

Prophetic Politics and Spiritual Power: An Ethno-Theological Study of Pentecostal-Charismatic Engagements with Politics in Kenya

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The Candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the works of others

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Abstract

As a contribution to the study of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and politics in Africa, this study offers an ethnographic and theological analysis of the ways in which Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Kenya engage “the political”. The thesis presents case studies of three prominent leaders and their ministries, on the basis of which three distinct but interrelated narratives of political engagement are identified and used as the basis for reconstructing Pentecostal-Charismatic political theological thought in Kenya. These narratives are: holiness prophetic, spiritual-dominionist and prosperity-dominionist. The narratives have in common an emerging political theology of altars, which references biblical prophetic concepts of sacred sacrificial space, in which the nation is dedicated anew to God and made holy. The concept of altars is reconstructed as a political theology that draws on Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic and indigenous religious understandings of power.

The central argument of the thesis is that, since the 1980s, in the contemporary Kenyan religio-political context, Pentecostal-Charismatic churches have not only directly engaged politics, many have also devised political theologies that are couched in the language and idioms of spiritual warfare. These narratives of spiritual warfare are presented as strategies to combat what is perceived to be a battle between God and the devil for the soul of individuals and the nation of Kenya.

The narratives of political engagement are reconstructed on the basis of a detailed reading of the ethnographic data collected during eight months of fieldwork in Kenya. The ethnographic approach enabled me to investigate and analyse Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements and theology from below. I argue that in order to understand the political engagements and the underlying theologies in Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic political thought, attention needs to be paid to their prophecies, sermons, and prayers, because these are political expressions carried out through a theological rhetoric of spiritual encounter.

In contrast to the social scientific and the general African theological literature on Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements, this study offers a more nuanced understanding of what constitutes the political but also offers an ethnographically informed theological analysis of the politics of spiritual warfare from the point of view of my Pentecostal-Charismatic interlocutors in Kenya.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis analyses contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic conceptions and forms of political engagements in Kenya. As in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, in Kenya, Pentecostal-Charismatic churches have become prominent features of Kenya's "religious and political landscape and now commands a massive following."¹ At the centre of the contemporary movement are leaders who among other titles claim to be prophets, in the sense that they function as channels of spiritual power. Some scholars have termed the phenomenon, the "reinvention of the prophetic" or the "turn to the prophetic" in contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity.²

The spiritually powerful charismatic personae, theological reorientations and forms of political engagement discussed in this thesis, are arguably the most significant changes within the contemporary Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic movement.³ In Kenya, powerful spiritual leaders are at the forefront of the movement's massive public visibility. They are also purveyors of the prevalent semantics of battling sin (spiritual pollution), and demonic forces in the political realm, in order to make Kenya born-again.⁴

¹ Damaris S. Parsitau, & Philomena N. Mwaura, "God in the City: Pentecostalism as an Urban Phenomenon in Kenya", *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, vol. XXXVI, no. 2, (2010), pp. 96.

² J. Kwaben Asamoah-Gyadu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit*, 85; Lindhardt, "Introduction: Presence and Impact" 11.

³ Lindhardt, "Introduction: Presence and Impact"; J. Kwaben Asamoah-Gyadu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit* (Oxford: Regnum Africa, 2015).

⁴ See Gregory Deacon, "Kenya: A Nation Born Again" *PentecoStudies*, vol. 14, no. 2 (2015), pp. 219-240; Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Marleen De Witt, "Altar Media's Living Word: Televised Charismatic Christianity in Ghana" *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 33, no. 2 (2003), pp. 172-202.

During the course of my fieldwork (2014-15, see below), I soon realised that a common characteristic of leaders of the more recent Pentecostal-Charismatic churches was what was common referred to as "prophetic declarations". A google search of such prophetic declarations by Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic pastors prior to the 2013 elections alone came up with over 17,000 prophecies.

A significant theological shift in the light of the “turn to the prophetic” is what Amos Yong calls “prophetic politics”, which refers to how Pentecostal-Charismatic prophetic discourses engages the political sphere and how such narratives functions politically.⁵ I follow Yong in his understanding of prophetic politics. In this thesis, “prophetic politics” is broadened to include other forms of Pentecostal-Charismatic discourses, such as sermons/teachings, prayer walks, dreams and revelations because they are often based on prophecies that are of political significance. Pentecostal-Charismatic pastors who claim to operate in the “prophetic realm” it is believed, are capable of intervening in national political affairs by providing the needed direction through their “spiritual mandate”, “prophetic utterances”, or “declarations and teachings”.⁶

While important, the thesis does not pay much attention to prophecy as a ministry, but rather the analysis of contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic conceptualisations and engagements with politics. The study argues that underlying the new forms of Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements is a theo-logic of power (see below). The analysis of the theo-logic of power will give us a sense of the dynamics of the spirituality that shapes Pentecostal-Charismatic forms of political engagement in Kenya.

This thesis argues that in the context of Kenya’s evolving religio-political context, the language of spiritual conflict, empowerment and dominion of the leaders of the newer Pentecostal-Charismatic churches demonstrates a new attitude towards politics. Some key Pentecostal-Charismatic leaders, as I shall show, have responded to socio-political and economic challenges by vying for political positions but more significantly, they have constructed theologies of power that interpret prevailing circumstances through the idioms of spiritual warfare. This spiritualised political imagination and the narratives it engenders,

⁵ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009).

⁶ These were quite common terms that were used by both leaders and members of the case studies and other Pentecostal-Charismatic churches that I surveyed both in person and on Television during the course of my fieldwork.

ascribe to demonic powers the causes of both contemporary and historical socio-political, economic and other developmental challenges. Spiritual warfare has thus become an extremely widespread theo-political discourse, that has influenced praxis or political behaviour of contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians. This is part of a wider trend in which the influence of contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity has transcended ecclesial circles to include the public sphere. Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity has reshaped the orientation of African Christianity and extends its influence into the public sphere by manifestly engaging socio-political issues.⁷ As a result of the increased visibility and wider influence in the African context, some scholars talk about a Pentecostalisation of African public spheres.⁸

I shall analyse the narratives and practices of political engagement in Kenya, and the contextualised theologies that shape or emerge from them. I argue that in order to understand the theo-logic underlying the contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic intervention into politics we must first and foremost attend to their stories—such as their prophecies, but also their prayers, sermons, teachings and narratives of spiritual power and divine encounters. I do so through an ethno-theological study (see below) of three Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, that formed the basis of my ethnographic research in Kenya (2013-2016). They are Dr Prophet David Owuor’s Ministry of Repentance and Holiness (MRH), Rev. Dr David Muhia Githii’s El-Gibbor Evangelism, Intercessory and Training Altar (El-Gibbor), and Bishop Margaret Kariuki Wanjiru of Jesus is Alive Ministries International, (JIAM). My approach

⁷ See Lindhardt, “Introduction: Presence and Impact” in *Pentecostalism in Africa*.

⁸ See Birgit Meyer, “Christianity in Africa: From African Independent Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches”, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 33 (2004), pp. 4447-474; Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Harri Englund, “Rethinking African Christianities: Beyond the Religion-Politics Conundrum” in *Christianity and Public Culture in Africa*, edited by Harri Englund, pp. 1-26 (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011); Gregory Deacon, “Driving the Devil Out: Kenya’s Born-Again Election”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 45, no. 2 (2015), pp. 200-220; Andreas Heuser, “Encoding Caesar’s Realm—Variants of Spiritual Warfare Politics in Africa” in *Pentecostalism in Africa: Presence and Impact of Pneumatic Christianity in Postcolonial Societies*, edited by Martin Lindhardt, pp. 270-290. (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

here is to analyse Pentecostal-Charismatic spiritual warfare teachings (and practices), which includes prophecies, prayers, teachings/sermons as a form of contextualised political theology in the context of Kenya's contemporary political culture.

1.1 Theo-logic of Spiritual Power

I adopt the term “theo-logic” to refer to the concept of spiritual empowerment, which is a fundamental dimension – the key theological underpinning – of Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality. In this thesis, theo-logic refers to a mode of reasoning related to the possession and deployment of spiritual power. According to this line of reasoning, born-again Christians who are filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit by faith, are able to transcend themselves, and begin anew. In Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, all things are possible.⁹

In the context of Kenya, the Pentecostal-Charismatic theo-logic of power has shaped different contextualised concepts of Holy Spirit encounters that are characterised by discourses and performances of the miraculous. The theo-logic of empowerment underlies the Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements. As Nimi Wariboko has put it, this understanding of power emanates from the conviction that “one who is set free by Jesus Christ has all of her potentials come into play and they can freely evolve to bring glory to God as she is led by the Holy Spirit”.¹⁰ For many Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, including in Kenya, salvation or being born-again (should) lead to “empowerment toward creative transformation, generally in terms of human being in-the-world”.¹¹ This notion of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit affirms the Pentecostal-Charismatic worldview that the encounter with and empowerment of the Holy Spirit is central, and non-negotiable, in

⁹ See Nimi Wariboko, *The Pentecostal Principle: Ethical Methodology in New Spirit* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012).

¹⁰ See Wariboko, *The Pentecostal Principle*, 208-9.

¹¹ Ibid. 3.

understanding reality.¹² The Empowerment of the Holy Spirit in the life of the born-again believer opens him/her up to new potentialities and possibilities.

The term, “the spell of the invisible” coined by Nimi Wariboko, (also see chapter two), in his study of Nigerian Pentecostalism sheds further light on how I use theo-logic in this thesis. According to Wariboko, “the spell of the invisible” is a brand of Nigerian Pentecostal spirituality, that it is similar and relevant to the Kenyan context, considering the (Pentecostal-Charismatic) connections between the two countries. The thesis of the “spell of the invisible” is that,

beliefs in and practices of access to, and production of, certain religious knowledges as carriers of truth and hope is the key embodiment of Nigerian Pentecostalism... This is a spirituality that imaginatively synthesizes the subjectivity of engagement and objectivity of existential pressures to perceive present realities as symbols of beings and processes beyond themselves. It creates and nurtures the habit, the disciplined practice, to simultaneously see what is obvious and ordinary and what is not yet and extra-ordinary. We have in this form of spirituality an empirical realism, which seeks for concrete demonstrations of divine presence and power in signs and miracles.¹³

In this thesis, I have called Wariboko’s “spell of the invisible” and “pentecostal principle” (see chapter two), the theo-logic of spiritual empowerment. It is a term, I believe that adequately and accurately captures the spirituality of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in Kenya as well. This understanding of divine power is deployed as a tool for political engagement, for empowerment, for potentiality, for overcoming impossibilities and achieving hope in the Kenyan context.

Little distinguishes Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity from other forms of Christianity other than its conception of Holy Spirit empowerment to all who believe. While spiritual empowerment is a common Christian concept, most Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, to cite Daniel Albrecht, accentuate an understanding that “gifts of the spirit,” including the subjective religious experience of “Spirit baptism” appear and operate as

¹² See Wariboko, *The Pentecostal Principle*.

¹³ Nimi Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism* (Rochester: University of Rochester, 2014) 4-5.

“normative in the life of the Pentecostal churches.”¹⁴ The theo-logic of Holy Spirit empowerment, while not unique to Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, refers to an emphasis Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians place on spiritual empowerment that ultimately shapes one’s whole experience, one’s beliefs and convictions, patterns of thought, emotions and behaviour.¹⁵

The thesis foregrounds the emergence of highly politicised and contextualised theologies of spiritual warfare, in the teachings and practices of contemporary Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians and churches. The study shows that while there is profound diversity in contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Kenya, most of them conceptualise politics as a domain inhabited by evil spirits, and they have devised localised versions of spiritual warfare theologies to combat them. Even where there is doctrinal disagreement (and there are many), Harri Englund points out that, such “conflicts often draw upon the most unifying aspect of Pentecostal doctrine—the belief in the omnipresence of the Devil.”¹⁶ For most Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, poverty, violence, and the general lack of development is part of a grand demonic scheme that can affect unwary individuals and nations. The key to both individual and corporate deliverance lies in being born-again but also knowing how to pray strategically against the hierarchy of demonic entities.¹⁷

I shall identify and analyse spiritual warfare as the framework that shapes the construction of varied forms of Pentecostal-Charismatic political theologies and strategies of engagement with the political sphere. In short, I describe and analyse the prophetic politics of contemporary Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. Narratives of spiritual warfare

¹⁴ Daniel E. Albrecht, “Pentecostal Spirituality: Ecumenical Potential and Challenge”, *CyberJournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research*, vol. 2 (1997), n.p.

¹⁵ Anne E. Carr, *Transforming Grace* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988).

¹⁶ Harri Englund, “Cosmopolitanism and the Devil in Malawi”, *Ethnos*, vol. 69, no. 3 (2006), pp. 299.

¹⁷ See Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009).

are a recurrent theme in Pentecostal-Charismatic prophecies — sermons, private and public religious practices such as prayer, and in everyday born-again conversations. Spiritual warfare is evoked, according to Englund, to urge Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians to “devote time to praying and partly accounts for the passion with which sermons and prayers are delivered.” As Englund continues, “The challenge is not only to defeat the Devil but to ensure that God even hears the prayers. ... Some Pentecostal Christians offer elaborate typologies for demonic spirits” as I show in chapters 3-5.¹⁸ Spiritual warfare teachings of key leaders offer my interlocutors the framework for contextual theo-political constructions on how to engage the Kenyan political sphere. In order to better understand the political engagements of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Kenya, in the light of debates on their contributions to politics in Africa, I explore how my case study churches interpret and teach about the source of power and its impact on contemporary politics.¹⁹ I am particularly interested in how idioms of spiritual warfare are contextualised in the prophetic discourses and teachings of key Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic leaders and their churches, and how spiritual warfare does constitute “forms of vernacular political critique.”²⁰

This dissertation is therefore an attempt to understand the political engagements of Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity by paying close attention to their own conceptualisations. The discourses, teachings and practices of the case studies are analysed as forms of African contextual political theology, or what some scholars have also termed as “political spiritualities”, “prophetic politics” or “contextual African pentecostal political

¹⁸ Englund, “Cosmopolitanism and the Devil in Malawi”, 301.

¹⁹ See, Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004); Harri Englund, “Pentecostalism Beyond Belief: Trust and Democracy in a Malawian Township”, *Journal of the International African Institute*, vol. 77, no. 4 (2007), pp. 477-499; Robert D. Woodberry, “Pentecostalism and Democracy: Is there a Relationship?” in *Spirit and Power: The Growth and Global Impact of Pentecostalism*, edited by Donald E. Miller, Kimon H. Sargeant, and Richard Flory, pp. 119-142 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

²⁰ Henni Alava, and Jimmy Spire Ssentogo, “Religious (De)politicization in Uganda’s 2016 elections”, *Journal of East African Studies*, vol. 10, no. 4 (2016), pp. 678.

theology”.²¹ Doing so, the thesis pays close attention to the inner logic and dynamics of Pentecostal-Charismatic theologies as well as their emic perspectives on political engagements.

1.2 Definition and Historical Overview of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity

In this section, I shall offer a definition of what is meant by Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity (or churches), taking into consideration the myriad of images the term conjures as well as its complex diversity and protean theologies.²²

To show how Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagement has evolved in the Kenyan context, I shall also give a brief history of the movement’s emergence and its political postures and strategies. This is in order to contextualise the discussion in relation to new forms of political engagements that have emerged within the movement in its more contemporary form. I adopt a simple periodisation, as some scholars such as Ranger have done.²³

²¹ See Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*; Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 11; Nimi Wariboko, “Political Theology from Tillich to Pentecostalism in Africa” in *Paul Tillich and Pentecostal Theology: Spiritual Presence & Spiritual Power*, edited by Nimi Wariboko and Amos Yong, pp. 126. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2016); Lovemore Togarasei, (ed), *Aspects of Pentecostal Christianity in Zimbabwe* (Cham: Springer, 2018); Kevin Lewis O’Neill, *City of God: Christian Citizenship in Postwar Guatemala* (Berkeley: University of Los Angeles Press, 2010); Adam Ashforth, *Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005); Barbara Meier, and Arne S. Steinforth (eds.), *Spirits in Politics: Uncertainties of Power and Healing in African Societies* (Frankfurt on Main: Campus Verlag GmbH, 2013); Simon Coleman, and Rosalind Hackett, (eds.), *The Anthropology of Global Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2015).

²² See Allan Anderson, “Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions”, in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, edited by Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, Andre Droogers, and Cornelis Van Der Laan, pp.13-29 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

²³ See Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Wilhemina J. Kalu, Nimi Wariboko, and Toyin Falola (eds.), *African Pentecostalism: Global Discourses, Migrations, Exchanges and Connections* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2010); Nimi Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism* (Rochester: University of Rochester, 2014); J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent*

1.2.1 Defining Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity

There is much debate in scholarly circles about the definition but also the origins and types of African Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. Pentecostalism generally refers to a disparate strand of Christians who can be identified by a set of similar core features or family resemblance analogies.²⁴ Broadly, it is the strand of Christianity, “that believes in, affirms and actively promotes the experiential presence of the Holy Spirit as part of normal Christian life and worship.”²⁵ For Pentecostals, the Holy Spirit is expected to manifest itself amongst believers in the here and now, particularly through gifts of healing, prophecy, and deliverance – a spectacular process that is intended to cast out demonic spirits possessing an individual, among others. Miracles are expected parts of worship, religious practices are usually expressive, emotional and experiential.²⁶

Let me briefly describe three main categories that are comprised under the umbrella term “Pentecostalism”: Classical Pentecostalism, Charismatic Christianity, and Pentecostal-

Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Damaris Seleina Parsitau, “From Prophetic Voices to Lack of Voice: Christian Churches in Kenya and the Dynamics of Voice and Voicelessness in a Multi-Religious Space”, *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, vol. 38 (2012), pp. 243-268; Parsitau, “From the Fringes to the Centre: Rethinking the Role of Religion in the Public Sphere in Kenya”, *Codesria*, 12th General Assembly, 2012, Younde Cameroun; Parsitau, “Arise oh ye Daughters of Faith: Pentecostalism, Women and Public Culture in Kenya” in *Christianity and Public Culture in Africa*, edited by Harri Englund, (Ohio: Ohio University Press); Paul Gifford, *Christianity Politics and Public Life in Kenya* (London: Hurst and Company, 2009).

²⁴ See Allan Anderson, “Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions” in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, edited by Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, Andre Droogers, Cornelis Van Der Laan, pp. 13-29. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

²⁵ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “Christ is the Answer: What is the Question?: A Ghana Airways Prayer Vigil and its Implications for Religion, Evil and Public Space” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 35, no.1 (2005), p. 97; J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Walter Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997).

²⁶ See Paul Gifford, (ed.), *The Christian Churches and the Democratisation of Africa*, (Leiden, Brill, 1995); Cedric Mayrargue, “The Paradoxes of Pentecostalism in Sub-Saharan Africa” *Ifri*, 2008, pp. 1-21.

Charismatic (or neo-Pentecostal) Christianity. This broad categorisation of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity is subject to specific local socio-cultural, historico-political and cultural context.

1.2.2. Classical Pentecostalism

Classical Pentecostalism began at the beginning of the 20th century, with roots in the 19th century holiness movements. It is associated with the outpouring and experience of the Holy Spirit in Charles Fox Parham Bible College in Topeka Kansas in 1901 and William Seymour's Holy Spirit revival experience in the Apostolic Faith Mission, on Azusa Street, Los Angeles, USA, in 1906.²⁷

The term "classical" is a designation coined in the 1960s and 1970s to distinguish the older Pentecostal churches from the "neo" or "Charismatic" Pentecostals in the Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant churches.²⁸ Classical Pentecostals emphasise a post conversion experience known as "baptism in or of, the Holy Spirit"²⁹. Classical Pentecostals generally subscribe to a work of grace subsequent to conversion in which Spirit Baptism is evidenced by speaking in tongues. For many Classical Pentecostals, Baptism of the Holy Spirit must follow another act of grace, sanctification.³⁰

1.2.3. Charismatic Movement

The term Charismatic, in its most common usage simply refers to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the historic church traditions such as the Catholic, Anglican and Protestant denominations. Peter Hocken, defines the Charismatic movement as,

²⁷ See Anderson, "Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions".

²⁸ Stanley M. Burgess, and Gary B. McGee, "The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements" in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, edited by Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, pp. 1-6. (Grand rapids: Zondervan, 1988).

²⁹ Ibid, 130, 220.

³⁰ Burgess, and McGee, "The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements", 1.

the occurrence of distinctively Pentecostal blessings and phenomena, baptism in the Holy Spirit (BHS) with the spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians 12: 8-10, outside denominational and/or confessional Pentecostal framework.³¹

Unlike Classical Pentecostals, Charismatic Christians do not emphasise a second work of grace or glossolalia as an affirmation of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.³² In spite of the theological and ecclesiastical difference between Classical Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement, there are features that are common to both.

Charismatics and Classical Pentecostals believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit and other pneumatic experiences and expressions such as prophecy, visions, healing, and miracles. Charismatics however, prefer to stay in the mainline churches and effect spiritual changes from within. In Kenya, Charismatic Christians also share the “pervasive Pentecostal semantics of ‘winning’ a nation ‘for Christ’.”³³ Rev Dr. David Githii, whose ministry is analysed in this thesis fell into this category, until he left the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, to form his own Pentecostal-Charismatic church. Even though the term Charismatic specifically designates outpouring of the spirit within historic church traditions, it could also refer to “Pentecostal-type Christianity” that differs from classical Pentecostalism in affiliation and/or doctrine.³⁴

1.2.4. Contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic

Contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity refers to a wide range of newer independent churches. These newer independent Pentecostal churches embrace contemporary cultures and methods of communicating. They form international ministries and often have a

³¹ Peter Hocken, “Charismatic Movement” in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, pp. 130.

³² See Hocken, “Charismatic Movement: Cephas Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism: A Study of the Development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Churches in Ghana* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum Publishing House, 2006).

³³ Andreas Heuser, “Encoding Caesar’s Realm—Variants of Spiritual Warfare Politics in Africa” in *Pentecostalism in Africa: Presence and Impact of Pneumatic Christianity in Postcolonial Societies*, edited by Martin Lindhardt, pp. 270-290. (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

³⁴ See Hocken, “Charismatic Movement”.

theology of prosperity or spiritual warfare or a creative combination of both.³⁵ We may add that the newer churches have a tendency to see the world as a spiritual battlefield between Satanic forces and the Christian God, and to engage the political sphere.³⁶

Some scholars refer to these churches as “neo-Pentecostals”, the “newer Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches”, “neo-Charismatic”, “neo-evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity, among other competing nomenclatures.³⁷ Contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic includes mega and other independent Pentecostal churches influenced by both classical Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement, most of which emerged from the 1970s and 1980s onwards.³⁸ The case study churches discussed in this thesis broadly fall in this category.

1.3. Overview: The Development of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Kenya

Scholars of Pentecostalism often trace the origins of the movement to the 1901 and 1906 revivals of the Holy Spirit that began in the United States of America.³⁹ Other scholars (have

³⁵ Anderson, “Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions”.

³⁶ See Birgit Meyer, “‘Make a complete Break with the Past’: Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 28, no. 3 (1998), pp. 316-349; Birgit Meyer, “Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic churches” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 33 (2004), pp. 447-474; Anderson, “Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions”.

³⁷ See Asamoah-Gyadu, “Neo-Pentecostalism and Televised Christianity in Ghana”, *Studies in World Christianity*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2008), pp. 9-28; Brian Siegel, “Neo-Pentecostalism in Black Africa” *Anthropology Presentations*. Paper 1. <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/ant-presentations/1> accessed 12 June 2017; Allan Anderson, “New African Initiated Pentecostalism and Charismatics in South Africa”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 35, no. 1 (2005), pp. 66-92; Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody: Hendrickson); Philomena Njeri Mwaura, & Mumma Martinon, “Political Violence in Kenya and Local Churches’ Response: The Case of the 2007 Post-Election Crisis”, *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2010), pp., 39-46;

³⁸ See Anderson “Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions”.

³⁹ See Robeck, Jr., “Azusa Street Revival”; ‘Seymour, William Joseph”, *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), pp. 344-50, 1053-8; Augustus Cerillo, Jr., “Interpretative Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins”, *Pneuma*, vol. 19, no. 1 (1997) pp. 29-49; Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997); Iain MacRobert, *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1988); Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of*

begun to) acknowledge the “polycentric” origins of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity or parallel experiences of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁰ Some scholars distinguish three distinct typologies and overlapping phases in the development of contemporary Kenya Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity while others include the East African revival as a separate category.⁴¹

Following scholars such as Ogbu Kalu, who holds that the revival had a direct influence on the East African Pentecostal movement, I shall include the East African Revival as a category in the development of Pentecostalism in Kenya. The spirituality of the East African Revival was formative in the life of many contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic preachers in Kenya. The four categories are Classical Pentecostal churches, older African Independent Churches, The East African Revival and the newer forms of Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches established after the 1970s and 1980s. These four categories are specific to the Kenyan context. It should be noted that in practice there is considerable fluidity between them. The categories are also not strictly chronological but they are intended to delineate waves of Holy Spirit revivals in Kenya. It is therefore appropriate to conceive of the different historical phases of the movement’s development as stages that influenced subsequent developments.

1.3.1. Kenyan Classical Pentecostalism

Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century (London: Cassell, 1996).

⁴⁰ See Anderson, “Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions”; Walter J. Hollenweger & Iain MacRobert, *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA* (New York: Palgrave, 2016); Allan Anderson, & Walter J. Hollenweger (eds.), *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); Harold D. Hunter & Peter D. Hocken (eds.), *All Together in One Place: Theological Papers from the Brighton Conference on World Evangelization* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); Allan Anderson, “Signs and Blunders: Pentecostal Mission Issues at ‘Home and Abroad’ in the Twentieth Century”, *Journal of Asian Mission*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2000), pp. 193-210.

⁴¹ See Loreen Maseno, “Prayer for Rain: A Pentecostal Perspective from Kenya” *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 63, no. 3 (2017) pp. 336-347.

The roots of classical Pentecostalism in Kenya can be traced to pioneer North American Pentecostal missionary activities that occurred in the early part of the 20th century.⁴² In 1921, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC), established a mission in western Kenya.⁴³ According to Philomena Mwaura, as early as the 1920s, revival had occurred in the Friends African Mission (Quakers) in Kaimosi, in 1927, in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada mission in the Nyang'ori, Western Kenya, in 1930 and also in the Africa Inland Mission AIM, at Kijabe in central Kenya.⁴⁴ POAC, was quite successful in western but also in central Kenya. By the 1930s, POAC missionaries had reached Maragoli, the Tiriki and the neighbouring Kalenjin and Luo ethnic groups. In 1965, POAC was renamed Pentecostal Assemblies of God, PAG. Missionaries from POAC are credited as the pioneer founders of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Kenya.⁴⁵ Christ is the Answer Ministries (CITAM), an influential Pentecostal church in Kenya (formerly Nairobi Pentecostal Church, (NPC) sees PAG as its mother church and as such traces its roots to POAC.⁴⁶

In the 1940s and 1950s, other classical Pentecostal denominations emerged. Missionaries from the USA started the Pentecostal Evangelical Fellowship of Africa, (PEFA). The Full Gospel Churches of Kenya FGCK, was started by Finish missionaries in 1949.⁴⁷ After Kenya's independence, the 1960s and 1970s saw the rapid growth of both Western classical but also indigenous Pentecostal churches. Kenyan Assemblies of God

⁴² See "Historical Overview of Pentecostalism in Kenya: Origins and Growth," *Pew Research Center*. 5 August 2010. <https://www.pewforum.org/2010/08/05/historical-overview-of-pentecostalism-in-kenya/>. Accessed 10 February 2020.

⁴³ See Ibid; Zablon Nthamburi, "The Beginning and Development of Christianity in Kenya: A survey" *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*, <https://dacb.org/histories/kenya-beginning-development/s>. Accessed 10 February 2020.

⁴⁴ See Mwaura Philomena Njeri, "A Theological and Cultural Analysis of Healing in Jerusalem Church of Christ and Nabii Christian Church of Kenya" <http://www.ku.ac.ke/schools/graduates/images/stories/docs/abstracts/2002/MWAURA%20PHILOMENA%20NJERI.html>. Accessed 15 February 2020.

⁴⁵ See Damaris S. Parsitau, "The Civic Roles of Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Kenya (1970-2010)". Unpublished PhD Thesis submitted to the Kenyatta University. October 2014.

⁴⁶ See Parsitau, "The Civic Roles".

⁴⁷ See Loreen Maseno, "Prayer for Rain: A Pentecostal Perspective from Kenya" *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 69, no. 3 (2017), pp. 336-347.

(KAG), was started by American missionaries in 1967. While these churches (Classical Pentecostals) are independent, meaning they are self-funding and self-supporting, they uphold their historic links to early American and European classical Pentecostal missionaries.⁴⁸ Kenyan Assemblies of God for example joined with the Assemblies of God USA in 1972.⁴⁹ The Apostolic Faith Mission AFM, and the Free Pentecostal Fellowship in Kenya FPCK, the New Testament Church of God NTCOG, Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa, and Elim Pentecostal Church of Kenya EPCK, are some of the major classical Pentecostal denominations in the country.

1.3.2. African Christian Independency in Kenya

The acronym AICs refers to African Independent/Initiated/Instituted churches. The Organisation of African Instituted Churches OAIAC, defines the AICs as,

homegrown African churches, founded originally during the colonial period, that have developed indigenous forms of worship, theology and social organization, all deeply inspired by a vision that is both Christian and African.⁵⁰

The AICs are indigenous churches founded by Africans for Africans, that are self-funding, self-propagating, self-supporting with little or no links to Western Pentecostal denominations.⁵¹

Beginning from the 1920s, there were several schisms and splits from mission churches to form AICs. The founders were Africans, who were either expelled from or left Western mission founded mainline churches to form their own.⁵² The AICs broke away from Western missionary churches such as the Anglicans, and other Protestant churches. “As in the

⁴⁸ See Maseno, “Prayer for Rain”.

⁴⁹ See “Historical Overview of Pentecostalism in Kenya.”

⁵⁰ See Organization of African Instituted Churches “About Us”. http://www.oaic.org/?page_id=51. Accessed 28 February 2020.

⁵¹ See Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism*.

⁵² See Droz, “The Local Roots”; Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Allan Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2001); David B. Barret, *Kenya Churches Handbook: The Development of Kenyan Christianity, 11498-1973* (Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House, 1973).

rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, the missionary churches had to face up to the breakaway process, which led to the establishment of the Independent African churches.”⁵³

As a result of the schismatic processes that occasioned their formation, AICs were derogatively referred to as separatist churches.⁵⁴ For Itumeleng Mosala, the AICs “connotes a specifically religious version of the wider African liberation from colonialism, capitalism, racism, and cultural chauvinism’ regardless of their specific theology.”⁵⁵ For some scholars, the AICs manifest both religious and political independency and innovation in Africa and are African responses to Western Christianity.⁵⁶ The AICs, are considered to have reclaimed the pneumatic and charismatic experiences that was suppressed in the mainline churches, making Christianity resonate well with African spirituality. The AICs have a strong focus on spiritual powers and gifts and emphasise “healing, use of African symbolism, music, musical instruments and leadership patterns”.⁵⁷ It is worth noting that in the Kenyan context, the emergence and development of the AICs in the Western and Central Kenya were influenced by different religio-cultural and political issues.

In Western Kenya, as I shall discuss below, AICs emerged from a series of Charismatic encounters among Christians in the mission churches. In Kikuyuland, the AICs were formed following the clitoridectomy controversy and on the quality of education.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ See David Barret, *Schism and Renewal* (London: OUP., 1968); Harold W. Turner, *History of an African Independent Church*, volumes 1&2 (London: Clarendon, 1967); J. D. Y. Peel, Aladura: *A Religious Movement among the Yoruba* (London: OUP, 1964); Paul Makhubu, “Attempts to Unite AICs into Associations in South Africa,” in *African Independent Churches in the 80's*, edited by Sam Babs Mala, pp. 38-45.

⁵⁵ Itumeleng J. Mosala, “Race, Class, and Gender as Hermeneutical Factors in the African Independent Churches’ Appropriation of the Bible” in *“Reading with”: an exploration of the interface between critical and ordinary readings of the Bible: African overtures*, edited by, Gerald O. West, and Musa Dube, pp. 44 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996).

⁵⁶ See Philomena Njeri Mwaura, “Gender and Power in African Christianity: African Instituted Churches and Pentecostal Churches” in *African Christianity: An African Story*, edited by Ogbu Kalu, pp. 359-388 (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2007).

⁵⁷ Ibid, 417.

⁵⁸ Droz, “The Local Roots”, 6.

According to Ivan Droz, the move towards religious independency, was also “equally stimulated by colonial racism.”⁵⁹

1.3.2.1. Western Kenya: *Roho* Christianity

The first AICs emerged in Western Kenya. Referred to as *Roho*, (Holy Spirit), it started as a popular ecstatic Holy Spirit and charismatic movement among young people. *Roho* churches are also referred to as *watu wa Roho Mtakatifu*, Kiswahili for people of the Holy Spirit. The terminology “Spiritual Churches” is close to the name *Roho* churches self-identify with, due to their emphasis on spiritual empowerment⁶⁰

In Western Kenya, a form of charismatic Christianity popular among the youth, emerged in the Anglican Church as early as 1912.⁶¹ The Ruwe Holy Ghost Church of East Africa RHGC, one of the oldest and influential AICs in Kenya, for example traces its origins to this period.⁶² Western Kenya, had experienced some Holy Spirit revivals before the advent of formal Western Pentecostal-Charismatic missions.⁶³

Scholars however acknowledge the creation of *Roho* churches with the activities of Alfayo Ondongo Mango of Musanda and his nephew Lawi Obonyo in the 1930s.⁶⁴ The events leading to the martyrdom of Mango, Lawi, and eight other members of the *Roho* movement in 1934, commonly referred to as the Musanda massacre are strictly commemorated as initial

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ See Timothy John Padwick, “Spirit, Desire and the World: *Roho* Churches of Western Kenya in the Era of Globalization” unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2003. Harold Turner, *History of an African Independent Church* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1967); J. D. Y. Peel, *Aladura: A Religious Movement Among the Yoruba* (London: International African Institute, 1968); Bengt. G. M Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* (London: James Clarke & Co., 2004)

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² See History of the Ruwe Holy Ghost Church of East Africa. <https://rhgchurchea.org/history/>. Accessed 12 February 2020.

⁶³ See Cynthia Hoehler-Fatton, *Women of Fire & Spirit: History, Faith and Gender in *Roho* Religion in Western Kenya* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁶⁴ See Hoehler-Fatton, *Women of Fire & Spirit*.

stirrings of the spirit that eventually led to the establishing *Roho* churches.⁶⁵ The Ruwe Holy Ghost Church of East Africa, The Musanda Holy Ghost Church of East Africa (MHGCEA), and the Cross Church East Africa (CCEA), all trace their origin to the revival spearheaded by Alfayo Odongo Manyo and the events that led to his death in 1934.⁶⁶ Since 1957 these three churches have been registered as the Holy Ghost Society of Kenya (HGSK).⁶⁷

When the East African revival, (discussed below), reached Western Kenya in 1938, it led to further schisms in the Anglican church in particular. Even though the East African Revival did not cause significant breakaways from mission churches, some of the major AICs trace their roots to the impact of the East African Revival. The Church of Christ in Africa COCA, for example, emerged from the Anglican church as a result of the arrival of the east African revival to Western Kenya.⁶⁸

In 1952 another major movement and prophetess emerged from the Roman Catholic Church. According to Zablon Nthamburi, prophetess Miriam Ragot denounced both the Roman catholic church and the white race. Even though the movement was suppressed it reappeared in 1963 through the Luo prophetess Gaudencia Aoko, the founder of Legio Maria Church.⁶⁹ The Africa Israel Church Nineveh is another important AIC in western Kenya that came out of the Pentecostal experience under the charismatic leader, Paul David Zakayo Kivuli.

He had been associated with the Pentecostal mission at Nyang'ori and became a member of the Pentecostal Church. In 1932, through a serious illness, he received the spirit. From that moment, Kivuli started to preach from village to village, gathering a large number of adherents. Kivuli named his church the Africa Israel Church Nineveh, denoting its independence from mission control.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ See History of the Ruwe Holy Ghost Church of East Africa.

⁶⁶ See Cynthia Hoehler-Fatton, *Women of Fire and Spirit: History, Faith, and Gender in Roho Religion in Western Kenya* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Mwaura, Philomena Njeri, "Gender and Power in African Christianity: African Instituted Churches and Pentecostal Churches" in *African Christianity: an African story*, edited by Ogbu Kalu, 400-445 (Pretoria: Dept. of Church History, University of Pretoria, 2005).

⁶⁷ See Ruwe Holy Ghost Church of East Africa, "About US".

⁶⁸ See Nthamburi, "The Beginning and Development of Christianity in Kenya".

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ See Ibid; Zablon Nthamburi, *A History of the Methodist Church in Kenya*. (Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1982); L. S. B. Leakey, "The Kikuyu Problem of the Initiation of Girls," *Journal of the*

Like most of the *Roho* churches, Africa Israel Church Nineveh AINC, has a puritan ethic. The church prohibits the use of tobacco and alcohol while upholding the importance of spiritual healing, dreams and prophecy.⁷¹

Roho churches have had a long history of rejecting Western culture, and capitalist modes of development. They however place much premium on community empowerment, African culture, spiritual gifts and powers.⁷² Also, like the AICs that emerged in central Kenya (discussed below), many *Roho* churches have over the years been influenced by the newer Pentecostal movements and have borrowed some of their theologies and practices.

Royal Anthropological Institute, vol. 61 (1931), pp. 277-285; L. S. B. Leakey, *Mau Mau and the Kikuyu* (London: Methuen, 1952).

⁷¹ See Zablon, “The Beginning and Development of Christianity in Kenya”, n.p.

⁷² See Timothy Padwick, “Spirit, Desire and the World: *Roho* Churches of Western Kenya in the Era of Globalization” unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2003.

1.3.2.2. Central Kenya: Independent Churches

In the case of central Kenya, Kikuyu Christian converts split from missionary churches in response to the 1928-30 Clitoridectomy controversy. While there were other areas of conflict between Western mainline mission churches and the socio-religious traditions of the Kikuyu's, the renunciation of the practice of female genital circumcision (clitoridectomy) was the most controversial.⁷³ Thus the independent African churches in central Kenya could be identified with the cultural nationalism that swept the country in 1920s and 1930s.⁷⁴ The clitoridectomy controversy was therefore more than a cultural or religious issue, it was political as well. Western mission such as the Scottish Presbyterian Missions sought to ban female circumcision, a core Kikuyu traditional rite. Jomo Kenyatta, who was the first President of Kenya, and a freedom fighter, endorsed the practice as a form of nationalist opposition to colonial domination. In *Facing Mount Kenya*, Kenyatta writes that the initiation is the most important among Kikuyu customs. The circumcision "is regarded as a condition sine qua non for the whole teaching of tribal law, religion and morality" among Kikuyu's.⁷⁵

The AICs or *Aregi*, (as they are called in Kikuyu), split from missionary churches predominantly over circumcision controversy, education, land issues and polygamy among the Kikuyu in the late 1920s.⁷⁶ AICs in central Kenya are also known as *Arathi* (prophets), *Aroti* (dreamers) or the *Akurinu* (spirit filled growlers). Collectively they are referred to as the "Andu a Ireмба" (turban people) because they all wear turbans to cover their heads.⁷⁷ *Arathi* are also known as *Watu Wa Mungu* (people of God). Other examples are, the African Independent Pentecostal Church AIPC, formed in 1929, and the African Orthodox Church

⁷³ Padwick, "Spirit, Desire and the World".

⁷⁴ See Nthamburi, "The Beginning and Development of Christianity in Kenya".

⁷⁵ Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal life of the Gikuyu* (London: Mercury, 1961), pp. 133.

⁷⁶ See John Lonsdale, "The Moral Economy of Mau Mau: Wealth, Poverty, & Civic Virtue in Kikuyu Political Thought" in *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya & Africa*, edited by Bruce Berman, & John Lonsdale, pp. 315-468 (London: James Curry, 1992).

⁷⁷ See Nthamburi, "The Beginning and Development of Christianity in Kenya".

AOC, which was established in 1932. Their emergence could be seen as responses to what some Kikuyu Christians believed to be dismissive and denigrating attitude of Western missionaries towards indigenous cultural practices. Because the goal of these AICs was to Africanise Christianity, they combined some indigenous Kikuyu beliefs and practices in their interpretation of the Bible (while rejecting some others). As such they rejected western education, cultures, medicine among others related to the West and sought spiritual guidance from the Holy Spirit and from the Old Testament.

For most Kikuyu Christians, it was their culture, and not Christianity, that was under attack. When the mainline mission schools closed their doors to Kikuyu's who did not conform to missionary edicts, they formed the Kikuyu Independent Schools Association (KISA), and the Kikuyu Karing'a Educational Association (KKEA), for the purpose of providing education to their people in direct opposition to mission education.⁷⁸ AIPC came out of KISA. The Kikuyu Karing'a Educational Association, was started by the AOC, now known as African Greek Orthodox Church AGOC. AIPC and AOC, in particular were very political.

The AICs in central Kenya also received inspiration from two Kikuyu freedom movements, the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA), and the Mau Mau. The African Independent Pentecostal Church and the African Orthodox church were banned in 1952 and only began functioning again after 1963, for their association with the Mau Mau revolt.⁷⁹ There are however strong theological reasons for the emergence of *Arathi* and Christian independency generally. According to John Lonsdale, the founding myth of the *Arathi*, tells how, Joshua Ng'ang'a, a young man who was barely literate, studied how to read the gospels on his own for two years in a cave and realised that Western missionaries did not have spiritual power.⁸⁰ Theologically AICs, resented what they believed was the absence of

⁷⁸ See Nthamburi, "The Beginning and Development of Christianity in Kenya".

⁷⁹ See Ibid.

⁸⁰ Lonsdale, "Moral Economy", 398.

spiritual power in Western mission churches and as such they looked for a spirituality that combine the Old Testament in particular with African spirituality. Like *Roho*, independent Churches in central Kenya also emphasise the power of the Holy Spirit, spirit possession, prayer, healing, dreams, and value biblical texts that indicate gifts of prophecy.⁸¹ After Kenya's independence in 1963 many of AICs in central Kenya in particular took on titles that indicates an emphasis on the Holy Spirit. Some examples are,

Holy Ghost Church of Kenya, the Christian Holy Ghost Church of East Africa, the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets Church, the Holy Spirit Church of Zayun, the African Mission of [the] Holy Ghost Church, and the God's Word and Holy Ghost Church.⁸²

While these churches continue to experience growth, the newer Pentecostal churches consider them to be too syncretistic and therefore demonic.

So, while it is clear that the founding prophets were spirit inspired, or share similar pneumatic phenomena with other Pentecostals, they have been historically not considered as such. As Asamoah-Gyadu points out, in much of the “literature they were marginalised in the historiography of World Pentecostalism for being unbiblical, irrational religious enthusiasts.”⁸³ But as I have mentioned earlier, in contemporary Kenya as in other parts of Africa, the older AICs have undergone tremendous changes both in doctrine and affiliation.⁸⁴

Their (AICs) use of sacramental—anointing oils, holy water, blessed handkerchiefs for mediation of spiritual power, and the perception of the Charismatic leader as the custodian of special anointing—has been reinvented within modern Pentecostal Charismatic Christianity, creating theological and ecclesiological continuities between the two traditions.⁸⁵

⁸¹ See Francis Kimani Githienya, “The Church of the Holy Spirit: Biblical Beliefs & Practices of the Arathi of Kenya, 1926-50” in *East African Expressions of Christianity*, edited by Thomas Spear, & Isaria N. Kimambo, pp. xxxi. (Oxford: James Curry, 1999).

⁸² Nthamburi, “The Beginning and Development of Christianity in Kenya”.

⁸³ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “From Every Nation Under Heaven: Africa in World Pentecostalism” in *Global Renewal Christianity*, edited by Vinson Synan, Amos Yong, and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, pp. xxvii-liv. (Florida: Charisma House, 2016).

⁸⁴ See Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism*; Afeosemime Adogame, “Aiye Loja, Orun Nile: The Appropriation of Ritual Space-Time in the Cosmology of the Celestial Church of Christ”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 30, no. 1 (2000) pp. 3-29.

⁸⁵ Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism*.

In contemporary Kenya, the hitherto blurred typological distinction between AICs and Pentecostal churches have become increasingly polarised in the course of the massive expansion of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity.⁸⁶ The AICs have standardised their teachings and doctrines in the light of new development as such several have added Pentecostal to their names. Many of these older AICs now straddle the typological divide because they have recast themselves as contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic churches.⁸⁷

1.4. The East African Revival

The East African Revival is included as a category of Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity because of its influence on contemporary theological articulations and practices.⁸⁸ According to Emma Wild-Wood, even though it is not as robust as in the 1930s and 1960s, the “contemporary legacy of the Revival is apparent in para-church organizations, in new Pentecostal expressions and in debates in East Africa on moral and social probity”⁸⁹ Thus, the Revival introduced patterns of ministry that were quite different from those in the mainline churches.⁹⁰

Scholars acknowledge that the Revival set the stage for a Pentecostalisation of the whole of Eastern Africa and is considered to be the most famous movement of renewal

⁸⁶ See Birgit Meyer, “CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICA: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 33 (2004), pp. 447-474.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ See Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Parsitau, “From Prophetic Voices to Lack of Voice”.

⁸⁹ Emma Wild-Wood, “The East African Revival in the Study of African Christianity” in *The East African Revival: History and Legacies*, edited by Kevin Ward, and Emma Wild-Wood, pp. 201-212; Kevin Ward, “Introduction” in *The East African Revival: History and Legacies*, pp. 3-10.

⁹⁰ See Philomena N Mwaura, “Gender and Power in African Christianity: African Instituted Churches and Pentecostal Churches” in *African Christianity: An African Story*, edited by Ogbu Kalu, pp. 410-445.

within the protestant churches in the region.⁹¹ Indeed as Wild-Wood succinctly puts it, “the language of the Revival, its moral code and its spiritual thought and practice have all become deeply characteristic of East African Protestant Christianity and have pervaded the social and political arenas.”⁹²

The East African Revival is commonly referred to as the *Balokole* (saved ones in Luganda), and the singing of its famous Luganda hymn ‘Tukutendereza Yezu’ (We magnify thee).⁹³ The origins of Revival is dated to a meeting in 1929, between key leaders in Gahini Eastern Ruanda.⁹⁴ It arrived in Kenya in the 1930s and held its first convention in Kabete in 1937.⁹⁵ The Revival was largely a lay led movement but one that spawned most of the first African Bishops and some leading contemporary figures of contemporary Kenyan Christianity. One main factor that precipitated the emergence of the Revival, was sin and slothfulness in the Protestant mainline churches.

According to the revivalists, Christianity had lost its vitality by tolerating secret sins, particularly those relating to traditional beliefs, dishonesty, petty crimes and sexual misconduct such as adultery and polygamy. To them, true salvation and higher spiritual life could only be received and experienced when these deeds were made public. Low moral standards and spiritual slothfulness among the leaders and members of the church was witnessed. The revival therefore, had a strong emphasis on the need for repentance of sins and on sole reliance on the atoning work of Christ on the cross.⁹⁶

⁹¹ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*; Kevin Ward, “The East African Revival of the Twentieth Century: The Search for an Evangelical African Christianity” *Studies in Church History*, vol. 44 (2008), pp. 365-38; Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa 1450-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

⁹² Wild-Wood, “The East African Revival”, 202.

⁹³ See Kevin Ward, “‘Tukutendereza Yesu’: The Balokole Revival in Uganda” in *From Mission to Church: A Handbook of Christianity in East Africa*, edited by Zablon Nthamburi, pp. 113-144.

⁹⁴ See Ward, “Introduction” in *The East African Revival*.

⁹⁵ See Derek R. Peterson, *Ethic Patriotism and the East African Revival* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Nthamburi, “The Beginning and Development of Christianity in Kenya”; Cynthia Hoehleer-Fatton, “Possessing Spirits, Powerful Water and Possible Continuities” in *The East African Revival: Histories and Legacies*.

⁹⁶ Loreen Maseno and B. Moses Owojaiye, “African Women and Revival: The Case of the East African Revival” *European Journal in Social Sciences*, vol. 3, no. 3 (2015), pp. 31; Ward, “Africa”, in *A World History of Christianity*; Derek Peterson, “Revivalism and Dissent in Colonial East Africa”, in *The East African Revival: History and Legacies*. pp. 105-118; Jason Bruner, “Public Confession and the Moral Universe of the East African Revival,” *Studies in World Christianity*, vol. 18, no. 3 (2012), pp. 254-268.

Balokole, were generally apolitical. In the context of the rise of Kenyan nationalist movements in the 1950s, *Balokole* shunned politics.⁹⁷ Scholars however points out the political import of *Balokole* practices such as public confession. Dereck Peterson, observes that the public confession of sins served social and public purposes for the *Balokole*, importantly for women, who used their conversion narratives to engage social and political problems. The Revival thereby empowered Kenyan Christians, both literate and illiterate, to testify for Jesus but also engage society through the lens of their faith.⁹⁸

Even though the influence of the revival cuts across denominational boundaries, it has produced many leading figures of the contemporary Pentecostal movement such as the Rev Teresia Wairimu of Faith Evangelistic Ministry FEM, Apostle Dr. Bishop, Joe Kayo, founder of Deliverance Church DC, Bishop Mark Karuiki DC, Bishop Arthur Kitonga of the Redeemed Gospel Churches of Kenya (RGCK), and Rev Dr. David Muhia Githii of El-Gibbor Evangelism, who is discussed in chapter four. The East African revival in many ways forms the basis of the spirituality of many of the contemporary leaders of the movement in Kenya.

1.5. Contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Kenya

Pentecostal-Charismatics churches or Christians are those whose beliefs and practices emphasise connectivity with the Holy Spirit. The term Pentecostal-Charismatic also refers to “Christian movements that typically value prophecy, visions, prayer, healing, and deliverance from evil spirits.”⁹⁹ Some scholars have categorised these churches, using terms

⁹⁷ Kevin Ward, “Tututendereza Yesu”.

⁹⁸ Dereck Peterson, 2001, 471.

⁹⁹ See Knut Rio, Michelle MacCarthy, and Ruy Blanes (eds.), “Introduction to Pentecostal Witchcraft in Spiritual Politics in Africa and Melanesia” in *Pentecostalism and Witchcraft: Spiritual Warfare in Africa and Melanesia*, edited by Knut Rio, Michelle Michelle MacCarthy, and Ruy Blanes, pp. 7. (New York: Palgrave, 2017).

such as neo-Pentecostal,¹⁰⁰ the “newer Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches”¹⁰¹, “neo-Charismatic”¹⁰², “neo-evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity”¹⁰³, “among other competing nomenclatures.”¹⁰⁴ Other scholars prefer African Pentecostal churches as a way of distinguishing them from classical or older African independent churches.¹⁰⁵

In Kenya, they designate themselves as Pentecostal. I prefer however, to use the term Pentecostal-Charismatic churches or Christianity (PCCs), to denote more recent Pentecostal churches, including born-again or “saved” Christians drawn from across the Pentecostal landscape. While a good number of these newer churches were established by Kenyans and are locally financed and self-governing, many belong to international networks of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, from North America to Europe, Asia and other parts of Africa.

There are, however, two important phases in the development of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in Kenya. The first phase can be traced to the late 1960s, notably the visits of American Evangelist Billy Graham and T. L. Osborne to Kenya.¹⁰⁶ According to Nernard Gechiko Nyabwari and Dickson Nkonge Kagema, their teachings and healing crusade ushered in a new understanding “that revival was a worldwide phenomenon and

¹⁰⁰ See Asamoah-Gyadu, “Neo-Pentecostalism and Televised Christianity in Ghana” *Studies in World Christianity*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2008), pp. 9-28; Brian Siegel, “Neo-Pentecostalism in Black Africa” *Anthropology Presentations*. Paper 1. <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/ant-presentations/1> accessed 12 June 2017.

¹⁰¹ Allan Anderson, “New African Initiated Pentecostalism and Charismatics in South Africa” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 35, no. 1 (2005), pp. 66-92

¹⁰² See Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody: Hendrickson).

¹⁰³ Philomena Njeri Mwaura, & Mumma Martinon, “Political Violence in Kenya and Local Churches’ Response: The Case of the 2007 Post-Election Crisis” *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2010), pp. 39-46.

¹⁰⁴ See David T. Ngong, *Theology as Construction of Piety: An African Experience* (Eugene Oregon: Resource Publication, 2013); Anderson, “New African Initiated Pentecostalism and Charismatics in South Africa”.

¹⁰⁵ Parsitau & Mwaura, “Pentecostalism as an urban phenomenon in Kenya”.

¹⁰⁶ See “Historical Overview of Pentecostalism”.

entailed more than revival preaching. It entailed other charismatic gifts such as healing”.¹⁰⁷

The first indigenous independent Pentecostal-Charismatic churches were established in the 1970s by figures who were influenced by these teachings and associated training sessions.

Joe Kayo, DC. David Kimani, founded Bethel Mission BM, Reverend Margaret Wangari, the Church of the Lord, and Arthur Kitonga, the Redeemed Gospel Church (RGC).¹⁰⁸ As I have discussed above, these persons were already highly influenced by the East African revival.

