power can tend to be enacted through spiritual lenses. Such issues are articulated and publicly debated using idioms of the supernatural. Hence, pneumatological approaches are a key to our understanding of the Neo-Pentecostal political theology and practice.

Thirdly, the first thing to notice about the three case studies is that despite theological similarities, the nature and content of Neo-Pentecostal political interventions differ considerably. They vary from active opposition to change and preservation of the status quo, to apparent neutrality and indifference, to active participation in the democratic processes of change. The differing attitudes among Neo-Pentecostals towards issues in civic and public life as well as their varied views of the appropriate aims and methods of engagement are demonstrated by the three churches.

Fourthly, Neo-Pentecostals adopt conservative positions on issues of personal morality but may embrace greater involvement on electoral politics on the part of the clergy. On social issues, clergy opposed five such issues: abortion, homosexual relations, premarital sex, separation and divorce, alcohol and substance abuse. More than seventy percent of respondents said that these were wrong, anti-Christian and therefore unacceptable.

Fifthly, the relative influence of these leaders and movements, or their ability to effect change in accordance to their beliefs depends on two factors:

their strategic placement within the society and politics and their sizes. Wairimu's ministry seems beyond doubt that the movement's message of dignity and its self-supporting character helped equip its adherents to be more confident and effective participants in Kenyan politics and society. JIAM and MMC appear to have inculcated a culture of democratic ideals where members of these two churches exhibited significant understanding of politics and issues in public and civic life.

Lastly, it appears that in the near future, Neo-Pentecostals are more likely to be politically mobilized because of the already existence of structures and infrastructures available as well as the accumulated social and spiritual capital already in place. In addition, while they differ in their views on across range of issues, they can easily mobilize themselves together to form a significant voting bloc like witnessed during the two national constitutional referenda in 2005 and 2010 respectively. From the aforementioned, this chapter suggests a picture of deep social, economic and public engagement in respect of all the three churches. In conclusion, research findings reveal that all the three churches and their churches have been socially and politically engaged as exemplified by the social and political interventions and capital of all the three clergy and their churches.

ⁱ Testimony given by Virginia Wanjiku of FEM, a former street girl rescued by FEM. Virginia now also volunteers for the ministry

ⁱⁱⁱ Mungiki sect is an outlawed socio-religious and political movement whose members have for more than two decades created mayhem and killed many people in Cenral Kenya as well as Nairobi especially.

ⁱⁱⁱ This information is available on hischurch website:www/mmc.org. The researcher also visted this oprphanage in 2009 during field research

^{iv} <http://www.jiam.org>

^v Field notes, 2008-2009

^{vi} Field notes 2008-2009

^{vii} <http://www.jiam.org>

^{viii} This common phraseology and theme was recurrently evident across not just the three case studies but also in many other Neo-Pentecostal Churches

^{ix} Interviews with male members of the three churches between 2008-2009

^x The word 'Chama' is a Swahili word which means group and is here used to refer to informal but regular women groups that frequently meet to forge both social/cultural/spiritual and financial networks in their homes, churches or other social spaces. These women 'chamas' are so popular and successful that it is unthinkable to think of any woman (rural or urban/ literate and illiterate) that does not belong to one or more of these informal groups. In fact, banking analysts estimate that three out of every five Kenyan women belong to a Chama. Some banks are now tapping on this gendered business culture, creativity and innovation by creating niche products with favorable interest rates and sizeable loan potential specifically formulated for these women groups.

^{xi} Self-esteem here is understood as seeing oneself as having value. In these churches, people are taught that they are valuable, that they are children of God, loved by God.

^{xii} Bishop Wanjiru made this announcement on her televised programme the Glory is here on 10/9/2006. Also repeated the same announcement on KTN Prime News the same day at 9.00pm

^{xiii} Participant observation 24th December 2007, Christmas service at JIAM

^{xiv} Bishop Wanjiru's sermon on Christmas Eve 24/12 2007. This message is equally posted on her church website at www.jiam.org.

^{xv} Bishop Wanjiru revealed her plans to contest politics to then KTN Swale Mdoe's in an interview during a programme called, (Uhondo WA Wiki, KTN TV footage on 29/6/7).

^{xvi} See for example Mwangi Githahu, 'From Pulpit to Power: Clerics' Dream of taking Government' *The Sunday Nation*, October 15, 2006. Otumo Ongalo, 'From Pulpit to Politics: it is a race to Usual Greed', *The Standard*, January 26, 2007: 'From Pulpit to Parliament' *The Standard*, July 26 2007, Jeff Otieno, 'Quit First, Tutu Urges the Clergy', *Sunday Nation* January 20, 2007. Gathenya Njaraba, 'Evangelicals New Kids on the Political Block' *The Standard*, November 30, 2006

^{xvii} Bishop Muiru Interview with Kenyans in Diaspora in Boston USA, 2007

^{xviii} A national constitutional referendum was held in 2005 where a 58% majority of Kenyans for various reasons rejected the Draft Constitution. Christian churches, notably the Pentecostals voted against the draft because it allowed for the inclusion of Kadhi courts.

^{xix} Ufungamano is a Swahili word denoting close cooperation and was first used in Kenya to mean ecumenism when the Catholic Church and Protestant cooperated in a joint project. Ufungamano was later to represent a Multi-faith based initiative for the defense of people's rights against an autocratic state. During the Constitution Review Process, the forum comprised a coalition of religious organizations such as the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), The National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), African Independent Pentecostal Church (AIPC), Seventh-Adventists, Salvation Army, Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya (EFK), Kenya Episcopal Conference, Methodist Church, Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims (SUPKEM) and the Hindu Council of Kenya.

^{xx} <http://www.corkenya.co.ke> subject: Evangelical Churches Fueling Islamophobia accessed on 21/4/2010

^{xxi} According to statistics from the 2009 Population Census, Muslims constitute about 4.3 millions while Christians comprise about 82% of the Population. This statistics clearly make the Muslims a minority in a predominantly Christian nation.

^{xxii} The findings of the Kenya Population and Housing Census 2009 show that Christians make up 31.8million of Kenya's 38.6 million people representing 82.6 percent of the population, compared to 78 percent in the 1998.

^{xxiii} Pew Forum on Religion and Public life documents: Historical Overview of Pentecostalism in Kenya www.pewforum.org/doc

^{xxiv} *Sunday Standard* Team 'Churches Campaign against the Referendum', *the Sunday Standard* August 21, 2005.

^{xxv} Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa, accessed at

<http://pewforum.org.doc>

^{xxvi} In Nakuru District where I reside, I conducted informal and formal interviews with clergy and members of Pentecostal churches. In my interviews with these clergy, none had any solid argument for their opposition of the Kadhi courts. What came out clearly are myths, fears, stereotypes such as those analyzed above. At the same time, leaflets circulated in the town contained the same misrepresentations. I came across one such leaflet titled: Proposed Constitution Draft of Kenya 2010, Why the Church is saying no. This leaflet claimed that the Constitution elevates Muslims making them Special Citizens. It further alleges that allowing the courts in the draft allows Muslims to be exempt from the bill of rights, will cause the church to lose credibility, mock the name of Christ and begin the road to making Kenya and Islamic state. The leaflet further claims that the presence of the Kadhi's courts in the draft has a 'bigger' agenda that the Muslims know and that is why all Muslim legislators support the Draft. The leaflets urge all Christian faithful to vote against the draft.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 THE APPROPRIATION OF MASS MEDIA COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we examine and analyse the different types of mass media communication technologies appropriated by JIAM, MMC and FEM. In so doing we seek to unravel the nexus between these churches and mass media. We also seek to understand how and why these ministries are increasingly appropriating mass media communication technologies as suitable sites for the transmission of their message and teachings. More importantly, we seek to find out how these churches and clergy use mass media communication technologies as a means of erecting religious empires and propelling themselves and their ministries into the public sphere.

Based on data gathered throughout our field study as well as content analysis of sermons delivered through the media, we analyze in detail the relationship between these churches and the mass media. We further examine how this relationship between NPCs and media is increasingly shaping and transforming the religious, social, political and cultural life of Kenyans.

More importantly, we examine how media has become a new largely autonomous public sphere with global reach. The chapter shows how it is increasingly playing an influential role in mediating religious and spiritual concerns and representing religion to the wider public. It also shows how media functions as a powerful means by which religious organizations mediate their presence, miracles and message into the wider society.

We begin with the liberalization of airwaves and its impact on Neo-Pentecostal Movements as a background. It is important to understand the nexus between Neo-Pentecostals and mass media in order to build a composite of how and why the three case studies all largely use mass media communication technologies. This will be followed by an analysis of the different types of mass media communication technologies appropriated by each of the case studies. In so doing, we point to the extent to which the interaction between not just the three cases studies but Neo-Pentecostals more generally and mass media have become increasingly profound. In conclusion, we highlight emerging issues and themes that characterize the relationship between Neo-Pentecostals and mass media communication technologies in Kenya.

6.1. A RAPIDLY CHANGING MASS MEDIA SCENE: THE LIBERALIZATION OF AIRWAVES IN KENYA

Until the early 1990s, Kenya's mass media scene was largely controlled and regulated by the Kenyan government through the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), which was the only media house in the country for a very long time. KBC, known then as the Voice of Kenya (VoK) was established in 1928 during the colonial era. After independence in 1963, it remained the main TV station until the 1990s. Former President Daniel Arap Moi had a tight grip on KBC TV. Each broadcast begun with a report on what the president did each day. To date both KBC TV and Radio are state-owned and controlled mainly serving strong political, educational, and developmental purposes (Gifford 2009; Parsitau 2006).

According to Ogbu Kalu (2008:118), the 1990s democratization process, dubbed as the ‘second liberation of Africa’, which apparently also included the liberalization of the state’s stranglehold on the media sector, the dismantling, of state monopolies as well as the commercialization of airtime and ownership is credited for opening up space. This gave way to increased media use in Africa. In Kenya, the mid 1990s ushered in a period of privatization and liberalization of the airwaves that gave way to a rapidly evolving private mass media scene.ⁱ

Barely a few years after the liberalization, commercialization, and deregulation of the airwaves, the Kenyan mass media scene has changed drastically and the country has witnessed the mushrooming of privately owned commercial FM Radio and TV stations, cable providers and other mass media communication technologies. At present, there are over ten privately owned television stations besides the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), namely Kenya Television Network (KTN), Nation Television (NTV), Citizen TV, e-TV, K24, KISS TV, Metro TV, Channel Five TV, Classic TV and many others. Similarly, satellite television providers such as South Africa’s pay television giant DSTV Multi Choice (DSTV), Zuku TV and Smart TV and others have penetrated Kenya’s mass media market although this remains out of reach for the majority of Kenyans.

There are three major Christian TV stations in Kenya namely Family TV and GOD TV and Hope TV. Family TV, the main Christian channel started broadcasting locally in 1999 but soon merged with America’s Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) and Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) of

America respectively. Family Media TV is broadcast via satellite and has an approximate twenty-seven percent viewership. Another Christian broadcasting organization, GOD TV, also known as Sauti Ya Rehema (SAYARE), is aired via Satellite (Parsitau & Mwaura 2013).

The emergence of television stations was soon followed by the proliferation of radio stations from 2003 when the liberalization of airwaves for radio took place in Kenya (Parsitau 2008). Since 2003, there has been an explosion of FM radio stations both secular and religious. According to the Communication Commission of Kenya (CCK), there are currently about 234 FM stations on air spread across the country. Similarly, there are about seven FM radio stations owned by various religious organizations (Parsitau 2008; 2012). These religious radio stations include Muslim's *IQRA* FM, the Catholics *Radio Waumini*, Evangelical Baraka and Biblia Husema Studios, Pentecostal Family FM; Jesus is Lord Radio, and Hope FM.

Family Radio also known as Radio 316, an affiliate of Family TV is popular and had an estimated forty-seven percent listenership in 2000 according to Research poll-star IPSOS Synovate (Kalu 2008:118; Mwaura 2008). It is further estimated that Radio 316 covers about eighty-five percent of the country. Hope FM is owned by Christ is the Answer Ministry (CITAM) while Nakuru based a German Evangelical Christian Organization owns Jesus Is Lord Radio. All these Christian FM radio stations are spread across major counties and reach a significant number of Kenyans.

Kenya equally has a vibrant print media and numerous newspapers, magazines and tabloids, both religious and secular. These are the *Daily Nation*,

The East African Standard, Kenya Times, The People, The Star, the Independent, and The Citizen. Mainstream print media particularly the traditional daily newspapers devote significant pages of their print to advertisements about forthcoming crusades, conferences, and symposia. One of the most prevalent forms of new media technology is the appropriation of the computer-mediated communication technology-the internet, particularly email, websites and social media such as face book and Twitter. The internet segment has witnessed great developments with an estimated 14 million users by December 2012. Kenya is listed as among the top ten countries in Africa as far as internet connectivity is concerned.

According to the Kenya Data Network (KDN), the Fibre Optic Cable (Seacom), one of the largest internet networks in Sub-Saharan Africa is already operational in Kenya.ⁱⁱ As such, Kenya has emerged as a regional and global ICT powerhouse. Access to the internet is therefore growing rapidly and is having a huge socio-economic and even religious impact on life in the country.

Mobile Technology is the latest media technology that has become popular in Kenya. There are four major mobile service providers in Kenya and these are, Safaricom Kenya Limited, Airtel Kenya Limited, Orange Telecom and Yu. Today, it is estimated that about eighty percent of the country is covered by these mobile networks. Kenya's most profitable company Safaricom has reported an impressive mobile subscriber base growth from just 15,000 in 1999 to about 8 million in 2007 and about 12 million by the end of 2008.

By December 2012, it was estimated that Safaricom had a subscriber

base numbering about 20 million. Other sources indicate that one out of every three adults in Kenya own a cell phone (Parsitau 2012). It is further estimated that the number of mobile subscribers in the country has increased to 29 million. By September 2012, 89 percent of the population had access to mobile telephony. Mobile telephony is having a huge socio-economic impact as Kenyans display the most innovative use of the gadget.

The latest technology that has set Kenya among the first in the world is the mobile phone money transfer service by network service providers. Kenya's biggest network operator Safaricom Kenya Limited allows subscribers to send money to other phone users by SMS. This facility known as M-Pesa has revolutionized lives and empowered many to partake of the monetary economy without owning bank accounts. Airtel Kenya limited and Yu recently launched their own version of mobile phone money transfer going by the name of Airtel Money and Yu Cash respectively and are both gaining popularity.

Many local banks and companies have entered into some sort of arrangements with Safaricom M-Pesa and Airtel Money to allow subscribers to pay bills and transact business using their mobile phones. Today, one can transact all kinds of business with a simple mobile gadget including paying utility bills such as electricity and water, buying airtime as well as withdrawing/depositing money from ones' bank account directly to one's cell phone. One can also buy good at some supermarkets, pubs and other eateries. This has enabled millions of Kenyans to partake of the monetary economy as well as empowering those who have no access to bank accounts. Mobile money transfer service is therefore increasingly playing significant roles by

transforming how business is done in the country.

The latest media to take the country by storm particularly among the youth is the so-called social media such as Face book, Twitter, What's up, My space, Linked In and Skype. Kenya is for example ranked second on the African continent in the use of social networking site, twitter.ⁱⁱⁱ These types of social media have totally transformed the lives of Kenyan youth who heavily appropriate these tools and sites.

However, even more importantly is how the heavy appropriation of the social sites has given Kenyan youth space and voice to contribute to social, economic, political and cultural discourse. This has empowered them to partake of the country's politics like never witnessed before to the extent that the youth can now follow their favorite politician, clergy, celebrities, media personalities and many others. They can also have voice to critique, support and mobilize around social and political issues. Although this is beyond the scope of this study, this has tremendous social, economic, political, and cultural implications for Kenyan youth and could inform further research.

Thus barely a few years after the liberalization, commercialization, and deregulation of the airwaves, the Kenyan mass media scene has drastically changed and broadened the scope and opened up space for the public. The liberalization and commercialization of airwaves in Kenya has not only transformed and revolutionized the country's mass media scene but has also had significant impact on various religious organizations, particularly the Neo-Pentecostals churches that have emerged as significant consumers of independent media.

This has a lot of implication for Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches role in civic and public life. The Pentecostal churches in Kenya embraced the use of mass media as an evangelistic tool. It has ushered in a new chapter in Kenya's religious history and has revolutionized the way Kenyans especially those of Pentecostal tradition are receiving and experiencing religion. This section has laid down the context for a more elaborate discussion on the role of Neo-Pentecostals in the mass media scene and how they use the media to engage civic and public life issues.

6.2 NEO-PENTECOSTALS AND THEIR APPROPRIATION OF MASS MEDIA COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Scholars of African Pentecostalism have noted the dominance of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in the public sphere, particularly in the public media where they actively broadcast their religious messages on radio, television, the print media and the World Wide Web and others (De Witte, 2003; Meyer, 2004; Adogame (2005); Asamoah-Gyadu (2005); Hackett (1998); Gifford (2004); Ukah (2007); Mwaura (2008) and Parsitau (2008). This is because in many parts of Africa, Pentecostals are increasingly and effectively appropriating mass media communication technologies to both propagate their message and pervade the public sphere.

Before the liberalization of airwaves in Kenya, Neo-Pentecostals had already asserted their presence in the public sphere by occupying the deserted cinema halls and theatres, warehouses, classrooms, community halls, auditorium, hotel conference rooms, stadia and any other open spaces, thereby contributing to the emergence of a new public sphere characterized by the

increased public presence of Pentecostal Christianity (Meyer 2003).

Neo-Pentecostals therefore appear to have formed a strong and inseparable relationship with the mass media to an extent that it could rightly be said to constitute a significant force in the media industry. This development needs to be studied and understood particularly here in Kenya where this emergent trend has not been adequately investigated. Yet, while all the different strands of religious traditions in Kenya employ the media to varying degrees to disseminate their beliefs and practices, it is the Neo-Pentecostals who clearly dominate. The deliberate use of various electronic and digital media has become the norm in many such churches. This has had a significant effect of propelling NPCs into the public sphere (Nyaundi, 2003; Parsitau 2005; 2006). Different religious groups compete for airtime to carry their message of evangelization.

The use and appropriation of mass media communication technologies by these churches have resulted in the transformation of the religious landscape in at least three ways: first, they are facilitating trans-national and homogenizing cultural flows, second they are taking the connections between these movements and the networks they create to new and global levels and third, they are using this media to invade the public sphere and contest issues in civic and public life.

To a great extent, it can be said that the relationship between Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity and the media in Kenya has propelled these churches into the public sphere. Neo-Pentecostals use the media to communicate their message to the public, while the media looks to Pentecostals

as one potential source of news and financial resources (Adogame 2010). Religious movements need the mass media not only to widely publicize their activities but also as a recruitment strategy and medium towards the enlargement of their clientele. Such appropriation of and coverage by the media may in some respect help to mobilize support, achieve validation and acquire some kind of legitimization and credibility within and around the social-cultural environment they find themselves in.

New media technologies also provide the populace and potential clienteles with the technical apparatus to do more than just receive information. They can respond to the messages they receive, ask further questions, or even send clarifications. One significant importance of the new media lies in its capacity for interactive communication. Next, we examine the use and appropriation of mass media communication technologies by JIAM, MMC and FEM.

6.3 APPROPRIATION OF MASS MEDIA COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN JIAM, MMC AND FEM.

The different types and genres of mass media communication technologies appropriated by all the three churches include: electronic and print media-radio, televangelism, newspaper, magazines and newsletters, religious advertising and marketing tools such as posters, handbills, New media such as the internet- emails and world wide web-www, you tube, mobile telephony and social media-face book, twitter, LinkedIn and my space).

i) Televangelism

Televangelism also known as the electronic church phenomenon has become the most popular form of evangelism within NPC (Parsitau 2005). In Kenya, many Neo-Pentecostal churches preach on television as if to compete for airtime. Commenting on African Pentecostalism and the media, David Maxwell (1998:255) avers:

What is new about African Pentecostalism is its recent growth, enormous vitality and its appropriation of the electronic media to the point that this has become part of Pentecostal self definition.

Maxwell's observations are clearly evident in the Kenyan Neo-Pentecostal scene where these churches are outdoing each other to preach on various media houses, particularly during weekends. This process has within the last two decades or so been facilitated tremendously by the movement's extensive appropriation of modern mass media technologies (Maxwell 1998: Asamoah-Gyadu 2005). For example in Kenya, all the established secular media houses such as KBC, NTV, KTN and Citizen TV air televised religious programmes from a variety of Neo-Pentecostal churches. Besides, there are two FBOs media Houses namely, Family TV and God TV.

Family TV is the main Christian channel and broadcasts only Christian programmes both foreign and local. Foreign programmes however take the centre stage although local televangelists are also beginning to feature prominently. This satellite TV channel and radio, which is largely sponsored by America's Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) and Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), airs religious programmes from renowned North American Televangelists such as T.D. Jakes, Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyer, Benny Hinn,

Juanita Bynum, Rod Parsley, Paula White, Pat Robertson, John Hagee, Bill Gaither, Jesse Duplantis, Jack Van Impe, Eddy Long, Billy Graham, Kenneth Copeland and many others. Such foreign programmes provide formats for local productions and local televangelists copy their styles and mannerisms (Witte, 2005).

Family TV also airs local programmes by local Televangelists such as Bishops Margaret Wanjiru of JIAM, Mark Kariuki of DC, Wilfred Lai of LCC, J.B Masinde of DC Umoja, Pius Muiru of MMC, James Ng'ang'a of Neno Evangelism, Allan and Kathy Kiuna of JCC among others. For example, Bishop Mark Kariuki's *Celebration Times* comes on Family TV on Wednesday at 9.30 pm and a repeat on Thursday 11.00 am and on Sunday morning on KBC TV at 9.00am. Bishop Margaret Wanjiru's *The Glory is here* airs on Family TV on Sunday at 8; 30 pm and a repeat on Thursday morning at 10.00 pm. Pastor Mwalili comes on Family TV Monday at 9.30 pm while Bishop Kitonga comes on the same channel at 11.30 am.

Secular media houses largely air local televised religious programmes. For Example, JCC Wilfred Lai's programme *Family Glory* is aired by KTN on Sunday morning at 8.00 am while Bishop Muiru's *There is Light in the Darkness* comes on KBC on Sunday morning at 7.30 pm. Apostle James Ng'ang'a's of *Neno Litakuweka Huru* meaning (*The Word will Liberate you*) comes on Saturday morning at 9.00 o'clock on KBC. Brother Kamlesh Patni's programme *Hope International Ministries* is also aired on Sunday morning at 9.30 am on KBC while Bishop J.B Masinde's *Refreshing Times* is aired on NTV on Sunday at 4.30 pm. In each of the three or four media houses, that is

KTN, NTV, KBC and Citizen TV religious programmes take the first two to three and a half hours of the day during the weekends. On Citizen TV, KTN and NTV there are musical religious programmes from 6.30 a.m. to about 1.00pm, taking about more than 6 hours of the day.

From the foregoing, it seems that local televangelists dominate local media houses such as KBC, KTN and Nation Television as they buy air-time slots from these media houses. The messages are normally aired in English, translated into Kiswahili the national language, and done by the same preacher. The same preacher does the teaching week after week. These channels ensure that religious programmes both local and foreign are aired throughout the day (Parsitau & Mwaura 2013). From the aforementioned discussions, it is evident that the NPCs clearly dominate the field of televangelism in Kenya. All the three churches namely, JIAM, MMC and FEM have televised religious programmes on different media houses. These are JIAM's the Glory is Here, MMC's Kuna Nuru Gizani and FEM Television Ministries respectively.

a) The Glory is Here

JIAM is one of the most popular and media savvy Neo-Pentecostal ministries in Kenya. JIAM is not only a ministry that uses mass media communication technologies but also one that enjoys public prominence besides featuring significantly in the mass media scene. This public prominence is enhanced by the fact that Bishop Wanjiru was a public figure, having served as a Member of Parliament and as an Assistant Minister between 2008-2013). Both roles have helped increase her public profile and that of her ministry.

There is a great level of organization and technology in JIAM often justified as a means of communicating in a huge church sanctuary that has a capacity of up to 5000 people. However, it has also been used to propel the church and its head into the public sphere. Just like many other NPC clergy, Bishop Wanjiru appropriates mass media communication technologies for evangelism (Mwaura 2008; Parsitau & Mwaura 2010). Indeed, Wanjiru was one of the first Kenyan evangelists to take full advantage of the media particularly television as an evangelistic tool.^{iv}

Bishop Wanjiru recognizes that television was the key media technology through which she reaches the un-reached with the gospel of Christ to convert them, inspire and transform (Parsitau 2011). This position is reiterated in JIAM's mission statement that reads:

JIAM exists to reach the world with the gospel. The fulfillment of this Mission is implemented by evangelizing the unsaved, setting the captives free, teaching Christians worldwide how to live a victorious life through the word God. We are called to bring salvation, deliverance, prosperity, redemption and righteousness to all nations of the world.^v

A significant number of members interviewed agreed that the televised programme is an important medium to reach a larger audience beside the church audience. This served as a motivation for many members to support the TV ministry through monthly monetary contributions. "The Glory is here" was among the first programmes to go on air in the late 1990s when the electronic church phenomenon gained prominence in Kenya. The *Glory is Here* was initially broadcast by Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC TV) and Radio. It later on moved to Family TV and Radio 316.^v From 2009 to 2011, *'the Glory is here'* was aired once a week, every Monday night by KTN at 9.45 PM,

shortly after prime news.

According to data available in JIAM website, *The Glory is Here* is also now televised in Uganda on Lighthouse Television, in Europe on Inspirational Channel, and in the USA on Christian Television Network (CTN) every Monday to Friday, (Mwaura 2008 and Parsitau & Mwaura 2010). Whether broadcast in Kenya or abroad, this religious programme is broadcast both in English and Kiswahili or a mixture of the two. Sign language is used for the benefit of the deaf; this shows sensitivity to persons with disabilities.

The Glory is here is a half hour pre-taped and pre-edited sermon which normally consists of Sunday morning or mid-week sermons that are recorded before they are aired by the media house. In this case, the church only buys airtime from the broadcasting house. JIAM has equally invested in its own media equipment and trained its staff on how to shoot, record, and edit all sermons before they are aired either on radio or television. Much of these sermons are recorded on CD, DVD and audio tapes which are sold locally at the church tape booth and JIAM's bookshop and internationally via the website and offices abroad particularly where the church has diasporic communities or branches.

Bishop Wanjiru uses storytelling, and imagery to deliver her messages. Testimonies are always about what God has done to her flock and viewers through her ministry. According to Mwaura (2002; 2008) and Parsitau and Mwaura(2010), Wanjiru claimed during the initial stages of the programme that the impact of her televised religious broadcast—with its different messages on themes such as deliverance, prosperity, success, healing, spirituality, prayer,

and growth—was so great that she had to increase the number of programmes due to public demand. Yet, this does not appear to be the case anymore as the programme is only now broadcast once a week with no repeat as was the case in the late 1990s.

b) Kuna Nuru Gizani (There is Light in Darkness) of MMC

Bishop Muiru, head and founder of MMC is a renowned televangelist who preaches on television and radio. His half hour programme, *Kuna Nuru Gizani* has been aired by KBC TV since 1998 every Sunday morning at 7.30 am. The programme is also aired on Sayari TV on Saturdays at 6.00pm. At the same time, it is also indicated in his website and church magazine that his televised programme is aired on Love World TV at 6.00 pm on weekdays, on Rock Solid TV and Adonai TV all of South Africa.^{vi}

In 2010, information available in MMC's website indicated that MMC had launched MMC TV, a 24 hour channel with the goal of reaching people with the good news of Jesus Christ. The researcher was however unable to verify this claim as this TV channel was not visible in the country's mass media scene during the field research. However, MMC owns a recording studio that resembles a small but busy media house. The first and second floors of the church buildings are served by huge television sets for members to follow the church service.^{vii} Nevertheless, sermons are available on you tube and viewers can access them.

Kuna Nuru Gizani programme like '*The Glory is Here*' is pre-taped and later on edited by the ministry's media department before it is aired by the broadcasting house. In this case, the ministry only buys airtime from the

broadcasting house. MMC like JIAM has invested in its own media equipment and trained its staff on how to shoot, record, and edit all sermons before they are aired either on radio or television.

Much of these sermons preached for TV consumption are stored in CD, DVD and audio tapes which are also sold locally at the church premises and the Lango shop. Internationally, the same are sold via the website as well as the church's offices abroad, particularly where the church has diasporic communities or branches. The televised sermons or messages are normally aired in Kiswahili the national language and English. Bishop Muiro however prefers to preach in Kiswahili and likes to demonstrate them with pictures or other illustrations.

c) Faith Evangelistic TV Ministry

FEM is one of the oldest of the NPC compared to JIAM and MMC. Since its inception in 1989, Evangelist Wairimu preferred to preach in large crusades and in single women conferences both locally and internationally. While her large crusades and meetings received wide media coverage, she shunned preaching on television and radio until January 2010 when she ventured into televangelism. Yet, she continued to appropriate other mass media communication technologies such as print media (magazines, newsletters, posters and handbills).

The move to televangelism seem necessitated by the fact that FEM has over the last one decade or so metamorphosed into a fully-fledged church now known as the Church of Four Square. This growth and reorganization has necessitated rapid changes in order to cater for the needs of a rapidly growing

population. One of these changes is the fact that FEM launched its TV programme known simply as *Faith Evangelistic Ministries TV programme*. However, even before she started her own televised programmes, Evangelist Wairimu was already preaching on television for other ministers. For example, she has severally preached on television for Bishop Allan and Kathy Kiuna of Jubilee Christian Centre (JCC).

But while she was slow to embrace televangelism as a medium of spreading the gospel, her ministry has been prominent in the mass media scene given the fact that her large crusades and charismatic persona used to attract a lot of media attention. Yet, Wairimu herself does not crave media attention and she has always tried to avoid being in the public limelight preferring to preach the gospel without attracting so much media attention. It would seem therefore that her recent move to preach on television was necessitated by the on-going restructuring and reorganization of the church. Yet, her televised religious programme is not radically different from those of JIAM and MMC.

FEM TV ministry started in late 2010 and is now aired on NTV every Sunday morning at 8.am. Recording is done during normal Sunday services or annual conference meetings which are later edited before they are televised. FEM like all other ministries has equally invested in its media equipment's, studio and trained its own staff that produce the programmes. In this case then, the ministry only buys airtime from the media house thereby effectively reducing costs.

