

**A MISSIOLOGICAL STUDY OF PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN  
AN INFORMAL SETTLEMENT IN NAIROBI, KENYA.**

**By**

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**FEBRUARY 2007**

**STATEMENT**

**STUDENT NUMBER 3441-368-5**

I declare that

**A missiological study of Pentecostal churches in an informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya**

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed. .... Date .....

Name .....

## DEDICATION

To Anita, Sheila and Sandie,

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is a product of the privilege I have had over the past seven years of working with pastors and church leaders involved in ministry in Nairobi's informal settlements. Some of them appear in this thesis but the vast majority of them do not. I would like to thank all those who I have had the privilege of working with over the years and who have been gracious enough to share with me in the joys and struggles of ministry in this city.

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Various people have helped in the research and the production of the thesis. Anne Kimani and Alvin Mbola from the Centre for Urban Mission assisted in the transcribing and translation and Alvin conducted the initial enumeration of churches and businesses. My thanks too to Andrew Avina who spent many hours transcribing the video recordings and assisting in translation.

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## **Abstract**

East Africa, with Nairobi at its hub, is currently experiencing unprecedented rates of urban population growth. Much of this growth is absorbed into informal settlements which, in the case of Nairobi, house over 55% of the city's population. The largest of these settlements is Kibera with a population totaling approximately 700,000.

The thesis focuses on Pentecostal churches in Gatwikera, one of the twelve urban villages which together make up Kibera. It is argued that what is emerging within these communities is a distinctive type of church which is defined as informal Pentecostal. Consideration is given to why mainline churches appear to struggle within the informal sector while these churches appear to thrive. The explanation for this is given in the way the Pentecostal churches emerge along the same lines as the informal economy. The thesis sets out to identify the distinctive nature of the churches and the way in which they exemplify a different form of Christian presence in the settlements to that of mainline churches and Roho churches. The study offers an analysis of their ministry and their pastors and considers their relationship to the flows of the rural urban continuum and the liminality of informal settlements.

The study seeks to identify the contribution these churches make to mission within the community particularly looking at their role in social transformation. It concludes that while the churches provide an important Christian presence within the community and social capital to enable people to better survive and retain hope within the settlements they offer little towards the much needed social transformation within the settlements. It is further argued that for this to be achieved, attention needs to be given to the development of appropriate forms of training and the facilitation of higher degrees of networking and collaboration.

The thesis is structured around the pastoral cycle which forms both the theoretical framework and the research methodology. The suitability of the pastoral cycle as a research method is explored within the thesis.

## KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

Charismatic Churches  
Informal Settlements  
Missiology  
Pastoral Cycle  
Pentecostal Churches  
Praxis  
Transformation

## ABBREVIATIONS

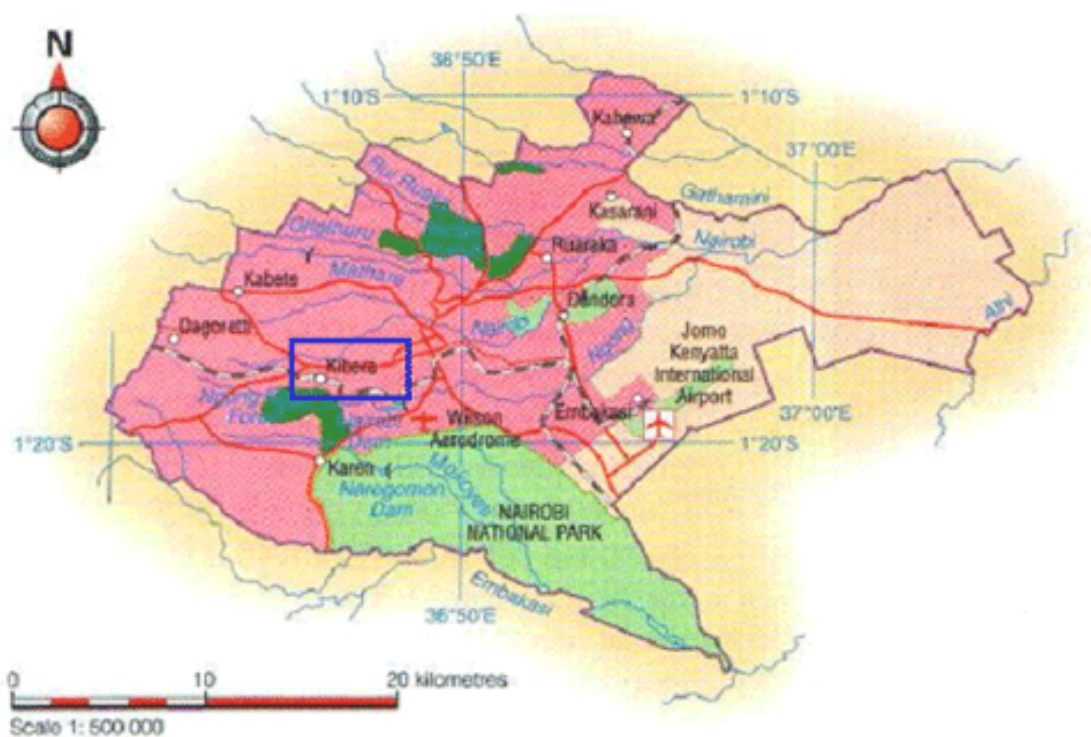
<b>ACK</b>	Anglican Church of Kenya
<b>AICs</b>	African Independent Churches
<b>CUM</b>	Centre for Urban Mission
<b>GCC</b>	Gatwikera Church of Christ.
<b>GPC</b>	Gatwikera Presbyterian Church
<b>GTJ</b>	Grace and Truth of Jesus
<b>JGC</b>	Jesus Gospel Centre
<b>PCEA</b>	Presbyterian Church of East Africa
<b>PMLM</b>	Praise Miracle Liberation Ministry
<b>PAG</b>	Pentecostal Assemblies of God.
<b>PPC</b>	The Pentecostal Prayer Centre
<b>RWGC</b>	Restoration of the World Gospel Centre
<b>SGC</b>	Shamma Gospel Church
<b>SJACK</b>	St Jerome Anglican Church
<b>WCCM</b>	We Care Christian Ministries

## MAP OF KENYA SHOWING NAIROBI



Source  
<http://www.cnn.com/HEALTH/9710/25/kenya.aids/kenya.nairobi.map.lg.jpg>

## MAP OF NAIROBI SHOWING KIBERA



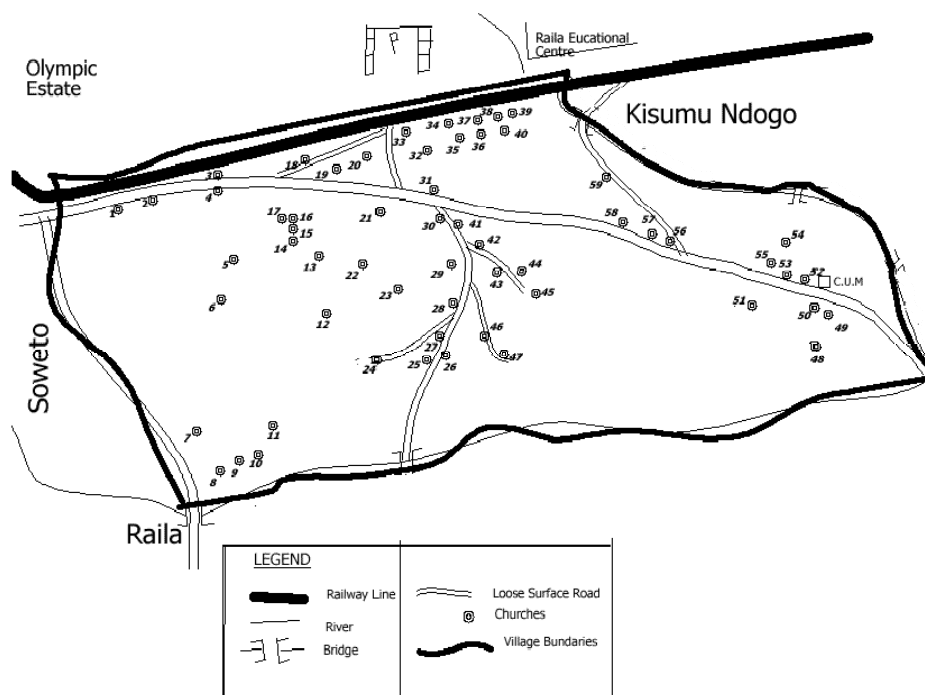
Source <http://www.stayalivekibera.org/Pics/nairobi-map.gif>



## Gatwiker



## Map Showing Churches in Gatwikera



### Churches.

1. Upendo Centre Church
2. Revelation Miracle Church Centre
3. Jesus Gospel Centre
4. Jehovah's Witnesses
5. Mowar Roho Israel Church
6. African Divine Church
7. Holy Ghost Church Full Gospel Fellowship
8. Holy Trinity Church of Africa
9. Nomiya Luo Church
10. Katwikera Lyahuka Church of East Africa
11. Musanda Holy Ghost Church
12. Disciples of Christ Church
13. Jesus Gospel Center (Mugumo)
14. Holy Salvation c.c.
15. We Care Ministry
16. Grace Ministries
17. Restoration of the World Gospel Center
18. Seventh Day Adventist
19. Faith of the World Salvation Church Kibera
20. Galilaya Community Center
21. Shammah Gospel Church
22. Pentecostal Revival Church of Christ
23. Roho Israel Church
24. Presbyterian Church of East Africa
25. Baptist Church
26. Brilliant Holy Gospel Church
27. Maranatha Church
28. St. Lazarus Faith (Yie) Church
29. Gatwikira Worship Center (Pentecostal Church)
30. Daughter church of St Michael's Roman Catholic parish Langata
31. Teko Injili Roho Mtakatifu
32. Musanda Hoy Ghost Church of East Africa
33. Gatwikera Church of Christ
34. ACF Ambassadors of Christ Fellowship
35. St. Philip Church
36. Pentecostal Church of Mercy
37. United Church Gatwikera
38. Nguvu Roho Mtakatifu
39. Musanda Hoy Ghost Church of East Africa
40. United Church of Christ
41. The Children of God Regeneration Center
42. Katwikera Village Friends Church Nairobi Yearly Meeting (Quakers)
43. Holy Church of Christ (Joler)
44. ARMC Gatwekera Church
45. Lion of Jude
46. Full Gospel Fellowship Deliverance Church
47. Great Altercall Fellowship Church
48. Holy Spirit Church of East Africa
49. Pentecostal Evangelism Team Universal Church
50. Living Stone Church
51. Pentecostal Prayer Centre
52. Faith of the World Salvation Church
53. St. Jerome Anglican Church of Kenya
54. United Cross Church of Africa
55. Faith and Deliverance Church.
56. African Divine Church
57. Holy Gospel Injili Takatifu Church
58. Praise Miracle Liberation Ministry.
59. Pentecostal Assemblies of God

### Terms:

Roho- Spirit (Swahili)  
 Yie- Belief (Luo)  
 Teko- Strength (Luo)  
 Injili- Gospel (Swahili)  
 Galilaya- Galilee (Swahili)  
 Upendo- Love (Swahili)  
 Takatifu -Holy (Swahili)  
 Nguvu- Strength (Swahili)  
 Mowar- Saved (Luo)  
 Lyahuka Be separate (Luo)  
 Musanda Location in Western Kenya (Luhya)





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## **VOLUME 2**

Transcripts of the services and the interviews



# **Chapter One**

## **The Research Design**

### ***Introduction.***

The journey to the training centre where I work includes a fifty meter path which winds its way from the point of entry into Kibera informal settlement to the crossing point of the Nairobi to Kisumu railway line. Within that distance, depending on the comings and goings or various congregations, I pass up to seven churches. A number of these are what will later be termed informal Pentecostal churches. This thesis attempts to explore the ways in which these churches emerge within the community and considers their missiological significance.

The first part of this opening chapter outlines the reasoning behind why I chose to undertake this research and the hypotheses and research questions which are to be explored within it. In the second part of the chapter the pastoral cycle is introduced and explored as the theoretical framework for the thesis. Here, some consideration is given to the origins of the cycle and to the different models of it which have been developed. Particular attention is given to the hermeneutical principles underlying the process of theological reflection which, in this thesis, I refer to as discernment.

The cycle not only forms the theoretical framework but also, by incorporating a slightly different version, provides the shape to the research method and to the structure of the thesis. This is considered in some detail in the third and concluding part of this chapter.

## **PART ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH.**

### ***1.1 Statement of the problem.***

The city of Nairobi has a population of approximately four million people, of whom more than 55% live in the informal settlements, occupying just 5% of the residential land (USAID 1993:1). In these densely populated areas of the city people live in squalid conditions in temporary or semi-permanent structures with little or no security of tenure. Most residents live in 10ft. by 10ft. structures made of mud, sticks and iron sheets. There is a lack of basic infrastructure, such that many homes have no running water, no electricity, no proper road access and sewerage disposal is provided only by open streams. Similarly, health and education and other social provisions are at best inadequate and frequently non-existent. The vast majority of the population of the settlements live in conditions of urban poverty with high levels of unemployment. The situation is made worse by increasing levels of rural to urban migration resulting in a percentage rate of urban population growth which is amongst the highest in the developing world (Scheidtweiler & Scholz 2004:5).

While social provisions are few, there is no shortage of churches in the informal settlements. The largest of these is generally the Roman Catholic Church. Protestant churches including the Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist, African Inland Church and Anglican Church are to be found, but their presence is limited and the ministry of these churches tends to be focused on more wealthy areas of the city.<sup>1</sup> The majority of churches in the informal settlements are African Instituted Churches and Charismatic and Pentecostal churches. Although these churches are numerous, many struggle to provide a sustainable ministry and they are frequently under resourced. The vast potential of the Church to make an impact on the conditions of the informal settlements seldom seems to be realised. As if to illustrate this, an oft quoted, but generally not substantiated, statistic suggests that the largest informal settlement, Kibera, has more churches than latrines (Eales April 2005:2).

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<sup>1</sup> A strategy document produced by Nairobi Diocese, Anglican Church of Kenya, found that out of 45 parish churches in the city only one, St Prisca's Korogocho, was situated in a slum. Diocese of Nairobi June 2003 *A Diocesan Strategy for the Informal Settlements 2003 - 2006*

## Chapter 1. The Research Design

Tropical Africa has the world's largest percentage of urban populations residing in slums and UN projections indicate a doubling of slum populations globally within the next 30 years, with one of the highest rates of growth being in Tropical Africa.<sup>2</sup> Urbanisation and the proliferation of informal settlements in Africa appears to be accompanied by an increase in Charismatic and Pentecostal churches. Paul Gifford (1994:241) noted that the most striking characteristic of African Christianity in the late 1980s and early 1990s was the proliferation of new autonomous Pentecostal churches. A similar process is evidenced in Latin America. Cox (1995:167), notes that Pentecostal growth is most evident among poorer communities in urban contexts. In the 13 municipalities of Rio de Janeiro he finds there are three times as many Pentecostals in the *favelas* as in the middle income areas of the city, with highest numbers being among the low wage sectors of the city. Similarly in Nairobi Charismatic and Pentecostal churches appear to be emerging fastest in the poorest areas of the city.

Two significant questions need to be asked about this process. Firstly why do Pentecostal churches appear to flourish within the context of informal settlements while mainline churches appear to lack a significant presence? In discussing this I will particularly consider the prevalence of what will come to be defined as informal Pentecostal churches. A more detailed description of what is meant by informal Pentecostal churches will be given later in the thesis. However as a working definition they may be understood as Pentecostal churches which reflect some of the characteristics of the informal economy. I have described these churches as Pentecostal whilst being conscious that many commentators form distinctions between Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. These differences are discussed in the text but I have chosen to remain with the broader term of Pentecostal to reflect the self definition of the churches and the way in which they need to be understood as part of the wider Pentecostal movement. Consideration will be

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<sup>2</sup> This figure on slum populations is taken from the UN report *The Challenge of Slums: Global report on Human Settlements 2003*. London: Earthscan Publications P.XXV The report refers to both slums, and informal settlement. In the interest of precision of terms this paper focuses specifically on informal settlements. A discussion of terms is found later in the paper.

## Chapter 1. The Research Design

given to the nature of these churches and what causes their proliferation within the context of the informal sector.

Secondly, given their presence in the informal settlements, the question will be explored as to the role of informal Pentecostal churches in the transformation of urban poor communities and how can that role be enhanced.

### ***1.2 Justification for the research.***

I have been involved in urban ministry since 1988 when I began working as an Anglican clergyman in Bermondsey, an Urban Priority Area<sup>3</sup> in Central London. As a curate I worked under an Anglican Vicar, Canon Ted Roberts, who, in the 1960s and 70s had pioneered a Locally Ordained Ministry (LOM) programme in Bethnal Green in the East End of London. The programme was developed out of a desire to foster local ordained leadership from among working class men (there was no ordination of women at this time) employed primarily in the London docks, and to challenge the perceived middle class captivity of ordained ministry in the Church of England. Whilst in Bermondsey a similar experiment in Locally Ordained Ministry was developed. I became involved as a tutor within that scheme throughout much of the period that I was in South London. It was that experience that particularly nurtured an interest in encouraging and developing ministries amongst people living in marginalized urban communities.

I remained in parish ministry in London until moving to Nairobi 1999. Initially I was working with the Anglican Church of Kenya, Diocese of Nairobi, in in-service training for clergy. In researching the training needs of clergy I noted that parishes covering significant informal settlement areas were usually led by the least trained clergy. I therefore began a process of working with the diocese to develop a diocesan ministry strategy for the informal settlements.

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<sup>3</sup> Urban Priority Areas (UPAs) were defined according levels of urban deprivation. Criteria for defining an area as UPA can be found in the Church of England document *Faith in the City*.

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One of the significant outcomes of the strategy formulation process with Nairobi Diocese was the recognition of the training needs of clergy and lay leaders in urban mission. An earlier survey conducted by researchers from Daystar University (Downes, Oehrig & Shane 1989:45) had similarly noted that less than 1% of Nairobi's church leaders had received any training or orientation in urban ministry. In response to this perceived training need, in 2001 I began working with Carlile College to develop a course in urban mission. Teaching of this course began in 2002. The course represented a new departure for Carlile College. As an Anglican institution it began for the first time offering a course where the majority students were not Anglican, with the largest group coming from Pentecostal churches. Criteria for entry into the programme were based on residence and ministry in an informal settlement rather than denominational affiliation. Teaching on that programme and engaging with students nurtured an interest in the ministry of Pentecostal churches in the informal settlements, an interest that lies at the heart of this thesis. During 2002 I also arranged to be attached to an Anglican parish, St Jerome Gatwikera, situated in Kibera, the largest informal settlement in Nairobi. This continues to be the church where I serve and minister on a Sunday.

In 2003, in an attempt to create training that was more contextually relevant, the college took the decision to rent a property in Kibera as a location from which to develop and deliver training in urban mission with a specific focus on ministry in the informal settlements. This was the beginning of the Tafakari<sup>4</sup> Centre for Urban Mission (CUM) and in that year I was seconded from Nairobi Diocese to join the staff of Carlile College and develop the nascent urban mission programme. I currently serve as the Director of the Tafakari Centre for Urban Mission. The Centre is an iron sheet structure within the heart of Gatwikera, one of the villages within Kibera. From here we develop and deliver both grassroots training for Kibera pastors and higher diploma level courses in urban mission.