The second phase, includes Pentecostal-Charismatic churches that were established close to the end of Kenya’s second democratic dispensation (from the 1980s) and more recent ones that were established after the year 2000.

In this thesis, my focus is on the newer forms of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity that were established after the 1980s, even though I acknowledge the shared history and common experience of the Holy Spirit in Kenyan Pentecostalism.

In the 1980s the number of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches increased dramatically:

some founded by indigenous Kenyans and others founded by international evangelists from Europe, Asia, America, and other parts of Africa. Itinerant televangelists such as Reinhardt Bonke, Benny Hinn, Morris Cerulo, Joyce Meyer, Cecil Stewart, Emmanuel Eni, and Simon Iheancho have graced the Kenyan capital of Nairobi and other major towns.¹⁰⁹

In 2006, T. D. Jakes, the American Pentecostal-Charismatic preacher drew nearly one million people to Uhuru Park in Nairobi.¹¹⁰ Even though the origins and theological influences of contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity is multifaceted, the influence of Nigerian Pentecostalism on the movement in Kenya needs a brief mention.

Since the 1980s, they [Nigerian and Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians] have collaborated in ministry in para-church association such as Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship and Women Aglow and shared platforms in crusades in

¹⁰⁷ Nernard Gechiko Nyabwari, and Dickson Nkonge Kagama, “Charismatic Pentecostal Churches in Kenya: Growth, Culture and Orality”, *International Journal of Human Sciences and Education*, vol. 1, no. 3 (2014) pp. 27-33.

¹⁰⁸ See Nyabwari, and Kagama, “Charismatic Pentecostal Churches in Kenya; Damaris Parsitau, “The Civic and Public Roles of Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Kenya 1970-2010” unpublished PhD thesis, Kenyatta University, 2014.

¹⁰⁹ Nyabwari and Kagama, “Charismatic Pentecostal Churches in Kenya”, 29.

¹¹⁰ See “Historical Overview of Pentecostalism” *Pew Research Center*.

both Nigeria and Kenya. As early as 1980, Bishop Margaret Wangari underwent a theological training course in Benin, Bendel State, Nigeria. While there, she was under the tutelage and guidance of the late Archbishop Benson Idahosa, founder of the Church of God Mission. Idahosa's influence was later to reach Kenya through the Winner's Chapel of David Oyedepo, Idahosa's former "spiritual child". This is one of the prominent Nigerian charismatic churches in Kenya. Emanuel Eni's literature, particularly his testimony in *Delivered from the Powers of Darkness* and his subsequent visit to Kenya in 1990, exposed Kenyans to the theology of power and deliverance. A number of people trace their disenchantment with mainline Christianity to the forceful evangelism and teachings delivered to these "anointed men of God".¹¹¹

Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Kenya is diverse and a complex hybrid of spiritualities. Contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity is therefore multifaceted but they can also be defined by their active and prominent political role in Kenya's public sphere. In the words of Knut Rio, Michelle MacCarthy and Ruy Blanes, contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic churches

tend to move out into public spaces in parades, crusades, healing missions, and into targeted neighbourhoods: they use prayer tents, street occupations, public squares, and rural crossroads. They are known to oppose traditional forms of leadership, ritual regimes, and hierarchical social structures. They also encompass popular social movements that seem to be intensely preoccupied with the idea of evil as spatially and territorially inherent in people's lives. Their notion of "spiritual warfare" addresses particular neighbourhoods, companies, or persons, and even whole continents or nations, as harbouring evil and being subject to ritual cleansing. These Pentecostals also move into political spheres, actively engaging in political campaigns.¹¹²

Even though the belief in spiritual power remains a common theological trope among Kenyan Pentecostal churches, the more recent ones who are the focus of this discussion can be identified by their theological emphasis on spiritual warfare and direct engagement with formal politics.

The preponderance of spiritual warfare theologies in the sermons of contemporary Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians has totally changed their approaches to politics. During my field work I realised that a major concern reflected in the theologies (as reflected

¹¹¹ Nyabwari, and Kageka, "Charismatic Pentecostal Churches in Kenya", 30.

¹¹² Rio et al, "Introduction to Pentecostal Witchcraft", 7; Asamoah-Gyadu, "African Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity: An overview" *Themed Articles*, Issue 8, (2006), <http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles-php/464/08-2006> accessed 20 August 2018.

in prayers, sermons, and prophecies) of my case study churches is the focus on driving out the devil from national politics. This is mainly couched in the language of spiritual warfare, which I claim does have political significance. Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians have devised spiritual strategies to counteract what they perceive as corrupt practices in the political sphere. The case studies are a reflection of how key Pentecostal-Charismatic leaders contextualise their teachings on engaging the political realm in Kenya.

In Kenya, therefore, the student of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity is faced with the fluid nature of Christian identity and belonging. Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians “themselves emphasise the provisional nature of the boundaries between different churches, and they freely visit each other’s churches”.¹¹³ During the exploratory stages of my fieldwork in 2014, I first visited a small Pentecostal-Charismatic church, of about 50 members, in Nairobi. After the service, in a conversation with a member who was curious about my research topic, she explained to me that she was a member of the Anglican Church of Kenya ACK. Even though she was a member of a prayer group in the Anglican church, she also frequented this Pentecostal-Charismatic church for “spiritual directions and teachings.”¹¹⁴

On another occasion, at a *kesha* (Swahili for all-night prayer service), organised by a Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), branch in Kikuyu town, the order of service, the sermon, the spiritual warfare prayers, speaking in tongues and the deliverance session, all conjured the image of a purely Pentecostal-Charismatic church service. Scholars have termed the influence of Pentecostal-Charismatic forms of worship on mainline Christianity as the “Pentecostalisation” of mainline churches¹¹⁵ or as “Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism”.¹¹⁶ Yvan

¹¹³ Harri Englund, “Cosmopolitanism and the Devil in Malawi”, *Ethno*, vol. 69, no. 3 (2006), p. 299; Damaris Parsitau, “From the Periphery to the Centre: The Pentecostalisation of Mainline Christianity in Kenya”, *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Mission Studies*, vol. 35, no. 3 (2007), pp. 83-111; Stephen Ellis, and Gerrie ter Haar, *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹¹⁴ Interview with Mwingi, June 2014.

¹¹⁵ Cephas Narh Omenyo, “From the Fringes to the Centre: Pentecostalization of the Mainline Churches in Ghana”, *Exchange*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2005), pp. 39-60.

Droz maintains that “In Kenya, a connection is seen today between Pentecostalism and evangelical Protestants, as well as a certain fluidity between Independent churches and Pentecostal. Believers or churches can easily cross from one stream to the other.”¹¹⁷

Several mainline Christians also self-identify as born-again Christians, thus blurring the lines between the self-identification of “mainstream Protestant evangelicals” and the contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic churches¹¹⁸. Both the Presbyterian Church of East Africa for example and the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches “consider the consumption of alcohol and smoking as sin.”¹¹⁹ The distance between Kenya’s mainline Christians and members of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches is also increasingly unclear.¹²⁰ Indeed, in Kenya, as John Karanja points out, “all mainstream Protestant churches are strongly influenced by the East African Revival, which has strong evangelical connections.”¹²¹ Karanja thus prefers an inclusive definition of “evangelicalism that embraces all Protestant Christians” including Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, since all their founders have their born-again origins in the evangelical revivals.¹²² There is much appeal in such an approach. However, Adogame rightfully cautions that it is important to acknowledge the diversity of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, in order to avoid “wide generalizations and insensitivity to the historical and cultural complexity of African Pentecostalism.”¹²³

¹¹⁶ Cephas Narh Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism: A Study of the Development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Churches in Ghana* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum Publishing House, 2006).

¹¹⁷ Droz, “The Local Roots”.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 4.

¹¹⁹ Droz, “The Local Roots”.

¹²⁰ Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*. (London: Hurst, 2009); Parsitau, “From the Periphery to the Centre”; Parsitau, & Mwaura, “God in the City”.

¹²¹ John Karanja, “Evangelical Attitudes Toward Democracy”, in *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa*, edited by Terrence Ranger, pp 67-94. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 67.

¹²² Ibid, 68.

¹²³ Afe Adogame, “Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements in Global Perspective”, in *The New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion*, edited by Brian S. Turner, pp. 498-518. (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2016).

The fluid concept of church membership serves to demonstrate but also reify the difficulty inherent in strict classifications of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in the Kenyan context. Indeed, for Hervé Maupeu “Kenyan Pentecostalism appears these days as an amorphous group with relatively vague outlines.”¹²⁴ Currently there are three bodies that attempt to bring Pentecostal-Charismatic churches together.

- The Federation of Evangelical and Indigenous Christian Churches of Kenya (FEICCK), founded in 2005, claims to represent 78 churches and denominations in Kenya.¹²⁵
- In 2013, The Kenya National Congress of Pentecostal Churches and Ministries (KNCPCM), was formed to also unite primarily the smaller newer Pentecostal-Charismatic churches.¹²⁶
- The Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK), was formed in 1975. It is the umbrella organisation for evangelical churches in Kenya under the auspices of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa. EAK is affiliated with the World Evangelical Alliance, (WEA).¹²⁷

1.6. Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and Politics in Kenya

The history of the churches involvement in national politics in the Kenyan context, is long intimate and inextricable.¹²⁸ Ranger analyses the history of African revivals, the dynamics of

¹²⁴ Herve Maupeu, *Organisations pentecôtistes, espace public et sujet politique: L'exemple du Kenya* (Paris, Colloque, 1998), in Droz, “The Local Roots”, 6.

¹²⁵ See http://www.feicck.com/News___Events.html.

¹²⁶ <http://kenyacongressofchurches.org/>;
http://kenyacongressofchurches.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6&Itemid=7.

¹²⁷ See “Evangelical Alliance of Kenya—EAK.
<https://www.localprayers.com/KE/Nairobi/500678756771622/Evangelical-Alliance-of-Kenya---EAK>. Accessed 20 February 2020.

¹²⁸ See Gregory Deacon, “Satan’s Snake and Political Violence in Kenya” in *Faith in Civil Society: Religious Actors as Drivers of Change*, edited by Heidi Moksnes and Mia Melin), pp. 158-163. (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2013). Gregory Deacon, “Driving the Devil Out”.

its biblical hermeneutics, creative use of vernacular cultures and its “assimilation into an oral prophetic culture.”¹²⁹ He sketches the historical background of revival movements by placing them in the context of the “major democratic transitions in the African democratic process and in the relations between African churches and the state.”¹³⁰ He divides Africa’s history of democratization in three “revolutionary phases”:

The ‘first democratic revolution’ was the anticolonial struggle that brought independence and ‘majority rule.’ In most Africa, this effort was completed by the 1960s ... The ‘second democratic revolution’ of the late 1980s was the challenge to one-partyism. In many countries this challenge led to the collapse of one-party regimes and the introduction of a competitive election ... [W]hat is being attempted at the beginning of the twenty-first century is a ‘third democratic revolution’: the struggle against presidential third termism; the struggle for incorrupt ‘transparency’; the struggle that not only develop electoral institutions but also to achieve a democratic culture and practice.¹³¹

The ‘first democratic revolution’ roughly corresponds with the emergence of African Independent or Initiated Churches, AICs.¹³² The AICs broke away from Western missionary churches such as the Anglicans, and other Protestant churches. “As in the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, the missionary churches had to face up to the breakaway process, which led to the establishment of the Independent African churches.”¹³³ In Kenya, as I have already discussed above, in Kikuyuland, the AICs were formed following the clitoridectomy controversy and on the quality of education.¹³⁴ The move towards religious independency, according to Ivan Droz was also “equally stimulated by colonial racism.”¹³⁵

During the ‘second democratic revolution’ that began in the late 1980s and 1990s, some of the leading clergy from Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian churches used their positions to campaign for political reforms and were persistent critics of President Daniel

¹²⁹ Ranger, “Introduction: Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa” 6

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid, 8-9.

¹³² Droz, “The Local Roots of the Kenyan Pentecostal Revival”.

¹³⁴ Droz, “The Local Roots”, 6.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

Arap Moi's government.¹³⁶ The National Council of Churches (NCCCK) and the Evangelical Alliance Kenya (EAK), are two important Protestant ecumenical associations. The NCCCK which was established in 1913 is the umbrella body for most of the mainline churches even though a few Pentecostal-Charismatic churches are members.¹³⁷ Most Pentecostal-Charismatic churches are members of the EAK. The EAK. was founded in 1975 as the Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya (EFK), as an association for those churches who did not want to be members of the NCCCK.

The mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic clergymen, used their sermons and activism to preach against abuse of power during a period when the incumbent government repressed any form of dissent. It was the institutional presence of the churches that made space for political dissent at a time when it was profoundly needed.¹³⁸ According to David Throup, it was only some senior clergy who had the freedom to criticise government without risking detention.¹³⁹ It was in this way that mainline churches, in particular, senior mainline clergy, came to be seen as critics of president Moi's government. During this period, many Pentecostal-Charismatics supported the government of President Moi.¹⁴⁰ Pentecostal-Charismatic churches were not involved in challenging the government. Some of them explicitly supported the regime.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya* (London: Hurst, 2009).

¹³⁷ See <http://www.ncck.org/newsite2/index.php/about-ncck/who-we-are>.

¹³⁸ See Gifford, *Christianity, Politics*; David Throup, "Render Unto Caesar the Things that are Caesar's: The Politics of Church-State Conflict in Kenya 1978–1990", *Religion and Politics in East Africa*, edited by Holger Hansen and Michael Twaddle, pp. 143–176. (London: James Currey, 1995).

¹³⁹ Throup, "Render Unto Caesar the Things that are Caesar's": William B. Anderson, *The Church in East Africa, 1840–1974* (Dodoma: Central Tanganyika Press, 1977); Herve Maupeu, "The Churches and the Polls" in *Out for the Count. The 1997 General Election and Prospects for the Democracy in Kenya*, edited by Marcel Rutten, Alamin Mazrui, and Francois Grignon, pp. 50–71.

¹⁴⁰ See Throup, "Render Unto Caesar the Things that are Caesar's"; Peter Kimani, "Moi Succession: Insights into the Past and the Future", *The Nation*. 27 February 2006.

¹⁴¹ See Gifford, *Christianity, Politics*; Gregory Deacon & Gabrielle Lynch, "Allowing Satan in? Toward a Political Economy of Pentecostalism in Kenya", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 43, no. 2 (2013), pp. 108–130. Gifford, "Some Recent Developments in African Christianity", *African Affairs*, vol. 93 (373), (1994), pp. 513– 534.

Since the introduction of multi-party democracy in 2002, not only has the number of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches burgeoned, but many of them have developed immense interest in politics and national development. Whereas previous campaigns for social justice and good governance by mainline and catholic clergy were considered to be a distraction from much pressing issues such as prayer (praying for those in government), preaching and evangelism, in its more contemporary political context, Pentecostal-Charismatic churches have developed distinctive theologies and approaches that enables them to actively engage national politics.

The significance of the political role of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Kenya can be seen by the prominent role they have played in contemporary politics, especially during the 2002 elections, the 2005 referendum and the 2007 and 2013 general elections. I have identified these events as major markers of the contemporary religio-political context. Since Mwai Kibaki's election as President in 2002 and more so after the 2007/8 election violence, the mainline Protestant churches have come to be seen as ethnically compromised and as such ineffectual in their prophetic duty.¹⁴² Kavulla writes that since 2003 Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians have played significant roles in Kenyan politics by spearheading the rejection of the proposed constitution in 2005. According to Travis Kavulla,

The December 2007 elections provide a further sign that Pentecostals are gradually interacting in more concrete ways with Africa's problems...Pentecostal clerics have also increasingly stepped into the world of electoral politicians themselves where their engagement with policy is all but inevitable.¹⁴³

Even though the mainline churches are still politically engaged and continue to play significant political roles, Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in particular showed an intense interest in politics, evinced in their interest in the 2005 referendum and the 2007 elections. The year 2002 marked the end of Arap Moi's one-party government, from 1978-2002.

¹⁴² See Parsitau, "From Prophetic Voices to Lack of Voice."

¹⁴³ Travis R. Kavulla, "Our Enemies are God's Enemies": The Religion and Politics of Bishop Margaret Wanjiru, MP" *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2008), pp. 254-263.

In 2002, Mwai Kibaki was elected as the new President after the NCCCK churches and clergy joined civil society in the long struggle with Moi's one-party system. Many of the mainline churches and leaders in the NCCCK who spearheaded the call for multi-party democracy in the 1980s and 1990s, felt that their job was over.¹⁴⁴ According to Maupeu,

Under President Moi's regime, political divisions were clear-cut. Moral authority was clearly held by the opposition and despite unacceptable practices most of the clergy debated the modalities of negotiating with a legitimately-elected government with whom they had to work, regardless of disagreements. The Kibaki era blurred these boundaries.¹⁴⁵

After Kibaki's 2002 electoral victory which was achieved due to the support of mainline Protestant churches, the clergy and new ruling elite worked together. This collaboration, according to Maupeu, "became more intimate than before because churches tended to initially legitimise the new government they had endorsed, and in which they had big hopes."¹⁴⁶

When the Kibaki government was embroiled in a serious corruption cases such as the anglo-leasing scandal, and abuse of power, the mainline churches especially the Roman Catholic church, known for issuing statements on such corrupt practices, were silent. Kibaki himself was a Catholic. According to Maupeu, the Catholic church "felt obligated to defend the administration that they had helped to come to power."¹⁴⁷ The mainline churches also saw themselves as partners with the Kibaki administration, and as such observers consider them as heavily compromised and coopted partners in the governance processes by President Kibaki's regime.¹⁴⁸ It was also during Kibaki's regime that Pentecostal-Charismatic churches became very vocal on national issues and many of their leaders vied for political office. The idea that born-again Christian should be voted into office was taking shape and effect.

¹⁴⁴ Rev Dr. Timothy Njoya, a retired minister of the PCEA and prominent activist against Moi's one-party state shared similar sentiments with me during my fieldwork in 2014; See Parsitau, "From Prophetic voices to lack of voice".

¹⁴⁵ Hervé Maupeu, "The Role of Religious Institutions" in *The General Elections in Kenya*, edited by Jerome Lafargue, pp. 251-278. (Oxford: African Books Collective, 2009).

¹⁴⁶ Maupeu, "The Role of Religious Institutions".

¹⁴⁷ Parsitau, "From Prophetic voices to lack of voice" n.p

¹⁴⁸ See Parsitau, "From Prophetic voices to lack of voice".

The constitutional referendum, held in 2005, was rejected by 58% of Kenyans.

Kibaki and his government, with the support of some churches campaigned on a Yes agenda.¹⁴⁹ The “No Campaign”, was spearheaded by the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches (and also the NCCCK) under the coalition “The Kenya Church”, on the basis that the new draft constitution provided for the establishment of Kadhi courts, (Muslim courts), and gave room for the legalization of abortion and homosexuality.¹⁵⁰ “Thus much Christian activity against the new constitution revolved around narrowly evangelical concerns rather than the broad human rights issues that initiated the drive for a new constitution.”¹⁵¹

Margaret Wanjiru, the founding Bishop of Jesus is Alive Ministries (see chapter five), was a leading figure in this campaign as were many other leaders of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. “The success of the Christian lobby in rallying support for blocking the 2005 constitution referendum was a sign of encouragement for religious leaders seeking to engage in national affairs.”¹⁵² Prayer sessions were used to organise Christians to rally against the draft constitution, some of them very large outdoor gatherings. Parsitau’s discussion of the emerging political influence of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches is insightful:

As the mainline church public theologies and prophetic voices were declining, new [Pentecostal-Charismatic] voices were emerging in the sociopolitical scene. These are voices of the newer Pentecostal and charismatic churches that were increasingly emerging by the dawn of the millennium, but especially in the run up to the referendum on the new constitution for the country in November 2005. The

¹⁴⁹ See Daniel Branch, “Kenya’s referendum: ‘In the Name of God, No!’” *Open Democracy*, (2010), <https://www.opendemocracy.net/daniel-branch/kenya%E2%80%99s-referendum-%E2%80%9Cin-name-of-god-no%E2%80%9D>, accessed 20 August 2018; Francis Openda, “Church Leaders Call for Referendum.” *The East African Standard* 25 March 2004.

¹⁵⁰ See “Churches Group Says No as Kibaki Endorse Bill” *The East African Standard* 25 August 2005; Maupeu, *The Role of Religion*.

¹⁵¹ Gifford, *Christianity, Politics*, 4.

¹⁵² Yonatan Gez, and Tanya Alvis, “Bishop Margaret Wanjiru and the 2013 Kenyan Elections: Between Politics of the Spirit and Expanding Entrepreneurship” in *Kenya’s Past as Prologue: Voters, Violence and the 2013 General Elections Christian*, edited by Thibon, Marie-Aude Fouere, Mildred Ndeda & Susan Mwangi, pp. 97 (Nairobi: Twaweza Communications, 2014).

Pentecostal and charismatic clergy that had previously played less prominent roles suddenly woke up from political hibernation to full sociopolitical engagements.¹⁵³

It should come as no surprise when Margaret Wanjiru and a Mutava Musyimi, a Baptist minister and former head of the NCCCK stood for elections and won as MPs for their respective constituencies. The Rev. Dr David Githii of El Gibbor Ministries, also stood for elections for the position of governor of Kiambu, but lost his election bid.

Other Pentecostal-Charismatic leaders such as Puis Muiri of Maximum Miracle Centre Nairobi announced in 2006 to run for President.¹⁵⁴ For Muiri, like many of his Pentecostal-Charismatic compatriots, Kenya had been ushered into a new political dispensation that called for “prophetic direction” in which the “church is by prophetic placement the end-time panacea, antidote and forthright healing that this world so badly needs.”¹⁵⁵ Other Pentecostal-Charismatic pastors stood for elections. Bishop Emeritus Adoyo of Christ is the Answer Ministries (CITAM), vied for the Senate in Nairobi on the ticket of the Labour Party of Kenya (LPK). Pastor George Weda, who describes himself as a theologian and politician vied for Kisumu senator seat on the ticket of the Farmers party, (FPK). A Reverend, Alice Ngetsa, run for the Kilifi women’s representative on the ticket of the Republican Congress Party of Kenya (RC), while Bishop Jackson Kosgey of the Worldwide Gospel Church (WGC), stood for the Baringo senator seat on the ticket of the of the United Republican party, URP. Robert Mutemi Mutua of the (DC), was not elected but was nominated by the Wiper party (WP), to the National Assembly as Youth, Disability and Workers Representative.¹⁵⁶ Pentecostal-Charismatic narratives of divine favour and spiritual

¹⁵³ Parsitau, “From Prophetic voices to lack of voice”

¹⁵⁴ See Caroline Wafula, “Muiru: Poll will Pit God Against Money” *Daily Nation*, 15 November 2007.

¹⁵⁵ Gifford, *Christianity, Politics*, 165.

¹⁵⁶ See Deacon, ‘Satan’s Snake’; Branch “Kenya’s referendum”; Maupeu, “The Role of Religious Institutions”.

warfare become significant part of the electoral politics.¹⁵⁷ “Politicians across the political divide adopted neo-Pentecostal language, imagery, and ritual into their campaigns.”¹⁵⁸

This period (2000-2008) also corresponds with Dr. Prophet David Owuor’s prophetic messages about impending doom, if Kenyans do not “repent of their sins and return to God.”¹⁵⁹ The Kenyan political sphere and the public sphere as a whole was Pentecostalist. “Moreover, religious leaders participated in the elections to a previously unseen extent.”¹⁶⁰ In addition to those already mentioned, another influential Pentecostal-Charismatic pastor who stood for elections as a member of parliament, was Kamlesh Pattni. Pattni has been described as,

the central figure of the Goldenberg scandal, who was accused by the Judicial Commission of Inquiry of defrauding the Kenyan government of 27 billion shillings. Several years ago, Pattni was ‘born again’ and rechristened Paul. He founded a church, the Hand of Hope, attaching its sanctuary to his International Casino complex near the National Museum, and last year acquired chairmanship of the defunct Kenya National Democratic Alliance (Kenda) party.¹⁶¹

But the 2007 election erupted into political and ethnic violence, with over one thousand people killed and over 300,000 others fled to camps set up for the internally displaced.¹⁶²

Cheeseman writes that the election of Kibaki was met with optimism:

¹⁵⁷ See Ibid

¹⁵⁸ Gregory Dean, “The Political Role of Christian Churches” in *The Oxford Handbook of Kenyan Churches*, edited by Nic Cheeseman, Karuti Kanyinga, Gabrielle Lynch, pp. 137-149. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

¹⁵⁹ David Owuor, “Prophecy of doom”

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=david+owuor+message+of+doom+2004&docid=608053126771182367&mid=273BEC792A0E045A0CB6273BEC792A0E045A0CB6&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>. 2004. Accessed 20 February 2020.

¹⁶⁰ Nic Cheesman, “The Kenyan Elections of 2007: An Introduction”, *Journal of East African Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2008), 168.

¹⁶¹ Travis R. Kavulla, “‘Our Enemies are God’s Enemies’: The Religion and Politics of Bishop Margaret Wanjiru, MP”, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2008), pp. 255.

¹⁶² See “Report, OHCHR Fact-finding Mission to Kenya, 6-28 February 2008.”

<https://www.ohchr.org/documents/press/ohchrkenyareport.pdf>. Accessed 20 June 2018: BBC “Key Points: Kenya Power-Sharing Deal” 28 February 2008.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7269476.stm>. Accessed 20 August 2018; Bernardi, Nikita “Kenya’s Coalition of Convenience and Ethnic Politicking” *Think Africa Press*, 25 September 2012; Mariah Ortiz, “Kenyans Face a New Vote Tomorrow” *Amnesty*

The contrast could not have been greater. On 29 December 2002, Mwai Kibaki was sworn in as Kenya's third president in front of a million jubilant citizens in Nairobi's Uhuru Park. The Kenya African National Union (KANU) government had been swept from power at the polls by Kibaki's National Rainbow Coalition (NaRC); Kibaki had crushed retiring President Daniel Arap Moi's anointed successor, Uhuru Kenyatta, in the presidential election. On the podium, Kibaki was joined by his leading allies, notably Raila Odinga who had masterminded the election campaign while Kibaki convalesced after a road accident. A multi-ethnic alliance, which promised far-reaching constitutional reform and robust action against corruption, seemed to have finally defeated entrenched authoritarianism in Kenya.¹⁶³

However, as we have seen, this euphoria did not last long because of the scandals that rocked Kibaki's administration and the challenges from the referendum on the constitution. Several Pentecostal-Charismatic leaders put themselves up for election as born-again alternatives to corrupt politicians. The fact that Wanjiru, Muiru, Githii, and other Pentecostal-Charismatic leaders stood for elections is significant because their campaign messages shared similar threads of the need to vote born-again Christians into political office.

During the fieldwork, many of my respondents spoke about their disillusion with the political situation but more with the church which many believed reneged on its spiritual duty of being an impartial arbiter. When my respondents say the "church" they are mainly referring to mainline churches. Many held that the mainline churches were complicit in the ethnic violence that erupted after the 2007 elections because they openly took sides with Kibaki against Moi's candidate, Uhuru Kenyatta. A common refrain which I heard over again was "the church has failed us". The contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagement with Kenyan politics results, in part, from their perceptions of the failures of the (mainline) churches but also from the failures of political leadership to bring about the desired political and economic developments.

Even though in 2013 the electoral process was not much different from 2007 in terms of irregularities, especially during the tallying of results, it was largely peaceful. Nicholas

International, 10 August 2010. <https://www.amnestyusa.org/kenyans-face-a-new-vote-tomorrow/>. Accessed 19 June 2017.

¹⁶³ Cheeseman, "The Kenyan Elections of 2007", 168.

Cheeseman, Gabrielle Lynch and Justin Willis have argued that the reasons why the two elections (2007 and 2013), were different are fourfold;

A dramatic political realignment brought former rivals together and gave them an incentive to diffuse ethnic tensions; a pervasive ‘peace narrative’ delegitimized political activity likely to lead to political instability; partial democratic reforms conferred new legitimacy on the electoral and political system; and a new constitution meant that many voters who ‘lost’ nationally in the presidential election ‘won’ in local contests.¹⁶⁴

These important observations notwithstanding, for many Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians the 2013 elections represented a “second chance” to redeem the land.¹⁶⁵ Indeed, it was “Kenya’s born-again election”.¹⁶⁶ The spiritual language of rebirth that characterised popular Pentecostal-Charismatic narratives before, during, and after the 2013 election must be understood in the light of the understanding that the devil was responsible for the violence that pervaded the previous election in 2007.

1.7. Rationale for the Study

There is much scholarly consensus that religion and politics in Africa are intimately entangled, and in order to better understand both, it is necessary to discard “assumptions of the inevitability of the continent’s secularization and democratisation following a ‘Western’ model.”¹⁶⁷ There are however considerable variations in terms of approach and focus with much of these studies which often looks at “the institutional relationships of religious elites

¹⁶⁴ Nic Cheeseman, Gabrielle Lynch, and Justin Willis, “Democracy and its Discontents: Understanding Kenya’s 2013 Elections”, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, vol. 1 (2014), 2.

¹⁶⁵ Deacon, “Driving the Devil Out”, 203

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ See Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar, *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Ellis and Ter Haar, “Religion and Politics: Taking African Epistemologies Seriously”, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 45, no 3 (2007), pp. 385-401; Deena Freeman, “The Pentecostal Ethic and the Spirit of Development” *LSE Research Online*, September 2016.

<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/67831/>

accessed 19 June 2018; Henni Alava, & Jimmy Spire Ssentogo, “Religious (de)politicization in Uganda’s 2016 elections” *Journal of East African Studies* vol. 10, no. 4 (2016), pp. 677-692. 679.

and the state or the impact of religion on people's interest in formal politics or electoral behavior."¹⁶⁸ There are also scholars, much more in the social sciences, who continue to underscore the chasm between the sacred and secular, popular in theories of modernization, as the basis of their analysis of religion and politics in Africa. As I show in the literature review (chapter 2), there are contemporary African theological scholars who depart from such troublesome theoretical approaches and have constructed frameworks for thinking more meaningfully about the African religio-political context. In chapter two, I engage key aspects of these debates specifically relating to Pentecostal-Charismatic engagements in Kenya.

Debates on the place of religion in Africa's democratisation has taken a renewed interest among scholars of African religions due to the growth and impact of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity but more significantly, the contemporary Pentecostalisation of politics in Sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁶⁹ As I show in this study, Pentecostal-Charismatic churches are increasingly engaging in national politics, and their conceptions of power destabilises the Western dichotomies of church and state, public-private, and the secular and profane. One of the key reasons for my study results from dissatisfaction with certain readings of Pentecostal-Charismatic engagements in politics, which start with preconceived conceptions of what the political and theological should entail and how they should be separated.

According to much of the scholarship concerning church state relations in Kenya, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians are reputed for having an "otherworldly spirituality which

¹⁶⁸ See Ellis, and ter Haar, *Worlds of Power*; Holger Bernt Hansen, and Michael Twaddle, (eds.), *Religion and Politics in East Africa: The Period Since Independent* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995).

¹⁶⁹ See Ranger, *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa*; Gingera-Pinyawa, A. G. G., *Issues in Pre-Independence Politics in Uganda: A Case Study on the Contribution of Religio to Political Debate in Uganda in the Decade 1952-1962* (Kampala: East African Literature Bureau, 1976); Holger Bernt Hansen, *Mission, Church and State in a Colonial Setting: Uganda 1890-1925* (London: Heinemann, 1984); Henni Alava, & Jimmy Spire Ssentogo, "Religious (de)politicization in Uganda's 2016 elections".

eschews socio-political engagements in favor of getting ‘saved’.”¹⁷⁰ Such a statement reflects the normative way in which the Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic movement has been identified and analysed. Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians are “apolitical according to certain categories and definitions.”¹⁷¹ For example, in a major contribution to the study of Kenya’s evangelical Christianity and democracy, Karanja divides the Kenyan churches into three, based on their political orientations. “Activist churches” according to Karanja, are “those institutions that have openly criticized some state activities”; “Loyalist” institutions, or institutions that have allied themselves with the state; “Apolitical” institutions, or those that have largely kept aloof from politics.¹⁷²

In Karanja’s analysis, he identifies the activist institutions with the National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCCK), the loyalist ones belong to the Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya (EFK), and the apolitical religious institutions are the new Pentecostal-Charismatic churches that were established in Kenya after the 1970s. Karanja describes the theological focus of Kenya’s apolitical Pentecostal-Charismatic churches as follows:

Its theology of state is based on Romans 13. The church is fully aware of the ills plaguing the present government, as well as ongoing political initiatives. But according to its leadership, such problems arise from corrupt human nature and can only be solved through prayer rather than confrontation. Its emphasis may be described as ‘social transformation through positive individual influence.’ This means that if each ‘born-again’ Christian lived according with Christian principles, the whole nation would be morally transformed.¹⁷³

What Karanja missed here is the evolving distinctiveness of Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements, and the politics of prayer, in particular what they term “corporate prayer” in the form of spiritual warfare for the state. I address these issues in chapter six.

¹⁷⁰ Richard Burgess, “Pentecostals and Political Culture in Sub-Saharan Africa: Nigeria, Zambia, and Kenya as Case Studies” in *Global Pentecostal Movements: Migration, Mission, and Public Religion*, edited by Michael Wilkinson, pp. 15-42. (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

¹⁷¹ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010).

¹⁷² John Karanja, “Evangelical Attitude toward Democracy in Kenya” in *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa*, edited by Terrence Ranger, pp. 67. (Oxford: Oxford Press, 2008).

¹⁷³ John Karanja, “Evangelical Attitudes towards Democracy in Kenya”, 76.

Gifford is engaged in-depth in this thesis, because he specifically analyses Pentecostal-Charismatic politics in Kenya.¹⁷⁴ Like Karanja, Gifford also sees Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity as “essentially a personal Christianity”, focused “primarily on success/victory/wealth”¹⁷⁵, and he suggests that it has no political theological frame of engaging Kenyan politics but is a “domesticated Christianity.”¹⁷⁶ Haynes has also long argued that Pentecostal-Charismatic dualistic worldviews/teachings result in political passivity.¹⁷⁷ What this implies, according to Andreas Heuser “is that followers of such churches believe they should ‘keep out of politics’, because what happens on earth is all part of the continuing battle between the Devil and God for dominance.”¹⁷⁸

In this thesis I depart from such approaches because, first, it is difficult to sustain the argument that contemporary Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians are apolitical in the light of contemporary developments.¹⁷⁹ Second, the use of spiritual warfare rhetoric by Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatics (what Gifford identifies as “enchanted Christianity”) in the political realm has resulted in renewed interest among churches and born-again Christians to be involved in politics and national development. As Heuser has pointed out,

[the] Pentecostal understanding of [spiritual] warfare being fought at the spiritual level does not necessarily result in an agony of action. On the contrary warfare theology envisions dramatic transformations and can in many cases motivate born again Christians to act.... Spiritual warfare not only provides a language for speaking about political developments and state affairs but also inspires the development of particular Pentecostal political theologies.¹⁸⁰

Wariboko rightfully observes that “none of these scholars [Heuser, Karanja, Gifford and Marshall among others] ask and deal with issues of religious production of knowledge as a

¹⁷⁴ See Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*

¹⁷⁵ Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 150.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 215.

¹⁷⁷ Jeff Haynes, *Religion and Politics in Africa* (New Jersey: Zed Books, 1996), 204. C

¹⁷⁸ See Andreas Heuser, “Encoding Caesar’s Realm — Variants of Spiritual Warfare Politics in Africa” in *Pentecostalism in Africa*. 275

¹⁷⁹ See Haynes, *Religion*.

¹⁸⁰ Jeff Haynes, *Religion*.

strategic project in the context of epistemological insecurity of life” in contemporary Kenya.¹⁸¹

In this thesis, I place emphasis on emic conceptions of politics, by drawing attention to Pentecostal-Charismatic conceptions of politics and the spiritual warfare theologies of engagement. These approaches to a large extent constitute the strategies and answers my interlocutors have devised in response to political challenges in Kenya. I analyse their spiritual warfare teachings as political theologies because of its main focus on “delivering” or “occupying the land” and “saving the nation for Christ” among other semantics of national deliverance.

My approach is therefore a departure from Karanja, Gifford, and Haynes (among others discussed in chapter 2) as it begins with the inner theo-political perspectives emerging from my case studies. The massive intrusion and influence of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches into politics not only calls for rethinking classical notions of politics but also of political theology.

I was also motivated to conduct this research because a (political) theological analysis of Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements has not been attempted so far. Parsitau for example conducted her PhD research on the civic engagements of three Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Kenya, through the sociological framework of religious capital.¹⁸² Mugambi’s PhD thesis, “Leadership Development in Progressive Pentecostal Churches: Three Case Studies from Nairobi, Kenya” addresses the emergence and development of leaders in “Progressive Pentecostal Churches” in Kenya.¹⁸³ Generally, contemporary Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity has received less scholarly attention, (even though it is increasing), compared to West African versions of the movement. There is therefore a gap in Pentecostal-Charismatic scholarship in Kenya,

¹⁸¹ Nimi Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 3.

¹⁸² See Parsitau, “The Civic and Public Roles of Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Kenya (1970-2010)” unpublished PhD thesis, Kenya University, 2014.

¹⁸³ See Mbogo Kayama Mugambi, “Leadership Development in Progressive Pentecostal Churches: Three Case Studies from Nairobi, Kenya” unpublished PhD thesis, Africa International University, 2016.

particularly one that attempts a theological analysis of the movement's contemporary spiritual warfare theology and how that impacts political engagements.

1.8. Method and Analysis: Ethno-theology

The research method adopted was an interdisciplinary ethno-theological approach. It is a combination of ethnographic research methods and theological inquiry. Ethno-theological approach is my attempt to discover theological notions narrated and enacted through theological narratives but also embodied expressions of the encounter with the divine. Ethno-theology methodology suggests “a constant interaction between theories and principles generated from the theological tradition and careful participative observation of the peculiarities of an ecclesial situation.”¹⁸⁴ Ethno-theology is therefore a call for a response, or a rapprochement between empirical and theological understanding in research for the purpose of unearthing “actual life theologies”, “ordinary” or “grassroots theologies”, i.e. beliefs and practices, of participant's actual life experiences of the church as a “gathered community” and simultaneously scattered in daily life.¹⁸⁵

The ethnographic variant in African Christian theological research opens up the space for a multivocal hermeneutic that takes seriously the faith stories and inner-logic of “people's arts of existence” and the “political constructions” and stakes that makes up the “ordinary” or mundane.¹⁸⁶ In the context of African theology, a well noted characteristic of Pentecostal churches is that they operate effectively with oral, vernacular, or actual life theologies that are expressed in prophecies, sermons, songs, prayers, including dance and other embodied

¹⁸⁴ Pete Ward, (ed), “Introduction” in *Perspectives on Ecclesiology*, edited by Pete Ward, pp. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012); Christian Scharen, *Exploring the Social Context of God's Work in the World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015); Don E. Saliers, Joyce Burkhalter Flueckiger, Dianne Stewart Diakite, and Don E. Seaman, “Ethnography and Theology: A Critical RoundTable Discussion” *Practical Matters* (2010), <http://practicalmattersjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Ethnography-and-Theology-Roundtable.pdf> accessed 20 June 2018.

¹⁸⁵ Jeff Astley, *Ordinary Theology: Looking, Listening and Learning in Theology* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁸⁶ Kathleen Stewart, *Ordinary Affects* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

theological expressions. Because there few written theological or doctrinal texts by the churches under investigation, I used ethnographic methods to enter into the Pentecostal-Charismatic context in order to identify their emic political theological and the ideological assumptions (theo-logic) behind their worldview. Ethnography and/as theology is particularly well suited to discuss why and how Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians in Kenya re-construct theologies of spiritual engagement/empowerment in response to contemporary political concerns. I wanted to hear the stories (relating to their politics) of Kenya Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians so as to attend to their experiences and theological beliefs.

In Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic preaching and much of Christianity in Africa stories—of supernatural interventions in daily mundane activities— are narrated and recounted in sermons, prayers and songs. Such interventions are not seen as mere symbolic encounters but as real divine-human encounters. The ethno-theological approach proceeds on the assumption that “stories are woven through our personal and social lives and that human beings have a natural impulse to narrate” and the ways “we story the world” have profound effects on how we create meaning.¹⁸⁷ The ethnography of the case studies grounds the contemporary manifestation of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and their prophetic political theologies of spiritual empowerment and engagement with the demonic—as part of the complex matrix of socio-historical and politico-cultural transformation processes in Kenya’s political history. By focusing on contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic theological constructions and interventions through ethnographic research, I am making a statement of not just the present as it is constructed but also of how the ‘past’ has acted as a progenitor of contemporary beliefs and practices in the political realm.

Put simply the ethno-theological approach is a proposal to understand African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and their political engagements from their own point of view, which means that I embrace simultaneously ethnography and theology. A characteristic

¹⁸⁷ Dominique Robert, “Fundamental Assumptions in Narrative Analysis: Mapping the Field” *The Qualitative Report*, vol. 19 (2014), pp. 1-17.

of African Christian theology generally, and of the contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in particular is that they rarely have written down theologies. Many express their theologies in stories/narratives of preaching, prophecies, songs, forms of worship, dance, dream interpretation, in understandings of healing and salvation and in concepts of evil and the practice of spiritual warfare.

Qualitative ethnographic methods such as participant observations, interviews of key leaders, members and focus groups were employed.¹⁸⁸ I give details of the fieldwork in chapter three to five, under each of the three case studies. Further, a discussion of the rationale for the approach adopted here ensues below.

1.8.1. Conversion narratives

Through a close reading of the conversion narratives from each of the leaders of my case studies, I analyse their life histories and biographies and the key theological themes that emerged from the ethnographic data collected during the course of the fieldwork from 2014-2015. The ethno-theological approach used in this thesis includes an integrative reading of conversion narratives, sermons, interviews, church publications and documents. The description of the case studies, in chapters three-five, is divided into two interrelated parts. The first relies on narratives of conversion in reconstructing the history and biographies of the leaders—who are considered key producers of theology in their respective churches. The second part focuses on the main theological features of the founder's ministry.

Harvey Cox has observed that Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians persistently emphasise their experience a lot.¹⁸⁹ In Pentecostal-Charismatic circles, if someone has been

¹⁸⁸ See Alan Bryman, *Social science Research Methods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Richard A. Krueger, Mary Anne Casey, *Focus Groups: practical Guide for Applied Research* (Thousand Oaks: Sage: 2008).

¹⁸⁹ Harvey G. Fox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 313.

¹⁸⁹ Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 37.

called by God or touched by the Holy Spirit, he or she will necessarily have a call narrative.¹⁹⁰

Keith Warrington also points out that “for Pentecostals, conversion functions as a watershed moment before which a person was an unbeliever and after which s/he became a believer.”¹⁹¹

It is so crucial that “most are able to identify the month and day when they became Christians.”¹⁹²

It is therefore inconceivable for a Pentecostal-Charismatic pastor not to have a conversion or call narrative. According to Claudia Währishch-Oblau, a “pentecostal/charismatic pastor who could not recount such a narrative to answer the question how he or she was called to be a pastor would not be considered a proper pastor, regardless of his training, education, and experience.”¹⁹³ They “place their conversion experiences within their whole life context.”¹⁹⁴ Henri Gooren, in his study of Pentecostal-Charismatic conversion narratives, calls it “biographical reconstruction”.¹⁹⁵ He refers to how people who experience conversion “literally reconstruct their lives, giving new meanings to old events and putting different emphases in the bigger ‘plot’ of their life stories.”¹⁹⁶

For many, if not all Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, the born-again experience is “sine qua non, of spirituality and the indispensable touchstone of faith”.¹⁹⁷ For Pentecostal-Charismatic clergy in particular, in many ways the story that follows one’s conversion is used as a legitimizing narrative for their call and anointing. “By recounting a call testimony, pastors establish and strengthen their special position in relation to their congregations.”¹⁹⁸ The leaders of the churches discussed here recount their conversion and call narrative as the most important event in their lives. According to the narratives, their encounter with God changed

¹⁹⁰ Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Claudia Währishch-Oblau, *The Missionary Self-Perception of Pentecostal/Charismatic Church Leaders from the Global South: Bringing Back the Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 85.

¹⁹⁴ Grace Milton, *Shalom: The Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

¹⁹⁵ Henri Gooren, “Conversion Narratives” 93.

¹⁹⁶ Henri Gooren, “Conversion Narratives” 93.

¹⁹⁷ Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, 312.

¹⁹⁸ See, Claudia Währishch-Oblau, *The Missionary Self-Perception*.

their self-image, and as such plays a central role in their self-identity, and is fundamental to their theological constructions, and self-understanding.¹⁹⁹

Stephen Land locates the importance of recounted experiences of conversion in the genre of testimonies. He explains Pentecostal spiritual experience as “part of a biblical drama of participation in God’s history”.²⁰⁰ For Yong, it is out of this experience of the Holy Spirit that Pentecostal-Charismatic theology emerges.²⁰¹ The focus on narratives of conversion is because of the emphasis my interlocutors place on it themselves. The choice of words in the narratives is significant from the perspective of Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality. While considered important, this section is not a detailed history of the various ministries, nor is it necessarily a factual and chronological account of the founding pastors’ lives. My approach here is part of my attempt to read their words carefully and to understand the meanings they assign to events in their lives, and what this means for how they position themselves in Kenya’s religio-political context.

1.8.2. Key Leader’s narratives

I also identify the main theological themes which are analysed further in subsequent chapters. In addition to conversion narratives (which continually feature in sermons and prophecies during my fieldwork), I draw from the key leaders’ sermons/preaching, prayers, but also from symbolic objects, and pictures. I also interviewed some key leaders of the various cases under study. These leaders are considered key producers of theology in their respective churches. Their teaching/sermons are received with great reverence and are generative. Many church members, especially junior ranking pastors and church staff,

¹⁹⁹ Henri Gooren, “Conversion Narratives” 93; Peter D. Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience: An Ecumenical Encounter* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, 2012); Stephen Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 74.

²⁰⁰ See Ibid.

²⁰¹ Amos Yong, “Not Knowing Where the Wind Blows...’: On Envisioning a Pentecostal-Charismatic Theology of Religions” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, vol. 7, no 14 (1999), pp. 81-112.

develop to some degree the same preaching style, mode of dressing of the founder and hardly depart from the founder's theological vision. The key leaders' rhetoric and narratives of faith serve the purpose of giving us a vivid picture of how they intend to be perceived and received in Kenya's contemporary religio-political context.

In *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics*, Harding conducts an ethnographic study of Falwell's Thomas Road Baptist Church in order to understand the political significance of Christian "fundamentalist" political engagement in the contemporary American public sphere.²⁰² In order to offer a political reading of Falwell's approach to politics, Harding focused on what is termed a series of "rhetorics and narratives", or the political force of "Bible-based language", and not on the narrow sense of conventional politicking.²⁰³ She placed emphasis on and describes "the community's language" as her "field site", meaning she focuses "primarily on the preacher's discourse" which includes preaching, biblical exegesis, testimony, biography, and witnessing.²⁰⁴ Harding, acknowledges "another kind of politics" that is carried out by means of such theological rhetoric or "politically charged sermons."²⁰⁵ For born-again Christians (or Fundamentalists, in Harding's words), sermons/teachings/preaching constitute another form of political expression that is carried out through the deployment of theological rhetoric.

Similarly, Wariboko has argued that in the context of African Pentecostal-Charismatic studies in order to understand their political theologies, there is the need for a close examination of prayers, sermons or teachings of representative pastors. To Wariboko, it is "worship-fed prayer" that constitutes the central locus of Pentecostal-Charismatic worship

²⁰² Susan Friend Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

²⁰³ Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell*, 15

²⁰⁴ See, Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell*.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 10.

services.²⁰⁶ Pentecostal-Charismatic theology can be discerned from “prayers which expresses the everyday beliefs, practices, and affections and from all that is ordinary and prosaic in the existence”.²⁰⁷ He adds that focusing also on the “writings, sermons, and prayers of individual clergy or theologians from the different [Pentecostal-Charismatic] traditions is the best method for including and analysing Pentecostal-Charismatic perspectives”.²⁰⁸ Such an approach gives us a good idea of conceptualisations of politics from the perspective of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. I follow a similar approach in this section, both in describing and analysing the main features of the three case studies. The discourses of the leaders and members of my case studies are instructive examples of how contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic churches frame their political engagements. The narratives, I argue are contextual political theological responses to Kenya’s contemporary politics.

²⁰⁶ Nimi Wariboko, “West African Pentecostalism” in *Global Renewal Christianity: Past, Present and Future* Vinson Synan, Amos Yong and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (eds.), (Florida: Charisma House), 2.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Wariboko, “Pentecostal Paradigms of National Economic Prosperity in Africa” in *Pentecostalism and Prosperity: The Socio-Economics of the Global Charismatic Movement* edited by Katherine Attanasi, and Amos Yong, pp. 36. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

1.9. Structure of the Thesis

Chapter two is the literature review. I engage the works of two scholars who can be considered as exponents of social-scientific scholarship into Pentecostalism and politics in Africa: Paul Gifford and Ruth Marshall. Furthermore, I examine two scholars who exemplify the emerging African theological study of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity: Asamoah-Gyadu and Nimi Wariboko. Under each section I engage their works from an ethno-theological perspective. The chapters three to five describe as well as offer theological analysis of the theologies of my case study churches. I identify theological emphases which are used as the basis for analysing the political theologies of the case studies.

Chapter six is the final chapter. It compares three spiritual warfare theological approaches to politics and analyses how spiritual warfare constitutes a form of politics and how the “Word” of God is used performatively as a prophetic approach to politics in contemporary Kenya. This builds towards the overall argument and conclusion that there is an inherent political dimension to spiritual warfare teachings and practices of contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Kenya.²⁰⁹ Through the teachings and practices of spiritual warfare contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity has inserted itself into Kenya’s political sphere in attempts to transform it, according to their own terms.

²⁰⁹ See Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2010).

Chapter 2: The Literature Review

Given the explosion of the Pentecostal-Charismatic phenomenon in Africa, scholars from the social sciences and some African theologians alike have taken interest in its political impact in contemporary African public spheres.²¹⁰

My aim in this chapter is to engage both the social scientific and theological literature specific to the relations between African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and politics. I engage four scholars, two social scientists, Paul Gifford and Ruth Marshall, and two from the field of African theology, J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu and Nimi Wariboko, who have made major contributions to African Pentecostal-Charismatic scholarship. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section focuses on social scientific approaches, while the second looks at African theological scholarship. Each section begins with a brief discussion of dominant theoretical approaches that shapes both social scientific and African theological scholarship.

2.1 Social Science Approaches to Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and Politics

In view of its massive growth and impact, and in light of the socio-cultural and political “ruptures” and changes introduced by its ferment, social science scholars have debated whether or not Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity is a modernising force in the political

²¹⁰ See Simon Coleman, and Rosalind I. J. Hackett, “Introduction” in *The Anthropology of Global Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism*, edited by Simon Coleman, and Rosalind I. J. Hackett, pp. 1-40 (New York: New York University, 2015); Joel Robbins, “The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity”, *Annual Review of Anthropology* vol. 33 (2004), pp. 117-143; Birgit Meyer, “Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches,” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 33 (2004), pp. 447–474; Mathew Ojo, *The End-Time Army: Charismatic Movements in Modern Nigeria* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2006); Terrence Ranger (ed.), *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

realm.²¹¹ For scholars interested in the contemporary growth and impact of African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in the public sphere in particular, this presented an important line of inquiry for several reasons.

In the context of contemporary research on Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Africa and elsewhere in the “global South”, the social scientific argument since the 1990s has largely revolved around Pentecostalism and modernity.²¹² The Weberian Protestant ethic in particular has served as a major theoretical point of reference as evident in the sociological literature but also in the anthropological and political science literature.²¹³ Anthropologists and other social theorists have adopted, departed from, or inverted the “meta-narrative of modernity,” and other familiar sociological discourses such as “disenchantment” and “enchantment.”²¹⁴ A brief introduction to the modernity debate, relating to both sociological and anthropological perspectives on African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, will suffice here.

The eminent sociologist David Martin, for example, in a pioneering sociological study of Pentecostalism in Latin America and Africa, uses the Weberian Protestant ethic as his dominant frame of analysis in discussing the modernising potentials of Pentecostalism in the political realm.²¹⁵ Martin points out that in Africa, Pentecostalism functions as “harbinger of modernity”, rather than as part of its “fundamentalist rejection.”²¹⁶ According to Martin “the first harsh phase of modernisation” aligns with the Pentecostal emphasis on betterment, self-

²¹¹ See Robbins, “The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity”.

²¹² See, David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); David Martin, *On Secularization. Toward a Revised General Theory* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Maria Frahm-Arp, *Professional Women in South African Pentecostal Charismatic Churches* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

²¹³ Harry Englund, and James Leach, “Ethnography and the Meta-Narratives of Modernity”, *Current Anthropology* vol. 41, no. 2 (2000), pp. 225-248; Joel Robbins, “Continuity Thinking and the Problem of Christian Culture”, *Current Anthropology* vol. 48, no. 1 (2007), pp. 5-38.