All the three televised religious programmes they share certain commonalities and practices as far as sermons and presentations are concerned.

First of all, in all the three churches, the head of the church is also the main producer and director of the programme. Wanjiru, Muiru and his wife the Rev Lucy Muiru and Evangelist Wairimu are the main producers and presenters of their respective televised programmes. For these reasons, NPC programmes are quite personalized.

Bishop Wanjiru preaches in all televised programmes. The cameras focus on the smartly dressed bishop preaching from a beautifully decorated glass pulpit with followers in matching colours. Similarly, Bishop Muiru also preaches every Sunday on TV and is normally introduced and welcomed by his wife the Rev Lucy Muiru. Like JIAM, *Kuna Nuru Gizani* is very personalized while the programme largely focuses on the Bishop who is the sole presenter of the religious programmes. This scenario is also replicated in FEM where Evangelist Wairimu is the focus of attention. Sometimes, they are seated in their spacious and well-equipped offices or are standing and preaching in the pulpit.

The cost of broadcasting on television is prohibitively high; few churches can afford more than brief exposures of pre-taped videos. This is even made difficult by the fact that no Pentecostal church in Kenya owns a TV station yet, although many have their own recording studios. Initially, when these churches began to preach on television in the late 1990s, televangelists offered 'live' coverage of their worship activities, but over time these proved very expensive.

Most Churches used to invite media houses to record for them but increasing costs of shooting, recording, editing, and airing proved an extremely

costly and strenuous exercise. Many invested in financial recourses to buy media equipment's in a bid to cut costs. Besides, many have trained their own staff who are tasked with the responsibility to do the shooting, recording and editing of the messages before they are aired on television. MMC also has media departments and recording studios manned by well-trained youth who carry out the shooting and editing of these sermons before they are televised.

Thirdly, televised programmes have to portray an image of prosperity, success, power and anointing. When the cameras focus on the flamboyantly dressed clergy, the rich and well-dressed people sitting in their churches, the message passed is that, it is possible to be wealthy, the well dressed and spiritual at the same time. For these reasons, what is televised is that which is attractive and appeals to the eyes. This is one reason why the programmes are thoroughly edited to give a perfect image of the clergy and his/her happy.

As Kalu (2008; 108) critically points out, the mass media bestow prestige and enhances the authority of the individual preacher or groups by legitimizing their status. The televised programmes testify to the success and favour of the preacher who gives the impression of someone important, one who is successful and is worthy of recognition and notice. The audience is also portrayed well and as a group that is attentive, responsive to the televangelists and thoroughly enjoying themselves.

However, the camera men and women focus more on the Bishop who is the centre of the broadcast. For these reasons, the preacher appears on one programme dressed in different but very expensive outfits while the pulpit is specially decorated to make it presentable for television viewing. Editing is

done to make both the preacher and the audience look good, smart and exuding joy, happiness, confidence, anointing, success and power. In so doing, the edited tapes glorify the personality of the pastor-his/her clothes, demeanour, popularity and success. De Witte (2003:174) has argued that as a popular cultural medium, television can make things and persons appear more beautiful and attractive than they really are, while at the same time presenting them as true and accessible.

Fourthly and in all the three churches, members help shoulder the cost of the televised programmes. With increased competition, airtime has become very expensive and the televangelists have adopted new strategies of soliciting support from their audiences in order to sustain these programmes. Besides, NPC televangelists have perfected the art of fundraising in which many have specially marked envelopes where people are urged to put money for the TV ministry.

JIAM has envelopes that are marked 'TV Ministry' and are passed around during all church services. Those who wish to support the TV ministry can put their contributions in these marked envelopes and indicate their contact details. Contributors are referred to as 'harvest partners.' These are men and women who are 'born-again' members of JIAM and who have pledged to support the TV ministry through monthly contributions.

Besides church members who pledge to support the TV ministry, there are also individuals and businesspersons who are called TV partners. These TV partners can be anyone but mostly friends of the bishop or people who share and believe in her vision and mission. TV partners can also be local or

international persons who may pledge to support this venture. This is important considering that television programmes target not only regular church audiences but also a huge network of viewers who can be depended upon to contribute for the TV ministry.

Contributors are sought directly or indirectly through televised messages, in advertisements in the church magazine or online. Viewers are urged to partner and send their contribution through mobile phone money transfer services such as M-pesa, Zap or Yu Cash. Some cell phone numbers are displayed on TV screens during televised church sermons for anyone willing to support the ministry and become a harvest partner. There are also online contribution forms for those interested in donation.^{viii}

Viewers contact the televangelist organizations, making huge donations and ordering literature, video compact discs and other products. Members and non-members are urged to buy the bishops' video, CDs or DVD tapes locally and abroad. Those abroad can buy them online through the church website^{ix} using all major credit or debit cards. It is, however, Bishop Wanjiru's various media ministries that have made an impact internationally. This is because her messages can be watched live on 'you tube' making it possible for her international audience or anyone who has access to the internet.

But for the local viewers, the same edited messages can be purchased from the church's tape booths and bookshop. Local viewers who wish to support the TV ministry can also send money through M-pesa. One can also order the tapes via the post. All these are meant to fund raiser for the television ministry. The contributors later receive 'thank you cards' or short text

messages thanking them for ‘standing with the Bishop financially’ to preach the word of God. One ‘thank you note’ and thank you text messages read like this:

I cannot fail to thank my faithful congregation and partners who have stuck by me throughout this long journey. Without your support, I would not be where I am today. It has taken your faith in me for us to reach this far. I would like to courageously encourage you that whichever ministry you are involved in be it TV partner, prayer partner or counselor; please keep on being a part of us, because God blesses partnership.^{xi}

Thus, monetary resources are aggressively sought and mobilized from followers and the public (believers and non-believers alike). JIAM therefore relies on the network of believers both local and international to help the church to realize its mission and vision. The social interactions created by these churches can be relied upon to help Neo-Pentecostal churches invade the public sphere using mass media communication technologies like televangelism.

JIAM often invites the public to participate in particular programmes or tune in to watch their televised services. At the same time, a media department is preoccupied with TV ministries and donations from TV partners who help to cater for airtime costs. In MMC as well as FEM, the televised programme is mainly funded by members, well-wishers, friends of the clergy and their ministries or harvest partners. This shows how these churches rely on the networks of support, the social capital they have built over the years to enable them engage with civic and public life issues using mass media communication technologies.

These networks of social support in the form of harvest partners later receive thank you notes in the form of emails, short text messages also

popularly known as sms or letters. One thank you note received by the researcher read:

Partners, we appreciate your gifts and we pray that God may bless you richly as you stand with us financially. You can donate by writing a cheque or giving a cash donation at our offices. Online donation will soon be available. Thank you and God bless you.^{xii}

Fifthly, and in a bid to cut costs, the televised messages are brief, simplified, and cast in individualistic terms as demanded by the principles of marketing (Smith 1990; 296). The great innovation of the Neo-Pentecostal media preachers has been to simplify the message into a sort of commercial transaction of symbolic goods. This is why scholars have raised issues about the content of televised messages; are they sufficient, what impact do they have on the viewers? Is it necessary in the first place?

Sixthly, televised religious programmes are used to mediate miracles, anointing and the power of the preacher. The reference to anointing is important as the key phenomenon that charismatic figures mediate through televised ministries. To start with and as explained by Asamoah-Gyadu (2005:14-15) of the Ghanaian context, ‘the televised sermons and images are designed to reflect success and authenticate the impression by the televangelist that they are purveyors or mediators of special power that is cast as the anointing.’ For these reasons, the television images associated with JIAM, MMC and FEM as well as other NPC ‘embodies the central theological themes of the ministry,’ particularly theologies of prosperity and presentations of God as a God of success, possibilities and breakthroughs.

According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2005:14-15), ‘the theological discourse

of the new churches also consists of a crisp, clear and direct message' which speaks to the concerns of broad masses of people in terms that are fascinating and enchanting. Bishop Wanjiru and JIAM's central theological discourses are about prosperity, success, victory, achievement, health, wealth and riches, power, financial and political prominence. On television, all these catchphrases and expressions are accompanied by images from the ministry of the televangelist who hosts the particular programmes. In this sense, the church is attuned to public needs where believers are promised miracles, healing, and solutions to their very specific mundane and immediate requests.

A catalogue of audio tapes-CDs, DVDs and Video-tapes seen and analysed from all the three churches reveal these features. The messages and advertisements from JIAM for example, invariably promise something new and spectacular especially to those who support one ministry or the other: 'your life shall never be the same again', 'your life will be transformed', 'your lack shall be turned into abundance', 'come and receive empowerment, breakthrough, transformation', 'come drink from the well of life' 'come experience real miracles.' Others read 'favor, favor, favor, God has given me favor, come for your favor and breakthrough,' 'come break the spirit of toil,' 'enter into the covenant of fruitfulness,' 'come rise from the pit to the palace'!^x

These messages are inspiring, uplifting and attuned to the needs of Kenyans who are struggling to make ends meet. Some of the topics read like this: 'Be comforted,' 'your reproach has been taken away,' 'your affliction has been taken away,' 'Seize the moment,' 'God's Supernatural Visitation is here,' 'wipe away your tears,' 'God is crowning you,' 'It is your appointed time,'

‘God has given me my breakthrough,’ ‘God favours his own’ ‘God has a plans for you’ and ‘the Lord has considered you.’^{xi}

From the aforementioned, it is clear that Wanjiru’s sermons are laced with all the ingredients of the faith gospel that are about success, breakthrough, victory and favor. She is insistent: ‘God has already done it all, and we just have to access what is ours already.’ Elsewhere, she teaches that God is not begging your situation to leave but is commanding it (Job 38:13).’ All that is needed to access all the things promised is faith. As observed by Gifford (2009) ‘all the key words of the faith movement such as ‘inheritance’, ‘breakthrough’, ‘destiny’, ‘season’, ‘manifestation’, ‘claim’, ‘victory’, ‘power’, ‘abundance’, ‘increase’ and others are heavily appropriated in JIAM.

When appropriating these words, illustrations are predominantly drawn from the Old Testament narratives. Her own interpretations and modifications loom large concerning the faith gospel. For these reasons, words such as ‘magnify,’ ‘exalted’ and ‘raised above’ are frequently used during sermons. This happens for God to prove to your enemies how important you are before the Lord. She teaches ‘when God says yes, no man can say no’ ‘when He raises you high above, he lays a table before your very enemies.’ Your enemies must live to see you being exalted by God, she teaches; they must live to see my exaltation. ‘The best thing about God is that he allows our enemies to hang around to see what the Lord can do.’

As part of this, ‘my name will be changed (Is 62, 2), I will get a new name, I will be spoken of in a different manner’. I will sing a new song, a song of praise to my God.^{xii} However, she has an answer for her flock; ‘it doesn’t

come in easy, there are trials and temptations, she stresses. ‘Each and every one of us has an issue to endure from time to time.’ How many of you know that God can lead you to a wilderness with no water or food! ‘But when you get out of the wilderness, you have not only been refined but you are ready for victory, success, breakthrough, provisions and all’

In addition, she insists one can realize God’s plan only by remaining in God: ‘Without God reigning in your life, you cannot get victory in this season.’ All must be sanctified and live for God, so there is an emphasis on a moral life. ‘If we lay a righteous foundation, a foundation that is based on God’s word and is anointed of the Lord—then those devils in your life will flee even before you cast them out.’^{xiii}

From the foregoing discussions, it is clear that most of these sermons are about success, victory, miracles, breakthrough, temptations, sufferings and other such themes. These messages serve a strong inspirational purpose, the kind that gives hope. Bishop Wanjiru claims that through her weekly televised programme, thousands have received salvation, deliverance, healing and breakthroughs in various areas of their lives. She also claims that her weekly miracle service draws many who claim to have been healed and saved.

Bishop Muiru’s televised programme replicates the same characteristics evident in JIAM. All the catchphrases of the faith Gospel are also heavily appropriated in MMC namely: miracles, deliverance, anointing, breakthrough, success, victory, and divine favor. On one televised sermons on KBC TV, Bishop Muiru preached the following:

You are going to succeed, shouts the bishop on the TV screen. I declare to you that before this year ends, you will not remain where you are. You are going to another level, your lack of education will not stop you, your small salary won’t stop you, and nothing will stop you in Jesus’ name. Where you are now is the lowest level you can ever be in life.^{xvii}

On several occasions, Bishop Muiru has held televised services involving an anointing precisely to get jobs overseas:

From now on, you will be experiencing a steady up-thrust In life and ministry! I declare breakthrough in your Health, finances, family, ministry, work and all cycles of life. Some of you are getting opportunities to travel overseas, scholarships, international business In addition, ministries. Doors are set open for your divine destiny!

In another sermon, he teaches:

You may be rejected, despised, and even sold by your own people but God's purpose concerning you cannot be altered... Whatever the Lord has promised you must come to pass. It may take days, it may take months or even years, but it must come to pass in God's time... When the timing of God comes there's a sudden shift and change that launches you into your future in addition, destiny. He insists: 'your marriage, your job, your anointing, Your finances may be lost but I declare to you today that you are not a bunch of losers but a congregation of winners.'^{xviii}

These sermons are often repeated. They are equally reprinted in the magazine and church website. Viewers and members of his congregation believe that the words of the Bishop are powerful, anointed and effective in bringing change into whichever situation the viewer is facing. Mundane situations, normal day-to-day challenges such as poverty, sickness, lack, are cast as the works of the devil or demons that are out to destroy Christians. In one sermon, he preached a message titled, 'All you need is one miracle for all your troubles.' FEM televised sermons are less about the faith gospel but more about miracles, victorious Christian living, prayer, prophesy among many other themes.

Lastly, televangelism is equally used to mediate faith healing and miracles. Evangelist Wairimu has long been acclaimed as a faith healer and a prophetess who performs miracles and prophesies at every available opportunity.^{xiv} Evangelist Wairimu's televised sermons revolve around themes

that touch on faith healing, miracles, prophesy, empowerment, women, singlehood, faith, prayer and many others. Miracles and prophesy however take centre stage. For example one televised sermon watched by the researcher was titled ‘creating an atmosphere for miracles.’ This sermon based on Mathew 15:21 dwelt at length on the subject of miracles. The sermon had previously been preached in an annual empowerment conference held at Jamhuri High school in October 2010. After the sermon, miracles were said to have taken place.

Yet, while the catchphrases of the faith and wealth gospel are sometimes mentioned, Wairimu appears more concerned about Christian values and virtues such as faith, prayer, faithfulness, kindness, charity, love, peace, reconciliation, good neighborliness. For this reason, her ministry appears more theologically grounded with a passion to teach Christians about the message of salvation that will transform their spiritual and physical wellbeing.

It would seem to me therefore that Evangelist Wairimu’s TV ministry is largely motivated by the need to evangelize and teach people about the transformative message of salvation. She is less focused on personal status and public prominence, but more about the gospel. However, preaching on TV will have an effect of raising both her public profile and that of her ministry irrespective of whether these are the intended results or not. Television is also used to mediate healing and anointing. All the three figures claim to possess this special anointing to heal and perform miracles. During televised sermons as well as in normal church services, Bishop Muiru for example images himself

as the anointed servant of God.

Anointing is a word that is frequently used in this ministry as well as in many other Neo-Pentecostal discourses. The word 'anointing' according to Asamoah-Gyadu (1995: 22) 'refers to the empowering presence of God that makes things happen. When the anointing is great as is often said to be the case, it manifests in acts of power. In other words, anointing is the power of God in action.' Bishop Muiru images himself as the anointed man of God, 'a bank of grace' and the medium that God uses to deliver his people from suffering.

Thus, an important message conveyed through televised sermons is the presentation of the bishop as truly anointed and full of spiritual power through which God can intervene in the lives of others. Clients who have successfully received this mediated spiritual power or interventions to their crisis are sometimes shown testifying to what God has done through the ministries of particular preachers.

Bishop Muiru's televised programme gives prominence to testimonies where people are shown testifying of the wondrous and miraculous things God has done for them through the prayers of the 'anointed man of God.' This can immediately take place especially if the believer is a faithful tither and those who give large sums of money. Testimonies are also given of people who received miracles through giving. Yet, this has sometimes attracted criticisms that people are paid to give testimonies of extraordinary things that happen to them.

In response to critiques and allegations that people are paid to testify

about miracles they experienced in order to attract new members, the Bishop denied this claims. During one Sunday service, the Bishop swore with the Bible that he never paid anybody to testify. Yet some claims of miracles seemed highly unlikely and unbelievable. For example, in one televised sermon, a testimony of a seventy one year old woman who suffered unexplained bleeding is miraculously healed. The Bishop claims that the bleeding might not be caused by menstruation but might also be a cancerous tumor brought about by demonic attacks.^{xv}

Because of this anointing, any simple utterance about a certain situation by the bishop or televangelists are taken as powerful and believed to change the current circumstances of the believer. People do not have to be in the church physically to be beneficiaries of the anointing or God's intervention. This anointing is so powerful that it can also be diffused to viewers at home who are asked to point to the TV station so that they can receive prayer and deliverance. The anointing is said to be so powerful it could come to the living room right through the screens of television set. At the same time, his messages are illustrated using pictures. The bishop also likes to demonstrate how prayers of deliverance work. In one televised sermon, he uses a gun to demonstrate how demons flee when he casts them out. They flee like people running away from gunshots.

Yet, the messages are simple, repetitious and devoid of any serious theological engagement. Sermons normally begin with a reading of a verse from the scripture which is displayed on the screen. It is sometimes oversimplified and can be incoherent. The sermon is not always built around

the passage but can assume a very literalist interpretation. The sermon nonetheless predictably revolves around certain themes: prosperity, success, health, seed faith, tithes, miracles, prophecy, evil spirits, witchcraft, deliverance and many others. However, television demands simple messages because it is both expensive and the time allocated is very short.

In his sermons, day- to-day challenges such as unemployment, poverty, denial of visa to travel, road accidents and death are given a spiritual causality explanation. For example, in one televised sermon the bishop preached on sixteen evil spirits. He enumerated these spirits as a backsliding spirit, premature death, disunity, sickness, visa denial, family injustice, infertility, suicidal spirit, and spirit of poverty, unemployment, joblessness and many others.

This can be cured through enactments of rituals and prayers. For example after preaching on sixteen evil spirits, the bishop used pieces of papers to illustrate the spirits, then tore the papers into smaller pieces, stepped on them, burnt them and declared victory among all those possessed by these myriads of spirit. At the end of the sermons, he claimed that God was going to sort out all these spirit.^{xvi}

Thus, Bishop Muiru's sermons tend to lean on the spiritual causality model where everything that is wrong or unexplainable is attributed to evil spirits, demons, forces of darkness, witchcraft. For this reason, his theology is largely interventionist in its approach. This is however not peculiar to Bishop Muiru's ministry alone but is a pervasive element in most Neo-Pentecostal churches not just in Kenya but also in many parts of Africa. Apostle James

Maina Ng'ang'a of Neno Evangelism, Bishops Wanjiru of JIAM and Wilfred Lai of JCC are some of the main proponents of this interventionist theology.

According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2005), 'Neo-Pentecostal theologies tend to be interventionists in orientation. This is particularly true of many African communities where religion serves as a survival strategy. Africans generally seek for solutions to their problems through prayers. Yet, in Neo-Pentecostal churches, it is the interventionist power of the charismatic pastor that is conceived of as the anointing. In this theology, many day-to-day challenges can also be overcome through faith and the anointed word of the prophet.

According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2005), the messages are not denominationally specific, this may result in great impact, and influence on people from across denominational and religious divides. Viewers may not be members of the said church but may well be organizing their lives according to the principles in the message heard on TV. The televangelist becomes the mediator of not only the message, but also the relationship with God that makes all things possible. Viewers are made to believe that nothing is impossible with God.

The television set is therefore assigned a new meaning and a new role. The television set is used to mediate miracles and bring deliverance to the people. It is also used to make things happen and make people appear successful and attractive. Yet, the charismatic message that is televised for public consumption is very motivational. In a series of televised sermons, the Bishop preached on a number of themes such as 'breaking the spirit of toil,

‘Lord we have toiled all night,’ ‘God’s plan is still intact,’ ‘your month to recover all,’ ‘God of another chance,’ ‘Better days are ahead.’^{xvii} All these messages were intended to encourage and give people hope. They encourage patrons to know that if they applied the principles of the Bible, they could be successful.

From the foregoing, televangelism therefore serves a multiplicity of purposes. It is for example used as an evangelistic tool, a tool for mediating miracles, divine healing and prophesies. Television remains the premium media for most televangelists as it adds visibility and importance. Televised sermons while carried out for evangelistic purposes also serve as a medium for broad social and political engagement. It is used to raise the visibility and public prominence of the evangelist, thus giving him status.

All the three churches have built successful religious franchises that have accumulated sufficient resources to finance major programmes directed into commercial media. There is no doubt that televangelism has increased the public prominence of Bishop, Wanjiru, Muriu and Evangelists Wairimu and each of their churches. However, this is also true of many other televangelists who have become quite popular in the country.

However, televangelism is not just used for evangelism but also as a tool to propel one to politics and public life. It can rightly be argued that Bishop Wanjiru has used her televised programme for political purposes. In fact, her success in politics can be attributed to her media survey skills and acumen. During her political campaign, Bishop Wanjiru employed all means and resources and especially her TV programme the Glory is Here to campaign

for re-election. On several occasions, Wanjiru used her airtime slot on Kenya Television Network (KTN), “The Glory is Here” to urge viewers to vote for her. At the same time during constitutional debates and campaigns, Wanjiru and other Neo-Pentecostal clergy who opposed the New Constitution used television as a medium to convince Christian voters and the public to reject the draft constitution.

As such, each televangelist used their half hour airtime on different media houses to inform the public about the campaign rallies, and to invite them to attend. They equally used television to churn out propaganda and articulate their position. In so doing, they tried to sway public discourse towards rejecting the new constitution. For these reasons, and as Kalu (2008) has aptly pointed out, ‘the mass media can be said to constitute an important site for the constitution of Pentecostal leadership in contemporary Africa.’

Bishop Muiru used his televised programme to campaign for elective politics particularly when he contested both parliamentary and presidential election during the 2007 General Election. He also did the same in 2010 during the constitution review process in which he vehemently campaigned for the rejection of the new constitution (Parsitau 2009; 2011b). He used his televised programme to call two million Christians to prayer rallies held by leading televangelists to urge Kenyans to reject the draft constitution.^{xviii}

Televangelists have also used their programmes to enhance their own personal profiles. For these reasons, all Kenyan televangelists are well known and enjoy great admiration from a section of the public especially among ‘born again’ Christians. However, there is also a lot of ridicule from the media, a

section of the public and local comedians who are suspicious of some of these televangelists. At the same time, the media has often subjected some of these clergy to public scrutiny leading to strained relationships between the media and the clergy.

Prior to and after Bishop Wanjiru declared that she would run for public office, several negative stories appeared in the press between 2006-2008 about her past. These stories focussed on her personal life, financial empire and witchcraft claims (Parsitau 2011). The bad publicity that Bishop Wanjiru received before her election as a legislator had the inadvertent effect of raising her public profile and putting her in the public arena in a very visible way. While the barrage of negative press coverage and publicity about Wanjiru's past raised questions about moral and integrity issues, it at the same time did not stop her from being elected as a legislator.

These clergy also use television as a powerful tool in marketing any church enterprise. They present their best to the viewers who are their potential church members. The use of mass media has given JIAM a higher public visibility, profile, and influence than their statistical share of the contemporary religious market would warrant (Kalu 2008:122).

Bishop Wanjiru strategically used her church platform as well as the local media to generate a positive public profile and a national persona. Members of JIAM interviewed are supportive of the televised programme. A significant majority of those interviewed said that they support the television programme because it reaches out to those who do not go to church. Others supported it because it gives them an opportunity to appear on television, a

move many saw as important.

Bishop Muiro also preaches on radio. His programme is aired by KBC radio every Saturday at 8.00pm and on *Biblia Husema (The Bible Says)* radio on Thursdays at 8.30 pm. The FM revolution witnessed over one decade ago has had a significant impact of ushering Neo-Pentecostals such as Bishop Muiro into the public sphere.^{xix} Radio stations ensure that religious sermons and gospel music from this ministry are given sufficient airtime. Bishop Muiro has produced his own gospel music while his church band, Maximum Melodies is internationally recognized. Gospel music from this group is played and aired by several Christian radio stations, including Hope FM, Biblia Husema studios and others.

At the same time, Bishop Muiro holds interviews, phone-in and accept prayer requests or advice on spiritual problems on radio. This has ushered him and his ministry into the public limelight. This is because radio has politically empowering effects due to the scope it provides for individuals to make their voices heard (Gifford, 2004). At the same time, this ministry like many others has also become viable clients for advertising in the media. Upcoming crusades, international preachers, meetings, conferences and symposia are advertised through these stations.

Religious programmes are also aired on secular radio such as KBC radio, Q FM, *Radio Maisha*, Easy FM and KISS FM. Although radio continues to be the most important mass medium in Kenya, television is the prestige medium because it accords clergy visibility in the public sphere. It is increasingly important both as a motor for the consumer society and for

generating as well as expressing public opinion. Television is the most popular medium used not just by the three churches we have analyzed above but also by most televangelists in Kenya today.

Thus televangelism has become a hallmark and a prominent feature of Neo-Pentecostalism in Kenya. It has equally changed both the religious and political landscape of the country. While the main reason given for televangelism is for purposes of evangelization and church growth, it also appears that it is used to enhance an image of success, prosperity, and modernity and to build and boost the personality of the preacher.

As one anonymous pastor explained to this researcher in an interview, the reason we all strive to preach on television these days is **NOT** that Christ is not known-(he added that Christ has been preached for centuries now) but I am not known and I need to be known. To be known, one needs to be seen and heard. Preaching on television accords me the privilege of not only being seen and

ii) Print Media

Besides television and radio, all the three churches equally appropriate print media particularly books, tracts and magazines. To start with, they all publish sermons in leading Christian magazines such as *The Eagle*, *Revival Springs*, *Integrity*, *The Christian Lawyer*, *Charismata Voice*, *Today in Africa*, *Shepherd* among many others. At the same time, the three clergy also use secular newspapers to aggressively market their ministries and products. Yet, each church publishes its own monthly magazine which we have discussed below. They are *Faith Digest*, *Maximum Times* and *Ebenezer Magazine* respectively.

Faith Digest Magazine is produced and published by JIAM with Bishop Wanjiru as the producer and Managing Editor. As an author and editor she

contributes monthly sermons, testimonies, events, conference proceedings and the like in this magazine. The main aim of *Faith Digest* is ‘to guide Christians to put their faith into action through Jesus Christ.’ For this reason, the magazine is used as a proselytizing tool.

Faith Digest is replete with passages on ‘how to get saved’ or ‘how to live a victorious Christian life,’ ‘how to overcome temptations,’ and ‘how to become successful. ‘Some sermons are meant to serve the purpose of encouraging people who feel low and frustrated, while others offer prayer and support. However, it also has segments on testimonies, mostly about miracles that took place through the prayers of the bishop. For these reasons, the magazine serves strong inspirational and proselytizing purposes.

However, *Faith Digest’s* main role is to popularize the religious activities, programmes and products of JIAM. Perhaps the most significant purpose of the magazine is religious marketing and advertising. *Faith Digest* is also used to advertise and sell JIAM’s products such as CDs, DVDs, Video Tapes and all. CDs and audio tapes of the bishops’ recorded sermons and other special events can easily be bought online and using the catalogue that is neatly listed in the magazine and website.

It is an important marketing tool not just for the church but also for the members who frequently buy space to advertise their businesses or products. It is common to come across adverts informing the public about a new school, college, hair salons, furniture stores, car bursars, wedding planners and interior décor shops. But more importantly, it is also used in enhancing the personal profile of Bishop Wanjiru whose immaculate picture or image graces every

cover of each monthly production.

The church magazine as Kalu (2008) notes therefore sets inspirational goals and purpose. Like the television, the magazine equally reinforces the central theology of the ministry. The theology is that of prosperity, success, health and status. A careful analysis of some of the messages printed in this magazine is revealing and bear titles such as ‘breakthrough and increase,’ ‘receive from the mercy seat,’ ‘Arise and Shine,’ ‘Arise from the coffin,’ ‘your battle has gone to the heavenlies,’ and ‘suddenly the Lord answers.’^{xx}

Faith Digest is also a medium through which JIAM and its founders and members engage in national discourse and politics. For example, *Faith Digest*’s editorial contents have views and commentaries on politics, constitutional matters, church-state relations and church and society. More recently, Neo-Pentecostal magazines have become important vehicles for propaganda. For example during the constitutional debates from 2005 to 2010, much of the editorial contents in leading Christian magazines such as *Faith Digest*, *Maximum Miracle Times*, *Integrity Magazine*, *Revival Springs*, *the Shepherd* and *the Holiness and Repentance Magazine* served as vehicles through which clergy opposed to the new constitution used to convince the laity to reject the new constitution.^{xxi}

Wanjiru also features in other Christian magazines where she is a frequent contributor. She has appeared severally in *Maximum Miracle Times*, *Revival Springs*, and *the Shepherd Magazines*. Besides *Faith Digest*, Wanjiru appropriates secular print to advertise her church activities. Mainstream print media particularly daily newspapers such as the *Daily Nation*, *The Standard*

and Citizen Newspapers very often carry religious advertisements about the church's forthcoming crusades, conferences, symposia or other events. *Faith Digest* like other NPCs' magazines therefore serves a variety of purposes as already said. It is suggested here that the appropriation of the print media has therefore helped propel JIAM and its head into public prominence limelight.

Bishop Muiro equally appropriates print media such as newspapers, magazines, books. He produces a monthly magazine called *Maximum Miracle Times*. This monthly magazine is published by Maximum Miracle Centre and is meant to nourish Christians' spiritual lives. The bishop and his wife appear on every front page of each publication leaving no doubt as to who are in charge of the church. At the same time both contribute sermons and articles in the magazine. This magazine is also used to highlight all the activities of the church. All sermons that are stored on CDs, DVDs, and Video tapes are published, reproduced and advertised in the magazine.

A catalogue of the same is also published while a calendar of church events and activities are highlighted. Members of the church who are in business also advertise their businesses in the magazines. This normally includes small businesses such as hair salons, interior décor and furnishings, schools and colleges among others. Yet the magazine also engages in social political discourses such as politics, constitutional matters and others.