From the very onset of developing the urban mission programme we agreed to give priority to training pastors who are living and working in informal settlements. The

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<sup>4</sup> Tafakari is Kiswahili for "to consider" suggesting looking at something in depth or with intensity.

## Chapter 1. The Research Design

majority of users of CUM are pastors and leaders of small, local Pentecostal churches. It is my involvement with this group of pastors, and my observations of their ministries, that prompted me to begin research into their models of ministry and how these impact on communities in the informal settlements. Such churches are seldom taken seriously by mainline churches and yet they have a presence in urban poor communities which far exceeds that of most mainline churches including the Anglican Church to which I belong.<sup>5</sup>

Although there is wealth of research on the development and growth of Pentecostalism in Africa and a sizeable body of research on African Instituted Churches, there is paucity of information regarding the growth of Pentecostalism in Africa's urban informal settlements. This is so in spite of two critical factors. Firstly, the informal settlements are the growing reality of urbanization in Africa. Secondly, Pentecostal churches are, I would argue, the dominant and fastest growing expression of church life in these communities and thus have a significant impact on urban Christianity in Africa. It is therefore essential to develop an understanding of these churches and offer some analysis of the nature and impact of their ministries.

This research project follows on from earlier research I conducted in Korogocho, another informal settlement in Nairobi, as part of an MTh programme (Smith 2001) undertaken through Westminster College, Oxford. I come to the research as one actively involved in training among churches in the informal settlements. It is hoped that the process and outcomes of this current research will be of benefit to the development of training programmes at the Centre for Urban Mission.

### ***1.3 The hypotheses.***

1. The rapid growth and spread of informal Pentecostal churches in the informal settlements of African cities is closely related to the demands, structures and expectations of the informal economy operating within this context. These churches

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<sup>5</sup> The size of presence of different churches in Gatwikera village, Kibera, is indicated later in the thesis.

## Chapter 1. The Research Design

form a distinct expression of church which emerges through an engagement between Christian faith and traditions and the informal socio-economic context of an informal settlement.

2. Informal Pentecostal churches may be seen in part as a new generation of African independent churches whose roots are not found in the rejection of modernity and colonial Christianity but in the socio economic divisions and marginalisation of African urban life.
3. Informal Pentecostal churches frequently provide a home for the “sojourners” of the city whose aspirations are to be “citizens” of the city.
4. The mission of the church in the city requires an engagement with socio-economic structures. That engagement requires both working with existing structures and, where necessary, prophetically challenging them. Formal churches fail to provide a significant presence in the informal settlements through a failure to relate to and actively engage with the socio-economic environment of the informal context.
5. The missiological significance of informal Pentecostal churches in the informal settlements lies in their unique position as churches “born” rather than planted within this context.
6. Mission as transformation will best emerge through churches that are “born”, and are in some way incarnated, within the socio-economic context of informal settlements.

### ***1.4 The research questions.***

The research questions focused on gaining a deeper understanding of what are to be defined as informal Pentecostal churches within the informal settlements. The thesis explores the way they came into being, the nature of their ministries and their relationship

## Chapter 1. The Research Design

to the informal economy of Kibera, and the impact they are having on informal settlement communities. In the research I considered questions in the following areas:

**i) The Minister:** What is the story behind the person who becomes a pastor of an informal church? Do these stories show any parallels with the development of *Jua kali*<sup>6</sup> businesses? Concepts of ownership are significant here. Is the Church owned by an individual? How is ownership expressed? What is their experience and understanding of calling? Who is the pastor accountable to and how is that accountability expressed? Whose, and what is the founding vision and how is that vision owned, developed and expressed within the life of the church?

**ii) The Message.** What is the core message of these churches? Is there a unifying message and how contextual is it? How does the message connect to the key issues facing residents in Kibera? What are the key influences that shape the message of these churches? What is the relationship of the message of the church to modernity, secularisation and globalisation in a changing urban culture? How are the scriptures used within the church? How is scripture read and used in worship? What is the principle hermeneutic being used here? How is the work of the Spirit understood?

**iii) The Membership:** Who attends these churches and why? Are there any significant indicators of who is likely to attend these churches? Is there a movement from other churches and what prompts this? How is both individualism and communal values expressed within the faith community?

**iv) The Ministry:** How does the ministry of this church shape the lives of its members? How do the churches perceive their relationship to the wider community of Kibera? How is both division and unity understood and expressed through the ministry of these churches? Are these churches, as the first hypothesis implies, a product of the socio economic realities of an informal settlement, or are they simply an off shoot of global Christianity manifest in an informal context?

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<sup>6</sup> *Jua kali* is the term for the informal economy in Kenya. It will be discussed in more detail in this chapter.



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**v) Transformation:** What is the church's understanding of transformation and how is that evidenced in the ministry of the church? Is transformation perceived in purely spiritual and individual terms? Is there an agenda for transformation beyond the membership of the church community and beyond personal economic advancement?

**vi) Training:** How is training perceived and what contribution could training make in enhancing the potential of these churches for both individual and social transformation? Can models of training be developed to assist the training of informal church pastors in informal settlements other than Kibera?

### ***1.5 The structure of the thesis.***

The thesis is structured around the pastoral cycle, which is discussed in detail in the next section. As will emerge later, the cycle is used in different ways, however one version of the cycle provides the structure of the thesis. In this respect the thesis is constructed round two "turns" of the cycle. In chapter 2 of the thesis, the literature review, the thesis moves through a cycle of context, social analysis, theological reflection and missiological responses. The context section seeks to define informal Pentecostal churches and set them within the context of the informal settlements and most specifically in Gatwikera village, Kibera. This movement of the cycle is here used to identify that which will be analysed in greater depth in the social analysis. However it is recognised that at some level there is an almost inevitable overlap between experience and social analysis.<sup>7</sup> The ensuing section on social analysis sets these churches within a wider context.

Following the social analysis parts three and four of the chapter establish the theological and missiological understanding which will inform the later theological reflection and discussion of the missiological implications of the research. There is an inevitable, and I suspect unavoidable, artificiality about this process in that this stage, being the literature review, is less an exercise in doing theology and more a process of laying the foundations

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<sup>7</sup> Wijsen notes that many approaches to the pastoral cycle do not make a clear cut distinction between observation and analysis. See Wijsen S Henriot P & Mejia R 2005 *The Pastoral Cycle Revisited: a critical quest for truth and transformation* Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa P136

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for the actual process of “doing” the pastoral cycle, which emerges in the following chapter.

Chapter three of the thesis begins the second turn of the cycle. The sections on experience and social analysis generally fall within the discipline of religious studies offering a description and analysis of the churches and contexts in which they operate. This dimension of the research is to be noted in the hypotheses where the first three reflect a framework more appropriate to a study of religion discipline. The research questions seek to identify and analyze informal churches as a religious phenomenon within the informal settlements. However the thesis falls within the discipline of missiology and its ultimate focus is missiological. This is more clearly reflected in sections three and four of chapter three.

Chapter four forms the conclusion to the thesis and is constructed in three parts. Part one reflects on the methodology, assessing the suitability of the pastoral cycle as a research method. Part two looks at mission praxis in relation to the informal Pentecostal churches and the implications for mainline churches of ministry in an informal context. Part three forms the conclusion to the whole thesis and identifies areas for future research.

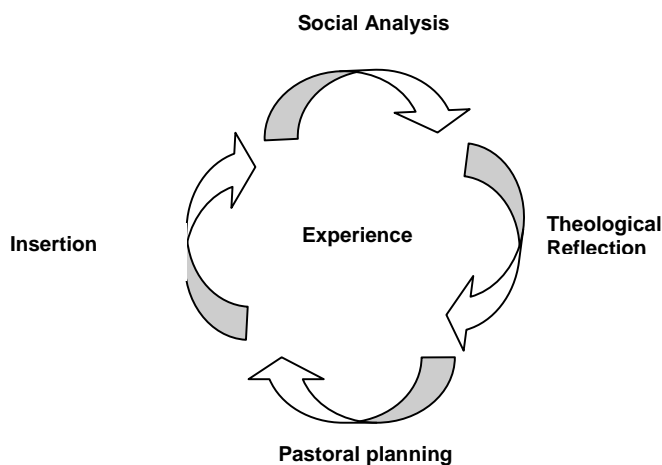
Structuring the thesis around the pastoral cycle has the advantage of illustrating how the cycle gives shape to the whole process. It does, however, have the disadvantage of creating, in the literature review and the research findings, two very large chapters. These two chapters form the core of the thesis with chapters one and four largely serving as an introduction and conclusion. The two central chapters are each broken into four parts with each part representing one “turn” or movement within the pastoral cycle and thus illustrating and demonstrating the logic of the research method.

The thesis is presented in two volumes. This first volume is the actual thesis including the bibliography and appendices. Volume two contains transcriptions of both the video tapes of the services and also of the interviews. The references in the text of the thesis to services and interviews are to be found in volume two.

## PART TWO. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 *The pastoral cycle.*

The model of the pastoral cycle<sup>8</sup>, sometimes called the praxis cycle, is used as a conceptual framework for this thesis. The cycle, developed by Holland and Henriot, as illustrated below, consists of a cyclical process of Insertion, Social Analysis, Theological Reflection and Pastoral Planning.



The cycle is a development of the process of “see, judge, act”, first articulated by Joseph Cardijn (Holland & Henriot 1983:10). Its philosophical roots, however, can be traced back into critical theory and the insights of Jürgen Habermas (1978) and the Frankfurt School and also to critical hermeneutics, which will be discussed later.

The relationship to critical theory is most evident in the concept of praxis. Praxis describes the dialectical relationship between reflection and action which results in the transformation of society. The term praxis goes back to Aristotle but gained contemporary prominence through Marx (Thiselton 1992:380). Marx identified the purpose of philosophy as being not simply to interpret the world but to change it (in Bevans 2002:72). He argued that this process of liberation comes through the unmasking

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<sup>8</sup> The Pastoral cycle is discussed in detail in Green, Laurie 1990. *Lets do Theology: a pastoral cycle resource book*. London: Mowbrays. The diagram below is taken from Holland J. & Henriot P. 1983 *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* (revised ed.) New York: Orbis P. 8

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of alienating socio-economic structures. This unmasking however, is hindered by ideologies which are socially determined and are used to justify established interests (in Thilselton 1992:385). The pursuit of liberation therefore requires a critique of ideology.

This notion of an emancipatory critique was taken up and explored by the Frankfurt School and later developed by, among others, Jürgen Habermas (1978). Habermas argued that the task of socio critical hermeneutics is to unmask social interests through an emancipatory critique which serves freedom, justice and truth (in Thilselton 1992:12). This process is not a purely intellectual endeavour but rather a conscious attempt to change society through a critical analysis of its structural and ideological systems. Habermas refers to the emancipatory nature of the critical exercise of human reason (in Lakeland 1990: 43).

It is particularly in this relationship between critical investigation, reflection and action that we see the relationship between critical theory and the pastoral or praxis cycle and also liberation theology. A dimension of social analysis becomes one of unmasking oppressive systems and the ideologies that create and sustain them. Gutierrez (1973) and liberation theologians incorporated the notion of praxis to demonstrate the relationship between belief and action, highlighting the way in which right thinking cannot be separated from right action. Sobrino comments that, from a Latin American perspective, theology finds its fulfillment not in right thinking (ortho-dox), but in right action (ortho-praxis) (in Bevans 2002:72). The pastoral cycle, as a theological method used by liberation theologians, understands theology as a process not simply of interpreting the world but changing it.

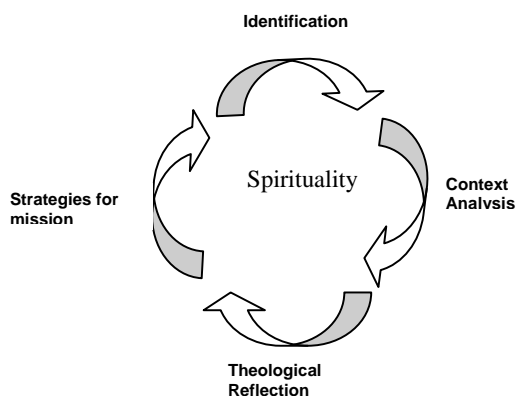
In line with the thinking of liberation theologians the pastoral cycle generally embodies the concept of theologising as a second act or second step (Gutierrez 1973:13). Croatto (1984:140) make the point that every theology has a point of departure. No theology comes simply as a deposit. Rather it involves some form of convergence between a source of revelation and the praxis of the theologian and his or her historical context. The

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concept of a second step presumes that the process of theologising begins with commitment and active participation within the life of a Christian community.

The concept of participation also underlines the notion of theologising as a communal activity involving a faith community and not the isolated domain of the professional theologian (Schreiter 1985:17). The Sixth Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians noted that, “Because commitment is the first act, theology is inseparably connected with the Christian community out of which it emerges and to which it is accountable” (in Kalilombe 1999:168). Tissa Balasuriya (in Kalilombe 1999:169) describes this as a process in which “groups need to listen to, learn from and creatively challenge each other to an ever more faithful response to the demands of Jesus Christ”. This process of listening, leaning and creatively challenging is not restricted to theology and owes much to the work of Paulo Freire (1972) in the area of adult education and versions of the cycle have been equally influential in community development.<sup>9</sup>

Numerous versions of the cycle exist which vary in the degree to which they adhere to Holland and Henriot’s (1983) original model. One example of adaptation, developed by Madge Karecki (2002:139) at UNISA, places spirituality in the centre of what she describes as a cycle of mission praxis. Spirituality in this model is not a stage, moment or movement within the process but “a motivational source”. Also in this model the concept of insertion is replaced by identification.

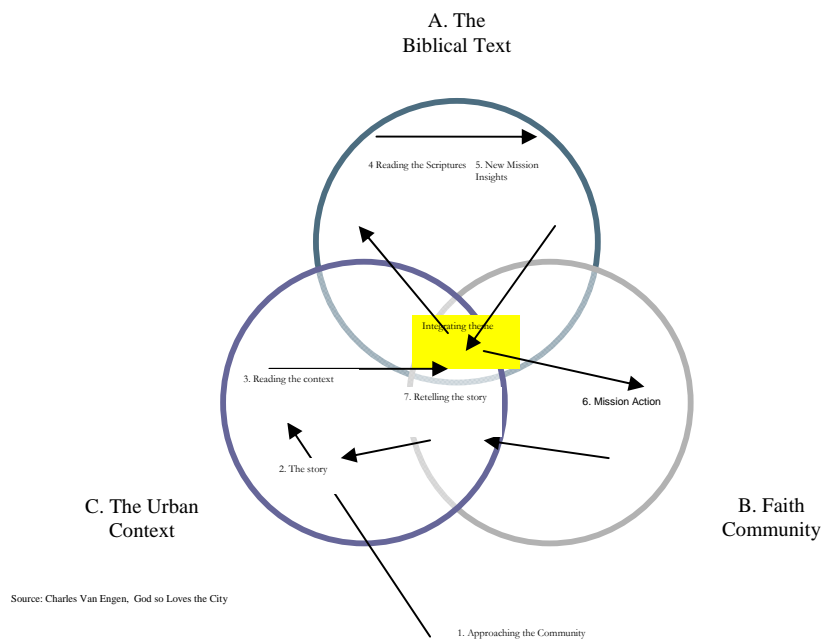


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<sup>9</sup> A prime example of this is seen in the work of Hope, A and Timmel, S 1995 *Training for Transformation: A Handbook For Community Workers*. London: ITDG

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Other models give explicit priority to the Bible thus defining the dimension of theological reflection as a process of reflecting upon and re-reading of scripture.<sup>10</sup> In one such a model, developed by Charles Van Engen (in Van Engen & Tiersma 1994:253), a Venn diagram is used to illustrate a tripartite model of doing theology drawing on three sources, namely the biblical text, the faith community and the urban context. Again the model is cyclical and transformational whereby the story of the community is changing through a process that leads to mission action within the community. In this model identification or insertion is expressed as “approaching the community.” Social analysis is understood in terms of gathering stories and reading the context and theological reflection is specifically rooted in a process of rereading the biblical text in the light of an understanding of the context. Van Engen(1994:258) notes that this not about imposing an agenda on scripture. Rather what is sought is “a way to bring a new set of questions to the text, questions which might help us to see in the scriptures what we had missed before.”



<sup>10</sup> See Van Engen, C and Tiersma J 1994 *God so Loves the City* California: MARC and also Cochrane et al 1991 *In Word and Deed: Towards a Practical Theology for Social Transformation*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications

## **2.2 Assessing the models.**

Within this study an alternative model will be used which retains the circular or, more accurately, the spiral model adopted by Holland and Henriot and makes some use of the concept of story as adapted from Van Engen.

One of the apparent drawbacks of Holland and Henriot's model, while it may not be an intrinsic aspect of the cycle, is that theology seems to be a stage in a process rather than being the process itself. Holland and Henriot (1983:13) make the point that social analysis contains within itself, implicitly or explicitly, a theology of life and that the theological process has already begun in the process of social analysis. However, experience of using this model with students at the Centre for Urban Mission indicates a need to make the implicit explicit. There is a tendency to see theological reflection as something to be done at a certain stage in the process rather than as something integral to the entire process. When that stage is reached there is frequently an uncertainty and ambivalence, even among those theologically well informed, as to what theological reflection is and how it relates to the social analysis. The fact that Holland and Henriot give very little space at all to discussing the process of theological reflection only serves to re-enforce the sense of theology as something less than intrinsic to the entire process.

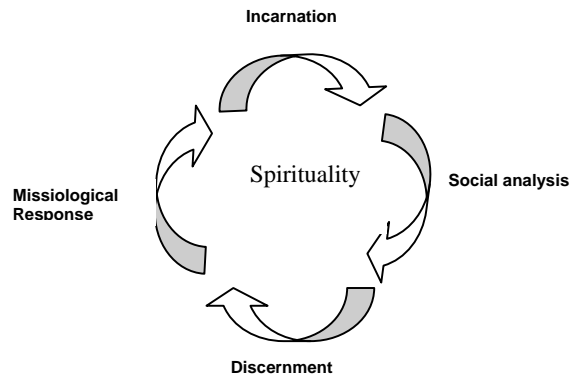
The model developed by Van Engen is helpful in its emphasis on scripture as the primary source of theological reflection and in illustrating the tripartite nature of theological reflection built on text, context and the faith community.<sup>11</sup> However the use of a Venn diagram creates an artificial separation whereby the text is read in isolation from the faith community. While this may not be intended, the minimal overlapping of text, context and faith community, creates an artificial and potentially unhelpful model of how theology is done. We read the text within the context and with the community of faith both local and contemporary and global and historical.

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<sup>11</sup> For Van Engen, coming from an evangelical perspective the primacy of the Bible is essential to the process of theological reflection. As will be seen later, advocating the primacy of scripture may also come from more democratic concerns that this is the one, and in some cases, only text which lay Christians may have access to in the process of theological reflection. See Cochrane et al 1991 *In Word and Deed: Towards a Practical Theology for Social Transformation*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications P.20

### **2.3 Modifying the cycle.**

This study incorporates a modified version of the pastoral cycle. In this adapted form the cycle begins with incarnation. It is placed there on the grounds that incarnation is the starting point of mission.<sup>12</sup> With Zanotelli (2002:14) the term insertion is rejected in that it implies the introduction of something alien or foreign and has a dominant and invasive slant to it.