²¹⁴ Englund, and Leach, “Ethnography and the Meta-Narrative of Modernity”; See Martin, *On Secularization*.

²¹⁵ See David Martin, *Pentecostalism*; David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Blackwell, 1990).

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, 141.

discipline, aspirations and hard work which will eventually propel countries in Latin America and Africa into modernity. Even though Martin acknowledges that Pentecostalism does not necessarily promote the moral values of liberal Western modernity, he admits that “[m]ost of the moral characteristics of Pentecostalism revive those of the ‘Protestant Ethic’”, in particular, “its competitive pluralism”.²¹⁷

Following Martin, many contemporary social scientific scholars have placed accent on the Weberian Protestant ethic or other adjuncts of the theory of secularisation such as modernity, globalisation, rationalisation, and disenchantment, to analyse the ways African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity shapes political attitudes.²¹⁸ Socio-cultural anthropologists have also shown great interest in the study of modernity in attempts to reveal what some perceive as cultural diversity in a period of globalisation. Broadly, such approaches draw upon discourses from the domain of sociology such as “multiple modernities”, “individualisation”, “disenchantment, and re-enchantment”.²¹⁹

In the Ghanaian context, Birgit Meyer has investigated the relationship between conversion, disenchantment, the image of the devil and modernity. In her seminal work, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity Among the Ewe in Ghana*, for example, Meyer, traces the development of the analogy between Protestant missionary teachings on God and the Devil, and Ewe Christian conceptions of “conversion in terms of a rupture with

²¹⁷ Martin, *On Secularization*, 146-7; Martin, *Tongues of Fire*; Peter L. Berger, “Pentecostalism—Protestant Ethic of Cargo Cult” *The American Interest*, July 2010, n.p. <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2010/07/29/pentecostalism-protestant-ethic-or-cargo-cult/>. Accessed 20th August 2018.

²¹⁸ Michael Wilkinson, for example, points out that the longest standing debate among sociologists of religion is that of secularization and even though it has been severely criticized by some sociologists, there still exist many of its contemporary proponents such as Peter Berger, and Steve Bruce. See Michael Wilkinson, “Sociological Narratives and the Sociology of Pentecostalism” in *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*, pp. 215-234; For a detailed discussion of how Africans are coping with modernity, see Augustine Agwuele (ed.), *Development, Modernism and Modernity in Africa* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

²¹⁹ See Englund and Leach, “Ethnography and the Meta-Narratives of Modernity”.

the past”.²²⁰ The understanding of conversion as “rupture”, a “break with the past” or with local traditions, has become central to Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic discourses on progress and renewal. The contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic movement, in Meyer’s assessment, has taken up “the language of modernity as it spoke to Africans through colonization, missionization and, after Independence, modernization theory”.²²¹ Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, according to Meyer, “promote individualism with even greater emphasis than the mission churches”. Meyer characterises Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians as “agents of modernity” by pointing to their emphases on personal salvation and material progress in life.²²² To some extent Meyer, and Martin, share similar views on the modernising effects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. They both agree that Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians conceptions of modernity differ from the Western construction of modern identity. Meyer in particular challenges normative conceptualisations of modernity as rupture with the traditions of the past. What pertains in Ghana in the context of Pentecostal-Charismatic conversion in Meyer’s view, are local responses to the ambivalences of modernity.²²³ The attraction of theories of modernity to anthropologists, hitherto considered the domain of the sociologist, has been eloquently critiqued by scholars such as Harri Englund and James Leach and Ruth Marshall.²²⁴

Is African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity a modernizing force in the contemporary African public sphere, does it lead to political quietism or escapism in the light

²²⁰ Birgit Meyer “‘Make a Complete Break with Past’: Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 28, no. 3 (1998), pp. 317.

²²¹ Birgit Meyer, “‘Make a Complete Break with Past.’”

²²² See *ibid*; Birgit Meyer, “‘Make a Complete Break with the past’. Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol., 28, no 3 (1998), pp. 316-349.

²²³ See Meyer, “‘Make a Complete Break with the past.’”; Birgit Meyer, “Modernity and Enchantment: The Image of the Devil in Popular African Christianity” in *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity*, edited by Peter van der Veer, pp. 199-230 (New York: Routledge, 1996).

²²⁴ See Englund, and Leach, “Ethnography”.; Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

of its emphasis on the supernatural, or does it promote a “new, politically oriented Protestant ethic” that might spur on Africa’s democratisation?²²⁵ These are some of the identified core questions that social science scholars have attempted to deal with. I will engage these central discussions and show how scholars from their respective disciplinary positions have sought to answer them, in the context of encounters between Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality and contemporary African politics.

2.2. Paul Gifford

Paul Gifford is an important interlocutor in this work for reasons stated below and those already stated concerning his research on Pentecostalism and politics in Kenya. His main area of research is on African Christianity and its contemporary public roles.²²⁶ He has, however, recently taken interest in the politics and modernity of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Africa.²²⁷ I will highlight his methodology, and the theories that underlie his analysis of the African political context and of Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements. I show how my approach departs from his functionalist analysis of Pentecostal-Charismatic engagements with politics. Gifford has lived in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Senegal, and Liberia, spanning three decades of teaching and research, some of which were spent working for the All African Conference of Churches (AACC).²²⁸

²²⁵ See David Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism & the rise of a Zimbabwean transnational religious movement* (London: James Curry, 2006); Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*.

²²⁶ See Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1998); Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa* (London: Hurst & Company, 2015); Paul Gifford, “Introduction: Democratisation and the Churches”, in *The Christian Churches and the Democratisation of Africa*, edited by Paul Gifford, pp. 1-13 (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

²²⁷ See Gifford, *Christianity, Development*.

²²⁸ See Gifford, *Christianity, Politics, and Public Life in Kenya* (London: Hurst and Company, 2009), 4.

Gifford, therefore brings to bear on his analysis his first-hand knowledge of the religio-political terrain. He draws on years of “personal experience” and decades of exposure to developments in African Christianity and politics.²²⁹ For scholars of African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity such as Allan Anderson, Gifford’s breadth of scholarship makes him “the leading and voluminous exponent of this subject.”²³⁰ In order to better understand Gifford’s rather negative analysis of Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements and their transformative potentials, it is important to understand his conception of politics in Africa.

Gifford holds that,

Africa’s only hope of joining the modern world is to transcend neo-patrimonialism, enforce the rule of law, build institutions, and adopt rational bureaucratic structures, systems, and procedures in education, health, agriculture, transport and so on. It is the contribution of different forms of Christianity to that agenda that I want to address.²³¹

Generally, this perspective has shaped his analysis of Christianity in several African public spheres. He holds that Africa’s development can only happen through a framework shaped by ‘functional rationality’ and not through the intervention of “enchanted forces”.²³² Gifford is not concerned with ecclesiological issues such as internal organisation, personal devotion, morality, pastoral care, theology and creeds of the religious organisations he studies. In my understanding of his approach, he applies predetermined political science schemas of analysis; moreover, his conception of politics appears to be restrictive, as it applies only to “formal politics”, such as political parties, parliament, elections, and the judiciary, health and education systems in Africa.²³³

²²⁹ Gifford’s references to his personal experience over the three decades of research in Africa appears in several of his publications. See his most recent book, *Christianity, Development and Modernity*, 7; Paul Gifford, *Christianity Politics and Public Life in Kenya* (London: Hurst and Company, 2009), 4-5.

²³⁰ See Allan Anderson, “Evangelism and the Growth of Pentecostalism in Africa”, http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/aanderson/Publications/evangelism_and_the_growth_of_pen.htm, pp., 9. Accessed 30 May 2007; Anderson, “Globalisation of Pentecostalism” a paper presented at the Commission Meeting of Churches’ Commission on Mission, in September 2002, Bangor Wales, p., 4.

²³¹ Gifford, *Christianity, Development*, 1.

²³² Ibid, 155.

²³³ See Gifford, *Christianity, Development*.

2.2.1 The African Political Context

Gifford distinguishes politics in Africa from the modern Western rationalised politics by appealing to the much-discredited theory of modernisation, discussed below. Also, he applies Weber's concept of "patrimonialism" in analysing developments in African politics, but also the dynamics within African churches.

The modernisation theory (also dependency theory) which presupposes that societies of the Global South should move, more or less in a pre-ordained way along the developmental paths of the global North is considered a scientific model by proponents of the so-called new political economy, derived from largely Marxist or neo-Marxist schools of thought.²³⁴ It informed development thinking and shaped the developmental agenda of former colonised societies, in order for them to modernise and join the Western developed world.²³⁵ Drawing also on Weberian conceptions of patrimonial rule and the work of political theorist Jean-Francois Bayart, Gifford refers to African politics as patrimonial, because it operates on a system of allegiance based on the kind of authority a father has over his children.²³⁶

According to Gifford, what this means is that,

those lower in the hierarchy are not subordinate officials with defined powers and functions of their own, but retainers whose position depends on a leader to whom they owe allegiance. The system is held together by loyalty or kinship ties rather than by a hierarchy of administrative grades and functions.²³⁷

Patrimonialism in Gifford's view accounts for the failures of African states to appropriate the shared values typified by "rational-legal ideas" and its modes of operation found in Western democracies.²³⁸ The political context is largely defined by the "Politics of the Belly",

²³⁴ See Jonathan Friedman, *Cultural identity and Global Process* (London: Sage, 1994); Heelas Heelas (eds.), *Religion, Modernity and Post Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).

²³⁵ See Colin Leys, *The Rise and Fall of Development Theory* (London: James Curry, 1996).

²³⁶ See Gifford, *African Christianity*.

²³⁷ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy* (London: Hurst and Company, 2004), 7.

²³⁸ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*.

a term popularised by Bayart to describe corruption and clientelism in African politics.²³⁹

African politics in Gifford's view lack the most efficient and legitimate ways—i.e. the legal rational bureaucracy of running a complex modern state. To this end what Africa needs in order to modernise is the so-called “Getting to Denmark” metaphor. It is the political scientist Francis Fukuyama who popularised the phrase “Getting to Denmark” to describe the challenges of creating modern political institutions.²⁴⁰

According to Fukuyama “[f]or people in developing countries, ‘Denmark’ is a mythical place that is known to have good political and economic institutions: it is stable, democratic, peaceful, prosperous, inclusive, and has extremely low levels of political corruption”.²⁴¹ Nick Fraser explains further that, for Fukuyama,

“Denmark” is a metaphor of moderate tempers, a good legal system, credible parliamentary democracy, a dose of healthful end-of-history tedium. Denmark, defined both as a real place or a metaphor, is the closest we can get to collective perfection.²⁴²

However, with regards to this developmental concept, Leys opines that its failure in Africa was due to the increasing conceptual irrelevance of the foundations that informed development practice in the 1960s and 1970s. It thus failed to produce the type of development in Africa that theorists had proposed.²⁴³

Fukuyama himself found numerous challenges with this thinking, and was not clear how such a Western European model could take root in different cultural and political contexts. Yet this modernising framework is what Gifford proposes as the path to end Africa's endemic under-development and the analytical lens through which he assesses

²³⁹ See J.-F. Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London: Longman, 1993); J.-F. Bayart, “Civil Society in Africa”. In *Political Domination in Africa: Reflections on the Limits of Power*, edited by Patrick Chabal, pp. 109-125. (Cambridge University Press, 1986); Crawford Yong, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

²⁴⁰ See Francis Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011).

²⁴¹ Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, 14.

²⁴² Nick Fraser, “Political Order and Political Decay review – volume two of Francis Fukuyama's magisterial political history” *The Guardian*, 28 September 2014.

²⁴³ See Leys, *The Rise and Fall of Development Theory*.

African Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements. Unlike other sociologists such as Martin and Maxwell, for example, who have found Weber's Protestant ethic resourceful in analysing the effects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Africa, Gifford is less positive that Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity is bringing Africa into the modern world. To Gifford, African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity does not reflect either Weber's Protestant ethic or Western modernity.

Gifford also does not agree that there is any value to the concept of multiple modernities, which goes against classical theories of modernisation.²⁴⁴ The concept of "multiple modernities" according to Eisenstadt,

presumes that the best way to understand the contemporary world—indeed to explain the history of modernity—is to see it as a story of continual and reconstitution of multiplicity of cultural programs. These ongoing reconstructions of multiple institutional and ideological patterns are carried forward by specific social actors in close connection with social, political, and intellectual activist, and also by social movements pursuing different programs of modernity, holding very different views on what makes societies modern.²⁴⁵

Gifford explicitly rejects this concept as well as the concept of postmodernity because both argue against single overarching meta-narratives. As Eisenstadt clearly states, "the concept of multiple modernities goes against the 'classical' theories of modernization and of the convergence of industrial societies prevalent in the 1950s, and indeed against the classical sociological analysis of Durkheim, and to (a large extent) even Weber".²⁴⁶

To Gifford, the concept of 'multiple modernities' is not helpful to the African political context. Far more fruitful, he suggests, is for African countries to move themselves towards "Denmark".²⁴⁷ He writes that,

²⁴⁴ See Martin, *On Secularization*.

²⁴⁵ Shmuel. N. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities" in *Multiple Modernities*, edited by S. N. Eisenstadt, pp. 2 (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

²⁴⁶ Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities" 1; Eisenstadt, "Modernity and Modernization" *Sociopedia.isa*, (2010), DOI: 10.1177/205684601053, accessed 18 June 2018

²⁴⁷ See Gifford, *Christianity, Development*, 14. Also see pp. 431 & 154 for more discussion on this topic.

Africa's only hope of joining the modern world is to transcend neo-patrimonialism, enforce the rule of law, build institutions and adopt rational bureaucratic structures, systems, and procedures in education, health, agriculture, transport and so on.²⁴⁸

With this approach, Gifford has already set the agenda he wants or expects Pentecostal-Charismatic churches to follow. Obviously, the Pentecostal-Charismatic framework of spiritual interventions does not fit in with his understanding of politics.

In this thesis, I argue that Pentecostal-Charismatic churches are actively engaged with politics by identifying theological narratives with political significance in the Kenyan context. Politics, we are reminded, is not only performed formally or in classical Western-organised political structures but also by ordinary people – what has been called “politics from below”.²⁴⁹

In my analysis of the sermons and other narratives of the case studies, I offer a more nuanced analysis of what it means to be political and politically engaged, from the perspective of the churches I studied. While important, I have less interest in what Pentecostal-Charismatic churches can or cannot do to change Kenya's dysfunctional political systems or structures. I'm more interested in how Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians construct concepts of the political and attempt to understand, from their point of view, the theological underpinnings of such theo-political conceptions. Following scholars such as Nimi Wariboko, for example, I focus on the “nonentitative” aspects of politics, by which he means the ‘magical substratum’ that underlies African politics.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Gifford, *Christianity, Development*, 11.

²⁴⁹ See Jean-Francois Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1993); David Francis (ed.), *Peace and Conflict in Africa* (London: ZED, 2008); Maria Frahm-Arp, “Pentecostalism, Politics, and Prosperity in South Africa” *Religions*, vol. 9 (2018), pp. 1-16; Barbara Bompani and Maria Frahm-Arp, (eds.), *Development and Politics from Below: Exploring Religious Spaces in the African State* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Karl Maier, *Politics of the womb, women, reproduction, and the state in Kenya* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

²⁵⁰ See Nimi Wariboko, “Political Theology from Tillich to Pentecostalism in Africa”, in *Paul Tillich and Pentecostal Theology: Spiritual Presence & Spiritual Power*, edited by Nimi Wariboko and Amos Yong, pp. 126-140 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015).

In the case of the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches under study in this thesis, there is a strong belief in the existence of spiritual evil that not only pollutes bodies but is also believed to be both underneath and above the structures of politics which can only be dealt with adequately through certain “anointed steps” and strategies involving strategic warfare prayers. Also, Gifford’s proposal that Africa’s development must hinge on Western forms of development and their specific political structuring takes no consideration of the contextual challenges such an approach engenders. In order for African economies to develop, Gifford claims, they must follow Western forms of education, science, technology, meritocracy, democratic reforms, the rule of law and a free market—which are hallmarks of Western modernity.²⁵¹ Such an understanding of modernity is problematic because it sustains the false binaries that pit the traditional or premodern and modern as opposites, instead of a complex web or as hybridised.²⁵²

Gifford erroneously equates Westernization with modernity, and thus conflates their meanings. Another significant factor is his use of theories of political economy, the very theories that Achilles Mbembe forcefully and convincingly argued are implicated in undermining “the very possibility of understanding African economic and political facts”.²⁵³

2.2.2 Enchanted Christianity and Politics

Gifford is no doubt a pioneering voice on debates about the impact of Pentecostal Charismatic Christianity on democracy in Africa. Much of his study captures the parallel developments of the movement’s growth during the big wave of Africa’s second democratisation in the 1980s and 1990s.

²⁵¹ Gifford, *Christianity, Development*, 153.

²⁵² See Talal Assad, *Genealogies of Religion* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993).

²⁵³ Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 7.

Gifford's most recent work, *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa*, pays significant attention to Daniel Olukoya's Mountain of Fire and Miracles ministries which is used as an example of enchanted religious imagination in African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. As the reasoning goes in this work, Pentecostal-Charismatic churches were and still are "encapsulated in a manifest system of political acquiescence".²⁵⁴ Gifford distinguishes mainline political engagements from Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. His position on the mainline political approach is as follows. "[T]he mainline churches have been characterised by an element of direct political involvement which has led them to pronounce on issues of human rights and even to train election monitors."²⁵⁵

According to Gifford, Pentecostal-Charismatics on the other hand relate to politics differently. They spiritualise politics by claiming that "[d]emons are responsible for the political situation, and their spiritual power must be broken".²⁵⁶ Gifford refers to this form of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity as "enchanted Christianity" and their way of conducting politics as an "enchanted approach" to politics. The enchanted Christian claims that ancestral curses, witches, and evil spirits can affect an entire nation. Specific men and women of God, prophets, or specialist pastors in deliverance, and spiritual and territorial warfare are able to lay bare the workings of this worldview and to provide spiritual directions mostly in the form of prophecies, and other forms of spiritual protection and ways to combat and to overcome them. The "biblical" and "faith gospel" are two types of enchanted politics.²⁵⁷ These categories seem to be a revision of his three earlier types, being the "faith gospel", "deliverance theology", and "Christian Zionism".²⁵⁸

²⁵⁴ Andreas Heuser, "Disjunction—Conjunction: African Pentecostalism and Politics" *Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, vol. 18, no. 3 (2015), pp. 10.

²⁵⁵ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 161.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ See Gifford, *Christianity, Development*.

²⁵⁸ See Gifford, "The Complex Provenance of some Elements of African Pentecostal Theology" in *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, edited by Andre Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani, pp. 62-79. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001).

According to Gifford, the “biblical approach”, is when “an elected leader is not regarded as a functionary, to be judged on criteria of effectiveness and productivity; the leader’s role is still sacral.”²⁵⁹ The faith gospel or “name it and claim it and take it” teaches that “circumstances are simply not relevant in comparison with what the Word of God says must be the case”.²⁶⁰ This faith gospel, emphasises “success”, “wealth” and “status”.²⁶¹ But there are also other Pentecostal-Charismatic ministries such as Daniel Oluokoya’s Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries (MFM), which specialises in spiritual warfare. MFM promotes what they term strategies of spiritual engagement such as “violent prayers of ‘holy madness’”, and “offensive warfare, of a ‘firebrand warrior’”.²⁶² Gifford thinks that these enchanted approaches to politics “bypass normal political considerations,” because their leaders do not only teach, but also claim that they have answers to problems and solutions to existential challenges that governments and politicians cannot provide.²⁶³ Pentecostal-Charismatic churches “spiritualise or moralise issues out of the mundane plane on which political issues have been most fruitfully addressed”.²⁶⁴

The enchanted approach, in Gifford’s estimation, diminishes human agency, and undermines social capital by encouraging fear and distrust, and it militates against the scientific rationality that underpins modern politics. While Gifford acknowledges spiritual warfare approaches to politics in African Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, he dismisses it outright as a dysfunctional political approach, because it will not be recognisable within the political issues raised by the World Bank or modern political science departments.²⁶⁵

²⁵⁹ Gifford, *Ghana’s New Christianity*.

²⁶⁰ Ibid, 165.

²⁶¹ Ibid, 44.

²⁶² Gifford, *Christianity, Development*, 27-8.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity* 169.

²⁶⁵ See Gifford, *Christianity, Development*.

2.3. Conclusion

In my estimation, Gifford does not pay much attention to the internal theo-logics or the emic theo-political perspectives and as such he misses how the spiritual principle of empowerment or the inner logic shape the spiritual warfare approaches to politics. Kalu points out how Gifford ignores the political theology that emerges from the Pentecostal-Charismatic teachings, that link the individual, the social and political misadventures to the larger cosmic warfare between God and the devil. According to Kalu, because such spiritual warfare theologies in African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity emanate from the interior of the peoples' worldview, they appreciate its critique and often accept the proffered solution.²⁶⁶ I draw broadly on Kalu's understanding of African Pentecostal-Charismatic prayer and other forms of intercession as types of political praxis, and strategy.

For Kalu, intercession can serve as a form of political critique at both local and the national levels.²⁶⁷ In my ethno-theological approach, the focus is on interpretations and perspectives of members by paying attention to the political language that emerges out of their personal and daily encounters with the divine. Actual lived theologies emerge out of members' intercessions, prophecies, teachings and practices and are contextual theologies that inform their politics in the context of Kenya's contemporary religio-political milieu.²⁶⁸

Gifford has also claimed that Pentecostal-Charismatic churches do not have a political theology, or any theology for that matter. Using Oyedepo, the founder of Winners Chapel, Nigeria, as an example, he writes that his covenant theology, as he categorises it, "is no way a political theology...Oyedepo is simply not interested in the world...He is not interested in

²⁶⁶ See Ogbu Kalu, "Faith and Politics in Africa: Emergent Political Theology of Engagement in Nigeria" In *Religions in Africa: Conflicts, Politics and Social Ethics, The Collected Essays of Ogbu Uke Kalu*, vol. 3, pp. 11-30 (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2010).

²⁶⁷ See Kalu, "Faith and Politics".

²⁶⁸ See, Diane B. Stinton, *Jesus of Africa: Voices of Contemporary African Christology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2006); Harri Englund, "Pentecostalism beyond Belief: Trust and Democracy in a Malawian Township", *Journal of the International African Institute*, vol. 77, no. 4 (2007), pp. 477-499.

changing system” and “some of his teaching is hardly theology at all”. What I think Gifford has in mind regarding theology, is formal academic theology. My point of departure is that Pentecostal-Charismatic churches do have a theology that actively engages with the political. While such a theology is not an academic systematic theology, it is theology nonetheless.

2.4. Ruth Marshall

Ruth Marshall is a political theorist. Her interest lies in the political stakes of new forms of religiosity in the context of political change and democratisation in Africa. Specifically, she focuses on the growth of popular Christianity, in particular the new Pentecostal-Charismatic churches or the “Born-Again movement” in Nigeria.²⁶⁹

Two main areas of her work concern us here. First, her analysis of the context in which the Nigerian Born-Again revival has developed and its evolution from the 1970s to the 1990s. Second, her methodological and theoretical approach, its significance for understanding Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements and its implications for my own work.

2.4.1. The Nigerian Context-Born-Again Christianity

Marshall traces the evolution of the theology of the born-again movement from its ascetic anti-materialist and otherworldly orientation during the burgeoning phase of the revival in the 1970s to the development of the prosperity gospel in the 1990s. According to Marshall,

[i]n the early years of the revival, the realm of politics and political power was invariably presented in terms that emphasized its dangerous and corrupt nature...The problem was also articulated in terms of the evil and dangerous nature of desire—for power, goods, prestige—and debt, implying that the various social relationships that constitute the nexus of power will ensnare the believer in their webs and inevitably lead him or her, as if through a process of enchantment, to sin and its wages as death. It was only through rupture from these norms and social forms that enchantment might be broken.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁹ Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009).

²⁷⁰ Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*, 210.

Influenced by its holiness, anti-materialist theological orientation in the first and second decades of the revival, as Marshall has pointed out above, converts to Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity gained a distinct social prestige based on their refusal to bribe or promote any dishonest lifestyles. Direct participation in politics, during this period in the movement's development in Nigeria was considered “‘unchristian’, and ambitions for political power, through the political machinery of the state, or other networks, such as chieftaincy were shunned.”²⁷¹

According to Marshall's account, in its first decades, incentives for being a born-again Christian were not material. Accent was placed on guarding against pollution by evil spirits but more importantly by material wealth. Salvation in this context was overtly otherworldly. From the 1980s onward, a “new wave” of Nigerian born again movement evolved. This brand of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity began in the 1970s in the United States, from where it expanded to other parts of the world through transnational discourses and movements. In Nigeria, “new wave” Pentecostalism distinguished itself from the older holiness movement by its focus on the “doctrine of prosperity” or the “faith gospel.”²⁷² This became more evident as the movement expanded, and a competitive religious market evolved which saw this “localised, retreatist” community become more associated with the elite from the field of business communities, politicians and other professionals.²⁷³ “From the retreat from the ‘world’ that characterised the holiness wave, the new wave placed a much greater emphasis on miracles, particularly of prosperity, salvation in the here and now, and ‘global spiritual warfare’ ”.²⁷⁴ The shift from holiness to prosperity theology thus entailed a theological revision of earlier concepts of salvation but also involved the intensification and

²⁷¹ Marshall, “God is not a Democrat: Pentecostalism and Democratisation in Nigeria.” In *The Christian Churches & the Democratisation of Africa*, edited by Paul Gifford, pp. 253 (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

²⁷² Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*, 78.

²⁷³ Marshall, “God is not a Democrat”, 253.

²⁷⁴ Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*, 79.

an expansion of local ontologies of the devil. Pentecostal pastors and members alike interpreted the cause of suffering, especially poverty, as the work of the devil or the result of a sinful life.

Nigerian Prosperity theology, as was the case of other Pentecostal-Charismatic movements in Ghana and other West African countries, redefined earlier conceptions of spiritual causality “in the idea of global spiritual warfare and the ongoing accent on personal miracles of deliverance.”²⁷⁵ Publication of conversion and miracle stories of leading Nigerian politicians and professionals also became part of a conscious effort to win the nation and its politicians for the Lord. Marshall explains further:

The advent of the ‘doctrine of prosperity’ provided the discursive and symbolic platform on which to integrate the born-again experience of redemption and social mobility, conscious consumption, and the legitimation of wealth in a time of scarcity. Older, ‘holiness’ churches began adjusting their doctrinal emphasis and targeting new congregations...The stress on the retreat from ‘the world’ was reduced, and wealth was understood as being the heritage of the true believer.²⁷⁶

In Nigeria, what is paradigmatic of the movement in its contemporary form is the shift in the categories of prestige, from the “blameless, simple, and Christ-like life” of the holiness period to the prosperity or new wave churches where “the economy of prestige is based on the acquisition of both spiritual power (expressed in the ability to heal, exorcise and prophesy) and material success as evidence of God’s favor.”²⁷⁷ This imaginative reworking of relations of power gave rise to new thinking and practices, especially in the way Nigerian Pentecostalism presented itself as a rupture from the past and from established Nigerian practices. Stories of powerful miraculous encounters and testimonies of everyday accounts of the miraculous, of healing, and prosperity emerged. These stories emerged throughout the

²⁷⁵ Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*, 79.

²⁷⁶ Marshall, *Ibid*, 254.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 79.

1990s in the context of existing anxiety of occult forces, such as portrayed in Emmanuel Eni's, *Delivered from the Powers of Darkness*.²⁷⁸

Eni is one of the first Nigerian born-again Christians to write about their past lives in service to "Lucifer." It is basically a testimony about the existence and high patronage of Lucifer's services in the spiritual underworld as well as about the dangers of dealing with occult forces for power and prestige. To Marshall, such stories are not mere cautionary tales about the dangers of the occult but are

fertile forms of religious imagination through which a new geography of the divine finds its expression and a mode in which the themes of redemption and resurrection in a world of corruption and desolations acquire a graphic force.²⁷⁹

Most of these stories follow a certain pattern, by making references to satanic hierarchy, in which Satan and his government exercise control with interest in destroying born-again Christians. According to the narrative pattern of the discourses, individuals or whole communities can be initiated into Satan's kingdom, portrayed in terms of a government with its own ministers and large army. It is "a military Kingdom' of 'millions of evil spirits, who oppress, suppress and possess human beings".²⁸⁰ Individuals possessed by evil spirits are believed to have the powers to bring unbelievers to economic ruin or cause disasters such as road accidents, sudden deaths, or cause people to commit serious crimes or politicians and other elite to obtain the prestige associated with wealth and political power. Ephesians 6:12, is an oft quoted biblical passage by Pentecostal-Charismatics that encapsulates who the true enemies of the born-again Christian are: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."²⁸¹ These narratives of demonic encounters and of

²⁷⁸ See Emmanuel Eni, *Delivered from the Powers of Darkness* (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur: Parole de vie, 1996).

²⁷⁹ Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*, 117.

²⁸⁰ Ibid, 118.

²⁸¹ Eph. 6:12 (KJV).

miraculous escapes directly address what are perceived to be the sources of insecurity and the political forms responsible for them.²⁸²

The engagement with the demonic is thus central to the Pentecostal project of redemption and salvation at both individual and national levels. In spiritual warfare discourse the image of the invading army of the Lord is at the heart of this born-again project of overcoming the demonic, which underwrites new forms of politics.²⁸³ Spiritual warfare prayers in this context are a form of insurrectional speech, through which converts do things with words.²⁸⁴ These spiritual warfare theologies are not unique to the Nigerian context but are found all over the continent.

It is the political theology inherent in these discourses of spiritual warfare in its contemporary form in Kenya that I focus on. As Marshall notes, central to determining the nature of born-again political theology is its “engagement with the demonic” in the context of the sociopolitical and economic insecurities in Nigeria.²⁸⁵ Marshall’s work shows how Nigerian Pentecostal-Charismatic churches construct contextual theological responses to what they perceived as spiritual crises, with political implications. I have pointed out in chapter one, that the political theology and political engagement of contemporary Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic churches are contextual responses to what is conceived primarily as a spiritual crisis.

2.4.2. Some Methodological and Theoretical Issues

Marshall’s methodological and theoretical contributions are crucial for engaging scholarly discourses that excludes Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements from the political arena in Africa. Marshall distinguishes her approach from other scholars such as Gifford and in particular Meyer, by claiming that she takes “religious faith seriously” and in many ways

²⁸² Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*, 118.

²⁸³ See Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*.

²⁸⁴ See Marshall, “Destroying arguments and captivating thoughts: Spiritual Warfare prayer as global praxis”, *Journal of Religion and Political Practice*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2016), pp. 4.

²⁸⁵ Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*, 204.

her approach clears an “analytical space” for understanding religious faith in its irreducibility.²⁸⁶

Drawing on Michel Foucault’s concept of “political spirituality” she is able to problematise the political significance of Nigerian Pentecostalism in terms of processes of subjectivation “without resorting to an a priori notion of either religion or politics” and as such she departs from typical functional social science accounts that centre on modernity, globalisation and economic crisis as the reasons for the growth and political import of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity.²⁸⁷ Nigerian “Born-Again Christianity” according to Marshall, is “a specific regime of practice, in and through which particular moral and political subjects are produced.”²⁸⁸ The process of subjectivation in the context of Nigerian Pentecostalism and politics is a dominant framework which she appeals to, in order to show that Born-Again believers and lifestyles are in themselves political. Nigerian Pentecostal-Charismatic “political spiritualities” must be understood as “the work of the self on the self” or as a regime of moral practices on the self and on others.²⁸⁹

For Marshall then, the political import of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches or the “Born-Again” movement in Nigeria stems from their vision of personal and collective redemption and of rupture, and its specific program for personal and collective regeneration and renewal.²⁹⁰ This vision of redemption or its possibility is highly influenced by spiritual warfare theologies. As such I find Marshall’s emphasis on spiritual warfare narratives as theological-political language useful, for these reasons. In Kenya, spiritual warfare teachings in the form of books, sermons, as well as services designated specifically as spiritual warfare services are common place. In chapters three to five, I construct political theological motifs of my case studies based primarily on their emphasis on how to wage spiritual warfare for the

²⁸⁶ Marshal, *Political Spiritualities*, 204.

²⁸⁷ Ibid, 34.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid, 46.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

nation and in chapter six I analyse spiritual warfare prophecies, prayers and actions, of the case studies in order to show the theo-logic that underlies their political engagements.

Marshall is clear in her critique of the ahistorical use of Western theoretical constructs in African contexts, because most of these approaches pre-suppose what qualifies as political. She therefore departs from the dominant social scientific approaches that see a causal relation between social, economic political crises and religious revival, and to approaches that bifurcate reason and faith, knowledge and belief.²⁹¹ These social science approaches –refer to the work of Meyer and Jean Comaroff – are specifically critiqued for their theoretical and methodological inadequacies to help grasp the born-again phenomenon in its irreducibility. These anthropological, sociological and political science approaches according to Marshall, are either focused on “cultural difference”, what she calls “the lack of ‘fit’ between Western theory and non-Western practice”.²⁹² Marshall rather, proposes that in order to understand the politics of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches there is the need to focus on the forms of new political language found on the ground in African societies. To this end, there is the need to understand the construction and articulation of civic virtue from the perspective of the people, which might tell us more about the possibility of instituting the form of society which classical political science represents as democratic.²⁹³

Here, I find Marshall’s call to focus on new political languages that are found on the ground useful for my own work, in particular how she applies Copan’s distinction between the “generic and institutional church”.²⁹⁴ According to Copan, “if there is an organised community which at the moment is part of the foundations of the democratic field of tomorrow, it is the church, in the generic rather than institutional sense.”²⁹⁵ Rather than focus

²⁹¹ Marshal, *Political Spiritualities*, 4-5.

²⁹² Ibid, 4.

²⁹³ Ibid, 243.

²⁹⁴ Jean Copans, *La longue marche de la modernité africaine: savoirs, intellectuels, démocratie* (Paris: Karthana, 1990), pp. 294-5, quoted in Marshall, “God is Not a Democrat”, 239.

²⁹⁵ Copans, *La longue marche de la modernité africaine*.

on church leaders alone, we must also focus on the body of believers “who through their identity and faith as Christians, are actively involved in constructing such new languages.”²⁹⁶

What is important, according to Marshall, is to identify a “Christian ‘demos’” which refers to a “group of people who are engaged as Christians, for whom their belief informs action, structures social relations and moralises the economic and political.”²⁹⁷

Even though in Marshall’s own work we don’t encounter the voices of many ordinary believers, I take her methodological proposal seriously, by focusing on theological narratives and discourses, as core to understanding how my case studies engage the political sphere.

The concept of politics used in this thesis is also not grounded in the “narrow, elite sphere of institutional politics and state rhetoric” but in the political consciousness that is shaped by Pentecostal-Charismatic spiritual warfare theologies constructed as responses to the contemporary political situation.²⁹⁸

In applying Marshall’s analysis of the Nigerian “Born-Again” Christianity, to the Kenyan context, the “Christian Demos” constitutes specific Christian responses to the contemporary political situation and to the history that brought it into being. Also, Marshall’s use of the self-referent term “Born-Again,” is informative. It stems from how the movement positions itself as a response to the failures of the church in the past and its attempts to construct a redemptive and empowering theology. This failure, according to Marshall, is linked to the failures of the “post-colonial state to redeem its promises of democracy and development...[C]oming to grips with the failure of the church means also to engage with the nation’s failure, that these two realities are linked.”²⁹⁹ The church is therefore seen as a means to confront the contemporary situation which is that of

deep economic crisis, profound cynicism and disaffection towards political leadership and the endless, government-engineered transmission process, popular disgust with

²⁹⁶ Marshall, “God is Not a Democrat”, 239.

²⁹⁷ Ibid, 243.

²⁹⁸ Ibid, 239.

²⁹⁹ Ibid, 246.

the excesses of corrupt state officials, and a widespread sense of social and moral disintegration.³⁰⁰

For Nigerian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, as in Kenya, the claim to have made “a complete break with the past” constitutes a break, supposedly with modes of association based on ethnicity, and in particular traditional religions and other modes and status such as kinship and gender.

To Marshall, even though it is important that the born-again articulations of redemption involve a critique of Nigeria’s political economy, what is more important is how it engenders an ongoing internal debate about civic virtue. Nigerian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians attempt to “reconceptualize 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”.³⁰¹ The born-again movement’s “political spirituality” is central to its success and significance. Not only does this form of spirituality articulate the urgent need for new modes of ascertaining the truth from falsity through its regime of self-governance, which extends to governing others, but it also has certain stated goals, two of which are spiritual empowerment and the creation of a new way of life. Through its project of rupture and renewal, the movement sets itself the political mission of healing the land that entails redemption of Nigeria’s past, but also announces the coming of a new Nigeria, a new kingdom ordained by God. What this means is, the “Born-Again” Christian in particular, needs to be careful with the kind of alliances forged - for to align with the wrong supernatural and material powers “opens up the space in which the ‘failure of the nation’ is manifested”.³⁰² This explains why for most contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, the political situation in their various countries is not just a material one, but also a deeply spiritual situation.

³⁰⁰ Marshall, “God is Not a Democrat”.

³⁰¹ Ibid, 246.

³⁰² Ibid, 247.

Marshall's approach helps us to understand better how local political consciousness emerged in Nigerian Pentecostalism by analyzing how democracy is reimagined and how politics as a whole is considered one of the main avenues for the cosmic battle between God and the devil. In Marshall's analysis, we see how spiritual warfare becomes primary to the Pentecostal-Charismatic project of not just winning individuals for the Lord but the whole nation as well. Such an understanding of the political project of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians derives from a close reading of narratives, not government actions and party politics.

This redirection of research focus from institutional politics to discursive forms, and the call to take faith seriously in religio-political analysis, informs this research. Such an injunction has also been taken on by scholars of the anthropology of Christianity, specifically of Pentecostalism.³⁰³ In this thesis, I am interested fundamentally in the theological explications of Pentecostal-Charismatics on politics and contextual political issues it engages.

2.5. Conclusion

In this conclusion, let me briefly discuss how my work departs from Gifford and Marshall as two main representatives of the social-scientific study of Pentecostalism in Africa. In relation to Gifford's approach, he does not pay much attention to the theo-logic or the emic theological narratives of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches and as such he missed the inner logic of spiritual warfare approaches to politics. Second, he focuses on the leader's theology or their lieutenants, to the exclusion of ordinary members whose voices are barely heard, despite stated intentions in the literature. My approach, on the other hand, has gathered and analysed the voices of both key leaders and members (see list of interviewees).

³⁰³ See Fenella Cannell, (ed), *The Anthropology of Christianity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Simon Coleman, Rosalind I. J. Hackett, and Joel Robbins (eds.), *The Anthropology of Global Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism* (New York: NYU Press, 2015).

Marshall's work on the other hand as she herself acknowledges, is not an ethnography of Nigerian Pentecostalism nor an analysis of its political theology, even though in her work we see the interaction between the political context and the construction of theological responses.³⁰⁴ As such even though she claims to take religious faith seriously, she fails to do so in many respects. First, she is quite critical of the movement's theology of redemption. On this she writes,

Pentecostalism expresses a negative political theology, whether one understands this term in its sense of theology of sovereignty or as theology of community. With its emphasis on individual salvation, interiority and affectivity, coupled with its incipient messianism, it has great difficulty in either founding an authority that commands obedience and may embody divine will, or creating the foundations of a political community.³⁰⁵

In my estimation, Marshall came to the above conclusion because she focused on the internal discrepancies in the movement's theologies, and on its incessant bid for pastoral monopoly in the context of increasing theocratic tendencies.³⁰⁶ An analysis of Pentecostal-Charismatic theology reveals both discrepancies and similarities, but in spite of differences in theologies, in my case studies for example, the vision to redeem Kenya through specific acts of prayer is quite uniform. Again, the emphasis on engaging with the demonic to Marshall is problematic. She thinks that "rather than [spiritual warfare] resolving the problem of radical insecurity and founding a new politics of living together, [it] gives rise to a politics of settling scores and vengeance."³⁰⁷

I argue that a theological analysis of spiritual warfare discourses and practices show that the underlying philosophy expresses potentiality, and hope in overcoming seemingly unsurmountable political and economic situations, rather than vengeance. The members from the churches I observed will mostly consider themselves peace ambassadors mainly because they fast and pray for the health and prosperity of their country. While Marshall's approach

³⁰⁴ See Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*.

³⁰⁵ Ibid, 165.

³⁰⁶ Ibid, 164.

³⁰⁷ Ibid, 165.

outlines important Pentecostal-Charismatic political theological interventions and examines how they engage the context in which they are formed, it does not go far enough to appreciate and analyse a contextual theology that underlie spiritual warfare. An ethno-theological account gives more grounds for constructing a political theology out of discourses and practices that reflects the *Sitz im Leben* of the case studies and a renewed understanding of their conceptions of and engagement with politics in Kenya.

2.6. African Theological Approaches and Pentecostal-Charismatic Theology and Politics

In this section, I first provide an overview of dominant African theological approaches as background for the review of the contributions of J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu and Nimi Wariboko, to the emerging theological study of Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagement in Africa. It is followed by a discussion of their analyses of Pentecostal-Charismatic theologies which I show are more sympathetic to the movement's political engagements, and closer to the approach I adopt in this thesis. I also discuss where I draw on or depart from their approaches.

2.6.1 Dominant African Theological Approaches

A survey of the African Christian theological literature shows very little engagement with contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches political theology in spite of the rich theological scholarship on the relevance of Christianity to postcolonial African contexts. Specifically, a theological analysis of Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements is nonexistent, in spite of the movement's growing political significance since the 1990s.

African theological scholarship from the 1970s to the 1990s dealt in one way or the other with what Martey describes as the “inculturation-liberation debate within the context of

the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians.”³⁰⁸ Since the 1990s however, liberation, reconstruction, and women’s theology (or the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians), have also become dominant paradigms in articulating socio-political issues in African theology.³⁰⁹ I show below that they have not adequately engaged the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement, especially its theological and political significance in contemporary African public spheres.

In a collection of eighteen essays, mostly focused on “Liberation and Reconstruction” in African theology for example, none of the chapters attended to Pentecostal-Charismatic conceptions in spite of the fact that they have become serious partners in African theological dialogue.³¹⁰ As I argue in this thesis, the framework of “spiritual liberation” is central to Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements, especially their conceptions of national redemption and liberation.³¹¹

Several reasons explain the paucity of theological literature specific to African Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements. Leading African theologians such as Ka Mana, Jesse Mugambi, and Emmanuel Katongole have all been critical and in some cases dismissive of the contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic contribution to Africa’s socio-cultural and political reforms. Mana, for example identifies the Pentecostal-Charismatic understanding and emphasis on divine interventions as problematic. For him, such an

³⁰⁸ Emmanuel Martey, *African Theology, Inculturation and Liberation* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 2; Emmanuel Martey, “African Theology and Latin American Liberation Theology: Initial Differences within the Context of EATWOT” *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, vol. 6, no. 2 (1996), pp. 26-46.

³⁰⁹ See M. T. Mwase, Eunice K. Kamaara (eds.), *Theologies of liberation and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of Professor Jesse Mugambi* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2012); Julius Mutugi Gathogo, “Liberation and reconstruction in the works of J N K Mugambi: A critical analysis in African theology” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Kwazulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg Campus, 2007; Julius Mutugi Gathogo, “Post-Liberation Theology: A Critical Appreciation” in *Theologies of liberation and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of Professor Jesse Mugambi*, pp. 59-94.

³¹⁰ See M. T. Mwase, Eunice K. Kamaara (eds.), *Theologies of liberation and Reconstruction*

³¹¹ See Martey, “African Theology and Latin American Liberation Theology”, 1.

approach stifles ambitions and the resources for political liberation.³¹² At best, Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality promotes an escape into a transcendent privacy with tranquilizing effects.³¹³ For Mana, “it is not with miracles that we change the world, but with quiet strength of the human spirit which the Lord has filled with his kindness.”³¹⁴ In the context of Mana’s liberation theology, “pledging allegiance to, and adopting witch beliefs has seriously weakened Christianity in Africa”.³¹⁵

The Kenyan scholar, Mugambi, has also dismissed any positive contributions of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity to Africa’s socio-cultural and political reform on the basis that it is foreign to African culture. For Mugambi, African Pentecostal-Charismatic churches are American imposed forms of Christianity, which are opposed to African cultural norms and values.³¹⁶ In *The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa*, Katongole, leaves out Pentecostal-Charismatic perspectives because he is also not convinced that they are able to “provide a critical challenge to the political and economic illusions of a postcolonial Africa.”³¹⁷ He adds that Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity

nicely locates itself within the dominant imagination of postcolonial politics and economics in Africa, and quite often reproduces, its patterns, its modernity, and its illusory promises of success and prosperity...[P]rosperity gospel peddlers merely represent the religious versions of the ‘politics of eating’.³¹⁸

Elsewhere Katongole has described Pentecostal-Charismatic church leaders as charlatans

³¹² See Ka Mana, *Christians and Churches of Africa Envisioning the Future: Salvation in Jesus Christ and the building of a new African society* (Carlisle: Regnum and Paternoster, 2002).

³¹³ See Ibid.

³¹⁴ Ibid, 80.

³¹⁵ Mana, *Christians and Churches of Africa*, 97.

³¹⁶ See Jesse Mugambi, “Evangelistic and Charismatic Initiatives in Post-Colonial Africa” in *Charismatic Renewal in Africa* edited by M. Vahakangas and A. A. Kyomo, pp. 111-144 (Nairobi: Acton Publications, 2003).

³¹⁷ Emmanuel Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 2011), pp. 49.

³¹⁸ Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa*, 50.

who only promote the illusory promise of material progress in Africa.³¹⁹ Similar glaring omissions of Pentecostal-Charismatic perspectives can also be made of *African Theology on the Way: Current Conversations*, which has one only chapter out of sixteen dedicated to African Pentecostal-Charismatic perspectives.³²⁰ *Theological Reimagination: Conversations on Church, Religion, and Society in Africa*, addresses none of the issues presented by the immense impact of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Africa.³²¹ It also needs to be taken into consideration that African theology has been dominated by Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant clergy-scholars who have long accused Pentecostal-Charismatic churches of ‘sheep stealing’ and of having no proper theological training.³²² As Adriaan van Klinken points out, mainline clergy-scholars,

have shaped their African Christian identity in relation to and in dialogue with, on the one hand, the original missionary foundation of their church and the denominational tradition with which they identify, and on the other hand, their traditional religious heritage and cultural realities.³²³

With most of these scholars trained in systematic or dogmatic theology in Western academies, they quickly dismissed or misunderstood the theological perspectives of contemporary Pentecostal Charismatic Churches and their possible contributions to African politics. In the context of church-state relations in Africa, most mainline churches leaders continue to follow a predictable pattern of political action. The Churches’ prophetic role, most will agree, is to engage government and political developments through advocacy and recommendations such as issuing pastoral letters urging for peace, reconciliation and other

³¹⁹ Emanuel Katongole, *A Future for Africa: Critical Essays in Christian Social Imagination* (Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005), 199-201, 239-250.

³²⁰ Diane B. Stinton (ed.), *African Theology on the Way: Current Conversations* (London: SPCK, 2010).

³²¹ Agbonkhiamghe E., Orabator SJ. (eds.), *Theological Reimagination: Conversations on Church, Religion and Society in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2014).

³²² See Aylward Shorter and Joseph N. Njiru (eds.), *New Religious Movements in Africa* (Nairobi: Pauline Publications, 2001).

³²³ Adriaan Van Klinken, “African Christianity-Developments and Trends” in *Handbook of Global Contemporary Christianity: Themes and Developments in Culture, Politics, and Society*, edited by Stephen Hunt, pp. 131-151. (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

forms of political reforms.³²⁴

The Circle is a community of scholars interested in engaging issues of common concern based on their experiences as African women.³²⁵ In the context of the Circle's feminist theological perspectives, I argue that they have been restrained from a deeper engagement with Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity due to what Bernice Martin calls "the Pentecostal Gender Paradox."³²⁶ The paradox is that, Pentecostal-Charismatic conceptions of spiritual empowerment endorses a notion of gender equality and oppression at the same time. Circle scholars have argued that Pentecostal-Charismatic hermeneutics does not fundamentally challenge patriarchy in both the Bible and indigenous African cultural practices and as such entrench women's subordination to men and denies them holistic salvation.³²⁷

The growth and influence of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in church and public life in Africa has brought about a theological shift and increasing emphasis on spiritual liberation and interventions in the political arena which is not replicated in the theological

³²⁴ Emmanuel Katongole, "Religion in Africa: A Curse or A Blessing?; On Daring to Reinvent Christianity in Africa" in *Theological Reimagination: Conversations on Church, Religion and Society* edited by Agbonkhianmeghe E. & Orobator S.J., pp. 199-210. (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2014).

³²⁵ See Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women's Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001); Tapiwa Praise Mapurang, "Bargaining with Patriarchy? Women Pentecostal leaders in Zimbabwe" *Fieldwork in Religion*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2013), n.p; Philomena N. Mauwra and Damaris Parsitau, "Perceptions of women's health and rights in Christian new religious movements in Kenya" in *Christianity in the African Diaspora: The Appropriation of a scattered heritage*, edited by Afe Adogame, pp. 175-186, (London: Continuum, 2008).

³²⁶ See Bernice Martin, "The Pentecostal Gender Paradox: A Cautionary Tale for the Sociology of Religion" in *The Blackwell Companion to Sociology of Religion*, edited by Richard K. Fenn, pp. 52-66. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2003).

³²⁷ See Musa Dube, "Between the Spirit and the world: Reading the Gendered African Pentecostal Bible", *HTS Theological Studies*, vol. 70, no. 1 (2014), pp. 1-7; Rsoinah Mmannana Gabaitse "Luke 4:18-19 and Salvation: Marginalization of Women in the Pentecostal Church in Botswana" in *So Great a Salvation: Soteriology in the Majority World*, edited by Gene L. Green, Stephen T. Pardue, K.K. Yeo, pp. 59-76. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmann Publishing, 2017); Sarojini Nadar, "On Being Pentecostal Church: Pentecostal women's voices and visions" in *On Being Church: African women's voices and visions*, edited by Isabel Apawo Phiri and Sarojini Nadar, pp. 60-79 (Geneva: WCC, 2005); Sarojini Nadar "The Bible Says! Feminism, Hermeneutics, and neo-Pentecostal Challenges", *Journal of Theology for South Africa*, vol. 134 (2009), pp. 131-146; J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "'Fireballs in our Midst': West Africa Burgeoning Charismatic Churches and the Pastoral role of Women", *Mission Studies*, No. 296 (1998), pp. 15-16.

literature on church and state. J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu and Nimi Wariboko are two African scholars whose engagement with Pentecostal conceptions of power suggest its liberating rather than marginalising potentials.

2.7. J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu

Asamoah-Gyadu is an ordained minister of the Methodist Church of Ghana, but his sympathies with the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement are well voiced in much of his work. I discuss the two main areas of his work, which are important starting points for understanding contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements in Ghana, and Africa.

2.7.1 Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and the Indigenous Imagination

In *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*, Asamoah-Gyadu, offers a comprehensive historical and theological analysis of Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity.³²⁸ In this and other works to be discussed, and contrary to Gifford and other scholars such as Mugambi, who point to the American origins and influence on African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, Asamoah-Gyadu, emphasises its indigenous roots, without discounting the influence of North-American “neo-Pentecostal” mega-churches.³²⁹

For Asamoah-Gyadu, “as far as the African situation was concerned, Pentecostalism offered the most palpable evidence of the current exponential growth occurring with Third World Christianity.”³³⁰ It is the indigenous origins and appropriation of African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity that explains this growth. He writes,

³²⁸ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments Within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism In Ghana* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

³²⁹ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2013), 1.

³³⁰ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 233; Asamoah-Gyadu, “‘From Every Nation under Heaven’: Africa in World Pentecostalism in Global Renewal

[i]f healing, prophecy, and prosperity within contemporary Christianity have therefore found a home in African Pentecostalism it is not simply because they are biblical concepts, important as that may be. It is because these phenomena strike response chords within the African primal or religio-cultural imagination.³³¹

I take such a position in this thesis because of the profound impact of indigenous conceptions of power in Pentecostal-Charismatic political theological constructions, even as they draw externally on Western or Asian perspectives. In *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context* for example, Asamoah-Gyadu analyses African Pentecostal-Charismatic theological concepts such as power, ecclesiology, and soteriology, and argues that they are shaped by primal religio-cultural imaginations and as such have more holistic applications in the African context. Pentecostal-Charismatic perspectives on salvation, according to Asamoah-Gyadu, comprise of healing and deliverance, transformation and empowerment, as well as prosperity.³³²

As I discuss in this thesis, concepts of individual salvation in the case study churches (under study) are intrinsically linked to narratives of saving the nation or healing the land. African Pentecostal-Charismatic theology of salvation also includes prosperity in life and business, or even the power to overcome demons. Asamoah-Gyadu places the pneumatic expressions of contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, especially their emphasis on spiritual warfare, within a distinctively African worldview, without discounting the synthesis of biblical and traditional worldviews that shapes such theologies.³³³

Christianity: Spirit Empowered Movements Past, Present and Future, edited by Vinson Synan, Amos Yong, and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, pp. xxvii-liv. (Florida: Charisma House, 2016).