Apart from the church magazine, the ministry also appropriates other print media particularly local dailies to advertise church activities, forthcoming events, such as crusades, ladies meetings and conferences. The Muiro's also own and run the Lango shop which also serves as a bookshop cum studio. It is

also the place where all CDs, DVDs, Video tapes, church magazines and all other religious literature are sold.

FEM equally appropriates the print media such as books, magazines, newspapers and others. The Evangelist is an astute author who has recently produced an autobiography titled *A Cactus in the Desert* in which she documents the story of her life and her spiritual journey. She equally publishes sermons in leading Christian magazine such as *Revival Springs* and *Africa Today* among others.

As such, Rev Wairimu has a heavy presence not just in the religious print but also in the secular print media such as the local dailies where she advertises her church programmes and activities. At the same time, she owns her own ministry's *Ebenezer Magazine*, a bi annual magazine that highlights the activities of her church. The ministry's church magazine is not the only print media used in FEM. It equally, also appropriates other print media particularly local dailies to advertise church activities, forthcoming events, such as crusades, ladies meetings and conferences. T

iii) Audio-Visual Tapes/CDc/DVDs

All the three churches also produce an array of audio-visual material in the form of CDs, DVDs, Video Tapes and other branded materials. These are also sold in the churches and other religious events such as crusades, conferences and other revival gatherings.

iv) Religious Marketing and Advertising

All the three churches employ different types of marketing and advertising tool to sell and market their products. They also employ

professional media and marketing professionals to design, display and market their ministries and products (Parsitau 2010). This is not strange as these churches are structured and operated like business companies, using corporate models of governance. Bishop Wanjiru is for example is described as the chief executive and the director of JIAM. Wanjiru incorporates business and marketing skills in the running of her ministry given that she has a sales and marketing background. Wanjiru is also an astute and shrewd businessperson, a trait that comes in handy in running her religious organization (Parsitau 2010

All the three churches use different methods of advertising, the most popular of which is the poster and handbills. JIAM uses posters and handbills as important medium for communication and advertising. They all display tremendous creativity and features when it comes to the use of posters and handbills. The churches use posters and handbills not just as evangelistic tools but as tools for disseminating information to the public. The use of posters is particularly suited for evangelism because they alert people about upcoming church programmes or events such as crusades, conferences, prayer meetings, youth fellowships, women meetings and many others. As such, urban centers are awash with posters and handbills used by these churches to aggressively advertise their products and ministries.

Religious leaders also use posters and handbills for political purposes. Bishop Wanjiru used posters to aggressively campaign for election to parliament. For instance in 2010 when she temporarily lost her seat as legislator, the Bishop employed all manner of campaign tools and appropriated different types of mass media communication technologies to convince her

constituents to re-elect her. However, it was the use of the poster and handbills, which were the most outstanding aspects of her campaign.

Her expansive Starehe constituency was for example awash with campaign posters and billboards pasted on poles, walls, bus stops, JIAM's church compound, some public transport vehicles, garages and markets urging them to re-elect her.^{xxii} The use of posters and billboards fit into the conceptual framework because they give the churches public visibilities as well as help these churches invade civic and public sphere.

v) Mobile Telephony

All the three churches have also embraced new media particularly mobile telephony and internet generated products such as emails, websites and social media such as face book, my space and twitter. All the three churches also increasingly appropriate mobile telephony and Short Text Messages (SMS). For example, JIAM has mobile phone lines from the four major mobile service providers such as Safaricom, Air Tel, Orange and Yu. These mobile phone lines are usually displayed on TV screens during televised church services, on church magazines, newspapers and websites. The mobile phone numbers serve many purposes in JIAM (Parsitau 2008). The phone is also used for prayer and counseling. A distressed person can call these lines when in need of prayer especially during live broadcasting where it is indicated that there are counselors on standby to pray for people.

At the same time, these phone lines are used to send inspirational messages via Short Text Messages to members and friends of JIAM who have subscribed to the service. For these reasons JIAM has expanded the range of

their digital electronic evangelism by sending inspiring messages to ‘bless’ subscribers who may not be members of the church. This creates a sense of personal relationship between the leaders and their members. For instance, all the three clergy send text messages to their followers especially when they need funding for numerous church projects, or to pass word around concerning the visit of a famous evangelist or an impromptu meeting. Such a mode of communication is faster, cheaper and more cost effective than conventional written messages.

They are also used to solicit funds from viewers who can give to the ministry through mobile money transfers. Ever since the introduction of mobile money transfer services in Kenya, all the three churches request people to contribute to their ministries using M-pesa services, Yu Cash and Zap cash. It is therefore used as a fund raising medium. Some churches are wholesale dealers with the mobile service providers such as Safaricom.^{xxiii} The mobile phones are also used for political expedience. Bishop Wanjiru used the cell-phone especially Short Text Messages to urge voters to re-elect her as MP for Starehe in 2010. In addition, she sent several text messages to Christians and non-Christians alike beseeching them to support her as demonstrated by one text seen by the researcher:

Please, give me a chance to finish the projects I started. I beseech you to vote for “good governance, good leadership, godly leadership and God will bless you.

MMC also appropriates mobile phones technology not just as a communication tool but also as a fund raising tool. Members and viewers are urged to donate or send money, tithes, and thanksgiving offerings through M-pesa and Zap money transfer services. There are more than four active lines

that are displayed by this ministry on screen during televised programmes. Members who subscribe can receive daily inspiration messages either through their cell phones or through emails. Short Text messages are also appropriated to alert members about urgent meetings, or about situations that require urgent prayers. Members in need of prayer and counselling can also use these mobile phone lines to reach for spiritual and psychological support. The mobile lines can also be used to alert intercessors about tragic happenings in the country that require intercessory prayers.

FEM equally appropriates mobile phones for various reasons: to communicate with its members, friends and partners, pass information about forthcoming events such as prayer, crusades, ladies meetings, for prayer and counselling, and for fund raising. The ministry has about five active mobile lines, three landline and fax lines to serve the needs of their members and non-members.

vi) The Email

Apart from the mobile phone and Short Text Messages, all the three churches appropriate internet generated technologies. JIAM uses electronic mail (e-mail), to get in touch with its members, viewers and friends. This instantaneous form of communication is fast, swift, cheap and can be carried out over distances (space time compression). This form of communication is not only popular with JIAM but with youthful pastors and the televangelists who now prefer to use it instead of snail mails. It is not a wonder that there has been an influx of the youth into these churches because they have embraced IT technology. Many youth have moved to more compliant churches with modern

technology. All the three churches are IT communication compliant and heavily appropriate the internet technology.

MMC for example has an ICT media department that employs significant numbers of youth who ensure that the church is prominent in new media spaces. The internet offers MMC very convenient ways through which the ministry can put its activities into the public sphere. The internet has also been turned into a virtual space for healing and evangelism crusades through which people can be evangelized through mediated computer technologies. Thus the internet serves as an extension of the presence and activities of church in virtual space.

It is capable of conquering barriers of time and distance in unprecedented ways. After all, being on the internet enables for maintenance of contact and participation by follower in the religious service. The significance of the internet for evangelism, healing and mediating sacred space cannot therefore be gain-stated (Asamoh-Gyadu 2005). The internet generally helps these churches to maintain a certain level of prominence in society. These churches appropriation of the internet, particularly the website therefore serves a variety of functions: an outreach and evangelistic tool, a marketing tool, a fundraising tool and a tool to raise the profile of the ministry, its founder and his family.^{xxiv}

vii) World Wide Web

The three churches have websites where they advertise their services and events 'online'. Church web pages have become the current equivalent of posters in public spaces. The use of internet by these churches amounts to a

significant paradigm shift in how religion is appropriated. The internet has revolutionized Neo-Pentecostal churches a great deal. As a virtual place, it has redefined how people experience church in the Twenty-first century. In this age of the internet, many NPCs have significant presence in the World Wide Web (www). Many churches advertise their activities and post sermons, prayer requests, mediate miracles and healing on line. Church web pages have become the current equivalent of posters.

The official websites of JIAM *www.jiam.org* is an eye catching site that not only serves as a critical source of information for her audience but also as an evangelistic tool. JIAMs' website is regularly updated and gives a glimpse of her life, history, vision and mission, programmes, order of services and many other products. A careful surfing of JIAM's website yielded a lot of information.

For example, the website consists of colourful graphics and text mainly pragmatic statements such as the mission and vision statements of the ministry, belief systems and rituals, foundational histories and prerequisite for membership, information on the various programme of events or links to branches and several other related groups or networking bodies. There are also sermons and daily devotions and segments on 'how to receive Jesus', 'how to donate online', harvest partners' forms, prayer requests, and how to watch live services on you tube.^{xxv}

In addition, there are prayer and daily inspirational messages that can be accessed by the viewer. Other important information includes. Bishop Wanjiru's profile and detailed biographical material, the history of JIAM while

the vision and mission of the ministry are clearly spelt out. It also highlights the ministries programmes and church services, news and events, contacts and a home page, a photo gallery, an online store, JIAM international and foreign offices, links to you tube, face book, and my space.

Her websites captures not only the local audience but also largely her international audience. As such, the use of new media serves a number of functions: firstly for communication purposes. It is for example indicated that the Holy Spirit uses these websites as “points of contacts” to influence lives. In the website, it is indicated that JIAM is an international ministry sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with millions of people around the world, teaching them the practical principles of faith in God and his word^{xxvi}.

JIAM not only uses the website to publicize its activities widely, but also as a recruitment strategy and for enlarging its public profile. According to Adogame (2005), ‘new media allows the populace and potential clientele with the technical apparatus to do more than just receive information. They can respond to messages they receive, ask further questions and seek clarification, contribute funds, buy CD and Video tapes or even receive Jesus by clicking ‘do you want to receive Jesus Christ as your personal saviour burtons.’ The online store is the most impressive marketing strategy of JIAM. When you click on the online store, you are welcomed to the store by a greeting and guidelines on how to purchase items. It is indicated that ‘here you will find messages by Hon. Bishop Wanjiru in DVDs, VHS, and CD format.

The website also serves strong social and political purposes. The photo gallery of the website is full of photos of the bishop preaching in her church

and abroad. But one interesting feature is that the website blinks with pictures of the Bishop shaking hands with the high and mighty; for example Bishop Wanjiru chatting with His Excellency President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, shakes hands with President Kibaki, and Prime Minister Raila Odinga. Others show her being sworn in as assistant minister for Housing and at State House Nairobi, chatting with the Speaker of the National Assembly and at church Service with former Mungiki leader Maina Njenga.

All these photos are meant to portray her as a powerful personality whom God has favoured and elevated. Yet, the church website simply replicates in appearance and content the kind of materials available in other publications such as Faith Digest magazine. In this case then, the use of the website is clearly a way to advertise the ministry and deliver information cheaply and to diverse audiences particularly virtual audiences. Although the website acts as a new and relatively effective means of outreach to the larger community, its main objective is actually to draw potential clientele.

MMC website^{xxvii} is not only one of the most informative websites but also one of the best designed. The primary aim of MMC website is to inform the public and viewers about the ministry and its many programmes. For these reasons, the ministry's website is regularly updated and is quite detailed with information about the ministry, its founder, his family, activities and programmes, sermons, online live broadcasts, various media products such as DVD, CDs, Audio and Video Tapes. The mission statement and vision are also clearly stated in the website. This is a clear indication of how this particular ministry wants to present its efforts to the general public.

MMC just like many Neo-Pentecostal ministries in Kenya is very personal and is largely driven by the charisma of the founder and his wife. Pictures of Bishop Muiru and his wife therefore grace and dominate the photo gallery, a trait that is also visible in other media. For example, pictures of the Muiru's grace the cover page of every church magazine, TV messages, audio, video, CDs and DVDs, again leaving no doubt as to who is in charge of the ministry. Most of the bishop's sermons are posted online. Besides there is an online store where one can purchase products such as audio, video, CDs, DVDs tapes. Live sermons and TV messages can be accessed via You Tube. Online viewers can use their credit cards to purchase products catalogued neatly and priced in US Dollars. The website also accepts major credit cards.

The website is also used to raise funds for the ministry. Church buildings or some other such projects that require funding are highlighted online with a plea to viewers to participate in the project by donating money. For example during field research and surfing of the net, MMC website had this blinking message asking people to urgently contribute money to buy a building dubbed 'sanctuary' at the Nairobi Central Business District (NCBD) which read "give birth to a new sanctuary for God's people."

The cost of the building is a staggering 50,000,000 shillings and people are cajoled to "give birth to the building for God's people". While collecting data in this church, my research assistant and I were asked to contribute for this building and that my interview with members could only take place if we gave money for the building. Besides there are myriad other ways of asking for money and donations. For example, through contribution for membership,

pledge and contributors' forms are all available at the website inviting viewers to partner with the bishop in order for him to preach the gospel to the end of the world. Contributors are referred to as "covenant partners."

All covenant partners whether they are members or not are invited to make donations and contributions. This can easily be achieved by simply filling in an online contributor's form. Viewers are cajoled, even persuaded to give to the ministry and with promises of blessings if they do so. There is also a membership form meant for those who wish to partner with the ministry. This form is for those who want to support crusades, the TV and radio programmes. It is indicated in the form the reasons why people should support these activities. It reads like this:

We are mandated to preach the good news of the Kingdom starting from Jerusalem (Kenya) to the outmost parts of the earth. The Bible says that blessed is he that plant besides many waters (mission fields). Jesus said, 'The harvest is ripe but the labourers are few.' Therefore if the Lord will and has prospered you to be a partner in what he is doing, fill in the Form bellow by clicking the pledge form.

At the end of the pledge form, one is asked to type in their prayer request and encouraged with scripture that cajoles the pledge more:

Remember, God is faithful: Exodus 23:25 'ye shall serve the Lord your God and he shall bless your bread and heal your waters and he shall take away sickness from thy midst.'

A church or movements' presence in the internet through an official website is also a sign of seriousness, professionalism and importance. Success entails achieving a certain measure of prominence, influence and a good public image through the media.

FEM's website^{xxviii} is not only one of the most well designed websites but is also very informative and detailed. The primary aim of the website is to

inform the public and viewers about the ministry and its many programmes. In the use of the website, this ministry's statement is indicative of how it wants to be perceived by the viewer. When one clicks on the link about the ministry, the introductory remarks reads like this:

FEM extends her warm embrace to you. You have laid your fingers on keys that led you to a distinct ministry on the move, whose sole aim is to see this generation swept by God's wave of salvation and that every believer reaches His/her destiny. That is the mission put forward for us this season.

The primary aim of the website is therefore to evangelize to the viewer or equip those already converted with spiritual resources to help them reach their destiny. There is also a summary of the beliefs, teachings and core values of the ministry. At the same time, FEM's website has a section, *click to receive Jesus* where there is a prayer to be said by anyone who wants to receive Christ as his/her personal saviour. The website is updated regularly and is quite detailed with information about the ministry.

As such, the website provides the populace and potential clientele with the technical apparatus to do more than just receive information. Yet the website is also used to mediate prayer, miracles, deliverance and prophecies. Elaborate and long prophecies issued every year are posted online for viewers to see and pray about the prophecies issued. Largely, the ministry appropriates the websites for evangelistic purposes, to put its activities to the viewers, for international outreach and as a marketing tool. Therefore, the use of the internet has emerged as a new public space where Neo-Pentecostal churches are presenting their activities to the public. And because the internet represents new public space that is open to a wide borderless community, it remains the most viable recruitment strategy available today.

This is because the church is not only concerned with what is happening locally but also beyond, in both the countries of the North and those of the South. This is a new evangelistic strategy, which is closely tied to new global cultural realities (Adogame, 2005). As Hackett (2006) aptly points out, web sites are a major new interface interacting with membership, with potential converts, competing or partnering with religious groups and organizations of media and the state.

In a similar spirit and as Comaroff (2012) points out ‘cutting edge congregations use slick websites and face book pages to reach out to potential followers in terms that shun lofty piety, offering self-discovery.’ In other words, these new movements are ever more moving assertively into the mundane reaches of everyday: into business, education, politics, popular culture, entertainment-domains hitherto taken to be distinct from religion, properly conceived. In the Neo-Pentecostal worldview, religion cannot be relegated to the private sphere- rather God is in everything from business to politics to entertainment and media.

viii) Social Media

All the three churches appropriate social media such as face book, Twitter and My space. JIAM appropriates social media networks such as Face book, Twitter, and My Space. Bishop Margaret Wanjiru of JIAM is on Face Book and one can connect and share views with her on these sites.^{xxix} Yet this media is still new in Kenya while its religious, social and political impact is yet to be assessed. Bishop Muiru also appropriates social media such as face book, my space and twitter. The bishop has a Face Book page where he invites

people to connect and share with him. Other church departments such as Maximum Melodies and Ladies of Excellence Ministries are also on face book and Twitter they all invite people to share and participate in these events.^{xxx}

6.4 CONCLUSIONS

From the foregoing analysis of the three case studies, we can conclude that all these ministries heavily appropriate mass media communication technologies in varying degrees. These ministries and their founders also occupy significant presence not just in the country's mass media scene but also in the public sphere. These churches are therefore increasingly appropriating mass media communication technologies such as television, radio, the print media, World Wide Web, Email, telephone, fax and mobile phones to propagate their message and pervade public space. There is also the deliberate and skillful use and adoption of various electronic media and digital media-audio, CD and DVD tapes not only to propagate their sermons but also for marketing purposes. Yet, the reasons for the use and appropriation of these technologies vary from one ministry to another.

We can conclude that there are five broad reasons why these Neo-Pentecostal ministries heavily use and appropriate mass media communication technologies: firstly, the primary reason is to preach the gospel-reaching out to the non-believers with the sole purpose of converting them. Evangelism therefore seems to be the primary purpose. Secondly, Neo-Pentecostals use the mass media to communicate their messages to the public. These churches need the mass media not only to widely publicize their activities but also as a recruitment strategy and medium towards the enlargement of their clientele.

Such appropriation of and coverage by the media may in some respect help to mobilize support, achieve validation and acquire some kind of legitimization and credibility within and around the social-cultural environment they find themselves in.

Thirdly and even more importantly, it is used to build the public prominence of the leading personalities. It has increased the social prominence and dominance of these churches, a venture that has further propelled them into the public sphere. Fourthly, the dominance of Neo-Pentecostal programmes on the media scene has had an overall impact on the popularity of this type of Christianity (Gifford, 2004:33), which has really flourished in a liberalized and commercialized media environment.

Fifthly, they have used mass media as an avenue to influence society and to enhance and develop a public profile. They can use a public platform to fulfil their mission for broader cultural change. But they also use it as a platform for broad social and public engagement as demonstrated by the examples of Bishops' Wanjiru and Muiru. These two clergy used their televised religious programme to drum up support for themselves when they contested for elective positions as well as urging viewers to reject the passage of the new Constitution in 2010.

It is therefore suggested here that Neo-Pentecostalism has made vital place and carved out a niche for itself in the social, economic and political domains. They have equally sought to sacralize profane spaces like media, politics and entertainment by increasingly foraying into these spaces. From the foregoing analysis, we can conclude that all the three churches are at home

with mass media communication technologies. The appropriation of mass media communication technologies by all the three churches serves a variety of functions and purposes: as an evangelistic strategy, marketing, fund raising, connecting with members and to make its presence felt in the world.

But it is also used to enhance the image and public profile of the religious personalities and their ministries. As such it serves as a social and political tool. In the next chapter, we examine female religious leadership, spiritual empowerment and gendered transformation within JIAM, FEM and MMC.

ⁱ Liberalization and commercialization of the mass media in this chapter signifies and entails the deregulation of the media and opening it up to the concerns and views of the public or ordinary people.

ⁱⁱ Kenya Data Network (KDN), *Sunday Nation* October 4, 2009, p.17. Also, see www.ktn.co.ke

ⁱⁱⁱ See for example *The Economist*, August 25th 2012, *African Business Magazine* July 2012

^{iv} Prior to Wanjiru's televised programme, "The Glory is Here", there were religious broadcasts by evangelists such as Apostle Harry Das of Chrisco Fellowship International (on KBC), but none held as much appeal as Wanjiru. It can be said that she changed the prevailing perception about mediated religion. ^{iv} Family TV is a religious broadcasting service, sourced from Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) and Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), both from the USA.

^v Family TV is a religious broadcasting service, sourced from Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) and Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), both from the USA.

^{vi} <http://www.maximummiraclecentre.org>

^{vii} Field notes 2008-2010

^{viii} <http://www.jiam.org>

^{ix} <http://www.jiam.org>

^x In a televised sermon titled Experience Real Miracles and based on 1 Samuel 17:1-28 and delivered on 12/7/2010 Wanjiru promised miracles, success, breakthrough to viewers.

^{xi} A Catalogue of Audio tapes listened to by the researcher. This catalogue can also be viewed in Faith Digest Magazines and consists of sermons preached by Bishop Wanjiru during church services. During a Breakthrough conference held on the 29/9/2010, these catchphrases were generously used. The same message had previously been preached on KTN 27/9/2010

^{xii} A series of televised sermons between 2008-2010

^{xiii} Sermons notes from fieldwork 2009

^{xiv} A sermon titled 'a miracle out of season' delivered on 3/4/2011

^{xv} Field notes 2009

^{xvi} *Kuna Nuru Gizani* sermon titled 16 Evil Spirits, preached on 4/7/2010, 7.30 am

^{xvii} A series of sermons titled Restoration and Better Days package preached on four consecutive Sundays between September and October 2007.

^{xviii} 2 million plus prayer rally advert on Kuna Nuru Gizani 4/7/2010.

^{xix} Jesus Is Lord Radio, Hope FM, Radio 316 all broadcast religious programmes such as sermons and gospel music.

^{xx} *Faith Digest Magazines* purchased by researcher during field research

^{xxi} Dr Bishop Jerry Kibarabara: Islamic Kadhi Courts: the Negative Spiritual, God's Champions 2010,

p.3-4; see also *Faith Digest*, 2002, p.11; see also Francis Ayieko, Constitution: it is time to cry for ourselves and our children, the Shepherd, August/September 2010, p.5

^{xxii} Participant observation during field work in September 2010

^{xxiii} Field notes between 2008-2010

^{xxiv} infor@fem-international.org, admin@fem-international.org and partners@fem-international.org.

^{xxv} For details, see JIAM's website, www.jiam.org (accessed 9 April, 2009).

^{xxvi} For details, see JIAM's website, www.jiam.org (accessed 9 April, 2009).

^{xxvii} [http:// www.maximummiracles.org](http://www.maximummiracles.org)

^{xxviii} www.evangelistwairimu.org

^{xxix} <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Hon-Bishop-Margaret-Wanjiru-mama-na-kazi>

^{xxx} [http://www.facebook.com/Bishop PiusMuiru.com:](http://www.facebook.com/BishopPiusMuiru.com)

www.myspace.com/melodies.org:[www.ladies of excellence.com](http://www.ladiesofexcellence.com)

CHAPTER SEVEN
NEO-PENTECOSTALS, FEMALE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP AND
EMPOWERMENT

7.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we consider female spiritual leadership, women empowerment as well as the public and civic roles and engagements of JIAM, FEM and MMC. The chapter also considers the important roles that female clergy and their churches are playing in shaping women's perceptions and decisions, evaluating also their impact on public life. We examine the spiritual empowerment and gendered roles of Bishop Wanjiru of JIAM, Evangelist Wairimu of FEM and Pastor Lucy Muiru of MMC's Ladies of Excellence Ministries (LEM).

JIAM and FEM, two prominent female-led NPCs in Kenya, present a leadership pattern, where women are the heads of their churches, and not just adjuncts to dominant males (Parsitau 2012). At the same time, JIAM and FEM present another rather unique leadership pattern, as both its founders are single women, who have risen above many challenges to become prominent religious visionaries and personalities as well as opinion shapers in the country.

These female-led NPCs have inspired a gendered and spiritually related social transformation that has spilt over to the public sphere as women carve out private, civic, public and even transnational spaces for themselves in an increasingly competitive religious marketplace. The Ladies of Excellence

Ministries (LEM) on the other hand represents the emergence of pastors' wives who are contesting spiritual power as well as public life within their respective religious organizations.

During field research, several foci emerged as having significant potential for women spiritual empowerment in all the three churches namely: spiritual leadership and empowerment, faith healing, deliverance and prophecy, leadership skills, business acumen and organizational skills, ministry to single women and the quest for civic and public life. Besides, all the three women have achieved wide reputation as leading woman visionaries, healers, evangelists, prophetesses, public personalities as well as role models and mentors. They have equally helped build social and spiritual capital among women by rallying their collective energies to network and forge relationships of support and trust. Bellow, we examine some of these issues in greater details beginning with the dynamic of female spiritual leadership in Kenya.

7.1 THE DYNAMICS OF FEMALE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP IN KENYA

African Instituted Churches (AICs) as well as Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity (classical, indigenous and the NPC) have ushered in a new upsurge in female religious leadership like never witnessed before since the advent of Christianity in Kenya in the 19th Century. In these churches and as Mwaura (2002:202) aptly points out, 'women are experiencing a measure of Christian ministerial freedom and equality hitherto denied them in mainline churches.' Not only are these women visible in ecclesial leadership as founders of churches, bishops, pastors, and evangelists but they also function as

prophetesses, prayer leaders, worship leaders, faith healers, counsellors, ushers, and heads of various church departments and administrative units.

Given the critical roles women play in the founding, maintaining and expanding of these churches, little attention has been devoted to how these has translated into greater engagement with issues in civic and public life. It is suggested here that women are extremely active in NPC and carry out significant responsibilities. In JIAM, FEM and MMC for example, women carry out incredible responsibilities for their churches. For example, female religious functionaries who have built huge and successful religious organizations from humble beginnings found JIAM and FEM. The Rev Lucy Muiru, wife to Bishop Pius Muiru MMC where she co-pastors with her husband, heads LEM.

A significant dimension of female spiritual leadership in Kenya is its increasingly feminized face. In fact, one of the most striking features of the Kenyan Neo-Pentecostal scene is the proliferation of ordained female clergy, many of whom are founders, presidents, bishops, evangelists, healers, or prophetesses in new churches. Examples include Bishop Margaret Wanjiru of Jesus (JIAM), Evangelist Teresia Wairimu of (FEM), and The Rev Lucy Muiru, head of Ladies of Excellence Ministries of (MMC), Rev Elizabeth Wahome of Single Ladies Interdenominational Ministries (SLIM) and the Rev Judy Mbugua of Ladies Homecare Spiritual Fellowship (LHSF).

Others include the Rev. Grace Kariuki of Amazing Grace Ministries International, Pastor Zipporah Kimani of Faith Harvest Church Family, the Rev Nancy Gitau of Deborah Arise Africa, Evangelist Alice Mugure of Zion Prayer

Mountain and the Kenya House of Prayer, Evangelist Mama Mwai of Charismata Ministries, the Rev. Esther Maingi of Rivers of Joy Faith Christian Church and Apostle Mary Wangui of The Will of God Ministry to name a few. In all these churches and ministries, women have assumed leadership positions to a degree that has not (yet) been replicated in mainstream Pentecostal churches or in public life in Kenya in general (Parsitau & Mwaura 2010).

These women are not only assuming prominence locally, but also internationally, as many of their churches and ministries have expanded trans-nationally, with branches in various other African countries as well as overseer (Mwaura & Parsitau 2010; Parsitau 2010a; Parsitau 2012a). Moreover, previously marginalized, 'non-typical' women, such as those who are single, divorced or widowed, have also assumed leadership roles in these new churches, ministries and fellowships (Parsitau 2010; Mwaura & Parsitau 2010) as exemplified by the lives and churches of Bishop Wanjiru and Evangelist Wairimu. Here below, I discuss dynamics of female religious leadership as exemplified by Bishop Wanjiru, Evangelist Wairimu and the Rev. Lucy Muiro.

The founding of Neo-Pentecostal churches and ministries by women present new dynamics in respect of female religious leadership in Kenya. Both JIAM and FEM are successful religious organizations founded, led and administered by Bishop Wanjiru and Evangelist Wairimu respectively, while LEM was founded and headed by the Rev Lucy Muiro of MMC. Bishop Wanjiru of JIAM is considered a pacesetter because she is not only a founder of a huge charismatic ministry but also the first Kenyan woman to be ordained a bishop of a Neo-Pentecostal Church in Kenya.¹ Wanjiru's ministry is not only

one of the most successful female led ministries but also more socially and publicly visible and politically engaged Neo-Pentecostal churches in Kenya today.

Since founding JIAM in 1993, Wanjiru has emerged as a strong woman whose ministry and position empowers fellow women to establish their own ministries and rise above their challenges. She has equally become an effective role model in promoting equality between men and women both in church and society. For this reason, she wields tremendous capacity to inspire and support other women in her ministry and beyond due to her ecclesial and public offices. Besides she has established a bible school for training other ministers thereby promoting the theological education of both male and female church ministers.

From a small charismatic prayer ministry and fellowship, FEM has equally grown to become a household name in Christian circles in Kenya and one of Nairobi's best-known Christian ministries while the Evangelist has grown to become a respected spiritual leader. Ever since she founded FEM between 1989-1985 and the other chapters, branches and offices abroad, Evangelist Wairimu has emerged as a dynamic female spiritual leader who leads a huge and devoted congregation to new heights of faith and conviction.

Over the years, FEM has developed considerable credibility among other churches, clergy, politicians, youth and women. She has focused mainly on evangelism and social programmes and increasingly conducts her mission in other African countries, Europe and America. The Evangelist has equally carved out a niche for herself in the country's social, political and spiritual sphere through soft power and influence as demonstrated by the number of

high-ranking politicians who frequently patronize her church.

The Rev Mrs. Lucy Muiro presents a slightly different leadership pattern and dynamic. She is a co-founder and co-pastor with her husband, Bishop Pius Muiro of MMC. She is also the head of the Ladies of Excellence Ministry (LEM), which represents the women caucus of MMC. According to Lucy Muiro:

The vision of this ministry is 'to transform women of Kenya into women of Excellence who will be equipped to transform the church, the nation and the larger world.'ⁱⁱ

As Mwaura (2005: 422) points out, 'the founding of Churches by women in Africa is the ultimate act of religious independency and self-determination.' This is because Neo-Pentecostalism in Africa has accorded women greater leadership roles. Not only are women visible in ecclesial leadership as founders, bishops, pastors, and evangelists, but they also function as prophetesses, prayer leaders, choir leaders, healers and heads of church organizations or ministries or departments. Besides laywomen in these churches are frequently involved in evangelism, prayer and intercession, singing and collecting offerings. They are also engaged in social welfare and humanitarian undertaking hospitality as well as church maintenance and organization.