Preference is give here to the term incarnation, with its implications of identification with a community and with the kenosis, the self emptying of Christ. Insertion also proves an unhelpful word when trying to analyse the role of churches which emerge from within a community rather than being planted by some outside agency, and where the pastor is a member of that community.

Jude Tiersma (1994:7) poses an important question in relation to incarnational mission when she asks “What does it mean to be incarnational when we are not the Messiah?” Does incarnation as a starting point risk the development of messianic models of mission and leadership? What is implied by incarnation as a starting point?

Firstly, incarnational mission affirms the importance of physical presence within a community as a starting point of mission. Zanotelli (2002:15) describes this as taking flesh, assuming the suffering of the urban poor, or the baptism of the poor. Secondly incarnation is important because it signifies a process of change within the individual or faith community that engages in mission. From this perspective the agent of transformation is also transformed. The mission agent is not an unmoved mover, individually or as a faith community, but one who is also transformed through entering

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<sup>12</sup> Bosch (1991:512) suggests that one way of identifying what mission is and entails could be to look at the six major “salvific events” of the New Testament beginning with the incarnation.



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into the experience of others for the sake of the gospel. However incarnation needs to be understood beyond those who enter into a community from the outside. It needs to have relevance for ministries which emerge from within the community. Here Madge Karecki's use of the term identification is helpful. In this, incarnation needs to be understood in terms of the ways in which the churches and their leadership identify with the realities, the needs, hopes and aspirations of the communities in which they minister.

The second movement within the cycle is social analysis. This requires an analysis of that which is experienced through an engagement with the life and experience of a given community. Analysis here seeks to identify and comprehend those forces and influences which shape the life of a community both at the local level and at the wider global level. Within the thesis this involves the analysis of the context, the pastors and their churches and their message and ministry within the community.

The third movement within the cycle is generally termed theological reflection. I have preferred to use the term Discernment. Discernment is the process of reading the signs of the times (Mat. 6:3), discerning the will and activity of God in the world. John De Gruchy (in Ballard & Pritchard 1996:38) suggests that the task of the pastor and the practical theologian is discernment and leadership enabling a community to ask and to discover with them "What does God require of us here and now?" Discernment, *diakrisis* concerns the church which believes itself to be a community and a communion created thus by the Holy Spirit (Pobee 1993:117). Pobee suggests that discernment is a communal rather than purely individual activity, one which is critical to mission, in which the church seeks God's will and their own calling in a given situation.

The term discernment is perhaps preferable to theological reflection because it points, in a more direct way, to the activity of the Spirit. However, what is described is still a process of theological reflection. It involves the activity of interpreting the contemporary human life-situation in the light of Christian faith (Abesamis 1978:122). It is the art of making theology connect with life and ministry so that gospel truth comes alive and Kingdom values are revealed in the life of the individual and the faith community.

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Holland and Henriot (1983:9) describe theological reflection as: “an effort to understand more broadly and deeply the analyzed experience in the light of living faith, scripture, church social teaching and the resources of (church) tradition.” Catholic writers tend to place an emphasis on church teaching and church tradition as well as scripture as sources for theological reflection. Mejia (1993:34), writing for the Catholic Synod of Africa, defines theological reflection as, “...the analysis of (a) situation in the light of the Word of God, tradition, the teaching of the (Roman Catholic) Church and the contribution of theologians in history.” For others, as in this South African WCC sponsored report, the primary emphasis is on the Bible.

Theological reflection in context requires a continual return to the sources; hence the priority of biblical study....The Bible is by far the major source, if not the only source of teaching and preaching for most grass-roots Christians. It is their basic dialogue partner in understanding their faith, and appears to be considerably more important than any other source (Cochrane, de Gruchy & Petersen 1991:20).

Whilst sharing the conviction of those who advocate the primacy of scripture in the process of theological reflection the question remains of how the Bible is then used in that process. Mejia (1993:34) stresses that this involves an inductive rather than deductive process.

What is important to underline however, is the fact that this methodology does not start with the Bible and the teaching of the church, as if everything else could be deduced from these sources. The method is rather inductive, submitting real life situations to the light of divine revelation as a light for our path.

The question raised here is fundamentally one of hermeneutics, the process by which the Bible is interpreted and its meaning appropriated within a given context. All readings of the scripture are contextual, being done within specific social, cultural and historical contexts (Ukpong 2004:24). Croatto, in his discussion of hermeneutics, makes the point that every reading of scripture is a production-of-meaning, and every meaning emerges from within a given context. The reader of the text creates meaning. What any text offers,

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including the biblical text, are the possibilities for novel interpretation (1984:153). In this sense interpretation means accumulation of meaning and that meaning is found in making the biblical Kerygma effective within a given context. From this perspective there is therefore no one single pure meaning to be extracted from a text and then suitably applied into a given context (Croatto 1984:165).

Croatto (1984:163) notes that while the process of theological reflection begins with an exegesis of the text even this process cannot claim objectivity. In Croatto's frequently repeated phrase, exegesis is *eisegesis*. In other words a dual process is involved in biblical interpretation by which the meaning of the text is not something simply extractable but rather involves an entering into the text. The interpreter enters into the text with the questions and experiences that arise from their context.

Van Engen (1994:258), proposes a process of asking questions of the text in order to discern meanings present, but as yet unobserved, within it. From this perspective the meaning is present within the text but requires questioning from within a given context in order to be discerned. Van Engen rejects what he perceives to be the failure of liberation theology in bringing a specific agenda to the text. Whilst Van Engen's model may appear at one level to be inductive it is ultimately deductive, in that meaning is perceived to be present and needs to be deduced from the text, with the context as the interlocutor that serves to deduce that meaning. Croatto, conversely, is proposing that the very act of reading and interpretation involves the creation of meaning not necessarily intended by the initial author nor understood by the initial audience. Instead the text becomes a source for production of meaning arising from the praxis of a given community. His interest is not in what lies behind the text, with historico-criticism. Rather, with Ricoeur (in Thiselton 1992:5), he is interested in what the text does, what effects it creatively produces and the way it impinges upon the reader.

Significantly for this study, Croatto (1984:156) goes on to assert the proprietorship of the poor and oppressed in interpreting the Bible, given that their life experience is closer to its "kerygmatic nucleus". While such assertion may be laudable in its desire to give voice

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to the poor in the interpretation of scripture it must be asked where this notion of proprietorship comes from. Has it authentically come from the poor themselves? Does it come from the very nature of scripture? Or, is this the non poor asserting the proprietorship of the poor in biblical interpretation when, and only when, their interpretation of the text conforms to a predetermined notion of how the text must be interpreted? Put differently, if the poor display a preference for prosperity theology in their interpretation of the text will their proprietorship be acknowledged or dismissed as false consciousness? In this respect Croatto appears to pre determine, even dictate, how the poor should read the text. He argues that for the poor and oppressed the Bible as a liberating text is the *only* kerygmatic, valid meaning (Croatto 1984:159). However, is this simply to create another orthodoxy, another normative or privileged reading of the text? Are there other possibilities of interpretation of the biblical text by poor and oppressed communities which do not read the biblical text primarily as a narrative of liberation and can such readings be held as valid?

There is a tension here between Croatto's acknowledgement that any reading of the text involves the creation of a meaning, and therefore inevitably the possibility of a plurality of meaning, and his assertion that that there is only one kerygmatic valid meaning for the poor. This tension is also observed by West (1995: 204) when he asks whether only Croatto's mode of reading the text is adequate to contexts of struggle. He similarly notes Cochrane's critique of Mosala that "the vast majority of the people he has as his intended base of operations read texts and events somewhat differently" (in West 1995:205).

Carlos Mesters (1995:416), describing the way in which base Christian communities in Brazil read the scriptures, suggests that the poor and oppressed find within the scriptures a direct affinity with their own life and experience. He describes a triangle of *Familiarity*, *Freedom*, and *Fidelity*, in which this *eisegesis*, this entering into the text takes place.

It is important to observe here the way in which Mesters suggests that the poor begin with their own experience of struggle and service. This is what they bring with them into the Bible. He suggests that the poor discover a reflection of their own lives and experience

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within the text. This is the meaning of familiarity. The Bible becomes their book, this is the freedom it offers. In this the Bible is seen as a liberating text. It can be observed that fidelity here is about the practice of scripture and not simply the knowledge and orthodox interpretation of scripture.

Much as I share the conviction that the Bible is a liberating text, Mesters' assessment seems too neat, as if the poor read the text as they ought to, discovering it to be what it should be. All readers, and specifically the Christian reader, can find some affinity with the biblical text. The Wall Street stock broker may equally declare that this is his book speaking into the struggles of his own situation. My difficulty with Mesters is threefold. Firstly, it is, in my view, unusual to find such uniformity of interpretation. The model looks more prescriptive than descriptive, homogenising what I suspect may be a much more diverse and more nuanced reading of the text into something that conforms to a preconceived notion of how the poor should read the Bible. It creates a generalising of the hermeneutical perspective on the basis of a shared experience of poverty as if poverty is **the** defining hermeneutic when the poor read the text. When the poor read the text they read it, I would suggest, like the non-poor, influenced by a wide variety of contexts and experiences which are more than simply economic.

Secondly, this view of biblical interpretation is too comfortable. Without wishing to deny the familiarity the poor and oppressed will find within the biblical text, the danger of a presumption of familiarity is that the Bible ceases to be prophetic, challenging and confronting the reader from the "otherness" of its perspective, and is thus domesticated and sanitised such that it conforms to that which is familiar. Thirdly, the entire enterprise assumes a certain understanding of scripture and a particular approach to the Bible. The whole process deals with the Bible as text. But for some the significance of the scripture may not lie as a text but as something else, as story, as people, as symbol.

In considering the process of theological reflection and discernment in respect of the churches identified in this study I have tried to begin by understanding how the biblical text is read, interpreted and understood by the churches. Is it perceived as a narrative of

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liberation or is there a greater plurality of readings within this community and their churches? However, from a missiological perspective it is important not only to observe how the text is used and interpreted, but to discern the outcomes of that interpretation and how authentically life-giving they are. Mesters (1983:124) rightly notes that the Bible is “ambiguous”, and can, if so interpreted, be a force for oppression as much as a force for liberation. How does their appropriation of scripture give shape and place into words and action the response of faith in their context? (Reader 1994:16).

In examining the process of biblical interpretation in theological reflection I find the argument between inductive and deductive models of interpretation to be largely sterile. On the one hand the subjectivity of the reader must be acknowledged. There is no acontextual reading of scripture which is wholly objective. On the other hand the original meaning of the text is not beyond human enquiry even if our encounter with the text will always involve a process of interpretation. Van Engen’s (1994:258) suggestion that the process of rereading the scriptures from a given context enables us to see in the scriptures what we had missed before appears not to engage with the plurality of what we might find there. Croatto on the other hand, with his emphasis on reading as a production of meaning, appears to then legislate for what the poor will find in the text.

Van Engen helpfully directs his discussion towards Bosch’s consideration of critical hermeneutics. This Bosch (1991:23) defines as the process of entering into the self definitions of those we wish to engage in dialogue with and also with the early Christian self-definitions which gave shape to the biblical text, and with the faith communities who have subsequently interpreted the text throughout the centuries. With Croatto, Bosch (1991:24) accepts that all reality is interpreted reality but this position does not preclude the essential exercise of attempting to pursue the self-understanding of the biblical authors and even of Christ himself. From this perspective Bosch (1991:22) can affirm the critical task of the Church as being to test continually whether its understanding of Christ corresponds to that of the first witnesses.

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In his discussion of critical hermeneutics West (1991:75) describes two processes of reading either in front of or behind the text. Reading in front of the text involves a careful study of the biblical text in its final form addressed from the perspective and life experience of the reader. He contrasts this position with that of reading behind the text, to critically examine the ideology and systems which have shaped the final form of the text. Bosch's reading of critical hermeneutics, with an emphasis on first witnesses, suggests a model of reading in front of the text which does not seek to critique the ideology of the biblical writers but affirms their authority as first witnesses. However, his unqualified reference to other self definitions appears not to acknowledge the way in which later tradition and interpretation of that text can be shaped by oppressive ideology. This lacks in some measure what Ricoeur and others term a hermeneutic of suspicion which recognizes that interpretation and tradition are not cumulative processes of wisdom but can be driven by the interests of individual or social power (in Thiselton 1992:14).

The notion of reading behind the text and identifying oppressive ideologies which may shape the world of the biblical authors and the text undermines the concept of the canonical authority of scripture. Also, as West (1991:80) observes, although with reservation, it can be open to the charge of being an elitist exercise which can exclude the ordinary reader of scripture. A process of reading in front of the text takes seriously both the biblical text in its final form and the context and experience of the contemporary faith community. As will be seen later, this process of reading in front of the text to some degree corresponds to the way in which many of the churches considered here use the biblical text as one which can be addressed from the specificities of their own struggle and life experience.

Turning to the final dynamic of the pastoral cycle, Holland and Henriot's term, pastoral planning, is replaced by missiological response. The choice of term is designed to indicate that the response aspect of the cycle is one which engages the church in her *raison d'être*, her calling to mission. Mission here may be understood as an act of conviction and obedience, acknowledging the possibility of discerning God's will through his self revelation in the person of Jesus Christ, a revelation made known in the

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Word, and borne witness to through the work of the Spirit in the community of faith. Here the response is more than planning or resolving to act, though both may be required. Rather the response is an act of obedience to that which has been discerned.<sup>13</sup> The resultant activity, for instance when the church actively seeks justice on behalf of the poor and oppressed, ceases to be simply a possible or advisable course of action; it becomes an imperative, an act of faith and obedience.

Within the cycle I have continued with Madge Karecki's inclusion of spirituality as the "motivational force." This motivational dimension acknowledges the manner in which spirituality shapes and forms both the process of action and of reflection. It cannot be identified as a separate activity nor subsumed under the process of discernment or theological reflection. The very desire to start from a place of incarnation reflects a particular spirituality which is implicit to the process.

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<sup>13</sup> Whilst the emphasis here is on action it must be noted that obedience may result in non-action, a decision to be silent or to wait.



## ***PART THREE: THE RESEARCH METHOD***

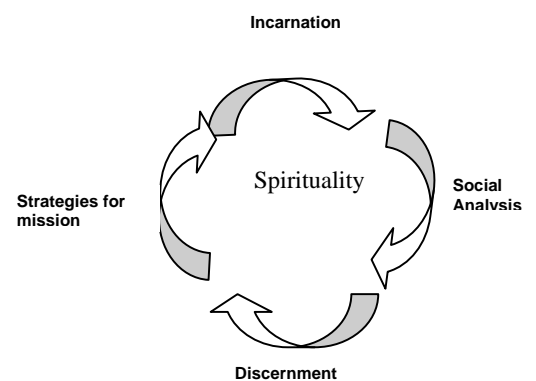
### ***3.1 Integrating the conceptual framework.***

The conceptual framework of the thesis, presented as an adaptation of the pastoral cycle, is integral to the research method. Within the thesis the pastoral cycle is used in two different ways utilising two slightly different models, with the version being dependent on the usage. Using more than one version of the cycle is not new. In the field of education, Madge Karecki (2002:138) notes that she has adapted the cycle according to the subject being taught. Here the employment of two versions of the cycle will not be determined by subject matter but by the function the cycle is to serve within the research process.

In the first instance a version of the pastoral cycle will be used as the actual research method. The cycle became a research tool defining my role in the research process. It gave shape to the way in which the research was conducted and the findings were analysed.

Usage of the pastoral cycle as a research tool has already been established. The empirical-theological cycle developed by Van der Venn is one such model (in Cartledge 2003:21). This process moves round a cycle of Problem, Induction, Deduction Testing, Evaluation. However its particular suitability for a quantitative method of analysis makes it less suitable for my own research.

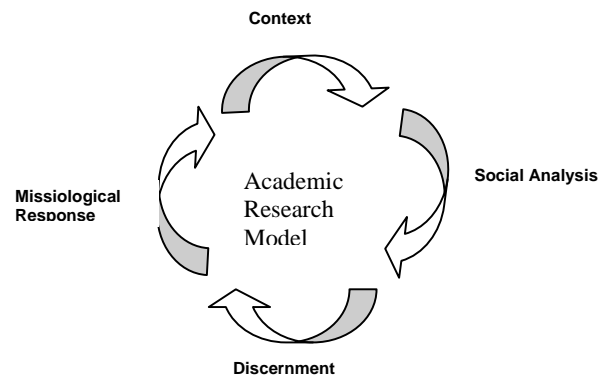
In using this version of the cycle, as a research method, it is to be noted that the movements of Incarnation, Analysis, Discernment and Strategies are those of the researcher and form the basis of the thesis. They represent that which must be owned and defended by the researcher. The process is described in greater detail below and is essentially missiological, going beyond description and analysis to point towards an



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alternative future through mission praxis. Placing incarnation as a starting point reflects both the research method, as will be explored, and the theoretical framework from which the churches are considered.

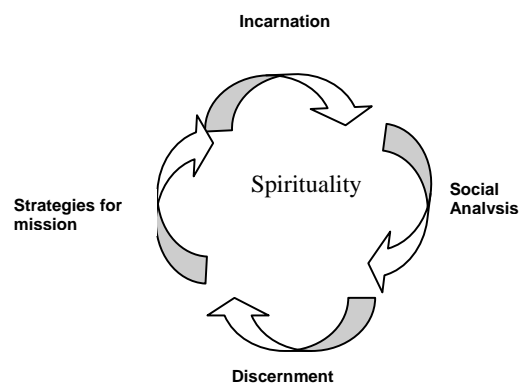
The second version of the cycle is used to provide the organisational structure to the thesis such that the sections of the two central chapters are structured around the pastoral cycle. Here the term incarnation is dropped in favour of context. Similarly spirituality is dropped in that the cycle is essentially being used for organizational purposes. In its place is the academic research model which is what essential drives the research process.



The adoption of context as the starting point was to provide the framework within which to describe both the churches and the environment in which they are set. It was also important to begin by seeking to understand the churches from their own self definition before introducing the theologically loaded concept of incarnation. The final chapter of the thesis however returns to the original starting point of incarnation as the process has gone beyond description and analysis and into mission praxis.

### ***3.2 Incarnation and the research method.***

Placing incarnation at the start of the research process eschews the notion of objectivity. This can be understood in three ways. Firstly it is not simply a denial of the possibility of genuine objectivity but rather an affirmation of the possibility, indeed the



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desirability and necessity, of a process of research which involves an active involvement with the community in which the research process is taking place. Ideologically this bears a close resemblance to what Peter Reason (1988) calls *Human Enquiry*. He suggests that a movement towards what he calls participative and holistic knowing requires a corresponding movement away from the distance of separateness and objectivity. Echoing Heron's argument that orthodox research methods are inadequate for a science of persons he advocates a process of critical subjectivity in which the researcher does not seek to suppress their subjectivity but rather "we raise it to consciousness and use it as part of the enquiry process"(Reason 1988:11).