³³¹ Asamoah-Gyadu, “‘From Every Nation under Heaven’: Africa in World Pentecostalism”, xxxv.

³³² See, Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*.

³³³ See J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “African Pentecostalism, Deliverance and Healing: Recent Developments and New Challenges” in *Witchcraft. Demons and Deliverance: A Global Conversation on an Intercultural Challenge*, edited by Claudia Währisch-Oblau and Henning Wrogemann, pp. 17-40 (Zurich: LIT, 2015).

2.7.2 Spiritual Warfare and Politics

Asamoah-Gyadu distinguishes mainline Christian political action from Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. The mainline churches, in his account, have confronted ruling governments by issuing press statements. This amounted to a direct or confrontational approach to politics. In Ghana for example, the Ghana Catholic Bishops, the body that oversees the affairs of the Roman Catholic Church in Ghana, appealed directly to Papal Encyclicals as the basis for disagreeing with actions taken by the government during the 1980s and 1990s.³³⁴

The mainline churches generally are known to issue communiques in the media addressed to the government or parties involved. While this observation is quite simplistic because the mainline churches have done more, and engaged in other forms of action, than just issuing statements, Asamoah-Gyadu, rightfully points out that Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Ghana, do not have a similar historical and theo-political and intellectual base.

Traditionally their ‘weapons’ have not been memoranda and pastoral letters. They referred to biblical passages to interpret what was going on and responded to the developments with prayer and prophetic declarations.³³⁵

In the contemporary Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic context, spiritual warfare prayers focus on preventing or even ameliorating God’s punishment of both personal and corporate immorality and political corruption. Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians therefore make direct connections between individual sins and national problems.³³⁶

Pentecostal-Charismatic churches usually organise intensive spiritual warfare prayers and fasting in order to deal with threats of political violence during elections. These distinctions are crucial for understanding the dominant approaches of both mainline and Pentecostal-Charismatic churches to politics in spite of some overlaps.

³³⁴ See J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “‘God Bless our Homeland Ghana’: Religion and Politics in a Post-Colonial African State” in *Trajectories of Religion in Africa: Essays in Honor of John S. Pobee*, edited by Cephas N. Omenyo and Eric B. Anum, pp. 165-184 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014).

³³⁵ Asamoah-Gyadu, “‘God Bless our Homeland Ghana’”, 170.

³³⁶ Ibid, 182.

As Asamoah-Gyadu explains in his work, spiritual warfare is not just confined to ecclesial spaces but it is a public affair. He explains that,

the public images of the leaders of these [Pentecostal-Charismatic] churches constantly include certain forms of militarization. Spiritual warfare summits and conferences are heavily advertised in the public sphere with images showing the lead speakers in actual military outfits... Archbishop Duncan-Williams, who is a pioneering founder of a charismatic church in Ghana, is shown wielding a sword that ostensibly shows the power he has over negative spiritual forces.³³⁷

Prophecies are also strong components of spiritual warfare which is used to call the whole nation to repentance, especially political leaders known to resort to traditional shrines or occult powers.³³⁸ Even though Pentecostal-Charismatic churches have traditionally shunned direct political engagement in favor of prayers by asking for God's direct intervention, it (prayer) should be seen as a form of political engagement.³³⁹ From their own theological perspectives they define their primary religious responsibility to the nation as "watchmen", meaning they constantly pray for a "spiritual release" in the light of political and economic challenges. In the context of African theology, Asamoah-Gyadu's work departs from the dominant African theological approaches that dismiss Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements. Such works, as I have discussed above, according to Asamoah-Gyadu, demonstrate a misunderstanding of Pentecostal-Charismatic theological approaches to matters of politics.³⁴⁰

Methodologically, Asamoah-Gyadu's works follow a "historico-theological" approach in analysing trends in contemporary Ghanaian Christianity.³⁴¹ His method is therefore not ethnography narrowly defined; and while some of his writings are empirical they are not focused on in depth studies of specific churches, apart from a few that are used as examples to support his point of view. His most recent monograph which analyses

³³⁷ Asamoah-Gyadu, "God Bless our Homeland Ghana", 35.

³³⁸ See Gerrie Ter Haar (ed.), *Witchcraft Beliefs and Accusations in Contemporary Africa* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2007).

³³⁹ Asamoah-Gyadu, "God Bless our Homeland Ghana", 176.

³⁴⁰ Ibid, 174.

³⁴¹ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 1.

Pentecostal-Charismatic theology from an African context, surprisingly fails to deal with spiritual warfare politics.³⁴² Another glaring lacuna in this book is the absence of Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements.

2.7.3. Conclusion

As far as Asamoah-Gyadu discusses the relevance of spiritual warfare, it is in the context of ecclesiology. For Asamoah-Gyadu, spiritual warfare shows how Pentecostal-Charismatic churches appropriate African religious worldviews in their search for the fullness of life.

Spiritual warfare has become a tool for diagnosing the influence of supernatural powers in the affairs of their members as evident by the focus on deliverance services, and themes such as “overcoming”, or “defeating”, “debilitating conditions in Pentecostal-Charismatic services.”³⁴³ A political theological reading of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches has therefore not been tackled in depth by Asamoah-Gyadu, which is something this thesis hopes to remedy.

There is much, however, to draw on from Asamoah-Gyadu’s historical and theological analysis of African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. While much of his focus has been on Ghana, his reference to Pentecostal-Charismatic theology of prayer, even though he did not go on to provide an in depth theological analysis, is important in understanding the localised and spiritualised approaches that underlie African Pentecostal-Charismatic approaches to politics.³⁴⁴

2.8. Nimi Wariboko

Nimi Wariboko, is a Nigerian and a practicing Pentecostal-Charismatic pastor and academic.

³⁴² See Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*.

³⁴³ See Asamoah-Gyadu, “Conquering Satan, Demons, Principalities, and Powers: Ghanaian Traditional and Christian Perspectives on Religion, Evil, and Deliverance” in *Coping with Evil in Religion and Culture*, edited by Nelly van Doorn-Harder and Lourens Minnema, pp. 85-104 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008).

³⁴⁴ See Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*.

He is the founding pastor of the Brooklyn New York branch of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), and currently the Walter G. Muelder Professor of Social Ethics at Boston University. Wariboko's works are significant for two main reasons.

First, Wariboko's methodological proposals and philosophical constructions illuminate the nature and task of Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality globally, but especially in the Nigerian and African context. Second, his work exemplifies an emerging feature in African theological scholarship by providing a much-needed insider academic perspective on African Pentecostal-Charismatic thought. The review consists of a brief discussion of Wariboko's methodology, followed by a discussion of two theoretical concepts that are central to his analysis of the political theology of the movement in the Nigerian and wider African context.

In conclusion, I discuss how my ethno-theological approach afforded me the opportunity of providing a more focused study on Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements as opposed to Wariboko's broad philosophical constructions.

2.8.1 Wariboko's Methodology

In the context of Pentecostal-Charismatic scholarship, Wariboko's method is consistent with that of North American constructive theologians such as Amos Yong, Frank D. Macchia, and Steven J. Land, to name a few of some of his most important interlocutors.³⁴⁵ These Pentecostal-Charismatic scholars have either constructed or have argued for a "central thesis"

³⁴⁵ See Frank D. Machia, *Justified in the Spirit: Creation, Redemption, and the Triune God* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010); Amos Yong, *The Spirit of Creation: Modern Science and Divine Action in the Pentecostal-Charismatic Imagination* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2011); James K. A Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010); Nimi Wariboko, *The Split of God: Pentecostalism and Critical Theory* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018).

or a distinctive principle around which a Pentecostal-Charismatic systematic and political theology or philosophy could be organised.³⁴⁶

The motivation of these Pentecostal-Charismatic scholars is to engage with the broader academy from distinctive Pentecostal-Charismatic frameworks. As Wariboko himself claims, he

brings pentecostal experience and ideas into dialogue with the broader academy, with mainstream theological and philosophical scholarships and [aims] to invite those outside the movement to seriously consider pentecostal voices, perspectives, and proposals in their theologies, philosophies and ethics.³⁴⁷

In *The Pentecostal Principle: Ethical Methodology in New Spirit*, discussed in depth below, he describes his approach as a “constructive work” that develops the theory of the “pentecostal principle” by offering a critical engagement with Tillich’s protestant principle.³⁴⁸ The approach developed in this book and much of his works are theoretical analyses of what is considered to be the core philosophical underpinning of the global Pentecostal-Charismatic movement and its contributions to social ethics and politics. As I will show, this broad interest also frames Wariboko’s analysis of African Pentecostal-Charismatic political theology.

In the context of African Pentecostal-Charismatic scholarship, and in terms of theological analysis of the movement’s political engagement, Wariboko goes further than all the scholars already engaged, in my estimation, by taking seriously the Pentecostal-Charismatic theory of knowledge and the spiritual process intended to actualise potentialities.³⁴⁹ He has specifically analysed the logic and dynamics of power and how they are related to conceptions of politics as a spiritual warfare, out of which he constructs a

³⁴⁶See Veli-Matti Karkkainen, Kirsteen Kim & Amos Yong (eds.), *Interdisciplinary and Religio-Cultural Discourses on a Spirit-Filled World: Loosing the Spirits* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2010).

³⁴⁷ Nimi Wariboko, *The Pentecostal Principle: Ethical Methodology in New Spirit* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), viii.

³⁴⁸ See Wariboko, *The Pentecostal Principle*.

³⁴⁹ See Wariboko, *The Pentecostal Principle*.

political theology of Nigerian and African Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. For our purposes, these theories are discussed in depth below.

2.8.2. The Pentecostal Principle

The “pentecostal principle” according to Wariboko, is “the capacity of social existence to begin something anew”.³⁵⁰ This concept is informed by Pentecostal-Charismatic pneumatology, grounded in the events of Acts 2, and developed in conversation with Tillich’s “Protestant principle”.³⁵¹

For Wariboko, Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality offers a new type of Christianity that not only fulfills Tillich’s “Protestant principle” but moves beyond it. Tillich’s Protestant principle, according to Wariboko, is “the force or tension that is in constant struggle with form as limit-actuality, as what can never be surpassed.” It “rejects any claim of an absolute, final form of culture, or of a determinate thing or order of things.”³⁵² In Tillich’s Protestant principle, “nothing is absolutely as it should be” as it points us to things beyond matter. After a lengthy debate with continental philosophers such as Michel Foucault, Martin Heidegger, Slavoj Žižek, Jacques Lacan, Jean-Luc Nancy, Giorgio Agamben, and protestant theologians like Martin Luther, Wariboko argues that Tillich’s Protestant principle is shaped by “backward-looking” theologies of forgiveness and justification.³⁵³

In contrast, the Pentecostal-Charismatic experience of the Holy Spirit, Wariboko holds, moves beyond justification as espoused in Tillich’s Protestant principle to include new birth, which encapsulates theological conceptions of the new life in Christ. While the Protestant principle, according to Wariboko, was developed to deal with questions of God’s creative omnipresence in the Protestant Reformation era, Pentecostalism offers principles for

³⁵⁰ Nimi Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2014), 4.

³⁵¹ See Wariboko, *The Pentecostal Principle*.

³⁵² *Ibid*, 43.

³⁵³ *Ibid*, 13.

a new era. Wariboko turns to and retrieves the “pentecostal principle” from the New Testament event in Acts 2. He interprets the Pentecost event as spirituality coming in contact with material existence, or human bodies that generates creativity. On the day of Pentecost, God’s creative spirit did not only become ‘incarnate’ in human bodies but in it “we find power to perform the impossible materialization of spiritual content.”³⁵⁴ In this context, as Wariboko claims, God’s spirit combined with matter in a movement towards actualised goodness.³⁵⁵ In Wariboko’s thought, Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality, or better, the “pentecostal principle” is about new life, about new beginnings and not just about regeneration.

The Pentecostal-Charismatic idea about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is a positive referent to the creative power poured onto all believing flesh. The Pentecostal-Charismatic expression of empowerment implies power over personal and communal sins but also an acknowledgement of God’s divine guidance and continued liberation. The “pentecostal principle” appears to be Wariboko’s own philosophical understanding of Pentecostal-Charismatic conceptions of possibilities that are opened up by the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

2.8.3. Nigerian Pentecostalism and the Spell of the Invisible

Wariboko describes his book *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, as an “empirical and practical study of Nigerian Pentecostals”³⁵⁶. Yet it is clear to me that it is also an extension and application of the “pentecostal principle”, as his intellectual, analytical project that nonetheless takes the lived experiences and everyday theologies of Nigerian, and for that matter African Pentecostal-Charismatic, churches seriously.

³⁵⁴ Wariboko, *The Pentecostal Principle*.

³⁵⁵ See Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, xiv.

Wariboko's approach can be described as partly an empirical approach to Nigerian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity because it focuses on analysing the moral experiences of members of the movement and their "existence within the context of their epistemological quest for and access to truth."³⁵⁷ It derives its evidence and moral descriptions from practice, "lived experience, active sense of life, and every day liturgical life of Nigerian Pentecostal churches" and yet on topics relating specifically to Pentecostal-Charismatic political theology, it is a reworked Tillichian notion of "power of being and spiritual presence" that provides the framework for organising the ethnographic data around the concept of the "pentecostal principle."³⁵⁸ As I shall discuss below, my approach foregrounds the ethnographic data as the primary theological voice of the churches.

In the book *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, Wariboko provides a philosophical rather than a theological or even a historical account of the movement's emergence and impact. He identifies the "spell of the invisible" as the first philosophy of the movement's hermeneutics and pneumatological imagination in the Nigerian context. It is central to understanding Nigerian Pentecostal political theology, and in particular the theo-logic that underlie their participation and articulations of the political.³⁵⁹

In Nigeria, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians believe, indeed they expect the invisible to be manifest— by faith. Based on this observation Wariboko constructs the "spell of the invisible" as an idea that elucidates the underlying character and quest of Nigerian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. In Nigeria today, "Pentecostalism is not just a moral or belief system—it is an epistemological quest."³⁶⁰ It is an epistemological quest concerned mainly with accessing the underlying character of things both seen and unseen. It is primarily

³⁵⁷ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, xiv.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*.

³⁶⁰ Ibid, xiii.

concerned with the invisible realm of events that is believed to shape circumstances and coincidences in Nigeria and the world at large.³⁶¹

Wariboko defines the “spell of the invisible” as a radical form of Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality that “attempt to bridge the gap between noumenal and phenomenal subjectivity in such a way that the subject-in-itself becomes directly accessible.”³⁶² As Wariboko explains further, for Nigerian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, “[i]t is not enough to be merely saved; one must see into, hear from, and converse with beings in the spirit. This is what affirms one’s status as saved and ‘hot in the Spirit’.”³⁶³ This observation also applies to my own findings in the Kenyan context. In the case studies, I describe and analyse how Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians in Kenya extract knowledge and power from the Holy Spirit so as to understand the inner workings of both visible and invisible worlds. To this end, I agree with Wariboko that for many African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, whether they are

investigating financial resource transfers from parishioners to their pastors or to a prophet claiming that his pronouncements are absolutely normative, the legitimizing impetus comes from ‘information’ that is accessible from the noumenal realm.

The value of a leader’s or members’ charisma or anointing,

is measured by his or her ability to use it to access the invisible realm for revelation and miracle-working power for the benefit of his or her followers, to mediate divine blessing between the seen and unseen worlds, and to build unquestionable authority. The big man or woman of God must be one whose eyes are open to see what is happening in the invisible realm.³⁶⁴

In the Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic context, the ability to “pierce the phenomenal veil” or being able to “see in the spirit”, or to have, and interpret visions and dreams, and to prophesy about coming cataclysmic events legitimises the call of the born again Christian, particularly the teachings and prophecies of leaders in both church and public circles.

³⁶¹ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*.

³⁶² Ibid, 4.

³⁶³ Ibid, 45-6.

³⁶⁴ Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 45-6.

In all its sophisticated philosophical erudition of Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality, Wariboko's "pentecostal principle" and in effect "the spell of the invisible", is quite a simple theo-logic, common to theological expressions of Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. The concept of being born again and empowerment by the Holy Spirit, emphasises newness in Christ, and the ability "to begin something new", which also carries strong notions of self-transcendence.³⁶⁵

Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians pray for the infilling of the Holy Spirit so that they may be "empowered to overcome", implying that an empowered born-again Christians "can do all things through Christ", which includes among others the powers to influence political events by healing the land.³⁶⁶ By claiming that they have been filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit, many of my interlocutors imagined themselves as men and women of God assigned to wrestle with the spirits behind Kenya's economic and political challenges. I have found useful for my own analysis of Pentecostal-Charismatic political theology, the concept of newness and the empowering possibilities explored in the "pentecostal principle" and the "spell of the invisible."³⁶⁷ Wariboko provide us with a framework in order to understand the core logic underlying Pentecostal-Charismatic theological concepts of empowerment, their logic of engagement, and how it is performed through sermons, prayers and prophecies as a form of political engagements.

2.9. Conclusion

Wariboko's philosophical analysis of the core beliefs of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement is useful as a broad framework as I discussed above. I'm however not convinced that constructing the "pentecostal principle" out of the theoretical perspectives of Tillich,

³⁶⁵ Wariboko, *The Pentecostal Principle*, 74.

³⁶⁶ See, Phil. 4:13

³⁶⁷ See Ibid; Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*.

whose analyses of the Protestant Reformation was shaped by thinking about the church in Europe can be adequately applied to contemporary African Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagements. The historical contexts of the Protestant Reformation that shaped Tillich's "Protestant principle" differs vastly from the contextual socio-historical and political context of contemporary African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity.

Chapter 3: Dr Prophet David Owuor's Ministry of Repentance and Holiness (MRH)

This chapter begins with a brief introduction to the ministry of Dr Prophet David Owuor. It goes on to give a detailed account of the fieldwork at his Ministry of Repentance and Holiness. It pays attention to the political import of the prophetic image he seeks to create and its political import through a close reading of his conversion and call narratives, his teaching on holiness and repentance, and the prayer rallies and home cell meetings I observed during the fieldwork.

The themes that emerge are derived from the discourses and holiness practices espoused by Owuor and his members and capture MRH's understanding of God's mission in the context of national politics. This chapter therefore primarily presents the ethnographically sourced data in the form of dominant themes in the beliefs and practices of the MRH as they relate to Kenya's contemporary politics. This chapter therefore offers a "thick description" of dominant themes in the beliefs and practices of the MRH as they relate to Kenya's contemporary politics, on the basis of the ethnographically sourced data. These emic perspectives, which are analysed and discussed more critically in chapter six, give us an idea of Owuor's holiness-prophetic approach (as I have termed it) to politics. I follow a similar format for the other two case studies in chapters 4-5.

3.1. Prophet Owuor's Biography, conversion and call to ministry

Owuor was born in 1966, in the village of Goma, Usenge, in the Bondo District of Nyanza province in Kenya. He is the second born in a family of six girls and three boys. His father Helekia Owour, was a prison officer (Sergeant Major) with the East African Community

Prison Service, and his mother Margaret Achieng Owour, described as a dedicated Christian, was a housewife and farmer.³⁶⁸

As the son of a prison officer, Owuor spent most of his formative and teenage years in Uganda, where his father had been transferred. He attended primary school in Yimbo, Kenya and in Luzira and Kitalya, both in Uganda, before joining Mbale Senior Secondary School in Uganda where he sat for his ‘O’ level exams. For his ‘A’ level education he proceeded to St. Peters College in Tororo, Eastern Uganda.³⁶⁹ He began his university education at Makerere University in Uganda, but completed this at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, in 1988. “Having studied for his Master’s degree at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev in 1992, he proceeded to study for a doctorate at the University of Haifa, Mt. Carmel, Israel, specialising in molecular genetic engineering, DNA cloning and nucleotide sequence analysis for medical drug design and discovery.”³⁷⁰

Owuor then moved on to take on a research position at the University of Illinois in Chicago, USA. His educational background and academic record is impressive and has been used by his ministry to shore up his image. Having spent most of his growing up days in Uganda and most of his adult life outside Kenya in Israel and USA, Owuor’s return in 2003, and the immense success of his ministry in the relatively short period of time has generated several public mis/conceptions about him—that add to his popularity. It is my view that Owuor exploits this outsider narrative in order to position himself as a reformer of Christianity in Kenya which he considers to, have, been hijacked by the devil and tainted by sin. Considering that Owuor started his ministry in 2003 in an already saturated Pentecostal-Charismatic environment such as Kenya, he needed to have a niche theology, which came in

³⁶⁸ See “Prophet David Owuor interviews-print and videos” <http://www.amefufuka.com/testimonies/dr-david-e-owuor> accessed November 2014.

³⁶⁹ “Prophet David Owuor, interviews-print and videos”.

³⁷⁰ Archbishop Dr. Onjoro’s introduction of Prophet Owuor during Eldoret pastors conference 31 August 2015.

the form of critique of the church at a time when public sentiments against its supposed failures to play a watchdog role in Kenya's ethnic politics were high.³⁷¹

Taking the number of his members and the pedigree of some of his church members, the holiness and repentance messages seems to have paid off. What also paid off is the aggressive use of his own media networks and public commercial T.V stations to cast himself as an outsider to the church in Kenya, and his ministry as a new holiness revival to cleanse all the defiled altars or churches and pastors in Kenya. For example, he says,

Some of the pastors have joined me in Kenya, they have confessed and repented because they see the miracles that the Lord is performing. Nothing is happening in the other churches because they are all defiled altars. I also now have pastors taking the repentance and holiness message to areas such as Nyahurunu, Bungoma, Mombasa, Muhoroni, Mt Elgon, Kitui. This is not a one man show, it is holiness revival to cleanse all the defiled altars and pastors. Here (in MRH) the devil stands rebuked but in other churches in Kenya it appears he is left totally unrebuked.³⁷²

It is not far-fetched to describe Owuor and his members as a holiness army, as sometimes they can be quite harsh on those who do not subscribe to their teachings. It is significant to note that for Owuor, miracles are a sign of a pastor's spiritual power and proximity to God, and therefore the lack of miracles (in other churches) indicates a lack of spiritual power caused by the absence of holiness. In similar fashion, he argues that Kenya is having political and economic challenges because of the level of sin in the nation.

As I will show in the next two chapters that discuss the other two case studies, it is Owuor's emphasis on holiness, as the source of spiritual power for both personal and national liberation, that sets his ministry apart. His outsider status, with little known about his life, gives weight to his messages and calls for holiness, especially in the contemporary Kenyan context where clergy scandals have become quite frequent.³⁷³

³⁷¹ See Christopher Mutisya, "The church has disappointed and let down the Kenyan people", *Standardmedia*, 10 November 2015.

<https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/ureport/story/2000182139/the-church-has-disappointed-and-let-down-the-kenyan-people> accessed 20 June 2018.

³⁷² Owuor, Sermon, 2014.

³⁷³ For example, *AnswersAfrica*, a Kenyan based online news portal catalogues a number of recent scandals by some Pentecostal-Charismatic clergy in Kenya. "Some of these scandals

3.1.1 Conversion Narratives

I begin this section with what I call the outsider narrative. It is part of Owuor's conversion story that is presented in a strategic way in order to distance his ministry from Kenya's mainstream churches. The outsider narrative, which is followed by an account of Owuor's call and spiritual mandate, emerges out of reading his stories of conversion and call to ministry.

3.1.1.1 Outsider to Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity

The Kenyan public is quite familiar with Owuor's ministry and his claims of intervening spiritually for the health of the nation. What was still a topic of debate among my interlocutors who were not members of his church was about his nationality, his wealth and the source of his spiritual powers. More important for some Pentecostal clergy were the issue of mentorship. They claim Owuor has no spiritual mentor.

In Pentecostal-Charismatic circles, his claim potentially cast doubts about the credibility of Owuor's call and ministry. For those who were interested in finding out prophet Owuor's mentor, the main issue was how to legitimise his call and the powers he possesses. The views of one of Owuor's pastor, who is no longer with the MRH, echoes most of the concerns of Kenya's Pentecostal-Charismatic community:

Prophet Dr Owuor has no mentor and no reference from any brother or sister or bishop from Kenya or the countries he said he came from. I have since tried to get any details about him from the USA. Even in Mexico where he claims that he prophesied the Tsunami but I have not received a single pastor who has written back saying he has an idea about him. All the returned emails say they have no idea about who this man is... He told me that after his many visitations he tried to seek help from many men of God including T.D Jakes and Benny Hinn but none wanted to help.³⁷⁴

range from fake miracles, to sleeping with people's wives in the name of spiritual cleansing." <https://answersafrica.com/8-famous-kenyan-pastors-and-the-huge-scandals-that-have-ruined-their-fame.html> accessed January 2015.

³⁷⁴ Interview with pastor John, Eldoret, 3 August 2015.

This pastor is not alone in raising issues that have to do with Owuor's plunge, so to speak, into the Pentecostal-Charismatic ministry and with his attempt to superimpose his ministry over all others. Margaret Wanjiru and Owuor have a long-standing feud over whose theological approach serves the people and Kenya the best. In response to Owuor's "attack" on her ministry, Wanjiru pointed at the lack of mentorship in Owuor's Christian upbringing, thus questioning his credentials as a minister:

I have heard that Owuor claims that there is no glory in Wanjiru's church but I am shocked that this man goes to preach at a crusade in Kakamega... So far as I'm concerned, really, he doesn't know how to minister so I ask who is his mentor?... If he says I'm fake, I have a mentor. Archbishop Kitonga ordained me, who ordained Owuor?³⁷⁵

The concept of mentorship or spiritual father or mother in the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition is important and relevant to this discussion. For some senior clergy in the Pentecostal and Charismatic fraternity, likely those who felt most threatened by Owuor's success or berated by his attacks on the church, the most irking issue was that Owuor did not have a spiritual mentor at all, or one known to them. Owuor himself has responded by saying he needs no mentors:

I came to Kenya looking to meet other pastors and bishops so that together we could deliver the many church leaders and deliver the nation from all the defiled altars of Baal. In America, I contacted some of them, even in Mexico but they're all about money... Those are not pastors, they're thugs.³⁷⁶

Evidently, as Owuor's biography and his own narratives below show, he is an outsider to Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Kenya. Having a mentor, even as a senior cleric, means one went through some form of training and that one's ministry is authenticated by a senior and respected authority in the tradition. Mentors in most cases ordain their mentees, as we will see in the stories of the other leaders.

This form of mentorship can be described as an established convention for training, but more importantly a legitimation of the call in Pentecostal-Charismatic circles, in a context

³⁷⁵ "Prophet Owuor and Bishop Margaret in renewed tussle" *KTN News Kenya*, 15 October 2014. <http://www.ktnkenya.tv/live>. Accessed, 20 August 2015.

³⁷⁶ Owuor, Sermon "Apostasy in the Church" DVD.

where many pastors, for theological reasons, choose to avoid formal training within established theological institutions. In the light of this, most upcoming Pentecostal pastors continue to subscribe to an internal tradition of mentorship from well-established senior clergy, such as the archbishops of more successful Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. A senior cleric, as mentor, advises, trains, prays for and provides what is popularly referred to in Pentecostal-Charismatic theology as a spiritual covering, for the mentee pastors. Such pastors need not be directly under the mentor's own ministry. In my view, it maintains some system of informal theological training but more importantly it is a system for legitimating a pastor's call through the oversight of an established cleric in the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition. Owuor positions himself as outside to this existing tradition and thus ruffles an existing theological framework. What is at stake here in Owuor's outsider narrative, and the critique from some senior Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic clergy pertains to questions about who has the genuine spiritual power to perform it on behalf of the nation.

While the emphasis of Owuor's theology and other narratives emphasise holiness, we must understand it as what he believes to be the "key" to obtaining power from God to perform miracles that will set the country free from its economic woes. Below I focus on core Owuor's narratives of his conversion and call in other to show the main theological features and focus of his ministry.

3.1.1.2. Owuor's Call Narrative and Spiritual Mandate

I have been a born-again Christian since 1996, but discovered that God wanted me to be his hand on earth when I was in Israel. The earth has turned out to be a filthy place full of sin and fornication...Right from the time I was doing my doctorate in Israel, the Lord was calling me and asking... Initially I tried to run from Him, but he followed me.³⁷⁷

The narrative above, is Owuor's rather short reference to when he became born-again.

Owuor's conversion story, unlike Wanjiru, and Githii, as we shall see, does not say much

³⁷⁷ Personal Recording, June 2015. In another version Owuor said he got born-again in 1998.

about his previous life before he was born-again. It is rather his academic life and subsequent call to ministry that is purposely given much prominence.

For Owuor, going to Israel to further his education was providential, because he believes that “it was part of a long journey that he (God) may call me to himself”.³⁷⁸ While these narratives are not articulated systematically (in fact there exist different versions of it for different purposes), they indicate theological perspectives implicitly or explicitly about an image he has successfully projected, at least to the millions of his acolytes, as prophet of God sent to Kenya from Israel.

The emphasis on Israel, as I will show, holds deep contextual meaning. It is deployed strategically to create a certain image of the man of God—as one who surpasses all others in Kenya’s Pentecostal-Charismatic circles in particular. The call in Israel narrative, also serves to answer the question of mentorship. In Israel, Owuor did not need a mentor because God was directly his mentor. This is the image of the prophet of God he has created, one who was directly chosen by God, in a place as biblically resonant as Mount Carmel:

The Lord called me for the first time in Israel...in Mount Carmel in Israel, in a tremendous vision of God when he appeared to me in a thick cloud and called me by voice, by a name... I was in bed sleeping one night when the Lord presented himself in a vision, accompanied by Daniel, Elijah and Moses as witnesses. He touched me with his left hand and lifted me up. I did not understand what that meant and He told me ‘I want you to be my hand on Earth’. This was at 3.29am on April 2004. Lord gave me the rod of Moses and asked me to warn all nations of the Earth to repent from sexual sin, lying, witchcraft and preaching of money, in order to restore the altar of the Lord.³⁷⁹

A significant observation from the narrative above is the reference to major biblical figures such as Daniel, Elijah and Moses who acted as witnesses to Owuor’s calling. For Owuor these biblical figures witnessing his calling is an authorisation of his prophetic ministry. Owuor defines his calling and ministry as a corrective to existing forms of Christianity

³⁷⁸ Personal Recording, June 2015.

³⁷⁹ Owuor, “In God’s Name; When Heaven Opened and Released Rain” June 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CslbEcpFXk> accessed June 7 Nov 2014.

worldwide.³⁸⁰ While his calling is specific to Kenya, it has a worldwide appeal, to “warn all the nations of the Earth to repent”.³⁸¹

There is another version of Owuor’s call narrative told by his second in command, Bishop Dr Onjoro, which highlights his extensive research in Western scientific institutions such as the Civil Aerospace Medical Institute in the USA. Onjoro’s narrative of Owuor’s call begins with his educational background, his work experience and research background. What is most important, according to Onjoro is that he has been called as the “Most High Prophet of the Lord”.³⁸²

Consistently as I noticed, Owuor does not narrate his conversion but rather emphasises his call narrative. This could be attributed to the holiness persona that he has created and wants to maintain. It is evident from the call narratives above that Owuor’s educational background and his call in Israel at Mt Carmel, are strategically used to support his status and profile, but also his ministry of repentance and holiness. In the context of Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic circles his educational background and his call in Israel are significant.

Pentecostal-Charismatic ministers often testify that their educational, economic, and political successes are due to the touch or blessings of God. Apostle Nganga of Neno Evangelism, Bishop Pius Muiro of Maximum Miracle Centre and Margaret Wanjiru of Jesus is Alive are a few of the big names of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity whose narratives of conversion and call depict an uplift, from being poor, with little or no education, to founders of thriving and successful mega churches.³⁸³ In contrast to their narratives of uplift, Owuor’s call is explained as a call from the respected field of academic research, in response to a higher calling of “Prophet of the Lord” that he occupies at present. The theological

³⁸⁰ See <http://www.repentandpreparetheway.org/> accessed June 7 Nov 2014

³⁸¹ Personal Recording, June 2015

³⁸² Recorded Introduction, Eldoret 2015.

³⁸³ See Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya* (London: Hurst and Co, 2009)

significance of Mt. Carmel must be understood in the light of an evolving and contextualised understanding of the Holy Land in Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic thinking discussed below.

In relation to Owuor's educational background, no other Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic clergy has such an extensive academic background prior to being called, nor can any claim to have been called in the Holy Land. This sentiment came out strongly during his usual sermonic attacks on the church in Kenya. "I'm not a preacher from the streets. I can also talk about my profession and academic qualifications". In a way, he inverts an existing narrative as we shall see, particularly concerning Wanjiru's narrative of being born again and its associated "blessings and increase".

First, Owuor's call at Mt Carmel references the prophetic ministry of Elijah and his power encounter with the false prophets of Baal. At the Muthurwa and Valley Arcade altars, embossed right atop the main stage, is an imposing picture of prophet Owuor with the biblical passage of Isaiah 40:3: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God". The reference to Owuor as the returned Elijah is both implicit and explicit. Church members have personally referred to him as Elijah.³⁸⁴ Mt Carmel intimates the nature and mandate of Owuor's calling, and recalls the contest of the Prophet Elijah with the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah in 1 Kings 18. He is presented as the major prophet sent to Kenya to warn her of its apostasy.

The language of warfare is prevalent in Owuor's teachings but only as a war against sin in the life of the church and state. In his words "it is war against immorality in the church".³⁸⁵ An example is the narrative of national bloodshed occasioned by the sin of the church. "In my dreams, I saw the sins of Kenya and blood flowing. Judgement is coming to Kenya... I saw the Lord pointing to Kenya, sending a watchman, sending me and pointing to

³⁸⁴ During the Eldoret 2015 Repentance rally I personally saw several members wielding placards that read "welcome man of God, welcome Prophet Elijah." Others welcomed him as the "Holy Spirit."

³⁸⁵ Owuor, Eldoret Repentance Rally 2015.

Kenya, to the church, to warn them. It is your turn to repent, Kenya.”³⁸⁶ Unsurprisingly, Owuor has repeatedly described the church in Kenya not just as “defiled altars”³⁸⁷ but as “Baal churches”³⁸⁸ or “Altars of Baal”.³⁸⁹

The emphasis on Israel also evokes another important domain evolving in Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Kenya. Asamoah-Gyadu points out how Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic leaders “now proudly preach about pilgrimages to Israel”.³⁹⁰ In the course of my fieldwork from 2014-2015 there were Kenyan pastors who also boasted of their pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Handkerchiefs sent to or brought from Jerusalem, anointing oils, water from any of the important rivers, and sand, all feature as objects used in announcing how powerful a miracle service would be—because of the point of contact with Israel and in effect with miracles of Jesus. Such pilgrimages do not necessarily share the emphasis American Zionism places on religious motivations to foster political support for the State of Israel, even though such ideas exist in some quarters. Nonetheless, African Pentecostal-Charismatics affirm the divine favours open to those who wish Israel well.³⁹¹

The contextual theological conception of pilgrimage to Israel appears to focus more on the spiritual powers believed to be derived from visiting the original biblical sites. Israel has emerged as a place of effective prayer and authentic spiritual power by “point of contact” with biblical sites in contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic churches.

Pentecostal/charismatic leaders have sought re-baptism in the Jordan, the river where Jesus was baptised, with the explanation that it was more authentic.³⁹²

³⁸⁶ Owuor, Eldoret Repentance Rally 2015

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “‘Born of Water and Spirit’: Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity in Africa” in *African Christianity: An African Story*, edited by Okgbu Kalu. Pp 388-409 (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2007).

³⁹¹ Asamoah-Gyadu, “Born of Water and Spirit”, 404.

³⁹² J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “Turning Jerusalem into a Christian Mecca among Christians in Africa and beyond: How Should We Respond?” in *Lausanne Global Analysis*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2016), n.p.

Mt Carmel's biblical significance is reiterated in Owuor's narratives to show that his calling is authentic and original, but also a high calling unprecedented in Kenyan Christianity. In this way, Owuor is able to set his ministry against all others, and himself to their ministers, who are considered to be false prophets, corrupted by "sexual sin, lying, witchcraft and preaching of money".³⁹³ On the website of the MRH, and in my personal observation, Owuor is described as the "promised Elijah" or the "Most Holy Prophet of the Lord."³⁹⁴ He did not come to set up a church, as I was told by Bishop Litunda of Nairobi Altar, but instead "the prophet of the Lord came to call all Kenyans back to God. To the highway of repentance and holiness. We are here for everybody, every tribe."³⁹⁵

Parsitau in her study of the MRH also writes that

[w]hile his entry into the Kenyan scene may have seemed quiet and unnoticed, prophet Owuor has cultivated an image and demeanour that has made him one of the most revered religious leaders in Kenya today. In fact, one could argue with certainty that his larger than life presence has sort of eclipsed other clergy and religious visionaries. He has systematically sought to edge out others by imaging himself as the only true prophet and the best of all prophets, while frequently criticizing others and portraying them as wolves in sheep's clothing-a phrase used to describe pretenders in common parlance.³⁹⁶

The language that positions Owuor as the man of God, sent by God to warn the pastors and politicians is also deployed through several faith mechanisms. On the church website, he is presented as a prophet preacher of "the eternal message of Repentance and Holiness in preparation for the rapture of the Church".³⁹⁷

The website of MRH also present Owuor as a world prophet who has prophesied about the Haiti earthquake (2009), the Chile earthquake (2009), the global economic crisis

³⁹³ Personal Recording June 2014. I also observed some of his members referring to him as the Holy Spirit as well as Prophet Elijah during the 2015 Eldoret crusade.

³⁹⁴ <http://www.jesusislordradio.info/> accessed June 2015

³⁹⁵ Field notes June 2015.

³⁹⁶ Damaris Parsitau, "The Rise of Prophet David Owuor and the Ministry of Repentance and Holiness (MRH)" 249

³⁹⁷ MRH New Zealand website. https://www.RepentNewZealand/info?tab=page_info; www.repentandpreparetheway.org. Accessed 1 July 2015.

(2008), the widespread global economic meltdown (2011) and many other major end-time prophecies. Owuor is also a healer and miracle worker, with the MRH website claiming that,

[t]he Lord has also worked through him to heal all kinds of diseases under the sun including “leprosy and HIVs/AIDs... blinds eyes opened, deaf ears have popped open, cripples have walked, and millions of people have been delivered by the Lord.”³⁹⁸

Owuor’s emphasis on his call in Israel not only evokes the encounter of Elijah with the false prophets of Baal, but also aims to show that his call is more authentic and his spiritual power genuine to perform all the listed miracles. Thus, Owuor parries questions of mentorship, legitimacy and source of spiritual power by capitalizing on the narrative that he was called in Israel.

3.2. The Ethnography

In 2003, Prophet Owuor left the United States, where he was working as a scientist, to start his Ministry of Repentance and Holiness in Nakuru, Kenya. He claimed that God asked him to return to Kenya and warn the nation of impending doom. He is a scientist turned prophet whose main message is about repentance, holiness and the “End times.”³⁹⁹ As, I shall discuss in detail below, Prophet Owuor considers Kenya a “defiled” state and as such much of his miracle rallies are targeted at cleansing individuals, churches and national politics from corruption. The broader scope of his ministry is to cleanse churches and politics, and to plant “national altars.”⁴⁰⁰

Owuor refers to his churches as “altars of holiness” or “national altars”, in order to distinguish his ministry from other “corrupt” and “defiled” Kenyan churches.⁴⁰¹ His popularity soared when he claimed to have predicted the 2007/8 post electoral violence. In 2013, he prayed over all the presidential candidates who were mandated to attend his holiness rally in

³⁹⁸ MRH New Zealand website.

³⁹⁹ See MRH website, <http://www.repentandpreparetheway.org/>. Accessed 10 July 2015.

⁴⁰⁰ See MRH website, <http://www.repentandpreparetheway.org/>.

⁴⁰¹ See Damaris Parsitau, “Embodying Holiness: Gender, Sex and Bodies in a Neo-Pentecostal Church in Kenya—Body talk and Cultural Identity in the African World.” In *Body Talk and Cultural Identity in the African World*, edited by Augustine Agwuele, pp. 181-201 (London: Equinox, 2015); Damaris Parsitau & Adriaan van Klinken, “Pentecostal intimacies: women and intimate citizenship in the ministry of repentance and holiness in Kenya” *Christianity, Sexuality and Citizenship in Africa*, vol. 22, no 6 (2018), pp. 586-602.

Nairobi and commit to sign a peace document or lose the votes of his teeming church members. His holiness and repentance rallies are highly patronised by government officials and other, politician. He receives support from the Kenyan government to lead nationwide prayer rallies of repentance and reconciliation.⁴⁰² At the time of my fieldwork, the MRH had thirty-three altars in Nairobi alone. The two altars where I conducted my fieldwork are the biggest in Nairobi and are led by bishops.

The fieldwork at the Ministry of Repentance and Holiness was conducted in June 2014, and August to September of 2015, in Kenya's capital, Nairobi and Eldoret, in Western Kenya. The concept of altars constitutes a major part of Owuor's core teaching and mission, which is to create a "holy people and a holy nation".⁴⁰³ The altars of the MRH are marked by imposing white tents that have become characteristic features of their places of worship and outdoor rallies. The Nairobi main branch where I conducted part of my fieldwork, is called the Nairobi Muthurwa Main Altar, or the Repentance and Holiness Kings Outreach Altar. This worship space is a massive tent structure in characteristic blue and white colours that can seat thousands of worshippers. I estimate the numbers at Muthurwa each Sunday I visited to be over ten thousand worshippers. I also observed a similar but smaller tent altar when I observed services and interviewed some members of Valley Arcade or Yaya Altar, in Nairobi. About two to three thousand worshippers meet at Yaya altar on Sundays. Another important feature in MRH is women's dress code. I observed that all women in some form of leadership position had their head fully covered and wore gowns over a dress in order not to reveal any part of their bodies. The perceived immoral dress codes form a big part of Owuor's criticism against the churches in Kenya. The men in leadership position, including ushers wore suits and a tie. Owuor's own dress code is usually a white or brown long coat and trousers to match. His trademark dreadlocked beard is, as he claims, part of a divine

⁴⁰² See, Rosalind I. J. Hackett, "Millennial and Apocalyptic Movements in Africa" in *The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism*, ed. Catherine Wessinger, pp. 385-419. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁴⁰³ Prophet Dr. David Owuor, Owuor, Sermon "Apostasy in the Church" DVD.

mandate to set himself apart for God. In August 2015, I also attended and observed a weeklong Holiness and Repentance crusade in Eldoret, which is discussed in depth below. I had become acquainted with Prophet Owuor's ministry in 2014 when I began my fieldwork in Kenya, but at that time it was not possible to get an interview with Owuor or with any of the leaders of his altars. His popularity had soared and he had become a national figure. His personal security guards numbered over 40. His convoy consisted of over 100 cars and had police escort riders just like any important Kenyan politicians.

During the period of my fieldwork I also observed what Parsitau calls Owuor's "presidential-like motorcade" and the traffic jams it causes.⁴⁰⁴ But as I discuss below, membership of the Ministry of Repentance and Holiness has not only increased astronomically since the inception of Owuor's ministry in 2003 but it also consists of highly placed Kenyan academics, politicians and other officials. In August 2015, I saw about 10 uniformed police officers in Nairobi's central business district using megaphones to announce to the public about the upcoming repentance and holiness rally. The challenges I faced in getting access to leading figures could be explained by two significant incidents that happened during my fieldwork. Leaders of the both Nairobi altars and other gatekeepers had adopted a hostile attitude towards journalists and other outsiders "who come asking questions", in response to what they considered to be media attacks on the ministry, and publication of untruths about their Prophet. All the altars across the country were asked to seriously hold prayer sessions against "the evil Kenyan media".⁴⁰⁵ During my fieldwork, I heard several stories or "rumours", to use the term of some of my informants as well as several press discussions on the source of Owuor's wealth and spiritual power. Prominent

⁴⁰⁴ Parsitau, "Prophets, Power, Authority and the Kenyan State: Prophet David Owuor of the National Repentance and Holiness Ministry" in *Religious Freedom and Religious Pluralism in Africa: Prospects and Limitations*, edited by Pieter Coertzen, M Christian Green & Len Hansen, 233-256. (Stellenbosch: SunMedia Stellenbosch, 2016)

⁴⁰⁵ See Steve Omondi, "Prophet Owuor's church holds repentance prayers for 'evil media'" *NairobiNews* 10 April 2016. <https://nairobineews.nation.co.ke/tag/archbishop-paul-onjoro/> accessed 1 July 18.

among such media debates are the validity of his prophecies concerning the electoral violence that erupted after Kenya's 2007 general elections.

As I have mentioned above, Owuor's concept of altar, in place of church, is a direct critique of both mainline churches and the contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic ministries. He describes them as "defiled altars", which has received a lot of pushback from other pastors who felt that their ministries were under attack. The tension between Owuor's ministry and existing Pentecostal-Charismatic ministries in particular was played out in several media encounters, which are also discussed below. I had much more success in 2015, even though I was still not successful in personally interviewing Prophet Owuor. The initial scrutiny and suspicion of my motives in 2014 had reduced, which could be attributed to my regular attendance of Sunday services at Muthurwa branch, and also the daily early morning prayer cell meetings I attended at the Valley Arcade branch. These services turned out to be very valuable in understanding the member's theological conceptions. During the 25-30, August 2015 much advertised and well-attended Repentance and Holiness Crusade at Eldoret, I was asked by the MRH Bishop of Nairobi to travel with his entourage.

My inability to directly interview Prophet Owuor was thus supplemented by long informal interviews with two Bishops from Nairobi, senior pastors and a number of church members. I also had access to Prophet Owuor's sermons/ teachings and prophecies on DVD, and other church documents related to his vision and ministry. More important I got a deeper appreciation of what constituted the everyday faith and a better understanding of the "ordinary" theological beliefs and practices of the Ministry of Repentance and Holiness. Quite significantly I was able to observe and also participate in five services led by Prophet Owuor himself. I frame his approach to politics as the "holiness approach" which is based on the emphasis he places on creating a "holy nation of holy Christians".



Figure 1. Dr Prophet David Owuor



Figure 2. Muthurwa main Altar (and overflow) in the Central Business District of Nairobi



Figure 3. Valley Arcade Yaya Altar, Nairobi



Figure 4. Repentance and Holiness Rally Eldoret August 2015.

This prayer rally had about a million people in attendance. Eldoret was virtually taken over by the MRH. 600 ushers and 1000 strong police force kept the peace and directed events in and off the rally grounds.



Figure 5. Owuor preaching at the August 2015.

Repentance and Holiness Rally. The national flags (of Uganda, Israel, Rwanda, Austria etc.), represents the international nature of Owuor's ministry.

3.3. Some Salient Features of Owuor's Ministry — Repentance and Holiness

As the name of Owuor's ministry reflects, its main theological emphasis is repentance and holiness. On the website of the Ministry of Repentance and Holiness, it reads:

[w]e believe that the only means of being cleansed from sin is through true repentance in the precious blood of Jesus Christi and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit who enables the Christian to live in holiness⁴⁰⁶

MRH has no headquarters per se, even though Nakuru seems to be where Owuor is based. In the context of contemporary Kenyan Christianity, MRH is rightly considered a “unique religious movement that specialises in prayer and fasting, repentance and holiness, prophecy and visions, probity and moral regeneration as well as the second coming of Jesus Christ”.⁴⁰⁷ It was described to me as a non-denominational movement, as the church refuses a single tag that will limit its outreach to all Kenyans. “It is a holy spirit movement for repentance and

⁴⁰⁶ MRH website http://www.repentandpreparetheway.org/crbst_11.html accessed 1 July 2015.

⁴⁰⁷ Damaris Parsitau, “The Rise of Prophet David Owuor and the Ministry of Repentance and Holiness (MRH)” 239.

holiness in Kenya.”⁴⁰⁸

Since its founding in 2003, the MRH has also witnessed a significant demographic spread, due to the extensive media attention given to Owuor’s prophecies and miracle services, especially a prophecy concerning the 2007/8 post-electoral violence. Even though the MRH started as a sort of mass movement, characterised by huge monthly crusades dubbed ‘national holiness and repentance prayer rallies’, the building of churches (altars) across Kenya indicates its gradual institutionalisation.⁴⁰⁹ As I have mentioned, Owuor is the main religious figure and leader.

Bishops oversee clusters of churches. Women are prominent in the administrative structure of the ministry, with some introduced as bishops, deacons, worship leaders, prayer leaders and choir leaders. I observed that the wives of bishops are also co-bishops of a sort and they, like all female staff and members, wear long flowing dresses that covers every part of their body, with headgear to match. So, while women are allowed leadership positions, there is more policing of their bodies.

The Archbishop, Dr Paul Onjoro is the national director of MRH and 2nd in command to Owuor and, like him, is not directly in charge of a congregation. The bishops oversee several altars and in Nairobi alone the bishop has oversight of the 31 altars. Owuor also hardly preaches at any of his branches on a normal Sunday service. Church members rather expect a prophetic telephone call or text message from him. His main public appearances are mostly during his trademark mass repentance rallies (see below). Owuor is also usually heard live on his Jesus is Lord FM station, which he uses to deliver most of his prophecies.

Bishops are in charge of teaching in their various branches. Periodic teaching services, led by Owuor himself, are organised for them. At one of these events Owuor, commanded his bishops, “I want you to preach the same messages I teach you to your congregations, do you

⁴⁰⁸ Interview with MRH Bishop June 2015.

⁴⁰⁹ See Parsitau, “The Rise of Prophet David Owuor.”

understand me?”⁴¹⁰ In this way he maintains the focus of his ministry on his theology of repentance and holiness. The themes in his teaching are picked up and used by his clergy and followers thereby creating a church sub-culture with a unique holiness ethos.

During Sunday worship services at the Muthurwa branch, there was always a “message from the Most Holy Prophet”, which was received with much anticipation. On this particular Sunday (21 June 2014) there were about 10,000 congregants waiting anxiously for the “message” that the prophet was to deliver by telephone call. When it did arrive, the bishop stopped preaching and announced with much applause that the prophet was going to deliver his message by phone, which lasted for approximately three to five minutes. The following week, while observing the worship service at the Valley Arcade altar, it was his prophetic text message that was read for the congregation. It was then announced with much detail that “the most holy prophet of Jehovah” was away on repentance and holiness rallies across several European cities, including Barcelona in Spain, Palermo in Italy and Vienna in Austria, to mention a few of the long list. This gives the ministry a global outlook, and to the members a sense of being part of a global repentance and holiness revival. MRH’s website and YouTube page are replete with Owuor’s international trips and his prophecies concerning international disasters. Almost all major disasters/events have been prophesied, or claimed to have been by Owuor and the MRH.

While Kenya is important, the MRH is positioned as a global spiritual revival movement. Kenya is construed as a local base from which God is reaching out to the world. For Owuor this is what makes Kenya important to his ministry, but it must be the first to experience “true repentance”. While the message of holiness and repentance are central to understanding Owuor’s ecclesiology and theology, they are staged and legitimated through public performances of miraculous healings and public prophecies concerning the sins of the church and of the nation. It is however argued that it is through distilling the concepts of

⁴¹⁰ David Owuor, “Highway to Holiness” DVD.

altars and of repentance and holiness rallies that we get the full import of his theology of the church and politics. Below I identify features of Owuor's ministry and their theo-political significance in the Kenyan context.

3.3.1. National Altars of Repentance and Holiness

In the context of Owuor's holiness theology national altars are supposed to replace corrupt and defiled institutions in both church and state. In her study of the MRH, Parsitau has rightly submitted that a salient feature that distinguishes MRH from other faith based organisations in Kenya is

the construction and creation of spiritual geographies and spaces referred to as national altars. These altars are not churches per se, but any space that is claimed, cleansed and used for worship, fasting, repentance and prayer meetings by this ministry.⁴¹¹

The altars have now become permanent spaces for worship, fasting, repentance and prayer meetings. The ministry has created and spawned hundreds of 'national altars' all over the country. Large parks, stadiums and show grounds have also been cleansed (and continue to be when needed) for national prayer rallies.⁴¹²

The significance of these national holiness altars lies not only in the religious and spiritual functions they serve for members and non-members alike, but also in giving a new dimension to spaces of worship. Instead of building churches, members meet in tented spaces that are normally sanctified with prayer days before the prophet arrives.⁴¹³ Tents seem to support Owuor's end time messages, but also serve as a silent critique of prosperity gospel preachers and their mega churches. I however argue that in order to get its full theological import, Owuor's concept of holy altars must be understood in the light of contextualised spiritual warfare theologies on demonic and holiness altars. The reference to Owuor's understanding of church as altars is important in this regard. For Owuor, the church – imagined as a community of holy Christians – should sit at the centre of national life.

⁴¹¹ Parsitau, "The Rise of Prophet David Owuor", 243.

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ See Ibid.

Holiness Christianity is to replace defiled Kenyan churches and corrupt political systems.