The founding of churches and ministries by women has had a spill over effect to public life. As Asamoah-Gyadu (2003) has pointed out, 'the emerging roles of women in these charismatic ministries is indicative of their theological position, where God's call on them is not passive but a compelling call to participate fully in Christian missions at all levels.' For many women,

engagement in these activities offers opportunities to learn new skills and to develop their potential. Many become enthusiastic public speakers and build their confidence as they carry out these responsibilities.

i) Women as Faith-healers

Another significant trait and leadership dynamic of the three churches is that these female visionaries are not only church founders but are also faith healers. Both Bishops Wanjiru and Evangelist Wairimu have both imaged themselves as faith healers in their respective churches. JIAM is both a healing and deliverance ministry that is preoccupied in bringing healing and deliverance to its people.ⁱⁱ Since establishing JIAM, Wanjiru has sought to transform and touch people's lives through the message of salvation, healing and deliverance. In most if not all of her church services (whether Sunday services or midweek services, crusades and revival gatherings as well as on televised religious services), Wanjiru has sought to propagate the message of healing, deliverance and general wellbeing.

At the same time and in August of every year for example, Wanjiru holds healing and deliverance conferences at her church, Nairobi Miracle Centre. Many of her sermons and narratives as discussed in chapter four address these and other themes. Deliverance is significant in the sense that it is an instrument of power of the church leaders to not only bring spiritual freedom to her followers but also a way of keeping control of believers many of whom are attracted to the church because to offers them opportunities for healing and spiritual freedom.

In many of her sermons and meetings, Wanjiru would invite people for deliverance. This is achieved through intense prayer accompanied by the laying on of hands. Severally, she has taught members about the principles for deliverance and success. Some of her sermons on this subject include: ‘three levels of witchcraft (part 1-16),’ ‘breaking the Spirit of Behemoth and Leviathans Series,’ ‘Destroying the King of the North Series,’ ‘Breaking the Spirit of Freemasonry,’ ‘Operating under open heavens,’ Deliverance of Soul, body and Spirit series,’ ‘Three kinds of curses,’ ‘Curses of the Words,’ ‘Out of Curses into Blessings,’ ‘Blessed, blessed, blessed,’ and ‘Eating the Good of the Land.’ⁱⁱⁱ

All these sermons focus on how to be delivered from myriads of spirits, demons, curses, witchcraft and many others. In her sermon’s Wanjiru teaches that all these can be overcome through prayer, fasting, anointing with oil and laying of hands to those possessed. After prayers of deliverance, people talk of experiencing ‘transformation,’ a buzzword in this church. Notions of a ‘new birth and ‘transformation’ are evoked and equated to those who have been delivered or converted to salvation.

‘Behold, I am a new creature’! ‘The old has passed, the new has come’ are common expressions in JIAM. Yet deliverance is just one aspect of a rich field of religious experience in Africa. It demonstrates how Neo-Pentecostal churches use spiritual resources available to them to transform the lives of their follower. For example, clergy like Bishop Wanjiru and Wairimu both use spiritual powers and resources to minister healing to their congregations.

For the ‘born again’ ‘spirit-filled’ women in JIAM, transformation encompasses a variety of meanings including: victory over sin and sickness, (whether physical, emotional, or spiritual), restoration, finding new love in Christ whether as (father, lover, or friend), or being filled in the Holy Spirit, accompanied by feelings of freedom, and liberation. The idea of freedom from demonic forces is one of the factors that contribute to Bishop Wanjirus’ appeal, since many of her adherents similarly see witchcraft as a cause of illness, suffering, and misfortune. This belief is common within the African world-view. Initially, her teachings focused on witchcraft and deliverance but later they progressed to messages of success and prosperity. Yet, the expectations for deliverance contributed significantly to the growth of her church in the late 1990s.

Other than physical healings, people in JIAM describe being healed from psychological and emotional conditions, sometimes explained as attacks from the devil. Demons are largely thought to cause illness and disease such as cancers, epilepsy, and other serious and less serious conditions. Such persons normally require deliverance to drive out these demons. Healing is holistic, and is thought to have effect on the entire person, body soul and mind. By successfully establishing a healing and deliverance ministry, Wanjiru has been able to ascend the social ladder to gain status and recognition. She also felt empowered to fight what she claims were the forces of oppression that have tormented women for a very long time.

Evangelist Wairimu is one of the best-known faith healers in Kenya. FEM is described as a faith healing and deliverance ministry. Although her

ministry started as a women-focused fellowship, the Evangelist speaks to diverse audiences and reaches out to various sectors of society with the gospel message, a venture that has drawn hundreds of people to her ministry for healing and deliverance as validated by thousands of testimonies of people who claim to have received such miracles.

During field research and interviews with members and nonmembers alike, and as already discussed in chapter four, we came across dozens of people who claimed to have received various miracles ranging from being healed of minor ailments to incurable and terminal illness such as cancers, diabetes, hypertension as well as barren women whose wombs were opened through prayer to bring forth children. We also came across people who had been transformed from various conditions such as substance abuse and other addictions, prostitution, crimes and many other challenges.

LEM is also a healing ministry and women frequent its monthly women fellowships and conferences for healing. During these fellowships, women receive healing and deliverance. In this sense, all the three women and their churches provide alternative health care, spiritual healing and services equivalent to psychotherapy, to those unable to afford the high cost of professional services (Mwaura 2005:434).

Moreover, healing is mediated in a loving community of believers in a highly emotive context punctuated with singing, dancing, clapping and shouting. Accounts of miraculous healings have been predominantly within not just the three NPCs but also in many other such movements in Africa. It has been suggested that the growth of NPC movements is largely owed to their

theological and practical emphasis on healing and their insistence that divine experiences occur when these clergy pray for people. According to Mwaura (2005: 434):

The healing metaphor in these churches not only enables women to ascend the social ladder and gain recognition, but it also empowers them to fight the forces of oppression such as unemployment, breakdown of family relationships, poverty, lack of resources and witchcraft. Through their claim that God's Spirit empowers them to heal and deliver, these women join God in a constant struggle against personal and communal oppression.

Healing is therefore a metaphor for a spirituality of survival and a search for wellbeing. According to Kalu (2008: 149), these female leaders are renowned just like those of earlier generations for faith healing, pastoral care that is gender specific, motherly concern for their adherents and capacity to inspire and support other women in the ministry.

ii) Women as Evangelists and Prophetesses

All the three churches can be described as evangelistic and mission oriented churches. Their founders can equally be described as accomplished evangelists and televangelists. Wanjiru's JIAM church is for example an evangelistic ministry with outreach and mission programmes meant to serve this purpose. Besides, Wanjiru is an astute evangelist and televangelist who spread her mission both locally and internationally through her church and media ministries. According to JIAM website, this mission is fulfilled through:

Evangelizing the unsaved, setting the captives free, and teaching Christians worldwide how to live a victorious life through the word of God. The church is further called to "bring salvation, healing, deliverance, prosperity, redemption and righteousness to all the nations of the world (Parsitau 2011b).

Women in this church are also heavily involved in evangelistic undertakings and carry out personal witnessing, house-to-house or door-to-door evangelism, and distribution of tract materials in marketplaces, homes, churches and within their respective communities. Women are also key recruiters, bringing others into their churches. Through such activities, women may learn valuable practical skills, including public speaking. Many also gain an important measure of self-esteem and confidence. These churches also give women greater skills and enhance their sense of efficacy in bringing about change both personal and communal change.

FEM is equally an evangelistic church with elaborate undertakings and programmes. Evangelism and divine healing remain FEM top priorities and focus. According to Mwaura (2005:435), evangelism is engaged in and experienced through organized seminars, conferences and retreats, single women fellowships and other such activities. Evangelism can also be done through personal witnessing, house-to-house outreach, counseling people who need help and distribution of religious literature.

In addition, Wairimu is respected as a prophetic voice used by God to speak to the nation of Kenya and the Church of Jesus Christ. By imaging herself as a faith healer, deliverer and a prophetess, women like Evangelist Wairimu have carved out a new space where they not only contest spiritual issues but social and national issues as well. In addition, as already highlighted in chapter five, Wairimu has on many occasions issued prophecies about the state of the nation.

From the foregoing, evangelism and prophesy has therefore enlarged

not just the roles of the Bishop Wanjiru, Evangelist Wairimu and the Rev Lucy Muiru, but they have also enlarged the roles of female members who besides being engaged in evangelism also carry out a number of functions such as singing, preaching, ushering and housekeeping. For these reasons, evangelism has accorded these female clergy both space and prominence, a venture that has resulted in the transformation of women's spiritual, social, economic and political lives.

These clergy have also sought to instill a change of attitude in their members and other viewers that there is no divine order restricting women from founding churches, teaching, preaching or even holding public office. These female clergy are of the view that objections to women carrying out such roles spring from social and culturally determined constructs. In all the three churches, women are therefore taught that they are equal to men in God's eyes and are able ministers of the Gospel. Women are also encouraged to develop and use their God given gifts and talents.

iii) Women Clergy as Role Models and Mentors

Besides being church founders, healers, evangelists, prophetesses, these female clergy are also acclaimed role models and mentors to women both single and married. They have equally mentored many female clergy, through leadership training and empowerment. Evangelist Wairimu has for example empowered and trained a significant number of women for ministry.

Female leaders such as Kathy Kiuna of Jubilee Christian Centre, Rev Elizabeth Wahome of SLIF, the Rev Nancy Gitau of Deborah Arise Africa and Evangelist Alice Mugure of Zion Prayer Mountain and Kenya House of prayer

have been mentored by the Evangelist as most of them served as ushers and organizers in her ministry before founding their own churches/ministries. Many female clergy view her as a role model and mentor whom they not only look up to but also admire and respect (Parsitau 2012c). Wairimu believes in role modelling and advises women to follow her example. Yet, she has also submitted to the mentoring of male pastors. For example, she has mentored Pastor Allan Kiuna of JCC and many others.

These female clergy have encouraged single women, and indeed all women, to rise above cultural inhibitions and to overcome gender-based discrimination in the church and society. Neo-Pentecostalism therefore seems to provide space in the church and in ministries, where women can exercise their spiritual gifts. Each of these women has also developed strategies for changing the condition of women within their respective churches. These include an array of female centred activities such as women fellowships, conferences, conventions and workshops.

iv) Women Clergy as Leaders, Managers and Administrators

Women clergy have also cultivated and imaged themselves as leaders, managers and administrators capable of creating, maintaining and overseeing large and successful religious organizations. Through her ministry, Wanjiru gained leadership skills such as the art of public speaking, organizational and interpersonal communication skills, self-esteem and confidence, business acumen, shrewdness and talents to propel herself and her ministry to public prominence. She has also used the experiences she has acquired over the years through her church's platform to enhance and endear herself to the public.

Coupled with her physical attributes Wanjiru has built a sort of brand around herself and her ministry. This is because Wanjiru can be described as a fearless, aggressive, ambitious, astute, shrewd, and a firm woman who does not shy away from what she believes is right:

I am a go-getter. When I want to get something and believe in it, I go for it full throttles (Parsitau 2012).

These traits, attributes and characteristics coupled with her media prominence and televised religious messages have enhanced her public profile and bolstered her image. Viewers interviewed suggested that they feel connected to the Bishop and the ministry because she cares about her viewers. Wanjiru is described by her followers as able leaders with great people skills. She has the ability to bring people together for the accomplishment of the common goals of mission. She is also a team player who inspires her members not just to become their best but also to pull their energies and synergies together for the common good. This came out very clearly during her political campaigns in 2007 and 2010 respectively.

Coupled with this is the fact that Neo-Pentecostal clergy are adept at getting people involved with their churches and helping make them feel part of the church community. Neo-Pentecostals are good at fostering participation from their congregations and creating social capital. Already, church members find themselves actively involved in church activities from the start, whether it is participating in bible study, singing in the choir or running numerous other church activities. Decision-making is very often democratic and all sector of society are included even women and youth.

As such, Neo-Pentecostal churches are indeed locally owned

organizations where people are totally engaged in the day-to-day running of the churches. For these reasons, these churches quickly become embedded in local communities and are seen as moral and meaningful institutions. It seems to us that Bishop Wanjiru tapped into this synergy, goodwill and support of her loyal congregation to propel herself and her church to prominence.

As such, Wanjiru has become vocal and an opinion shaper not only in Kenyan politics but also as a leader of a Neo-Pentecostal church Ministry. It is also clear that her church strongly encourages its members to become engaged in the transformation of society and provides them with skills and opportunities to do so. JIAM as both a church and community of Christians demonstrates the importance of the social context of churches as a determining factor in shaping the political beliefs and behavior of its members. It further demonstrates that church settings provide explicit opportunities for religious leaders to convey messages with political overtones, through channels as varied as civic education, sermons, Sunday school teaching, church publications, prayer meetings, Bible study groups and on televised sermons.

v) Women Clergy and Public and Civic Life

Neo-Pentecostal women have also sought to contest civic and public life as the case of Bishop Wanjiru demonstrates. After establishing JIAM and making history for being the first woman to be ordained as bishop of a Neo-Pentecostal Church in Kenya, Wanjiru went ahead to build an illustrious political career as the MP for Starehe Constituency and as an Assistant Minister for Housing and Shelter between 2008 and early 2013. While serving as a legislator and a cabinet minister, Bishop Wanjiru sought to fight for

women rights not just in church and society but also on issues in public life such as electoral politics and constitutionalism. She has argued that women must be given equal opportunities like men and that no position should be reserved for men alone. She believes that women are entitled to aspire for any positions in the society.

She has also taken upon herself to encourage women to contest public life. While serving as a legislator and Assistant Minister, along with other female Christian leaders, Wanjiru presided over the unveiling of The Christian Women of Kenya (CWK), an organization meant to raise awareness about the marginalization of women in politics with a view to challenge them women to engage in politics in order to transform lives they want to change their lives. Besides Bishop Wanjiru was a member of the Kenyan Women Parliamentarians group composed of female legislators who front women issues at the level of policy.^{iv}

This group, coupled with her teachings on empowerment have the ability to transform women's' perceptions of their roles in civic and public life and challenge them to contest public life. There is no doubt that female religious leaders have faced many challenges in their quest for gender equality and empowerment. However, they have also had a measure of success in winning their cause for the equality of women.

Bishop Wanjiru has shown that women are capable of combining successful careers in ministry and politics. In addition, she has won praise and admiration from both males and females in her church. For example, male members of JIAM approved of their bishop's activities as a female religious

leader and a politician. An increasingly large number of men viewed her as creative, strong, charismatic, beautiful, attractive, and anointed to do God's work.

From the above analysis, it would appear that Pentecostal women clergy like Bishop Wanjiru of JIAM are beginning to view electoral politics as a new space for empowerment. This space has not only raised her personal profile and that of her ministry but has also placed her in a position of influence where she can empower other women. Her previous role not only as Assistant Minister for Housing but also as a Member of Parliament have brought her face to face with myriads of challenges facing women in Kenya and the African continent at large.

JIAM has therefore given women voice and space to articulate their issues, challenges and desires. We can therefore conclude that JIAM has shown how religious communities and personal religious commitment offer women opportunities for self-determination as well as leadership experience—both of which help them contest public life and become agents of change. The roles played by this female spiritual leader and many others provide an opportunity to explore issues of female leadership in Kenya's public sphere and their role in the democratization process and development in the country. Bishop Wanjiru has risen to prominence as leader in the Neo-Pentecostal movement, despite the stigma typically attached to single or divorced women.^v

Yet while JIAM is not a women's ministry but a fully-fledged church that attracts people from all walks of life, class and gender, its impact on gendered transformation is nevertheless significant and for a number of

reasons. Firstly is the fact that Wanjiru's gender and achievements have placed her in a unique position to influence other women both spiritually, socially, economically and politically.

Secondly, her ministry runs women's meetings, conferences and symposia where women are empowered and motivated to raise above all odds and challenges like she did to become a successful spiritual and public figure. Experiences and challenges provide rich lessons from which women can draw lessons, motivation, empowerment and hope. Despite having been established and led by a woman, JIAM is not a women's ministry but a fully-fledged church that has followers across gender, class, ethnic and age divides.

The impact of female spiritual leaders has been such as to instill attitudes into their members into their members and congregations and challenging mission churches about the roles, place and treatment of women, especially single women. They are persuaded that there is no divine order restricting women from taking preaching and teaching role in the church.

They are of the view that objecting to women carrying out such roles spring and culturally determined constructs. The main reason for the change in attitude among Pentecostals towards women assumes authoritative roles in the church are the influence of and use of biblical texts by religious leaders themselves. They use scriptures to authenticate their preaching, teachings roles in church. They attempt to persuade their listeners to accept the bible in a new light favourable to women.

Converts suggested that through the teachings of JIAM, they have learnt to see themselves and their lives in new light. They rejected a fatalistic,

victimhood mentality to reclaim their urgency. In many cases this new sense of urgency and empowerment leads to new behaviour and new types of social relations both of which enhance economic development and fosters gendered transformation.

These female clergy seek to bring about massive social transformation in ontology, security and behaviour, creating new individuals, who are equipped to deal with the social, spiritual, cultural and economic situations in which they find themselves. For these reasons, churches such as JIAM are not only powerful agents of development but are also spaces of spiritual, gendered, economic and political liberation and empowerment (Freeman 2012; Parsitau 2012d). Below, we explore each of these pathways in order to tease out their impact for women empowerment both spiritually and socially.

7.1.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN NEO-PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

i) Church Spheres as Spaces for Empowerment and Liberation

NPC offer women many opportunities to serve in their respective churches. It also accords them with a caring support network as well as opportunities for self-development. For example, women, who because of their poverty and personal circumstances find themselves excluded from other self-help groups, find a place in these churches.

This observation is validated by many studies that have shown that one of the strengths of Pentecostal Christianity is that it is a more inclusive religion that facilitates the participation of marginalized groups (Soothill 2006; Gill 1990, Martin 1991). Not only do women who patronize these churches receive

social, spiritual and psychological support, they also feel affirmed and their dignity upheld. Commenting on this, Hackett (1991:191-208) avers:

Within the intimacy of the compound church, women may become known and accepted as persons and become full citizens of the Kingdom of God, in which they can take Initiatives and responsibilities.

This source of personal validation is especially important for women who are sick, childless, divorced, or accused of witchcraft. Whereas single mothers, divorced and separated women are rarely given positions of responsibility in mainline churches, the Neo-Pentecostal churches ordain such women and give them other responsibilities.

The cases of Bishop Wanjiru and Evangelist Wairimu both single mothers and heads of successful Churches serve as an encouragement to such women that even if society frowns on them, they can rise above that to become respected religious functionaries. In these churches, it is acknowledged that spiritual power is available to both men and women and that both are empowered to teach, preach and found churches as long as they have been called by God and endowed with charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit.

At the same time, worship, prayer and fellowship also provide these women with opportunities for spiritual rejuvenation and escape from the drudgery of life. As already highlighted in chapter three, worship in these churches is participatory, refreshing and exuberant. Worship services also become locus where every person's needs are mediated in the context of prayer, singing and dancing. This creates a sense of belonging and community.

Through prayer, women are able to have a sense of release and relief

even as women freely express themselves in worship, by giving testimonies, leading praise, worship, and sometimes-experiencing pneumatic and ecstatic experiences such as speaking in tongues, trances, visions, prophesying and dancing. Here, their spirituality accords them space and the freedom to express themselves, disclose their inner feelings and tensions in a context devoid of restrictions.

Scholars such as Marrie Griffiths (1997) have noted the therapeutic roles of prayer in the lives of women in these churches. During prayer and worship services, annual conferences, fellowships, cell group meetings, or bible study groups, these women share their stories of sufferings and restoration through confessional testimonies. The meetings allow them to disclose their inner life among generally supportive women.

This has therapeutic effects on women who find time and space to ventilate in a context of sisterly support. They also provide moments for entertainment and relaxation. It has been argued that since women do not have the same social outlets like men, the church and women groups become centres for socialization, welfare association and building networks of trust. The churches not only provide fellowship and spiritual support, they also offer solidarity in times of need.

From the foregoing, it is clear that NPC provide a caring network of support to women and opportunities for personal development. Within these churches, they forge networks of social, financial and spiritual support that may not be available in other places. Gaining moral authority and boosting self-esteem improves women's chances of developing activities beyond the

home and widen their networks of sociability, thereby encouraging female individuation.

Here, women not only exchange ideas on how to run their families, but they also share an access empowering information like legal counsel, how to conduct business and even to lead a prayerful life. For these reasons, church spaces are not just spaces for worship but also act as civic spaces where socio-political and economic issues are discussed as well as spaces to access legal aid and advice. In one of FEM's Single Ladies meeting at Charter Hall, Nairobi on the 21st 3/09 and attended by the researcher, the speaker of the day was Lady Justice Martha Koome, a gender and children rights activists and a judge of the High Court. During this meeting Lady Justice Koome took the largely women audience through some sort of civic education in which she spoke about the rights of children. She said:

All children have the rights to love, food, shelter, protection, Education, access to healthcare even inheritance. Even children of single parents, have rights to inheritance (21/3/09).

Justice Koome also talked to women about government agencies tasked with women and children welfare such as the Ministry of Gender and Children Affairs as well as NGOs such as FIDA-Kenya, which provide legal advice to poor women. She said:

A child has a right to know the father. Children must also, be protected from rape, incest, child prostitution in addition, child labor (21/3/09).

Lady Justice Koome also talked to women about their rights as married or divorced women and urged them to be empowered economically. She equally spoke on issues affecting women both married and single in the church

Wife beating, sexual and gender based violence, spousal abuse in addition, others are rampant in our society but they should not be tolerated. If you are a victim, do not suffer in silence, please get help. We have representatives from FIDA Kenya in this service. Please

and in the home front:

During this meeting, women were also given time to ask questions regarding their legal rights particularly in respect to inheritance, acquisition of property as well as children rights. Women lawyers who had been invited as guest speakers also gave these women free legal advice. Lady Justice Koome during this meeting severally called on the government to provide information and legal aid to such women to empower them legally and socially.

In this meeting, Evangelist Wairimu equally challenged NGOs to come to the aid of women, provide them with financial resources, easy access to credit facilities, and create a conducive environment for doing business in an environment devoid of harassment particularly by city council workers. She argued that the Government and Christian Churches should give preferential treatment to women small-scale traders and allocate them secure and safe spaces where they can do business so that they can be able to support their families. In the same meeting, Evangelist Wairimu offered vigorous social commentary on issues affecting women as a marginalized constituency in a heavily patriarchal society. She said:

Women in Kenya are confronted by myriads of challenges. These includes issues such as HIV/AIDS, poverty, healthcare, and gender based violence, crime, insecurity, inequality, unemployment, family issues, economic empowerment and education. Others include finances, sickness, marital issues, single-hood, loneliness, childlessness, wife inheritance, widowhood in addition, many other social and moral issues. Other front burner issues that affect all women such as marginalization, lack of legal aid, lack of representation at the level of policy and decision-making, lack of access to basic healthcare, poverty, unemployment and many others. All these issues require urgent attention from all stakeholders.

After highlighted these issues, she pointed out that women were oppressed with no one to fight for them and no one to listen to their cry, both in

some churches and in government. From the foregoing illustration, it is evident that these churches are also spaces for accessing legal help and information.

However, they are also civic spaces where gender issues are contested and discussed. As suggested above, female clergy like Evangelist Wairimu are involved in promoting women and children rights through activism and Civic Education. Civic education is aimed at creating awareness of issues of justice and rights as pertaining women and children. More importantly, becoming part of this form of religiosity also provokes debates about women empowerment. In so doing and by redefining female subjectivity, Neo-Pentecostalism helps foment the process of women acquiring autonomy from their husbands and children.

As such, women patronize these churches for a number of reasons. Women fellowships, prayer groups offer women opportunities to forge new relationships of trust and create networks of solidarity. They also encourage women to participate in democratic groups where they elect leaders and learn leadership skills such as public speaking, decision making and how to govern their own women networks or *chamas*. As such, women church groups have the potential for capacity building roles and the opportunities they create for women's self-expression. The importance of grassroots church groups in giving the opportunity and confidence to speak and participate in these groups. For these reasons, these churches' spheres may hold potential for female religious leadership by providing these women with opportunities to participate actively in public and civic life.

In this case then, the legitimizing context of Neo-Pentecostalism may

provide a bridge to expanding roles by offering leadership opportunities and skills as well as a potential justification for greater equality for women in their respective churches. Yet, little attention has been focused on whether Neo-Pentecostal women attempt to expand their roles in the none religious sphere. This chapter fills in this glaring gap.

At the same time, involvement in these groups also affords women a more prominent role in the public sphere with women such as Bishop Wanjiru of JIAM preaching in public spaces and going ahead to become a politician and civil servant. Others such as Evangelist Wairimu preaching on television, radio and other such spaces. Repeatedly women in JIAM, FEM and Ladies of Excellence told this researcher of the ways in which their participation in these organizations gave them the opportunity to foster leadership capabilities, roles that their churches did not allow them to pursue.

Other women emphasized the healing that took place not just in their physical bodies but also in their spiritual and emotional wellbeing as well. At the same time, women have used their own church spaces and women conference as spaces for liberation and empowerment. Belonging to a church that boosts self-esteem, emphasizes the present and encourages the search for prosperity undoubtedly, helps surmount the constraints posed by traditional patriarchal culture, stimulating the involvement of women in the economic sphere.

These churches spaces and vicinities therefore serve a variety of functions. To start with, they are meeting spaces for socialization for its members, gossip away from home, spaces to serve and nurture skills, to

learning business ideals and acumens as well as spaces to access, exchange and negotiate information. However, this is not the only benefits for women who patronize Neo-Pentecostal churches. Below are a description and some analysis of the central themes within the three churches' discourses that indicate why women patronize these churches activities. The women activities include women fellowships, conferences and conventions that refer specifically to women and their spiritual, social, psychological, emotional well-being, roles and functions. However, they are also spaces for healing and deliverance, networking and building of social capital, motivation, self-esteem building, contesting patriarchy and equality.

Much of what follows stems from participant observations from the researchers attendance at women's fellowships, conferences, workshops and other female directed initiatives in JIAM, FEM and MMC. Where it is relevant, I have referred also to local written sources and the women activities of other Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Kenya.

ii) Women Fellowships and Conferences as Spaces to Contest Public Life

Women's fellowships and conference is a common feature of church life in most Neo-Pentecostal churches. All the three churches have weekly, monthly and annual women's activities. This can be in the form of fellowships, prayer groups, bible study groups, married women retreats, or single ladies fellowships or just general women conferences or conventions. These meetings are held within these churches' premises or designated venues.

For example, JIAM holds weekly women's fellowship on Saturday or Sunday afternoons, where small groups of women numbering between 20-30

gather for prayer and fellowships. FEM and the Ladies of Excellence Ministries prefer monthly women's fellowships instead of weekly meetings. Since its inception in 1985, FEM regularly holds small women prayer groups to date. In fact, these small prayer fellowships have come to redefine FEM as a women's ministry.

For example, FEM holds single women meetings/fellowships in Nakuru every first Saturday of the month for the last one and a half decades. Of all of Evangelist Wairimu's many achievements and accomplishments, it is her ministry to single women that seems to stand out. This is not surprising for two reasons, namely that FEM itself was started in 1989 by Evangelist Wairimu together with a group of twelve women, mostly single women who used to meet for prayer and fellowship at a house in Huruma Estate in Nairobi between 1978 and 1985.

As such, FEM is a women's ministry and they are the bedrock of the church. For over three decades now, Evangelist Wairimu has endeavored to remain actively engaged in and interacts with single women despite her busy schedule. Secondly, is the fact that Wairimu herself is a single woman and can resonate with others like her. These two reasons make her ministry attractive to women, particularly single women who identify with her.

This might also explain why she has special affinities to single women whom she frequently meets during monthly prayer and revival fellowships in Nairobi, Nakuru, Mombasa and many other places to connect, share and uplift this category of women. In these meetings and in many of her sermons and teachings, women issues take centre stage as she focuses on women's spiritual,

economic, and social empowerment.

Similarly, the LEM for example uses monthly women conferences, conventions or symposia as opposed to weekly women's fellowship as fora to speak and transform women's lives. On average JIAM attracts about 40-60 women for its women fellowships while MMC attracts about 20-30 women. FEM can attract between 100-200 women for their monthly fellowships. While JIAM and FEM attract mostly, LEM tend to attract a mixture of women both married and single. Younger women tend to attend youth fellowships where membership is mixed and the meetings tend to be livelier with lots of praise and dance.

Women's fellowships in all the three churches share common features: all begin with praise and worship sometimes led by a small choir. All songs are sung in English, Kiswahili or a mixture of both with local dialects. Praise and worship is accompanied by clapping, dancing, shouting, sobbing and joys singing. Prayers of intercessions led by one or two women then follow praise and worship.

Prayers are said for women participants. This can be in the form of supplication and thanksgiving, prayers for forgiveness, healing, restoration, deliverance and miracles. Prayers are also said for church founders and their ministries, families, children and the country at large. Sometimes, there are session's times for testimonies, followed by more prayers then the sermon, mostly delivered by the church founder, or their assistant pastor or a guest. Sermons are generally motivational, meant to encourage, affirm, and built women.

The sermons are then followed by prayers of deliverance that centre on women issues and concerns such as bareness, violence, curses, family relationship and related issues, poverty, diseases and many others. Thus, women's fellowships tend to be small and frequent. This lends them space to talk, share, and connect and fellowship with one another. As such, women use these church spaces to network and form groups of solidarity in a spiritually infused environment.

Apart from the regular weekly or monthly women fellowships, there are also annual women conferences and conventions. All the three NPC hold at least one annual women convention that can attract large numbers of women. Every August for example, Bishop Wanjiru runs the Annual *Daughters of Glory* Conference, a women's specific forum to deliberate on their issues. FEM also holds an annual women conference once a year, normally in the month of August where women issues take centre stage. The Ladies of Excellence Ministry also holds monthly *Women of Excellence* conference that takes place on the first Saturday of every month at Odeon and Ruaraka sanctuaries. Besides the *Women of Excellence Conference*, there is also the annual *Divine International Ladies of Excellence Conference*, which takes place on the first week of August of every year.