Secondly, it acknowledges that knowledge emerges in a process of reflected-upon action. The act and process of incarnation involves presence and participation in action. Connections may be made here with the insights gained from liberation theology of active participation in the liberation of the oppressed as the starting point of theology (Boff 1978:41). This is frequently encapsulated in the concept of praxis. Thus Gutierrez (1978:11) describes the process of doing theology as one of a critical reflection on Christian praxis in the light of the Word. Again connections can be made with what Reason (1988:13) describes as an *emergent paradigm* in research. Employing the term *co-operative inquiry* Reason suggests a process that seeks knowledge in action and for action. Reason essentially argues for a dismantling of the split between objectivity and subjectivity, between knowing and doing, arguing for a critical subjectivity that leads to informed action.

A third aspect of incarnation as a starting point is that it recognises a process that is dynamic. As the starting point of mission it implies a process and presence which is prophetic, promoting change and transformation. Incarnational presence implies a presence which not only identifies with another or with a community but provides a presence which is efficacious in promoting Christian love (Boff & Boff 1988:4). In this activity the researcher is not insulated from that dynamic process. On the contrary incarnation involves a kenotic movement in which change becomes an inevitable and fundamental part of the process. Daniele Moschetti (1996:60) notes that,

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An authentic process of incarnation with the people requires a kenosis, through learning how to wait, to listen, to forgive and to persevere. If this experience of life is done in a spirit of openness this mission changes completely the horizon of life, the spirituality and humanity of the pastoral agent.

Using the pastoral cycle as the theoretical framework underlying a research method acknowledges that the researcher is neither objective nor detached and hermetically sealed from the community in which the research is conducted but critically subjective and consciously open to change in thought and action.

In the context of this research it needs therefore to be acknowledged that the research finds its starting point within my own involvement within the community of Gatwikera. I come to the research process as an Anglican priest attached for the past three years to a congregation within this community. I come to the process conscious of my role as director of a training centre situated in the heart of the community, which shares in many of the uncertainties and restrictions of life within Kibera. I approach the research as one who is intentionally involved, at some level, in the life and ministry of the Church in this community and who seeks to identify and be identified with it. I have chosen incarnation as a starting point because this captures the sense of intentionality and affirms that the research itself is a missiological process.

However, any suggestion of an incarnational relationship with the community requires significant qualification. There are both contradictions and substantial limitations in this relationship which could make the term incarnational only a possibility if it is understood as describing a very broad process and spectrum of engagement. I work in Kibera but I don't live there. On that basis alone any suggestion of incarnation as a starting point of my involvement in this community could only be understood as something very limited and partial. It is a starting point in a continuum of engagement and involvement in which the example of the Word who became flesh remains largely as both an invitation to journey further and a recognition that this journey will only ever be tentative and partial. This starting point is also contradictory. I come as an Anglican researching Pentecostal

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churches. I come as a foreigner, whose forbears initiated the policies that created both Kibera and the land tenure problems that continue to threaten the elemental security of Kibera's residents.

However, the starting point of this research process lies in my action and involvement in the life of this community. It is the experience of working with and alongside Pentecostal pastors and church leaders from within the informal settlements that has provided the catalyst for this research. In that very tentative and qualified way I will use the term incarnation.

### ***3.3 The research process.***

The research process largely took place in 2005 in seven stages as identified below.

- i). A pilot study of "informal churches" in Nairobi was conducted in 2002. This study formed the initial basis of the research and was essentially designed to test whether a correlation could be found between informal Pentecostal churches and the characteristics of the informal economy. The pilot study was carried out with four pastors of different churches in two informal settlements, Kawangware and Kibera.
- ii). A mapping of Gatwikera village identifying churches and informal economic activity. This aspect of the research required weekend visits to Gatwikera to observe places of worship within the community. The enumeration took place over four Sundays in December 2004 and January 2005. 59 churches were identified.
- iii) A mapping of informal businesses in Gatwikera. This research took place on 28 January 2005. The village was divided into three distinct locations and research assistants then enumerated all informal businesses observable within their location. Enumeration was carried out in the morning and then again in the late afternoon. The enumeration was only able to identify visible businesses and therefore did not include businesses that are

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conducted inside the home. Only static businesses were counted and therefore hawkers moving round the village were not included in the statistics.

iii) Gathering of essential data on the churches in Gatwikera using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative data regarding churches in Gatwikera. A sample questionnaire is found in appendix 2. From the data churches were selected to be invited to form the basis of the in-depth research involving videoing church worship and interviewing pastors and members of the congregation. In total 30 churches completed the questionnaire representing approximately 50% of the churches within the research area.

iv) Conducting of semi-structured interviews with pastors of the selected churches. In depth interviews were conducted with ten pastors from ten different churches within the community.

v) Participant observation of church worship. Within the research process I attended worship in 9 churches and, with the permission of the church videoed worship in seven of the churches.

vi) Conducting semi-structured interviews with members of congregations. In three churches I conducted semi structured group interviews with between 10 and twelve members of each congregation.

vii) Sharing of research findings with the pastors through a workshop held at the Centre for Urban Mission.

### ***3.4 Limitations of the research.***

Any research process has its own limitations. In this instance the informal context of Kibera made some aspects of the research quite difficult. The fact that most pastors work part time and meet in buildings which are only available on a Sunday made the field

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research process quite difficult. In completing questionnaires the majority were completed at the church at the end of a service which made it possible to verify some of the answers given by the pastors. However in some instances it was only possible to interview the pastor on a day other than a Sunday which made it difficult to provide any verification of the recorded answers. In general, for instance, I found that pastors tended to over estimate the size of their congregations compared with the numbers evidenced on a Sunday.

Although I have worked for some time within Gatwikera I was still a stranger to most of the pastors in the survey. The influence of my presence as a foreigner within the community cannot be dismissed in terms of its impact on the research findings. On some occasions it was clear in interviews that pastors or members of their congregations were either providing what they perceived to be my desired answer or, very occasionally, directing the answer in a way that might encourage some form of support for the church.

In the churches where I videoed services I was also conscious of the influence I and the camera might have on the worship. I positioned myself in a corner at the back of churches but given the small size of these congregations my presence was in no sense anonymous. On a couple of occasions references in the preaching were made to wazungu (Whites or Europeans) suggesting that my presence was influencing in some way the nature of the preaching.

One of the significant challenges in the research is my still limited grasp of Swahili and my complete lack of knowledge of Luo. In two of the videoed church services I was reliant on subsequent translations and transcriptions of the service in order to comprehend what was going on. It was important to then watch the services with a Luo speaker as well as obtaining the transcript and translation.

Translation also proved a complex process at times. The proximity of churches to each other made it difficult on occasions to hear what was being said in one church over the worship, prayers or preaching coming from a neighbouring church. On a number of

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occasions testimonies were lost or part of a sermon through the sheer problem of hearing what was being said. The translations also created their own difficulties in that within sermons the words of the original speaker and the interpreter would not always convey the same message. Interpretation is in itself a creation of meaning. The translations which I worked with tended to be a fusion of the words of the preacher and the interpreter brought together by a translator working on the soundtrack of the video. These create yet another layer of interpretation which put me at some interpretative distance from the original words of the preacher.

Finally it is important to note that the observations and reflections within the thesis are mine and are formed from a background and context very different to the one I am working in. To acknowledge this is not to undermine the validity of the research but to acknowledge that what is seen, heard and reflected upon is done through the lenses of my own history and experience and the conclusions are shaped by that history. Had I been brought up in Kibera I would no doubt have observed and interpreted events very differently. What is offered therefore is a description and analysis of the churches in question, shaped by my own subjectivity. It does not attempt to provide a definitive statement about the churches but hopefully an informed contribution towards a deeper understanding of church life within the informal settlement communities.



## ***Conclusion***

This thesis arises out of my own involvement with Pentecostal churches in informal settlements in Nairobi and particularly in Kibera. It is a product of the questions generated by these encounters and the desire to explore those questions in a disciplined way. The tool I have opted to use in order to make this particular exploration is the pastoral cycle which, by utilizing it in two different and modified forms, provides both the theoretical framework for the thesis and the structure for the research process and for the thesis itself. What is being tested within the thesis, therefore, are not only the stated hypotheses, but also a hitherto unspoken hypothesis, that the pastoral cycle can be used as a research method. The suitability of the cycle for this purpose is considered in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

Within the modified forms of the pastoral cycle being used here the term incarnation has been proposed as a starting point for the research process. This reflects my own conviction about mission and the belief that the research process itself can be a missiological exercise. If we understand praxis to involve the intimate relationship between thought and action, between knowing and doing, then the logic of the pastoral or praxis cycle leads to an inescapable conclusion that research, and the pursuit of knowledge, using this process, becomes a missiological act. However, it would be unwise to push the logic of this too far. Proposing the term incarnation as a starting point, is to adopt a word charged with meaning which asks profound questions about the level to which one enters into, engages with, and is committed to, any given community. The limitations of its usage are perhaps most evident when assessing the depth of personal engagement between the researcher and the researched. In the end I have attempted to address those questions by describing incarnation as a process and an invitation rather than a specific point of arrival.

Within this chapter I have explored the reasons for undertaking the research, introduced the pastoral cycle as its theoretical framework and indicated the process and limitations of the research. In the chapter which follows, the literature review, I explore some of the key themes and ideas which will be explored within the field research.

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Literature Review**

#### ***Introduction***

In the previous chapter I described how the pastoral cycle would be used to provide a structure to the thesis. This is now demonstrated in both this and the following chapter. This chapter is constructed around the four movements of the cycle and each movement engages with literature that is pertinent to an understanding of the churches under consideration. The first movement, here defined as context, sets out to define the context, and identify the primary concepts which are considered in the research process. Slums and informal settlements are defined and also the informal economy which, it will be argued, forms a pattern for the way in which informal Pentecostal churches emerge within the informal settlements. Attention is also given to models of church within the community and some essential differences are identified between mainline, Spiritual and Pentecostal churches. Finally within this movement of the cycle the geographic context of Gatwikera village is considered with its informal economic activity and the churches present within it.

The second movement of the cycle, social analysis, critically examines the socio-economic dimensions which give rise to and shape informal settlement communities and considers the specific historical factors behind the emergence of Kibera. A particular feature of Nairobi, and many other African cities, is the relationship between rural and urban communities, often referred to as the rural urban continuum. Understanding this relationship will prove to be highly significant in a later discussion of the churches. In this section the rural urban continuum is explored through considering the Kiswahili words *nyumba* (house) and *nyumbani* (home) and the way the concept of these two distinct places shape urban experience in Kenya.

Having considered the influence of the particular nature of the urban context on the churches, this part of the chapter goes on to explore the way the churches relate to the

## Chapter 2. The Literature Review.

wider Pentecostal movement. Here attention is particularly given to the impact of Pentecostalism as a movement in respect of social transformation. Finally, within this section wider influences of globalization, modernity and secularization are considered.

The third movement of the pastoral cycle has been described here as a process of discernment. A praxis model of doing theology involves theological processes which cannot be merely descriptive. The process of discernment is thus presented as something which not only engages with present realities but envisions and anticipates a different urban future. This anticipation, following the logic of the pastoral cycle, emerges from an analysis of the context. The relationship between the methodology of the pastoral cycle and the praxis of Pentecostalism is considered, and the possibility of a clash of perspectives is explored here and revisited in the final chapter of the thesis.

The section on discernment concludes by building on the earlier analysis of the rural urban continuum. Drawing on the work of Brueggemann (1977), this section reflects on the nature of life within the informal settlements as that of sojourner, wanderer and exile and explores these typologies in relation to the experience of informal Pentecostal churches and their members.

The final movement of the cycle is that of missiological response. Here mission is discussed as *missio Dei* and as the embodiment of regenerative narrative. Again the logic of the pastoral cycle is that an understanding of mission should in some way be rooted in our earlier discussion of discernment, exhibiting a logical flow between the process of theological reflection and the resulting missiological response. The idea of mission embodying a regenerative narrative is intended to demonstrate that relationship. As with the previous discussion on discernment, this understanding of mission is then considered alongside a Pentecostal understanding of mission.

## **PART ONE: THE CONTEXT**

### ***1.1 The informal church in the informal sector: defining key concepts.***

The cycle begins with the context. Reference to the context here points essentially to a descriptive process, a giving account of that which we observe and appreciate through our senses. Lonergan describes this as a process of being attentive to the data of our senses and inner experience (in Whelan 2002:81). In chapter three, the dimension of context will involve a description of the actual churches covered in the research. Within this section, which deals primarily with literary sources, I am using the notion of context to capture the process of describing and defining that which forms the focus of the research. This section is therefore essentially descriptive rather than analytical introducing the key concepts to be used in the research and describing the context within which the research takes place. At the heart of this section is the definition of what is meant by informal Pentecostal churches. Whilst it is helpful as a model to distinguish between description and analysis in reality such distinctions are seldom as neat and this section, whilst aiming to be primarily descriptive does some offer some analysis of that which is described.

#### ***1.1.1 Slums and informal settlements.***

Whilst the 2003 UN report on Human settlement uses “slums” as a generic term for a physical and spatial manifestation of urban poverty and intra-city inequality (UN 2003: XXVI), it will be important here to distinguish between slums and informal settlements. Slums are generally used to define a wide range of low income settlements and poor living conditions. Slums may be defined as,

... a contiguous settlement where the inhabitants are characterized as having inadequate housing and basic services. A slum is often not recognised and addressed by the public authorities as an integral or equal part of the city (UN 2003:10).

However for our purposes the term slum is too general and deprecatory and has its historic roots in a Western urban context of declining inner city residential areas. Here

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therefore the term informal settlement will be used rather than slum.<sup>14</sup> Informal settlements can be defined as temporary structures, that is structures made of temporary materials such as wood, mud, iron sheet and polythene where occupants have no or only quasi legal rights of occupation (USAID 1993:5). A distinction is therefore made between areas of the city of Nairobi which are recognised by the city authorities as consisting of permanent legal structures, and those which are defined as temporary settlements. Some of these permanent structures may be defined as slums as they are characterised by declining and inadequate permanent housing. Kibera, however, is an informal settlement in that it is constructed of temporary materials, and is largely not served by the amenities and infrastructure; sewage, water, roads, electricity, which are made available in the formal areas of the city. Similarly there are no rights of tenure in Kibera or other informal settlements in the city. The reality of lack of tenure in informal settlements has been illustrated by frequent forced evictions and destruction of structures in Kibera and other informal settlements.<sup>15</sup>

### **1.1.2 The formal and informal economy.**

In Kenya the informal economy is known as *jua kali*.<sup>16</sup> The term essentially refers to a specifically Kenyan manifestation of the informal sector of the economy. Initially it described the work of blacksmiths and metal workers. It was then extended to cover mechanics and finally it came to describe not a single form of micro enterprise but rather a “Kenyan African version of capital accumulation to be contrasted with that of the multinationals and Kenya Asians” (King 1996:24). Official recognition of the term, through acceptance into a major planning document, came in the Kenya Government Development Plan 1989 – 1993 (King 1996:14).

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<sup>14</sup> Although the term informal settlement is used here for the purpose of precision it can be noted that most residents of Kibera and similar communities throughout the city refer to their environment as a slum.

<sup>15</sup> In February 2004 the Kenyan Government began a process of evicting Kibera residents living under power lines and along the railway and road reserves. The process was suspended the following month through international pressure. Forced evictions of residents from the informal settlements goes back to the colonial period when Africans had virtually no right of habitation in the city. Post independence, in 1990, 40,000 people were evicted from the Muoroto and Kibagare districts of Nairobi. See Macharia, Kinuthia 1991 Slum clearance and the informal economy of Nairobi. *The Journal of African Studies*, 30, 2 (1992) 221 - 236

<sup>16</sup> *Jua kali* literally means fierce sun in Kiswahili. The term is derived from the way that many business are conducted without any shelter from the elements, particularly the heat of the day.

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The informal sector is not a particularly Kenyan development. The term informal sector came from Keith Hart's (1973) work in Ghana in 1971. Using Weber's theory of rationalisation he used the term to contrast stable wage employment offered by corporate organisations with the more unpredictable commercial activities that he observed in Ghana. Globally, as early as 1973, estimates from cities in six Latin American countries and two Asian suggested that 39 – 69 per cent of the urban workforce were engaged in the informal sector. 1995 statistics for Kenya indicated the presence of 900, 000 *jua kali* enterprises employing over 2 million people (King 1996:40).

The 1972 International Labour Office (ILO) mission to Kenya identified the importance of the informal sector for Nairobi's economy. In their report they characterised the differences between the informal and formal sectors (Gilbert & Gugler 1992:96). The ILO report argued that the informal or *jua kali* sector is characterised by a way of doing things. These characteristics are listed as follows:

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Formal Economy</b>	<b>Informal</b>
Entry into employment	Difficult	Easy
Type of resources	Reliance on overseas resources	Reliance on indigenous resources
Form of ownership	Corporate ownership	Family ownership
Size of operation	Large scale	Small scale
Labour and technology dependency	Capital intensive often using imported technology	Labour intensive using adapted technology
Training and process of skills acquisition	Formally acquired skills. Use of expatriates	Skills acquired outside the formal school system
Market regulation	Protected markets through quota tariff and licenses	Unregulated competitive markets

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Much research has been done on Nairobi's informal economy. However, "formal" and "informal" should not be understood purely in terms of business and the economy. Hake (1977:9), in his seminal work *Nairobi: a self help city*, notes that many social provisions emerge through informal or *jua kali* initiatives and that the settlements have "immense potential for creative development which will determine the future shape of the city and contribute enormously to the country's well-being." Similarly, King (1996:25), notes that "Increasingly it has been felt that it is the *jua kali* economy that provides people with their work, health, law, housing, and their training." Simone (2004b:14) makes a similar observation noting that for many in African cities survival is the objective and this has meant revising and improvising upon informal activities and putting together "a vast domain of providing foodstuffs, services, shelter, consumables, transportation, health care and education outside the institutions, frameworks, practices and policies sanctioned by the state." He notes one estimate that 75% of basic needs are provided informally in African cities (2004b:69).

The term informal is therefore being used to describe the whole social dimension of the informal economy in the sense that it is through informal structures and activities that much of the social organisation and welfare provision in the city takes place. An initial illustration of this can be found in terms of sewerage management. As a formal activity this is done by the city council either through its own labour or through formal contracts with private companies. In the informal sector sewerage management may take place through volunteer labour or, as at times in Gatwikera, through a youth group attempting to raise a few shillings from residents and businesses.<sup>17</sup>

While the term *jua kali* is used to describe the Kenyan informal sector, King (1996:3) also points to three dimensions of what he calls the Kenyanization of the informal sector. Firstly there is the recognition of the importance of the informal economy with its incorporation into the national economy. Secondly, he points to a specifically Kenyan

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<sup>17</sup> In Gatwikera the Lalibela football team raises a small income for the group through occasionally cleaning or unblocking some of the open sewers that run through the village.

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contribution to academic and policy debates about micro-enterprise. Thirdly he observes that the key group that has been absent in discussions on the informal economy have been the *jua kali* workers themselves.

### **1.1.3 Formal and informal churches.**

This study argues that alongside or, more accurately, within the growth of the *jua kali* (informal) sector in Kenya there have also emerged, informal (*jua kali*) churches. The study seeks to document their significant presence in the informal settlements which forms a distinctive expression of urban Christianity in Kenya. The research, based in Gatwikera village, Kibera, examines the difference between formal and informal models of “church” in the informal settlements drawing on research into the informal or *jua kali* economy in Kenya.