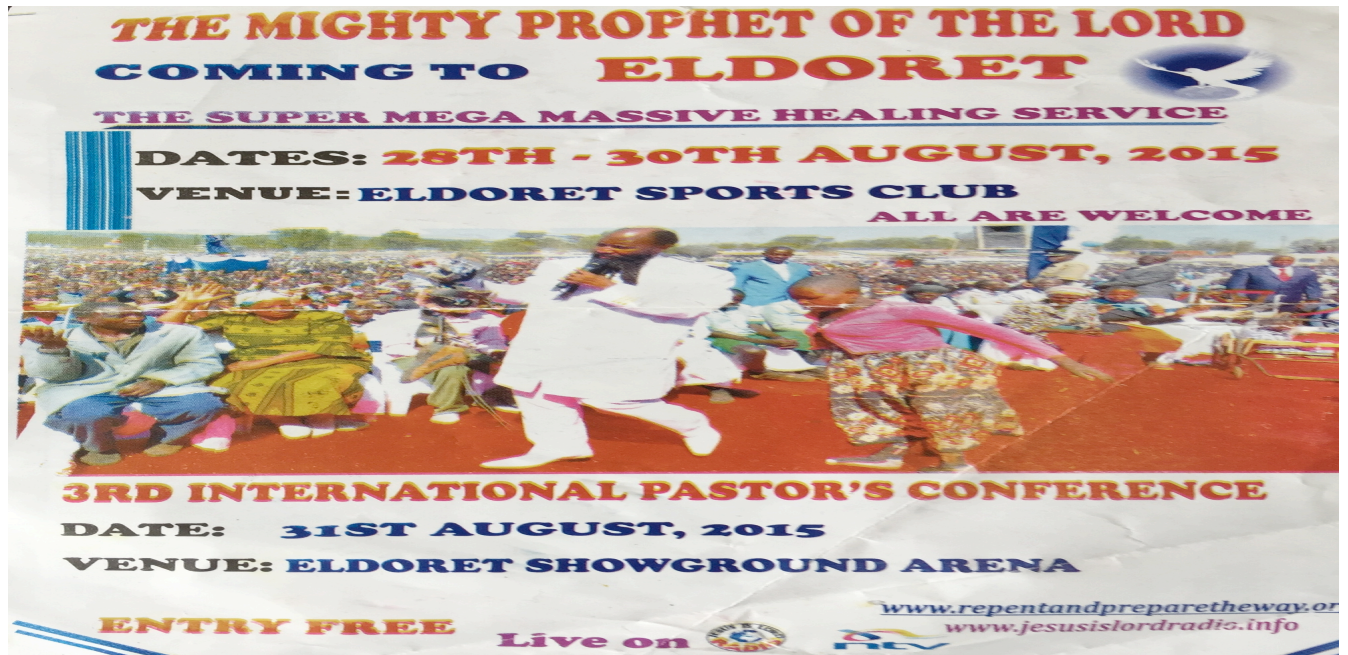


Figure 6. A poster advertising Prophet Owuor's "2015 Super Mega Massive Healing Service" in the western Kenyan town of Eldoret.

3.3.2. Repentance and Holiness Rallies

One of the most important features of MRH are the repentance and holiness rallies. They are crucial to understanding Owuor's conception of church and politics. For the MRH, repentance and holiness prayer rallies are the major flagship programme for putting into words and actions Owuor's message of personal and national redemption. Sections of the MRH's statement of faith reflect this idea of "PREPARING THE WAY" because it is believed that "the church has entered into a critical dispensation for preparing the Way of the Lord in observance of absolute Righteousness and Holiness".⁴¹⁴

The rallies are also Owuor's main medium for staging his prophetic authority, that comes with immense political implications. As I have already noted above, the MRH began as repentance and holiness rallies and continues to see itself as an interdenominational repentance and holiness movement. These prayer rallies however began as small prayer groups that emerged all over the country, specifically aiming at (and praying against) the sins

⁴¹⁴ MRH website http://www.repentandpreparetheway.org/crbst_11.html.

of the post-election violence through ritual enactments dubbed *toba* (Swahili for repentance prayers).⁴¹⁵ During these rallies members were and still are expected to fast for days, repenting for both personal and national sins. During participant observation of the 2015 “Mega Repentance and Holiness” rally held at the Eldoret sports club, some members, were dressed in sackcloth and symbolically wailed as a form of mourning and penitence for the sins of the country. These huge national repentance and holiness crusades are held in many parts of the country, particularly in the Rift Valley region, which experienced most of the 2007/8 post-electoral violence.

The rallies attracted thousands of people who heeded the calls to repent for the sins of the country.⁴¹⁶ Parsitau writes that

Owuor called on both victims and perpetrators of the violence to publicly repent of their sins and ask for forgiveness from God and neighbours whom they attacked or stole from. During many of these rallies, both victims and perpetrators of the violence publicly repented for their sins and many returned what they stole from their neighbours.⁴¹⁷

The Kenyan government, which at the time had initiated several commissions of inquiry and reconciliatory processes, recognised Owuor’s spiritual initiative and gave him their backing.⁴¹⁸

This explains in part the numerous police dispatch riders, gun toting body guards, and the reception Owuor receives from senior police and government officials.⁴¹⁹

In 2009, during the Nakuru repentance and holiness rally, Owuor re-baptised Raila Odinga, the then prime minister of Kenya, in a televised ceremony which, according to Owuor, was a sign of repentance and holiness from the top of the country’s political

⁴¹⁵ See Parsitau, “The Rise of Prophet David Owuor”.

⁴¹⁶ See Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Parsitau, “The Rise of Prophet David Owuor”, 246; On the website of the MRH, there are pictures supposedly of perpetrators of crime during the 2007 PEV returning stolen items. Others depicted returning guns, bow and arrows, machetes among other dangerous implements supposedly used in the disturbances that ensued after the elections of 2007. For more see http://www.repentandpreparetheway.org/crbst_11.html.

⁴¹⁸ See Parsitau, “The Rise of Prophet David Owuor”; In 2008, the Waki commission tasked to investigate the electoral atrocities presented its report to President Mwai Kibaki. On reconciliation efforts by the NCKK and government, see chapter 1.

⁴¹⁹ At the Eldoret rally the Uasin Gishu County police chief Nelson Taliti testified that he made sure his boys (policemen) kept vigil in preparation for the arrival of the prophet.

leadership, and represented “a new beginning for Kenya. When leaders follow Jesus in righteousness, this is what brings the healing to the land, especially healing for Kenya at this hour”.⁴²⁰ Raila was led and made to “stand in the gap” for the nation, for its sins of commission and omission. For most politicians, the MRH rallies were avenues for cleansing their own images. Prior to the 2013 general elections, the MRH held a press conference and announced that church members should not vote for any presidential candidates who did not attend its Nairobi repentance and holiness rally. According to Archbishop Onjoro,

any presidential candidate who will not participate in this [2013 Nairobi repentance and holiness rally], we shall translate it that they’re not lovers of peace, of righteousness and not lovers of Kenya. I will announce that no member votes for them...All members will subscribe to it. I say categorically, no member should vote them.”⁴²¹

This brought six out of the eight 2013 presidential candidates together for national prayers and repentance. The 2015 Eldoret rally was attended by almost all the big men and women in the political leadership of the city. Kericho County Governor Prof Paul Chepkwony was introduced and given time to testify. The Uasin Gishu County Deputy Governor Daniel Chemno, Nandi County Women Representative Hon. Zipporah Kering, and Kapseret MP Hon. Oscar Sudi, among others, were present. It is worthy of note that Owuor was officially invited to Eldoret and to Uasin Gishu County by the County Senate.⁴²² While the MRH insist it is not interested in politics, and Owuor has personally chastised Wanjiru for standing for elections because, according to him, “pastors cannot and should not do politics, they preach repentance and holiness”; the political implications of holiness theology gained more traction during and after 2009, as both people seeking healing and politicians seeking to present a born-again image flocked to the rallies.

⁴²⁰See “Dr Owuor Baptizes Prime Minister of Kenya”, *Repent and Prepare the way*, 3 June 2009. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWRl6J6pjkC>. Accessed 1 July 2015

⁴²¹ Bishop David Onjoro, “Seeing Divine Intervention” *Repent and Prepare the way*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLYyyM9qZZc>. Accessed 2 July 2015.

⁴²² See Julius Gathogo, “Theo-Political Dominance of Africa-Pentecostalism in the 21st Century: Lessons from the Kenya Socio-Ecclesial Context”, <http://docplayer.net/63765741-Theo-political-dominance-of-afro-pentecostalism-in-the-21st-century-lessons-from-the-kenyan-socio-ecclesial-context.html>. Accessed 2 July 2018.

The practice of wearing sackcloth continues to be a public display of remorse for the sins of the nation. At the Eldoret 2015 rally, I witnessed streets being washed with water by members dressed in sackcloth. The sackcloth but also the washing of specific streets has strong spiritual connotations. For members of MRH, it meant washing away the sins of the town and of the nation. Such rallies are very well attended. During my fieldwork in 2015, I estimated over a million adherents at the three day Eldoret “Super Mega Repentance and Holiness” crusades.

Owuor’s crusades are marked by several huge tents that accommodate thousands, on public grounds which are spiritually consecrated and declared as “Holy Altars” for the purpose of the crusade. At the 2015 rally, Owuor recounted again his prophecies that spawned the rallies across Kenya in the first place:

I said, Kenya, I have seen your judgement, it is your turn Kenya, the judgement of the lord coming upon you and surely it shall be known in this land that Jehovah is God. I have seen blood flowing on our land. Kenya, I have seen you running for your lives... And the Lord said, prophesy that Kenyans are going to refugee camps. I see you with your things on your head pulling your children in large columns Kenya, how come you did not understand when the lord said repent. The church is responsible for the disaster when the altar is defiled, disaster happens...and Kenyans went into refugee camps until today refugee camps still spot the land in fulfilment of the word spoken by the lord to me the prophet of the most-high.⁴²³

Repentance rallies grew in response to Owuor’s prophecies that God wanted Kenya to repent, or would punish them again with more bloodshed. Repentance must first come from the church and its leaders. The church had preached “Panda mbegu, the gospel of sow a seed, and immorality at the altar Kenya, [but the church] did not preach holiness again”.⁴²⁴

For Owuor the church in Kenya is important to national security and development, but an unholy church brings the wrath of God on the people. The failures and the sins of the church in Kenya result in the failures of the nation.

⁴²³Owuor, “Judgment on Apostasy” DVD.

⁴²⁴ Owuor, Sermon August 2015.

In fact, if there is anybody guilty for the bloodshed in Kenya, it is the church, the pastors, the bishops, because they're the ones who should have warned of judgment, of the bloodshed, of the earthquakes. They did not get this prophecy because there is a fall in the priesthood...The pastors cannot hear from God. The ones you see on TV or talking here and there, have been exposed and the only way out for Kenyans is repentance.⁴²⁵

Repentance rallies were largely based on prophecies of impending doom, but as I have pointed out, their impact was also due to an existing narrative that the church was compromised and had lost its prophetic voice, long before the 2007 electoral violence.

Owuor's critique resonates with this narrative, for which the NCK churches themselves acknowledged and organised a repentance and reconciliation prayer service of their own.⁴²⁶

This rhetoric of the failure of the church is presented in several ways. Owuor's critique is part of, and contributes to, the narrative that the church and for that matter Christians have central but specific spiritual roles to play in national politics. The conclusion below briefly reiterates Owuor's theological notion of church and state and his theology of holiness that undergirds it.

3.4. Conclusion

For Owuor, the war to win the souls of individuals and of the nation from the devil is waged through personal and corporate acts of repentance and holiness. In the context of contemporary Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, Owuor's holiness approach adds another dimension to the existing born-again political spirituality. In this context only repentance and holiness can bring Kenya God's peace, prosperity and protection.

Prayers against evil forces that are believed to prevail against Kenya also exist in Owuor's theology, but his overall theological emphasis and approach to dealing with Kenya's political problems (as he sees them), is through his emphasis on holiness.

As we have seen, in Owuor's approach "because sin brings about God's displeasure

⁴²⁵ Owuor, Sermon August 2015.

⁴²⁶ See "National Council of Churches of Kenya, January—June 2008 Report" *National Council of Churches of Kenya*. <https://www.globalministries.org/news/africa/national-council-of-churches.html>. Accessed 20 June 2016.

and ruins the nation, personal morality issues are far more important than political, structural, or economic matters”.⁴²⁷ The political crisis is seen to be the result of the breakdown of a specific kind of morality or spirituality in the church, hence the political crisis needs to be “addressed via improvements in personal and public morality”.⁴²⁸

This Holiness-prophetic approach, especially the concept of holy altars, is analysed in chapter six as a holiness political approach that is performed prophetically in response to contextual political situations in Kenya’s contemporary public sphere.

⁴²⁷ Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2010), 6.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

Chapter 4: Bishop Margaret Kariuki Wanjiru of Jesus is Alive Ministries International JIAM

In this chapter, as I have done with the two other case studies, I rely on the ethnographic data collected during two rounds of fieldwork conducted in 2014 and 2015. The ethnography gives a detailed account of what I have termed in this thesis as Wanjiru's prosperity-dominionist approach to politics (see chapter six). Wanjiru's involvement in national politics is undergirded by a combination of prosperity and spiritual warfare concepts that is focused on addressing witchcraft and "demonic altars" believed to be behind personal and communal poverty. Apart from giving insights into the significance of Wanjiru's main worship services and their import, I'm also interested in the significance of JIAM's location in Nairobi's central business district to Wanjiru's ministry in terms of her contextualised spiritual warfare sermons and conferences and what it means to her political ambitions.

Following Wanjiru's conversion and biographical narratives, I shall identify and analyse major themes that emerge from her sermons and teachings on prosperity, altars, witchcraft and spiritual warfare as the basis for understanding what I have termed the prosperity-dominionist approach to politics (see chapter six). The core theo-logic that frames Wanjiru's approach to politics I shaped by a combination of prosperity and spiritual warfare concepts. In my analysis, (as I have done in the other case studies), I shall tease out the contextual political significance of a prosperity and demonic dimensions of Pentecostal-Charismatic theology in Kenya.

4.1. Biography and Conversion

Margaret Karuiki Wanjiru was born on the 22nd of December 1961 in Thika, about 45 kilometres outside of Nairobi, to Samuel Kariuki and Loice Wanjiku Kariuki of Kiambu County, Kenya. Wanjiru describes her father as a drunk who was mostly absent from home. She and all five siblings were brought up in Nairobi's Kangemi slums by her "hardworking single mother" who also worked as a domestic worker in Nairobi Westlands.⁴²⁹ She dropped out of Cutchi Gujarati Hindu Union School Secondary School CGHU, at age 17 because she became a teenage mother at 16, and had a second child before she turned 19.⁴³⁰ She then started petty trading by selling trinkets on the streets of Nairobi. In her conversion narrative she describes her life growing up in Kangemi slums as one that was "full of poverty."⁴³¹ She narrates having to eat the "same meal, githeri and avocados all the time, if there was any."⁴³² She often narrates and in fact emphasises how she was once a "poor hawker, toilet, car and office cleaner, a store keeper, and sales girl" in Nairobi.⁴³³ During these formative years she determined "to make it in life" and aspire to get to the top.⁴³⁴ In her testimony, she claims to have returned and completed her secondary and college education and worked as a secretary for a multinational firm in Nairobi.⁴³⁵ Wanjiru subsequently became quite a successful "self-employed business woman in the transport, import and export" sectors.⁴³⁶ This success, she claims, did not come as a result of mere hard work but with the assistance of the powers of witchcraft, even though her followers and other admirers now fondly call her *Mama wa Kazi* (hardworking woman in Kiswahili).

⁴²⁹ See JIAM's website, <https://jiam.org/bishops-profile/>. Accessed 4 November 2016.

⁴³⁰ Jacob Ng'etich, "Questions raised about Wanjiru's degrees" *Standard Digital*. <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2000074350/questions-raised-about-wanjiru-s-degrees>. Accessed 20 July 2109.

⁴³¹ Margaret Wanjiru, Sermon, August 2014.

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ See <http://jiam.org/bishops-profile/> Accessed 11 April 2016.

⁴³⁴ Wanjiru, Sermon, August 2014.

⁴³⁵ See Wanjiru's profile, <https://jiam.org/bishops-profile/>.

⁴³⁶ See Ibid.

Prior to her conversion, which happened at Emmanuel Eni's crusade in Nairobi (see below), Wanjiru, claimed that she "got deep into Satanism and witchcraft" in attempts to make money and improve her life. Later on in life, after gaining wealth and fame through the powers of witchcraft, she lost almost all her wealth when she reneged on her promise to perform the appropriate rituals. Her conversion was therefore predicated on her desire to seek a more reliable source of spiritual power. I shall discuss in detail below, the connections that Wanjiru makes between poverty and witchcraft or evil spirits more generally.

4.1.1. Conversion

Wanjiru was converted at a crusade in Nairobi in 1989. In her conversion narrative, she recalls a dramatic power encounter that eventually led to her conversion at a crusade organised by the Nigerian Evangelist Emmanuel Eni, a confessed former Satanist, with extensive experience of the spiritual underworld.⁴³⁷

In *Delivered from the Powers of Darkness*, Eni vividly describes his spiritual encounters after he was initiated into Satanism and testifies of his visits to the underworld for spiritual power to fight Christians. Eni's revelations of the specific demonic/witchcraft strategies employed by Satan and his cohorts against born again Christians has been used extensively, particularly in the Scripture Union in the 1980s and 1990s, as a standard narrative for soul winning and revival. Eni became a major resource person on the wiles of the devil and his agents against Christians. Wanjiru also describes herself as a "former witch" who was involved in "Satanism" with similar spiritual capabilities until her encounter with Eni at a crusade in Nairobi.⁴³⁸ As she narrates in great detail:

There was a crusade somewhere and I went to this crusade, the preacher happened to be in Satanism and got born again so I listened to his testimony and it was so similar to mine. I thought he knows everything I do. The Lord will have it the preacher had a word of knowledge so that day, you know, I don't know anything about gift of the holy spirit so he calls me out with the word of knowledge and instead of going

⁴³⁷ See Emmanuel Eni, *Delivered from the Powers of Darkness* (Kijabe: Kijabe Printing Press, 1997).

⁴³⁸ See "Former Occultist Is Now First Female Pentecostal Pastor Ordained in Kenya" *CharismaMagazine*, 30 June 2001.

towards him I run away, I literally run away I just took off...I went the following day, listened to the preacher and then he said there is a lady here God is going to save and use her mightily. So this time he calls me out and he prayed for me for hours and left me to the Lord. But it was when I was in my office, I was into import and exports business. all of a sudden the presence of the Lord came down and I started weeping, repented my sins, gave my life to Jesus got born-again right there on my own and made a deal with God, getting saved not only to come to heaven but also to preach the gospel. That was my turning point. now my life turn around and I even decided business can wait I want to preach the gospel...so here I am Bishop Margaret.⁴³⁹

Power encounters are significant patterns in the conversion narrative of all three leaders under study. In the case of Wanjiru, we're made to understand that the crusade was a power encounter in which the spirit of God used a "former witch" to deliver her from the powers of evil, through "a word of knowledge"—i.e., the ability to know the details of a situation that couldn't have been known without the power of the Holy Spirit.

The desire to acquire spiritual power (empowerment), is also a significant pattern. Even though Wanjiru and her family were Anglicans, her born-again conversion, in a way marked her entry into Christianity, a new kind of power Christianity. The Anglican Church in Wanjiru's view is a "powerless church" because of the absence of a sustained spiritual warfare against the powers of witchcraft on behalf of members. Having spiritual power in order to prevent the negative effects of witchcraft such as poverty, is paramount to Wanjiru and her concept of ministry. Her conversion not only led to her deliverance from the powers of witchcraft but also to the empowerment by the Holy Spirit and with the anointing. Thus, she believes that she was saved by God to fight the demons that had once plagued her with poverty. As she couched it herself, "I was anointed to prosper".⁴⁴⁰

The demonological dimension of Wanjiru's prosperity teachings or theology owes much to Eni's ministry and to how he re-shaped the concept of witchcraft during the heydays of his evangelistic activities in Nigeria and across the African continent. In *Delivered from the Powers of Darkness*, which easily became a bestseller in the 1980s among evangelical

⁴³⁹ Benjamin Maruiki, "Bishop Margaret Wanjiru Reveals She Engaged in Satanism" *Kenyans.co.ke* 1 September 2015. <http://www.kenyans.co.ke/news/video-bishop-margaret-wanjiru-reveals-she-engaged-satanism>. Accessed, 27 August 2018.

⁴⁴⁰ Wanjiru, Sermon, August 2014.

and the nascent Pentecostal-Charismatic ministries, Eni gives personal testimonies of meetings with Satan and with high ranking spiritual entities with mandates to corrupt Christianity through carefully planned spiritual warfare.⁴⁴¹ These narratives, most of which emanated from Nigeria, were of encounters with the devil that employed language and rhetoric that goes beyond what was considered locally as witchcraft. Like Wanjiru, Eni recounts stories of being initiated into devil worship, and of acquiring spiritual power that made him prosper in businesses but also with powers to kill his adversaries.

Wanjiru's success later in life in spite of coming from a poor background is part of a message that she harps on, because to her "it does not matter your poor background", what matters, is the right connection to the power of the Holy through the ministry of JIAM. Her background as a business person in the *Jua Kali* (informal business sector, see below) and her former association with witchcraft shapes her sermons and teachings and her perceptions of power in the political realm. Prior to starting her own church, Wanjiru was a street preacher in Nairobi and around the country. She was ordained as a pastor in 1997, and as a bishop in 2002, by archbishop Arthur Kitonga, the founder of Redeemed Gospel Church.⁴⁴² Kitonga was also the same clergyman who baptised David Githii (see previous chapter), which means they both share a spiritual father or mentor. She is considered the first female pastor to be ordained as a pentecostal bishop in Kenya.⁴⁴³ According to JIAM's website, she has a doctorate in Divinity, from Vineyard Harvester Bible College, Georgia USA in July 13, 2003".⁴⁴⁴

JIAM's website also states that Wanjiru has received a certificate in governance from Harvard University – USA.⁴⁴⁵ One significance of Wanjiru's background for her ministry and political career is that women form the majority of her congregants and are likely to identify with the conversion narrative of a struggling single mother in the *jua kali*. But as I shall

⁴⁴¹ Wanjiru, Sermon, August 2014.owuor.

⁴⁴² See Yonatan Gez and Tanya Alvis, "Bishop Margaret Wanjiru".

⁴⁴³ See "Former Occultist Is Now First Female Pentecostal Pastor Ordained in Kenya" *CharismaMagazine*, 21 July, 2005.

⁴⁴⁴ See Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

discuss below, Wanjiru's biography and conversion narrative projects her as one who overcame the challenges that many of her congregants, face, such as the scourge of poverty and witchcraft attacks.

4.2. Wanjiru's Political career

When I had the opportunity to briefly interview Wanjiru in 2014, she told me that she ventured into politics because "it was a call from God" based on Isaiah 62:10, which says: "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people".⁴⁴⁶ For Wanjiru her call to ministry and politics are the same. She supports this assertion with Rev. 5:10 which says, "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth".⁴⁴⁷ In Wanjiru's understanding, born again Christians are "Kings and Priests who will rule the earth" for the purposes of destroying the kingdom of darkness and usher in God's reign of prosperity. Like Githii, the notion that born-again clergy in particular should not partake in politics is inconceivable to Wanjiru because it is not consistent with her theo-logic of spiritual power. A born-again Christian has the power to change not only their own lives but that of their communities and the nation as a whole. It is even better if they know how to wage spiritual warfare.

From 2007-2013, Wanjiru was the Member of Parliament MP, for the Starehe constituency which she won on the ticket of the Orange Democratic party, ODM. She has since left the ODM and joined the Jubilee party.⁴⁴⁸ At the launch of her 2007 campaign, the American Pentecostal prophetess Brenda Todd who officiated at the service, laid hands and prayed for Wanjiru, and anointing her for electoral victory and to "take this seat [Starehe] for

⁴⁴⁶ Isaiah 62: 10 KJV; Wanjiru, Interview 2014.

⁴⁴⁷ Revelation 5:10 KJV.

⁴⁴⁸ See Wanyiri Kihoro, *Politics and Parliamentarians in Kenya 1944-2007* (Nairobi: Centre for Multiparty Democracy, 2007).

Jesus”.⁴⁴⁹ During her period as MP, she was also made the assistant minister for housing. It has been stated that she held one of the most important constituencies in Kenya.⁴⁵⁰ The seat of government is in the Starehe constituency and is also home to the most prestigious business in Kenya and abode to lower middle-class Kenyans. Moreover, because jua kali is located in the Starehe constituency, it is regarded as the constituency of the “street wise”.⁴⁵¹

Wanjiru’s electoral victory in the 2007 elections in particular could largely be attributed to her ability to bring together the material concerns of jua kali workers and the spiritual concerns of her church members. She counts the provision of business support funds, housing and the provision of sanitation blocks such as bathrooms and toilets within the informal settlements of Starehe as some of her achievements as MP and minister of housing.⁴⁵² Since 2013, Wanjiru has attempted to annex the seat of governor for Nairobi but she has so far been unsuccessful. In her first attempt to run for the Nairobi gubernatorial elections she was disqualified by Kenya’s electoral body IEBC, because she did not have a bachelor’s degree from a recognised university. In 2014, she however graduated from St Pauls University in Limuru, with a Bachelor of Arts in Leadership and Management in order to run for governor of Nairobi in 2017, which she lost.⁴⁵³

Wanjiru continues to express her ambitions to “win Nairobi for Jesus” for which JIAM remains an important political base. It was my observation in both 2014 and 2015 that JIAM constitutes a sizeable block of voters and by organising monthly spiritual warfare

⁴⁴⁹ Travis Kavulla, “Our Enemies Are God’s Enemies: The Religion and Politics of Bishop Margaret Wanjiru, MP”, *Journal of East African Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2008), pp. 254-263.

⁴⁵⁰ See Pamela Mburia, Jane Thuo, Marceline Nyambala, *Journey to Leadership: Women Legislators in Kenya’s Tenth Parliament* (Nairobi: AMWIK, 2011).

⁴⁵¹ See Ibid.

⁴⁵² See Ibid.

⁴⁵³ See Kenneth Maina, “Bishop Margaret Graduates, Vows to Dethrone Kidero” *NairobiWire*, 10 October 2014; JIAM Field notes June 2014 and 2015.

conferences that are focused on addressing the concerns of *jua kali*, she has developed a particular faith brand that is growing and continue to invite more people to her audience.⁴⁵⁴

4.3. Ethnography—Jesus is Alive Ministries JIAM

The headquarters of Jesus is Alive Ministries International JIAM., also known as “Sanctuary One” are on Haile Selassie avenue in Nairobi’s Central Business District CBD. JIAM was established in 1993 and is currently one of the largest Pentecostal-Charismatic ministries in Kenya, and indeed East Africa. Its flagship branch in Nairobi has a membership of over 20,000, and it attracts thousands of worshippers to two services each Sunday in English and Swahili. JIAM also offers as many as 22 services a week at Sanctuary One.⁴⁵⁵ Recently JIAM has established other satellite branches in Knoxville USA, in Australia, South Africa, and in London. In Kenya, JIAM has only one other branch, in Voi-Kenya.⁴⁵⁶ As part of its outreach ministries, JIAM has the Good Samaritan Project which is a charity to the disadvantaged, a missionary project called the Fire Brand Missions, and a Bible School. It also has ministries for children, teens, the youth, women and an Intercessory ministry. JIAM also has a radio and television ministry called “The Glory is Here.” JIAM has male and female pastors responsible for the various ministries, ranging from children, youth, men, women, and prayer to social services ministries.

I first visited JIAM from June to July 2014. Much of this fieldwork was conducted at Sanctuary One, which significantly sits in the prime commercial hub of the capital city of Kenya, also known in Swahili as *Jua Kali*. I shall briefly discuss the significance of *Jua Kali* before I proceed to describe the details of the services that I observed. In Kenyan Kiswahili, *Jua Kali*, is a reference to the small traders or entrepreneurs such as artisans and traders in the

⁴⁵⁴ See Loreen Maseno, “The Glory is Here!’ Faith Brands and Rituals of Self-Affirmation for Social Responsibility in Kenya” A paper presented at the 9th International and Interdisciplinary Glopent Conference, 10-11 June 2016, Uppsala University, Sweden.

⁴⁵⁵ See JIAM’s website <https://jiam.org>. Accessed 2 July 2014.

⁴⁵⁶ See Ibid.

informal business sector who conduct their business under the hot rays of the equatorial sunshine in Nairobi.⁴⁵⁷ *Jua kali* also refers to anyone in self-employment, but most of the traders and artisans in the informal sector are known to operate from the central business district or the area called Kamukunji, the nearby Gikomba and Muthurwa markets as well as the slums of Kibera or Dandora where many members of JIAM live or work.

JIAM is also close to the main transportation hubs in the central business district. Quite close to JIAM are the bus stops for matatus (mini buses) from towns outside Nairobi such as Thika, Ngong, Kiambu, Machakos among others. On Sundays or during one of Wanjiru's spiritual warfare conferences it is common to see church members jumping off matatus in the middle of the road in front of Sanctuary One, and after such services these matatus come back to scoop up passengers in the most competitive manner. The location of JIAM serves it well taking into consideration ease of access for church members who do not live or work in Nairobi. As I shall show below, *Jua Kali* is also of significance to Wanjiru's political career. In both national and local elections, politicians promise to ensure that *Jua kali* sector receives financial assistance, security, and access to infrastructure because of the sectors contribution to Kenya's economic development.⁴⁵⁸

According to Kenya's 2014 economic survey, 80 percent of the 800,000 jobs were created in the *jua kali* sector, which makes it one of the most politicised sectors in Kenya.⁴⁵⁹ In analysing Wanjiru's sermons and teachings, I shall argue that in spite of the spiritualised framework that shapes her approach to politics, they are intended to address the concerns of *jua kali*, such as poverty, the challenges of family life, the fear of witchcraft. The usual political promises from politicians to improve the lives and working conditions of *Jua Kali*

⁴⁵⁷ See Kenneth King, *Jua Kali: Change & Development in an Infant Informal Economy 1970-95* (London: James Curry, 1996).

⁴⁵⁸ See Henry M. Bwisa, "Jua Kali sector is big business, ignore it at your own peril" *Standard Digital*, 13 April 2017.

⁴⁵⁹ See Kenya National Bureau of Statistics Economic Survey 2014. <https://www.knbs.or.ke/?wpdmpo=economic-survey-2014>. Accessed 20 July 2019.

residents and workers, is not very different from Wanjiru's claims to have the spiritual power/anointing to change their lives.

As I shall discuss below *jua kali* features prominently in Wanjiru's sermons and teachings. Not only does she claim to be interested in the economic uplift of *jua kali* workers and by extension many of her church members but she has laid a plan for what she believes will transform Kenya's CBD. For example, in 2014, Wanjiru unveiled her plans to transform Nairobi's central business district by funding the constructing of what she called "Glory Twin Towers". The towers will be 12 floors each, one on each side of the road where the old auditorium currently sits on Haile Selassie avenue in Nairobi's CBD, and will be connected by an overhead bridge. The towers will house the main church auditorium, modern offices, a college, a children's church, a five-star hotel, a swimming pool, a spa gym, banking halls, clinics, a supermarket and basement parking.⁴⁶⁰ According to Wanjiru, the towers will be a near replica of the American twin towers but with only twelve towers, it is perhaps more of a symbolic replica that is supposed to make a theological as well as a political statement. Sitting in Kenya's business district, when completed, the Glory Twin Towers are supposed to show the extent of God's divine blessings in Wanjiru's ministry, and to be a sign of "God's divine favour" on Kenya.⁴⁶¹ During an appeal for funds towards the construction of the towers, members were made to understand that because "this is not a mere building" anybody who contributed to its successful completion will "Recover All" their possessions, including those who sow a "laughter seed" or "Mighty Restoration seed."⁴⁶² The "Glory" in "the Twin towers", according to Wanjiru, means that, "we simply don't have to be poor. We can be rich and have wealth, and not apologise for it... This tower will show that God's favour has arrived, and no one can bring it down in the mighty name of Jesus"⁴⁶³ The completion of this

⁴⁶⁰ Field notes JIAM June 2015.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ Ibid

project will demonstrate Wanjiru's spiritual gifts in wealth creation and a display of her spiritual power to create wealth.

Also, quite important is the presence of Kenyan Indians in the *jua kali* because of how Wanjiru conceptualises their presence, as "demonic". On the other hand, JIAM or Sanctuary One, is seen as type of holy altar that was established to give the *jua kali* a spiritual cover from the demons of "Hindu gods and temples" in the area.⁴⁶⁴ For Wanjiru and her team of pastors, the concern is that even though *jua kali* can be a place of business opportunity it is also a dangerous place because of the presence of "demonic altars", which is a direct reference to nearby Hindu and Sikh temples.

Since the 1930s and 1940s, the central business district has also been a predominantly Indian part of Nairobi. Roads are still lined with trading stores, and temples, including areas with graveyards of Nairobi's diverse Indian community.⁴⁶⁵ Both the Sikh temple in Pangani and the Hindu temple, which sits at the end of Ngara road are still landmarks that depicts not only the earlier patterns of residential and occupational segregation but also the status of Indians as the second group of people on the economic and social hierarchy in Kenya.⁴⁶⁶ The contrast between African sheds and the bigger and well stocked Indian shops are clear. The *jua kali* is thus a hotbed for political campaigns because of the dense concentration of both traders and artisans. *Jua kali* area covers three constituencies in Nairobi county, which includes Starehe, where Wanjiru became a member of Parliament, Kamukunji and Embakasi. For the members of JIAM who work in the Jua Kali, many aspire to be prosperous entrepreneurs such as Wanjiru herself who started her trade in the same area. Wanjiru sees herself as a businesswoman, a politician, and a clergy person, and for many of her adherents her anointing or spiritual gift is considered to be in the area of "increase" as it relates to

⁴⁶⁴ Margaret Wanjiru, Sermon, 2014.

⁴⁶⁵ See King, *Jua Kali*.

⁴⁶⁶ See King, *Jua Kali*.

material blessings and prosperity.⁴⁶⁷ A major node of attraction to Wanjiru's ministry is that it is believed she is able to give spiritual directions and anointing to those who also seek spiritual empowerment for the purposes of enhancing the fortunes of their own businesses and in effect their lives for the better.

For others, who may not be necessarily members of JIAM, Wanjiru is a role model, a woman of God whose upward mobility serves as a model for them to emulate.



Figure 7: The logo of JIAM.



Figure 8: Artist impression of the Glory Twin Towers.

This imposing picture hangs right on the preaching stage

⁴⁶⁷ Interview with Pastor Duncan, JIAM 2014. He preferred that Wanjiru's ministry was called "blessings" rather than "prosperity".

4.3.1. Fieldwork 2014

To return to worship services that I observed during my fieldwork from June to July of 2014, I observed and participated in a total of 18, 1st and 2nd Sunday services. My estimate of the attendance during the first services is around three thousand. Second services had attendance of about five thousand every Sunday but this increases considerably during special programmes such as the last Sunday of a spiritual warfare conference.

On my first Sunday, Wanjiru announced the beginning of “powerful” month long “spiritual warfare conference”.⁴⁶⁸ This was an evening programme that ran from 22 June-27 July 2014, from 5pm-10:30pm every evening. The first two weeks focused on, “Destroying Satanic Altars part 1” and the 2nd week closed with “Destroying Satanic Altars part 2”.⁴⁶⁹ As I shall further elaborate below, the conference was announced as a spiritual warfare, that was focused on “Satanic or demonic altars”. These “altars” are believed to possess spirits such as witchcraft that is capable of “stealing financial blessings” and other occult spirits who are also believed to fight against “progress in life”.⁴⁷⁰

Major themes from the conference organised in 2014 and others conducted in 2015 form the main basis of reconstructing Wanjiru’s political theology and subsequent analysis of her approach to politics in Kenya. In 2014, I also observed and participated in the Wednesday evening prayer meetings. This service is part of JIAM’s midweek programmes titled, “Destroying Babylonian Spirits.”⁴⁷¹ During this programme, which was mainly a deliverance service, Wanjiru referred to Babylonian spirits as “white witchcraft” that can control one’s life completely and can defile the earth because of their embeddedness in people and places of power.⁴⁷² “Babylonian spirits” according to Wanjiru, are also connected to the “feminine spirit of Jezebel” who was also referred to as “the lady of the kingdoms” because of her

⁴⁶⁸ Margaret Wanjiru, JIAM, June 2014.

⁴⁶⁹ Field notes JIAM 2014.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid

⁴⁷¹ See JIAMs, website, <https://jiam.org/>. Accessed June 29, 2014.

⁴⁷² Wanjiru, “Destroying Babylonian Spirits”, 2014.

supposed powers to corrupt good leaders and destroy nations.⁴⁷³ But because “Babylonian spirits” are also believed to kill “sexual appetites”, and “destroying marriages” they are associated with spirits of bareness, unproductivity, and poverty.⁴⁷⁴ Wanjiru conducted several exorcism (deliverance) as well as impartation of spiritual power into those delivered from “spiritual barrenness” and other spiritual attacks associated with poverty. On the 18th and 25 of June 2014 for example the focus of the three and half hours long prayer meeting was on “Deliverance – from Witchcraft, Poverty, Debts, and Misfortunes”.⁴⁷⁵

In 2014 even though I was not successful in interviewing Wanjiru, I was able to interview pastor Naima, who is in charge of the children’s ministry, pastor Mary, in charge of the women ministry, pastor Enoch, in charge of the spiritual warriors and pastor Duncan, who is Wanjiru’s campaign manager. I must add that I was granted the interviews after attending almost all their services in between June and July 2014. Just like other Pentecostal-Charismatic pastors, Wanjiru had increased her personal security due to terrorist attacks on churches at the time.

4.3.2. Fieldwork 2015

I returned to JIAM in 2015 and conducted my fieldwork from June to September. Even though I was fortunate to have personally met Wanjiru, it was brief. I conducted the rest of my interviews with one pastor Duncan, about whom she had said: “If you want to understand my politics, talk to pastor Duncan - he is my campaign manager”.⁴⁷⁶ While I was not able to have in depth interviews with Wanjiru herself, the four pastors I was able to interview gave an in-depth idea of JIAM’s core theological concerns and focus. I also interviewed twenty church JIAM members.⁴⁷⁷ Moreover, JIAM owns a recording studio where Wanjiru’s sermons and teachings are edited and sold in the churches bookstore. For the purpose of this work, I

⁴⁷³ Wanjiru, “Destroying Babylonian Spirits”; <https://jiam.org/>.

⁴⁷⁴ See Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ See <https://jiam.org/the-three-levels-of-witchcraft/>. Accessed, June 29, 2014.

⁴⁷⁶ Field notes JIAM July 2015.

⁴⁷⁷ See Appendix for gender breakdown of members interviewed.

shall include in my analysis her sermons on a DVD titled “Three levels of Witchcraft” an impartation service organised in August 2015, titled “Possess your possessions: How to Pray Effectively for Land” and “Building Godly and Satanic altars” in order to adequately understand and analyse the interconnection between Wanjiru’s demonology and her political ideas.

A close reading of Wanjiru’s sermons and teachings in 2015, confirmed what I have observed during my 2014 fieldwork, in relation to Wanjiru’s preoccupation with witchcraft, prosperity and political leadership.



Figure 9: Wanjiru leading an impartation session during Sunday worship service

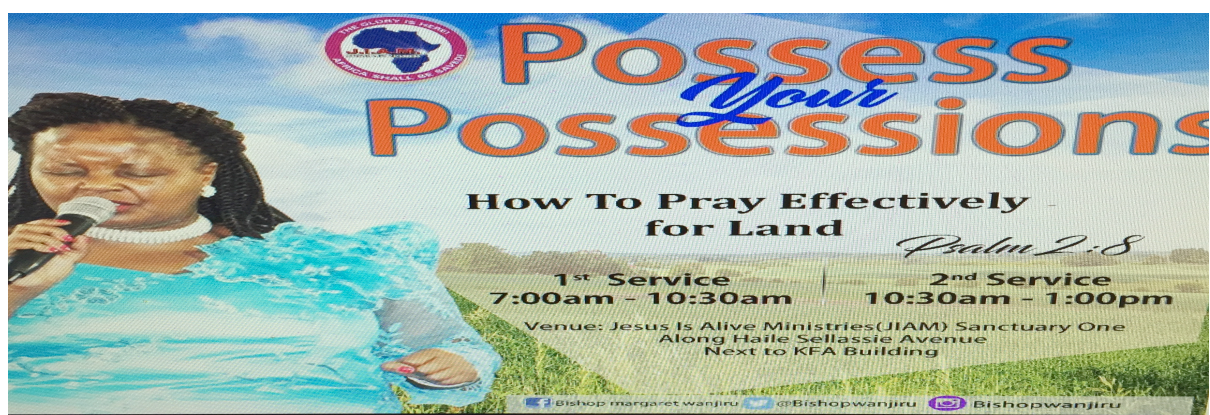


Figure 10: JIAM poster announcing a Spiritual Warfare Conference



Figure 11: A poster for the deliverance services held every Wednesday Evening from 5:00-8:00pm

4.4. JIAM as a Political Base

As I briefly mentioned above, members of JIAM form a sizable block of voters in the Starehe constituency and from my own observation Wanjiru seem to have broader support among the Pentecostal Christians in the *jua kali*. The spiritual warfare conferences which are well-advertised and well attended are in my estimation spiritual as well as political events, which must be understood in the context of Wanjiru's 2013 electoral loss and her bid for re-election as governor of Nairobi. Because Wanjiru sees her decision to be governor as the fulfilment of divine a prophecy or mandate, she also construes any form of challenge to her ambitions as spiritual attack that attempts to derail a divine injunction. The spiritual warfare conference as we have noticed bring together thousands of "prayer warriors" who are also potential voters in the Starehe constituency. Not only do they share similar views on personal and national prosperity, they are also a standing spiritual army of a sorts, whose purpose would be to fight for a spiritual victory for Wanjiru and Kenya as a whole. For example, during a session of the spiritual warfare conference that I observed in August 2015, the resident Pastor of JIAM mounted the podium and openly endorsed Wanjiru's candidature for governor of Nairobi, encouraging the congregation to vote for her.⁴⁷⁸ One Bishop Murogi, who is from the

⁴⁷⁸ See Yonatan Gez, and Tanya Alvin, *Kenya's Past as Prologue*.

Heavenly Glory Church in Nairobi, was quite explicit in his prayer about the purpose of the conference:

I declare new beginnings for Nairobi today... We declare that from the front to the back we sanctify Nairobi in the name of the father and the son and the Holy Spirit. We pray from the seat of this holy altar, we release fresh anointing on Nairobi, say a big amen to our new governor of Nairobi, Dr Bishop, the woman of God, the prophet of Nairobi, and of Kenya, and the prophet of Africa.⁴⁷⁹

Wanjiru's prosperity-dominionist approach to politics, we must remember, primarily attributes Kenya's developmental challenges to spiritual poverty. While such an approach acknowledges exploitative socio-political and economic structures it sees poverty as a spiritual problem that is caused by the powers of the devil. The appropriate solution, according to this approach, is to "vote for leaders who can see into the spirit". In Murogi's prayer, his reference to the "prophet of Nairobi" is an affirmation of Brenda Todd's earlier anointing of Wanjiru as a politician but also of her spiritual mandate which is to wage spiritual warfare on the spirits that block development and prosperity in Nairobi and the country as a whole.

In addition to Bishop Murogi, twenty-two pastors from different Pentecostal churches were introduced which gives the indication that Wanjiru's support base extends beyond Nairobi and Starehe constituency. Some of the pastors and their congregations travelled from as far as Narok which is about 142 km from Nairobi. Several other mentees pastors of Wanjiru confirmed their support for her candidature for Nairobi's gubernatorial seat, some implicitly by using biblical figures with references to her supposed prophetic call to be both a minister of the gospel and a politician. References were made to Wanjiru's hard work but most importantly it was her spiritual power, her anointing and leadership capabilities that made her the ideal candidate who could bring a "fresh anointing" to Nairobi.

While most of JIAM's Sunday sermons or conference messages (discussed below) focus on members attaining a higher level of inner spiritual power as the means of combating evil,

⁴⁷⁹Wanjiru, Field notes June 2014.

they are also made to understand that their personal struggles also translate to the struggles of the nation. Overcoming personal spiritual problems also involves fighting for the nations socio-political and economic uplift. While true that with her members alone she couldn't have won the 2007 elections, they formed a reliable constituency of voters with immense manpower and conviction.

4.5. Analysis: Prosperity-Dominionist Approach

In this section, I analyse main theological themes that emerge from the ethnographic data discussed above. The purpose here is to offer further elaboration on Wanjiru's political theology through a close reading of her main spiritual warfare sermons and teachings on the subject.

Wanjiru's Prosperity-dominionist Approach moves from the anti-material theology of the 1980s to a theology that primarily engages with so called "spirits of poverty". Her ministry of prosperity and "witchdemonology" to borrow from Onyinah, employs such narratives as demonic altars in explaining the role of the 'Evil One' as a destructive force in Kenyan politics.⁴⁸⁰ In the Prosperity-dominionist approach to politics, spiritual warfare against "demons of progress" in particular, becomes a prerequisite for naming and claiming one's material or financial blessings.⁴⁸¹ This frame of reference suggests that the prosperity of a born again believer is secured because the devil and his agents are unable to attack them. As I shall discuss further in chapter six, Wanjiru's prosperity-dominionist approach, and the theological approaches of Prophet Owuor and Githii, are all rooted in indigenous religious conceptions of spiritual and political power. The underlying influence of Wanjiru's demonology is that of spirit causation in Kikuyu religion. In the context of Pentecostal-

⁴⁸⁰ See Opoku Onyinah, "Contemporary 'Witchdemonology' In Africa". *International Review of Mission*, vol. 93 (2009), pp. 330-345; Opoku Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana* (Dorset: Deo Publishing, 2012).

⁴⁸¹ Werner Kahl, "Jesus Became Poor that We Might be Rich" in *Pastures of Plenty: Tracing Religio-Scapes of Prosperity Gospel in Africa and Beyond*, edited by Andreas Heuser, pp. 101-116. (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2015), 102.

Charismatic Christianity, it is the Holy Spirit which is believed to empower the born again Christian to claim the material wealth that rightly belongs to them as children and heirs and heiresses of God.

Demonic altars, from the foregoing, could be anything dedicated to the devil, or believed to be able to cause harm to unbelieving individuals and the communities. As I have mentioned such thinking comes from spiritual warfare teachings that is informed by the indigenous worldview. Wanjiru's approach therefore qualifies as a contextualised or Africanised spiritual warfare tradition, considering that it is focused on solving local economic challenges in Kenyan politics by identifying and conquering the demons of poverty.

Like Githii, Wanjiru also holds that it is the duty of the church to effect positive change in local politics. The spiritual power bequeathed to born again Christians in Wanjiru's view and ministry in particular does not support the separation of church and politics.

According to Wanjiru,

Church is very powerful when it comes to networking, when it comes to obeying the preacher's instructions that are given and that is exactly what happens during elections but also there are spiritual things which the bible also talks about that impedes the progress and prosperity of nations, so for me it is not biblical to separate church and politics. The bible does not separate politics and the church.⁴⁸²

Wanjiru does not possess any elaborate theology of the church, but, as we can see the church is not just a place of worship but also a place for networking. This reflects the possible influence of her marketing background, but her spiritual frame of analysis sees spiritual impediments to both individual and national prosperity. A spiritual understanding of economics and politics underlies her political engagements as she attributes and in fact teaches that specific spiritual entities are responsible for personal and national economic problems.

⁴⁸² Personal Interview with Wanjiru, 12 July 2015.

In Wanjiru's Prosperity-dominionist political theology, spiritual warfare is a necessary part of receiving financial blessings, as I have discussed above. In Kenya and beyond, prosperity theology does not follow a systematic theological format but it has a common script. Meaning is usually generated around compound terms such as "increase, enlargement, improvement, enhancement, multiplication and success."⁴⁸³ The narrative of prosperity also emphasises "progress," "victory," "overcoming," "blessings" among other "positive declarations."⁴⁸⁴ Most Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic prosperity preachers teach that

God rewards faithful Christianity with material abundance, well-being and perfect health. It is not uncommon for those who preach that gospel to cite their personal material acquisitions as examples of faith Christianity.⁴⁸⁵

Prosperity theology is also undergirded by a theory of economic exchanges with God. It is believed that when a believer offers "financial offerings and positive confession" God will act.⁴⁸⁶ Wanjiru explains her theory of economic exchanges quite clearly in the sermon titled, "Possess your possessions: How to Pray Effectively for Land."⁴⁸⁷

We are in a month where we are investing spirituality into our wealth. Whenever there is a sowing, it is like making an investment, there has to be a withdrawal somewhere along the way so very soon some of you are going to start reaping, and harvesting the seed you have planted. But when you start harvesting don't forget where God brought you from—a nobody to somebody, amen.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸³ Andreas Heuser, "Religio-Scapes of Prosperity Gospel: An Introduction" in *Pastures of Plenty: Tracing Religio-Scapes of Prosperity Gospel in Africa and Beyond*, edited by Andreas Heuser, pp. 16 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015); Andreas Heuser, "Mapping Prosperity Gospel in Politics and Society" in *ibid*; Paul Gifford, "The Complex Provenance of Some Elements of African Pentecostal Theology" in *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, edited by André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani, pp. 62-74. (London: Hurst, 2001).

⁴⁸⁴ Nimi Wariboko, "Spirits and Economics" in *Interdisciplinary and Religio-Cultural Discourses on a Spirit-Filled Word* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) 149.

⁴⁸⁵ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit*, 164; Ebenezer Obadare, "'Raising righteous billionaires': The prosperity gospel reconsidered" *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, vol. 72, no. 4, (2016), 1-8.

⁴⁸⁶ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Sighs and Signs*; Katherine L. Wiegler, *Investing in Miracles: El Shaddai and the Transformation of popular Catholicism in the Philippines* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005).

⁴⁸⁷ Wanjiru, sermon, "Possess your possessions: How to Pray Effectively for Land."

⁴⁸⁸ Wanjiru, JIAM August 2015.

In Wanjiru's prosperity model, God's financial blessings is based on a covenant of giving—of money but also of time. Just like other proponents of the prosperity model in Kenya, Wanjiru uses the agriculture metaphor of “sowing and reaping” to drive home the nature of the economic exchange with God.⁴⁸⁹ The biblical texts often used to support giving, are Malachi 3:10 and Luke 3: 38.

In Malachi the prophet makes a direct connection between the failure of agricultural fortunes and the failure of Israel to fulfil her religious duty in the payment of tithes. The passage Luke reads as follows: ‘Give, and it will be given to you, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measure to you.’⁴⁹⁰

Paying one's tithes, on time, regularly and truthfully, and “sowing” offerings generously without reservations to the church, will result in “double blessings” from God. “Reaping” or “harvest”, means that born-again Christians will continue to enjoy “the good things that God has ordained for those who believe in him.”⁴⁹¹

Prosperity preachers see the patriarchs as role models. According to Amos Yong, Abraham for example is not only called “the father of God's chosen son and elect people but also blessed him abundantly in every way: socially, economically, and materially. Joseph's many-colored robe foreshadowed his prosperity as second in command over the whole of Egypt later in life.”⁴⁹²

Job is seen as a faithful who was also,

rewarded not only with the full restoration of his health but also with double the prosperity that he had before his calamity. In each of these instances and many others, then, the Bible portrays God's desire to bless his people with spiritual, physical, and material abundance.⁴⁹³

⁴⁸⁹ See Wariboko, “Spirits and Economics”; Virginia Garrard-Burnett “Neopentecostalism and Prosperity Theology in Latin America: A Religion for Late Capitalist Society” *Iberoamericana*, vol. 42, no. 1-2 (2013), pp. 21-34.

⁴⁹⁰ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Sighs and Signs*, 163.

⁴⁹¹ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 116.

⁴⁹² Yong, “A Typology of Prosperity Theology: A Religious Economy of Global Renewal or a Renewal Economics?” in *Pentecostalism and Prosperity*, 19.

⁴⁹³ Yong, “A Typology of Prosperity Theology”.

In his study of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria, Ukah, has referred to African Pentecostal-Charismatic prosperity teachings as “situational theology” because it “represents a situational response to specific social and economic circumstances.”⁴⁹⁴ Wanjiru contextualises her prosperity theology by conceptualizing spiritual evil, witchcraft in particular, as spirits of poverty. Even though she teaches that God blesses faithful born-again Christians with wealth or blessings, there is a demonological dimension to her teachings, that suggests

that one’s chances of (material) success had less to do with social structures creating opportunities, and more with pernicious, ubiquitous spirits (e.g. ‘the spirit of unemployment’), which can only be combated and brought to heel through faith in the power of prayer.⁴⁹⁵

Wanjiru holds that there are spiritual powers of poverty who are assigned to put “curses of lack—of progress” on Christians who are not vigilant against the wiles of demonic forces.

The basic theological idea here is that,

a persons’ prosperity in life can be hampered by demonic powers even though that person is a Christian. Ardent exponents of this idea [prosperity-dominionist model] generally teach that demons gain a foothold in human lives by entering through ‘demonic doorways’...The array of demonic doorways often means that nobody can be excluded from the possibility of some form of possession or oppression by demons, and so the problems of life can be understood principally as the work of demons.⁴⁹⁶

Intense Spiritual warfare and intercessory prayers are employed in order for church members to “possess their possessions by force.”⁴⁹⁷

In a teaching on spiritual warfare for example, Wanjiru talked about the “spirit of caging.”⁴⁹⁸ She taught that “caging is done over people’s life so that they do not progress in life. They [demons] make people become stagnant.”⁴⁹⁹ Here too we see that the emphasis is on

⁴⁹⁴ Asonzeh Ukah, *A New Paradigm of Pentecostal Power: A Study of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2008), 324.