Large conference and conventions are normally advertised on TV, radio, newspapers, church magazines, pamphlets, and billboards and online. Nairobi like many other towns in Kenya is awash with posters and banners advertising forthcoming women national women's conventions and other women's programmes. Women conference or conventions unlike monthly

women fellowships are also larger, well organized and attract many women both members and non-members alike, sometimes with women from up country attending. Membership too is open to all females irrespective of age, marital status, social class and religious affiliation these meetings attract all types of women such as married, single, divorced, separated, widowed, unmarried women, and young females.

The main patrons of these meetings are exclusively women although male ministers are sometimes invited to speak to the women. However, women concerns and issues dominate the meetings and males may not find it particularly interesting. Successful local female preachers are also frequently invited as guest speakers and mentors to various categories of women.

These women conferences or conventions are slightly different from the weekly or even monthly women fellowships in many respects. They are larger both in terms of the number of women they attract as well as their organization. Some of the larger conference like in JIAM and FEM are announced on television and radio.

Most women conference run for about between 5 to 7 days and tends to be divided into morning, afternoon and evening sessions. Morning sessions open with an hour or so of prayer and praise and worship as do most Sunday services. The meetings normally begin with praise and worship followed by testimonies by women about what God had done for them. These meetings also tend to be exclusively female although a few men also attend.

These meetings also attract the presence of international preachers, mostly partners and contacts of these clergy. An interesting feature of women

conferences is that they are mostly attended by overseas guests and speakers the majority of them mainly from North America (African-Americans specifically), Europe, South Africa and West Africa. Women from different regions outside or within the country can attend. The meetings can be very intense with a morning, afternoon and evening session. Many of these conferences come in many shades and are dubbed: ‘Daughters of Faith,’ ‘Daughters of Zion,’ ‘Women of Substance,’ ‘Women without Limits,’ ‘Single ladies fellowships,’ ‘Women for Jesus,’ ‘Women of Spirit,’ ‘Women of Integrity,’ and so forth.

It is important to point out that the women conferences are prime locales for the construction and reiteration of Neo-Pentecostal discourse on womanhood, singlehood and Christian hood. These meetings are also dominated by women concerns such as finance, marriage, abusive spouses, unfaithful husbands, single-hood, single parenting, bareness, sickness and others. Women fellowships, conferences and conventions serves variety of functions Here below, we describe some of the tangible consequences accruing not just from these meetings but also from these churches spheres generally.

iii) Spaces for Healing, Miracles and Deliverance and Prophecy

Women fellowships and conference are largely spaces for healing and deliverance. In one of the LEM prayer meeting at Odeon Cinema, The Rev Lucy Muiro preached a sermon titled ‘What Jesus has done for you’ (John 8).^{vi} In this sermon, the speaker dwelt on the theme of healing and wellbeing. She said:

Fellow women, you should pray that Jesus should heal women’s souls, bodies and minds. Women have been slandered, abused and rejected just like the woman in Canaan, but God has come to heal your pain, to wipe away the tears, rejections, abuse, and the slander. If you are here and you feel like the woman in Canaan, I speak divine healing into your situations! It doesn’t matter what society is saying about you, what matters is that Jesus has come to heal you.

During the afternoon session the following day, a visiting guest introduced only as the Rev Deborah from Tanzania began a session with prayers for faith-healing and miracles. Various women with an array of ailments were called out for prayer. First she called out women suffering from women specific illness such as bareness, infertility, miscarriage, gynaecological problems and other such complications and was prayed for. Next, she offered prayers of healing for strained relationships and broken marriages as well as for those who have been searching for prospective spouses. Then she prayed for those suffering from depression, stress, lack of money, unemployment and many other illnesses even general malaise.

Other issues prayed for in this particularly session included societal discriminations and stigma that does not recognize or value women and all other issues that afflict women. These women prayer fellowships and conferences, narratives both written and oral, hold in common a sense of the healing power and transformative potential of prayer. Through prayer for example, a woman who feels angry, desperate, or overwhelmed by everyday challenges may experience a sense of intimacy with God as her loving father, friend or husband.

Through prayer a woman can perhaps feel that someone hears her cry and cares for her and that God will not only comfort her but will heal her sufferings and fill her with joy. She can also feel herself empowered and imbued with a new self-esteem and confidence. According to Linda Wood head (2002), NPC churches may offer women space for the articulation of

desires and frustrations in wider, more public settings—not only in churches, but in small groups and Para-church organizations. They offer a safe space in which women can articulate their deepest desires and concerns that they would probably be unable to articulate in other social spaces.

In this case, prayer groups provide a setting place in which to share fears, hopes, desires, and personal experiences. Such secondary institutions offer a forum for healing not only by God, but also through the love and support of women who are sisters-in-Christ. During the time for testimonies, women spend a great deal of time talking about their concerns. They testify in public about the changes they have realized, the benefits of salvation, and what the churches or ministries have done for them. These churches try to provide women with a refuge in which such prayer can occur, a sympathetic community where women may learn together about what God has done in their lives.

In these prayer meetings, women testify of what God has done for them. Public testimonies therefore emerge as a powerful way in which women find and express themselves. Repeatedly, women narrated to the researcher ‘how God set them free from bondage’ and how they ‘received healings.’^{vii} Others spoke of ways in which their participation in their churches gave them the opportunity to foster leadership capabilities. For example, Pastor Ziporah Kimani of Faith Harvest International Nakuru and Deborah Arise Africa narrated to the researcher how participation in the FEM’s monthly Single Ladies Prayer fellowships in Nakuru motivated them to believe in themselves and start their own churches.^{viii}

Other women emphasized the healing both physical and emotional that occurred in their lives when they joined the NPCs. Others have described to me what belonging to these churches means to them. Mary chepkoech said; it is like being in a warm place, a place where one finds support, care and understanding. Such narratives about the roles of these prayer fellowships in the lives of its participants epitomize the therapeutic role that these churches have continued to play for women. The churches therefore become community's talking and meeting point thereby granting women space and voice. Nowhere is this more visible than in ladies/women conferences and fellowships.

In these prayer fellowships, women participants have forged alternative communities that not only proved spiritual nourishment but also healing and therapeutic release as well as emotional and psychological wellbeing (Griffiths 1997; Wuthnow 1994). Thus Pentecostals intimate and develop a sense of community as they meet together in their churches for worship, prayer cell group meetings, midweek meeting and Bible study. It is this creation of social capital in the sense of community that many women find attractive about their churches particularly women led churches.

There is an emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit to effect healing and transformation in and through them, power administered through the bestowal of spiritual gifts. Women call themselves 'spirit-filled women' who have been blessed with spiritual gifts described in the New Testament such as wisdom, knowledge faith, healing, miracles, prophesy, discernment of spirits,

speaking in tongues and the interpretations of tongues.

Additionally, women share a sense of Jesus as a personal companion, easily accessible via conversational prayer and always ready to intercede on their behalf to God. Jesus is described as ‘the one who will never leave you or forsake you,’ a loving savior who cares about all that concerns them. Metaphors describing Jesus range widely from friend, to lover of my soul, husband and companion (Adogame 2008:139).

Even more than God, Jesus is envisioned as longing desperately for human beings to turn to him with love and gratitude. Pentecostal women prayer to Jesus is in a nurturing, maternal way. The three persons of Godfather, son and Holy Spirit are used to interchangeably. Often, these women mix them as if they were interchangeably. For these reasons, Neo-Pentecostal ministries provide a refuge in which such prayers can occur, a sympathetic community where women may learn together about all that God will do for them in their lives.

These meetings do not only accord women with space for healing and restoration, they also accord them space to talk, pray, testify, comfort and commune with one another. These meetings can be powerfully therapeutic, as women narrate their sufferings and pain at the hands of abusive spouses, or the loneliness they felt when deserted by a spouse, or just their struggles and pain as they fend for their children. The ties that bound this band of praying women are sadness, sorrow, pain, despair, issues of body image and male approval, home and child crisis, domestic violence, poverty and suffering (Griffiths 1997).

In FEMs' meetings, women are lent a safe space to share their bitter, heart wrenching testimonies, and join with their sisters in prayer and spiritual ecstasy. In this sense, she creates forum for women in a non-structural setting where they can share and ventilate. These forums are managed by women for women and focus mainly on women issues. Throughout fieldwork, we came across tens of testimonies about women healed of various ailments. Women narrate health issues specific to women that are addressed in these female meetings. Bareness and infertility were some of the most common problem we encountered.

In the Nakuru monthly single ladies fellowship, we interviewed five women who conceived miracle babies after prayers from the Evangelist. Catherine was unable to conceive for thirteen years but when the Evangelist prayed for her fifteen years ago, she managed to conceive and gave birth to a boy called Joshua. Mrs Jennifer Kahare also gave birth to a bouncing baby boy after she was prayed for by the Evangelist. This is what she said in an interview

I have one daughter and i had tried desperately to conceive for years but I was unable to. I attend a crusade in Nakuru Town in which the evangelist Prayed for struggling women like me. One month later i conceived and i Could not believe myself. Nine months later, Joshua was born and was Just overwhelmed by what God had done through Evangelist Wairimu. I made A decision to serve God for the rest of my life because He is faithful. I quit my Job for God's ministry. Now i serve as a pastor at Njoro branch. Glory be to his Name forever and ever ^{ix}

Other ailments include tumours, cervical cancers, breast cancers, fibroids and many other female related ailments are addressed in these meetings. These are addressed through prayers of deliverance and faith healing. The researcher attended countless such meetings in Nairobi, Nakuru and what

came out from participant observations, and personal interaction and interviews with women in these meetings is that the ministry has had tremendous impact in bringing healing and wellbeing to these women.^x Pragmatic reasons therefore fuse into spiritual ones, and vice versa, as women join Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic groups in an effort to improve their lives and their status.

iv) Spaces for Motivations and Transformation of the Self

In the meetings there is a lot of motivation speaks meant to help women achieve personal transformation and development. Sermons in women fellowships and conference are positive and affirming. They are geared towards not just motivating women to become their best but also to become successful. During a Ladies of Excellence, conference held at the Odeon Sanctuary in Nairobi and attended by the researcher, Rev Lucy Muiro claimed:

God sent me to tell women of Kenya that God will transform you to bring out excellence in you so that you can go out and transform your communities to the Glory of God . The main purpose of LEM ministry is therefore, to equip women with spiritual resources that will bring out the best in women who will in turn transform the Kenyan society (P.O and fieldnote 8/8/ 2009).

The words used in this ministry are ‘transformation,’ ‘excellence,’ ‘empowerment,’ ‘anointing,’ ‘blessed,’ ‘healed,’ ‘raised,’ ‘filled with the Holy Spirit,’ ‘set free,’ ‘set apart’ ‘released’ and many others. These words are used to motivate, empower, impart, encourage, affirm, and generally give women self-esteem and confidence. Women are therefore transformed using words and are equipped with spiritual resources to rise up above their challenges. These metaphors are equally used as a sort of critic for society, patriarchy and culture. While society has treated them as the weaker sex, they call themselves,

‘Women of Honor,’ ‘Women of Integrity’ and ‘Women of worth.’ Many female founded and led churches and ministries indicate that they exist to empower women and girls holistically.

v) **The Use of Feminine Imagery and Biblical Resources as tools for Empowerment**

A salient feature of women fellowship and conferences in Kenya is the use of feminine imagery and scriptures as metaphors for empowerment. A defining feature of all the three churches but especially FEM and the Ladies of Excellence Ministry is the use of feminine and biblical images of women heroines. These include women such as Deborah, Naomi, Dorcas, Jael, Ruth, Mary, Elizabeth and Magdalene as images and metaphors of empowerment and transformation. These biblical figurines are declared “women of excellence” and role models whom God used in biblical times.

Women in these churches are encouraged to emulate these biblical heroines so that they can become models of transformation in their families, churches and societies. Many women in these churches also try to emulate and relate their lives and challenges to these biblical figurines and want to be identified with them. They draw strength and inspiration from these metaphors. Messages in women meetings particularly in conferences and conventions are rich with gender rhetoric and symbolism of empowerment, its extensive replication in this speech/sermon delivered by Lucy Muiru of MMC at the Ladies of Excellence Conference on 8th August 2008 underscores the point:

Praise Jesus daughters of the Most High God and be thou blessed! Welcome to this wonderful God ordained conference that will transform your life forever in Jesus name. We must begin to look at ourselves the same way God looks at us. From today,

know that you are a model of destiny, a woman of the hour. You are highly favored of the Lord and given power to prosper all round in Jesus Name. Model means a sign, an example, a symbol or a demonstration. It is a point of reference. This being a 'Women of Excellence Conference', we have to refer, from the word of God and possibly follow suit or even do better. These models are women who refused to be ordinary. They excelled in their lives and that is why they are recorded in the bible for future reference. We have to look at individual women who made a difference and a positive impact in people's lives during their lifespan. I have picked different categories of women to represent different categories of women in this conference. I believe we are mixed grill-married women; single women, barren women, widows, orphans, young girls and all. Jael Wife of Heber (Judges 5:31) is one such model. Jael redeemed Israel from the hands of the Canaanites by killing the Army Commandant Sisera. It was only after the death of the army chief that Israel enjoyed peace for 40 years. Jael is a good model of destiny. She knew Israel's destiny was in the hands of God not the enemy. She outshined Barrack the Israel army Commandant. You do not have to have a training to do exploit. Jael is a challenge to women who take themselves ordinary and of no value.

Abigail Wife of Nabal is the other model of destiny. She salvaged her family (1 Samuel 25:32-35). She is a good example of a woman married to men who are not born again. Abigail saved her family from King David who wanted to kill all of Nabal's family for refusing to assist the king and the army. She took provision to King David and the hungry soldiers and begged for forgiveness. You can salvage your family even when your husband is a drunk, arrogant and all. You only need to be strong in the Lord. The other model of destiny is Mary the mother of Jesus- a symbol of purity for girls (Luke 1:36) Mary obeyed God and bore him a son. God knows every virgin, her location, her career. When you shun evil, you become useful for God's use. Men like any other woman were approaching Mary. However, she maintained her dignity! She remained pure! She feared God! She adored God in her body! Girls, you can make it! You can lead a holy life! You can maintain your virginity until you are married. The next model of destiny is Dorcas who is a model of generosity and service in her generation (Acts 9:36). The Bible does not refer to Dorcas's marital status or if she has children or not. However, I have picked her as a model to single and barren women. Dorcas will prove to you that being single or barren does not hinder you from serving God and loving children who are not yours biologically. I know it feels lonely to be single and bitter to be barren. However, Dorcas' example will encourage us to serve God despite it all. She helped poor and vulnerable women, mostly single and orphans. You can touch peoples' lives and uplift the downtrodden. Naomi is another perfect model of destiny. She stood the bitter test of time: Naomi lost her husband and two sons. Besides, she was in a foreign land and she became very bitter. She changed her name from Naomi, which means pleasant to Mara, which means bitter. Out of the bitter life you are living now, God will bring out something excellent that will be remembered by generations. The last model of destiny is Elizabeth, wife of Zachariah, a perfect model of patience. Elizabeth was childless for many years. She waited upon the Lord for many years in prayer. In her sunset years, God gave her a son named John. A homebuilder needs a lot of patience and perseverance. Stay focus and keep on waiting upon the Lord. One day, God will answer your prayers. No problem is permanent. Weeping endures for a night, joy comes in the morning. Make sure that by the end of this conference, your name is added to this list of the models of destiny in Jesus Name.^{xi}

This long sermon draws upon several genres and evokes gender discourses of a complex nature. The rhetoric centers on the dignity and

vulnerability of women, self-worth and esteem building. It focuses on the innate power of women to effect change at the familial and societal levels. Discrimination, abuse by spouses and societal injustice to which women are exposed within the larger society also features largely. However, the text is also and to borrow Adogame's (2008: 138) words is 'replete with admonitions of hope, perseverance, encouragement and empowerment in a way that captures the observers' imaginations towards an imagined gender identity.'

FEM also uses biblical imagery and resources to empower women. These include stories of women in the bible, heroines who did extraordinary things in their societies. The most common biblical heroines appropriated in FEM include Queen Esther, Naomi, Ruth, Debora, Mary, Magdalene and many others. These heroines and exceptional women are used to illustrate how powerful women can be, particularly when faced with difficult situations. The Evangelist uses biblical texts and scriptures as resources for both spiritual and personal empowerment.

The messages and sermons preached by Rev Lucy Muiro are inspiring, positive and affirming and geared towards lifting women and giving them hope in God. At home and in the church, the women are encouraged to be models of destiny and integrity, active in evangelism and ministry (Kalu 2006:231). Scholars such as Ogbu Kalu (2006; 2008) and Marie Griffith (1997) have drawn attention to the important role of using feminine spirituality as metaphors of power, transformation and encouragement. These scholars have argued that these metaphors have been used by women to draw examples that resonate well with their lives and challenges and use them to encourage and

empower themselves.

Both Evangelist Wairimu and Pastor Lucy Muiro have used these allegories to encourage women to reread and reinterpret scriptures to affirm themselves, their personal dignity, as well as communal wellbeing, rallying their collective energies together and built self-esteem. This female clergy has reinterpreted scripture to empower her flock. Rev Elizabeth Wahome of Single Ladies Interdenominational Ministry and Rev Kathy Kiuna of Daughters of Zion Ministries also use these feminine images to rally women together and give them self-esteem, confidence and affirmation that they are God's children, daughters and leaders (Parsitau 2012c).

It would therefore appear that women at FEM and the Ladies of Excellence Ministry as well as other such churches use these metaphors to reconstruct their shattered, injured, wounded beings with feminine biblical imagery. In many NPC, women are encouraged to rise above victim-hood because they are not victims but "God's daughters", "Children of the Most High God." Single women are particularly exhorted to ignore societal labels such as "home-wreckers" "husband snatchers" because they are a "new creation" a people that have been "renewed in the newness of Christ."

In one sermon during women conference, Lucy Muiro told women

Learn to see and value yourselves the way God sees and values yourselves. When you do this, you will love yourself more, esteem yourself more and even forgive yourself more (P.O 8/8/08).

Yet the empowerment discourses offers some glimpse about women religious lives and their struggle for both social and spiritual empowerment. More importantly, female converts from the three ministries seem to shift their

mentality from victims to empowered persons who seek to transform their lives using spiritual resources and tools of empowerment from biblical resources as exemplified by FEM and Ladies of Excellence Ministries and their members. They find personal and social integrity in the transformation offered by Pentecostal religiosity and are both a sort of struggle for gender liberation, as well as a critique and struggle with a patriarchal order and culture. The uniqueness of the Pentecostal experience and the theology of equality before Christ have helped shift women's mentality from victims to stakeholders in both church and society.

Lastly, in these churches' discourses on women, the concept of transformation is often expressed in terms of a break with a past characterized by abuse, rejection, pain, lack, poverty, failure, abuse especially spousal abuse and others. In most women's meetings, messages of renewal and transformation tend to focus extensively though not exclusively, on women's relationships with men. These women ministries seek a complete break with the past through the transformation of the self. Critical images of change, of renewal, rebirth, healing, rejuvenation and transformation are at the core of these ministries and are critical, therefore, to understanding their appeal.

vi) Spaces to Build Social Capital

Women meetings and conferences provide these women with rare opportunity for solidarity, networking and experiencing sharing in Christianity. For these reasons, these churches unquestionably build social and spiritual capital by rallying women's collective energies to better their lives using biblical and religious resources. Each is empowered with spiritual resources to

engage in social and economic pursuit. In these churches, women are provided with tools and skills such as business leadership training.

JIAM and FEM frequently conduct business and leadership training meetings for both women and men. Other than economic empowerment, Wanjiru has sought to empower women in leadership and education so that they can reclaim their place in society. In her sermons, she teaches women how to overcome challenges that confront them such as poverty, ignorance, marital challenges and many others. Wanjiru has often taught, encouraged and challenged women to contest civic and public life, particularly, leadership, business and entrepreneurship and politics. Through motivation talks, business meetings and sermons, Wanjiru has sought to empower women in business and leadership.

In addition, she has sought to back up her empowerment rhetoric with business trainings and seminars where skills such as time management, planning and budgeting are taught. In one such meeting, Wanjiru preached a sermon titled 'women, finance and entrepreneurship,' Wanjiru taught women how to succeed in business and leadership (P.O 8.8.09).

This motivational sermon challenged women to get involved in business so that they can improve their lives and that of their families. Besides, she runs a revolving fund going by the name 'Glory micro finance' where women can access loans for business. In her constituency, she has sought to use the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) money to empower women and youth who engage in small-scale trading activities.

vii) Space for Equality of and Spiritual Empowerment

In all the three churches, the spiritual equality of believers is promoted. This is explicit in the teachings of both JIAM and FEM where both founders are heads of their ministries. These churches cite scriptures first to explain women relationships to God and second, women relationship to men. Conversion to Pentecostalism has brought about a sense of liberation to women.

Women in these ministries seem to view conversion as providing a new moral order, a redemptive moral strategy in which they can redeem themselves and their situations using spiritual resources accruing from conversion. As such, Pentecostalism may be viewed as not only a redemptive response to crisis but as one that contains freedom based on the biblical interpretations and moral codes and this is empowering them in the homes, churches, and in public life.

Women clergy view themselves as equally to men. In terms of the spiritual status of men and women, it is widely held within Neo-Pentecostal churches that women as well as men were made in the image of God. As such, they share with men all the fruits of the Holy Spirit, an equal heritage, a shared priesthood of all believers irrespective of sex, race or gender. It is common to hear such phrases, as ‘God is no respecter of persons,’ and ‘in Christ, there is neither male nor female.’

What this suggests is that as far as the relationship between men and women are concerned, there are no difference between males and females. This does not mean however, that born again men and women are not subject to norms of behavior that are governed by what is perceived as gender

differences, and which distinguish one sex from the other.

In mainstream Pentecostal churches as is the case in mainline churches, women are perceived as equal to men on a spiritual level. However, within the social order of the sexes, they are perceived to be imbued with certain inherent biological and psychological differences, which distinguish one sex from the other and govern social relations (Flora 1975; Cucchiari 1996; Mwaura 2002; Mwaura & Parsitau 2010).

viii) Spaces for Contesting Patriarchy and Sexism

Women fellowships and conferences are also increasingly spaces to contest, negotiate and reconstruct what it means to be a Christian woman in a patriarchal society like Kenya. In one of the Ladies of Excellence Conventions, attended by the researcher, the speaker was Rev. Dr Grace Ndungu of Amazing Grace International Ministries. Rev Ndungu who spoke on a sermon titled: *This is a year for Women's Ministries to Rise up* delved into the world of female religious leadership and the challenges facing female religious ministers. Here is a paraphrased sermon preached by Rev Ndungu in which she talks about the birthing of new female led ministries and based on Ezekiel 16:18-14:

My dear sisters, the year 2009 is a year of the fullness of time! I am talking about the hidden, suppressed, oppressed and blocked women ministries that are wallowing in darkness waiting for someone to bring them forth. The blockage is coming from your pastor, your husband, society and established ministries. Whenever they hear that it is a woman preaching, they oppose it, they disregard her; they sneer at it and have very little value for you. I have good news for you she said, God is coming to cut the umbilical cord, wash away all the mess surrounding your ministry, adorn you with heavenly beauty and equip you to preach. I know many of you have the calling but wondering where to begin. God is passing by to cleanse you and release spiritual growth and anointing on you. People will begin to hear about you! Little by little, they will start coming to you! By the time, God comes on the second round, he will find you already established, having your church, your flock and supporters! Get ready woman of God, this is your year! So many new women ministries are coming up this year! So many old ministries will come down in favor of new ones. Some old preachers will be dropped in favor of new ones! You have been hidden in someone else ministry for so long, you have been used and dumped by the spiritual fathers and mothers for so long! Time has come! Rise up sisters^x

In this sermon, the speaker candidly spoke about the challenges facing female ministers in society, such as sexism and, discrimination. However, she also delves into female discrimination based on their reproductive issues. In drawing upon women and blood allegories that largely signifies impurity, she encouraged women that God was about to wash them clean, thereby contesting Leviticus orders in the Old Testament and societal perceptions that often portray women's biological and reproductive health, particularly women menstrual periods as unclean, thereby making women feel unfit and unclean to preach the gospel.

Instead, she told the women that God was washing away all their impurities and beautifying them with linen and jewelry until they grow exceedingly beautiful and advanced to royalty. In so doing, God has already approved of these female religious leaders and that many more women need to contest leadership positions not just in church but in society as well.

In the same Ladies of Excellence Conference, a high ranking South African female preacher who was only identified as Rev Dr Lydia and who is said to be a Member of Parliament was one of the speakers. She preached a sermon titled 'Never Give Up, Forward Move.' In her introductory remarks, she said:

'I came here to help raise women of impact, women who do not give up easily, women whose motto is 'forward ever.' You see, women are the most important beings. All presidents, CEOs, teachers, doctors, and Legislators come through the womb of a woman. For these reasons, women are strong, wonderful, lovely, useful and able to withstand childbirth. 'You should therefore soar up like an eagle, fly high and don't scratch with chickens.'

Another salient feature of women meetings is the use and interpretation of biblical passages to construct their own understanding of beauty and body image. Women are encouraged that despite their many issues whether physical, biological, emotional or otherwise, they are beautiful because they are ‘created in the image and likeness of God’. It is common to hear women encourage each other this way:

‘Walk tall because you are fearfully and wonderfully made. He has given us beauty for ashes! I am beautiful inside out!’ (P.O 8/8/09)

In the meetings women are taught that, they are special, beautiful, important, lovely, wonderfully and fearfully made by God. They are also taught to value and esteem themselves, a move that appears to have raised their place in society. Women interviewees reported self-esteem and valuing of themselves as one of the benefits of attending women meetings.^{xii}

Neo-Pentecostal converts therefore seem to shift their mentality from victims to empowered persons who seek to transform their lives as well as their personal wellbeing. As such, women find personal and social integrity in the transformation offered by Neo-Pentecostal. It is suggested here that the uniqueness of the Neo-Pentecostal experience and the theology of equality before Christ has helped shift women’s mentality from victims to stakeholders in both church and society. The researcher’s interactions with women appeared to suggest that they have come value themselves as well as developed self-worth after attending such meetings.

ix) Spaces to Contest Divorce, Single-hood and Marriage

Women conference and fellowship are also used to contest single-hood,

marriage and family life. Here personal narratives and testimonies come in handy. Wairimu has used her own personal story, life experiences and spiritual power to help and encourage not just this category of women but many others. Her traumatic life experiences as a young divorced mother, denied access to her son for more than two decades (a story which she delves into in her personal autobiography and one we dealt with in greater details in chapter three), has shaped her perception of single mothers and their place in the society. Yet, she rose above this traumatic experience to become a successful spiritual leader with compassion for single women and children.

Wairimu uses this story to teach women that she had been through it all and emerged stronger. Her personal experiences not only resonates well with the experiences of single women in Kenya today but that her experience has influenced her perception and relationship with her largely women dominated audiences and congregation. She frequently reminds these women that if she overcame that loss, then they too can rise above their many challenges. As such, she has overcome the prevailing negative attitudes towards women preachers in Kenya to create a ministry that focuses on women empowerment not only in spiritual circles but also in development issues as well.

Wairimu believes that God has divinely mandated her to reach out to women and promote their self-actualization in the wider society so that they can take up leadership roles in the church and society. This conviction has made her rise up to become a prominent crusader for women and gender issues and a critique of both sexism and patriarchy in a society where single women are frowned upon (Wairimu 2010).

Yet, it is not just single women that Wairimu focuses on but rather on the larger women constituency. This is particularly so given the fact that she frequently holds both monthly and annual conferences whose audiences are largely women of all occupations irrespective of their social or marital status. Wairimu argues that her ministry serves as a wakeup call to the Christian church and the society as a whole and challenges them all not only to accept single women but to also embrace them as well and formulate leadership programmes to tap women as social and spiritual resources that can be utilized by both church and society (Wairimu 2010).

Rev Wairimu also criticizes Christian churches and calls on them to open up space for women as leaders, deacons, preachers and directors of projects. Wairimu argues that all women including single women are capable leaders and that the church must strive to support by formulating leadership programmes to build leadership capacities and skills for these women.

In her personal autobiography, *A Cactus in the Desert* (2011) Wairimu examines not only issues of women leadership in Christian Churches but also massive challenges facing single women in Kenya. She also talks about issues of patriarchy and the roles of men in marriage and family. She advocates for partnership with men and stresses on the need for both genders to work together for the benefit of the family, the church and the nation.

Some of the sermons preached in selected conferences in all the three churches include the following themes: 'daughter of prophesy, prophesy!,' 'Woman Arise,' 'Woman stand up and be counted,' 'Woman God Trusts you' 'woman be persistent,' 'woman get romantic,' 'the wise woman' 'only Jesus is

for you,' 'the Lord has considered you,' 'overcoming the spirit of fear in women,' 'overcoming condemnation,' 'tell him all,' 'healing of the broken hearted,' 'restoration,' 'beauty for ashes,' 'women and finances,' and many other themes.^{xiii} Apart from encouraging women to re-read, re-interpret and critique scriptures and texts in order to draw inspiration from them, Wairimu also helps build spiritual capital using biblical resources. For these reasons, her ministry unquestionably builds social and spiritual capital by rallying women's collective energies to better their lives using biblical and religious resources. At the same time, they are taught to embrace values such as empowerment, self-confidence and self-esteem.

These women through various activities and roles have acquired distinctive identities for themselves. In one sense, FEM might be considered as promoting gender equality and transformation among the women constituency by changing their lives and that of their families and society through spiritual and leadership resources. FEM further provides these women with institutional settings for the acquisition of leadership and organizational skills that may be transferred to civic skills.

While JIAM runs seminars on female leadership, gender empowerment and development programmes aimed at empowering women, spiritually, economically and politically, it is her personal story from 'rags to riches' that appears to inspire women most. Wanjiru has sought to use her personal life story and narrative to empower women. Her 'rise from ashes to beauty' story appeals to women who are hopeful that their lives and present circumstances can be overcome just like their bishop did. She encourages women to work

hard in whatever they do. Many women interviewees suggested they were inspired by her personal story and struggles, her determination, ambitions, strength and other attributes (O.I 8/8/09).

Women incredibly talk about how these prayer meetings helped them. They described these meetings as loving communities of sisters, safe spaces/places and support groups (O.I 8/8/09). In these prayer groups and fellowships, participants intentionally forge alternative communities that claim to provide not only theological or doctrinal instructions but also loving nurturance, diagnosis of women's particular/specific ills and guaranteed treatment.