The term “formal churches” should be understood to describe those churches which share characteristics of the formal economy of the city. Conversely, “informal churches” should be understood to describe those churches whose emergence and form of social organisation is closely related to the informal economy of the city. Informal churches, therefore, are to be understood as churches which share many of the characteristics of the *jua kali* sector. Distinction between churches, therefore, is being made in relation to their correspondence to either the formal or informal social and economic structures of the city. This is in contrast to other methods of distinguishing and categorising churches on the basis of theology, history or polity.

There is some advantage in describing these churches as *jua kali* churches in that this term conveys a sense of them being a particularly Kenyan expression of church life in the informal sector. This recognises the skill, enterprise, ingenuity and adaptability of Kenya’s informal sector. In this sense it has a highly positive connotation. However, in common usage, *jua kali* also has the pejorative sense of something that is second rate or not authentic. For that reason, for the purpose of this study, churches that share the characteristics of the *jua kali* sector will be referred to as informal churches.



Finally, it can be noted that the term informal carries with it the connotation of social and economic marginalisation. Just as the informal economy is the economy of the urban population which largely does not share in the benefits of urban citizenship, so informal churches need to be understood in terms of their marginalization both socio-economically and within the structures of organized religion in the city.

### ***1.2 Towards a definition of informal Pentecostal churches.***

The thesis identifies a new category of churches which are here defined as informal Pentecostal churches. However in creating such a category a prior task is required of defining Pentecostal. Anderson notes that this is a matter of much discussion amongst scholars. He uses the term Pentecostal to describe churches which emphasize the centrality of the Holy Spirit in faith and practice. This definition is broad and enables the inclusion of Zionist churches under the Pentecostal umbrella. He uses the term Pentecostal type churches to allow for some latitude in the definition of Pentecostal. Within his schema he identifies three types of Pentecostal churches within the South African context. These are; Pentecostal mission churches, independent Pentecostal churches and indigenous Pentecostal-type churches (Anderson 1992). This latter category enables Anderson to include “Spirit type churches” within the Pentecostal movement. I will argue later that these churches should be considered as a separate category.

#### ***1.2.1 Models of church.***

For Anderson, writing from a South African context, the distinction between Pentecostal mission churches and independent Pentecostal churches lies both in their roots and their current leadership and centres around their connectivity to white Pentecostal churches. These categories are less applicable to the Kenyan and the concept of independent churches raises the question, independent from what or whom?<sup>18</sup> Mission established churches are now almost entirely under African leadership. Pentecostal Churches which

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<sup>18</sup> Gifford (1994:241) uses the term autonomous Pentecostal churches but this too seems to leave questions of defining what constitutes both the autonomous and the non autonomous church.

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served the racially elite population, such as Nairobi Pentecostal Church now, serve African economic elites and may be more independent than locally established churches which have developed support networks through donor churches abroad. Neither do these categories provide room for the new initiatives of Pentecostal churches established from Korea and Brazil or churches such as the Winners Chapel established from Nigeria. In recent years Pentecostalism has become a global phenomenon in a way that now leaves once valid categories of independent or mission churches looking largely redundant. Historical origin and ethnicity in respect of leadership no longer seem to be effective categories for encapsulating the acknowledged diversity that exists within the Pentecostal movement.

An alternative criterion is to consider churches in respect of polity. Mugambi (1995:120) uses this to form a distinction between Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. The models he identifies are Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, Pentecostal and Charismatic. Within this model African Instituted Churches do not exist as a separate category but fall within one of the five categories on the basis of polity. In Episcopal, Presbyterian and Congregational models power and authority is exercised by bishops, councils of elders, and the local congregation respectively. In the Pentecostal model power and authority are attributed to the Spirit rather than to individuals or councils. In the charismatic model however, authority and power rest with the leader by virtue of the charisma which he or she possess. Mugambi argues that in the event of the leader leaving the congregation, or in circumstances where charismatic gifts appear to have waned, the church will either disintegrate, adopt a new charismatic leader or select a new leader by an institutional process similar to a congregational model. For this reason Mugambi suggests a close affinity between congregational, Pentecostal and charismatic churches (1995:121).

Using Mugambi's analysis it may be observed that most "formal" churches are either Episcopal, Presbyterian or Congregational and most informal churches will tend to be Charismatic or Pentecostal. It can also be noted that in this form of categorization many churches defined as African Independent Churches will also appear as charismatic or Pentecostal. These churches form a significant presence in the informal settlements. The

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historic roots of African Independent Churches are, however, rural rather than urban and there are therefore significant differences between informal Pentecostal churches and African Independent Churches in the informal settlements. These differences can be explored by contrasting the differences between “Roho” or “Spiritual” churches which fall in the category of African Independent Churches, and informal Pentecostal churches.<sup>19</sup>

### **1.2.2 Informal Pentecostal and “Spiritual” churches.**

The process of categorizing churches is fraught with difficulty and this is perhaps especially so with regard to Pentecostal churches. The flexibility of the Pentecostal movement, its varied localized expressions with considerable theological diversity make it difficult to produce a coherent definition of what constitutes a Pentecostal church, particularly if such definitions are required to be confessional, rooted in dogmatic statements on faith and practice. Petersen (1999:77) however makes the valuable point that Pentecostalism is not confessional but experiential. He suggests that in a general sense Pentecostals can best be understood as holding a basis for theological thinking and action which springs from a transforming spiritual experience and a subsequent sense of empowerment derived from an intense transcendent presence of the divine.

Anderson (2002:40) makes the point that definitions of Pentecostal and particularly the distinction between Pentecostal and Charismatic is a significant issue in the study of global Pentecostalism. Anderson (2002:42) notes that figures for the size of the global Pentecostal movement can vary with estimates ranging from Mandryk’s figure of 394 million to Barrett and Johnson’s figure of 533 million. Much of the difference lies in the inclusion or exclusion of independent and charismatic churches of various forms. In this research, whilst acknowledging the distinction that Mugambi makes between charismatic

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<sup>19</sup> I have used the term Roho and Spiritual churches as essentially synonymous within this thesis. However technically Roho churches should be seen as a subset of a wider group of Spiritual churches. Roho churches in E Africa may be understood as African Instituted churches which trace their origins to the coming of the Holy Spirit in Kaimosi in 1927 or similar later manifestations of the Spirit and which share in a tradition of spirituality derived from these events. Within the wider group of Spiritual churches are the Akurinu Churches of Central Province which have a different historical origin (Padwick 2003:8).

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and Pentecostal churches, on the basis of polity, I will hold both these groups together. The churches described in the thesis are generally, by Mugambi's definition, Charismatic churches. However I use the term Pentecostal to locate them within the broader Pentecostal movement.

Within the African context particular difficulties emerge in defining Pentecostal churches as either distinct from or inclusive of the Spiritual churches. Hollenweger (1972:151) uses the phrase independent African Pentecostal churches to hold African Independent Churches of the Spiritual variety within a wider more embracing definition of Pentecostal. Anderson (1992:4) broadly shares this view pointing to historical and theological links between Pentecostal and Spiritual churches. He describes African Pentecostal churches as Christian churches in Africa which emphasize the working of the Holy Spirit in the church. He includes within this category, in South Africa, churches which he terms Zionist and Apostolic as well as African churches which originated in Western "classical Pentecostal" missions (Anderson 2000: 37). Similarly Harvey Cox (1995:246) places African Independent and Pentecostal churches together when he states "The African independent churches constitute the African expression of the worldwide Pentecostal movement"

The lumping together of African Independent Churches (AICs) and Pentecostal churches under the title independent African Pentecostal churches is essentially problematic, if for no other reason than that the members themselves, within the Kenyan context, appear not to use the term Pentecostal in such an all embracing way. While Spiritual and Pentecostal churches share a common experience of the work of the Holy Spirit, it is likely that both groups of churches will distinguish themselves from one another and significant differences exist between these types of churches. Pentecostal churches, in the Kenyan context, are unlikely to recognize "Roho" or Spiritual churches as fellow Pentecostals and Spiritual churches would similarly distance themselves from Pentecostals. There are significant differences in their theology, and their relationship to the urban context.

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Anderson (1992:5) seeks to resolve this dilemma of including some AICs within the term Pentecostal by using the phrase “indigenous Pentecostal type churches”. Here he describes churches which cannot always be called Pentecostal “in the strictest sense of the word” without further differentiation (1992:5). In a later work he maintains the premise that most AIC’s are Pentecostal movements but argues that they should not be regarded as Pentecostal in the Western sense of the word without further qualification (2000:27).

Whist recognising the shared history and common experience of the Holy Spirit of Pentecostal mission churches and Spiritual churches, Padwick (2003:8) uses the term African Pentecostal Churches to describe African founded churches which in style look to the West and Western Pentecostalism *and urban society*<sup>20</sup> rather than African rural traditions. On a similar theme Anderson suggests that by taking an imaginary Western - African cultural axis Pentecostal mission churches and independent Pentecostal churches will lean towards a western side of the axis while indigenous Pentecostal type churches will lean towards the African side (1992:6). However, I would share Padwick’s position that these different churches represent more than differences on a cultural axis but are distinct expressions of Christianity. It is however particularly through this Western and urban orientation that AICs and Pentecostal churches can be perceived as two distinct expression of Christianity, even if, as will emerge later, there are identifiable areas of overlap between the two.

Informal churches in Kibera can be placed into two categories which are distinguishable as types or models and which I will now seek to describe. The table below sets out the characteristics which identify and distinguish three types of churches. These are formal churches, informal Pentecostal churches, and Spiritual churches. My premise is that informal Pentecostal churches and Spiritual churches are both essentially informal churches but that informal Pentecostal churches form a distinctive category both as specifically Pentecostal churches and through their particular relationship to the informal

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<sup>20</sup> My emphasis

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**urban** economy. These are models and clearly some overlap and fluidity within definitions will emerge.

The table below, drawing on the earlier distinctions drawn between the formal and the informal economy, provides distinctive characteristics of formal, informal Pentecostal and “Spiritual” churches.<sup>21</sup>

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Formal Churches</b>	<b>Informal Pentecostal Churches</b>	<b>Spiritual Churches</b>
Entry into ministry	Complex process involving selection and training.	Largely a process of self selection through an experience of “calling.”	Recognition of calling by the church community.
Ministry resources	Substantial resources in buildings, capital projects and training facilities often established through overseas support.	Minimal resources in terms of buildings or capital expenditure. Human resources as primary.	Social capital as primary resource.
Form of ownership	Church properties, buildings, projects owned by the denomination. Congregational loyalty is to the denomination.	Ownership often in the hands of the pastor as the “vision holder.” Congregational loyalty is to the pastor.	Ownership by the local community of the church. Loyalty is to the local community and to the values of the founding vision.
Size of operation	Large often spread across the country.	Small. May consist of one church with less than 20 members.	Small scale operation at the local level but with larger networks of relationships within the denomination.

<sup>21</sup> Information on Spiritual churches used in this table is drawn from a number of sources. These include: my own research on an Akurinu church in Korogocho in 2000 (Smith:2001), research by John Padwick on Roho Churches in Western Kenya (Padwick: 2003); subsequent conversations with John Padwick and also Kenneth Ambani, a student at Carlile College, both members of the Holy Spirit Church of East Africa; Seminars held with members of the Organisation of African Instituted Churches both in Kibera in November 2004 and at the Institute for the Study of African Realities in April 2006.

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Labour and technology dependency	High capital investment particularly in buildings. Significant access to “Western” technology in urban churches.	Very low capital investment A desire for “Western” technology in respect of music and amplification.	Very low capital investment. Resources shared widely between ministries within the church. General ideological rejection of “Western” technology.
Training	Significant access to formal, and expensive theological education, generally through designated colleges.	Little access to formal theological education and training. Much use made of seminars, conventions and short courses. Considerable openness to available “western” training materials.	Minimal formal training given within the denomination. Apprenticeship model most widely adopted.
Competition	Historically, initially regulated but now increasingly competitive. Tendency to be involved in formal ecumenical bodies alongside other formal churches.	Frequently highly competitive. Form their own networks of relationships and co-operation through pastors networks and co-operation in crusades and prayer vigils. Membership tends to be mobile leading to a fear of “poaching” by other churches.	Little or no involvement in formal ecumenical bodies but some networking with other independent churches. Local co-operation focuses around traditional community events, particularly funerals and significant church occasions.
Form of organisation	Bureaucratic with extensive use of committees and a defined organisational structure. Elders are elected.	Limited use of formal structures and committees. Decisions generally made by the leader. Church elders are appointed by the pastor. Family members of the	Based on a consensus model and on a committee of elders reflecting traditional models of clan eldership.

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		pastors may hold key posts in the church.	
Exercise of authority and accountability	Exercised through formal structures generally defined by written constitutions. A tendency towards the use of or belief in democratic structures in specific/identified areas of church life. Structure tends to be “top down.”	Authority and accountability generally understood to be exercised relationally rather than bureaucratically. A tendency towards a appointed structures of local leadership through the spiritual discernment of the pastor. Little accountability to the local church.	A tendency towards a grass roots “bottom up” approach with the pastor accountable to the congregation and elders. Resistance to formal structures created through constitutions.
Method of growth	Organised often centralised process of church planting frequently associated with the purchase of land.	Frequently through division in an existing congregation centred upon an individual experiencing a call to establish their own ministry.	Through division within a congregation at a communal rather than individual level and through migration.
Relationship to Social and economic structures in the city	Users of the formal economy both institutionally and by church members. Often have direct access to structures of power and influence in the city. Church headquarters will be in the city, in the vicinity of the Central Business District.	Outside the formal economy, and little access to social or economic power. Church leaders tend to be entrepreneurial with aspirations towards the formal economy of the city. Church headquarters may be in an informal settlement.	Outside the formal economy. Values are communal rather than entrepreneurial with a suspicion of individual wealth and prosperity that is not accountable to the community. Church headquarters will be in a rural part of Kenya outside Nairobi.
Relationship to the informal economy	Operate outside or on the periphery of the informal economy. Ministry in this context is usually financially	Churches modelled on the informal economy operating in some respects as an informal business. The Pastor is either	Church members involved in the informal economy. The pastor is generally part time supporting himself



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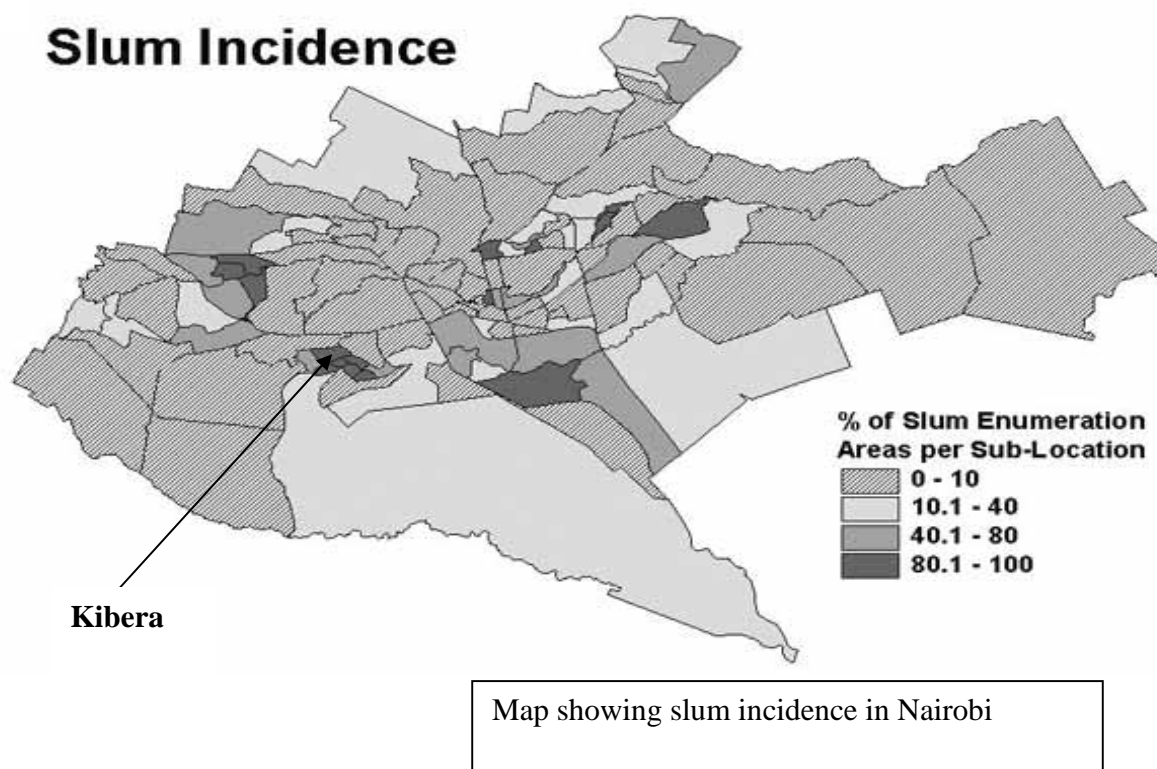
	unsustainable leading to minimal involvement. Informal structures tend to subvert formal structures when churches operate within the informal settlements.	full time supported through the local church as a form of <i>jua kali</i> employment or employed within the <i>jua kali</i> sector or in casual employment.	through <i>jua kali</i> employment.
Relationship to political structures	Historically these churches have had a close relationship with the centre of formal political power. This was established within the colonial period and continued in the post colonial era. Churches exhibit both a “chaplaincy” type role to political structures and occasionally a prophetic role.	Generally lacking in political power and ostensibly apolitical perceiving political involvement as un-spiritual or outside the mandate of the church.	Lack political power or influence. Political involvement perceived as un-spiritual, and contaminating. A rejection of or ambivalence towards modernity creates an ambivalence towards formal political processes.
Sense of identity	Formally defined through creeds, canons, constitutions and liturgies. National identity often as part of a wider international family of churches.	Built around the “vision” of the pastor. Local urban identity. Members may belong to an informal church in the city and a formal church at their rural home.	Built around traditional rural communal values and the founder’s vision. Identity often expressed through robes and flags. Rural and urban church allegiance remains the same.
Language	English, the primary language of the formal economy, is the primary language in the city churches.	Kiswahili as the primary language. Preaching often in English translated into Kiswahili.	Language use demonstrates a preference for mother tongue languages with virtually no use of English.

The characteristics given above illustrate some of the characteristics which differentiate formal, informal Pentecostal and Spiritual churches. There is a wealth of research on Spiritual churches and African Independent Churches generally. This study specifically focus on the experience on informal Pentecostal churches within the informal settlements.

### ***1.3 The informal church in the informal sector: defining the geographic context.***

Figures for calculating the numbers of informal settlements within Nairobi vary considerably, largely through differing methods of enumeration and the way in which settlements are divided into villages which may be counted as separate settlements. One figure given for Nairobi estimates that there are 180 such communities in the city housing over two million people (Bodewes 2005: 30).

#### ***1.3.1 Kibera.***



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Kibera is one of many informal settlements in Nairobi. With a population of approximately 600,000 (Nairobi City Council 2002:10) it is the largest informal settlement in Kenya and possibly the largest in Africa. It is made up of 12<sup>22</sup> “villages” of which one, Gatwikera, forms the context for this thesis.