⁴⁹⁵ Ebenezer Obadare, “‘Raising righteous billionaires’: The prosperity gospel reconsidered” 4.

⁴⁹⁶ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 118.

⁴⁹⁷ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 118.

⁴⁹⁸ Wanjiru, sermon “Destroying Satanic Altars.”

⁴⁹⁹ Wanjiru, “Three levels of witchcraft” <https://jiam.org/the-three-levels-of-witchcraft/>. Accessed August 20, 2018.

gaining or using spiritual power in order to overcome evil spirits associated with poverty. I argue that the prosperity-dominionist approach reflects the “African worldview in which religion is a survival strategy and in which faithful religiosity is rewarded with abundance, prosperity, and increase.”⁵⁰⁰ As I have already discussed under the holiness approach, in the African religious worldview, moral probity is associated with divine favor and moreover taking Wanjiru’s own background into consideration, relating poverty to witchcraft is however not surprising. Even though Wanjiru draws on the bible to construct her theology, indigenous conceptions of the spiritual world impinge on her hermeneutics of the bible. In African indigenous systems, similar conceptions of wealth exist across the region.

[S]alvation is about wholeness, embracing physical and spiritual blessings. Adherents of African traditional religions believe that in the most comprehensive sense of the word. Favours from the gods in traditional societies are not limited to the care of souls but they also include blessings of fecundity, riches, and a long and healthy life. The gods are expected to make life in the present time (not only the hereafter) worth living.⁵⁰¹

The prosperity-dominionist approach taps deep into African traditional thought.⁵⁰² Amos Yong, in his study of prosperity theologies, called the blend of African worldviews with spiritual warfare in African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity as “the contextual argument.”⁵⁰³ According to this argument,

the theme of prosperity is especially important in light of popular understandings of what it means to be saved, in particular the prevalent beliefs about salvation held by the masses residing in the ‘global south’. Thus, ‘prosperity’ is an important component of salvation...[i]ncluding physical well-being.⁵⁰⁴

In the Kenyan and the African context broadly speaking, the prosperity gospel is political theology because it is a contextualised response to poverty and all that brings ill-health and death. Prosperity theology has political implications in contexts where most are poor and are

⁵⁰⁰ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 117.

⁵⁰¹ Wariboko, “Spirits and Economics”, 41.

⁵⁰² Kalu, *Power, Poverty and Prayer: The Challenges of Poverty and Pluralism in African Christianity, 1960-1996* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2006).

⁵⁰³ Yong, “A Typology of Prosperity Theology” 23

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

looking for “doorways” to open and “miracles” to happen before they can put food on their tables. Indeed, it takes only a miracle, for some members to be able to put food on the table for their children, as was shared in the numerous testimonies during church services (in all three churches). Small favors such as a bowl of ugali (corn flour, staple food in East African region) or the gift of a “thousand shillings” (£7) all are treated as miracles.

Through the theology of prosperity, the majority of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians are motivated to develop specific economic and even development initiatives with concrete economic consequences.⁵⁰⁵ There has been much criticism of prosperity theologies in Kenya and the followers of prosperity preachers cannot be said to be oblivious to the display of ostentation by their leaders. Wanjiru’s own approach has been the subject of various national debates on corruption and affluent lifestyles of Pentecostal-Charismatic prosperity preachers.⁵⁰⁶ Not only do prosperity preachers get accused for fleecing their members but also for importing and using wholesale the North American Pentecostal theology on wealth, considered a “sign from God, just as poverty is a sign of sinfulness.”⁵⁰⁷ It is however important to mention that as a Kikuyu, Wanjiru’s conception of wealth and her faith is highly reinforced by her Kikuyu ethos of the accomplished man or woman.⁵⁰⁸ Lonsdale discusses the ethos that guides the Kikuyu conception of the acquisition and distribution of wealth which

⁵⁰⁵ Yong, “A Typology of Prosperity Theology” 23, 28; Hasu Pävi, “Prosperity Gospels and Enchanted Worldviews: Two Responses to Socio-economic Transformations in Tanzanian Pentecostal Christianity” in, *Pentecostalism and Development: Churches, NGOs and Social Change in Africa*, edited by Deena Freeman, pp. 67-86. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

⁵⁰⁶ See Gifford, *Christian, Politics*; Christian Thibon, Marie-Aude Fouéré, Mildred Ndeda, Susan Mwangi (eds.), *Kenya’s Past as Prologue*.

⁵⁰⁷ Droz, “The Local Roots of Kenyan Pentecostalism” 18.

⁵⁰⁸ See Ibid.

goes beyond the acquisition of material wealth to show ones accomplishment but also a compassion for the less financially endowed.⁵⁰⁹ Wealth, “concerns the ultimate aims of any Kikuyu, obtaining the status of *mûramati*” which refers to those who are compassionate to redistribute their wealth.⁵¹⁰

According to the Kikuyu ethos on wealth acquisition and redistribution, wealth is a reward to good people,

who prove their compassion (tha) and redistribute their goods to attract numerous dependents. The counter example is egoistical wealth, which brought accusations of sorcery, because it was immoral and could only come from the occult sources. In the case of Pentecostal churches, the display of wealth seems to root itself in the intimate links that bind material wealth and moral integrity within the Kikuyu ethos. For Pentecostals, ‘true’ faith must logically be accompanied by ostentatious luxury — because poverty of true believers is not pleasing to God — as the *mûramati* exposed its opulence as a sign of morality.⁵¹¹

In my view, the critique of the prosperity gospel, in particular, that prosperity theological paradigm is the least “oriented toward national development” because of perceptions of self-serving motivations of prosperity preachers.⁵¹² In the Kenyan Kikuyu context in particular “the symbolic connotations of wealth overtake its purely pecuniary aspects and presents moral aspects which lead to self-accomplishment.”⁵¹³ Prosperity preachers do not merely address poverty, according to Wariboko, they also “produce desires and dreams” focused on

⁵⁰⁹ See John Lonsdale, “The Moral Economy of Mau Mau: Wealth, Poverty, and Civic Virtue in Kikuyu Political Thought” in *Unhappy Valley, Conflict in Kenya and Africa: Violence and Ethnicity*, edited by B. Berman and John Lonsdale, pp. 315-504. (London: James Curry, 1992); John Lonsdale, “Kikuyu Christianities” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 29, no. 2 (1999), pp. 206-229; Fr. Hilary Wambugu, James Mwangi Ngarariga, Peter Muriithi Karuiki (eds.), *The Agikuyu: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore 2nd edition* (Nairobi: Wisdom Graphics, 2006).

⁵¹⁰ Wambugu, *The Agikuyu*. For more on how women in particular achieve the status of *mûramati*, which is beyond the scope of this thesis, see for example, John Lonsdale “The Moral Economy of Mau Mau”.

⁵¹¹ Droz, “The Local Roots of Kenyan Pentecostalism” 18.

⁵¹² Wariboko, “Pentecostal Paradigms” 41.

⁵¹³ Droz, “The Local Roots of Kenyan Pentecostalism” 18.

building from the bottom up the economic aspirations of *mwananchi* (ordinary citizens in Shahili).⁵¹⁴ It is a spiritual politics of the *jua kali*, because of its attraction to *wananchi*, especially small business people from the informal market. The show of wealth by Wanjiru is also a show of the power of God working in her life. The ostentation is a sign of praise to God for providing abundance of wealth which then motivate others to follow a similar path of seeking salvation and material wealth.

4.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, while Wanjiru obviously participates directly in politics, underlying all her political engagements is the theological understanding that poverty is a spiritual problem ultimately caused by evil spirits even though she does not deny that hard work is part of her success. She attributes and in fact teaches that specific spiritual entities are responsible for personal and national economic problems. In the light of such convictions she teaches, prays and prophesies, while participating directly in politics by mobilizing her members and using her church as a base for such political mobilizations. In chapter six, I analyse further Wanjiru's prosperity-dominionist approach to politics alongside the approaches of Gitthi and Owuor.

⁵¹⁴ Droz, "The Local Roots of Kenyan Pentecostalism" 38.

Chapter 5: Rev. Dr David Muhia Githii's El-Gibbor Evangelism, Intercessory and Training Altar (El-Gibbor)

This chapter focuses on Rev. Dr David Muhia Githii, the founder of El-Gibbor Evangelism, Intercessory and Training Altar. Githii established this ministry in 2014 as a Pentecostal church after he was expelled from the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA). He was the moderator of the General Assembly of the PCEA from 2003-9, after which he became the pastor in charge of Kajiado parish from 2009-2014. In April 2014, he was defrocked by the new leadership of the PCEA and the Kajiado presbytery and debarred from performing any duties as a minister of the PCEA.⁵¹⁵ According to the new leadership of the PCEA, Githii was “defrocked” because he persistently objected to existing partnership between the PCEA and the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) and the Church of Scotland, for their endorsement of gay marriage.⁵¹⁶ In many of his sermons and writings, he attacked the legacy of the Church of Scotland in Kenya, describing it as a “demonic church”, and the existing partnership with the PCEA as an “unholy union tainted with devil worship.”⁵¹⁷

Exposing & Conquering Satanic Forces over Kenya, is Githii's treatise that extensively deals with supposed demonic powers that are responsible for Kenya's political and economic predicaments.⁵¹⁸ He wants to mobilise “prayer warriors” in order to fight evil spirits that have taken strongholds in Kenya's politics.⁵¹⁹ As I shall discuss below, his theological and political conceptions are highly influenced by the spirituality of the East

⁵¹⁵ See Anne Njeri Kanina, “Excommunicated PCEA Moderator Rev David Githii Starts New Church” *diasporamessenger*, n.d. <https://diasporamessenger.com/2015/01/excommunicated-pcea-moderator-rev-david-githii-starts-new-church/>. n.d. Accessed 3 August 2016.

⁵¹⁶ See Njeri Kanina, “Excommunicated PCEA Moderator David Githii”; David Githii, “The Speech by the 17th General Assembly Moderator Rt. Rev. Dr David Githii on 22nd April 2003, St Andrews Church” n.p; David Githii, interview, August 2014.

⁵¹⁷ Githii, interview, August 2014.

⁵¹⁸ David Githii, *Exposing & Conquering Satanic Forces over Kenya* (Nairobi: Frangancia Books, 2007).

⁵¹⁹ See Githii, *Exposing and Conquering*.

African Revival, but more importantly his training in “Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare” (SLSW), at the Fuller Theological School of World Missions in the United States.

An in-depth discussion of the ethnography at El-Gibbor, will give us a better understanding of what I have termed Githii’s Spiritual- Dominionist approach to politics. The Kenyan political arena is described in purely spiritual terms and the devised solutions that Githii has proposed is the principal weapon of strategic spiritual warfare prayers. First, I will give an account of the biography and conversion narrative, followed by the which is followed by a brief background to circumstances that led to Githii’s expulsion from the PCEA below.

5.1. Biography and Conversion Narrative

Born to a Maasai father and Kikuyu mother in 1947, in Gikambura in Kiambu County, Githii attended the Gikambura Primary School and had his secondary education at Kirangari High School.⁵²⁰ Githii, describes an impoverished and difficult childhood, when on occasions he went without food. “I had only one shirt, and shorts riddled with holes. I had no bed, apart from a sack. I slept on the floor” he narrated to me during our interview.⁵²¹ In 1952 his father was detained for seven years as part of the British detention policy of preventing Kenyans from joining the rebellion against colonial rule. His father’s imprisonment and his mother’s inability to pay his school fees meant he had to start primary education in 1959 at age twelve. His personal experience under British colonial rule, particularly his father’s incarceration by the British colonial administration, “led to a difficult life” for the young Githii and likely contributed to his negative assessment of Western Protestant missionaries to Kenya.

Determined to pursue further education after his primary and secondary schooling, Githii trained at the PCEA teacher training college in Kikuyu, graduating in 1971 as a

⁵²⁰ Githii, Personal Interview, September 2014. See www.revdavidgithii.me accessed August 2014 (website currently discontinued).

⁵²¹ Githii, Personal Interview, August 2014.

certified teacher. His teaching career spanned 8 years, from 1972-1980, when he attained the position of head teacher.⁵²²

Githii's initial born again experience was highly influenced by the spirituality of the East African revival.⁵²³ He was ordained into the PCEA in 1984, having entered St Paul's Theological College (now St Paul's University-Limuru) in 1980, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity degree. From 2003-9, he was the moderator of the General Assembly of the PCEA. Prior to this, he served parishes in central Kenya, including Kajiado, Eastleigh and the Mathare slums. He also taught at the Presbyterian Bible Institute (now the Presbyterian University of East Africa), and at Day Star University.

Githii holds a Master of Theology degree in Missiology and a Doctorate in Missiology from the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary and the Fuller Theological Seminary respectively. At Fuller Theological Seminary, Githii was introduced to spiritual warfare theology. "I concentrated a lot on studying spiritual warfare. Through that, I came to learn a lot about idolatry and how it affects people, and indeed, a nation".⁵²⁴ The influence of Charles Peter Wagner's School of World Missions' spiritual warfare approach, commonly known as "strategic- or cosmic level spiritual warfare" (SLSW), in shaping Githii's political conceptions and how he contextualised it as theological response to Kenya's political crisis is described here and analysed in depth in chapter six.⁵²⁵

As I have mentioned above, Githii's Pentecostal-Charismatic leanings could also be attributed to the influence of the East African Revival earlier in his life. His born-gain conversion narrative reflects this influence as it presents a typical revivalist pattern:

⁵²² Githii, Personal Interview August 2014; Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010).

⁵²³ Githii, Interview September 2014; See, Hughes, *The Reading and Preaching*.

⁵²⁴ Githii, quoted in Gifford *Christianity and Public Life*, 209.

⁵²⁵ See James K Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy (eds.), *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 40.

In 1976, October 31, so this day I have spent time with the people drinking as usual, drinking past midnight and people started looking for my home to take me because I was so drunk. Finally, they [friends] decided to leave me in the pub, they told the watchman, look after him, when he wakes up he will know where to go. So that is exactly what happened. When I woke up in the morning and started walking towards home something I saw something like a flash of light that opened my life in front of me as I walked. Then I remember how my father was jailed by the British for 7yrs with hard labour because of the Mau Mau question...Then I led a very hard life, one shirt and one short all patched up. My mother could not afford. I started schooling at the age of 12 years because I was working. I could not manage until my father came from prison. Now I am a teacher, a headmaster, so I asked myself, is this the way the lord wanted me to live? So the following day I went to look for the church and before long I stood in the church, I said, now I let Jesus Christ to lead my life, into my heart. From that time, it has never been like that again. My life changed so when we talk of born again, it is somebody who has really released oneself to the Lord, always telling the Lord to guide me.⁵²⁶

At the time of his conversion, Githii had already been baptised as an infant at the Church of the Torch in Kikuyu so he was already a member of the PCEA, but he had not in his words, “invited Jesus into his life as Lord and saviour”, and as such he was “a carnal Christian.”⁵²⁷ What this meant was that he was not a Christian filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and as such he was a powerless Christian, one who was incapable of knowing the wiles of the demons and therefore unable to resist their evil machinations. His mention of a “flash of light”, in his conversion narrative, is a reference to St Paul’s New Testament conversion experience on the road to Damascus which is also a common trope for those who saw their previous lives as anti-Christian.

Githii’s conversion as a born again Christian also meant that he had received supernatural enabling or spiritual empowerment to live a morally upright life. As he told me, he had been empowered to overcome previous “strongholds and altars” of immorality in his life. “From that time...1976 to this day I have never touched alcohol again”.⁵²⁸ The spirituality of the East African revival provides the framework from which Githii contextualises spiritual warfare. His theology is shaped by the strong “moral and social probity” espoused by the

⁵²⁶ Personal Interview August 2014.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

⁵²⁸ Personal Interview August 2014.

“Bazukufu (Reawakened)” wing of the Balokole (revivalists) in the 1960s and 1970s.⁵²⁹

According to Githii,

Here in Kenya the question of being born again has a very high spirit and level... When I started, I said my name is David Githii I am born again, the Lord found me on the street, so when I say that now I am born again, what I mean is I was a drunkard and the lord found me that day. That day we have taken a lot of beer... The East African revival started in Rwanda in 1920, that is where it started, it came sweeping through Uganda and then it came here in 1937. That foundation of being born again gained wider ground here than any other country in Africa, I think it gained ground here more than any country in Africa. Here [in Kenya] we are more influenced by the east African revival so to say that I have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and saviour it is from that foundation in 1937.⁵³⁰

Githii's conversion narrative must be placed in the context of the enduring influence of the East African Revival. His theological influences are therefore grounded in both local as well as American Evangelical and Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality, espoused by the Fuller School of World Missions. The mission of his church, El-Gibbor, is an expression of the dual influences from both schools of thought on his Christian outlook.

5.2. Cleansing the PCEA-The Background

In Kenya and sub-Saharan Africa more broadly, members of the mainline churches who identify as Charismatic Christians have formed renewal groups in “response to the staid, silent, orderly, and overly rational approach to the faith inherited from the Western mission enterprise of the early nineteenth century.”⁵³¹ But for Githii, the problem with the PCEA goes far beyond staid worship, even though he counts, “clapping of hands, jumping to praise the Lord, saying ‘Amen’ or Hallelujah, organizing kesha (all night church service), speaking in tongues, and raising up hands in prayer during worship services as some of the “spiritual”

⁵²⁹ See Emma Wild-Wood, “The East African Revival in the Study of African Christianity” in *The East African Revival: Histories and Legacies*, edited by Kevin Ward and Emma Wild-Wood, pp. 201-212. (New York: Routledge, 2016); Kevin Ward, “Tututendereza Yesu: The Balokole Revival in Uganda” *Dictionary of African Christianity Biography*, <https://dacb.org/histories/uganda-tututendereza-yesu/>. Accessed July 23, 2014.

⁵³⁰ Githii, Interview August 2014.

⁵³¹ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 10.

innovations he introduced during his tenure of leadership.⁵³² His mission, as he saw it, was to cleanse the church of all the demonic spirits behind certain symbols, relics and other legacies of Scottish missionaries to Kenya that he has identified and marked as “demonic symbols.” Not only did he teach that the evil powers behind such religious relics affect the spiritual life of the PCEA but also the economic and political progress of Kenya.⁵³³

Githii saw himself as an expert with the spiritual powers and training to unravel what he considered to be the influence of “pagan mythology” and “Freemasons and Satanist” on the Scottish Reformed tradition.⁵³⁴ With such theological positions, it is unsurprising that he set out on a mission, with great support from Charismatic church members and clergy, to cleanse the PCEA of all items identified and labelled by the group as “ungodly symbols” associated with the Church of Scotland.⁵³⁵ The St Andrews Youth Fellowship from the St. Andrews PCEA Nairobi, which happens to be one of Kenya’s oldest and most affluent churches, with the tacit support of their pastor, the Rev. Dr Timothy George Wanjau, “pledged to go round all of Kenya’s churches, to destroy all such symbols” from churches in the PCEA.⁵³⁶ The group succeeded in destroying the following items: Thirty stained glass windows at the St Andrews PCEA in Nairobi, memorials to parishioners killed in the East Africa campaigns of the two world wars, Royal Air Force shields, tapestries, wrought-iron

⁵³² Githii, “The Speech by the 17th General Assembly”.

⁵³³ Githii, *Exposing and Conquering*.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

⁵³⁵ Interestingly, in 2004, Githii had set up a commission in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa to investigate colonial era religious relics and imagery left by early Scottish missionaries. The commission was led by Rev Dr Timothy George Wanjau, the pastor in charge of St Andrews PCEA in Nairobi. They concluded that the symbols were associated with “Freemasons” and therefore “demonic”, thus associating the Scottish missionaries and the Church of Scotland with devil worshippers. See “Iconoclasts-turn-their-fury-on-Kenya’s-colonial-past”, *The Telegraph*, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/kenya/1479163/Iconoclasts-turn-their-fury-on-Kenyas-colonial-past.html>. Accessed January 2015.

⁵³⁶ Damaris Parsitau, “Pentecostalising the Church of Scotland? The Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) and the Pentecostal Challenge in Kenya (1970-2010)” in *Africa in Scotland, Scotland in Africa: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Hybridities*, edited by Afe Adogame and Andrew Lawrence, pp. 228-250. (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

grilles, and the St Andrews flag.⁵³⁷ These actions even prompted leaders of the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), in their bid to curb the possible spread of Githii's "iconoclastic fury" in their church, to quickly form their own commission to examine the possibility of dismantling British symbols at the All Saint's Cathedral in Nairobi.⁵³⁸

Broadly speaking, Githii's focus in the PCEA can be distilled into three phases. The first was to build a church of born-again Christians who were spiritually empowered to wage spiritual warfare in the PCEA. Second, he was interested in overcoming demonic point of contacts in Kenyan churches, the PCEA, in particular. Third, he was focused on teaching about how to identify and overcome demonic altars in the political and public sphere. The EL-Gibbor ministry, which is also described as an "altar", was set up by Githii in order to continue what he started in the PCEA. As I shall discuss below, El-Gibbor has a dual but interconnected mission. It serves as an "altar" but also as a training and empowerment ministry on spiritual warfare. Githii's concept of altars is thus a core part of his theology of spiritual warfare. "Planting altars" or churches, is described as part of his core mission to "champion the cause of Evangelism and intercession" by training prayer warriors and intercessors to intercede for Kenya.⁵³⁹

I have identified central themes which frame Githii's demonology that shows the nexus between his theological conceptions and his political and engagements. What follows is an attempt to develop an account of Githii's ministry and its significance and impact, based on an analysis of his thoughts and practices—with the aim of understanding his views in relation to the role of the church in society and politics in contemporary Kenya.

⁵³⁷ See "Iconoclasts turn their fury on Kenya's colonial past" *The Telegraph*, 16 December 2004.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/kenya/1479163/Iconoclasts-turn-their-fury-on-Kenyas-colonial-past.html>. Accessed January 2015.

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

⁵³⁹ See <http://www.fpcmarshalltown.org/ElGibborMinistries.com/index.html>. Accessed 13 June 2016.

5.3. The Ethnography

I first interviewed the Rev. Dr David Githii in September 2014, at his residence in Zambezi, on the Nairobi-Nakuru road in Kenya. Compared with the two other case studies, I had the most success with Githii in terms of personal interviews, even though at the time he also complained of getting a bad press due to his expulsion from the PCEA. I was able to interview him personally on three other occasions. During our first interview in August 2014, El-Gibbor ministry had not yet been established. My second interview was conducted at his new church premises in Ruiru, Githambaya in June 2015. Our last formal interview was in July 2015, at Nakuru, during his pastors' empowerment seminars on spiritual warfare. I was able to attend three of his "Spiritual Warfare Empowerment Seminar", which he organised for pastors and church leaders between June and August 2015. I noticed that the empowerment seminars are held in specific towns and villages where Githii believes that there are strong influences of "ancestral and generational curses" that affects evangelisation as well as material well-being of residents.⁵⁴⁰

I attended the Kikuyu town empowerment seminar on 28th July 2014, Nakuru town on 31 July 2015, and Nyeri on 21 August 2015. I also had the opportunity to conduct focus group interviews during some of the seminars and church services that I observed. Apart from interviews and participant observation, Githii graciously handed me several books that he claims influenced his thinking about how to conduct spiritual warfare. I have also made copious references to his personal book on spiritual warfare, *Exposing & Conquering Satanic Forces over Kenya*.⁵⁴¹ Most of Githii's seminars, which are becoming quite popular as the numbers in 2015 were higher than what I observed earlier in 2014, are based on this book and on other pamphlets and brochures. I discuss the importance of the empowerment seminars below. I was also in contact with Githii in 2016, when I sought clarification on a number of issues through email and telephone conversations.

⁵⁴⁰ Githii, Spiritual warfare handout, 2015.

⁵⁴¹ See Githii, *Exposing & Conquering*.

In August 2014, when I first interviewed Githii, he was unsure of starting a church of his own even though he had received the much-publicised news of his sack from the PCEA. In 2015, he had started his own ministry and had been re-baptised by immersion, by the Archbishop Arthur Kitonga, founder of the Redeemed Gospel Church, whom he now considered his mentor. Being baptised by Kitonga was very significant and carried much weight for these reasons. Kitonga is the head of the Redeemed Gospel Church, and he is a highly successful and respected senior Pentecostal-Charismatic clergyman in Kenya. His baptism legitimised Githii's new identity as a Pentecostal-Charismatic clergyman and founder of a new church in the Pentecostal tradition. Also, as an archbishop, Kitonga is able to provide Githii with what Pentecostal-Charismatics refer to as "spiritual covering", or a form of seal of approval for his new ministry.

5.4. EL-Gibbor Evangelism, and Intercessory Altar

El-Gibbor means "Lord Almighty"⁵⁴² Its mission is to, "deepen the roots of Christianity in many practical ways [and] to liberate people and nations from the grip of satanic power as emulated by Paul."⁵⁴³ On its website, El-Gibbor is referred to as a "movement" and an "altar" upheld by three pillars—of Evangelism, which is the "heart of the church", "Intercessory Prayer Warriors" as the "breathing of life into the body of Christ and to destruction of Satan's stronghold", and lastly "Training for spiritual warfare" as an "empowerment tool."⁵⁴⁴

Even though the ministry intends to have a national reach, Githii explained that it was specifically set up in Gitambaya, as a "spiritual altar...To destroy the demonic altars operating in Kiambu county".⁵⁴⁵ He defined an altar as,

any structure on which sacrifices were offered. In this case, Calvary where Jesus died became an altar. But the main difference between an altar and Church is that the altar

⁵⁴² See Githii, *Exposing & Conquering*.

⁵⁴³ See Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ Githii, *Exposing & Conquering*.

⁵⁴⁵ While Githii uses church, he describes his organization as an altar.

speaks, commanding the surrounding area far and wide. A holy Altar combats the strongholds and schemes of the evil one.⁵⁴⁶

In Githii's demonology, altars are either holy or demonic. Any community of "genuine" born again Christians is a holy altar. A structure purposely set up and dedicated to God to combat evil spirits that are believed to have powers to hold people and communities' captive qualifies as a holy altar because it is seen as the presence of God's power in specific vicinities.

As I shall show, Githii's theology of altars is a contextualised form of "strategic level spiritual warfare" (SLSW).⁵⁴⁷ C. Peter Wagner, a leading authority on spiritual warfare from the Fuller School, describes three levels of engagement. The first is, "Ground-level" spiritual warfare, which involves casting demons out of people.⁵⁴⁸ The second is the "Occult-level", and it involves identifying and dealing with demonic powers emanating from practices such as witchcraft, Eastern religions, New age and other "occult" practices.⁵⁴⁹ The third, "Strategic-level" spiritual warfare,

describes confrontation with high-ranking principalities and powers such as Paul writes about in Ephesians 6:12. These enemy forces are frequently called "territorial spirits" because they attempt to keep large numbers of humans networked through cities, nations, neighbourhoods, people groups, religious allegiance, industries or any other form of human society in spiritual captivity. This level of warfare, [is] also called 'cosmic-level warfare'.⁵⁵⁰

It is believed that the main duties of demons who operate at the "Strategic-level" is to keep people from becoming born again Christians and in effect from reaching their full potential in life.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁴⁶ Githii, Interview Gitambaya, Ruiru. June 2015.

⁵⁴⁷ See Peter C. Wagner, *Spiritual Warfare Strategy: Confronting Spiritual Powers* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image Publishers Inc., 1996).

⁵⁴⁸ See Wagner, *Spiritual Warfare Strategy*.

⁵⁴⁹ See Ibid.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid 23.

⁵⁵¹ See Peter C. Wagner (ed.), *Breaking Strongholds in Your City: How to Use Spiritual Mapping to Make Your Prayers More Strategic, Effective, and Targeted* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1993); Clinton E. Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997).

In Githii's spiritual warfare theology the powers which operate at all three levels could be categorised as demonic altars or strongholds. For example, Githii attributes the failure of the Kenyan government to "battle alcoholism in Kiambu" to the work of demons who have made Kiambu a "stronghold" for alcoholism, among others.⁵⁵² El Gibbor is thus seen as an "altar" purposely set up to deal with "territorial and generational curses that hinder the physical and even spiritual growth of Kiambu and this country."⁵⁵³ The "territorial and generational curses" operating in Kiambu are, "demonic altars" responsible for "causing alcoholism, immorality and poverty in Ruiru, Gitambaya area."⁵⁵⁴ At the national level, he has identified several symbol and images that he believes are demonic altars, which I shall discuss below.

Githii's theology of altars emanates from what was being promoted by the Fuller Theological Seminary of World Missions in the 1990s as a "new spiritual technology for completing the Great Commission" in this generation.⁵⁵⁵ Central to the proponents of spiritual warfare is the concept of both holy and demonic "strongholds" which I believe partly underlies Githii's theology of altars. According to Cindy Jacobs, also a leading advocate of SLSW, there are "strongholds of the mind and thoughts", "strongholds of ideas and concept", "stronghold of occultism", "stronghold in society" "a stronghold in a city and church", among other strongholds related to the kingdom of God as well as of Satan.⁵⁵⁶ Demonic strongholds are interrelated and can keep the people living in specific geographical area in darkness, bondage and sin.⁵⁵⁷ A personal sin can therefore become a satanic stronghold that

⁵⁵² Githii, personal Interview August 2014; Maichuhie Kamau, "Alcoholism blamed for high TB in Kiambu" *The Standard*. 3 March 2018.

⁵⁵³ Githii, personal Interview August 2014.

⁵⁵⁴ Field notes June 2015

⁵⁵⁵ Wagner, *Spiritual Warfare Strategy*; Kjell Sjoberg, *Winning the Prayer War: Why and How to Pray for Where You Live* (Chichester: Sovereign World, 1991), 23.

⁵⁵⁶ Cindy Jacob, "Facing Strongholds" in *Breaking Strongholds in Your City*, edited by C. Peter Wagner, pp. 61-69. (Ventura: Regal Books, 1993); Cindy Jacobs, *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy: A Training Manual for Militant Intercession* (Grand Rapids: Chosen, 1994).

⁵⁵⁷ David Stamen, "Territorial Spirits" <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/russ01uk/clients/dstamen/terrspirits.html>. Accessed January 16, 2019.

can eventually affect whole communities. In order to achieve breakthrough in specific geographic areas, “spiritual mapping” and “spiritual espionage” and other “spiritual technologies” such as “prayer evangelism” were promoted.⁵⁵⁸ For some proponents of SLSW, the necessary steps to demolish these demonic strongholds are establishing holy altars.⁵⁵⁹ According to one Pentecostal-Charismatic pastor dedicated to teaching on “spiritual altars”, “holy altars” have the power to cast out demons from specific geographical locations.⁵⁶⁰ Some physical altars, depending on the purpose they were set for, can function as gateways as well as strongholds for both the Holy Spirit and demonic spirits. For Githii setting up his church in Gitambaya amounted to establishing a holy altar that will be used to bring people to Christ but also to conquer the strongholds of the enemy.

At the time of my fieldwork in 2015, church services at El Gibbor were held in a tent that served as the altar or church building. It could barely accommodate fifty congregants, seventy at most. Large church membership, sophisticated media equipment, flashy cars and the flamboyance associated with both Owuor and Wanjiru’s ministries cannot be found here, at least for the moment. The land on which the tent was erected was however cleansed by Githii and his intercessors through spiritual warfare prayers specifically designed to set up holy altars to counteract ungodly behaviour and other socio-political challenges people face. El-Gibbor was barely a year old (nine months) during my fieldwork. Githii has no other pastors, and as such no existing hierarchy of leadership. For the most part, worship services

⁵⁵⁸ See, George Otis, Jr., *Spiritual Mapping Today* (Lynwood: The Sentinel Group, 1993); Tom White, *The Believer’s Guide to Spiritual Warfare* (Ann Arbor: Servant, 1991); Tom White, *Breaking Strongholds: How Spiritual Warfare Can Reap a Harvest of Evangelism* (Ann Arbor: Servant, 1993); Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); Walter Wink, *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Powers that Determine Human Existence* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1987).

⁵⁵⁹ See Stephen Nanil, “Holy Altar, Disciple India: Raising 1 Million Holy Altars to Establish Christ’s Kingdom in India” http://mission1m.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Disciple-India_Holy-Altars_May-2-2014_FINAL.pdf. Accessed June 3, 2019.

⁵⁶⁰ See Daniel Olukoya, “Deliverance from Evil Altars” *Sermon Central*, March 22, 2010. Accessed June 2018 <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/deliverance-from-evil-altars-daniel-olukoya-sermon-on-idolatry-145445>.

(teaching/sermon, healing and deliverance) are led by Githii, apart from a small worship team of three who lead the “worship” i.e., singing and praise. Githii, however, has mentee pastors of other churches who support his spiritual warfare training seminars, but not the day to day administration of his altar, or church.

In 2014 when I first interviewed Githii, he was confident of getting a full house of former Presbyterians if he left the PCEA. In his mind, he wanted to continue the mission of spiritual warfare in the PCEA. He was confident that, “many people will come”.⁵⁶¹ That was not the case when I visited El-Gibbor in 2015. On my first Sunday, there were about 30 members, including Githii and his wife. Most of the members lived near the altar and others who attended were already familiar with Githii’s ministry. Esther, one of my interviewees, who was attending for the first time, lived in Gitambaya and was attracted to the church because of spiritual warfare and deliverances services announced on a local radio station. In a sermon that Githii preached that Sunday, he explained that the power of a church is not in numbers but in the power of the Holy Spirit. Church members at El Gibbor were defined as “dedicated spiritual warriors” who are serious about intercession for the realisation of the “Kingdom” against “principalities, powers, [and] spiritual wickedness in high places”.⁵⁶² While the altar has not attracted the numbers Githii expected at the time of my fieldwork, the symbolic siting of his ministry in a specific area in order to engage demonic powers and strongholds that holds sway over local and national life has much theological and political import. Unlike Owour who organises huge outdoor rallies in Nakuru, and throughout the country, or Wanjiru whose focus is the *Jua-Kali*, Githii’s main focus are Kikuyu towns and villages, especially those in Kiambu.

It is however the spiritual warfare training programmes, which he also calls “Empowerment Seminars”, rather than Sunday worship services, that constitute El Gibbor’s most vibrant form of theological and political engagement. At the time of my fieldwork,

⁵⁶¹ Githii, Personal Interview August 2014.

⁵⁶² Githii, observation, El-Gibbor Church August 2015.

Githii's "Empowerment Seminars", had been organised in several villages and towns in Kiambu county to counter the problem of negative altars. Significantly, Githii's seminars have so far been organised only in predominantly Kikuyu areas which he believes have demonic altars related to ancestral and generational curses. In a way, his seminars bring the evangelistic focus and prayer ministries of El Gibbor together. Clearly, Githii deviates from the stodgy forms of worship inherited from the Scottish missionaries by focusing on the things he considers spiritual and crucial for the church growth—evangelism, intercessory prayers and spiritual warfare and training (in spiritual warfare), as key issues for his ecclesiology and, more importantly, for executing the role which the church has to play in politics. When compared to the ministry of Owour and Wanjiru, who are able to pull large crowds of people in a single meeting, El Gibbor's numbers are insignificant. The seminars are his tour de force in spiritual warfare training, and his strategy of positioning himself as a well-educated cleric, knowledgeable in deciphering masonic, witchcraft and other demonic powers that affect Kenyans. While Owuor, for example, stages his prophetic authority (with political ramifications) by organising mass repentance and holiness rallies, Githii believes that his seminar approach is building an army of born-again spiritual warfare soldiers.

In the next few pages, I discuss major areas of emphasis of Githii's empowerment theology based on close reading of his seminar materials such as PowerPoint presentations, spiritual warfare pamphlets, sermons, interviews with church members and other teaching materials.



Figure 12: A Banner of El-Gibbor Church in Ruiri-Gitambaya.



Figure 13: El-Gibbor worshipped in this tent church when I visited in 2015



Figure 14: Healing and Empowerment prayers during worship service at El-Gibbor.



Figure 15: One of my focus group interviews after a church service at El- Gibbor.

5.5. The Empowerment Seminars

Githii organises a series of seminars intended to fill a lacuna in spiritual warfare training for born again Christians and pastors in Kenya. The seminars are his flagship programme for disseminating his ideas on how to conquer “Satanic Forces over Kenya”.⁵⁶³ According to Githii, he is

equipping people with the knowledge through which the devil manipulates individuals, families, clans, church and nations, through schemes—including: divination, witchcraft, Illuminati, Freemasonry, New Age Movement and all kinds of occultism.⁵⁶⁴

At the Kikuyu empowerment seminar, the programme brochure read that his “teachings exposes many avenues through which the devil thrives and continually suffocates Kenya.”⁵⁶⁵

Githii himself refers to the seminars, as “efforts to point out the role of the Church in politics and society, particularly in addressing issues that affect the Nation.”⁵⁶⁶ The seminars are organised in close collaboration with the local council of pastors in a village/town, or sometimes organised solely by Githii and his group of mentee pastors. The towns or cities are all Kikuyu towns that he believes are under the powers of specific demonic spirits. After a

⁵⁶³ See Githii, *Exposing & Conquering*.

⁵⁶⁴ Githii “A Reflection on El Gibbor Ministries.” n.p.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶ Field Notes, Nakuru Empowerment Seminar

seminar, demonic altars that have been identified through “prophetic revelation” are destroyed through “strategic warfare prayers”.⁵⁶⁷

Pentecostal pastors and church leaders are mostly attracted to these seminars. In Nakuru, for example, there were about 50 attendees who were all pastors of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. Only two women elders from the PCEA in Nakuru were in attendance. At Nyeri, there were more pastors, around 80 Pentecostal-Charismatics, and about 20 others who identified as lay leaders from Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Anglican churches. At the Kikuyu town empowerment seminar, I counted close to 100 attendees. Participants range from church members to pastors of mainly Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. While there were no clergy from any of the mainline churches, the number of clergy from the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches was impressive, and most seminars were considered a success, especially in the light of their resolve to create spiritual armies of their own. As I have pointed out earlier, Githii’s ministry, and his seminars particularly, are geared towards correcting what he believes to be wrong theological underpinnings of church-state relations in Kenya. Seminar topics are organised around themes such as, “Understanding Kenya’s Prophetic Destiny”, “Kenya Suffocating Under Witchcraft and Satanism”, “Main Demonic Symbols on Kenyan Buildings”, “Satanic Symbols and Images in Kenyan Parliament Building”, “The Role of the Church and Godly Governance”, “Understanding Kenya’s Prophetic Destiny” and “Strategies for Mobilisation of Prayer Warriors as Intercessors for Warfare”.⁵⁶⁸

During one of the seminars, Kenya was described as the nation mentioned in Zephaniah 3:10 and understood actually to be the nation beyond the rivers of Ethiopia.⁵⁶⁹ The reference to the “City of the sun” in Isaiah 19:18 is read as “referring to Nairobi, which has

⁵⁶⁷ David Githii, Kikuyu Empowerment Seminar, 2015.

⁵⁶⁸ Programme brochure, Nakuru Empowerment Seminar, 2015.

⁵⁶⁹ See Githii, *Exposing and Conquering*.

been popularly referred to as the City in the sun.”⁵⁷⁰ Kenya is therefore “the springboard for the spread of the gospel in this age.”⁵⁷¹ According to Githii, Kenya’s geographical location is divinely inspired and in line with its divine purpose in the world. Kenya, has however been unable to enter its “prophetic destiny” because of political corruption. He writes that, “in Kenya it is becoming increasingly difficult for the newly established KACC (Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission) to exert justice because graft is still entrenched in some Kenyan’s mind”.⁵⁷² Githii however explains that political corruption and the resultant hardships it has brought to Kenyans results from “curses” that are “deeply entrenched in her [Kenya’s] foundations; longstanding sins which dates back to covenants made by our founding national fathers”.⁵⁷³

The seminar approach is thus part of his mission to “train and equip a praying army of intercessors that shall surpass, by numbers, the forces of darkness encroaching the African Continent and in particular East Africa”.⁵⁷⁴ Ps. John, one of the participants at the seminar in Limuru, who identified himself as a prophet and a mentee of Githii said the seminar was “a Christian end time army training programme”.⁵⁷⁵ Another pastor from Nyeri, compared the seminar to devolution system of government:

This is like devolution. Pastors in Nyeri are very happy for this powerful teachings... We cannot understand the world without his empowerment and the Holy Spirit to reveal things, the Satanic altars about our villages, the Kikuyu names, the country. Now I have this knowledge and this power. Like Luke 10, I have been given power to conquer everything, all the demonic altars in Nyeri, even the power to conquer my neighbours.⁵⁷⁶

By devolution, Pastor Mwangi was making reference to Kenya’s 2010 constitution and the decentralised system of government that created 47 semi-autonomous counties. One of the major debates during the constitutional review process for the devolution of government was

⁵⁷⁰ Githii, *Exposing and Conquering*, 2.

⁵⁷¹ See Ibid.

⁵⁷² Ibid, 33.

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid, 3.

⁵⁷⁵ Interview with Prophet Paul, Nyeri, 2015.

⁵⁷⁶ Field notes, interview of Pastor Mwangi, Nyeri, 2015.

that not only would it bring power closer to the people through their counties but, more importantly, it would promote community participation in the government process.⁵⁷⁷

Participants talked about how Githii was empowering them (pastors) in the small towns (Kikuyu towns) with the “knowledge to perform”, in other words, to participate in governance by engaging in spiritual warfare.⁵⁷⁸ The seminars are also used to create a political base and new political consciousness. Participants are not only taught the intricacies of engaging in warfare contextually, but also strongly advised to stand for elections or to vote only for born-again Christians:

Kenya needs God fearing leaders and Godly guidance...People who enter into politics must but spiritual and prayerful, people who can strive to cleanse parliament from every form of evil that manipulates politicians, then and only will there be a spiritual breakthrough that will liberate the leadership blinded by the devil.⁵⁷⁹

Githii rejects the notion that Christians should not participate in politics, and explains that “if born again Christians go into politics [and] become parliamentarians, they will not see witchdoctors, all those demonic altars in parliament that are bringing curses to Kenya will be worked on”.⁵⁸⁰

During a focus group interview after the Nyeri seminar, there was a palpable sense of pride among participants that they are undertaking a very important Christian duty for their nation and for the world. Such a sense carries connotations of grassroots participation in politics, inherent in the concepts of building a Christian army and in the idea that spiritual warfare prayer as a form of participation and engagement with the governance of one’s country for the better.

⁵⁷⁷ See Daniel M. Muia, “Devolution: Which Way for Local Authorities in Kenya?”, *KIPPRA discussion paper: Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis*, vol. 73 (2005), pp. 1-45; Benjamin Tsofa, Catherine Goodman, Lucy Gilson, and Sassy Molyneux, “Devolution and its effect on health workforce and commodities management—early implementation experiences in Kilifi County, Kenya” *International Journal for Equity in Health*, vol. 16 (2017), pp. 1-13.

⁵⁷⁸ Interview, Pastor Mwangi, Nyeri 2015

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁰ Githii, personal interview August 2014.



Figure 16: Spiritual Warfare and Empowerment Seminar for pastors, Nakuru July 2015.



Figure 17: Time for Ministration during the Nakuru Empowerment Seminar. Deliverance Prayer for the Nation, led by Githii



Figure 18: One of the seminar PowerPoint slides show the goddess Harambee or ambee. According to Githii she is a major if not the main demonic Spirit that afflicts Kenya's political, economic and cultural life.

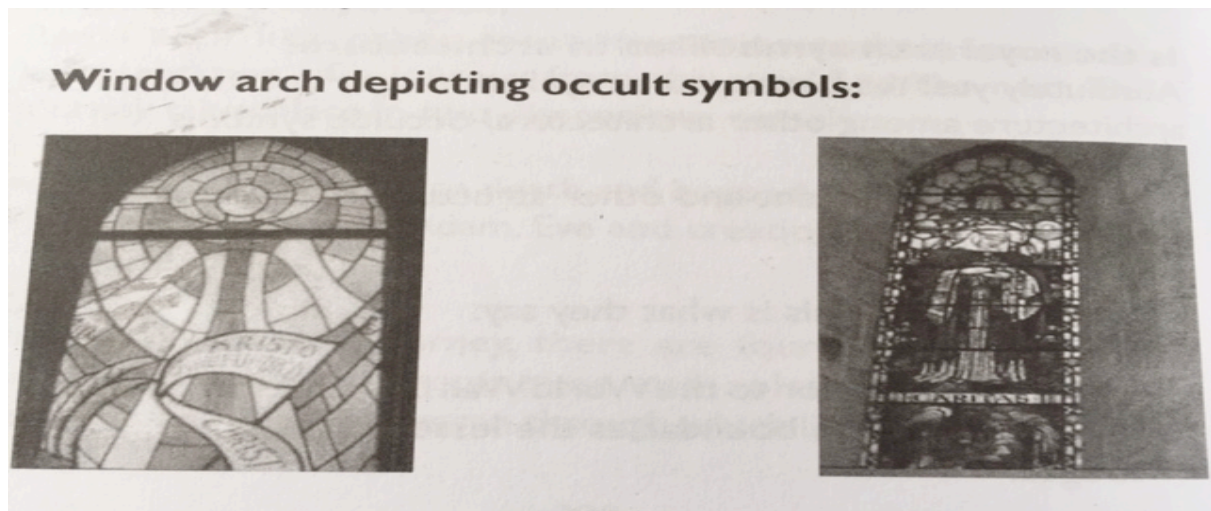


Figure 19: Stained glass windows at St Andrews PCEA Church Nairobi. (Destroyed by Githii's group).⁵⁸¹

5.6. The Role of the Church in Politics-Underlying Theological Commitments

It could be sufficiently argued that Githii's spiritual warfare theology is constructed and contextualised with the role of both individual Christians, and in particular the role of the church in politics in mind. As I have earlier pointed out, for Githii it is imperative that born-again Christians enter politics. He argues that this has a biblical basis.

The Bible is political, from the book of Genesis to revelation. One cannot easily isolate life from politics...Jesus was involved in politics as he wrestled with the erroneous teachings of the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Zealots.⁵⁸²

The church, in Githii's thinking, has a more explicit contextual political role to play. It "cannot detach itself politically because this directly affects the lives of those in the society". He offers a reading of Jeremiah: 1:10 "See today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant" as one of his foundational texts in support of his call to politics. According to Githii this text

⁵⁸¹ According to Githii, "the arch is an eastern gate to the temple of Saturn, vespian, concord and tabularium—all gods of ancient Rome. "The arches like altars are also "demonic gates" and have similar demonic effects" such as "making a Sunday worship service look like funeral"⁵⁸¹

⁵⁸² Githii, *Exposing and Conquering*, 161.

clearly explains the prophetic role of the church, a prophetic call to spiritual warfare. There is the need to understand the important role that intercession plays in spiritual warfare and in politics. The church must engage the satanic forces in warfare.⁵⁸³

Githii, as we have seen, rejects the notion in Owuor's holiness approach that Christians, especially those born-again, should not directly enter into politics. While holding that it is a spiritually polluted field, he believes that spiritually empowered Christians can cleanse the political system through spiritual warfare.

It is also instructive to know that in 2013, when he was still a PCEA clergyman, he stood for election as the governor of Kiambu. Even though he lost, his reason for participating directly in politics was that "Kenya needs God fearing leaders and Godly guidance" He adds that

People who enter into politics must but spiritual and prayerful, people who can strive to cleanse parliament from every form of evil that manipulates politicians, then and only will there be a spiritual breakthrough that will liberate the leadership blinded by the devil.⁵⁸⁴

As I have already mentioned, Githii cites both popular and academic corruption indices and World Bank reports to support his claims of how corruption operates. For instance, he writes:

Because of this corruption Kenyans have been at the mercy of selfish legislators and some judicial offices and others. Kenya loses Kshs .85 billion annually through corrupt deals, an international graft watchdog has said.⁵⁸⁵

The Parliament of Kenya and other seats of government are described in his teaching/sermons as bastions of evil powers that corrupt. The seminar topic "Kenya Suffocating Under Witchcraft and Satanism", for example, deals with a list that sounds no different from a political science class, apart from its obvious spiritual explanations of events. Issues of political corruption, "tribalism and tribal clashes", "poor infrastructure", "ecological disasters due to destruction of natural resources", "joblessness", the "crime rate" are discussed in the context of spiritual warfare in order to identify their root causes.⁵⁸⁶ In Githii's

⁵⁸³ Githii, *Exposing and Conquering*, 192-3.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid, 150.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid, 33.

⁵⁸⁶ Participant Observation, Nakuru Empowerment Seminar 2015.

view, the contemporary political situation is more precarious and calls for serious Christian interventions in order to save it:

It is about time born-again Christians commit to the Nation entirely by giving it to God. As things stand now, Satan is manning the Nation in his many entreaties. By electing a good number of God-fearing people, spiritual warriors, the country can easily be cleansed. Let us speak and act now, let us clean up.⁵⁸⁷

Spiritual warfare therefore provides Githii the language to speak about Kenya's corrupt political culture. The concern of Githii with demons in Kenya's political system, for example his description of Kenya's parliament as a space infested with demonic spirits and altars, should be seen as a spiritual warfare or spiritualistic approach to politics. The basic trope of this approach is that demons are everywhere. Satan and his cohorts are held responsible for political and economic hardship, and for failures in life. Effective political engagement in such contexts entails to a large extent getting to know the demonic hierarchies, especially the "territorial powers" and other high ranking demonic powers who have been given oversight over specific geographical areas.⁵⁸⁸ In Githii's spiritual warfare worldview, the 'problem of evil' is conceived as a concrete struggle, because the battle is "not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"⁵⁸⁹

5.7. Conclusion

Githii is clear that he is not calling for a theocracy. "Categorically, I'm not calling for a theocracy in Kenya."⁵⁹⁰ He instead calls upon Kenyans to elect into Parliament "those who can

⁵⁸⁷ Githii, *Exposing and Conquering*, 18.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid; Wagner, *What the Bible Says About Spiritual Warfare* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image, 1992); Charles H. Kraft, *The Evangelical's Guide to Spiritual Warfare: Scriptural Insights And Practical Instruction On Facing The Enemy* (Minnesota: Baker Publishing, 2015).

⁵⁸⁹ Eph. 6:12.

⁵⁹⁰ Githii, *Exposing and Conquering*, 18.

recapture Kenya's prophetic destiny...those who can "wage spiritual warfare".⁵⁹¹ I have termed Githii's approach, which I analyse in-depth in chapter six, as a Pentecostal-Charismatic spiritualist-dominionist intervention into Kenya's politics.

In other words, Githii uses the structures of parliamentary democracy for a political programme of spiritual warfare. Githii clearly holds a theological framework that enables him to engage directly with politics. It is a theology that simultaneously emphasises the saving of souls and the Church's engagement with the political, through a spiritual framework capable of identifying, confronting and overcoming "all the witchcraft and corruption that keeps Kenya captive"⁵⁹². His focus on identifying demonic strongholds responsible for Kenya's political and developmental setbacks not only makes him an authority of spiritual warfare in Kenya but also on political issues in his area of influence. As I have shown, his intent to stand for political office was also shaped by his theology of spiritual warfare and his conception that building altars for spiritual warfare will bring political salvation to Kenyans. It is a spiritual confrontational approach where the focus is on engaging demons directly and praying out the Satanic powers from both church and state.

⁵⁹¹ Githii, *Exposing and Conquering*, 18.

⁵⁹² Personal Interview September 2014.

Chapter 6: Comparative and Theological Analysis of the Holiness-Prophetic, Spiritual-Dominionist and Prosperity-Dominionist Approaches to Politics

In the previous chapters, I have reconstructed the narratives of political engagement in the three case study churches, which I have described with the labels of holiness-prophetic (Owuor), spiritual-dominionist, (Gitthi) and prosperity-dominionist (Wanjiru). This chapter unfolds in five sections. In the first section, I provide a comparative analysis of the three narratives of political engagement which serves as the basis for in depth analysis and a more broader application of the ethnographic data discussed in chapter three, four, and five.

The holiness-prophetic, spiritual-dominionist, and prosperity-dominionist narratives or forms of political engagements as I shall show in the second section, derive from a re-reading of the theology of power encounter inherent in concepts of power evangelism. I shall argue that, in spite of the distinctiveness of the holiness-prophetic, the spiritual-dominionist, and prosperity-dominionist theo-political narratives, they are not exclusive but complimentary. They (three narratives) draw on and contextualise a common theo-logic of power that connects spiritual empowerment to the transformation of socio-political realities. The narratives of engagement are analysed as contextualised re-appropriations of the theology of power which must first be understood in the context of missions from a Pentecostal-Charismatic spiritual warfare perspective.

Following will be an analysis of the concept of altars that emerged as a common theo-political trope to all three case studies in the third section. Conceptualised in this thesis as “altar theology”, it is analysed as an emerging but distinctive theo-political construction that results from a holistic theology of salvation that incorporates both indigenous religious and Pentecostal-Charismatic hermeneutics of spiritual power. Altar theology encapsulates the theo-logic of the three theo-political forms of engagements. The theological concept of altars, even though novel, helps us to understand an emerging political theology. Altar theology, I

argue, shows how many contemporary Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians construe salvation and also how they engage in prophetic mission in the context of church-state relations.