From the foregoing analysis, these women fellowships and conferences are much more than just prayer fellowships. They are spaces for empowerment and liberation, spaces of refuge and healing. However, they are also spaces in which women engage in discourses about issues of great concern to them. This is because these meetings are centered on issues of great concern to women and which cut across all boundaries-religious, class, marital status and age.

7.2 CONCLUSION: BREAKING WITH THE PAST: A SOCIAL CRITIQUE

In this chapter, we have considered female spiritual leadership and the gendered roles of JIAM, FEM and the Ladies of Excellence ministries. Our analysis of the three case studies suggests that women clergy and laity are using their new faith as a space for struggle, for liberation, for dislocating sexism and patriarchy and for contesting public culture. We have also shown that all the three female clergy have used their spiritual roles to contest

leadership and public life.

Both Wanjiru and Wairimu have risen to public prominence as leaders in the Neo-Pentecostal movement, despite the stigma typically attached to single or divorced women. Acclaimed as role models, these leaders have encouraged single women, and indeed all women, to rise above cultural inhibitions and to overcome gender-based discrimination in church and society.

The Ladies of Excellence Ministry has equally enlarged the public roles of Lucy Muiru both as a female clergy and a Bishops' wife. The Ladies of Excellence Ministry has helped enlarge the public profile of Lucy Muiru. The pastor not only needs his wife for social acceptance, prestige and respect but also to attract, appeal, mobilize and lead the female constituency in the church. This is critical given the fact that women not only form the majority in the church, but also are also critical to the very lifeline and foundation of these churches. These has enlarged the roles of many pastors' wives in the country and given some degree of recognition and public prominence.

In many Neo-Pentecostal churches, the pastor's wife also known as the 'first lady' has become quite prominent. According to Kalu (2008:153), the first lady 'serves as a nodal power for mobilizing and deploying female evangelical power.' Many pastors' wives are increasingly assuming the title 'First lady', which in itself signifies and symbolizes empowerment. The title largely analyzes and responds to earlier perceptions that women were totally passive or voiceless in leadership structures in these churches.

Commenting on the Ladies on Fire for Jesus International in Scotland, Adogame (2008) observes that the First Lady title is reminiscent of how

Presidents and governors' wives in several countries carve out a public niche for themselves within their respective political apparatus. The appropriation of the 'First Lady' title in many Neo-Pentecostal churches in Kenya is undoubtedly an enactment of this practice albeit in religious terms.

Lucy Muiro of Maximum Miracle Centres and the Ladies of Excellence ministries projects an image of an empowered woman who in turn seeks to empower other women. In addition to being a co-pastor, a wife, and mother, a 'mama', and a woman of worth, she is also a public figure, a political decision maker and a nation builder. In contrast to traditional interpretations of Proverbs 31, to which the charismatic churches do also adhere to, the virtuous woman is also the kind of woman who is a world changer. Many pastors' wives acquire theological training and help in the running of the ministry. Some have taken over the counseling departments to provide counseling services in their respective churches.

Yet, all the three women present a different leadership pattern, at least in part because Wanjiru and Wairimu are single women. While these women may not be described as gender activists out to alter traditional gender relations, they do challenge the gender stereotypes and prejudices in patriarchal societies. They exhort women to circumvent such limitations through the power of the gospel, using their spiritual gifts to rise to their full potential.

The three women have also challenged the conservative segment of Pentecostalism that restricts the level of a woman's ritual status. These ministries emphasize healing and deliverance which they interpret as part of the divine plan of God for them and are legitimized by an encounter with God

through a conversion with divine power that manifests itself in the ability to heal and deliver women from demonic powers.

All the three charismatic movements focus on deepening not just participants' levels of spirituality, but their social, economic and political empowerment as well. They have done this by preaching a gospel that promotes the spiritual equality of all believers. These female clergy talk about the equality of all believers before Christ. In principle, they have argued that there is no barrier to women becoming pastors, prophetesses, and founders of their churches. In terms of the spiritual status of men and women it is widely held views within the born again churches that women, as well as men, were made in the image of God. As such, they share with men all the fruits of creation and equal heritage with all men in the royal priesthood. It is common to hear such phrases as 'God is no respecter of persons,' 'in Christ there is neither male nor female.'

Both Wanjiru and Wairimu image themselves as equal to men and that the Holy Spirit enables them to preach like men if not better. However, they also frequently highlight tensions they experience as single female clergy and the discrimination they have faced in their lives by virtue of being single women. Yet, by founding their own churches and ministries, these women are essentially contesting spiritual, cultural and public roles just like their male counterparts. This has largely enhanced the spiritual status of female believers and participants in these churches.

Crucially, these women ministries offer women the possibility for change and transformation. While this change may not be permanent, the

possibility of personal transformation is continually offered to those who desire it. For example, women believers are constantly reminded to declare: 'I am a new creation, behold the old is gone. I am a new me, washed and delivered by the blood of Jesus. I am no longer a slave to the past, behold I am free, I am free.' Thus, the concepts of change, renewal and transformation are critical elements of the born again message (Adogame 2008:139).

They are often expressed in phraseology that every congregant memorizes. For example: members are often urged to repeat: 'He gave me beauty for ashes...', 'from this day hence forth, my life will never be the same again! 'Today is my day of destiny,' 'this is my season of fruitfulness,' 'I am walking into a new season, a season of miracles, provisions, favor, success and destiny!'(P.O 8/8/09).

On the subject of breaking away with the past, female preachers often seem to appeal to women's negative memories of their relationships with men as a contrast to the happy and prosperous future awaiting them in Christ, not in heaven but in this lifetime. Forget the past and press on towards the mark... a brighter future awaits you (P.O 8.8/09).

The story of Rahab the prostitute (Joshua 2: 1-24) is often told to illustrate that a woman without a glorious past can still be used as an instrument of God. More importantly perhaps, interpretations of this story emphasize that a prostitute like Rahab also became the richest woman in the city. This leads to a slightly different aspect of the Neo-Pentecostal discourses on personal transformation and the importance of breaking with the past. It recalls the story of Esther, the slave girl who became queen. According to these

church's teachings on prosperity, any woman no matter her past or present status, can become a queen. At the same time, the personal narratives of female ministers such as Bishop Wanjiru and Evangelist Wairimu illustrate this point and possibly functions as a source of inspiration for other women.

Through personal narratives like these, women in NPC congregations are encouraged to believe that their lives can change. However, it is not clear from these narratives whether the success stories they relate are because of self-determination, self-belief or divine intervention. In fact, the distinction between individual agency and God's will in Neo-Pentecostal Christianity attitudes to 'destiny' is often rather blurred or ambiguous.

However, ambiguities notwithstanding, this discourse of change and renewal, and of success and victory, is significant in a way that it creates a public space in which women's right to be a winner is declared and acknowledged. 'You are women of worth', 'women without limits', 'women of destiny', 'rise up and shine for your time has come to be counted!' (P.O 8/8/09).

It is not difficult to understand why a religious discourse that emphasizes individual 'agency' and control over personal destinies appeals, particularly to women who often feel that their lives are being directed by events beyond their control. In this type of Christianity, gender-neutral individualism is prioritized in a way that is not seen in Kenya before.

As suggested above, Neo-Pentecostalism introduces an element of individualism into the religious discourses, which has particular significance for women because it enables them to renegotiate some cultural practices and expectations of traditional life that impede their lives and limit their choices.

The three women ministries have also shown how religious communities and personal religious commitment offer women opportunities for self-determination as well as leadership experience, both of which help them become agents of change. They also emphasize women empowerment through spiritual resources.

By enlisting various categories of women (wives of pastors, single, divorced, separated, widowed, young, old and by recognizing charismatic gifts and the presence of successful female-led ministries), Kenyan Neo-Pentecostalism has opened space for women to make an impact in the church, society and in the country even trans-nationally. The emergence of female clergy in the Kenyan Neo-Pentecostal scene is no longer regarded as a novelty as they are currently enjoying a visible and supportive public goodwill whether as church founders or in civic or public life. Yet, it has brought about a gendered social transformation whose impacts in private, civic and public life needs to be further analyzed.

From the foregoing analysis, it would appear therefore that Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Kenya have contributed to women's emancipation from oppressive cultural practices and prescribed gender roles. Already there are signs of agency in women and this may have important ramifications for gendered social transformation, which might translate into greater civic and public roles for women. However, women themselves must continually draw upon and utilize the empowering effects of these religious organizations to fight for their human rights and this improve their lives and status in contemporary Kenya.

ⁱ While Bishop Margaret Wangare of the Church of the Lord, a classical Pentecostal was the first to be ordained a bishop, her ministry is largely unknown beyond Banana hills and is virtually invisible in the public sphere.

ⁱⁱ See also Miracle Magazine, December 2002, 18. In this magazine, Wanjiru delves into her past involvement in witchcraft in a sermon entitled, “Three levels of witchcraft.”

ⁱⁱⁱ Series of sermons both televised and church sermons between 2008-2011

^{iv} <http://www.jiam.org>

^v All Kenyan communities are patriarchal, despite the changes brought about by modernization, the Christian missionary enterprise, and formal education, which have all influenced -- and altered -- gender roles considerably; the attitude still prevails that women’s ultimate function in society is marriage and procreation. Single women are still perceived as incomplete and are often shunned, despite rhetorical proclamations to the contrary. Women-founded and -led ministries and churches accord women more prominence and more leadership opportunities. Nevertheless, men still patronize these churches, though not necessarily in equal numbers as women, and they do not feel out of place. Judy Mbugua, the founder of Women Homecare Fellowship – a ministry with local roots and diasporic connections – attests to this fact. (Judy Mbugua Oral Interview: Nairobi, 28th May 2009).

^{vi} Ladies of Excellence Conference held on 5/7/2009 at Ruaraka.

^{vii} Interviews with women in FEM, LEM in Nakuru and Nairobi respectively in August 2009

^{viii} Interviews with Pastors Zipporah Kimani and Nancy Gitau both of Nakuru in August 2009

^{ix} Interviews with women in one of FEM’s Nakuru Ladies meetings in 2009

^x These claims of miraculous healing are also documented in Evangelist Wairimu’s own 2010 personal Autobiography, *A Cactus in the Desert*, pages 309-364

^{xi} Rev Lucy Muiru preached this message on Maximum 18/9/2008. The same message is reprinted in Maximum Miracle October Issue 2008

^{xii} Field notes-2009-2010

^{xiii} Series of sermons delivered in women conferences between 2007-2010

CHAPTER EIGHT

8.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This study sought to investigate and understand the roles of JIAM, MMC and FEM in civic and public life. The study had five main objectives: first, to examine ways in which the three churches engage with significant issues in civic and public life; secondly, to identify the main doctrinal beliefs, teachings and practices as well as understand how these beliefs and teaching relate to their engagement with civic and public issues; thirdly, examine their social, economic and political contributions and engagements; fourthly, understand the relationships between NPCs and mass media and evaluate how their appropriation of media communication technologies has propelled them into the public sphere and fifthly, assesses their impact on women as well as understand these women's contribution in civic and public life.

To carry out the said objectives, the following research premises/assumptions were formulated. First, that NPCs' engagement with issues in civic and public life has led to its heightened public prominence in Kenya; secondly, that NPCs are unable to contribute progressively to civic and public issues; thirdly, that NPCs have no doctrinal position concerning issues in civic and public life; fourthly, that their prominence in public life has been largely propelled by the media; and lastly that NPCs have significantly changed the position of women in Kenya and have propelled them into the public sphere and enabled them to contest public life.

8.2. THE ROLE OF NEO-PENTECOSTALISM IN CIVIC AND PUBLIC LIFE IN KENYA

The focus of the study has been on how Neo-Pentecostals respond to issues in civic and public life. We specifically considered the civic and public roles of JIAM, MMC and FEM, not exhaustively, but in some breadth, the three churches are significantly engaged in civic and public issues. Each of the three case studies have made significant impact not just within their respective communities but also in the spiritual, social, economic and political developments of the country. They have equally enlarged the roles of women (both leaders and laity), not just in spiritual life but also in civic and public life. However, this engagement concentrates more on the spiritual than social, economic and political issues that it is shifting.

There is a tendency among the three churches to over emphasize spiritual issues at the expense of social, economic, political and gender issues. For example, in chapters three and four, it was noted that the preaching and teachings of these churches focused more on Christian devotional life than other aspects. Too frequently, all the three churches invest their energies in conducting crusades, tent revivals, healing and deliverance services, conferences and symposia, fellowships, ladies' meetings, men's meetings, prayer fellowships and night vigils among, among many others. This leaves them with very little time for addressing pertinent issues such as socio-economic and socio-political realities.

For example, almost 90 percent of all the programmes at JIAM, MMC and FEM are religious programmes: namely, Sunday services, midweek

services, monthly all night kasha, prayer meetings or vigils, Sunday school, youth fellowships, male fellowships, women fellowships, home church meetings and choir practice. There are also frequent huge and expensive crusades, TV programmes and other evangelistic undertakings such as retreats and revival meetings, local and international conference, conventions, symposia workshops and deliverance meetings.

All such meetings serve a spiritual or revival purpose of renewing people's faith, providing them with fora and space to re-energize spiritually. We can therefore conclude that overall and in all the three churches, the clergy as well their members seem more focused on a people's driven spirituality than they are focused on pertinent social realities. While seminars on leadership, business and entrepreneurship as well as civic education trainings do take place once a month in FEM or once every year in all the three churches, these are not allocated sufficient time compared to the myriads of religious programmes enumerated above.

Even the social ministries evident in all the three churches such as MMC's Children Home or Faith Evangelistic Ministry Rescue Centre, are not only spiritually inspired but are also spiritually focused. Their purpose is also to provide spiritual interventions to non-spiritual issues such as poverty, drug and substance abuse, crimes and other social and structural issues. These issues are often explained using spiritual causality. Thus, drug addiction, poverty crime and prostitution, among the social issues attributed to the work of the devil or demons and other malevolent spiritual agents. More often than not, NPCs have been criticized for spending too much time organizing and

attending religious meetings, leaving very little time for addressing pertinent day-to-day realities.

One of the assumptions of this study was that Neo-Pentecostals are unable to contribute progressively and meaningfully to issues in civic and public life. This study reveals that these churches are able to contribute progressively to issues in civic and public life even though their understanding of issues is largely characterized by spiritually infused spectacles. There is need therefore to balance spirituality with pragmatic engagement if Neo-Pentecostals are to contribute meaningfully to issues in civic and public life. However, with in respect of the social, economic and political issues, the spiritual world is immanent. It looms large in the way Neo-Pentecostals perceive of social, economic and political issues.

Thus our answer to the question on whether or not these churches have played significant roles in civic and public life is therefore affirmative. It acknowledges that all the case studies are spiritually, socially, economically and politically engaged although they could do better. Here below, we summarize the findings starting with spiritual, theological, social, economic, political, media and gendered engagements.

8.2.1 ANALYZING THE IMPLICATIONS OF DOCTRINAL, BELIEFS, TEACHINGS AND PRACTICE

One of the premises and assumptions of this study was that Neo-Pentecostals have no doctrinal position concerning civic and public engagement. In chapter four, the study highlighted important doctrinal beliefs and teachings of not just the three churches but also of most NPCs in Kenya.

We concluded that these churches' beliefs and teachings reveal how NPCs understand and engage in issues in civic and public life. We further showed how these beliefs, teachings and certain emphases poses inherent qualities that facilitate Neo-Pentecostals' engagement in public and civic life issues.

We summarize some of the doctrinal and theological teachings, beliefs and practices in a bid to tweak out their implications for civic and public engagement., We noted earlier that these beliefs, teachings and practices including an approach to issues in civic and public life are largely shaped by doctrinally based notions such as conversion to salvation, baptism in the Holy Spirit, notions of sin, the Kingdom of God, eschatology or the second coming of Jesus Christ and the centrality of the Bible, among others.

After an in-depth analysis of these beliefs and practices, it was possible to draw a number of conclusions. First, these doctrinal beliefs, and teachings on salvation, the Kingdom of God and centrality of the Bible among others significantly influences how Neo-Pentecostals engage with issues in civic and public life. Secondly, Neo-Pentecostal beliefs and practices could present both doors as well as barriers to the movements' engagement with society. We identified five aspects in this regard that seem to foster both civic and public engagement.

First, Neo-Pentecostals are driven by a strong emphasis on individuals' salvation and evangelism as foundational to broader societal change. Emphasis on salvation requires a definite confessional commitment believed to be caused by the Spirit. This can have a transformative impact on how Neo-Pentecostals engage with the world around them. Members of JIAM, MMC and FEM

seemed keen to help individuals address their contextual challenges using spiritual resources. To start with, individuals engage with other issues in society through the prism of a personal relationship with God and convictions about being a good steward and a generous person.

Secondly, it has been noted that religious experience is evident not just in pneumatic phenomenon associated with manifestations of the Holy Spirit, but also more fundamentally in the conscious personal decision that a person needs to make to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. In this case then, being ‘born again,’ as the initial experience is called, is itself a transformation accompanied by the Holy Spirit who subsequently fills believers with power. Yet, undertaking evangelism in itself promotes the churches engagement with the world and was the precursor to their involvement in issues encountered in the lives of individuals thereby prompting them to be socially engaged as opposed to being disengaged. In addition, we further identified elements in the beliefs and practices of NPCs that seemed to open up possibilities for pragmatic engagements with the world.

All the three churches place tremendous emphasis on the role, place and person of the Holy Spirit who is understood to be a teacher, a comforter, a companion, an empowering and energizing agent, a counselor and a friend among others. The Holy Spirit does not discriminate and can indwell every believer, small or big, male or female. Thus, the emphasis on the Holy Spirit could support social inclusiveness as well as empowerment of marginalized people through the understanding of the role of the Spirit.

Another doctrinal belief of the three churches revolves around their

understandings of the Kingdom of God. Members of JIAM, MMC and FEM understood the Kingdom of God as both spiritual and geographical. They also understood it both as a reign of God on earth and as a force. This suggests that God's Kingdom is perceived as an invasive force that enters and pervades the present. It was also noted throughout field research that all the three emphasize on the Kingdom of God has influenced their congregants' worldviews.

Believers from the three churches felt that they could help establish the kingdom of God on earth by living out their salvation empowered by the Holy Spirit, which generates much needed urgency to change the world. Based on their understanding of the Kingdom of God, members of the three churches spoke clearly about the need for believers to act in every sphere and at every level of society to forge practical change. Broader understandings of God's Kingdom can therefore facilitate Neo-Pentecostals' concern and action beyond personal issues.

Neo-Pentecostals also place tremendous emphasis on sin, the fall of humanity and thereby the need for salvation from sin. While there is tremendous emphasis on the wretchedness of humanity because of sin, Neo-Pentecostals tend to concentrate more on individual or personal sins at the expense of social evils. There is need, therefore, for a broader understanding of sin that entails both personal and corporate sin and evil. Yet, seeing the depth and seriousness of sin and evil in the world could foster a realistic view of the world where serious problems are identified rather than perceived as not existing. In addition, the reality of corporate sin motivates people to engage with the reality to change the situation.

It is suggested here that this preaching if properly channeled can forge a worldview where believers understand how repeated personal sinfulness ends up embedded in social customs, laws, social institutional structures and mismanagement of creation. This can lead to the development of an ethics of concern for social/structural evil or even better still, social activism that rejects oppression, inequality, and injustices, three key elements of structural evil.

A significant belief of most Neo-Pentecostals is the belief in eschatology. Neo-Pentecostalism as already said is an eschatological faith, where true believers anticipate the return of Christ and the end of the world. While there are dangers inherent in this kind of doctrine, there was no evidence that members of the three churches were disengaged with the world in lieu of its anticipated end. Instead, members and clergy are going on with their lives, investing, building homes, buying stock, sending their children to school/college and going on with their usual day-to-day activities.

From the foregoing, we can conclude that, it is in the spiritual realm that these churches seem most successful and effective in. We noted that many of these churches were characterized by a moving sense and commitment to improve the lives of their members, using spiritual resources. For example, all the three churches have tens of programmes to help people in need, providing them with much needed counseling, motivation, a sense of commitment and self-worth. Thus, the spiritual world appears to suggest ways and modes in which the Neo-Pentecostals engage with the world. Yet, NPCs have also been perceived as indifferent towards social, economic and political issues.

8.2.2 Aspects of Beliefs that Hamper or Limit Pragmatic Engagement

After examining how these beliefs and practices can foster greater engagement in issues in civic and public life, let us now examine how the same beliefs could hamper or limit pragmatic engagement with issues in civic and public life. We earlier identified five aspects of Neo-Pentecostal beliefs and practices that seem to hamper or limit these churches' engagement with civic and public issues. The first limit arises because of the emphasis placed on personal salvation and the personal sphere. This emphasis on the personal sphere potentially leads to neglect of the social order because much energy and resources is used to focus on personal development at the expense of societal development. Thus, the preaching and teaching of these ministries can focus mainly on Christian devotional life at the expense of social and structural issues and challenges.

The second limit was that of the Holy Spirit. NPCs have come to represent the most consistent and intense emphasis on the power and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. As such, they do have significant potential role. This appears in practice as a focus amongst Neo-Pentecostals on their personal relationships with Jesus and the Holy Spirit, primarily experienced individually. In fact, Neo-Pentecostals privilege the Holy Spirit a great deal, overtly, emphasizing on individual relationship with the Holy Spirit. This was, validated by myriads of testimonies about what the Holy Spirit was doing in members' lives. Members spoke of their relationships with the Holy Spirit in personal terms such as 'my comforter', 'my guide', 'my friend', 'my counselor' among others. However, an overall emphasis on the Holy Spirit

could lead Neo-Pentecostals to downplay issues in civic and public life.

In addition, this overriding emphasis on the spiritual dimension of life and of social problems potentially promotes a dualistic worldview and subsequent neglect of worldly problems. Attributing anything negative in life to demonic forces also stifles NPCs from pragmatically engaging in issues that are non-spiritual at all. The overall emphasis on the spiritual dimension of life and social problems could mean Neo-Pentecostals limit their connection to public and civic life.

However, even more importantly, by emphasizing the exercise of spiritual gifts in the personal sphere or for personal gratification, Neo-Pentecostals risk paying less attention to the work of the Holy Spirit and not taking part in the struggle for social progress. Coupled with this is the emphasis on conversion and the act of being saved or born again. To many NPCs, one is either saved or not saved. This has in itself created exclusive groups of the 'saved' and 'born gain' types.

Fourthly, and on the question of sin and the fall of human kind, even more paradoxes emerge. Neo-Pentecostals take seriously the genesis account of the fall of humanity with implications that they view the earth as being tainted by sin. This leads them to mount many crusades, revival fellowships to convert people from sin. More importantly, they develop a dualistic view where the world is divided into two realms; the evil realm and the good realm.

Within this framework are widespread beliefs about the existence of a range of evil spirits. Viewing sin as entirely spiritual and individualized hinders pragmatic social engagement. Sin is likely to be spiritualized where there is an

overall emphasis on spiritual warfare. Neo-Pentecostals mostly view sin as existing at an individual level. They see the human sin as a source of humanity's greed and covetousness and what separates individuals from God.

While there is tremendous emphasis on personal sin, Neo-Pentecostals seem to place far less emphasis on sin as existing at a structural or social level. In stressing the personal and spiritual origins of sin, the structural elements of sin might be ignored or even rejected. As already indicated in chapter four, Neo-Pentecostal social indifference might arise from focusing so much on the individual as opposed to the social.

At the same time, seeing sin as entirely spiritual could promote other worldliness and looking to spiritual warfare for solutions rather than concretely addressing systemic injustices. Problems are also individualized. Sin is attributed to poor personal choices and answers to problems are sought through one's personal relations with Jesus and through faith in God. Hunt (2001:12) identified Pentecostal tendency to focus on individual rehabilitation rather than structural rebirth. As observed by Nwanko (2001:1), Pentecostals tend to stress personal rebirth to the neglect of social rebirth.

Fifthly, perceptions and understanding of the Kingdom of God can have its own limitations. Limitations could occur when Pentecostals view the Kingdom of God as entirely spiritual, fulfilled by preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and planting churches with a views to bring about a peoples' centered spiritual salvation. Focusing so much on spiritual evangelism and the Kingdom of God ignores social problems. Acknowledging the reality of social sin implies the Kingdom of God needs to break into society and all of creation, not

just enter the lives of individuals. Personal salvation occurs alongside social salvation, being worked into personal relationships, workplace, families, neighborhoods, nations and the world. As Sider (2002; 49-50), puts it:

In particular, people cannot be abstracted from their social settings. If my family dynamics are unhealthy, if all the good jobs have left my community, if my ethnic group is discriminated against, if my nation is facing a moral crisis, then my life will not be what God intended, regardless of my individual prosperity or spiritual peace.

Thus, a biblical understanding of persons therefore, should lead the Church to seek both spiritual renewal including institutions development, structural reforms and creation care. Sixthly and linked with the above is that this places God in a deeply personal role in the world, rather than an abstract one. According to Blombery (1989), Neo-Pentecostals view God in the images of a friend. God is also viewed in individualistic images such as father, friend, redeemer, comforter, helper, prince of peace, king and many others. These individualistic images of God mean that God is often viewed as a personal being who is concerned with individuals rather than a creator God concerned about all of creation.

Linked with this perception is the Neo-Pentecostal view of the world as a temporary place that will soon end. In addition, there can be a tendency to see God as very active in individual lives, remotely concerned with world events, but pay little attention to Gods role in sustaining creation. Lack of commitment to creation and environmental issues is attested by scarce mention of creation in Pentecostal discourse. The view of the world as evil is another shortcoming of Neo-Pentecostalism that can hamper meaningful engagement with the world.

Throughout field research, the researcher did not come across a single message on ethics. In this sense, we can conclude that the way Neo-Pentecostals view creation is linked to the way they view God as Father of creation. From the foregoing analysis, it is clear that Neo-Pentecostal beliefs and practices can present both open and closed door in respect of their engagement with issues in civic and public life.

8.2.3 Analysing the Implications of Recurring Emphases on issues Public and Civic Life

In chapter four, we also examined some of the most prevalent but controversial emphasis and themes promoted not just by the three churches, but most Neo-Pentecostal churches generally. These are the centrality of the Bible, oral theologies, prosperity gospel, faith healing, deliverance, demonology and spiritual causality, miracles, signs and wonders. Others include prayer and prayer mapping, prophesy and prophetic engagement. These emphases and themes engender tension and court controversy more than the doctrinal beliefs and teachings highlighted above. Here below we analyze these controversial beliefs, practices and their implications on civic and public life.

a) Centrality of the Bible

For most Neo-Pentecostals, the Bible as already said is the source of faith and doctrine, authority and power, revelation and prophecy, urgency and promise. The NPCs assign to the Bible a unique authority and importance. The scriptures are understood as the inspired word of God. Christians give authority to the bible because they believe God inspires it. To most Neo-Pentecostals, the Bible is unerring in every single detail and is to be taken literally. Both clergy

and laity lay tremendous emphases on the centrality of the Bible, which is captured by this common phraseology, 'the Bible says,' phraseology, and statement that gives finality to everything. The churches and laity both use the Bible as a law code and this leads to a legalistic theology (Mwaura & Parsitau 2012).

From the foregoing, it is suggested here that Neo-Pentecostals engagement with issues in civic and public life can be said to be motivated and shaped by their reading of scriptures. This has created its own tensions and ambiguities. First, Neo-Pentecostals hold their emphasis on salvation, evangelism and experience in tension with an emphasis on the authoritative role of the bible. This means that the Neo-Pentecostal beliefs and practices highlighted above are guided by a lofty regard for biblical authority, coupled with an inclination to take the words of scripture literally (Spittler 2002:109), leaving no room for a critical engagement with scriptures.

Secondly, the Bible acquires a sort of performative and prophetic usage and reading, which has already said has enhanced the status of the pastors and enlarged their powers. It is the anointed prophet of God who must actualize the biblical promises of one's' life. Sometimes, one gets the impression that the Bible is a preserve of anointed preachers who can affect it because of their gifts. He or she is the dispenser of blessings, grace and miracles. Yet, while the gift of prophecy and the role of the prophet are woven into the fabric of the early Judeo-Christian tradition, and may indisputably be a factor in the formation of many NPC, it is also a very problematic area. It can and has been used to promote a position of power and prestige by clergy.

Thirdly and related to the above is the observation that Neo-Pentecostals do not appear to apply a hermeneutics of suspicions towards their clergy or sermons. It was noted throughout field research that Neo-Pentecostals take scripture literary and do not seem to question their pastors or even critic scriptures. This is because they are taught that to do so is to disrespect the servant of God, which can attract wrath from God who protects his anointed servants. Fourthly and again related to this is the fact that Neo-Pentecostals do not appear to have a well-developed secular or public theology of power. Their reading of the Bible compels them to oppose some of the actions and attitudes of the state as we saw during the Constitution Review Process.

One key reason for this is that while Pentecostals view the Bible as authoritative over all areas of life, they pay relatively little attention to formal written theology. In fact, it is almost impossible to understand the churches' social and political thought without unraveling its relationship to the scriptures. This is one of the undeniably underlying tensions inherent in this understanding and reading of the Bible.

Apart from the centrality of the Bible, an important feature of Neo-Pentecostalism is its oral and non-academic theologies. Theological training and careful ministerial formation is de-emphasized in most Neo-Pentecostal churches although many are now establishing theological colleges. Instead, confidence, the art of public speaking and communication skills, spiritual experience and divine calling, prophecies and testimonies are privileged and appear to replace accreditation. These attributes or traits are all that is needed for anyone to start their own ministry or church as attested by the founders of

the three case studies.

It was also noted that at least at the beginning of the founding of their churches, none of the three Neo-Pentecostal clergy examined here have a theological training in a seminary or a theological school despite them being ordained to ministry and bearing titles such as Bishops, Reverend, pastor, teacher, evangelist and prophet. At the same time and because Neo-Pentecostal clergy often do not have theological education that is equivalent to their mainline church counterparts, coupled with the fact that they rely on personal testimony and divine calling over theological education means that they hardly or are not always adequately prepared to engage in civic and public issues.