### **1.3.2 Gatwikera village.**

Gatwikera village lies at the Western end of Kibera boarding the villages of Soweto and Kisumu Ndogo. Its boundaries are physically defined by the Nairobi to Kisumu railway to the North, the Motoine river to the south, a tributary to the Motoine river to the North and East and by a small footpath to the West. The boundaries, as defined by the map, were also confirmed through consultation with members of the local community although there was some level of uncertainty within the community about the exact position of the Western boundary with Soweto.<sup>23</sup> Demographic information regarding Gatwikera, as with other informal settlements in the city, is notoriously inconsistent. Figures obtained from the 1999 national census indicate the total population of Kibera to be 135,000 with Gatwikera having 24,460 residents (Government of Kenya 2001:1). This figure may be contrasted by research undertaken in 1995 by Dr Peter Ngau of Nairobi University which gave Kibera a population of almost one million and Gatwikera a population of 100,000 (Ngau 1995:64). Accurate or undisputed figures are not available. It is beyond the scope of this research to do any independent population survey of Gatwikera. A decision is therefore required as to what may represent a realistic estimate of the population.

In this research the decision has been made to adopt figures taken from a November 2002 situation analysis report prepared for an environmental sanitation project. The figures have been selected on the basis that the report is endorsed by the Government of Kenya, produced by Nairobi City Council and funded by the World Bank. It also reflects something of a middle position between the extremely divergent figures of the 1999 census and Peter Ngau’s research, and is among the more up to date estimates for the

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<sup>22</sup> Different figures will be found for the number of villages in Kibera largely dependant on whether sub-villages are considered as separate villages. Generally figures will be found ranging from 11 to 13.

<sup>23</sup> Research conducted in the community by Colin Smith and Alvin Mbola 11, 01 2005

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settlement. According to these figures Gatwikera has a population of 52,234, about 11% of the total population of the settlement (Nairobi City Council 2002:10). The name Gatwikera is derived from Kikuyu, one of the major languages of Kenya, and means a place where you get stuck.<sup>24</sup>

### **1.3.3 The Informal economy in Gatwikera.**

The main source of income for Kibera residents is the informal economy. A Government of Kenya report of 2001 estimates that only 17.1% of the population of Kibera are engaged in formal employment. A study by AMREF (1998) in one of Kibera's "villages", Laini Saba found 38% of the population were in waged employment but over half that figure consisted of those employed in house work.

In a survey of Gatwikera, conducted as part of this research, 1225 informal businesses were identified. Over 95% of these were in the retail/service sector and 85% of them were run by women. However, if an aggregated figure is given for sale of cooked produce then this becomes the largest single item. It can be noted that the number of churches identified on the day of the research was fifty nine. This formed the fourth largest form of informal enterprise after retail shops, fish frying and water points.<sup>25</sup>

The Kenya Government's economic survey of 2000 found 63.3% of the informal economy consisted of the service sector (Nairobi City Council 2002:15). The higher figure for Gatwikera reflects the lack of available land for manufacturing activities and the way that such activities are frequently "zoned" within specific areas of the settlement. Workshops or *Jua kali* industry form a significant part of Kibera's economy. However the lack of vehicle access to Gatwikera has resulted in a lower level of *jua kali* industry than might be found in other villages within the settlement.

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<sup>24</sup> Translation proved by Prof. JNK Mugambi

<sup>25</sup> Water in Kibera is purchased from stand pipes and forms an important part of the local economy.

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It was observed that most businesses were individually run by the owners with only chemists, *Busaa* (local brew) clubs, hotels, pubs and some workshops providing employment for additional workers.

In respect of the capital base required to run informal businesses in Gatwikera these can range from as little as \$1 to roast ground nuts by the road side to as high a figure as \$300 for a chemist shop.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY	AREA A	AREA B	AREA C	TOTAL
Carpentry	3		7	10
Welding	4		5	9
Shoe making/repair	7	17	7	31
Retail Shops	24	32	20	106
Busaa <sup>26</sup> Clubs	4	4	9	17
Liquor Bars	1	9	8	19
Video Halls	4	8	9	21
Barber Shops	12	6	30	48
Tailors	9	14	11	34
Chemists	7	6	5	18
Churches				59
Schools	5	3	10	18
Health facilities	1	5	3	9
Youth Groups		3		3
CBOs <sup>27</sup>			2	2
Merry-go-rounds <sup>28</sup>				
Water points	22	22	26	70
Butcheries	6	5	9	20
Vegetable stalls	28	32	27	87
Charcoal	27	12	24	63
Fast Food (ie Chips)		2		
Laundry		5		5
Electrical repairs	6	7	5	18
Telephone services	6	8	3	17
Photo Studios		6		6
Compact Cassette vendors	8	5	8	21
Hotels (not residential)	5	9	5	19
Herbal doctors			2	2
Paraffin points	5	10	5	20

<sup>26</sup> Traditional Beer

<sup>27</sup> Community Based Organisations

<sup>28</sup> Local saving schemes generally operated by women. Each week money is pooled and shared out to member of the group in turn.

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Posho <sup>29</sup> Mills	3	2	6	11
Battery charging	6	4	4	14
Chapatti makers/vendors	14	7	15	36
Mandazi <sup>30</sup> vendors	18	8	15	41
Ground nuts	17	9	7	33
Fish sellers (fried or dried)	23	26	22	71
Chips	13	23	17	53
Roasted Maize	9	7		16
Mutura	3	3	3	9
Githeri <sup>31</sup>	10	21		31
Boiled Maize	2	11	4	17
Hardware		3	13	16
Boiled Eggs	2	14		16
Roasted Meat	4	6	4	14
Raw Eggs	4	18		22
Cooking Oil	8			8
Samosas		7		7
Cereals/grains		12		12
Hair salons	7	6	12	25
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>1225</b>

### 1.3.4 Churches in Gatwikera.

As with other areas of Kibera, Gatwikera has a significant number of churches. Fifty nine, of various types, were identified within the village. From these a number were selected to form the basis of the research. All the churches are technically informal in the sense that they are within an informal settlement and are constructed of temporary materials, mainly iron sheet, and have only quasi legal rights in terms of tenure. However not all churches are informal within the definition used in this study. The village is host to an Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Friends Church, which may be understood as formal churches within an informal context. This idea will be developed further in the study.

The enumeration only counted structures used as churches and therefore did not allow for churches which may at times meet within the village but not consistently in one place or

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<sup>29</sup> Businesses for milling maize

<sup>30</sup> A type of doughnut deep fried and cooked and sold by the roadside

<sup>31</sup> Maize and Beans cooked by the roadside

structure, as is the practice of many AICs. A much fuller discussion of the churches is given in the next chapter.

## PART TWO: SOCIAL ANALYSIS

### 2.1 Informal settlements as a product of unjust social structures.



*Daily Nation 28 June 2006*

It could be argued that the city in Kenya is fundamentally a colonial imposition. Urban centres on the coast date back to the tenth century but their origin is Arabic rather than African.<sup>32</sup> Whilst there is evidence of indigenous urban development in other parts of Africa, most particularly in West Africa, towns and cities in the interior of Kenya were largely developed to meet the needs and requirements of the colonial administration.

In 1948 over 90% of Kenya's Asians lived in urban centres and over 60% of the European settlers, whereas almost 95% of Africans remained in rural areas (Obudho

<sup>32</sup> The suggestion that Swahili towns along the coast of East Africa are essentially a manifestation of Arabic culture is disputed by Thomas Gensheimer. He argues that these cities emerged as the outcome of centuries of economic and cultural development producing unique architectural and urban forms which suggest strong African cultural roots. See Gensheimer, T. *Globalization and Medieval Swahili City* in Falola, F. & Salm, S.J. 2004 *Globalization and Urbanization in Africa* Asmara: Africa World Press p. 173

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1981:29). These figures need to be seen in the context of British colonial rule which actively kept the African out of Nairobi. The Pass Laws controlled the number of Africans living and working in the city and, where provided, accommodation for the African population was grossly inadequate (Obudho 1997:316).

Nairobi was essentially a European city (Macharia 1992:223), built around the needs and requirements of the European settler with only restricted access for the African who was perceived as a temporary sojourner in the city. Elate (2004:54) argues that the primary basis of colonial town planning was the segregation of the “white man’s city” from the “native villages.” Segregation either followed natural barriers such as hills and rivers or through artificially created barriers creating buffer zones between communities.<sup>33</sup> Colonial cities therefore need to be seen not as an attempt reproduce the Western city in Africa but rather as a conscious form of social transformation and control that facilitated the separation of races.

The history of Nairobi is therefore a history built upon exclusion in which the African was never deemed to belong. The legacy of this exclusion is manifestly evident even today in the distribution of land within the city. The history of being temporary sojourners in the city, and the possible impact of such policies on the psyche of Nairobi’s urban population is one which cannot be ignored. In this respect Welbourne and Ogot (1966:7) describe human rootlessness as being, “the most startling and disturbing consequence of Europe’s total impact on Africa”.

The existence of informal settlements within the Nairobi context cannot be separated from this colonial history and from the “shape” of the city which emerged in the colonial period. Informal settlements emerged from the native villages of the colonial era.

The spatial and social segregation of the colonial period, continues to infiltrate African urban society which has not been able to amalgamate this segregation within its

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<sup>33</sup> In Nairobi it was the hills on the cooler western side of the city that were reserved for the white population, Indians were accommodated in the vicinity of the railway and such provision as was made for the African population was on the Eastern side of the city.



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traditional cultures and values (Elate 2004:51). Nairobi continues to exist as a zoned city, a fragmented metropolis, socially and economically divided, with recognized suburbs and estates catered for by urban infrastructure. Meanwhile, informal settlements form the place of habitation for the majority of the population for which national and civic authorities make little or no provision.

Urban economic inequalities mirror the wider national picture with Kenya at one point being second only to Brazil in inequalities of income distribution with 10% of the population owning 47% of the country's national income (Oxfam May 2001:v). Nairobi has been described as one of the world's most unequal cities with population densities in one area of the city being 360 per square kilometer compared to 80,000 within the same sized area in parts of Kibera (Davis:2006 95).

The colonial model of urbanisation did not only influence the spatial organisation of the city but also changed the nature of the structure of relationships within the city. In Zanotelli's (2002:14) words, racial apartheid was replaced by economic apartheid. Colonial divisions created the formally organised "city" within defined urban perimeters while overcrowded, unplanned native villages, informal settlements, emerged outside the city boundaries. These divisions remain in the city of Nairobi both through the continued unplanned growth of informal settlements and the growing establishment of gated communities providing security to the residents of the "city". The racial divisions which found their physical embodiment in passes have, in some sections of the city, been replaced by perimeter walls, razor wire and electric fencing.<sup>34</sup>

The end of British Colonial rule with Kenyan independence in 1963 brought with it an end to the Pass Laws which restricted African inward migration into the city. This resulted in a huge increase in Nairobi's population which to a large degree was accounted for through squatting and informal settlement. The Eastern area of the city, which under

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<sup>34</sup> One example is the area of Gatina in Kawangware, an area of high density formal and informal housing at the edge of Nairobi bordering the elite estate of Lavington. In the colonial era Gatina marked the perimeter of the city, a point where African's could stay without requiring a pass. Today Gatina is divided from Lavington by a 3 metre stone wall, razor wire and an electric fence.

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the apartheid system of colonial Nairobi was designated for African housing, saw an increase in population of 145,000 between 1965 and 1975 and population density rising from 50 persons per hectare in 1962 to 200 – 300 by 1969 (Muwonge 1980:599). Much of this rapid increase in population was not through the creation or expansion of formal housing but through the burgeoning of informal settlements. By 1971 it was estimated that a third of the population of the city were living in “unauthorised housing”.

In the 1980’s the debilitating impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes, further exacerbated unplanned urban growth through the large scale increases in rural poverty (Zezeza 1990:17). UN figures indicate that in the years between 1971 and 1995 the number of informal settlements in Nairobi rose from 50 to 134 and the population of those informal settlements rose from 167,000 to 1,886,000 during the same period. (UN 2003:219).

Currently, Nairobi is experiencing 50% of its population growth through rural to urban migration (Shorter 1991:16). Of those entering the city 70% are likely to initially take up residence in one of the city’s informal settlements (Niemeyer 1999:27). Urban migrants are drawn to the city in the hope of better economic and educational prospects or are pushed to the city primarily by rural poverty (Monsma 1978:13). The gap between rural and urban incomes in Kenya means that, in spite of poor living conditions, unemployment and low wages, the city still offers a substantial economic advantage over rural communities. It is this economic dynamic that has produced a rampant process of urbanisation in Africa, currently running at an annual rate of 3.5 – 4%, despite economic stagnation and massive and under employment within many of Africa’s cities (Davis 2006:15).

Thus far my treatment of informal settlements has been to account for them as an essentially pathological form of urban development rooted in structural injustices. Informal settlements may be seen as symptomatic of the failure of the formal economy and the failure of governments to deliver quality low cost housing to an ever growing urban population. However the global development of informal settlements across

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continents in the developing world has caused some commentators to observe that informal settlements, rather than being symptomatic of failure in the development of urbanisation in the developing world, may be possibly the correct solution for urban development – a solution tailored to the exigencies of the poor (Tonna 1985:84). Elate (2004:56) makes a similar observation when he states:

Particular attention needs to be laid at the endogenous dynamism and the self management strategies developed by the slum dwellers within their environment which should promote slums as a new model for town planning and urban development in third world countries, especially those in Africa South of the Sahara.

Elate cites the case of Ndogbassi in Douala, Cameroon, as an example of where an informal settlement emerged with its own form of organization, administration and governance which led to the creation of well organized but technically illegal informal settlement. Elate (2004:65) argues that sustainable solutions, to what he calls the slums phenomenon in Africa, will not come through reactive policies against informal settlements but will come primarily through “the reorganization and optimization of existing structures.” In a similar vein, Simone (2004c:70) argues against the notion that the formal economy is that which is real and normative, posing the question of whether the informal sector could act as a platform for a different kind of sustainable urban configuration.

Sassen (in Davey 2001:31) notes the way in which different value is placed on people places and economic activities in urban life. She points to an *over-valorization*, particularly of the global financial markets and a significant *de-valorisation* of the people, places and economic activity of those whose manual labour sustains the city. In Elate (2004) and Simone (2004c) we see a movement to *re-valorize* the informal settlements, recognising the qualities of urban life that exist in these communities in spite of the absence of formal infrastructure. This *re-valorization* of informal settlements is also found among commentators noting the contribution made by the informal economy.

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Informal settlements may also be perceived as places which may preserve traditional African values of communality within an urban context. They are expressions of grassroots, largely self governing, urbanisation rather than examples of more bureaucratically planned “top down” development as may be seen in Central Business Districts around the developing world. Simone (2004c:67), commenting on urbanisation in Africa notes that there has been an astute capacity to use “thickening fields” of social relations, however disordered they may be, to make urban life viable. Simone’s use of the phrase “thickening fields” points towards the social capital of traditional African society. Social capital is the glue which holds a society together (Stiglitz 2002:161), a stock of attributes that inheres not in the single individual but in the human collectivity (Meadows 1999:380). It is those attributes which enable societies to operate, order themselves and function effectively and cohesively. Simone appears to be arguing that this social capital of African society is what enables cities to function even where formal, bureaucratic structures appear not to operate.

The impact of rural to urban migration on social capital is complex. Its erosion can be seen in the fragmentation of traditional patterns of relationship which have sustained rural communities. These patterns include the way in which relational and spatial proximity are intimately connected. The pattern of remitting funds to a rural “home”, constructing a home there, and attending weddings and funerals “at home” all suggest, in the Kenyan context, that most urban residents still perceive a need or value in investing in the social capital of the village.

The informal economy is in itself evidence of these thickening fields. However the mountains of uncollected rubbish, higher infant mortality rates, above average levels of HIV AIDS infection, high levels of abortion and early childhood pregnancy, the persistence of un-and under employment and high levels of insecurity in many informal settlement communities suggest that these “thickening fields” may not be as thick as Simone appears to perceive them. There is clearly a value in affirming that which is positive in the experience of life in the informal settlements. However this may be more a testimony to the inventiveness and resilience of the human spirit in often inhumane

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circumstances, than an adequate justification of the emergence and rampant growth of informal settlements across the developing world. Slums and informal settlements are a physical manifestation of urban inequality and the qualities of life that exist in such communities should not camouflage the realities of injustice and indifference that create and sustain them. Similarly it would be unwise to create too idealised a view of the social organization and levels of social capital that exists within informal settlements. In the absence of police activity, “justice” can be distributed harshly and indiscriminately as mob justice and informal and quasi formal structures of governance can be corrupted to little more than systems of oppression and extortion.<sup>35</sup>

### ***2.2 Tracing the line of history: Kibera as contested space.***

Kibera’s history as an informal settlement dates back to the colonial period when “Nubian” soldiers, and their families, of the Kings African Rifles were settled in the area (Parsons 1997:90). The soldiers were originally drawn from Emin Pasha’s garrison of Egyptian outposts in Equatoria who had been cut off through the rise of the Mahdist state. They were incorporated into the East African Rifles in Uganda and in the late 1890’s many were transferred to Kenya to guard the new railway. They formed the backbone of the “Native Officers” of the King’s African Rifles. Having no legitimate claim to land in the “Native Reserve” the Nubians presented a problem to the Colonial authorities in respect of their resettlement, when injured or retired, and the settlement of their families. The solution was to settle them in a military exercise ground which had been assigned to the army in 1904. The first Nubian soldiers and their families were settled there in 1911 in an area which became known as the KAR Shambas.<sup>36</sup> Nubian Soldiers with 12 years of service were given a shamba pass which allowed them to stay rent free in Kibera as a form of pension. This is the beginning of the story of the settlement of Kibera.

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<sup>35</sup> One occasionally reported unofficial means of punishing thieves and “muggers” within Kibera is termed “Kuweka tyre”. This refers to the placing of tyre over the head of the alleged offender and burning both tyre and victim.

<sup>36</sup> Shamba is Kiswahili for a cultivated field or vegetable garden

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The name Kibera is derived from the Nubian word for forest and initial settlement created a sparsely populated area of small farms in a significantly larger area than that currently occupied by Kibera informal settlement. Descendents of the initial Nubian settlers remain in Kibera and continue to claim rights to the land for which the Colonial Government never issued a title deed. Although within the boundaries of Nairobi city the land remains a contested space with no residents possessing officially recognized legal rights to settle on what remains government land. The Nubians, a largely Muslim community “recast their ethnic identity” to define themselves as Nubis, an indigenous “tribe” entitled to full rights as Kenyan citizens following independence in 1963 (Parsons 1997:89). Although forming a relatively small percentage of Kibera’s population the Nubians have a significant influence in the community both as resident landlords and through their ongoing claim to parts of Kibera as their community land. To date, land rights remain a hotly contested issue in the community.

The growth of Kibera from sparsely populated Nubian shambas to become one of the largest informal settlements in Africa can be explained by a number of factors. By independence Kibera’s population was approximately 5000 with half the population being Nubian. The land area of Kibera at this stage was about 12,000 acres. Following independence in 1963 the pass laws were abolished giving Kenyans the right to enter and live in the city without requiring a pass. This inevitably led to a rise in rural to urban migration and combined with a lack of low cost housing, led to a rise in the unregulated construction of informal housing. Muwonge (1980:599) estimates that by 1971 one third of Nairobi’s population were living in “unauthorised housing.”