In the fourth section, which is immediately followed by the general summary and main conclusion, I shall engage the spiritual warfare concept, Rhema. I shall discuss how Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians understand and use the Bible or rightly the “Word” as a source of power that can be spoken or activated into the political realm. In this section, I show how the three narratives of engagement (Owuor, Wanjiru, and Githii), shed light on Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic political conceptualisation, in particular how spiritual power relates to the concept of the political.

Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Kenya share the orientation of indigenous cosmology where events are first established in the spiritual world before manifesting materially.⁵⁹³ The Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic belief that certain men and women of God can access spiritual power and manipulate events through spiritual encounters for the flourishing of humanity shows the disposition to be both “inside and outside” African indigenous religions.⁵⁹⁴

In both Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and African religions there is the strong belief in the direct involvement of spirits in every-day life and the potential of these spiritual entities to have transformative effects on society. For many Africans, including Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, the miraculous is an expected part of daily life.⁵⁹⁵ I explicate the

⁵⁹³ See Peter J. Paris, *The Spirituality of African Peoples: The search for a Common Moral Discourse* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophies* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1990); John Mbiti, “Christianity and Traditional Religions in Africa” *International Review of Mission*, vol. 59, no. 236 (1970), pp. 430-440; Jacob K. Olupona, *African Religions: A very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁵⁹⁴ See Nimi Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, 5.

⁵⁹⁵ See Marius Neil, “The African Background of Pentecostal Theology: A Critical Perspective” *In die Skriflig*, vol. 53, no. 4 (2019), pp. 1-8; Nimi Wariboko, “Pentecostalism in Africa” *Oxford Research Encyclopedias*. October 2017, <https://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/africanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.00>

Pentecostal-Charismatic understanding of the performative power ascribed to the word of God in order to explore the connection between the three theo-political narratives, and political praxis. In other words, I intend to show that the holiness-prophetic, spiritual-dominionist and prosperity-dominionist theo-political narratives are “performative utterances” that also draws on the resources of indigenous religious beliefs and practices. The central argument is that not only is it held that born-again Christians can deploy the charismatic gift of discernment but they can also speak the Word of God into a situation—in order to transform it.

6.1 Synopsis and Comparative Analysis— Holiness-prophetic, Spiritual-dominionist, and Prosperity-dominionist Approaches to Politics

6.1.1 Synopsis

The Holiness-prophetic Political Approach of Prophet Owuor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apostasy. The church and Kenya as a whole have abandoned holiness Christianity in favour of the prosperity gospel and other acts of immorality such as drinking alcohol, sexual immorality, “immoral dressing”, political corruption and acts of violence among others. • Poverty, violence, corruption are signs of the works of powerful demonic entities who have taken hold, but God also severely punishes nations that forsake God’s word with violence, disease and natural disasters so that they may repent and return to him. • Holiness is key to Holy Spirit empowerment, individual and national prosperity.
The Spiritual-dominionist Political Approach of David Githii	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kenya has been mortgaged to demons. It is Satan who actually rules over Kenya. The church, especially mainline protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Church are either involved or ignorant of demonic activities in the both ecclesial and political spheres. • National socio-political problems are therefore spiritual. • Strategic spiritual warfare prayers are the key to national development.
Prosperity-dominionist Approach of Margaret Wanjiru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kenyans are poor mainly because of spirits of poverty operating at both individual and corporate levels. • Shares similar logics of engagement with the spiritual-dominionist approach but focused on poverty as a spiritual problem caused by evil spirits such as witchcraft and other occult spirits associated with indigenous religions and Hinduism in particular. • Born again Christians must fight spirits of poverty in order to retrieve what witches and other demonic entities (spiritual enemies) have taken from them, but they must also obey specific spiritual principles or biblical laws of prosperity.

6.1. 2 Comparative Analysis

In spite of the distinctiveness of the holiness-prophetic, the spiritual-dominionist, and the prosperity-dominionist forms of political engagements, which are clearly due to the inner

diversity within the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in Kenya, they share a common theo-political vision which is shaped by a common theo-logic of power.

The holiness-prophetic theo-political narrative, which at first sight appears to be the least oriented towards politics, and the spiritual dominionist and prosperity-dominionist narratives, all frame political challenges as a form of demonic spiritual attack, which is understood in collective and nationalist terms. Moreover, while the spiritual-dominionist and prosperity-dominionist approaches call for direct political participation, the holiness theo-political approach entreats Christians not to directly participate in politics but they can pray for its redemption and vote for politicians who share the holiness ethos of the movement. In comparison to the other two, the holiness-prophetic narrative, as I have discussed earlier, seems apolitical, but is political none the less, because of its focus on cleansing the political sphere and its concern with socio-political issues.

The holiness-prophetic approach shares with both the spiritual-dominionist and prosperity-dominionist approaches a vision to liberate Kenya spiritually and as such agrees that “prayer is the key” to confronting the political situation and an answer to socio-political challenges. The holiness-prophetic narrative integrates themes of purity and power. In the context of Owuor’s holiness theology, sanctification and empowerment are fused. Themes of power encounter runs through the holiness-prophetic and the spiritual-dominionist and prosperity-dominionist narratives.

While the language of demonic causality is not dominant in the holiness narrative for example, it is certainly not completely absent. The holiness-prophetic approach, unlike the spiritual-dominionist, and prosperity-dominionist approaches, focuses more on certain acts of sin rather than demons in the political sphere. It ultimately ascribes the “power of sin” over both individual and corporate bodies to the devil and his cohorts. For the holiness-prophetic narrative in particular, sin can be seen as a spiritual power that makes Christians powerless. Such thinking is consistent with the concept of demonic doorways in the spiritual-

dominionist and prosperity-dominionist narratives. Sin opens doorways for demonic possession, activity and control over national politics. Brian Chapman and Erwin Van der Meer have both referred to this as “sin promoting demons”.⁵⁹⁶

In this context, the demons who are believed to operate in the political arena are only able to do so because of the “power of sin” that has taken hold over their lives and that of the church. The spiritual-dominionist and prosperity-dominionist approaches are not too dissimilar in the light of focus and interest in direct participation in national politics and the concept of spirit causality.

Within the spiritual-dominionist and prosperity-dominionist narrative, the concept of holiness is equated with being born-again. The spiritual-dominionist and prosperity-dominionist narratives envision political liberation and prosperity from evil spirits, including witchcraft, but with less emphasis on holiness, as the foremost approach. The idea of holiness emerges in the context of spiritual warfare which is discussed in depth below. The spiritual-dominionist approach for example, constantly cautions adherents to confess and to cover themselves with the Holy Spirit or the blood of Christ as a form of protection against demonic attacks.

Both the spiritual-dominionist and prosperity-dominionist approach hold that a born-again Christian is, or should already be aware of the dangers and consequences of sin before engaging in spiritual warfare. While a born-again Christian is sanctified and empowered during conversion, the ever-encroaching power of demons can lead to sin, and in effect lead to powerlessness. This calls for constant re-empowerment—in order to discern and overcome the wiles and schemes of the devil. Where spiritual-dominionist and prosperity-dominionist differ is in the emphasis and focus on specific spirits. The prosperity-dominionist approach

⁵⁹⁶ Erwin Van der Meer, “Reflections on Spiritual Mapping” *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*, vol. 20, no. 1 (2001), pp. 47-170; Brian Chapman, “Seeing the Unseen: A Look at the Spiritual Mapping and Territorial spirits”. <http://www.missionreview.com/index.asp?id=4281>. Accessed 10 August 2019.

focuses on spirits of poverty as a primary political challenge, while the spiritual-dominionist approach, like the holiness-prophetic approach, to some extent, is interested in re-aligning the moral fabric of the nation according to certain spiritual warfare principles or power encounter. Rather than a narrow focus on a narrative of holiness or prosperity, the spiritual-dominionist approach is more interested in how the powers affect the whole of life, including the ability to be holy and prosperous Christians.

The spiritual-dominionist and prosperity-dominionist approaches share the theo-logic that the mission of Christians and the church in Kenya is to fight against principalities, powers, and other spiritual forces who ultimately are the cause of political instability, poverty and any other form of ill that keeps humans from abundant life in Christ.⁵⁹⁷ The key to political success depends on how Christians use spiritual warfare against the spiritual powers who control their lives and communities but in essence it is more about their state as born-again—sanctified and empowered by the Holy Spirit. While both the spiritual-dominionist and prosperity-dominionist approach would generally agree that Kenya needs born again political leaders, they differ in the approach. For the spiritual-dominionist approach, the starting point is to first identify the network of demonic spirits from the local to the national level and to devise plans of attack in order to overcome them. We can call it a bottom-up approach because of its focus on local demons, spirits in local communities, who inevitably are connected to the network of demons on the national level.

⁵⁹⁷ See Andreas Heuser, “Encoding Caesar’s Realm—Variants of Spiritual Warfare politics in Africa” in *Pentecostalism in Africa: Presence and Impact of Pneumatic Christianity in Postcolonial Societies*, edited by Martin Lindhardt, pp. 270-290 (Leiden: Brill, 2014); John F. McCauley, “Pentecostals and Politics: Redefining the Big Man Rule in Africa” in *Pentecostalism in Africa: Presence and Impact of Pneumatic Christianity in Postcolonial Societies*, edited by Martin Lindhardt, pp. 322-344; Adeshina Afolayan, Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso, Toyin Falola (eds.), *Pentecostalism and Politics in Africa* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); John F. McCauley, “The Politics of Pentecostalism in Africa” *Oxford Research Encyclopedias Online*. August 2019. <https://oxfordre.com/politics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-1379?rskey=SvdH2s&result=1>. Accessed, 10 November 2019; Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 7-14.

The prosperity-dominionist approach, which generally sees poverty as failure to exercise enough faith, also construes national poverty as a result of failure of those in power to uncover and use biblically sanctioned principles of wealth towards individual prosperity and national development.⁵⁹⁸ In its contextual re-appropriation, the prosperity-dominionist approach focuses on “anointed leadership”. This entails leading, from the top, in order to create a type of trickle down blessings where the anointing of the leader also empowers those at the base into prosperity. Pentecostal-Charismatics refer to this as “a point of contact”. The good life results from the leader’s financial anointing—by this I mean verifiable material blessings which are used as evidence of Gods anointing on the person. However, inherent in both the spiritual-dominionist and prosperity-dominionist approach is the understanding that God calls and empowers born-again Christians into politics in order to transform it. This, they all will agree is also dependent on holiness. It is therefore incumbent on born-again Christians to tap into the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and engage in some form of spiritual warfare on their own behalf but also for their family members, their communities, their country and the world.

While it could be argued that there is little prosperity thinking in the holiness-prophetic and spiritual-dominionist approaches in terms of its focus on material blessing, and almost no direct reference to holiness in the prosperity-dominionist approach, the ideas are implicit in each narrative.⁵⁹⁹ There is a common language of spiritual domination or hindrance in the spiritual realm with consequences on the material progress. We should thus see the three theo-political narratives as contextual particularities of broader Pentecostal-Charismatic appreciation of the works of the Holy Spirit that comprise diverse experiential, geographic, and varied socio-cultural and political dynamics. In the context of Kenyan Pentecostal-

⁵⁹⁸ Margaret Wanjiru, “Vision for Starehe.”

http://www.bishopmargaretwanjiru.com/economic_religious_affairs.htm Accessed 20, August 2015; Margaret Wanjiru, “Bishop Margaret to Vie for Starehe in 2007”. <http://bishopwanjiru.blogspot.com/2007/03/bishop-margaret-to-view-for-starehe.html>. Accessed 21 September 2015. (Blog discontinued).

⁵⁹⁹ See Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 93-94.

Charismatic Christianity, holiness-prophetic, spiritual-dominionist, and prosperity-dominionist approaches easily become theological bedfellows in the quest for spiritual power that works holistically in both church circles and the political arena.

The holiness and prosperity theologies within the global and African Pentecostal-Charismatic movement have been frequently regarded as irreconcilable, taking into consideration their perspective on engaging the world and material wealth.⁶⁰⁰ However, the contextual understanding of holiness in the contemporary Kenyan context, at least in MRH, fuses a holiness perspective with both the spiritual-dominionist and prosperity-dominionist frameworks. Different from classical Pentecostalism, for Owuor, holiness is believed to be the source of Holy Spirit power that will bring favour or prosperity to the believer and communities of believers. One may argue that, there are obvious differences in the holiness, spiritual-dominionist, and prosperity-dominionist approaches, but all three approaches are compatible with one another. The desire to eliminate poverty and suffering through Holy Spirit empowerment resonates in all three. The holiness-prophetic, spiritual-dominionist, and prosperity-dominionist narratives provide a distinct theological rationale for engaging politics.

What is at stake here are three different contextualised theo-political narratives of political engagement jostling for attention in the context of myriads of other distinct but interconnected theologies of power and spiritual warfare. The holiness-prophetic, spiritual-dominionist, and prosperity-dominionist approaches are therefore only different in terms of the emphasis on how spiritual power could be sought in order to counteract inimical spiritual powers in the political realm but not in terms of the theo-logic of power.

In order to understand the concept of power, albeit interpreted and applied in different ways towards a common end, we need to explore what is core to Pentecostal-Charismatic identity on the basis of an adequate understanding of its theology of missions,

⁶⁰⁰ See Andreas Heuser (ed.), *Pastures of Plenty: Tracing Religio-Scapes of Prosperity Gospel in Africa and Beyond* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015), 66-79.

and how it takes shape in the emerging theo-political consciousness of many Christians in Kenya.

6.2. Mission and Power Encounter

In this section, I seek to demonstrate that Pentecostal-Charismatic pneumatological concepts of encounter and empowerment are central to the movement's missional aspirations and inform the emerging political engagements. Understanding Pentecostal-Charismatic politics does mean paying attention to the theo-logic underlying the ensemble of practices that comes under the rubric of spiritual warfare. While many of the basic assumptions in spiritual warfare concerning the reality of the spiritual realm and the spirits that inhabit it, and the power of highly anointed men and women to defeat them, is shared by adherents globally, local context shapes specific discourses and practices.⁶⁰¹ The holiness-prophetic, spiritual-dominionist, and prosperity-dominionist motifs in Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity are spiritual warfare concepts that have found a home in a local Christian context.

In order to illustrate how spiritual warfare developed, as a concept and how it has been re-appropriated in the theo-political imagination of Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, I shall first offer a survey of mission theology, taking into consideration the emphases and shifts in missionary thinking and evangelism within the movement.

Wariboko's analysis of spiritual empowerment and spiritual warfare as a form of spiritual

⁶⁰¹ See Ruth Marshall, "Destroying arguments and captivating thoughts: Spiritual warfare prayer as global praxis" *Journal of Religious and Political Practice*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2016), pp. 92-113.

politics by African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians is relevant to this discussion. Yet contrary to his approach which identifies philosophical intuitions that inform the African Pentecostal-Charismatic worldview, my analysis of the movement's spiritual politics takes the distinctive approach to mission and the contextualised notion of salvation that emerged in the 1980s seriously (see chapter four).

6.2.1 Mission as Spiritual Empowerment and Warfare

There is no universal agreement among Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians worldwide on the subject of Holy Spirit baptism and empowerment. There are however historical and regional emphases among Pentecostal-Charismatics worldwide concerning the relationship of spirit baptism to initial faith in Christ, to water baptism and speaking in tongues.⁶⁰² But as Frank Macchia points out, most Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians view the “Holy Spirit baptism as analogous to a rite of passage among Christians to an intense awareness of the presence of God and an experience of the kingdom of God in power”. He adds that

such an experience is regarded among majority Pentecostals as an empowerment of Christians for vibrant praise and dynamic witness, both of which are thought to involve signs and wonders of the kingdom that should be experienced to some degree in the everyday lives of ordinary Christians.⁶⁰³

The Finnish Pentecostal theologian, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, agrees with Macchia that “[f]or Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians the presence of the Holy Spirit in their midst implies empowerment.”⁶⁰⁴ Robert Menzies, sees Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity as an empowered prophetic community for missionary service.⁶⁰⁵ David Faupel portrays Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity as a latter-day empowered end-time missionary

⁶⁰² See Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006).

⁶⁰³ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*.

⁶⁰⁴ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, “The Pentecostal Understanding of Mission” in *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, edited by Wonsuk Ma, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen & J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, pp. 26-44 (Oxford: Regnum, 2014).

⁶⁰⁵ Robert Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (London: T&T Clark International, 1991).

fellowship employing the full and extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit to win the world quickly before the return of Christ.⁶⁰⁶

John Penney, in *The Missionary Emphasis of Luke-Acts*, contends that from its inception Pentecostalism has been a missionary movement which saw in the spirit baptism of Acts 2, a normative paradigm for spiritual empowerment to preach the gospel. Acts is therefore more than a history of the emergence of the movement, but also an open-ended account of the missionary work of the Holy Spirit in the church and the ongoing spirit-directed preaching of the gospel.⁶⁰⁷ Even though Spirit baptism continues to be a deeply dividing theological issue within the global Pentecostal-Charismatic movement, the notion that it entails a life transforming encounter with the Holy Spirit, with its associated spiritual gifts, such as prophesying, prayer for healing, and works of miracles, are not only enthusiastically embraced and sought after, but a hallmark of the movement.⁶⁰⁸

The conversion narratives for example (see chapters three-five), are stories of encounter with the Holy Spirit. Christian conversion in this context is seen as a personal encounter with and experience of the Holy Spirit rather than an assent to some intellectual theological formulation.⁶⁰⁹ A crucial feature of Pentecostal-Charismatic conversion then, is the idea of spiritual insight, that results from encounter with the Holy Spirit. Spiritual

⁶⁰⁶ David W. Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

⁶⁰⁷ Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*; Robert Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991).

⁶⁰⁸ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "The Pentecostal Understanding of Mission".

⁶⁰⁹ See John Michael Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology* (Sheffield: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1997); Innocent Ogueri Aguwuom, "'Everything is Possible, But not Everything is Beneficial' (1 Cor. 10:23): Pneumatological christology of the Parousian Church of Christ and (Ab)uses of Spiritual Power in Nigerian Pentecostalism" in *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, edited by Wonsuk Ma, Veli-Matti Karkkainen, J. Kwabena Asamoah-gyadu, pp. 67-86. (Oxford: Regnum, 2014).

empowerment is believed to lead to transformation to higher level as a consequence of this experience.⁶¹⁰

A number of African Pentecostal-Charismatic scholars can also be cited concerning the central significance of Holy Spirit empowerment in the movement's perspectives on missions. For Allan Anderson, spiritual empowerment is a "fundamental presupposition of all Pentecostal theology" while for Asamoah-Gyadu, "[t]he Pentecostal-charismatic openness to divine intervention in terms of signs, wonders, and empowerment as in the daily exercise of spiritual gifts or charismata" is not only key to its phenomenal growth but also key to understanding new expressions of spirituality in the African context.⁶¹¹ This appropriation of the active role of the Holy Spirit in Christian missions has followed a rediscovery of pneumatology within traditions of radical reformation and evangelical revivals that culminated in the emergence of Pentecostalism and subsequent Charismatic Christian initiatives at the beginning of the 20th century.⁶¹²

The source of spiritual empowerment is considered to be the Spirit of God working within and among his people.⁶¹³ Harvey Cox might be referring to the Pentecostal-Charismatic emphasis on spiritual empowerment, especially in the Global South, when he suggests that it is "primal" religious experience and expressions that account for the movements colourful global diversity and creative adaptability to the various cultural settings.⁶¹⁴ What unifies the

⁶¹⁰ Mark J Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 60.

⁶¹¹ Asamoah-Gyadu, "'You shall Receive Power': Empowerment in Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity" in *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, pp. 48.

⁶¹² See Steven Jack Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A passion for the Kingdom* (Cleveland: CPT Press, 1993).

⁶¹³ See J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "'You shall Receive Power': Empowerment in Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity" in *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*. Pp. 45-66.

⁶¹⁴ See Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Addison Wesley, 1995).

global Pentecostal-Charismatic movement is therefore not a doctrine or systematic theology of the Holy Spirit, but rather a common experience and understanding of empowerment, as a crucial spiritual tool for doing mission. Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity is very much a movement of power encounter—an experiential encounter with the Holy Spirit. We may thus see the concept of empowerment as a common denominator of Pentecostal-Charismatic experiences of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual warfare, I believe, draws from the wells of Pentecostal-Charismatic pneumatology, reflecting on core concepts such as eschatology and soteriology which are re-appropriated to varied contemporary socio-political settings and challenges.

It is fair to submit that for most mainstream Western Evangelical and Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, spiritual warfare, in terms of its “ontological and epistemological premises” was a new approach.⁶¹⁵ In the African context this pneumatic expression of Christianity has long been associated with the older African Independent/ initiated churches (AICs), whose provenance and agency had no historical or theological connection with Azusa Street, but have beliefs and practices that are Pentecostal and African.⁶¹⁶ Indeed a strong argument could be advanced that some of the most prominent spiritual warriors in African Christianity have emerged from the camp of the AICs.⁶¹⁷

⁶¹⁵ See Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

⁶¹⁶ Solomon Waigwa, “Pentecost without Azusa: an historical and theological analysis of the Akorino Church in Kenya” A Doctor of Philosophy dissertation submitted to Baylor University, 2008; Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*.

⁶¹⁷ See J. D. Y. Peel, *A Religious Movement among the Yoruba* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 200); Annalisa Buttici, “Crazy World, Crazy Faith: Prayer, Power and

These assertions notwithstanding, notions of spiritual warfare have long been part of and central to the Pentecostal-Charismatic understanding of spiritual empowerment for missions from its inception. In the case of the Western mission-based Classical Pentecostal traditions, which emerged as the second wave of spirit revival in African Christianity, they also emphasise spiritual empowerment in the form of the charismatic gifts of praying in tongues, deliverance, and prophesying, but it is rather the contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic churches who have expanded the soteriological dynamics of spirit encounter in the form of spiritual warfare.⁶¹⁸ In the wake of their emergence as a “third wave” of Holy Spirit revival in African Christianity around the 1980s (see chapter one), many existing practices and definitions changed, particularly the nature of prayer, the practice of evangelism, and the emphasis on power encounter.⁶¹⁹

6.2.1.1 Spiritual Warfare

Broadly, it could be argued that by way of emphasis, Classical Pentecostal spiritual warfare placed accent on becoming born-again, that is, on individual salvation, and taking up a ‘new life’ in Christ which typically meant abstention from all forms of indulgence.⁶²⁰ The new life in Christ within classical Pentecostalism broadly construed was expressed by constant prayer,

Transformation in a Nigerian Prayer City”, in *Prayer in Religion and Spirituality*, edited by Guiseppe Giordan and Linda Jane Pauline Woodhead, pp. 244–61. (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

⁶¹⁸ See Solomon Waigwa, *The Akorino Church in Kenya: An Indigenous original Pentecostal Church* (New York: Mellen Press, 2018); John Wimber and Kevin Springer, *Power Evangelism* (London: Holder & Stoughton, 1985).

⁶¹⁹ See René Holvast, “Spiritual Mapping: The Turbulent Career of a Contested American Missionary Paradigm, 1989-2005” A doctoral dissertation submitted to the University of Utrecht, 2008; René Holvast, *Spiritual Mapping in the United States and Argentina: 1989 – 2005: A Geography of Fear* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

⁶²⁰ See Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*.

witnessing and evangelism, Bible study, and a holy and righteous life which involved various practices of anti-materialist purification.⁶²¹

Even though deliverance or casting out demons in both AIC and classical Pentecostalism could be referred to as spiritual warfare in the broad sense of engaging demonic powers, it was a practice that mostly focused on healing individual bodies.⁶²² Empowerment while present was more focused on spiritual preparation for Christ's imminent return. The biblical injunctions were therefore focused on how to evangelise the world quickly. Such an approach to mission did not develop the urgency in socio-political engagements. In order to appreciate the meaning of empowerment, as Asamoah-Gyadu suggests, we need to combine its meaning in classical Pentecostal thought with a broader understanding in contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic discourse.⁶²³ I have argued in chapter one that in the Kenyan and African Pentecostal-Charismatic circles such classificatory boundaries are tenuous but the distinction is historical and they also point to the shifts, emphasis, and contextualisation of the Gospel in Kenyan Christianity.

Donald Miller has referred to the contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatics in the North American context as "new paradigm churches" which coheres with Wariboko's assessment that in the contemporary African context "they [new paradigm churches] have planted another root, and that is spiritual warfare."⁶²⁴ In the African Pentecostal context,

it is another root that reworks the other two [AIC and Classical Pentecostalism] (which are both forms of temporal consciousness relating to the from where and the where to existence) by relating them to the postevental imperative of born-againness and to the creative and prophetic powers of both spatial and temporal dimensions of consciousness.⁶²⁵

⁶²¹ See Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*.

⁶²² See Opoku Onyinah, "Principalities and Powers" in *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, pp., 139-161.

⁶²³ Asamoah-Gyadu, "'You shall Receive Power'", 50.

⁶²⁴ Donald E. Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Nimi Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2014).

⁶²⁵ See Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*.

The paradigm shift in mission thinking that emerged during the so called third wave Pentecostalism (see chapter one), built on the existing concepts of deliverance but also introduced new concepts, that emerged from the demonology of the Church Growth Movement in US Evangelicalism in the second half of the 1980s.⁶²⁶ Deliverance in this sense was considered to be one part of the total conflict of discerning and expelling spirits.

Perspectives on mission did not contradict earlier soteriological notions but had more elaborate demonology and emphasised warfare as its leading missionary technique.⁶²⁷ “It marked a shift in the conception of the ends of evangelism; no longer solely a matter of individual redemption, conversion came to be seen as the principal means for the ethical, social, and political transformation of entire societies.”⁶²⁸ For contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, “God has delegated the task of dealing with territorial spirits and other demonic powers to the church. Missions and evangelism is therefore more than winning individual souls, it included socio-political liberation through a Holy Spirit empowered praxis. In other words, Spirit Baptism shifted from individual empowerment to conceptions of empowerment that has implications for how contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity viewed the church and its mission in the world.

6.2.1.2 The Core Ideas and Strategies

Spiritual warfare as a concept has long been an inherent part of Christian conceptions of conversion, evangelism and the concept of Christianity as a journey that is full of struggles against the flesh, sin and death. In the Global South, we may add the emphasis on the fight against evil spirits. However, the idea of strategic level spiritual warfare as a movement began in US Evangelicalism in the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, and later developed into a neo-Pentecostal-Charismatic movement.⁶²⁹ Peter Wagner, George Otis, Charles Kraft,

⁶²⁶ See Holvast, *Spiritual Mapping in the United States and Argentina*.

⁶²⁷ See Holvast, *Ibid*.

⁶²⁸ Marshall, “Destroying arguments” 101.

⁶²⁹ Holvast, “Spiritual Mapping”.

John Wimber, and Cindy Jacobs are recognised leaders, but they also developed a network of like thinking Christian organisations with an emphasis on the use of Christian techniques or spiritual weapons “in a dualistic war against evil non-human beings (‘spiritual battle against demons’) in order to enhance Evangelical world missions.”⁶³⁰

However, while the Church Growth Movement (CGM), or the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR), from which strategic spiritual warfare as a movement developed, has declined in terms of influence, there are not many countries in the world where it is not practiced in one form or the other. Its basic concepts were adopted and developed in diverse ways by affiliate movements, especially African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians through the AD 2000 related prayer conferences.⁶³¹ In the year 2000, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation met in Nairobi, Kenya in attempts by both Evangelicals and Pentecostal-Charismatics to reach some consensus about spiritual warfare.⁶³²

Most adherents of spiritual warfare will consider their concepts to be a logical consequence of the teachings of the CGM in the US. Yet in Kenya and the wider African context, spiritual warfare beliefs and practices receive their coloration from the indigenous religious worldview. Spiritual warfare therefore has grounds in both Christianity and African traditional religious concepts.⁶³³ Even though western evangelists of spiritual warfare were active in generating and disseminating initial ideas, the spread and re-contextualisation of its concepts has been carried out by indigenous Pentecostal-Charismatic agents rather than by an organised Western mission agenda. Spiritual warfare is therefore a movement in the loose sense of the word, but one “without membership cards, focussed on persons, based on personal relationships through flexible and ever-changing networks, dependent on modern

⁶³⁰ Holvast, *Spiritual Mapping*, 81-2; James Beilby and Paul Eddy, eds. *Understanding Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012).

⁶³¹ See Van der Meer, “Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare”.

⁶³² See “Deliver Us from Evil – Consultation Statement”
<https://www.lausanne.org/content/statement/deliver-us-from-evil-consultation-statement>.
 Accessed 14 October 2019.

⁶³³ See Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

forms of communication and without a centralized theological core”.⁶³⁴ As Marshall points out, spiritual warfare is not a set of doctrines, but rather

a bricolage, a living, moving corpus of ideas, scriptural interpretations, images, discourses and techniques developed and circulating across a range of personal, institutional and virtual networks and engendering an elastic, undisciplined and pragmatic processes of inspired creations, borrowings, combinations and adaptations.⁶³⁵

In what follows, I shall outline the spiritual warfare perspectives on culture and worldview by engaging Kraft. Both Wagner and Otis use Kraft’s concepts of worldview as a starting point.⁶³⁶

6.2.1.3 Worldview of Spiritual Warfare

The spiritual warfare movement saw itself as introducing a paradigm shift toward a new Christian culture, or reality. The shift started with a few religious innovations in relation to the others of which one is the tendency to interpret common Christian praxis as obsolete, at least in part.⁶³⁷ Kraft’s main argument is that both Western and non-Western worldviews are distortions of God’s kingdom and the spiritual realm. Enlightenment philosophy which banishes the supernatural, he argues, underlies much of Western cultures. While Non-Western cultures have some similarities with the world of the Bible, it is not biblical.⁶³⁸ Kraft’s understanding of worldview is based on dual conception of what he termed “objective REALITY and subjective reality”.⁶³⁹ “REALITY”, according to Kraft, refers to what is actually there as God sees it. “reality”, on the other hand is the subjective mental picture of objective REALITY. Based on a reading of 1 Corinthians 13:12, “For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known”, Kraft concludes that the human picture of God, is distorted,

⁶³⁴ Holvast, *Spiritual Mapping*, 2.

Ruth Marshall, “Destroying arguments”, 97.

⁶³⁶ See Holvast, “Spiritual Mapping”, 162.

⁶³⁷ Holvast, “Spiritual Mapping”, 162.

⁶³⁸ See Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity with Power: Your Worldview and Your Experience of the Supernatural* (Ann Arbor: Vine Books, 1989).

⁶³⁹ Kraft, *Christianity with Power*, 12.

due to our worldview.⁶⁴⁰ He defines worldview as “culturally structured assumptions, values, and commitments underlying a people’s perception of Reality”.⁶⁴¹ Culture informs us to filter what we deem possible and impossible, which shapes our understanding of the Gospel. Our worldview is related to how we perceive reality. Even though True “REALITY” exists, it is only God who experiences “REALITY” in its fullness.⁶⁴²

Humans’ experience of “REALITY” is partial, subjective, or flawed.⁶⁴³ For Kraft this comes as an important corrective to his own evangelical worldviews and to most Western churches for their emphasis on the Gospel as merely truth and evil as human weakness.⁶⁴⁴ While truth is an important part of Christianity, a conception of power was missing in Evangelical hermeneutics. Truth and Power are central to the message of the Gospel and for Kraft, Western Evangelical Christians in particular needed to experience this power on a personal level. The answer, according to Kraft is to be open to “Biblical Revelation” which is the corrective, in this instance, to our distorted views of REALITY.⁶⁴⁵

Kraft’s understanding of revelation challenges traditional evangelical perspectives of Biblical revelation. For Kraft, the Biblical canon is closed but revelation is best understood as a process. As such, contemporary revelations are equally valid as inspired writings of the Bible. The emphasis, according to Kraft, should be placed on the dynamic process of revelation and not just the informational content.⁶⁴⁶ The CGM wanted to influence both Western and non-Western realities, or at least change the worldview of Christians who have been shaped by their respective context to accept the possibility of extra biblical revelation, and by extension the teachings of spiritual warfare, through the empowerment of the Holy

⁶⁴⁰ 1 Corinthians 13:12,

⁶⁴¹ Kraft, *Christianity with Power*, 20.

⁶⁴² A. Scott Moreau, *Contextualization in World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academics, 2012).

⁶⁴³ A. Scott Moreau, *Contextualization in World Missions*.

⁶⁴⁴ Paul G. Hiebert, “Spiritual Warfare and Worldview” n.d. <https://www.lausanne.org/content/spiritual-warfare-and-worldview>, n.p. accessed 10 October 2019.

⁶⁴⁵ Kraft, *Christianity with Power*, 16.

⁶⁴⁶ See Ibid; Scott Moreau, *Contextualization*.

Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that enables and adjust our “perceptions so that we can live adequately in the spiritual area”.⁶⁴⁷

What Kraft suggests, is that, spiritual warfare teaching even though not absolute in its understanding of “REALITY” is still trustworthy enough to direct our lives through faith in Christ. Two important aspects of Kraft’s worldview are that, first, the cosmic battle between God and Satan is a REALITY. Second, Holy Spirit empowered Christians have access to divine revelation outside what has been written in the Bible. Both revelations however are not qualitatively different.⁶⁴⁸

Kraft’s, definition of revelation received a lot of backlash from most North American evangelicals who argued that such proposals are contrary to traditional evangelical theology of revelation and inspiration.⁶⁴⁹ Contemporary African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian have found much meaning in the dynamic process of revelation. In the Kenyan and wider African context, Kraft’s definition of revelation is what Pentecostals-Charismatic Christians refer to as prophetic unction or prophetic declarations. It means the illumination which God enacts through the Holy Spirit that causes born-again Christians to be charged with power and become the living voices of God.⁶⁵⁰ Wagner and his colleagues termed it Rhema, which is defined and analysed in depth below.

The contemporary prophets in Pentecostal-Charismatic churches draw heavily on this conception of revelation. The “lord said to me” or the “spirit revealed to me” among others, are common concepts of revelation as prophecy being practiced in African-Pentecostal Christianity. The God who spoke in the past to his prophets continue to speak and reveals new things in order to tackle contextual challenges. In fact, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization that met in Nairobi in 2000, affirmed this position. “The Holy Spirit

⁶⁴⁷ See Kraft, *Christianity with Power*; Moreau, *Contextualization*.

⁶⁴⁸ See Moreau, *Contextualization*.

⁶⁴⁹ See Carl H. Henry, “The Cultural Relativizing of Christianity”, *Trinity Journal*, vol. 1 (1980), pp. 153-164.

⁶⁵⁰ See Clark Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984).

has surprised the church by acting in ways not explicitly taught in Scriptures (Acts 10 and 15) and may be doing so again.”⁶⁵¹ I shall argue further below that the emerging concept of altars also emerges from the understanding that God continues to reveal new things which may not be written explicitly in the bible but are necessary for dealing with contemporary challenges.

6.3 Altar Theology

The concept of altars emerged as a common theme in all three case studies. In this section, I analyse this emerging “altar theology” as a distinctive theo-political construction that results from a holistic theology of salvation that incorporates both indigenous religious and Pentecostal-Charismatic hermeneutics of spiritual power.

Spiritual warfare is soteriological from beginning to end. As Boyd puts it, spiritual warfare can be “accurately described as a story of God’s on-going conflict with, and ultimate victory over, cosmic and human agents who oppose him and threaten his creation”.⁶⁵² The aim of spiritual warfare is to use strategic prayers as a tool of redemption from all that is captive to both cosmic and human powers. Soteriology, is therefore not just a dominant narrative and the focus of the warfare but also a principle theological theme that runs throughout thought and praxis. The altar is a core symbol of salvation that serves as the integrative theme for the holiness, spiritual-dominionist, and prosperity-dominionist theo-political narratives.

Most of the practices of spiritual warfare, as I have discussed, have been developed as answers to specific contextual challenges that need specific Christian interventions. African indigenous religious salvific goals, are often evident in the prayers to the ancestors for both spiritual protection and material blessings and prosperity. Indeed we could think of altars, in the African Pentecostal-Charismatic context, as a construct that encapsulates the cosmic

⁶⁵¹ See “Deliver Us from Evil – Consultation Statement” <https://www.lausanne.org/content/statement/deliver-us-from-evil-consultation-statement>. Accessed 14 October 2019.

⁶⁵² Boyd, “The “Christus Victor” View of the Atonement”.

battle between the good (God, Holy Spirit) and evil (Satan and his demons) which expresses particular cultural meanings in the African context.

6.3.1 The Pentecostal-Charismatic Altar

Although Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity cannot be strictly defined by adherence to particular rituals in the strict sense, some major contemporary studies of the movement affirm certain foundational rites oriented around the concept of the altar.⁶⁵³ Benjamin C. Ray also argues that African Independent Churches, have creatively retained two fundamental elements of the indigenous religions, namely “the belief in invisible forces, especially malevolent spiritual powers, and the belief in the efficacy of ritual action.”⁶⁵⁴ Altar theology is tied to the indigenous religious understanding of the efficacy of ritual.⁶⁵⁵ In other words Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians acknowledge the performative aspects of the spoken word.

According to Wolfgang Vondey, “the soteriological plot of Pentecost is appropriated by Pentecostals in diverse contexts through the foundational rite of the altar call and response”.⁶⁵⁶

The concept of the altar is one such reconstruction of Pentecostal-Charismatic soteriology on

⁶⁵³ See Daniel E. Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); Thomas J. Csordas, “Ritualization of life” in *Practicing the Faith: The Ritual Life of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians*, edited by Martin Lindhardt. pp. 129-151 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011); Joel Robbins, “The Obvious Aspects of Pentecostalism: Ritual and Pentecostal Globalisation” in *Practicing the Faith*, pp. 49-67; Daniel Tomberlin, *Encountering God at the Altar* (Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015); Chris E.W. Green, *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of the Lord’s Supper: Foretasting the Kingdom* (Cleveland: CPT Press, 2012); Paul Gifford, “The Ritual Use of the Bible in African Pentecostalism” in *Practicing the Faith*, pp. 179-198.

⁶⁵⁴ Benjamin C. Ray, “Aladura Christianity: A Yoruba Religion” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 28, no. 3 (1993), pp. 268.

⁶⁵⁵ See Chammah J. Kaunda, *The Nations that Fears God Prospers: A Critique of Zambian Pentecostal Theo-political Imaginations* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2018); Chammah J. Kaunda, “‘The Altars are Holding the Nation in Captivity’: Zambian Pentecostalism, Nationality and African Religio-Political Heritage” *Religions*, vol. 9, no. 5. (2018), n.p.

⁶⁵⁶ Wolfgang Vondey, “Soteriology at the Altar: Pentecostal Contributions to Salvation as Praxis” *Transformation*, (2016), 2; Jacqueline Ryle, “Laying Our Sins and Sorrows on the Altar” in *Practicing the Faith*, pp. 68-97.

the basis of the root image of Pentecost that shows both biblical and contextual experiential responses and sensitivity to contemporary politics.

Most Pentecostal-Charismatic churches do have raised platforms but not in the form of physical altars found in Roman catholic or episcopal churches. Pentecostal-Charismatic churches do not have altars “in the sacrificial sense of the biblical writings nor in the Eucharistic sense of the sacramental traditions”.⁶⁵⁷ Vondey writes that,

[i]n neo-Pentecostal communities, the idea of the ‘sacred space’ with a central focus point (‘altar’) is shifting from clear architectural identifiers to the more symbolically and experientially identified center of worship of the congregation.⁶⁵⁸

The concept of the altar is embedded in theological concepts of encounter with God, practices, and biblical narratives that are both central to Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and indigenous religions. The Pentecostal-Charismatic altar is therefore a theological symbol of power encounter and salvation. Vondey defines the Pentecostal-Charismatic altar as

a ritual metaphor for human encounter with God. Although historically and conceptually sometimes identified with a particular space and time of corporate worship, liturgy, and ritual, the Pentecostal altar is generally a theological symbol of the Kingdom, which is ‘neither here nor there’ (see Luke 17:21) but which comes into existence, as on the day of Pentecost, through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the participation of the community in response.⁶⁵⁹

Altar/s is a conceptualisation that in my opinion encapsulates the contextualised spiritual warfare ideology of God’s intervention through born again Christians in the socio-political, cultural and economic affairs of the Kenyan state. The concept of the altar is a construct that symbolises for Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians that encountering God is always soteriological, should lead to redemption, transformation, and deliverance.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁷ See Vondey, “Soteriology at the Altar”; Cyril Edward Pocknee, *The Christian Altar in History and Today* (London: Canterbury Press, 1963).

⁶⁵⁸ Vondey, “Soteriology at the Altar” 5.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁰ See Ibid.

6.3.2 Worship as Altar Experience

As a spirit movement, worship in the Pentecostal-Charismatic context is believed to be directed by the Holy Spirit (the move of the Holy Spirit). Worship therefore focuses on experiential aspects of the Holy Spirit that ultimately lead to an encounter with God—at the altar.⁶⁶¹ The whole of the worship service could therefore be described as an altar experience. “It is at the altar that souls are ‘gloriously saved’, converts are sanctified, the sick are healed, and seekers are baptized in the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁶² Whether it happened in a characteristically noisy worship service or in a sombre and tearful encounter with the Holy Spirit, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians routinely recount their altar experiences in testimonies that demonstrate the centrality of salvation.

The altar stands for an encounter with God’s holy and powerful presence which is often referred to in Pentecostal-Charismatic circles as the “glory” or “spirit of God coming down”.⁶⁶³ The altar is also a sacred place where the sinner is believed to encounter, confess their sins and accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour. The concept of the altar call, for example, in Pentecostal-Charismatic theology, is not only a foundational rite but one that also re-enacts the basic plot of the biblical events of interruption, proclamation, call and response in varying forms.⁶⁶⁴ In all its variety the altar is a Pentecostal-Charismatic ecclesial metaphor that emphasises salvation as a ritual space for entire communities in which individual and communal response to God is embedded.⁶⁶⁵ But as I demonstrate below, the concept of the altar as a place of powerful presence and encounter with the divine, comes partly from indigenous logic of power. In the African Pentecostal-Charismatic context broadly, the

⁶⁶¹ See Tomberlin, *Encountering God*.

⁶⁶² David Tomberlin, “The Centrality of the Pentecostal Altar”. <http://www.danieltomberlin.net/the-centrality-of-the-pentecostal-altar/>. N.d. Accessed 20 October 2019, n.p.

⁶⁶³ Tomberlin, “The Centrality of the Pentecostal Altar”.

⁶⁶⁴ Vondey, “Soteriology at the Altar”.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid.

concept draws on models from the bible but also reaches back to the distinct place and power accorded to words in African cosmology and belief systems.

6.3.3 Altar theology and Indigenous Cosmology

In Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, altar theology makes sense when viewed against the backdrop of the resilience of indigenous religious worldview, as it constitutes the substructure of religion in Africa, including the emerging spiritual warfare concepts.

Adherents believe that altar is a foundational Christian concept that can engage indigenous cosmology at its foundation.⁶⁶⁶ They also hold that African indigenous religious practices and belief system can themselves constitute demonic altars. The encounter or the confrontation must be between power Christianity and the fundamental features of African indigenous cosmologies, because non-Christian religious practices and belief system can in themselves constitute demonic altars. Specifically, the Pauline admonition in Colossians 2: 8 is taken seriously. “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.”⁶⁶⁷ Paul’s reference to “elemental spiritual forces” is understood by Pentecostals as referring to evil spirits in African religions.⁶⁶⁸ The divinities, ancestors, and witchcraft are all classified as “elemental spiritual forces” and as such qualify as demonic altars in the sense that these are spiritual entities with strongholds on peoples and communities.

Witchcraft is an inimical power, but because it belongs to the supernatural realm witches are believed to work in concert with the ancestors, and divinities, as servants of the devil and forces of destruction. Such notions build on the understanding that evil emanates

⁶⁶⁶ See Emeka Nwankpa, *Redeeming the Land: Interceding for the Nations* (Accra: Africa Christian Press, 1994); Eastwood Anaba, *God's End-Time Militia: Winning the War Within and Without* (Accra: Design Solutions, 1998); Uzor Ndekwa, *Earth as a Weapon of Defence or Warfare: How to Pray using the Earth* (London: Uzor Ndekwa Ministries, 2011); Milka Gathoni Ruchathi, *Identifying and Destroying Evil Altars: Demolishing Evil Altars in Your Life and Building Godly Altars* (Nairobi: Fine Script Publishers, 2017).

⁶⁶⁷ Colossians 2: 8, NIV.

⁶⁶⁸ Yusufu Turaki, “Africa Traditional Religious System as the basis for understanding Christian spiritual warfare”, *Lausanne Movement*, 22 August 2000. <https://www.lausanne.org/content/west-african-case-study>. Accessed 20 November 2019.

pre-eminently from the supernatural realm and all other spirits other than the Holy Spirit are deviations from Godly worship. The African ancestor is believed to have mortgaged the future of the land to inimical spirits that the Bible speaks about (see below). Within this perspective there is a strong attention to land as both gift and covenant which agents of the devil are believed to have dedicated to the devil through ritual sacrifices to the gods and ancestors⁶⁶⁹ As Kalu points out, in the African Pentecostal-Charismatic context, “[f]estivals, rites of passage and the celebration of the agricultural cycle are rituals that re-energize the covenants periodically.”⁶⁷⁰ The sin of the ancestors are their sacrifices to spirits and divinities other than the Christian God. The practice of witchcraft and other occult spirits have polluted the land and compels the need for its deliverance.⁶⁷¹ For Asamoah-Gyadu, this understanding resonates with the biblical material on spiritual activities found in Exod. 22:18, Deut. 18:10, Ezek. 13:17-23, Mark 1:21-28, Luke 9:37-43.⁶⁷²

The reference to altars by African spiritual warfare teachers, as we have discussed in chapter three to five, and above, is therefore a crafty combination of selected biblical references of encounters that are explained as altar experiences with God or the devil. The construction of altar theology by Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians therefore emerges from the Bible, but also from the indigenous religious worldview. The concept of altars provides a certain contact point, a meeting place for African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and indigenous religiosity. The indigenous cosmology provides the religious groundworks, the vocabulary, and insights of Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic altar theology, even though they scrutinise all beliefs according to (their understanding of) the Bible. It is therefore important that in order to understand altar theology, we take note of the influence of indigenous spirituality, in particular, the tendency to sacralise power in the political sphere.

⁶⁶⁹ See Kalu, “Faith and Politics in Africa”.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid, 11.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid.

⁶⁷² See J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “Witchcraft Accusations and Christianity in Africa” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (2015), n.p.

In many African indigenous systems, according to Kwame Bediako, “[t]he traditional belief is that the well-being of the society depends upon the maintenance of good relations with the ancestors on whom the living depend for help and protection.”⁶⁷³ Even though it is difficult to present a single indigenous Kenyan or African religio-political conception of power, virtually all ethnic groups have a concept of the mystical credentials and political role of the ancestors and other spirits.⁶⁷⁴

Many African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians also acknowledge the power of the ancestors, in a sacralised cosmos.⁶⁷⁵ They believe that there are ancestral or bloodline related curses. Individuals, communities and even nations suffer from the consequences of sins committed by their ancestral progenitors—for their sacrifices to other gods other than the Christian God.⁶⁷⁶ Demon possession and control is associated with any form of ancestral veneration. The ancestor is in fact being impersonated by a demon.⁶⁷⁷ The consequences of sins committed by the ancestors are recurrent chronic and hereditary diseases, emotional excesses and allergies, frequent miscarriages and untimely deaths, suicidal tendencies and persistent poverty and almost everything associated with negativity in life.⁶⁷⁸ A reading of the biblical texts, Exodus 20:5 and Deuteronomy 5:9–10, 28, justifies this belief on the understanding that “God is a jealous God who punishes children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren for the sins of parents.”⁶⁷⁹

Sacred spaces, groves, trees and objects in African indigenous cosmology are also fundamental to a full appreciation of the African Pentecostal theology of altars. Many ethnic

⁶⁷³ Kwame Bediako, *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1992), 241.

⁶⁷⁴ See Bediako, *Theology and Identity*.

⁶⁷⁵ See Allan Anderson, “African Initiated Churches of Spirit and Pneumatology”, *Word & World*, vol. 23, no. 2 (2003), pp. 178-186.

⁶⁷⁶ See Neil, “The African Background of Pentecostal Theology”.

⁶⁷⁷ See Allan H. Anderson, *Moya: The Holy Spirit in an African Context* (Pretoria: Sigma, 1991).

⁶⁷⁸ See Opoku Onyinah, “Deliverance as a way of confronting witchcraft in modern Africa: Ghana as a case history”, *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2002) pp. 109-136; Anderson, *Moya*.

⁶⁷⁹ Neil, “The African Background of Pentecostal Theology”, 3.

communities regard them as the first temples or altars of God, or the manifestations of spiritual powers of powerful deities in objects or places of their choosing. Sacred spaces, groves, trees and objects in African indigenous cosmology are associated with communicating with the divinities and departed ancestors. This is because in African indigenous religious contexts, sacred spaces, groves, trees and objects, are mythically clothed with religio-political power and used by traditional elders for social and religio-political control of a group.⁶⁸⁰ Among the Kikuyu for example, the Muĩgumo (*Ficus natalensis* / *Ficus thonningii*), is considered a sacred tree that is key to understanding their cosmology. The sacred Muĩgumo is significant to the Kikuyu because it is a symbol of power, life and fertility and “represent the sacred continuity of the Gĩkuĩyũ spiritual, cosmic and physical world”.⁶⁸¹ Karangi argues that although the majority of the Kikuyu have converted to Christianity, the inherent concept of the Muĩgumo as a traditional sanctuary is still deeply embedded in their minds. As a consequence, the people continue to see the church as replacing the sacred Muĩgumo tree. The argument here is that both prayers and rituals are performed in Church – as at the old Muĩgumo sanctuary.⁶⁸² While the church focused on salvation through Christ, at the Muĩgumo sanctuary, as in many indigenous religious shrines, salvific goals are evident in the giving of sacrifices and libation prayers which are mainly focused on protection and prosperity. Ritual sacrifices associated with the sacred Muĩgumo, validates the Kikuyu “claim to land, political power, religious hegemony and identity.”⁶⁸³ The religio-political affiliation between the Kikuyu and the Muĩgumo tree is still relevant in the post-colonial context and influential in shaping the people’s conception of power.⁶⁸⁴ There is a strong

⁶⁸⁰ See Matthew M. Karangi, “Revisiting the roots of Gĩkũyũ culture through the sacred Mũgumo tree” *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, vol. 20, no. 1 (2008); Hubert Bucher, *Spirits and Power: An Analysis of Shona Cosmology* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1980).

⁶⁸¹ Ibid, 117.

⁶⁸² Karangi, “Revisiting the roots of Gĩkũyũ culture.

⁶⁸³ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid; Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya* (Nairobi: Kenway Publications, 1938); Bruce Berman, & John Lonsdale, *Unhappy valley, conflict in Unhappy valley, conflict in Kenya and*

affinity between the Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic idea of altars and indigenous religious concepts of sacred spaces and objects. In indigenous cosmology, it is held that certain geographic areas and objects can be abodes of the spirits and as such are spiritual strongholds. There is evidence from my fieldwork that the construction of altar theology emerges from the understanding that shrines, sacred groves among others, are places of sacrifice to the spirits and are spiritual strongholds. In these places, it is believed that curses can be placed or broken.

The altar is therefore not necessarily physical but also not exclusively spiritual. Altars are identified as good or bad based on the spirits that are believed to inhabit them or the purpose for which they were constructed. “Altars have power to bless or curse (Numbers 23:1-30).”⁶⁸⁵ Godly altars are associated with the good life while demonic altars explain strongholds that blocks the good life. Godly altars could stand for victory, blessings and overcoming, while demonic altars are ultimately associated with failures, or the lack of progress in the life of an individual or community. The altar therefore signifies contact with the spirits or a place where such encounter is possible or has been recorded.

Altars could also be good or bad acts. A prayerful born-again Christian is deemed to have built an altar dedicated to prayer while a drunk may be under the control of the altar (spirit) of alcoholism. In a recent development in Kenyan politics, the Vice President, William Ruto, who is also standing as a presidential candidate for the next general election in 2022, was in the news for launching a national prayer altar at his official residence in Karen, near Nairobi.⁶⁸⁶ Ruto and his wife were joined by various leaders of the clergy. The motivation for building the national prayer altar according to Ruto’s wife was based on 2 Samuel 24: 45

Africa. Book two: Violence and ethnicity (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1997).

⁶⁸⁵ Chris Okafor, “Evil Altars And Generational Curses” <https://revelationalknowledge.blogspot.com/2015/03/evil-altars-foundational-altars.html>. Accessed 2 November 2019.

⁶⁸⁶ See Sheila Njambi, “Ruto builds National Prayer Altar at Karen Home” *The-Star*. 1 August 2019; Vincent Kejitan, “DP Ruto Builds Church at His House” *Standard Media*. 1 August 2019.