Those without formal theological education often lack the tools of language, history, philosophy, theology and culture that most ecumenists find useful. As a result, it is difficult for Pentecostal leaders to contribute to these issues. This came out quite clearly during the Constitution Review Process as highlighted in chapter five. However, while they de-emphasize theological training, Neo-Pentecostal is obsessed with big titles. Most are now increasingly Dr, Bishop, Evangelist, Prophet/prophetess, Apostle and other such title. This has also created tremendous tensions and debates as the public questions their academic credentials.

b) Prosperity Gospel

An increasingly controversial feature of not just JIAM, MMC and FEM but also a majority of Kenyan Neo-Pentecostalism is their focus and promotion of the gospel of prosperity. Messages on prosperity and all its key ingredients such as success, victory, appear to be the bedrock of all these churches.

Teachings on giving occupy more than half of JIAM and MMC sermons. This gospel of prosperity has generated significant tensions, ambiguities and attracted criticism, one of them being the perception that its proponents are fleecing their flock.

c) Faith Healing and Deliverance

Stress on faith healing and deliverance theologies equally generates its own tensions. To start with, the tendency to attribute spiritual causality to non-spiritual problems including serious problems such as cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, HIV and AIDS can give people false hope and lead to many not seeking proper medical attention.

d) Spiritual Warfare

Emphasis on spiritual warfare also poses serious challenges and engenders its own tensions. It could promote a dualistic worldview where the world and morality are divided into divine or demonic parts that are good and evil. This promotes social disengagement by posing struggles as otherworldly (in the spirit realm against spiritual beings), rather than worldly in society against structural evil). Spiritualizing issues can lead to social problems being seen as wholly because of demonic action in the spiritual realm, not in the context of structural or systemic inequalities present in the material world.

e) Miracles, Signs and Wonders

Belief and over emphasis on the miraculous, signs and wonders can lead to a tendency to over spiritualize issues that are non-spiritual. Neo-Pentecostals spiritualize issues that have nothing to do with the spirit realm. Prayer of exorcism or healing becomes the remedy for social ills as opposed to

restructuring the political economy. Prayer not human effort is seen as the solution for personal and national problems as Nwanko (2001) observed amongst African Pentecostals. Even road accidents, insecurity, terrorism, floods, bad governance are all blamed on evil spirits not human era.

c) Prayer, Prayer Mapping and Prophetic Engagement as the Solution

Prayers, prayer mapping, intercessions and prophetic engagement are modes that NPCs appropriate in civic and public issues. However, they seem not to have translated into significant prophetic voice that can hold governments and people to account. For example, in many of the prophecies issued by the clergy as discussed in the texts, they merely mention the things that will happen without analyzing them. For example, prophecies by Bishop Muiro focused on floods, road accidents, violence among others yet the only way forward suggested is for people to repent and prayed to God concerning those prophecies. Other than legitimizing the status of the man or woman of God or the prophet of God and entrenching the office of the prophet/prophetess, prophetic engagement has not fostered meaningful prophetic voice that can hold a government to account.

Neither has it fostered a culture of social or even political activism. Despite tremendous daily prayers, prayer mapping, spiritual warfare and prophetic engagement. The churches have not been so uncritical of the dysfunctional system. They have not translated to meaningful social transformation. Another major question often asked about Kenyan NPC is why their tremendous growth and vitality have not translated into a moral reform of

the Kenyan society.

Kenya is one of the most corrupt nations in Africa despite the intensity of Neo-Pentecostal preaching, evangelistic campaigns and crusades, prayers, prayer mapping, prayer watch, intercession and prophetic engagement. Corruption, nepotism, negative ethnicity, and other social ills still plague a Christian country such as Kenya. The conclusion is that Neo-Pentecostals need to enlarge their prophetic voice to go beyond just issuing prophecies but also provide a rationale for meaningful and pragmatic engagement with civic and public life issues.

To sum up the issues raised in this section, we showed that there are a number of internal ambiguities inherent in Kenyan Neo-Pentecostalism particularly in respect of some of the doctrinal beliefs, teachings and practices promoted by the churches. To mediate these extremes, there is need for a spirituality that addresses socio-economic and political issues through a more pragmatic theology of engagement. Next, we focus on practical ways in which Neo-Pentecostals engage with social and economic issues as discussed in chapters five, six, seven and eight.

8.3.1 Broad Features of Neo-Pentecostal Social Engagement

While there is an over emphasis on the spiritual realm on the part of Kenyan Neo-Pentecostalism, there are also signs of social, economic and political engagement even if this is done using spiritual resources. In fact, field research yielded a different picture in respect of social engagement. In chapters five and at a micro-structural level, the researcher found sufficient evidence that all the three NPCs have made a strong social impact. Some of these

features were discussed under three broad themes, namely: social, economic, political and civic engagements.

a) A Practical Gospel of Social Engagement

Field research revealed that the three churches are engaged with their societies. They have done this through the preaching and promotion of a practical gospel of social inclusivity, establishment of social welfare and mercy ministries, humanitarian and relief engagement, rehabilitation, in the provision of psychological counseling as well as stress relief and emotional wellbeing, among others. Other features of social engagement undertaken by the three churches include personal, communal and societal wellbeing, redeeming and protecting the family sphere and wellbeing and acting as a social glue and moral fabric of society, granting members a moral framework for living as well as character formation and reformation.

In terms of public involvement, Neo-Pentecostals are generally interested in social work: schools, orphanages, health institutions; outreaches to drug addicts, street urchins, prostitutes and lately, HIV and AIDS. This gives the impression that Neo-Pentecostals would rather seek to nurse and rehabilitate the victims of predatory socio-political system than to directly challenge the oppressive structures of the society. However, it seemed that FEM had more social and humanitarian ministries than both JIAM and MMC

b) Protecting the Family Sphere

As well as transforming individuals and communities, all the three churches strive to protect the family sphere through restructuring the family unit. The focus and continual stress on the family as the basic unit of society

and as an institution ordained by God is significant. For this reason, Neo-Pentecostals believe their message is directed first to individuals and families than to social and political institutions. In all the three churches, there is a strong emphasis on family life and values. NPCs generally focus on the family in three ways: namely through character and moral formation, a focus on children, the youth (both male and female), and finally and more importantly, a focus on the institution of marriage and family stability.

To start with, NPCs promote a godly character that stresses on the importance of sobriety, honesty, cleanliness, good manners and many others that have a direct consequence on family health and wellbeing. Born again Christians are often urged and exalted to live moral and disciplined lives. There is also a continued emphasis on holiness and self-control.

These findings are further validated by many studies carried out elsewhere, for example, CDE (2008); Maxwell (2006); Ruth Marshall (1998); Asamoah-Gyadu (2005); Parsitau (2009); they show the impact of Pentecostalism on moral formation. In all the three churches observed during field research and as demonstrated in chapter five, 'born again' members are offered a moral framework, patterned on scriptures to help them redirect their energies and aspirations all of which translate into better families, better relationships and healthier communities. They are often taught that they can become better persons if they follow the word of God that transforms and empowers.

A standard phraseology in all the three churches was that when one gave their lives to Christ, they would never be the same again. They would be

transformed individuals, men and women of character, integrity and honor.¹ For these reasons, it can be argued that all the three churches have indeed protected the family, the home and the personal spheres of growing millions of people by ensuring harmony and protecting their personal spaces from stress. Their commitment to their families and their commitments to rebuild strong families amidst communities shattered by social, cultural and economic dislocations are therefore commendable. The focus on the family has been one of the most significant emphases for three Neo-Pentecostal ministries.

Lastly, is the social empowerment and transformation accruing from joining these churches? In particular we noted the empowerment particularly of vulnerable groups such as women and youth leading to individual and societal transformation. This cannot be underestimated particularly in helping people transcend insurmountable challenges that they grapple with.

c) The Creation of Social and Spiritual Capital

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the three churches lies in their creation of social and spiritual capital among their members. This is important and is evident particularly in the building of social trust and networks among their congregants. On social and spiritual capital, we identified a number of themes, five of which are important; spiritual/social capital, creation of self-esteem and confidence, social trust, religious networking, and social fabric. Their core business was that of nurturing self-hood, a positive attitude, a sense of personal identity and destiny, self-worth and self-reliance, all of which are key traits in the Neo-Pentecostal character that enables adherents to operate as individuals in a volatile environment.

The creation of social capital is evident in all the three churches where members are engaged in both communal and personal developments. Respondents from the three churches suggested that the dominant forms of support they received from their communities were spiritual (prayer, encouragement), and material support (solidarity, trust). Thus, all the three churches remain significant in building religious and social capital within their respective communities. For these reasons, and as pointed out in chapter five, the churches continued to address the personal security of their members, particularly the poor and vulnerable groups who remain their largest constituencies.

d) The Creation of Self-esteem and Confidence

Another significant contribution of these churches is in the creation of self-esteem and confidence. All the three churches are involved in helping their members build and develop self-esteem and confidence. This was especially observed during conferences, workshops and symposia where teachings and sermons focused on motivation speak. The sermons appeared to encourage, uplift and affirm members positively, thereby building their confidence and self-esteem. More than half of the women interviewed across the three churches revealed that belonging to these churches had helped them develop increased self-esteem and confidence and their lives.ⁱⁱ More women than men acknowledged the role of these churches in helping them attain self-esteem and confidence.

These churches achieve these through their daily, weekly or monthly sermons and teachings. To start with, there was incredible affirmation of

congregants during sermons and theologizing. The words used during sermons and teachings were not just positive and affirming but also inspiring as well. For example, in one of FEM ladies conferences attended by the researcher, the preacher told women that they were beautify and fearfully made by God and that they ought to celebrate their bodies with all their flaws since God created them wonderfully (P.O 12/8/2009). These findings are corroborated by many other studies in Africa and Latin America (Brusco 1985; Campos 1999; Martin 1999; Parsitau 2010; 2011; Parsitau & Mwaura 2010). A common denominator noted and highlighted by all these studies was that converting to Pentecostalism helped its followers develop, build and nurture self-esteem and confidence

8.3.2 Economic Engagement

With respect to the social and economic transformation, several important points emerged during field research. These were entrepreneurship, micro-finance and business culture, work ethics and financial thrift and discipline. Others included employment, skills, acumens and life competencies as well as addressing poverty using practical and spiritual resources. More importantly was the creation of a motivated psych, high levels of self-motivation and hope and courage in the face of uncertainty that not only translates to a better life but also a better society.

In chapter five, we showed how conversion to Neo-Pentecostalism was shaping alternative ethics of conduct, marketing and networking. This is because in these churches, converts learned new skills and life competencies including how to budget, plan and account for their finances in a bid to

enhance their economic practices and ideals. In so doing, these churches helped in fostering and inculcating productive economic and entrepreneurial tendencies that have important implications for social and economic development.

In addition, there is the morality and life orientation of the typical congregants. These included a disciplined attitude to work, an equally disciplined attitude to other spheres of life, a deferral of instant consumption among others that is typical of many Neo-Pentecostals. Consequently, this led to a culture of savings and capital accumulation, a trait noted among Pentecostals in African and Latin American Pentecostals. This development is corroborated by the CDE (2008) Report.

f) Social Transformation and Empowerment

In chapter five, we argued that the three churches seemed largely successful in bringing about social transformation and empowerment. First, more than half of respondents described how being born again changed or transformed their lives, gave them a sense of meaning and belonging, self-esteem and confidence. Secondly, and in all the three churches, members described how their churches offered them the intensity of spiritual life that helped them overcome alcoholism, family breakdown and other social ills to recover self-respect.

The NPCs represent the most consistent and intense emphasis on the power of the gifts of the spirit. To start with, all the three churches focused on individual transformation. The individual, it was argued, was empowered personally and directly first by the experience of salvation and secondly by the

experience of the Holy Spirit. Individual empowerment is needed to cope with the pressures of poverty and social alienation. It is here that the Pentecostal experience of prayer and the Holy Spirit is a crucial resource for individuals. It is largely believed that individual empowerment leads to societal empowerment.

To a lesser extent, all the NPCs reviewed above are characterized by a moving sense of a spiritual encounter and a corresponding sense of joy, happiness and optimism among congregants. Thirdly, and a critical contribution of the three churches is the spiritual empowerment of the laity. The study shows that lay empowerment lies at the heart of each of the case studies. The fourth is empowerment of the poor and marginalized. David Martin (1996:167) and Anthony Balcomb (2008) have identified specific impacts of Pentecostalism in Latin America and South Africa.

Our study has corroborated the findings of these studies as well as the impact of the NPCs in Kenya. A very important function of Pentecostalism that Martin isolates is that it has provided an avenue for the recognition and integration of marginalized people. In fact, Martin describes Pentecostalism as the movement for the mobilization of the culturally despised.

This study therefore found out that there was enough evidence from the three NPCs to contest the stereotype of Pentecostals as otherworldly and disengaged from society. They respond to social economic context and issues confronting their members using religious resources. They offer hope and lived solutions to combat intensifying poverty, marginalization, insecurity and structural causes.

8.3.3 Socio-Political Engagement

In respect of public and civic engagement, we demonstrated with examples how the initial Neo-Pentecostal attitude of non-engagement with issues in civic and public life is being replaced by a more favorable disposition towards full political engagement. We concluded that the three churches are politically, publically and civically engaged even though the level of this varies from one church to the other.

What conclusions can one make concerning Neo-Pentecostal engagement with civic/public life and their contribution to the democratic process in Kenya? First, despite doctrinal similarities, the nature and content of Neo-Pentecostal political interventions differ considerably. Historically and as demonstrated in chapter six, they have varied from active opposition to change and preservation of the status quo, to apparent neutrality and indifference, to active participation in the democratic processes of change.

The differing attitudes among Neo-Pentecostals towards politics and the general democratization process as well as their varied views of the appropriate aims and methods of engagement were also noted. In this respect then, they are not different from other sectors of society. Their political contribution depends on other factors such as culture, gender and development. The opposition to a new constitutional dispensation is indicative of their opposition to change and the desire to maintain the status quo. At the same time, most Neo-Pentecostals more generally respond more or less predictably on certain moral issues such as abortion and homosexuality no matter what their ethnic, class or culture, varying from zero tolerance on these issues to qualified intolerance.

Yet it is not appropriate to conclude that because Pentecostals are intolerant with respect to social and moral issues are intolerant and others are tolerant, or that Pentecostals are anti-democratic or at least unable to contribute to democratization. On the contrary, their vigorous exercise of their constitutionally protected right to express themselves on these issues demonstrates that rather than being alienated from the transformation of Kenya, they are carving out a space for themselves in the new dispensation. They also regard themselves as citizens who have a stake in the wellbeing of their country. Their opposition of the new constitution however controversial it was contributed to a healthy climate of debates essential to any democracy.

With regard to the new constitution, it seemed that it was its liberalism that stirred disquiet among many Pentecostals. Some Pentecostals like those in many countries like South Africa joined the debates because they saw an opportunity to engage in an important debate concerning the nature, extent and appropriateness of individual rights and civil liberties.

Yet their position on such issues exposed Pentecostal clergy as a group whose theology was ill prepared to engage pragmatically with such issues. Their position on the kadhi courts controversy not only exposed them as intolerant of other faiths but that many may harbor traits bordering on Islamophobia. Given these observations then, how have the opinions, beliefs, interventions and attitudes of Pentecostals discussed above contributed to the democratization and transformation of the Kenyan society?

To start with, the relative influence of these leaders and movements, or their ability to effect change in accordance with their beliefs depends on two

factors: their strategic placement within the society and politics and their sheer sizes in terms of numbers. JIAM and MMC appear to have inculcated a culture of democratic ideals where members of these two churches exhibited significant understanding of politics and issues in public and civic life. Many viewed elective politics as Christian projects in which they have a right to participate. The three churches seem interested in the promotion of civic consciousness, an emphasis on citizenship, obeying the law, respecting property and challenging corruption.

This has ushered in a new dispensation where ordinary Christians can participate and determine how a new Kenya should not only evolve but also how it should be governed. Yet, this freshness and eagerness has also brought about excesses and intolerance not only with members of non-Christian faith but also between church and state. With respect to questions on the role of religion in public life specifically politics, nearly all of the respondents in JIAM and MMC indicated that Christians must play active roles in public life. Members of these two churches viewed politics positively as Christian projects in which all must be involved as demonstrated in chapter six.

They were equally more positively receptive of their clergy being involved in politics, believing that their actions were God ordained and they must therefore obey God's call. This was not surprising as most Neo-Pentecostals rarely question their clergy nor imbue other motives other than what their clergy told them. "How do you question God", one respondent put frankly, "if God called them to politics, it is because he looked around and saw none that was worthy of this responsibility".ⁱⁱⁱ

Pastors actively mobilized electoral support for members. Sometimes, such support was `divinely` buttressed by prophecies (Both Bishop Wanjiru of JIAM and Bishop Pius Muiro of MMC) claimed having received prophecies about their political aspirations. For example, Bishop Margaret Wanjiru of JIAM served in the Kenyan Parliament and cabinet as an Assistant Minister for Housing while Bishop Pius Muiro of MMC was both a Parliamentary and Presidential aspirant in the 2007 General Elections. Both have played prominent roles in elective politics, constitutional matters, human rights issues, policy and advocacy, promoting national cohesion and healing, and prayer for the nation among others.

Members of FEM differed markedly from those of JIAM and MMC in terms of the role of the clergy in public life and their views seemed to be in tandem with the views of the public that appear to suggest that while clergy should question social and political issues, they must keep off from elective politics. This position seemed to correspond with that of Evangelist Wairimu who believed that she had been called to preach the gospel of salvation and had no business being in active politics.

However, she has equally become increasingly influential in politics by courting and hosting politicians, presidents and other powerful personalities such as President Uhuru Kenyatta and his Deputy William Ruto as well as Hon Kalonzo Musyoka among others in her church. Evangelist Teresia Wairimu is also very influential on a non-official basis. Besides her ministry being prominently engaged in social and humanitarian undertakings than JIAM and MMC, her ministry is also prominent in peacekeeping, reconciliation, conflict

resolution, and national cohesion efforts.

Each of these leading personalities and religious founders alongside others from a variety of NPCs participated and contributed in one way or another in the constitution review process through civic education, advocacy, and inculcation culture of civic engagement. Despite the fact that they all opposed the passage of the new constitution and vehemently campaigned for its rejection during the two national referenda, their efforts ought to be commended at least for the fact that they voiced their concerns about how Kenya should or should not be governed. Besides, all the three ministries actually promote civic consciousness by laying great emphasis in good citizenship.

Other than the direct modes of socio-political engagements, we also noted other indirect ones with respect to these churches. And on this, we pointed out to the ever more overt role played by revelations and prophecies in Neo-Pentecostal Worldview, of the direct intervention of the divine in human and national even global affairs and the tendency to put God in everything, from politics to entertainment to business and marketing. We argued these new and indirect modes of engagement are just as important as the direct modes.

Ruth Fratani-Marshall (1998) insists that Pentecostal discourse on current economic and legitimacy crisis perceives power as being under-girded by a spiritual force and entails a bold attack on the states:

In its engagement with local forms of knowledge and practice, it develops an ongoing critical debate about government, one which not only indicts the immorality and inequality at the heart of domination, but does this by using a language and imagery that resonates with the imagination of the dominated. Pentecostalism is a political force not merely as a result of successful competition within the religious field-providing the spiritual and material benefits others did not. Its radical success in conversion has as much to do with the fact that it re-conceptualizes the moral order, claiming a redemptive vision of citizenship in which the moral government of the self is linked to the power to influence the conduct of others. To align oneself with the wrong sort of supernatural and material powers, is to regulate one's conduct according to the wrong set of precepts opens up the space in which the failure of a nation is manifested.

Yet, despite contributing to national politics by participating in elective politics, engaging in debates about human rights and constitutionalism, paradoxes and ambiguities were also noted as discussed in chapter six. It is worth noting that Christian-Muslim relations were most strained when Neo-Pentecostals joined in debates about constitutionalism and human rights.

8.4 Engagements with Mass media Communication Technologies

One of the assumptions of this study was that the Neo-Pentecostal use and appropriation of mass media communication technologies propelled these churches and their founders into public prominence. This premise has been found to be true. In chapter seven, we analyzed the dominance of Neo-Pentecostal programmes on the media scene, which has had an overall impact on the popularity of this type of Christianity (Gifford, 2004:33).

We noted how contemporary evangelism in the hands of Neo-Pentecostals and charismatics, has harnessed new media and technologies and combined them with the logic of consumer advertising to spread the word far and wide through music, CD, DVDs, audio tapes, televangelism and online forums and social sites such as face book and Twitter (Hackett 1998; Adogame 2012, Meyer 2002; 2006).

By appropriating these forms of media communication technologies, combined with marketing and advertising methodologies as well as entertainment, Neo-Pentecostals have created a form of evangelism, which is energetic, enticing and ubiquitous. In this sense, it is suggested here that Neo-Pentecostalism in Kenya as well as elsewhere has made a vital place for itself in the domains of politics, the market and the mass media, seeking to bend them for its own purposes Freeman (2012). As such, these churches are therefore great agents of development and economic growth as discussed in chapter five.

From our analysis, we can argue that through the media these churches 'are molding what counts as Christianity in Kenya. Through their media ministries particularly televised Christianities, the Pentecostals have planted, their brand of Christianity firmly in and within Kenya's public space and in the process weakened denominational loyalties of Kenyan Christianity.

8.5 Neo-Pentecostalism, Women and Public Life

Another premise of this study was that Neo-Pentecostalism has changed the positions of women and enlarged their roles in civic and public life. Neo-Pentecostals have been largely successful in the area of youth and women empowerment. The following factors make these three churches stand out: first and perhaps the strongest impact on the Kenyan society is their commitment to women. The women are not only critical to the very lifeline, sustenance and survival of these churches but have also benefited in various ways. It is possible to enumerate some of these non-quantifiable and tangible benefits of belonging to these churches.

To start with, women have benefited spiritually and emotionally from the teachings espoused by the churches. They have attained physical and psychological healing and wellbeing due to the woman-focused deliverance and healing ministries. However, it is in the area of self-esteem and self-confidence where we have seen tremendous results. Women have drawn on inspiration, mentorship and role modeling from Bishop Wanjiru and Evangelist Wairimu. Both can be considered as pace setters given the fact that both are single women who have defied norms and culture to emerge as leading religious functionaries, and leading personalities in public life.

Bishop Wanjiru's for example has served the purpose of showing Kenyan women that it is possible to be successful even against all odds. Her 'rag to riches' story tells of a woman who not only overcame all manner of odds and challenges but has also contested patriarchy, culture, tradition, sexism and politics to emerge as a spiritual and political leader. Evangelist Wairimu has used her personal story and ministry to single women to encourage women to rise above victim-hood, single hood to become respectable role models.

8.6 CONCERNS ABOUT NEO-PENTECOSTALS

Throughout field research, the researcher came across a number of concerns raised about Neo-Pentecostals more generally. Key among these concerns is the emphasis on the gospel of prosperity.

a) Prosperity teachings and its challenges

Perhaps the greatest concern that the researcher encountered throughout field research was that there were significant levels of concerns that some pastors are eager to enrich themselves at the expense of their devout but naïve

followers. The researcher encountered great concerns from members of the public and a section of Christians that some of the entrepreneurial pastors were out to exploit both members and non-members alike. Many critics suggested that the proponents and televangelists appear to prey on a nation-seeking succor, promise of prosperity and easy solutions gospel. These concerns were pervasive and should not be ignored.

b) Tendency to over Spiritualize Issues

Another serious concern of the NPCs is their tendency to over-spiritualize most issues even those that are not spiritual. This inability to divorce issues from spiritual lenses hampers their pragmatic engagement with significant issues in public life. There is also the fact that spiritualizing issues leads to escapism and the inability to take personal responsibilities for individual weakness. Social sins that are often blamed on the devil and lack of accountability.

For example, Neo-Pentecostals often view moral lapse such as marital infidelity or unfaithfulness, corruption and stealing as the work of Satan or demons and therefore tend to be less judgmental of the sinner and more likely to rely on exorcism to deal with the sin. On this, they have been criticized for failing to take responsibility of failures. Instead, they blame the devil for their own inadequacies. This encourages lack of accountability among both the clergy and laity.

c) Theological Training of Clergy

In Kenya, the issue of the training of pastors has generated its own tensions. While the well-established Pentecostal churches have seminaries and

Bible colleges where their clergy are trained, the Neo-Pentecostals emphasize charismatic and pneumatic gifts above formal training. The tendency among the latter is to regard seminary-trained pastors as cold and lacking in evangelical fervor (Adeboye 2003). In addition, while some Neo-Pentecostal pastors may be educated, they lack professional pastoral and counseling training and grooming, they only learn on the job. Such pastors insist that they have been equipped by a “divine call,” which they had in a dream, vision, prophecy, or through some inner illumination. They therefore consider this call more important than formal training. However, this only explains and exposes their inadequacies.

Theological training and careful ministerial formation is deemphasized. Instead, confidence, the art of public speaking and communication skills, spiritual experience and divine calling are all that is needed for anyone to start their own ministry or church. Divine calling and testimonies also appear to replace accreditation. For these reasons, all the three clergy namely Bishops, Wanjiru, Muiru and Evangelist Wairimu (at least while I was conducting field research) do not appear to have attended any Bible School or theological institution. All come from professional backgrounds. Wanjiru and Muiru come from marketing and business backgrounds while Wairimu is a trained teacher.

Interestingly, all have been ordained as bishops and evangelists even without theological training. In addition, to give credibility and image as leaders of successful religious organizations, they are now increasingly added new titles such as Dr Bishop and Evangelist or all of the above. This has drawn

a lot of criticism from a section of the public. However, there are signs that some Neo-Pentecostal clergy are now beginning to study theology or are pursuing higher education, subjecting their own ministries to critical academic study as insiders. Such a move can diffuse tensions and help bridge the gap between the academy and experiential faith that exposed the deficiencies of the movement. It might further diffuse criticisms and help them acquire some level of respectability.

Since Neo-Pentecostal leaders often do not have adequate theological education that is equivalent to their mainline church counterparts, they are not always adequately prepared to engage in ecumenical debates and discussions. Those without formal theological education often lack the tools of language, history, philosophy, theology and culture that most ecumenists find useful. As a result, it is difficult for Pentecostal leaders to engage in ecumenical conversations.

d) Big Man/Woman Syndrome, Inaccessibility of Clergy

One of the most frustrating concerns that the researcher came across during field research is the inaccessibility of the big men and women of God who are shielded by security details. Neo-Pentecostal clergy have become virtually inaccessible to the common person who has to book appointments to see these clergy. Besides, Neo-Pentecostal clergy have cultivated a sense of self-importance that makes them special people who are inaccessible to the laypersons.

e) **Authoritarianism**

Paradoxically, there is also need for them to reform their internal authority structures, which are more authoritarian than democratic. This internal authoritarian structure is evident in many Pentecostal churches in Kenya, particularly in the larger and more established churches where the founders have become authoritarian and unchallenged.

8.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above issues and concerns raised, we would like to suggest a number of recommendations for Neo-Pentecostals engagement with issues in public life. In respect of Neo-Pentecostal engagement with issues in civic and public life, there is need for Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals to create a more active public role, for themselves, which goes beyond social work by intervening in civic, political, policy and social issues. Neo-Pentecostals should enlarge their civic and public roles as well as forge new interactions with civil society to bring meaningful development. While there is some level of public engagement as discussed in the texts, they, there is room for improvement in order to sustain this trend and encourage greater and more effective ways of public and civic engagement.

Related to this is the sort of disconnect or lack of balance between humanitarianism and social justice in respect of Kenyan Neo-Pentecostalism. Christian churches tend to focus more on works of charity but fail to respond to structural injustices prevalent in society. There is need for Neo-Pentecostal churches to forge a broader worldview of civic and public life issues. There is also little or no biblical basis for socio-political engagement and not enough

reflection on righteousness in the public sphere.

Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals have not developed the critical resources needed to engage meaningfully and prophetically with secular powers. Neo-Pentecostal churches have an enormous potential to influence public morality and ethics because like all other religious organizations, they are the custodians of morals and social issues.

More importantly, Neo-Pentecostals need to develop a culture of respect and tolerance for non-Christian faiths. The Kadhi/Islamic courts controversy portrayed Pentecostal clergy and groups as people ill equipped to engage other cultures. They created enormous strains between Christians and Muslims. The way these churches went about with the constitutional review process strained relations not just between Christians and Muslims but church and state. There is need for a theology of interfaith engagement, tolerance for non-Christian faiths and a general respect for other faiths.

There is also urgent need to de-emphasize the prosperity gospel and place more emphasis on the social and political issues. Today, Christian bookstores are filled with prosperity literature, motivation speak and other self-help material but virtually no resources to help Christians to engage the state. No amount of prayer and prophesy can change nations. All these lead to a distinct disconnect between faith and practice.

Kenya being over 80% Christian has not translated into social or moral reform and transformation. There is urgent need to balance between spirituality and practice in order to bring about meaningful social transformation. This is because those engaged in development would argue that

a more skilled, educated and empowered people could take control of their own lives. Evangelicals would argue that a people driven by compassion, honesty and integrity would transform society. The position adopted here is that the one thing that would best affect Kenya is what the churches conspicuously avoid.

Another vital contribution, which Pentecostal churches could make to the political development of the nation, is to re-orientate their members by emphasizing personal responsibility and de-emphasizing the spiritual and the miraculous. There is need to de-emphasize the miraculous, the spiritual and engage more pragmatically. There is also need for congregants to employ a theology of suspicions or a hermeneutics of suspicions about their clergy, to critic them and hold them to account and de-emphasize personality cults and train more clergy in theological colleges.

This would go a long way in making individuals accountable for their choices and actions. All the above recommendations could be summed up in the words of Paul Freston (1995) that” at the institutional level in Africa, Pentecostal churches may be better in their overall effect on democratic consolidation even if less important for democratic inauguration than mainline churches.”

8.8 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In future, scholars should consider the politics of succession in NPCs. One of the issues arising from this study is that NPCs are personality led and heavily depended on the founder. There was no evidence of succession in all the three churches as all are registered under the name of the founder and his/her family. In addition, the social, economic, political and cultural impact

of social media on the youth who heavily appropriate this type of media should be considered as this was beyond the scope of this study. In addition, there is need to understand the relationship between Neo-Pentecostals and human rights. This is because in Neo-Pentecostal understanding, everyone is made in the image of God, and all people have equal value in God's sight.

At its root, Pentecostalism is a religion of the people: everyone has the right to interpret scriptures for themselves; they are not dependent on a priestly class. Believers have direct access to God, not needing a mediator, and everyone has a role within the body of Christ, regardless of social class, race, ethnicity, and family lineage. The social and political implications of these theological views are quite radical. They establish the basis for democratic rule in which all persons are equal, have a right to cast a vote as a member of the community, and in which established authorities can be questioned as one claims the right to personal interpretation of scripture.