Following national elections in Kenya in 1974 the MP for the constituency encompassing Kibera granted permission for the large scale construction of rental housing in Kibera. Many of the beneficiaries of this were from the Kikuyu community, the community of the then President and the community which had particularly experienced a significant loss of ancestral land in the colonial period. From 1974 onwards significant construction of housing took place such that by 1980 Kibera had an estimated population of 60,000. Building of rental housing continued to increase and in the 1980s there was substantial

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migration into Kibera from Western Kenya. Today Kibera has an estimated population of 600,000 and in such a densely populated environment there is no further possibility of significant population increase.

Attempts to upgrade Kibera have been thwarted by a lack of progress in establishing land tenure and in resolving the competing claims of structure owners and tenants. Illegal government demolition of structures, in violation of the UN charter on human rights, began early in 2004 but was halted through international pressure, mainly orchestrated through the Roman Catholic Church. The policy of seeking to relocate Kibera residents finds its precedent in the colonial era when the then Government found it too politically risky to forcibly repatriate such a large urban population (Parsons 1997:96). Kibera's status as an informal settlement means that it falls outside the municipal authority's provision and therefore lacks the most basic amenities of safe potable water, roads sewage systems electricity and refuse collection. Expressed positively, in Hake's (1997) words, it is a self help city. However the optimism of such a designation of the informal sector in the 1970's seems somewhat overtaken by events of the 80's and 90's where massive urban migration and political indifference has created communities built more around precarious survival than self help.

### ***2.3 Nyumba, nyumbani: the rural urban continuum.***

Geddes and Bamford note that the distinctive feature of a city lies in the way it "accumulates and embodies the heritage of a region and combines in some measure and kind with the cultural heritage of larger units, national, racial, religious, human." (in Gorringer 2002:139). Cities demonstrate both common attributes and regional differences.

It has been argued that a distinctive feature of many African cities, particularly observable in Nairobi, is the way in which residents see themselves as temporary residents in the city with perhaps the intention of returning to a rural home (Little 1973:10). This phenomenon is well illustrated in the heart of the Central Business District of Nairobi. A statue of a lone soldier has beneath it the inscription, "He lives in the city

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but his heart is at home”. The statue was erected in the colonial period and may be understood as an expression of a colonial policy of excluding Africans from the city. It is significant that the inscription is written in the third person reflecting a colonial perspective of Africans as rural dwellers and Europeans as urbanites, an ironic position given that much urban migration was precipitated by colonial policies which forced Africans off their land. However the words may still be interpreted to capture the sentiments of many of Nairobi’s residents, portraying an ambivalence towards life in the city and a deep seated sense that whatever else Nairobi may represent, it is not home.

The city is the place of work, or at least of seeking work; a place of perceived opportunity, of study and of education. It is the place of the house *nyumba*, but not the place to call home, *nyumbani*.<sup>37</sup> This is the perceived wisdom of much thinking regarding urbanisation in E Africa. However in the following section we explore whether this dualistic identity remains or whether there is shift taking place within the city such that rural ties are diminishing and the urban context has begun to take on a new meaning for its residents.

The oscillation of people between town and city, and what Shorter (1991:18) terms “the rural urban continuum”, is a distinctive feature of urban life in many parts of Africa. Adepoju noted that in Nigera 78 percent of all urban migrants retained social links with rural homes through regular visiting (in Ocho1996:15). Here we will examine this link between the rural and the urban from the context of Nairobi. In exploring the notion of *nyumba/nyumbani* we will consider it from four perspectives: economically, socially, religiously and as a form of myth. Ultimately however our concern is less for the city as a whole but for the meaning of the actual context of this research, the informal settlements and, more specifically, Kibera.

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<sup>37</sup> Nyumba and Nyumbani are the Kiswahili words for house and home respectively.



### **2.3.1 *Nyumba, nyumbani: an economic perspective.***

Njuguna<sup>38</sup> is a civil servant. He has worked in Nairobi for 25 years and now has a comfortable house in West Nairobi. From Monday to Friday he works in his office in the centre of town. Once a month, however, he returns to his rural home in the foothills of Mount Kenya to inspect his tea and to pay workers on the family farm. He is a man of some status in his village and will eventually retire to the home they have built on their family land.

Otieno is a night watchman who lives in Kibera. He works six or seven nights a week and sends some of the proceeds back to a village near Kisumu where his wife and five children live. The small amount he sends supplements whatever his wife can raise from the small plot of land, which has decreased in size with every new generation. He intends to send more, but life in the city is expensive and the pay is very poor. Once a year he goes home on annual leave and spends time with his family. He takes home what money he can but expectations exceed what he can provide. He occasionally thinks about moving the family to the city but school fees are too high<sup>39</sup> and his 3 meter square mud and iron sheet rented room would be crowded. He is not sure he wants his children to grow up in the city. He envisages the day when he will retire from the security firm and go back to his rural home.

The stories of Njuguna and Otieno, whilst fictional, represent the reality of many thousands of people living in the city and their experience is not unique to Nairobi. Harri Englund similarly observes the strength of economic ties between rural and urban areas in Lilongwe where urban dwellers frequently tolerated poor living conditions in the city in order to maintain relatively prosperous rural positions (Simone 2004b:25).

We see in the stories of Njuguna and Otieno that both wealth and poverty build bridges between the city and the rural areas. People are prevented from making a home in the city because they cannot meet the cost of urban life, while others retain links to a rural home

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<sup>38</sup> Njuguna and Otieno are fictitious characters but their stories are not.

<sup>39</sup> Despite the introduction of free education by the NARC Government many parents in the informal settlements pay for informal schooling for their children within the settlement.

where they still own land and property. For both individuals economic factors of both wealth and poverty may make the city a temporary place of residence rather than an urban home. However for Otieno his relationship with a rural home stems from the reality of his experience as an urban migrant whose origins are outside the city. Had he moved his family to Kibera, had his children been born here, as many are, what would be their story?

### **2.3.2 *Nyumba, nyumbani: the social dimension.***

Mbiti's (1969:224) oft quoted epithet "I am because we are" stands in an intentional contrast with the Descartes' maxim of western identity, "cogito ergo sum". Mbiti's argument is that African identity is found in community. Within the village the social ties of tribe, clan and *rika*<sup>40</sup> play a central role. Critically therefore the definition of *nyumbani* is rooted in a sense of community. *Nyumbani* defines a place of belonging within the context of a given community. *Nyumba* conversely is defined by its absence of community and belonging. *Nyumba* is therefore essentially individualistic, it describes the place where I live but reveals nothing of the community to which I belong. *Nyumba* in this respect describes location whereas *nyumbani* describes a place of attachment and rootedness. Jonathan Smith makes the point that while ones place of birth may be accidental "investing it with meaning, converting it into a home is an act of human construction." (Smith 1986:25) This transformative act, he argues becomes a paradigm of all humane activity "the conversion of mere location into a locus of significance"(1986:25).

*Nyumbani* is the conversion of *nyumba* to a place invested with meaning which is more deep rooted than just a place of birth. The place of belonging, here, is not necessarily the place of birth but rather of ancestral relationship, spanning beyond the individual to the community to which he/she belongs. Here distance is not a factor. Simone (2004b:18) notes that, "Distance from home did not connote disconnection from place."

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<sup>40</sup> Age mates in Kikuyu society

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This distinction between *nyumba* and *nyumbani* has some resonance with Brueggemann's (1977) distinction between place and space. He describes place as being space which has historic meanings. Whilst space represents an arena void of commitment, coercion and accountability, a place of individual freedom, place is a context which declares that humanness cannot be found in escape, detachment, absence of commitment and undefined freedom (1977:5). He describes the yearning for place as a decision to enter history with an identifiable people in an identifiable pilgrimage and this yearning is something which, in his perception the urban promise has not met (1977:4). This however is an overly pessimistic view of the city which gives no recognition of the fact that from the Cathedral city to the mining town, the Swahili settlement to the Soweto township, generations of people around the globe have found cities not to be places of anomie and social dissonance but rather distinct communities to which they belong. My own experience of living in an "urban village" in S.E London where many of the community were experiencing significant dislocation in being driven out by gentrification and the economics of the housing market, suggested that this too was an urban environment which constituted place rather than mere urban space.

A distinctive feature of this contrast of space and place in the African urban context is that space and place come to have specific geographic identities and describe the dual residence which is held by many of Nairobi's residents. The city is space, marked by individual freedom and a lack of accountability to a given community, while the rural, in an idealised sense, is place, *nyumbani*, space invested with meaning, belonging, history and relationship.

In the village the physical proximity of homes is often a reflection of relational proximity. The substance which reinforces these ties is land. The ownership of land is central. It is wealth, it is status, but it is also the very tangible expression of belonging. Twisting Tilich's (1978: 9) words, it is the ground of being. To be without land is not only to be materially poor, it is also to some degree a poverty of identity. Land is not a mere commodity, its significance is both social and, as will be seen later, religious.

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For the urban dweller the city can appear to lack those elements which engender community and belonging. The unity of the clan and tribe may be lost in the multicultural context of urban life. Gutkind (1962), writing in the early 1960s, commented that Africa's urban centres are not merely focal points where the break with tradition can be seen most clearly but also centres in which a major restructuring of African society is taking place. Shorter (1991:31) is non-committal on the actual nature of the impact of urbanisation on tribal identity but does argue that urban living transforms ethnic identities. A more radical view of the impact of urbanisation on traditional culture is to be found in a social analysis conducted by Christ the King Catholic parish in Kibera (in Bodewes 2005). One of the areas considered was the impact of urbanisation on young people in Kibera. They came to the following conclusion.

Most youth born and raised in Kibera are no longer attached to their rural lives and values and some do not even know how to trace their family roots. The result is that most, if not all, of the youth born into Kibera have been integrated into the growing universal culture of the West. Many youth openly admitted that they simply no longer desire to hold onto the traditional African culture of their parents and grandparents. (Bodewes 2005:107)

Whilst the above quotation appears to trumpet the demise of traditional culture within Kibera, later chapters in the book point to the strong continuation of rural links, particularly in relation to burial practices, and the continuity of a deep sense of ethnic identity. This suggests that predictions about the absolute demise of traditional culture are at best premature if not inaccurate.

However urban life clearly has its impact on the nature of community and belonging. The relationship between physical proximity and familial ties is lost in a context where a person may not even know their neighbour in a rapidly mobile neighbourhood. Most critically, in a context where people live as virtual squatters with the constant threat of eviction, and where the ownership of land remains a far off dream and an apparently insoluble problem, a sense of belonging in the city may appear unrealisable. Rural *nyumbani* in this sense represents something permanent and secure, no matter how small or meagre, when compared to the uncertainties of urban life.

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A social dynamic which emerges from this context is that urban environments are often marked by a lack of care and provision. Local authorities make little or no provision for the informal settlements and those living in these communities may themselves invest little time in the upkeep of a community to which they have no ownership and few rights. Mountains of rubbish and open sewers and a lack of community co-operation become a feature of life in a context in which, at some profound level, a sense of ownership and belonging is obscured or non-existent.

If *nyumbani* is de facto rural, if place is only and ever place in a rural context in what sense can the city ever be invested with meaning such that it becomes place, home? Perhaps here language becomes critical. *Nyumbani* may be de facto rural by the very definition of the word. It may be that city can never be *nyumbani* simply because all the associations of *nyumbani* are rural. Perhaps, as we will see shortly, new words are needed to describe the relationship between the rural and urban environments, which do not define the city as being simply temporary space. Are we seeing a cultural shift that redefines the meaning of the city and if so, what part does the church, particularly in the context of informal settlements, have to play in that process?

### **2.3.3 *Nyumba, nyumbani: the religious dimension.***

The religious attachment of the city dweller to the rural home is most frequently illustrated at the point of death where the deceased must be taken “home” for burial. That return for burial is understood to be significant not only for the deceased and his family but for the community as a whole. Within traditional E. African society a person cannot be buried away from his ancestors, for even in death he continues to be a part of that community.

The strength of that tie to the rural homeland, and legal recognition of that tie, has been well documented in the celebrated case of Otieno and Wambui (Shorter 1991:6). In this instance Otieno, a senior Nairobi lawyer was prevented from being buried in Nairobi,

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according to the wishes of his wife, through the claims of his village community that, where ever he has lived, he must still be buried at “home”. While many in the Christian population will reject traditional ideas about the living dead and ancestors, there remain powerful cultural attachments which still make burial in the city unpopular. The sight of coffins on the roofs of cars, matatus<sup>41</sup> or in the back of pickups, accompanied by lines of mourners leaving Nairobi at the end of the week for burials at home, is common feature of life in this city. However it may also be observed that there is an increasing demand for burial space in the city as rural ties begin to diminish and where the urban landless poor find they have no rural burial place.

Relationship to a rural home is also manifest in patterns of church attendance where key rites of passage, but most particularly funerals, are frequently marked at the rural home. It therefore becomes important to maintain contacts with the rural community. People living in the city, whatever their circumstances, also enjoy a higher status in their rural communities with consequent expectations that they will contribute to the rural community. Consequently, many city pastors complain that their members will give to the church in the city but will be sending their tithe “home”.

Significantly for Anglicans and other mainline denominations, the church of *nyumbani* may well be altogether different from the church attended in the city. As will be indicated in the research, it is far from unusual to be an Anglican or Methodist at *nyumbani* but attend a Charismatic or Pentecostal church in Nairobi.<sup>42</sup> Church attendance in the rural community is defined by long standing community allegiances whilst in the city denominational commitment is less strong and individual preference prevails. This preference is often directed towards Pentecostal and Charismatic churches which may appear more urban and modern, reflecting the aspirations of urban life. It may also be argued that Pentecostal and Charismatic churches address more directly the felt needs of the city dweller.

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<sup>41</sup> Local minibuses which form the mainstay of public transport in Kenya

<sup>42</sup> A simple survey of the pastors of Pentecostal churches on an urban mission course at Carlile College revealed that half the students belonged to other denominations in their rural home.

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Shorter and Njiru (2001:13) note that many of the new religious movements in Africa are arising in situations where the majority of people are experiencing acute poverty or even desperation. Many of Nairobi's Charismatic and Pentecostal churches, by their very names; The Deliverance Church, Winners Chapel, the Maximum Miracle Centre, appeal directly to people experiencing, in some measure, dislocation and oppression in urban living or who aspire to some form of upward mobility within the city. Similar names of informal churches exist within the informal settlements with references to victory and miracles being a common feature. The appeal of these churches in the informal settlements of the city is seen in the way in which their spirituality addresses problems of urban life. Anderson (2000:18) notes that the great attraction of many new forms of African spirituality is that they claim to provide answers to existential problems. Welbourne and Ogot (1966:141) made similar observations of African independent churches suggesting that these churches could preach messages relevant to the social and material problems of members and could "provide homes in which mythical and empirical factors were felt, as in traditional society, inextricably linked."

Finally, in a survey of Nairobi, statistical data indicated that church attendance is more than three times as high in rural areas as in the city (Downes, Oehrig, Shane 1989:42). Some urban migrants change denomination in moving from the rural to the urban, while others become detached from the church altogether. It is beyond the scope of this research to look at the impact of urbanisation on levels of church attendance and a recent survey has produced contrary findings to those of the Nairobi Church Survey.<sup>43</sup> However, it is arguable that in some measure *nyumbani* also represents beliefs, values and commitments, held within the rural community which are discarded, temporarily or permanently within the city.

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<sup>43</sup> The 2004 report by ACM-FTT entitled The Unfinished Task found Nairobi had the highest levels of church attendance in the country. However the data is at best questionable not least because they would appear not to consider Roman Catholic and African Instituted churches as Christian Churches.

### **2.3.4 The myth of *nyumba, nyumbani*.**

James Mwangi died in Kibera at the age of 82.<sup>44</sup> He had lived for many years in two rented rooms, along with his wife and other members of his family. The funeral took place at the rural homestead, a largish compound not far from the town of Muranga. Why had Mwangi remained in Kibera? Why had he not returned to live in his rural home which afforded far more room than the crush of Kibera? No single answer will be entirely satisfactory. He retained business interests in the city, renting rooms in Kibera, but he had no shortage of family to take over the business. Friends gave different reasons for why he stayed in the city but ultimately he remained in the city out of choice. He had a home in the traditional sense but he never chose to live there. *Nyumbani* for Mwangi became a rural ideal, a sustaining myth, but never an actual place of residence. His so called home was never in fact home, he was most at home in the city. He possessed a home, *nyumbani*, but existentially he could be at home and feel at home in the city.

Mwangi's coffin on the roof of the vehicle declared that he was going home but in fact he was leaving *home* to be buried on ancestral land. Similar to Western patterns of habitation, the place of residence and the home had virtually become synonymous. Yet there is still some tangible connection with this other place called *nyumbani*. The space in the city which he inhabits still at some level does not altogether replace the place which inhabits him and which he has always called home but seldom returned to.<sup>45</sup>

Mwangi's story illustrates the fact that although many people have a place they can call home, an increasing number choose not to live there having culturally become more at home in the city. Two other factors challenge the idea of the rural home. Firstly, for some in Nairobi there is no rural home. For the landless poor there is nowhere else to go. While the concept of a rural home may still exist as a place of origin, a place where relations still live, or even as a desired place of return, it may have no physical reality. For many of

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<sup>44</sup> Whilst the name and some minor details have been changed the circumstances of the funeral, which I participated in, are otherwise accurate.

<sup>45</sup> This idea of being inhabited by place is taken from Isasi-Diaz, A.M. 2004 *La Habana: the city that inhabits me* In Tanner, Kathryn ed. *Spirit in the Cities: Searching for soul in the urban landscape*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press



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the urban poor, the only home they physically have is the rented iron sheet hut they now occupy. Conversely, for the affluent, the realities of rural life, the lack of certain basic amenities, and perhaps the community expectation of a sharing of wealth gained in the city, may mean that the rural home holds little attraction. The house built on their own land outside the city, the emerging suburbia, will in every other respect, become home even if the term *nyumbani* is reserved for a little visited rural community.

The second challenge to the concept of *nyumbani* comes from the generation which knows nothing of a rural home, from those born and raised in the city. A point of confusion in conversation with young people in Nairobi is to ask them where home is.<sup>46</sup> Some will simply say Nairobi, while others may acknowledge a rural place occupied by their grandparents that has little or no connection with their own sense of identity and belonging. Here *nyumbani* defines tribal identity, but serves little other purpose. Over forty percent of the residents of some informal settlements are under the age of 16 (Neuwirth 2006:67) and most of these were born in the city. For this generation the concept of a rural home has little or no meaning. Sheng, an ever changing mixture of Kiswahili, English and vernacular languages has become the lingua franca of the urban youth. Ultimately it is a language that transcends tribal differences affirming a cosmopolitan urban identity.

Globalisation and the unrelenting impact of Western culture on urban life all contribute towards a generation which feels increasingly dislocated from the culture and values of a rural home. It may therefore be argued that the dichotomy of *nyumba nyumbani*, which is so important to our understanding of life in the informal settlements, is, like the settlements themselves, temporary and contingent, a passing phase in the process of urbanisation in Kenya. What is emerging is possibly an urbanite population within Nairobi and other urban centres where urbanisation has resulted in new forms of social consciousness.