“David Built an altar to the Lord and offered burnt offerings and peace offering. Thus, the Lord was moved by prayer for the land, and the plaque was held back from Israel.”⁶⁸⁷ Such a move connotes a dedicated prayerful born-again Christian but also a stronghold of the Holy Spirit in his house and affairs of life. As a “national prayer altar” we are made to understand that it is specifically focused on averting national calamities but also to foster the quest for, and the gains made so far, in the areas of peace and unity.⁶⁸⁸ The clergy in attendance, who were described as “fathers of faith and mountains of influence” to show that they are at the very top and influential in national affairs commended the Ruto family for their “prayerful dedication and loyalty to the most-high God. As you pray for the nation, your loyalty in prayer will not go unnoticed”.⁶⁸⁹

Altars can therefore be physical or spiritual but most importantly all altars have a spiritual basis. There is no altar that has no spiritual purpose in African spiritual warfare thinking. The altar is therefore a spiritual stronghold where destinies can be altered whether for good or for bad. Ones’ destiny can be deeply altered when brought within the place or zone of the sacred. The born-again life indeed when altered by the spiritual encounter, constitutes a new life (an altered life), from the previous life of bondage to the devil. In reference to the altar, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians may be talking symbolically about encountering spiritual powers that can bring about dramatic alterations to one’s life. Altar theology in sum is the collective theo-political conception of godly and demonic forces operating in the political realm. The holy altar as opposed to demonic ones are collective practices that involves participation in prayer, prophecy, ministry, repentance, conversion, miracles, and worship in various forms. This includes the laying on of hands, anointing, healing, tarrying before the lord, redeeming the land through deliverance, testimony and other

⁶⁸⁷ 2 Samuel 24: 45

⁶⁸⁸ Njambi, “Ruto builds National Prayer Altar at Karen Home”.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid.

spiritual warfare practices that are aimed at engaging foundational spirits in African and other demonic spirits in order to sanitise corrupt political systems.

The purpose and function of altar theology could be compared to Amos Yong's conception of prophetic politics in African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. Yong coined the term "prophetic politics"⁶⁹⁰ in order to show the "ways in which pentecostals are indirectly political, but nonetheless political after all."⁶⁹¹ Prophetic politics according to Yong, refers to the "literal understanding of how Pentecostal discourses engage the public sphere... 'Prophetic' is more an attempt to describe how Pentecostal rhetoric functions in the public sphere in opposition to the perceived evils of the world."⁶⁹² Born-again Christians believe that they have been empowered and emboldened by the Holy Spirit to speak the Word of God or prophecy and pray about political situations in their country. Prophetic politics, according to Yong, also includes Pentecostal-Charismatic

characterization of the political as a spiritual realm contested by the God of Jesus Christ and the Allah of Mohammed [I add gods of the Hindus, African religions, indeed all non-Pentecostal-Charismatic forms of worship].⁶⁹³

Pentecostal-Charismatic prophetic politics respond to context where political power is traditionally understood as connected with ancestral spirits and where the elders and some politicians often, according to popular belief, resort to witchcraft and other rituals for political ends.⁶⁹⁴

The explicit denunciation of witchcraft and other spiritual entities that are believed to be operating in the political realm and the practices that name, resist and cleanse communities of such perceived evil harmful influences, that are related to the "prophetic politics" of African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, are not different from the concept of the holy altar. Like prophetic politics, altar theology also directly or indirectly engages the public

⁶⁹⁰ Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 11.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid.

⁶⁹² Ibid, 12.

⁶⁹³ Ibid, 11.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.

sphere through declarative performances such as prophecies, preaching, spiritual warfare prayer and rites of deliverance. As I have mentioned, the concept of holy altars encapsulates desires to capture the political sphere and bring it under the authority of God's reign. In effect, it is an attempt to sanitise the political sphere according to certain biblical principles of spiritual warfare.

The altar is a call to individuals, their respective communities and to all on the national level to bring their lives—faith, sins, circumstances, problems, sicknesses and diseases, fears and hopes to God. Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians flock to the altar in expectation that the Holy Spirit will interrupt their circumstances and in that sense, bring a new dimension of life. “The expectation of the altar involves as much the renewal of the individual as the transformation of the community.”⁶⁹⁵ In the Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic context, the concept of the altar, is a rhetoric of invitation, acceptance, response, and participation in an ecclesio-political configuration, shaped by the call to warfare for the purposes of national prosperity and peace. It is also a rhetoric that allows Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians to cast more widely a soteriological understanding that includes the salvation of the political order, indeed of all of creation.⁶⁹⁶ Altar theology and the prophetic posture it nurtures, requires a response, and participation in God's redemptive presence and activity. Soteriology, from the perspective of altar theology (as in the Pentecostal-Charismatic altar call) is an experience that goes hand in hand with active participation.

As I have discussed in previous chapters and further show here, the call to participate in the political order is couched in the rhetoric of warfare. Prophetic utterances, prayer rallies, spiritual warfare conferences, and sermons have been used to mobilise Kenyans to support or resist certain national issues which were considered demonic (see chapter one, three to five). Altar theology is therefore the construction of a theo-political concept in Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity as they attempt to address concrete socio-political and economic

⁶⁹⁵ Vondey, “Soteriology at the Altar” 6.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid.

issues and ways to overcome and overthrow perceived principalities and powers behind Kenya's political structures.⁶⁹⁷

The prophetic political theology that emerges is an effectual integration of altar (sacred) and throne (secular) that calls out to all mortals to account before God or be consumed by the prevailing evil. In this context, we could also construe the holy altar as the proclamation of the whole of the gospel, the Word of God as against deceitful naturalistic or spiritualistic mindsets. According to the logic of spiritual warfare, the cosmic battle between the forces of good and bad ramifies in the suffering of humanity which explains poverty and ill-health among other demonic manipulations. In the context of Kenya, the narratives disclose conceptions of the good and bad and a clear rejection of evil and suffering. Suffering may be demonic, systemic, or both, but for the Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian, there are spiritual enemies who seek the downfall of others. Joseph Quayesi-Amakye's assessment of spiritual warfare in Ghanaian Pentecostalism also holds here. He writes that

In their understanding, evil and suffering are enemies that taint Gods perfect world, and make life miserable for earths inhabitants... To them evil is anything that contradicts, and deprives goodness, and causes misfortune, harm and destruction to human existence... To break away from their control requires Gods merciful interventions. In other words, the negative effects of such enemies on life are so dangerous that it takes more than human effort to deal with them. To win in these battles demands more than human power, wisdom, and intelligence.⁶⁹⁸

In order to break away from such demonic attacks or control, one requires God's intervention. In this sense, altar theology is placing Christ at the center of both individual and national life. Christ or God's word now becomes central, as the new altar, which prefigures his glorious sacrifice and that which cancels and makes obsolete all altars or powers of the world.

This prophetic political engagement is first and foremost at the level of proclamation based on a reading of a series of selected texts one of which is Romans 10:17, "So then

⁶⁹⁷ Vondey, "Soteriology at the Altar" 6.

⁶⁹⁸ Quayesi-Amakye, "This Nonsense Must Stop!" 4.

faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”⁶⁹⁹ As I have discussed earlier, in the context of Kraft’s concept of biblical worldview, spiritual warfare adherents do not only see the 66 books of the Bible as the inspired Word of God, but they also hold that it is possible to receive and utter extra biblical revelations based on the concept of rhema. The Pentecostal-Charismatic understanding of rhema gives the theo-political narratives a performative dimension.

6.4 Rhema—“Word” as Action

In the preceding pages of this chapter, I have discussed how altar theology derives from both the bible and indigenous cosmology as they are related to power, authority and politics.

Notions of sacralised political authority in the African indigenous religious worldview invade the present and brings its legacy to bear upon contemporary theo-political constructions.⁷⁰⁰ In this section, in order to further illustrate the underlying logic of Pentecostal-Charismatic political engagement, I shall analyse the spiritual warfare concept of rhema, as a theoretical framework for understanding how God’s Word, or simply the Word, be it in the form of a sermon, a prophecy, or prayer in itself signifies the action of the word, on the world.⁷⁰¹

6.4.1 Logos and Rhema

Biblical scholars are wary to draw a strong distinction between the Greek terms Logos and Rhema.⁷⁰² Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians and the spiritual warfare movement in particular, emphasise the distinctions between logos and rhema. According to leading exponents such as Wagner, there are different meanings attached to both.⁷⁰³ Wagner defines

⁶⁹⁹ Romans 10:17.

⁷⁰⁰ See Kwame Bediako, *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1992).

⁷⁰¹ See Marshall, *Political Spirituality*

⁷⁰² See Horst Dietrich Preuss *Old Testament Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press. 1995); Gerhard Kittle, Gerhard Friedreich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1985).

⁷⁰³ See Wagner, *Confronting the Powers*; William G. Rusch, *The Trinitarian Controversy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1980).

logos as “the written Word of God.”⁷⁰⁴ Logos, also refers to the totality of the inspired Word of God, in particular to Jesus who is seen as the living word of God.⁷⁰⁵

Rhema is more pneumatocentric. It is defined by Wagner as the “directly spoken word of God.”⁷⁰⁶ He illustrates the distinctions between logos and rhema as follows.

During His power encounter with the devil in the wilderness, Jesus used the logos, the written word of God in the Old Testament, as a spiritual weapon by which he defeated the enemy in strategic-level spiritual warfare.⁷⁰⁷

In Matthew 4:7, “Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”⁷⁰⁸ The logos in this case is believed to refer to the written words of God recorded in the sixty-six books of the bible. Like many Evangelicals, the spiritual warfare movement also consider the bible a closed canon. The concept of rhema on the other hand, according to Wagner derives from Paul’s engagement with demonic powers in a similar power encounter, with Elymas or Bar Jesus, a sorcerer in Cyprus. Wagner argues that in Acts 13:11” Now the hand of the LORD is against you. You are going to be blind for a time”, Paul used a rhema word from God rather than a direct reference to the logos or the written word.⁷⁰⁹

While holding that the bible is God’s complete revelation to humanity, the spiritual warfare understanding of Rhema sought to challenge in part the idea that there are no extra biblical revelations apart from what has been given in the bible. The concept of rhema also challenged the doctrine of cessationism.⁷¹⁰

According to Evangelical cessationist doctrine, the gifts recorded in the bible have ceased but as Wagner also points out, they held that “God does not speak to us directly apart from scripture”.⁷¹¹ The spiritual warfare understanding is that, God speaks apart from the bible

⁷⁰⁴ Wagner, *Confronting the Powers*, 52.

⁷⁰⁵ Stephen Harris, *Understanding the Bible* (Palo Alto: Mayfield, 1985); Georg Strecker, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000).

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁷ Wagner, *Confronting the Powers*, 52.

⁷⁰⁸ Matthew 4:7.

⁷⁰⁹ Wagner, *Confronting the Powers*, 52.

⁷¹⁰ Ibid, 54.

⁷¹¹ Wagner, *Confronting the Powers*, 54.

but not in contradiction to it.⁷¹² The emphasis is threefold. First, “[b]oth forms of the word of God, logos and rhema, are valid sources of knowledge”.⁷¹³ The second, is its focus on empowerment, highlighting the role of the Holy Spirit in mission. The Holy Spirit speaks to present situations. More importantly, direct words from God could be given to born again Christian or some highly gifted individuals such as prophets, healers and preachers. The third is the emphasis on speaking, the spoken word, or utterance. An empowered Christian can hear directly from God. They can also say power packed words that are directly revealed by God concerning a prevailing situation.⁷¹⁴ In effect, the written Word and the rhema are all inspired by God and are equally potent to confront the devil in spiritual warfare.⁷¹⁵ Even though subjected to different contextual reinterpretations, the spiritual warfare understanding of rhema generally refers to extra biblical revelation and directions under the power of the Holy Spirit.⁷¹⁶

In the Kenyan and African Pentecostal-Charismatic context, rhema is about receiving extra biblical revelation word from God and equally, about speaking the word with power and expecting positive results based on the level of ones, faith or anointing. Faith in itself amounts to power in African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity.

According to Wariboko, “Pentecostals see faith as the power of universal exchange-ability in transactions of the spiritual realm or intercourse”.⁷¹⁷ More faith means more power and access to divine resources. When an African Pentecostal-Charismatic spiritual warrior speaks a word in the power of the Holy Spirit, it performs the supernatural power of God. It

⁷¹² See Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (Grand rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993).

⁷¹³ Wagner, *Confronting the Powers*, 52.

⁷¹⁴ See Mark Virker, “The Real Difference Between Logos and Rhema Words” *Charismanews*. 15 October 2018. <https://www.charismanews.com/opinion/73604-the-real-difference-between-logos-and-rhema-words>. Accessed 13 November 2019.

⁷¹⁵ See Wagner, *Confronting the Powers*.

⁷¹⁶ See Wagner, *Confronting the Powers*.

⁷¹⁷ Wariboko, “West African Pentecostalism” 16.

is conceivable that it is the logic of divine human interaction in indigenous religions that has been transferred to a new register.⁷¹⁸

6.4.2 “Rhema Word”: The Contextual Application

In the Kenyan and African Pentecostal-Charismatic context, especially in spiritual warfare traditions, the whole Bible is literally the power of God.⁷¹⁹ But there is also a contextual application of Rhema, closely associated to spiritual empowerment and explained by the term “prophetic declarations”. These are words that contain blessings or curses declared by a born-again Christian. The efficacy of the blessing or curse depend on the level of the persons anointing or spiritual authority. According to popular Pentecostal-Charismatic usage, a “prophetic declaration” is a word or words that “will make something good” or bad happen in one’s life. Declarations are uttered when the Holy Spirit drops a divine word or a Rhema into the heart of the preacher to either pronounce blessings or curses.⁷²⁰ The words of a believer’s prayers, or prophetic declarations qualify as Rhema because they are empowered speech that can be uttered in order to change situations.

In the African indigenous cosmology as well, prayers to the ancestors, offerings and sacrifices do not only say things, they are expected to do things.⁷²¹ Moses Oludele Idowu points out that;

In virtually all African religious systems, the myth of creation through the word of the Creator has been sustained. That this world was created by a Supreme Being and it was done through the Words uttered by Him. This belief which is implicit in African world view...This shows the tremendous power of the word. From the very beginning the word has been connected with power, life, being and vital force.⁷²²

⁷¹⁸ Wariboko, “West African Pentecostalism” 16.

⁷¹⁹ See Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Ezra Chitando, “If My People...” A Critical Analysis of the Deployment of 2 Chronicles 7: 14 During the Zimbabwean Crisis” in *The Bible and Politics in Africa*, edited by Massiwa Ragies Gunda & Joachim Kugler, pp. 247-289. (Bamberg: Bamberg University Press, 2012).

⁷²⁰ Wanjiru, Sermon August 2015.

⁷²¹ See Ray, “Aladura Christianity”.

⁷²² Moses Oludele Idowu, “Words of Power, Power of Words: The Spoken Word as Medium of Vital Force in African Cosmology”. Paper Presented at International Colloquium/Festival

The power of the word, in other terms, using words properly in the form of ritual speech, finds a distinct place in African cosmology since it is based primarily on oral tradition.⁷²³

In many African indigenous religious worldviews, the performative force of speech is believed to attract good powers and repel bad ones.⁷²⁴ This indigenous religious logic of the performative force of speech shapes the contextual reinterpretation and application of rhema and may explain why in contemporary African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity emphasis is placed on imprecatory prayers. Carl Laney, defines imprecation prayer as “an invocation of judgment, calamity, or curse uttered against one's enemies, or the enemies of God”.⁷²⁵

Imprecatory prayer is therefore “an invocation--a prayer or address to God, and (b) must contain a request that one's enemies or the enemies of Yahweh be judged and justly punished”.⁷²⁶ Moses’ prayer in Numbers 10:35, that God’s enemies, (who were also Moses’ enemies) should be scattered was an imprecation.⁷²⁷ Prophetic utterances are mostly imprecatory in nature. “The centrality of prayer and its imbrication in everyday practices [of African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians] derives from the sociohistorical significance of power” in Africa.⁷²⁸

In the African context broadly, having the capacity to “look into” but also to “interpret happenings in the supernatural universe and determine how these can influence the

to Celebrate 48 Years of Solo Performance in Nigeria by the Department of English and Literature, Nigerian Turkish Nile University, Abuja, 6-8 May 2014.

⁷²³ See Idowu “Words of Power, Power of Words”; Benjamin C. Ray, *African Religions; Symbol, Ritual and Community* (New Jersey: Prentiss-Hall, 1976).

⁷²⁴ Ray, “Aladura Christianity”; J.D.Y. Peel, *Aladura: A Religious Movement Among the Yoruba* (London: 1968); Robin Horton, African Traditional Thought and Western Science”. *Africa*, vol. 37, no. 2 (1967), pp. 155-187.

⁷²⁵ J. Carl Laney, “A Fresh Look at the Imprecatory Psalms” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 138 (1981), pp. 35-45; J. Carl Laney, *A Fresh Look at the Imprecatory Psalms, in Vital Biblical Issues* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1994), 30.

⁷²⁶ Laney, “A Fresh Look at the Imprecatory Psalms” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 36.

⁷²⁷ Ibid.

⁷²⁸ Wariboko, “West African Pentecostalism”, 14.

life chances of individuals is a basis of power.”⁷²⁹ In the African indigenous worldview, [n]egative events can also be resisted by imprecatory prayers.⁷³⁰ The performative effect of the spoken word is in keeping with African religio-cultural and political worldviews. We are reminded by Bénédet Bujo how words are also believed to function in African religio-cultural and political settings. “One must recall the function of word in black Africa. The word possesses such tremendous power that it can either create or destroy the community. This means that the word signifies life or death—it is medicine or poison.”⁷³¹ Asamoah-Gyadu equally posits that,

The performance effect of the spoken word in African pneumatic movements is yet further evidence of the resonances between primal ideas and Christian innovation. In the traditional context words translate into action, and therefore the power of blessing and curse are very important, especially when coming from figures of authority. In the African Christian context, the authority of the believer is critical to contemporary Pentecostal self-perception. One does not come to God as a [mere] sinner begging for pardon, but as one granted authority in Christ and empowered by the Spirit to boldly claim his promises and declare others blessed or cursed.⁷³²

Underlying the performative use of the word of God in Pentecostal-Charismatic theology, is a logic of power that draws on spiritual warfare understandings of rhema and the performative force of ritual speech in African indigenous cosmologies.

In Pentecostal-Charismatic theology, the Bible in particular “retains its authority and sanctity as the Word of God”.⁷³³ In some “indigenous Pentecostal movements, the Bible is not simply text but also a sacred symbol that is potent for certain therapeutic rituals.”⁷³⁴ More precisely, for African Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, the Bible is “living and active” and

⁷²⁹ Albert Kafui Wauaku, “Hinduizing from the Top, Indigenizing from Below: Localizing Krishna Rituals in Southern Ghana” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 39 (2009) pp. 1.

⁷³⁰ Neil, “The African Background of Pentecostal Theology” 1.

⁷³¹ Bénédet Bujo, *Foundations of an African Ethic: Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality*. Translated by Brian McNeil. (New York: Crossroad, 2001), 46; John S. Mbiti, *The Prayers of African Religions* (London: SPCK, 1975)

⁷³² Asamoah-Gyadu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit: Ghanaian Perspectives on Pentecostalism and Renewal in Africa* (Oxford: Regnum, 2015).

⁷³³ Asamoah-Gyadu, “‘From Every Nation Under Heaven’: Africa in World Pentecostalism” in *Global Renewal Christianity*, edited by Vinson Synan, Amos Yong and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, pp. xxxvi. (Florida: Charisma House, 2016).

⁷³⁴ Ibid.

“affective revelation of God’s Word rather than a [mere] historical compilation of human records.”⁷³⁵ In most cases what this means is that “the Bible is allowed to speak to existential situations, as passages are used, sometimes selectively, as a source of interpretations that can be applied directly to situations of interest.”⁷³⁶

Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians are encouraged to memorise, and keep the bible or the word of God in their hearts all the time and be able to repeat it verbatim in times of temptations or need. Based on the power of the word of God, but also the level of their anointing, some Pentecostal-Charismatic pastors believe that by a “prophetic declaration” they can bless or curse, give and even take lives.⁷³⁷ Highly anointed leaders can also bless, or even change the destiny of their nations by a declaration. Several scriptural verses are influential in this regard. Romans 10:8 “But what does it say? The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart”.⁷³⁸ Job 22:28, “Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee”.⁷³⁹ According to one of my participants, pastor Muchangi, the above scriptures

demonstrate the power of your tongue. The utterance of your mouth can turn your circumstances around. You can bring to naught every manner of trouble in your life by the declarations of your tongue if only such decrees are made by faith.⁷⁴⁰

According to Wariboko, in order to understand the use of language in this way, we need not focus on deciphering “the logic of the sentence or structure of theological discourse” but rather understand how the logics of power from “oral, vernacular culture is brought to bear on the sentence.”⁷⁴¹ In the indigenous religious context, what a speaker “declares to be true is confirmed as true (even though it may depart from what everyone knows are the actual facts

⁷³⁵ Asamoah-Gyadu, “From Every Nation Under Heaven”.

⁷³⁶ Ibid.

⁷³⁷ See Emmanuel Eni, *Delivered from the Power of Darkness* (Kijabe: Kijabe Printing Press, 2011; Bishop Dr. Samuel Mbithi, “The Miracle is in Your Tongue” *God’s Champion*. November 2014 issue, pp. 20-23.

⁷³⁸ Romans 10:8 NIV.

⁷³⁹ Job 22:28.

⁷⁴⁰ Samuel Muchanga, personal interview. Participant at Githii’s Kikuyu spiritual warfare conference. August 2014.

⁷⁴¹ Wariboko, “West African Pentecostalism”, 9.

of the case) by virtue of the sacred and corporate authority of the ritual context.”⁷⁴² According to Ray, this derives from the “combine authority of the speaker, the divinities who “join” and strengthened his words, the ancestors who witness to them, and the human community which repeats them.”⁷⁴³

In the ritual context of indigenous religions, the “words of the priests are especially authoritative because these men contain within themselves the power of the divinity Flesh which enables them to speak the ‘true word’ and to present the situation as it really is”.⁷⁴⁴

In many African indigenous worldviews, spiritual power can be transferred through ritual observances and sacrifices. However, such rituals are considered incomplete without the spoken word.⁷⁴⁵ For Kalu, performative utterances in the African Pentecostal-Charismatic context is a reconstruction of “language which [indigenous religious] communities use in addressing and sustaining divinities, ancestors, and the Supreme Being”.⁷⁴⁶ In both the African religio-cultural view and Pentecostal-Charismatic biblical hermeneutics, the word is never neutral, it is the locus of spiritual power. Words are both expressive and instrumental, both symbolic and practical.⁷⁴⁷ Words have power over life and death.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the narratives of engagement are contextualised spiritual warfare teachings of what the Church Growth Movement termed “Power Evangelism” or

⁷⁴² Benjamin C. Ray, “‘Performative Utterances’ in *African Rituals*” *History of Religions*, vol. 13, no. 1 (1973), p 22.

⁷⁴³ Ray, “‘Performative Utterances’

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid, 22.

⁷⁴⁵ See Idowu “Words of Power, Power of Words”

⁷⁴⁶ Kalu, “‘Globecalisation’ and Religion”, 235.

⁷⁴⁷ Ray, “Performative Utterances”; J. D Y. Peel, “Understanding Alien Belief Systems”, *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 20, no. 1 (1969), pp. 69-84; J. H. M Beattie, “Ritual and Social Change” *Man*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1966), pp. 60-74:

“Power Christianity”.⁷⁴⁸ I have showed that the conceptions of spiritual empowerment and the political theology that emerges from the narratives of engagement respond to questions posed by Kenya’s past and contemporary socio-cultural, economic and political issues. While the prayers and prophecies that formed the basis of the narratives are most often spiritualised, a close reading revealed that they are imbued with pragmatic notions of the interaction between God or spirits, human beings and society.

It is practical existence that has given shape to the prayers and prophecies projected into national politics. In other words, prayers are projected into national politics as responses to both contemporary and inherited crises. The Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic use of powerful words is an approach oriented towards practical application of the promises in the word of God.⁷⁴⁹ Implicit in the theo-political narratives is a strong unity of prayer and practice. This is to say that prayers are also types of action—the projection of powerful words of God but also words that reflect the exigencies of everyday practices. In Kenya, as in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians are engaging in forms of spiritual warfare by taking a stand against powers of Satan perceived to be operating in the political realm.⁷⁵⁰

6.6. General Summary

The thesis analysed the political engagements and emerging political theology of contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Kenya through a case study of three

⁷⁴⁸ See John Wimber, *Power Evangelism* (Chosen, 2009); Charles Kraft, “Three encounters in Christian Witness” in *Perspectives on World Christian Movement*, edited by Ralph Winter, and Steven C. Hawthorne, pp. 447. (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999).

⁷⁴⁹ Nkem Emerald Osuigwe, *Christian Churches and Nigeria’s Political Economy of Oil and Conflict: Baptist and Protestant Perspectives* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2014)

⁷⁵⁰ See Knut Rio, Michelle MacCarthy, and Ruy Blanes, “Introduction to Pentecostal Witchcraft in Spiritual Politics in Africa and Melanesia” in *Pentecostalism and Witchcraft: Spiritual Warfare in Africa and Melanesia*, edited by Knut Rio, Michelle MacCarthy and Ruy Blanes, pp. 1-36. (New York: Palgrave, 2017); Richard Burgess, *Nigeria’s Christian Revolution: The Civil War Revival and its Pentecostal Progeny (1967-2006)* (Oxford: Regnum, 2008).

churches. The focus was on how Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic churches construct and engage the political sphere, within the framework of their spirituality or theological ideas. The churches studied are Dr Prophet David Owuor's Ministry of Repentance and Holiness (MRH), Rev. Dr David Muhia Githii's El-Gibbor Evangelism, Intercessory and Training Altar (El-Gibbor), and Bishop Margaret Kariuki Wanjiru of Jesus is Alive Ministries International (JIAM).

The thesis argued that since the 1980s, more so after the turn of the century (2000), the posture of newer Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Kenya demonstrate a new attitude towards politics. Leading Pentecostal-Charismatic clergy created new ecclesial forms of political engagement in the contemporary Kenyan public sphere. As Heuser has pointed out, “[i]n the 1980s and 1990s, the concern with satanic/demonic interference in worldly affairs and an increased ritual emphasis on deliverance has become dominant features of African Pentecostal theology and church life.”⁷⁵¹ The language of the Pentecostal-charismatic intervention into politics is dominated by spiritual warfare imagery and language that depicts a cosmic battle between the Christian God and Satan and his forces for the soul of individuals and nations.

Spiritual warfare theological concepts, I have argued, gave new political language that informed the political participation in the Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic context. In my analysis of the political engagements of Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, I foreground the narratives of my interlocutors as forms of contextual political theological responses to local historical, cultural, and, socio-political issues. The spiritual warfare rhetoric which has been a central focus in this thesis is considered the theology of the people on the ground as they are embedded in ideas and expressions common to the “ordinary members” churches I studied.

⁷⁵¹ Andreas Heuser, “Encoding Caser’s Realm—Variants of Spiritual Warfare Politics in Africa” in *Pentecostalism in Africa*, edited by Martin Lindhardt, pp. 274.

In contrast to the mostly social-scientific scholarly analysis of Kenyan and more general African Pentecostal-Charismatic political postures (see chapter two), this study offered a critical theological understanding of the movements political engagements by paying close attention to, and analysing spiritual warfare teachings and practices.

The approach of the study was an ethno-theological approach that enabled me to construct categories of analysis from ethnographic narratives (see chapter one). The ethno-theology approach, as I shall discuss further below, enabled me to mine the inner theo-political perspectives as worked out in the spirituality of contemporary Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. My proposal for an ethno-theology approach was to avoid positing in advance what constitutes political thinking and practices of my case studies as Gifford in particular has done (see chapter two). In this thesis, I departed from such conclusions, and from the approaches that privileged externality by imposing political and functional interpretations on Pentecostal-Charismatic theologies and practices.

By beginning with the theological perspectives of the case studies, I showed how such spiritualised narratives intersect with Kenyan politics. I argued that such narratives of spiritual warfare are political theological constructions that can be understood as responses to contemporary socio-political crises in Kenya. The political crisis, for many Pentecostal-Charismatic churches including the case studies, also constitutes a spiritual crisis, hence the spiritual strategies and solutions.

A point I have reiterated throughout the thesis is that in order to understand Pentecostal-Charismatic approaches to politics; we first have to understand the theological grounds from which political responses and engagement are made, and not the other way around. In this research, I have taken the Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic “theology from below” seriously, and have questioned the appropriateness of the normative, Western-centric understanding of theology (see chapter two). Theology is not just done in the theological academy, or by the professional theologians alone. Increasingly attention is being paid to

“local theologies”, “ordinary theologies”, or “Narrative theology”.⁷⁵² These terminologies have come to represent theologies that emerge from local or indigenous expressions and reflections on the Christian faith, in specific locales. Beyond Pentecostal theology, narrative approaches have always featured prominently in African theology.

In the context of African Christianity and politics, Katongole describes the place of (Christian) stories and its importance in understanding “nation-state politics in Africa”.⁷⁵³ He writes that, stories do not

only shape how we view reality but also how we respond to life...Stories not only shape our values, aims, and goals; they define the range of what is desirable and what is possible. Stories, therefore, are not simply fictional narratives meant for our entertainment; stories are part of our social ecology. They’re embedded in us and form the very heart of our cultural, economic, religious, and political worlds.⁷⁵⁴

Even though Katongole does not directly discuss Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, he refers to the possible effects of stories on political life in Africa. Katangole’s reference to uncovering “underlying stories” is what I have termed in this thesis as inner logics or theo-political narratives. Focusing on theo-political narratives gives us a fresh way to talk about Pentecostal-Charismatic stories of divine encounters — as narratives that shape unique political expectations and characters.⁷⁵⁵

Richard Burgess also follows a similar approach in his work in the Nigerian context. Pentecostal-Charismatic theologies are often buried in sermons, prayers, testimonies and popular literature. They are now recognised by academics as important sources for theological reflection globally.⁷⁵⁶ Burgess identifies Pentecostal-Charismatic theology as an enacted theology that emanates from reflection and practice, and is in contrast to the more

⁷⁵² See Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004); Richard Burgess, “Freedom from the Past and Faith for the Future: Nigerian Pentecostal Theology in Global Perspective” *PentecoStudies*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2008), pp. 29-63; Joseph G. Healey, *Towards an African Narrative Theology* (Orbis Books, 1996).

⁷⁵³ Emmanuel Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 2.

⁷⁵⁴ Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa*, 2.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁶ See Peter D. Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience: An Ecumenical Encounter* (Oregon: Pickwick, 2012).

formalised written theology of the European mission churches.⁷⁵⁷ I have approached my own research by focusing on the “ordinary”, “contextual”, or implicit theological constructions of my case studies.⁷⁵⁸ I therefore pay attention to sermons, prayers, testimonies and other theological narratives and constructions of my interlocutors in relation to how they position themselves in Kenya’s politics.

Methodologically my work reflects a closer theological reading of prophecies and interviews, sermons, prayers songs, and embodied theological practices as it allowed me to start with the experiences and practices of my interlocutors. My ethno-theological approach provided an entry point into the lives of the congregations and individual members. As a result, my study captured both personal stories and corporate worship and its intersection with political life. In the case studies section, (see chapter 3-5), I gave attention to life stories in order to better appreciate the worldviews that shape the theological concepts that emerges out of everyday experiences in the Kenyan context. As I observed concerning Marshall’s approach, the voices of “ordinary” Nigerian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians are overshadowed by the dense engagement with continental philosophers, which is similar in many ways to Wariboko’s approach.

In Wariboko’s, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, for example, a discussion of the practical effects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity on (Nigerian) society receives marginal attention in the last chapter. Moreover, in his analysis of African Pentecostal-Charismatic political theology, he does little with indigenous conceptions of power and very little engagement with African theology, in spite of its rich literature on contextualisation and indigenisation of Christianity.⁷⁵⁹

⁷⁵⁷ See Richard Burgess, *Nigeria’s Christian Revolution: The Civil War Revival and Its Pentecostal Progeny* (1967-2006) (Eugene: WIPF & STOCK, 2008).

⁷⁵⁸ See Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (New York: Orbis, 2004).

⁷⁵⁹ See Nimi Wariboko, “Political Theology from Tillich to Pentecostalism in Africa” in *Paul Tillich and Pentecostal Theology*, edited by Nimi Wariboko and Amos Yong, pp. 126-140. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).

The concept of spiritual empowerment, I have argued (see chapter six), draws on indigenous religious concepts of power. The prayers, prophecies, indeed the theo-political narratives come from a deep appreciation of specific historical and present socio-political and cultural issues and predicaments. In the context of indigenous religious ritual and in Kenyan Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, words are accorded performative functions. The “dimensions of ‘saying’ and ‘doing’ therefore belongs to the same action, not different types of actions.”⁷⁶⁰ In this way, we can see the three narratives of engagement, i.e., holiness-prophetic, spiritual-dominionist, and prosperity-dominionist, as creative theological reinterpretations and response to concrete socio-political situations that both nourishes and challenges it.

⁷⁶⁰ Ray, “Performative Utterances”, 23.

List of Interviewees: Ministry of Repentance and Holiness

Name	Sex	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
D Litunda	M	Nairobi	June 25 2015
S Mutiso	M	Yaya, Nairobi	June 25 2015
D Baroni	M	Yaya, Nairobi	June 25 2015
M Kirui	F	Nairobi	29 June 2015
A Obonyo	M	Nairobi	29 June 2015
N Kibet	F	Nairobi	29 June 2015
L Onyango	M	Nairobi	29 June 2015
K Njoki	F	Nairobi	29 June 2015
Kalonzo	M	Yaya, Nairobi	30 June 2015
Otieno	F	Yaya, Nairobi	30 June 2015
R Ochieng	F	Yaya, Nairobi	30 June 2015
W Kirui	F	Yaya, Nairobi	30 June 2015
A Kitonga	M	Nairobi	15 July 2015
O Mungai	F	Nairobi	15 July 2015
P Simuyu	M	Nairobi	15 July 2015
I Onjoro	M	Nairobi	15 July 2015
Kinuthia	M	Nairobi	15 July 2015
T Njiri	F	Nairobi	17 July 2015
A Anaya	F	Yaya, Nairobi	17 July 2015
P Achieng'	F	Nairobi	19 July 2015
B Abonyo	M	Nairobi	19 July 2015
Keya	F	Nairobi	19 July 2015
T Rotich	M	Nairobi	19 July 2015
T Githinji	M	Nairobi	26 July 2015
Irungu	M	Nairobi	26 July 2015
P Oluoch	M	Yaya, Nairobi	26 July 2015
E Owuor	F	Yaya, Nairobi	26 July 2015
Gitonga	M	Eldoret	24 August 2015
V Kyaka	F	Eldoret	24 August 2015
D Kimani	M	Eldoret	26 August 2015
S Kibaliach	M	Eldoret	26 August 2015
N Mwiti	M	Eldoret	28 August 2015
M Oloo	M	Eldoret	28 August 2015
L Chebet	M	Eldoret	28 August 2015
B Oduor	F	Eldoret	28 August 2015
M Opondo	F	Eldoret	30 August 2015
Oketch	F	Eldoret	30 August 2015
C Omollo	F	Eldoret	31 August 2015
Total:38 Female: 18 Male: 20			

List of Interviewees: JIAM

Name	Sex	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
E Ngugi	F	JIAM Nairobi	22 June 2014
A Odhiambo	M	JIAM Nairobi	22 June 2014
Ps Enoch	M	JIAM Nairobi	23 June 2014
F Mwingi	F	JIAM Nairobi	25 June 2014
C Maina	F	JIAM Nairobi	27 June 2014
J Mumbi	F	Telephone Interview	27 June 2014
M Waweri	F	JIAM Nairobi	29 June 2014
Ps. Duncan	F	JIAM Nairobi	30 June 2014
E Wangari	F	<i>Jua Kali</i> Nairobi	30 June 2014
R Wangecha	F	<i>Jua Kali</i> Nairobi	1 July 2014
C Kamende	F	<i>Jua Kali</i> Nairobi	1 July 2014
W Wairimu	F	<i>Jua Kali</i> Nairobi	3 July 2014
S Karanja	M	<i>Jua Kali</i> Nairobi	3 July 2014
A Onyango	M	JIAM Nairobi	3 July 2014
J Wangechi	F	JIAM Nairobi	27 July 2014
A Gitau	F	JIAM Nairobi	27 July 2014
E Karuiki	F	JIAM Nairobi	27 July 2014
M Wanjiru	F	JIAM Nairobi	3 August 2014
T Kahare	F	Telephone Interview	28 June 2015
S Atieno	M	JIAM Nairobi	28 June 2015
D Kamau	F	Telephone Interview	28 June 2015
S Kimotho	M	JIAM Nairobi	29 June 2015
S Mwangi	F	Telephone Interview	29 June 2015
T Mutua	F	Telephone Interview	29 June 2015
E Maina	M	JIAM Nairobi	29 June 2015
R Mwangi	F	Kibera Nairobi	3 July 2015
A Okeyo	M	Kibera Nairobi	3 July 2015
M Njoroge	M	JIAM Nairobi	5 July 2015
M Kimani	M	JIAM Nairobi	5 July 2015
A Wanjiru	F	JIAM Nairobi	5 July 2015
C Muthoni	M	JIAM Nairobi	7 September 2015
M Wanjiru	M	JIAM Nairobi	12 July 2015
G Karuiki	M	JIAM Nairobi	12 July 2015
W Mbula	M	JIAM Nairobi	12 July 2015
A Kibicho	F	JIAM Nairobi	12 July 2015
Total: 35 Female: 21 Male: 14			

List of Interviewees: El-Gibbor

Name	Sex	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
D Githii	M	Zambezi, Kikuyu	2 September 2014
D Githii	M	Gitambaya, Ruiri, Kiambu	24 June 2015
W Wangari	F	Ruiri, Kiambu	24 June 2015
W Njoroge	F	Ruiri, Kiambu	26 June 2015
M Karuiki	F	Ruiri, Kiambu	26 June 2015
M Mukami	F	Thogoto, Kikuyu	26 June 2015
N Kinuthia	M	Ruiri, Kiambu	2 July 2015
P T Kimani	M	Ruiri, Kiambu	2 July 2015
M Waweru	F	Ruiri, Kiambu	2 July 2015
R Kimotho	M	Ruiri, Kiambu	2 July 2015
A Kamau	F	Telephone Interview	2 July 2015
C Kamau	M	Ruiri, Kiambu	4 July 2015
R Maina	F	Ruiri, Kiambu	4 July 2015
J Karuiki	M	Ruiri, Kiambu	4 July 2015
G Kimani	M	Ruiri, Kiambu	6 July 2015
Prophet N Paul	M	Kikuyu	25 July 2015
Pastor M John	M	Kikuyu	25 July 2015
J Mumbi	M	Kikuyu	28 July 2015
Muthoni	F	Kikuyu	28 July 2015
Wangechi	F	Nakuru	31 July 2015
M Njeri	F	Nakuru	31 July 2015
D Githii	F	Nakuru	31 July 2015
J Kinoti	M	Nyeri	21 August 2015
W Wangui	F	Nyeri	21 August 2015
Prophet Paul M	M	Nyeri	21 August 2015
Odhiambo	F	Gitambaya, Ruiri, Kiambu	23 August
E Nguruji	F	Ruiri, Kiambu	23 August
Ps Wainana	M	Telephone Interview	23 August
K Githinji	M	Gitambaya, Ruiri, Kiambu	23 August
S Mwangi	M	Telephone Interview	23 August
R Wangui	F	Ruiri, Kiambu	23 August
R Muchanga	F	Ruiri, Kiambu	23 August
C Karuiki	F	Ruiri, Kiambu	23 August
M Akinyi	F	Ruiri, Kiambu	23 August
B Kiare	F	Ruiri, Kiambu	23 August
Total: 35 Female: 19 Male: 16			

Appendix One

Ministry of Repentance and Holiness

STATEMENT OF FAITH

THE HOLY BIBLE

We believe that the Bible is the principle foundation and the only unchanging, infallible and authoritative Word of GOD completely inspired by the Mighty Holy Spirit. The Holy Bible is the highest and final authority in every aspect of life as created by GOD

We believe in One GOD; eternally existent in three Persons: GOD the Father, GOD the Son, and GOD the Holy Spirit

THE TRINITY

THE LORD JESUS

We believe in the deity of our LORD Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of GOD, His virgin birth, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, His death to completely redeem sin for all men

SALVATION

We believe that all men are born with a sinful nature and that the work of the Cross completely redeemed man from the power of sin and death. And that those who believe in Christ JESUS as LORD and Saviour are saved.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity and the baptism of the Holy Spirit is manifested by the fruit and the gifts of the Spirit

We believe that the Church of Christ is the eternal and universal Body of Christ JESUS consisting of all those who have accepted the work of the atonement

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE RAPTURE

We believe that the Rapture is the imminent, premillennial return of Jesus Christ for His holy Church when the dead in Christ shall be raised in glorified bodies, and those living in holiness shall be transformed into glorified bodies without tasting death and get caught up in the air with the LORD JESUS

We believe in the ordinance of water baptism by immersion in obedience to the Word of GOD. And all those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour should be baptized in water as a public profession of their faith in Christ

WATER BAPTISM

REPENTANCE & HOLINESS

We believe that the only means of being cleansed from sin is through true Repentance in the precious blood of Christ JESUS and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit who enables the Christian to live in holiness

PREPARING THE WAY

We believe that the church has entered into a critical dispensation for Preparing The Way of the LORD JESUS in observance of absolute Righteousness and Holiness

“The Prophetic Calling of the Man of God: Getting to Know the concealed side of the Prophet”

<https://repentandpreparetheway.org/TheConcealedSideOfTheProphet.pdf>

list of David Owuor’s video and audio prophecies and teachings found in the following websites below.

<https://mega.nz/#F!NvY31KYR!GhMcyqwf4Jp1XC9tQupDBg>

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeBSbxVH1Pv1301539LZXjW44Bxr8sXjf>

Appendix Two

Jesus is Alive Ministries JIAM

Our Beliefs

Our Vision

‘Africa Shall Be Saved.’

Mission Statement

The mission statement of Jesus Is Alive Ministries is to reach the world with the gospel of JESUS CHRIST.

The fulfilment 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 of GOD. We are called to bring salvation, healing, deliverance, prosperity, redemption and righteousness to all the nations of the world.

We proclaim that “JESUS IS ALIVE” and that HE is sitting in the heavenly places at the right hand of GOD the father, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. (Ephesians 1:20-23).

This mission is being accomplished through the joint efforts of JESUS IS ALIVE MINISTRIES and the staff on a worldwide scale, through the use of television, webcasts, radio, crusades, conferences, books and tapes.

This ministry has increased tremendously through the prayers and financial support of our Harvest Partners and other ministries of the same purpose.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

Some of the Teachings of Bishop Margaret Wanjiru

The Three Levels of Witchcraft.

Witchcraft can manifest it's self in several ways. Let's start with what to do when you have demonic dreams. You need to pray against those demonic dreams and even sometimes pray and fast until you feel a relief; until you feel in your spirit that you have overcome the purpose of the devil. Most of the dreams have animals, some of them have got monkeys, they call them chimpanzee. Some of you think that monkeys are ok because some of you were taught in university that human beings came from monkeys so you imagine there are some characteristics between human beings and monkeys which look alike. I don't care that there is any characteristics which look alike, I don't look like a monkey and they don't look like me the fact that they can eat a banana does not mean that they look like human beings. Sorcerers and witches come and manifest in the spiritual realm in form of dreams. Destroy them and scatter them in the name of Jesus Christ. Many other wicked dreams including sexual dreams also manifest. Sexual dreams are very defiling dreams. some of you have this sexual being that comes to have sex with you in the dreams and yet maybe you are single and even if you are married, you know this spiritual being is not your spouse and you know that after such a dream you feel so defiled like you really committed sin. In the spiritual realm there is a sin committed, and that is why when we renounce covenants with Satan, we

renounce those that we know and those that we do not know. Sexual dreams are dangerous. You can be praying for a breakthrough and may be you pray and fast yet the prayers are not manifesting because you are already defiled. The sin of defilement is the worst because once you are defiled, it doesn't matter how much you are defiled but you are still defiled.

Some of these spiritual beings that comes to have sex with human beings at night, some of them are spiritual husbands and wives. These spiritual husbands and spiritual wives are so jealous, so jealous that even if you force your way and get married, you will never enjoy your marriage. They are always there defiling you, they torment, they frustrate you and you end up a very depressed person, they are also so jealous that if you are single you remain single so that they keep on visiting you. They don't want you to enter marriage; they want you to remain theirs. Today bury them so that they will never resurrect, the grave they dug for us , we are putting them inside, once these spiritual beings are destroyed people will start enjoying their marriage.

Free masonry

They operate under the red witches, that is why you find them in churches because the power of God is being made manifest in the church and once you keep them in church they kill the power of God in church. That is why we have nice churches on nice building yet no power of God in those churches. If there is a symbol of masonic spirit in church, it must be brought down, the church must guard against the powers of freemasonry. The free masonry believes that they must be very influential, they want to hold the best jobs and positions, best leadership positions in the nation.

Free masonry curse people through **masonic curses**. We must pray against masonic curses. They release their curses and when they release their curses, these curses are supposed to bring you down to just destroy what you are doing, second, to kill your influence through rumour mongering and gossiping about you, that is why when you see servants of the God attacked and rumours are going round, don't join those rumours because the author of those rumours had a target.

Once you start becoming influential, you become the target of freemasons and therefore you must pray every day against the Masonic people, against their tongues, against their sacrifices, almost every day. The Masonic curses destroy your finances, your businesses, they devastate you in a way that you become so discouraged you start hating your own job and you want to come out of your own job, yet a promotion is right away and you want to come out of your job! Ephesians 6 says after you have done all, stand. You can't be running from one place to another because some people said something negative about you. Masonic curses are real and if you expect to prosper, to rise up to the top, you must deal with them because within their own circle, they favour the people of their own brotherhood; the people of their own association so for you to prosper you must deal with Masonic spirits. We must pray against the queen of the heaven, it is a child of the prince of the air. Queen of the heaven works very closely with free masons creating lack and want; if find that you are lacking money for school fees, you don't have enough money to pay all bills, and there is always a shortage in your life! yet we read psalm 23 the Lord is my shepherd I shall not be in want! Today you must enter into rest in the name of Jesus Christ. The forces of darkness do not operate seasonally, they are always there and you therefore must keep on praying every day. Pray perpetually!

False prophets or agents of lucifer

They are agents of the devil.

False prophets, diviners, enchanters, witchdoctors, sorcerers, witches operate under red witchcraft.

The most effective way to deal with them is to pray against the red witchcraft; this way you are dealing with them right in their kingdom.

janes and the jambres

They withstood Moses during the days of Moses removing the children of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land. The janes and jambres in witchcraft are called Capricorns. They are small, short human beings, they are so short that they reach just around the knees or slightly above the knees. They don't walk in singles, they walk in multitudes. They are so many that if they surround you, whenever you try to go, you can't go because your legs are not moving. They are so wicked that in your spirit you will be feeling you are feeling breakthrough; you are feeling that God is taking you somewhere but your legs are not getting you there. When Capricorns surround you, you cannot enter into your possession. Today we destroy them in Jesus name.

Caging

Caging that is done over people's life so that they do not progress in life. They make people become stagnant. Caging also comes in properties that are supposed to be occupied and nobody wants to possess and all over sudden the building is covered with darkness.

Guarding spirit

They are demonic spirits that watch over the souls for example the souls of people who are not born again so that they will not get born again and if they get born again they backslide. That is why once we lead people to the Lord, we must watch over them and ensure that they remain saved.

They have an assignment to keep the names of people in the book of death but we have an assignment to remove those names from the book of death and put them in the book of life by leading people to the kingdom of God.

They use tongues to destroy people. Pray against them, cut off their tongues, and nullify them in the name of Jesus Christ.

White witchcraft works with a lot of discouragement and accusing the brethren, it uses the tongues to destroy people, to spread malice.

spirits of babylon

The kingdom of babylon is a parent to kingdom of jezebel. White witchcraft is so concealed by the time you know, it has done some damage. Rumours against you. The Bible calls it the daughter of Babylon, daughter of Chaldean, the Bible further says that she will know widowhood meaning that nobody will comfort her, she will also be childless meaning that she operates with others. But she will be destroyed.

Jezebelic spirits in white witchcraft has an assignment to destroy marriage. It kills sexual appetite in marriage.

Isaiah 47- jezebel spirit is a feminine spirit. it is a woman type spirit. She is also called the lady of the kingdoms. She is coming down in dust in Jesus name. Daughter of jezebel, daughter of Chaldeans also called the daughter of babylon.

Prayer points

Blood of Jesus destroy every witchcraft.

Every demonic covenant be destroyed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Caging is removed in the name of Jesus Christ.

Spiritual wickedness is rendered powerless in the name of Jesus Christ.

Put on the whole armour of the lord.

<https://jiam.org/the-three-levels-of-witchcraft/>

Appendix Three

El Gibbor Evangelism, Intercessory and Training Altar

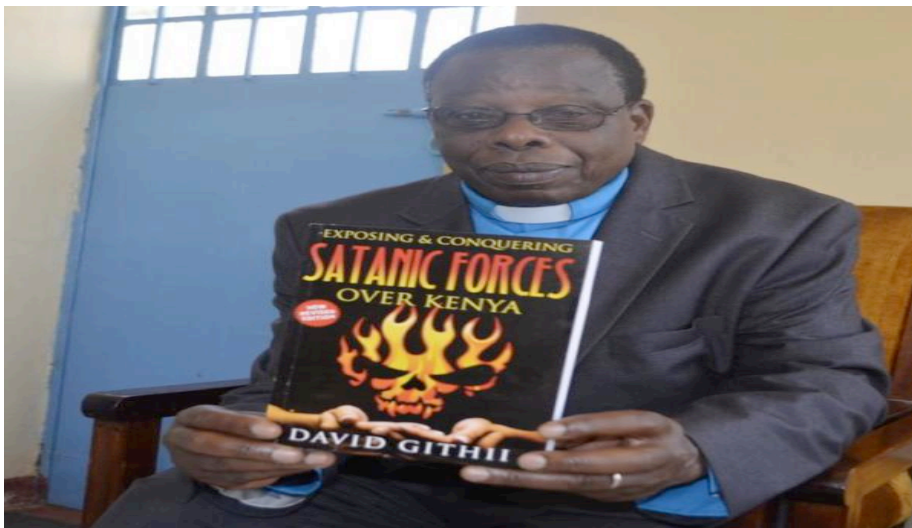
The Goal

The goal of El-Gibbor Ministries is to teach, equip and train the disciples of Christ who will sacrificially advance the GREAT COMMISSION as spelled out by Jesus in Matthew 28:16-19 and for which Jesus emptied himself and sacrificially died for humankind's redemption.

Vision Statement

El Gibbor Ministries desires to devotedly carry the Evangelism, Intercessory Prayer, and Training mantle as stated in the Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-19. This ministry will evangelize non-Christians and train Christians for church leadership to back up and advance the Kingdom of God.

<https://elgibborministry.weebly.com/>



Rev Dr David Githii with a copy of his book, *Exposing & Conquering Satanic Forces over Kenya*

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List of Abbreviations

A.A.C.C All Africa Conference of Churches

ACK Anglican Church of Kenya

AFM The Apostolic Faith Mission

AGOC African Greek Orthodox Church

A.I. C African Instituted/Independent Churches

AIM Africa inland Mission

AMHGC African Mission of [the] Holy Ghost Church

AINC Africa Israel Church Nineveh

AIPC African Independent Pentecostal Church

AOC African Orthodox Church

BM Bethel Mission

C.B.D Central Business District

CCEA Cross Church East Africa

CHGCEA Christian Holy Ghost Church of East Africa

C.M.S Church Missionary Society

CITAM Christ is the Answer Ministries

COCA Church of Christ in Africa

D.C. Deliverance Church

El-Gibbor El-Gibbor Evangelism, Intercessory and Training Altar

EAK Evangelical Alliance of Kenya

E.F.K. Evangelical Fellowship

EPCK Elim Pentecostal Church of Kenya

FPK Farmers party

FEM Faith Evangelistic Ministry

FEICCK Federation of Evangelical and Indigenous Christian Churches of Kenya

FGCK The Full Gospel Churches of Kenya

FPCK Free Pentecostal Fellowship in Kenya

HGSK Holy Ghost Society of Kenya

J.I.A.M Jesus Is Alive Ministries

KAG Kenyan Assemblies of God

KCA Kikuyu Central Association

LP Labour Party of Kenya

KFPC Kenya Foundation of the Prophets Church

HGCZ Holy Spirit Church of Zayun

HGCK Holy Ghost Church of Kenya

KANU The Kenya African National Union

KISA Kikuyu Independent Schools Association

KKEA Kikuyu Karing'a Educational Association

KNCPCM Kenya National Congress of Pentecostal Churches and Ministries

MHGCEA Musanda Holy Ghost Church of East Africa

MRH Ministry of Repentance and Holiness

NaRC National Rainbow Coalition

NCCCK National Council of Churches Kenya

NTCOG New Testament Church of God

OAIAC The Organisation of African Instituted Churches

PAG Pentecostal Assemblies of God

PAOC Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada

PCEA Presbyterian Church of East Africa

PEFA Pentecostal Evangelical Fellowship of Africa

RC Republican Congress Party of Kenya

RGCK Redeemed Gospel Churches of Kenya

RHGCEA Ruwe Holy Ghost Church of East Africa

URP United Republican party

WP Wiper party

WGC Worldwide Gospel Church

Map of Kenya

Map of Nairobi