There is also need to devote more attention to the limits and excesses of Pentecostalism and create room for critique. A viable starting point here is the recent concerns with fake pastors. Taking seriously complaints and concerns, that point towards internal contradictions would be a viable starting point for a nuanced critique of Pentecostalism, based on peoples own experiences, narratives and ideas. The point here is to develop a keen eye on the cracks, loose ends and paradoxes that reveal certain limits of Pentecostal churches and clergy capacity to achieve what they claim.

We need to relate their rise and downfall to other religious traditions, maintain a fresh outlook that could yield new theoretical insights via critical

investigation of our own assumptions. There is also need to study the rise of self-proclaimed prophets such as Prophet David Owuor who commands thousands of followers as well as new claims for miracles and faith healing.

ⁱ This common phraseology and theme was recurrently evident across the three case studies. NPC's

ⁱⁱ Self-esteem is here understood as seeing oneself as having value. In these churches, people are taught that they are valuable, that they are children of God, loved by God.

ⁱⁱⁱ James Maina of JIAM answer during an interview in 4/8/2009 in Nairobi

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire for Church Leaders

Instructions

Kindly complete with tick or a written response where appropriate

1. Personal Data

- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Name | 4. Level of education | 7. Occupation |
| 2. Age | 5. Position in the Church | 8. Denomination |
| 3. Marital Status | 6. Gender | |

Name of Ministry _____

No. of Branches _____

No of Employees _____

2. General Questions

When did you start/join the church/ministry?

What was your previous carrier?

What was your previous religious background?

What motivated you to start the church/ministry?

What challenges have you faced in your ministry?

How many services do you hold per week?

Do you have any special programmes for members of your church?

What roles and activities do women play and perform in your church?

Have you ordained women to serve in your church?

Do you use any kind of media technologies in your ministry?

If yes, what types of media technologies do you use and why?

How do you finance media ministries in your church?

Appendix B: Questionnaire for the Church Members

1. Names
2. Age
3. Marital Status
4. Level of Education
5. Position in the church
6. Gender
7. Occupation
8. Denomination

General Information

1. When were you saved?
2. When did you join the church/ministry?
3. What attracts you to this church?
4. How often do you get involved in church activities?
5. What part of church services do you enjoy most?
6. What teachings and practices particularly appeal to you in your present church?
7. What is the role of church in society?
8. What is the role of the church in politics?
9. Do you know who founded this church?
10. How have you benefited from this church?

Appendix C: Questionnaire for Ex-Membres

1. Names
 2. Age
 3. Marital Status
 4. Level of Education
 5. Position in the church
 6. Gender
 7. Occupation
 8. Denomination
1. When did you first join your former church?
 2. What attracted you to the church in the first place?
 3. Did you benefit from your former church spiritually or otherwise?
 4. Did attending this church change your life in any way? If yes, how?
 5. When did you leave and why?
 6. Did you inform your ex-church leaders about your intentions to leave the Church?
 7. What issues and challenges did you experience in your former church?
 8. What church do you attend now?

Appendix D: Interview Guide for Focus Group Discussions

1. When did you join the church?
3. What is your understanding of the role of church in society?
4. Is your church involved in improving the lives of people and society?
5. What ministries and programmes has your church initiated and why?
6. How often do you participate in church activities?
7. What motivates you to participate in church activities?
8. What are the roles of women in your church?
9. Has your church empowered women in any way?
10. What are some of the challenges that your church has faced?
11. Has your life changed in any way since you joined this church?

Appendix E: Participant Observation Schedule

1. Church, place, time, activity observed, participants class/status/age, gender
2. Observed church services, order of services, mode of worship, demographic, social, corporate features, structures, social and humanitarian ministries, media ministries, evangelistic and mission undertaking such as crusades, mid-week meetings all night prayers, youth fellowships.
3. Sunday services, prayer, singing, praise and worship, sermons, interpretations, styles of preaching, sermons presentations, offering collections, testimonies, faith healing and deliverance services.
4. Major social, economic and political themes: healings, deliverance, sin, the significance and use of the Bible, response to social issues such as HIV/AIDS, drug and substance abuse, same sex marriages, politics, constitution matters, women empowerment.
5. Resources: media devices both print and electronic equipment is, including audio-visual televised religious programmes, recording of sermons, editing, observing use of instruments.
6. Women activities: prayer fellowships, conference, conventions, single women meetings, married couples retreats

LIST OF RESPONDENTS

Table 1: List of Respondents.

Name	Sex	Age	Church	Occupation and Position in Church	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
Peris Njoki	F	30	JIAM	Member and teacher	Nairobi	5/1/2009
Peter Mwaura	M	45	JIAM	Member and Businessman	Nairobi	5/1/2009
Everline Ndunge	F	42	JIAM	Member and teacher	Nairobi	5/1/2009
Grace Kamende	F	50	JIAM	Member and Businesswoman	Nairobi	5/1/2009
Philis Kilonzo	F	45	JIAM	Usher and Teacher	Nairobi	5/1/2009
Eunice Wangui	F	38	JIAM	Member and Nurse	Nairobi	12/1/2009
Kamau Njoroge	M	35	JIAM	Member and Taxi Driver	Nairobi	12/5/2009
Wambui Ngugi	F	52	JIAM	Member and Air hostess	Nairobi	12/1/2009
Stephanie Wairimu	F	20	JIAM	Member and University Student	Nairobi	12/1/2009
Karanja	M	45	JIAM	Member and	Nairobi	12/1/2009

Josephat				Matatu Driver		
Denis Onyango	M	35	JIAM	Choir member/ shopkeeper	Nairobi	19/1/2009
Fanis Moraa	F	30	JIAM	Member and secretary	Nairobi	19/1/2009
Kamau Waigwa	M	25	JIAM	Member and artist	Nairobi	19/1/2009
Elias Waigura	M	40	JIAM	Member and business	Nairobi	19/1/2009
Jane Ngonyo	F	28	JIAM	Housewife	Nairobi	19/1/2009
Linnet Wangui	F	30	JIAM	Businesswoman	JIAM	22/1/2009
Harry Kamau	M	35	JIAM	Taxi Driver	JIAM	22/1/2009
Dennis Kamau	M	38	JIAM	Businesswoman	JIAM	22/1/2009
Phaneul Ndungu	M	39	JIAM	Administrator	JIAM	22/1/2009
Charles Ndungu	M	35	JIAM	Software engineer	JIAM	22/1/2009
Jane Achieng	F	35	JIAM	Dressmaker	JIAM	2/2/2009

Name	Sex	Age	Church	Occupation and Position in Church	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
Catherine Kirigo	F	41	FEM Nakuru	Secretary	Nakuru Town	1/2/2009
Nancy Gitau	F	55	FEM Nakuru	Business Woman	Nakuru Town	8/2/2009
Mary Mwangi	F	35	FEM Nakuru	Teacher	Nakuru Town	15/2/2009
Emily Rotich	F	48	FEM Nakuru	Banker	Nakuru Town	22/2/2009
Samary Kessei	F	50	FEM Nakuru	Accountant	Nakuru Town	1/3/2009
Anne Kiarie	F	45	FEM Nakuru	Housewife	Nakuru Town	8/3/2009
Edith Kariuki	F	40	FEM Nakuru	Secretary	Nakuru Town	8/32009
Mrs. Kahare	F	56	FEM Nakuru	Pastor	Nakuru Town	15/3/2009
Jenifer Wairimu	F	45	FEM Nakuru	Business woman	Nakuru Town	15/3/2009
Irene Kigen	F	43	FEM Nakuru	Secretary	Nakuru Town	15/3/2009
Nelly Moraa	F	36	FEM Nakuru	Nurse	Nakuru Town	22/3/2009

Mary Jeruto	F	52	FEM Nakuru	Banker	Nakuru town	22/3/2009
Margaret Kibet	F	37	FEM Nakuru	Nurse	Nakuru Town	29/3/2009
Eunice Wairimu	F	60	FEM Nakuru	Business woman	Nakuru Town	5/4/2010
Mrs. Kamau	F	60	FEM Nakuru	Business woman	Nakuru Town	5/4/2010
Mrs. Murgor	F	44	Nakuru Town	Banker	Nakuru Town	5/4/2010
Doreen Akinyi	F	25	Nakuru Town	Tailor	Nakuru Town	12/4/2010
Lorrain Anyango	F	30	Nakuru Town	Journalist	Nakuru Town	12/4/2010
Mary Ngugi	F	28	Nakuru Town	Accountant	Nakuru Town	12/4/2010
Mrs. Muluvi	F	42	Nakuru	Teacher	Nakuru Town	19/4/2010
Winfred Mbula	F	39	Nakuru	Hair dresser	Nakuru Town	19/4/2010
Rosemary Mwinda	F	53	Nakuru	Business woman	Nakuru Town	19/4/2010
Name	Sex	Age	Church	Occupation and Position in Church	Place of Interview	Date of Interview

Joseph Muhoro	M	45	MMC	Usher/ businessman	Nairobi	1/2/2009
Kamau Goro	M	47	MMC	Member/Taxi Driver	Nairobi	1/2/2009
Judy Wangui	F	38	MMC	Member/ matatu driver	Nairobi	1/2/2009
Samuel Kimotho	M	40	MMC Nakuru	Pastor	Nakuru	8/2/2009
Rachael Kimotho	F	37	MMC Nakuru	Pastor's wife	Nakuru	8/2/2009
Josephine Mwangi	F	52	MMC Nairobi	Member Teacher	Nairobi	15/2/2009
Pastor Kareko	M	46	Nairobi	Lecturer	Nakuru	15/2/2009
Samuel Njoroge	M	45	Nairobi	Businessman	Nakuru	15/2/2009
Simon Kamau	M	54	Nakuru	Businessman/ usher	Nakuru	22/2/2009
Samuel Kahura	M	37	Nakuru	Taxi driver/usher	Nakuru	22/2/2009
Dickson Thuo	M	38	Nakuru	Praise and worship Leader	Nakuru	22/2/2009

Mercy Njeri	F	35	Nakuru	Choir leader	Nakuru	22/2/2009
Joseph Mwaniki	M	33	Nakuru	Choir member	Nakuru	22/2/2009
Nancy Wanja	F	34	Nairobi	secretary	Nairobi	1/3/09
Rev Lucy Wambugu	F	54	Nairobi	Administrator	Nairobi	1/3/09
John Wahome	M	39	Nairobi	Church driver	Nairobi	1/3/09
Joseph Odhiambo	M	27	Nairobi	In charge of church maintenance	Nairobi	8/3/09
Deus Onyango	M	36	Nairobi	Carpenter	Nairobi	8/3/09
Felix Murunga	M	40	Nairobi	Businessman	Nairobi	8/3/09
Maurice Amukobe	M	32	Nairobi	Church cleaner	Nairobi	15/3/10
Larry Kamonye	M	28	Nairobi	Messenger	Nairobi	15/3/10

Name	Sex	Age	Church	Occupation and Position in Church	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
Elsie Mwadime	F	55	FEM Nakuru	Member and banker	Nakuru Town	12/4/09
Anne Kariuki	F	45	Nakuru	businesswoman	Nakuru	12/4/09
Maggy Kibet	F	30	Nakuru	house girl	Nakuru	13/4/10
Emily Chesang	F	29	Nakuru	Dressmaker	Nakuru	14/4/10
Jane Mundia	F	50	Nakuru	School matron	Nakuru	15/4/10
Joice wangui	F	54	Nakuru	Posho mill owner	Nakuru	16/4/10

A.8 Map of Kenya showing location of Nairobi

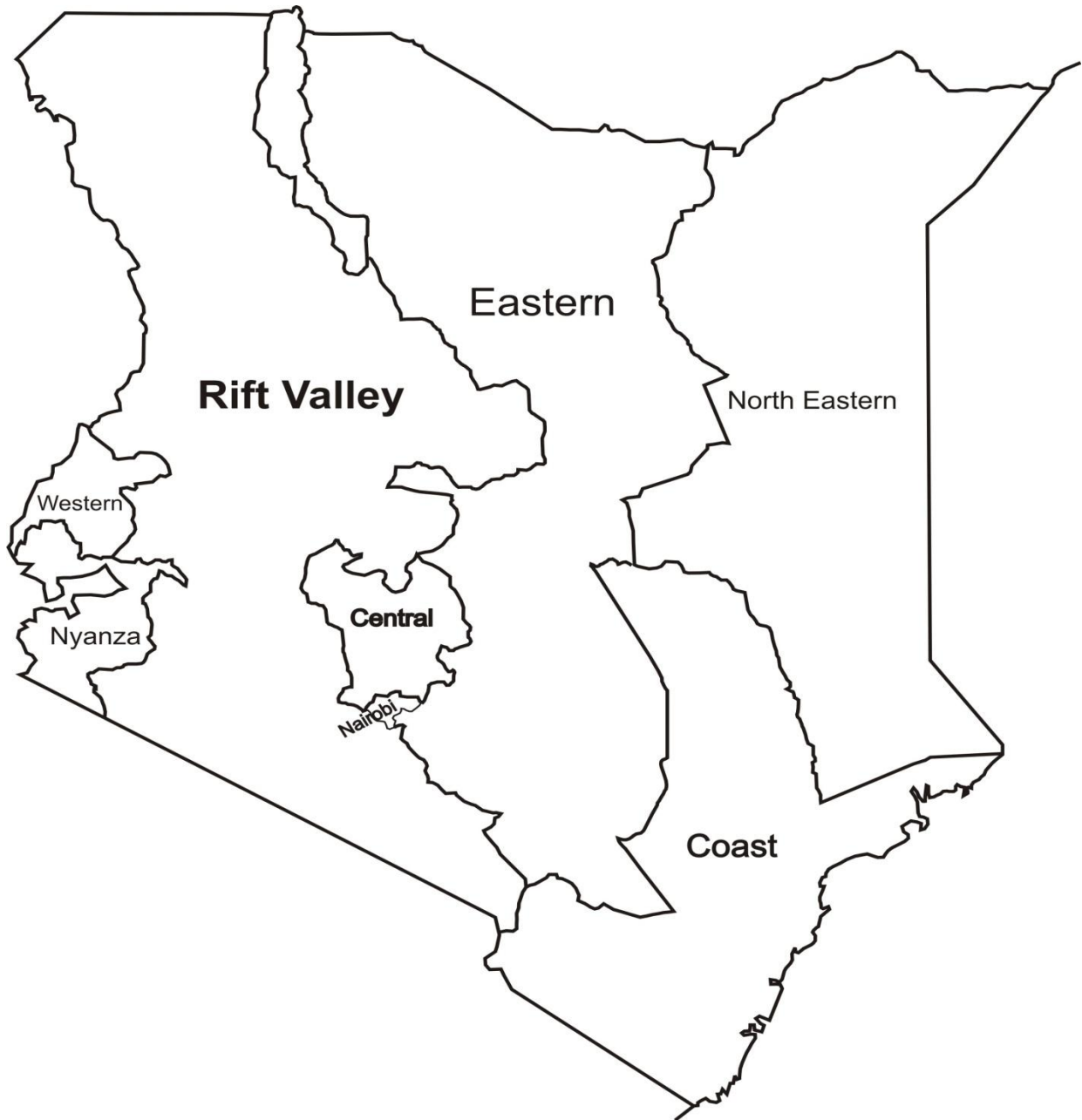


Figure 1: Map of Kenya

A.8: Map of Nairobi showing location of churches

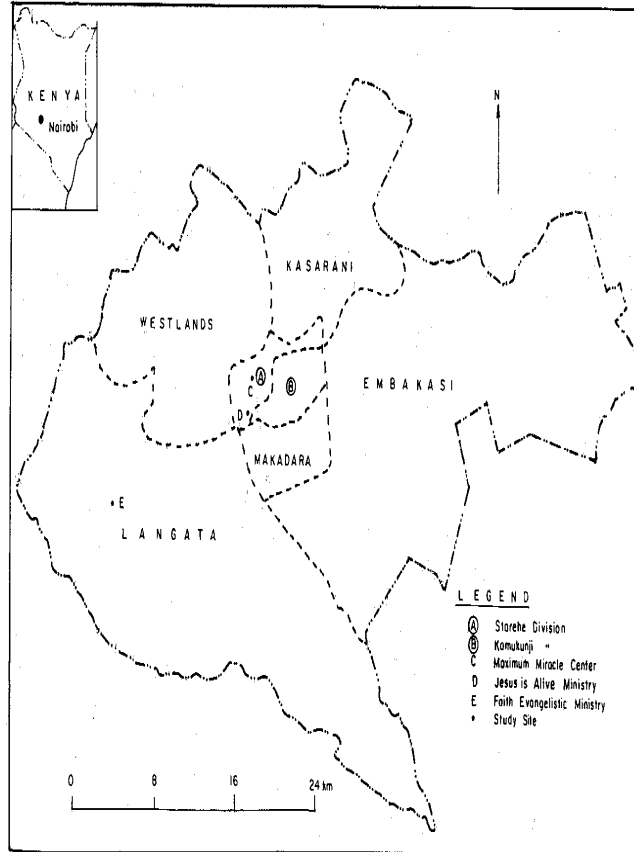
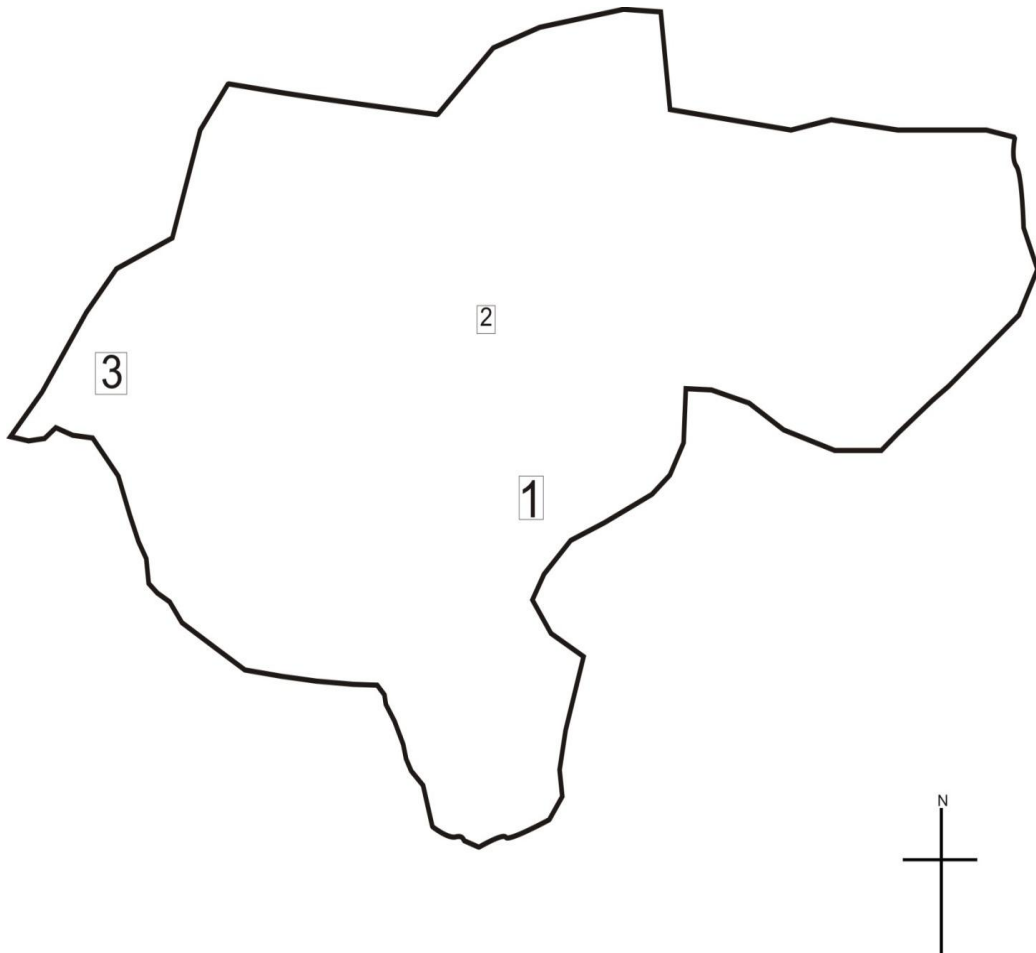


Figure 2: Map of Nairobi show the Study Sites

1. Jesus Is Alive Ministry
2. Maximum Miracle Center
3. Faith Evangelistic Ministry



A.9: Map of Nairobi showing location of churches

Figure 3: Map of Nairobi Showing Location of Churches

**List of Televised Sermons either Viewed on Television/or Listened on CD,
DVD or Audio tapes and Content Analysis of Sermons**

Table 2: List of Televised Sermons

Church	Media House	Time	Date	Title of Message
MMC	KBC	7.30a.m	4/1/2009	Your Month to Recover all
MMC	KBC	7.30a.m	11/1/2009	God's Plan is Still Intact
MMC	KBC	7.30a.m	18/1/2009	Is your past still defining you
MMC	KBC	7.30a.m	25/1/2009	God of another chance
MMC	KBC	7.30a.m	1/2/2009	Better Days are ahead
JIAM	KTN	9.55PM	5/1/2009	The covenants of fruitfulness
JIAM	KTN	9.55PM	13/1/2009	From the pit to the palace
JIAM	KTN	9.55PM	19/1/2009	Three Levels of Witchcraft
JIAM	KTN	10- 11PM	22/1/2009	Faith that Preserves
JIAM	KTN	10.05PM	2/2/2009	Curses of the Words
JIAM	KTN	10.10PM	9/2/2009	Covenant of Wealth 2
JIAM	KTN	10.05PM	16/2/2009	Is there a cause?
MMC	KBC	7.30AM	1/3/2009	16 Evil Spirits
MMC	KBC	7.30AM	8/3/2009	Prophecy
JIAM	KTN	10- 30PM	2/3/2009	Favor
JIAM	KTN	10-	9/3/2009	The glory

		30PM		
MMC	KBC	7-30AM	8/2/2009	Breaking the Spirit of Toil
MMC	KBC	7-30AM	15/2/2009	I have more understanding than my teachers do.
FEM	NTV	8.00AM	2/1/2011	Shake off the Dust
FEM	NTV	8.00AM	16/1/2011	The power of a Spoken Word-1
FEM	NTV	8.00AM	23/1/2011	The power of a Spoken Word-2

Sermons Listen on DVD, CD, & VIDEO Tapes

JIAM LADIES FELLOWSHIPS

Table 3: Sermons Listen to DVD, CD & Video Tapes

Church	CD/DVD/Tape	Time	Date	Title of Message
JIAM		2pm	16/3/09	Releasing the Champion in you
JIAM		2pm	23/3/09	Improving yourself
JIAM		3pm	30/3/09	Exercising your authority
JIAM		4pm	6/4/09	Woman get romantic
JIAM		4pm	13/4/09	Love story
JIAM		2pm	20/4/09	Beauty for Ashes
JIAM		2pm	27/4/09	Wisdom for favor
JIAM		2pm	4/5/09	Deliverance/Spiritual warfare
JIAM		2.35pm	11/5/09	Destroying the Medianite Spirit

JIAM		3pm	18/5/09	Setting the captives free
JIAM		3pm	25/5/09	Destroying the Spirit of Behemoth
JIAM		2pm	1/6/09	Deliverance and Spiritual Warfare part 1&2
JIAM		4pm	8/6/09	Revealing the Spirit of Freemasonry
JIAM		3pm	15/6/09	The Spirit of Jezebel
JIAM		3pm	22/6/09	Babylon has fallen
JIAM		3pm	29/6/09	Destroying the Spirit of Levithian
JIAM		2pm	6/7/09	Destroying the Spirit of Debts
JIAM		3pm	13/7/09	Three levels of witchcraft
JIAM		2pm	20/7/09	Restoring what the devil has stolen in your life
JIAM		2.30pm	27/7/09	Prayer and Fasting
JIAM		3pm	3/8/09	Effective prayer and fasting
JIAM		4pm	10/8/09	Divine intervention
JIAM		3pm	17/8/09	Your light has come
JIAM		2pm	24/8/09	Sanctification
JIAM		2pm	31/8/09	Giving
JIAM		3pm	7/9/09	First-fruits and the covenant of wealth

JIAM		4pm	14/9/09	From the pit to the palace
JIAM		2pm	21/9/09	Walking and serving in love
JIAM		3pm	28/9/09	Holy Spirit
JIAM		4pm	5/10/09	The Gifts of Holy Spirit
JIAM		3pm	12/10/09	Word of Prophecy
JIAM		2pm	19/10/09	The gifts of the Holy Spirit(word of Knowledge)
JIAM		3pm	26/10/09	The gifts of the Holy Spirit(word of wisdom)
JIAM		3pm	2/11/09	The gifts of the Holy Spirit(word of prophecy)
JIAM			9/11/09	The Holy Spirit for Restoration
JIAM		2pm	16/11/09	The Holy Spirit will raise a standard
JIAM		2pm	23/11/09	Outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our children
JIAM		2pm	30/11/09	Anointing
JIAM		2pm	7/12/09	The anointing for restoration
JIAM		2pm	14/12/09	Anointing for exaltation
JIAM		2pm	21/12/09	Blessings
JIAM		3pm	28/12/09	Blessings of the 12 tribes of Israel

JIAM		2pm	3/1/10	Transferring the wealth of wicked
JIAM		3pm	10/1/10	You are a prophet of your own destiny
JIAM		4pm	17/1/10	The covenant/name of God
JIAM		3pm	24/1/10	The blood Speaketh
JIAM		3pm	31/1/10	The covenant of God
JIAM		3pm	8/2/10	The name of God part 1&2
JIAM		3pm	15/2/10	New year/new season
JIAM		2pm	16/2/10	Setting your goals
JIAM		2pm	17/2/10	Prophetic word for 2000
JIAM		2pm	18/2/10	After 90 days of glory
JIAM		2pm	19/2/10	First fruits and the covenant of wealth
JIAM		3pm	20/2/10	The year of new beginnings 2008
JIAM		4pm	21/2/10	The River of God
JIAM		2pm	22/2/10	Making a memorial for the lord
JIAM		3pm	23/2/10	Sowing righteousness
JIAM		2pm	24/2/10	The zeal of the word shall perform it
JIAM		2pm	25/2/10	God Kind of faith

JIAM		3pm	26/2/10	The Spirit of increase
JIAM			27/2/10	God will do it again
JIAM		2pm	1/3/10	The covenant of the lord shall perform
JIAM			2/3/10	What is faith?
JIAM			2/3/10	Covenant of fruitfulness

Sermons Listen to on DVD, CD, & VIDEO Tapes

MMC and the LEM LADIES FELLOWSHIPS

Church	CD/DVD/Tape	Time	Date	Title of Message
MMC		2pm	4/1/09	Releasing the Champion in you
MMC		2pm	5/1/09	Improving yourself
MMC		2pm	6/1/09	Exercising your authority
MMC		2pm	7/1/09	Woman get romantic
MMC		2pm	8/1/09	Love story
MMC		2pm	9/1/09	Beauty for Ashes
MMC		2pm	10/1/09	Wisdom for favor
MMC		3pm	12/1/09	Women of Excellence
MMC		3pm	13/1/09	Models of Destiny
MMC		2pm	14/1/09	The power of praying wife
MMC		2pm	14/1/09	The power of praying mother
MMC		3pm	15/1/09	Daughters of God
MMC		3pm	16/1/09	The spirit of jealousy

MMC		3pm	17/1/09	The Spirit of Jezebel
MMC		3pm	18/1/09	Destroying the spirit of adultery
MMC		4pm	19/1/09	Destroying the Spirit of Bareness
MMC		2.pm	8/3/10	Destroying the Spirit of Debts
MMC		3pm	15/3/10	Destroying the Spirit of witchcraft
MMC		2pm	16/3/10	Restoring what the devil has stolen in your life
MMC		2pm	17/3/10	Prayer and Fasting
MMC		2pm	18/3/10	Effective prayer and fasting
MMC		3pm	19/3/10	Divine intervention
MMC		3pm	20/3/10	Your light has come
MMC		4pm	21/3/10	Sanctification
MMC		2pm	22/3/10	Giving
MMC		2pm	23/3/10	First-fruits and the covenant of wealth
MMC		2pm	24/3/10	From the pit to the palace
MMC		2pm	25/3/10	Walking and serving in love
MMC		3pm	26/3/10	Holy Spirit
MMC		4pm	27/3/10	The Gifts of Holy Spirit
MMC		5pm	28/3/10	Word of Prophecy
MMC		3pm	28/3/10	The gifts of the Holy

				Spirit(word of Knowledge)
MMC		2pm	29/3/10	The gifts of the Holy Spirit(word of wisdom)
MMC		2pm	30/3/10	The gifts of the Holy Spirit(word of prophesy)
MMC		2pm	1/4/10	The Holy Spirit for Restoration
MMC		2pm	2/4/10	The Holy Spirit will raise a standard
MMC		3pm	3/4/10	Outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our children
MMC		4pm		Anointing
MMC		2pm	4/4/10	The anointing for restoration
MMC		2pm	5/4/10	Anointing for exaltation
MMC				Blessings
MMC		3pm	6/4/10	Blessings of the 12 tribes of Israel
MMC		3pm	7/4/10	Transferring the wealth of wicked
MMC		3pm	8/4/10	You are a prophet of your own destiny
MMC				The covenant/name of God
MMC		2pm	9/4/10	The blood Speaketh
MMC		2pm	10/4/10	The covenant of God

MMC		2pm	11/4/10	The name of God part 1&2
MMC				New year/new season
MMC		3pm	12/4/10	Setting your goals
MMC		4pm	13/4/10	Prophetic word for 2009
MMC		3pm	14/4/10	After 90 days of glory
MMC		2pm	15/4/10	First fruits and the covenant of wealth
MMC		3pm	16/4/10	The year of new beginnings 2008
MMC		2pm	17/4/10	The River of God
MMC		3pm	18/4/10	Making a memorial for the lord
MMC		4pm	19/4/10	Sowing righteousness
MMC		2pm	20/4/10	The zeal of the word shall perform it
MMC		3pm	21/4/10	God Kind of faith
MMC		3pm	23/4/10	The Spirit of increase
MMC		3pm	24/4/10	God will do it again
MMC			25/4/10	The covenant of the lord shall perform
MMC		3pm	26/4/10	What is faith?
MMC		3pm	27/4/10	Covenant of fruitfulness