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<sup>46</sup> An unpublished survey of part of Kibera by Christ The King Catholic Church found that the majority of women and all the youth interviewed claimed that Kibera was home. Conversely the men, overwhelmingly identified a rural homestead

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This emerging form of social consciousness is well captured in sheng when the youth speak of the rural areas. In this section I have worked consistently with the phrases *nyumba* and *nyumbani*. However these are not the only words to describe the rural urban continuum. For many of Nairobi's youth the area we have called *nyumbani* is called *ushago* or even *shags* for short. Its etymology is uncertain but may be found in *mashambani*, meaning a place of rural cultivation. Critical here is that in the language of the youth the rural community and home are no longer synonymous. New words have been created to define this relationship in a way that avoids identification with the rural environment as a place of belonging. It becomes a place of otherness rather than of identity. The rural context seems to become synonymous with rural occupation, with agriculture and working the land. It remains distinct from the city but not by its significance in belonging but by its distance from the lifestyles and occupation of the city. The word *nyumbani* will perhaps always have a rural connotation, but increasingly it may cease to be home practically or existentially for the youth of the city.

### **2.4 Informal Pentecostal churches within the wider Pentecostal movement in Africa.**

The global Pentecostal movement represents the fastest growing expression of Christianity in the world today. Harvey Cox (1995:xv) suggests that Pentecostal churches are growing at the rate of 20 million new members a year while Gifford, (2004:38) describing the Ghanaian context, reports stagnation in membership of mainline churches whilst Pentecostal churches are recording growth rates of 30 – 80%. If Barratt and Johnson's projection is correct, by 2025 Pentecostals will number 740 million accounting for 28% of global Christianity (Anderson 2000:24). From its humble origins at the turn of the twentieth century in an African American church in Azusa Street, Los Angeles, Pentecostalism has grown into a global movement. The locus of its growth is to be found in the cities of the developing world or, as suggested more dramatically by Mike Davis (2002:125), wherever the emotional fuel is supplied by poverty and injustice. Pentecostalism, from its very origins is primarily a black urban movement. Informal Pentecostal churches represent just one more manifestation of that world wide movement within Christianity.

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Various theories have been expounded to explain the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism. Martin (1990:160), discussing the contexts of Korea and South Africa, highlights the way Pentecostalism thrives in contexts of rapid social change and “considerable threat.” Anderson (1992:18) notes the argument that Pentecostalism has thrived in contexts of social dislocation and the experience of social disorganisation and radical social change. Similarly Marshal –Fratani (2001:1995) points to the growth of Pentecostalism in contexts of urban crisis. Pentecostal growth has consequently been defined as a religious response to social dislocation.

Haynes (1996:169) describes the emergence of new religious movements in Africa, often Pentecostal or charismatic, as being a reflection of the attempts of ordinary people “to come to terms with the socio-economic environments which have changed massively within one or two generations and to the centralisation of power which has led to many feeling both marginal and impotent in the face of state dominance.” Anderson rejects this view as essentially simplistic. Pentecostalism appears to be growing fast in the rapidly expanding cities of the global south and amongst the urban poor. However, Anderson is right to object to an explanation of Pentecostalism which portrays the movement purely as a response to some form of social pathology. In respect of Africa Anderson argues that Pentecostalism has grown essentially for religious reasons and from the desire and hunger for a truly African expression of Christianity in a modernising world. Cox (1995:81) in a somewhat similar way points to the way Pentecostalism appeals to a core of human religiosity which he calls “primal spirituality.”

Andersons’s argument that Pentecostalism is a response to the search for a truly African expression of Christianity is largely sustainable by his inclusion of African Independent Churches within the Pentecostal movement. However, even then one must ask why, if Anderson is right, AICs in some African cities are declining in the face of Pentecostal growth (Gifford 2004:38)? Here, contrary to Anderson’s findings, the more African expressions of Christian faith, represented by the AICs, are experiencing decline in the face of more Westernised Pentecostal movements.

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Pentecostalism is a global movement and its appeal may lie more in its opening into a global world than its connectivity to African cosmology (Corten & Marshall Fratani 2001:3). The emergence of, for instance, Korean led Pentecostal churches in Nairobi, or the ever increasing use of Western instrumentation and songs in worship, must raise doubts about the validity of the argument that the desire for an African expression of Christianity lies at the heart of Pentecostal growth on the continent.<sup>47</sup> Pentecostalism as an urban movement may be as much marked by its opening of doors into a global world (Corten, Marshall-Fratani,2001:3) as by its appeal to some essence of African religiosity. This ability to somehow be “at home” in a variety of contexts is perhaps the real strength of the Pentecostal movement.

Martin (1990:231) speaks of the capacity of Pentecostalism to become truly indigenous, becoming more easily embedded within local culture. Anderson (2000:115) similarly observes an inherent flexibility within Pentecostalism which allows it to transplant itself within different cultures. I would suggest here that this openness is as much towards urban and global culture as it is towards those cultures more specifically defined as African. This dynamic of flexibility and fluidity, an ability to move within and between cultures may also contribute to the explanation of why Pentecostal churches can emerge and flourish in the soil of the informal settlements while mainline protestant churches lack the flexibility to take root within this context.

In addressing the growth of Pentecostalism Anderson notes the significance of the spirituality of Pentecostal churches which speaks into the problems and tangible needs of African society (Anderson,1992:19). Shorter and Njiru (2001:36) make a similar observation although using a somewhat dismissive expression of “problem solving” churches suggesting that such churches provide (false?) spiritual solutions to essentially material problems. More positively, Anderson is arguing that the pneumatology of Pentecostal churches, with the message of reception of the Holy Spirit, empowers

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<sup>47</sup> A bus leaves Kibera every Sunday transporting worshipers to a Korean Pentecostal church on the other side of the city. A few yards from the same bus stand a Brazilian Pentecostal preacher has set up a ministry.

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individuals to cope with what, within an African tradition, might be seen as a hostile spirit world and provides a message that addresses the entire human condition and not just “spiritual” problems.

Within this thesis it is argued that one dimension of the growth of informal Pentecostal churches lies in the way they reflect the characteristics of the informal economy, the nature of their relationship to the complex realities of life in the informal sector and their ability to engage with the issues of living which arise from within that context. The argument here focuses not so much on African cosmology, which Anderson tends to emphasise, as on the liminality and socio-economic realities of the informal context. This is not to argue that such churches emerge as a deviant or dysfunctional response to a context of social dislocation. Rather I would I seek to explain this from the perspective that all churches arise from within a given context, socially, politically, culturally. Informal Pentecostal churches are significant because they arise from the informal sector rather being inserted into it and it is perhaps the flexible nature of Pentecostalism which allows it thrive in the eroding and shifting soil of the informal settlements. This is explored later.

Within the research questions I set out to look at certain key facets of the churches in the study. These fall under the headings of Minister, Membership, Message, Ministry, Transformation and Training. We now consider these in turn in respect of the Pentecostal movement generally. The issue of training is not considered here but is looked at in the concluding section of the thesis.

### ***2.4.1 The minister and the ministry.***

Within the thesis it is argued that many pastors emerge as ministers of informal churches in a similar way to which individuals set up businesses within the informal economy. The argument of ministries emerging in relation to economic factors is not entirely new. Martin (1990:160) argues that Pentecostal churches create structures which somehow parallel what is found in the economic sphere. In the thesis it is argued that the ministry

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of informal Pentecostal churches reflects the specific nature of the informal economy. The issue here is that the informal sector provides ease of access into employment and this is as true for a church as a hairdressing salon or a fish stall.

While the thesis specifically focuses on the informal sector, similar observations have been made more generally to the emergence of Charismatic and Pentecostal ministers. Isichei, (1995:335) in considering the proliferation of new churches in Africa, notes that the founding of churches is a career open to talent for which no formal qualifications are needed.

The idea of perceiving the church as business appears unavoidable in a thesis which defines churches as emerging along the lines of, and sharing the characteristics of, the informal economy. Again the idea of church ministry as a form of business is not an entirely new observation. Gifford (2004:192) notes that the establishment of a Christian church is the shortest route to raise oneself above the poverty line and suggests that Ghana's new pastors are religious entrepreneurs where economic circumstances are difficult (2004:62). Shorter and Njiru (2001:39) make a similar point in describing the way a young man from the slums makes the economic transition to a permanent house with a sleek car through setting himself up as a self ordained preacher.

Economic factors are a significant factor in determining the shape of ministry within the informal settlements. It is one explanation for why such contexts are almost deserted by mainline protestant churches and why the Roman Catholic Church can generally only maintain a presence in such communities through its missionary orders and foreign missionaries rather than its parochial system.<sup>48</sup> Against that background it seems disingenuous to highlight avarice in the motivation of Pentecostal churches to explain their presence in these communities whilst ignoring the factors which keep the mainline churches at the margins of the informal sector. My (Smith 2002: 6) pilot study with informal settlement pastors, found that their ministry represented a drain on the household economy rather than making a contribution. To argue that informal settlement

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<sup>48</sup> Christ the King Catholic Church in Kibera, which has a wide ranging social ministry, comes under the ministry of the Guadalupe fathers from Mexico.

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churches share characteristics of the informal economy is not to suggest that they are essentially businesses headed by religious entrepreneurs for whom this is the easiest route to a making living in a dire economic context. For many the church seldom pays the rent, let alone the pastor. One Kibera pastor in the research commented “If you think you will be a pastor and benefit from people definitely after some few days you will close down and go for another business.” (Smith 2005) Other motivating factors therefore, must also be considered.

A second observation to note of Pentecostal ministers, particularly in marginalised urban communities, is that, unlike their mainline church counterparts, they are drawn from among those whom they serve. Berryman (1996:185) comments:

What is striking is that the pastors are drawn from the ranks of the poor and, despite their suits and ties, remain like the people around them in their ways of life and outlook.

Both Gifford (1998:171) and Berryman (1996:186) note the way in which Pentecostal ministries develop in a way which is not dependant upon producing trained intellectuals or a professional class of minister but rather provide a much greater scope for more local leadership. This view of the Pentecostal pastor as a “man of the people”, as a pastoral presence deeply connected to grass roots life in the community, emerging from it and ministering within it, is in stark contrast to that other image of the Pentecostal pastor. This is the image of the “big man” or “Man of God” who represents something far over, above and beyond the man or woman in the street. Here we see the notion of Pentecostal ministry as something highly individualistic and focused on the persona, and perceived gifts of the pastor.

Charismatic churches can be understood to be, by definition (Mugambi 1995:120) the ministry of individuals and in some respects individualism is the hallmark of charismatic Christianity (Gifford, 2004:28). The notion of a pastor as the anointed one who channels God’s blessings (Gifford 1998:169) inevitably leads to an emphasis of the person rather than the office of the Pastor. A pastor is defined by his or her ability to mediate the

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blessings of the Spirit to his/her followers rather than by appointment into a specific role. In this sense ministry is authenticated by the efficacy of the pastor in channelling such blessing.

Within such an understanding of ministry the “big man” syndrome, which Gifford (2004:185) laments as the curse of Africa, is a more likely leadership style than models expressed in terms of servant leadership. However, this research does not focus on the city centre ministry of large Charismatic churches but on the ministry of individuals who largely share the socio-economic realities of their congregants. While it may be the individuality of the respective pastors which distinguishes one ministry from another, the notion of the big man who is the channel to blessing and prosperity may be hard to sustain in an environment where the pastor is no better off than his congregants. Responses to the questionnaire issued to churches in Gatwikera indicated that the majority of pastors were self employed in the *jua kali* sector and there was little evidence to suggest that any of the pastors were experiencing significant financial benefit as a result of their respective ministries.

### **2.4.2 The membership.**

I have already stated that, from its origins, Pentecostalism has been a black urban movement. Hurban (2001:125) indicates that it is also a movement of people in transition, of the urban migrant. He argues that in the Caribbean and in South America Pentecostals are not to be found in the rural communities where local forms of social control are strong, but among recent arrivals living on the periphery of large cities. This view is contested by Droogers (2001:50) who argues, from a South American context, that urban converts are not new arrivals but the already established middle class. However, both Martin and Gifford point to the way in which Pentecostal churches can be seen to be strong in both the upper echelons of urban society and at the poorer margins. Martin points to the growth of Pentecostal mega churches in elite sections of urban society in South Africa, Asia and South America. Gifford similarly demonstrates, from a simple process of counting Land Cruisers and Mercedes cars in church car-parks, that



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Pentecostal ministries appeal to different strata of Ghanaian society. Using a similar tool in Nairobi it quickly becomes apparent, from churches such as Nairobi Pentecostal Church, that membership of a Pentecostal church is not restricted to those at the economic margins of the city.

Hollenweger (1994:200) argues that Pentecostalism was a religion of the poor that, especially in the West, became a religion of the affluent. Harvey Cox (1995:17) makes a similar observation arguing that American Pentecostals,

began as rebellious antagonists of the status quo, refusing to serve in the armies of this fallen age, but now have become impassioned super patriots, easy marks for the high rollers of the religious right.

The overwhelming conclusion to be drawn here is that, whilst Pentecostalism might find its early roots in marginal communities and still today thrives in contexts of urban poverty, it is not a religious movement that can be confined to one socio-economic strata of society.

Working on the premise that Pentecostal churches are more western facing than African instituted churches I was also concerned to establish whether informal Pentecostal churches have a membership which is essentially urban facing. In other words do the churches represent a retreat from modernity and urban life, in the way that AIC's have been characterised, or are they in some sense populated by aspirants of the city who seek to identify with a church which has a more urban trajectory. This is considered in detail in the research findings

### **2.4.3 The message.**

It is clearly problematic to generalise about the message of any group of churches and Pentecostal churches in particular are marked by a wide diversity in belief and practice (Hollenweger 1994:212). Nevertheless those reflecting upon the global Pentecostal movement tend to point towards certain common areas which are significant in the

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teaching and preaching, particularly of the newer Pentecostal churches. Gifford (2004:69) in his study of Pentecostal churches in Ghana points to an emphasis on success, wealth and prosperity, arguing that prosperity theology is integral to Ghana's charismatic revival. The message of salvation, Gifford (2004:109) argues, is no longer presented in Ghana's new churches as a message to do with sin, atonement and redemption but rather one which focuses on "this worldly" realities.

This emphasis on "this worldly" realities is a theme taken up by many writers although not always pointing towards a prosperity theology which Gifford found so integral to Ghana's charismatics. Anderson (2000:116) describes the way in which Pentecostal and Zionist churches in South Africa provide answers to this worldly needs like sickness, poverty, unemployment, loneliness, evil spirits and sorcery. Waldo Cesar (2001:26) suggests a message within the Pentecostal movement, particularly amongst the urban poor, which encourages radical faith, hope and mutual responsibility and which results in new lifestyles which recover moral and ethical values. Gifford (2004:121) finds little evidence of this emphasis on taking responsibility other than in the ministry of Mensa Otabil who specifically emphasizes personal responsibility. Rather, Gifford primarily detects a message which seeks to reap where one has not sown, the very antithesis of mutual responsibility.

Within the research I observe the way in which the informal Pentecostal churches address the very material needs of the community. As will be seen, what is observed is generally neither as crudely expressed as some of the more blatant forms of prosperity theology, but nor is the message one of mutual responsibility which Cesar observes in South America. Instead, I find something much closer to Anderson's observations of a spirituality which speaks into the very practical struggle for survival in a difficult environment.

Three specific areas warrant particular consideration in discussing the message of Pentecostal churches, particularly in the urban African context, these are the use of the

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Bible, the use of testimony and an understanding of the role of demons and spirits in the life of the believer.

Anderson (2000:133) notes that in Pentecostal churches an emphasis on the Bible as the Word of God is particularly strong. However he also notes a distinctive way in which the Bible is read. Drawing on the work of Carlos Mesters he notes the way in which churches from a strong oral tradition, such as Pentecostal and Zionist churches, do not place an emphasis on the meaning of the text, as something existing independently, in its own right. Rather the emphasis is on the meaning the text has for the people (Anderson 2000:134). He argues that a process emerges in which members “enlarge” the Bible for themselves out of their own context with its inherent presuppositions.

In his analysis of the way the Bible is interpreted in both mainline churches and African Instituted churches Mijoga (2001:123) describes the way in which preachers from African Instituted Churches read the Bible pre-critically. This is not to suggest they read the Bible in an un-reflective way but rather in a method not shaped by methods of critical interpretation. Drawing on the work of Wendland, he notes that while a critical reading of the scriptures tends to move from general biblical principles to the specific context of the hearers, in a pre critical reading of the text the reader begins from the experience of the hearers, their needs, goals, knowledge and experience and moves from the specifics of their context to a general conclusion with exhortation and admonitions (Mijoga 2001:126). This style, what he terms popular preaching, is flexible, practical and participatory built around concrete images, figures and illustrations. Mijoga (2001:129) also notes a preference for narrative texts and the stress on story telling within the act of preaching.

In discussing the way the scriptures are used in Roho churches Padwick (2003:299) similarly notes this pre-critical reading of the Bible where it is regarded as a contemporary document “fit for application to any appropriate situation without reference to the historical context of the original text.” Critically he notes the way in which the scriptural account is expanded, subverted, and rhetorically exploited “as if it were an oral

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tradition, which indeed it has become.” Hollenweger identifies a similar oral quality within Pentecostalism. However he goes further by arguing, not that the churches have in some sense appropriated the Bible as an oral document, but rather that the Bible is in essence first and foremost (although not exclusively) an oral document (Hollenweger 1994:213). In this sense the oral nature of the Pentecostal tradition is in keeping with the very nature of scripture.

My own observations, as will be discussed later, similarly found considerable use of the Bible but not in the evangelical, more deductive pattern of biblical exposition which seeks to unearth meaning inherent within the text. Rather the Bible served as a repository of stories and ideas which were made applicable to a people struggling to survive in the city.

Testimony exists as a significant vehicle through which the message of Pentecostal churches is communicated. Hollenweger (1994:200) in particular notes the way in which Pentecostal churches of the poor are distinctive in their strong reliance on oral and narrative patterns of thought. Marshal – Fratani (2001:99) notes a distinctive aspect of Pentecostalism is the way in which the problem of spiritual forces is addressed through testimony producing discourses which expose these forces and show the individual how to overcome their dangerous and destructive influences. Testimony lies at the heart of the hermeneutical process of many Pentecostal churches. Anderson (2000:135) points to a hermeneutical process in which both the Bible helps explain the experience of the Spirit in the life of the believer and the experience of the Spirit in the life of the believer enables the people to better understand the Bible. In this sense Anderson finds a “concordistic” approach to the Bible in which the hermeneutical approach focuses on finding correspondence between the text and the every day experience of the believer. Testimony is therefore part of the message, it is the demonstration, the authentication of the word by the work of the Spirit in the life of the believer.

Consideration of the message of informal Pentecostal churches inevitably involves a discussion regarding demons and exorcism. Anderson (2000:186) discusses the way both

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ancestors and demons are understood in the churches he researched in South Africa. He found among Pentecostals that ancestors were generally understood to be evil spirits which had no power over the lives of Christians. Satan, on the other hand, was often interpreted as the one who lies at the roots of all the misfortunes which the believer may face. Anderson identifies the importance of exorcism in the ministry of Pentecostal, Zionist and Apostolic churches in South Africa suggesting that Pentecostal churches in particular placed a greater emphasis on exorcism.

At the Centre for Urban Mission our training of Pentecostal pastors from within the informal settlements found that the issue of demon possession was a topic which generated more “heat” than almost any other. Interestingly Gifford (2004:91) found the greatest emphasis on the demonic amongst churches populated by Christians from the lower socio-economic strata of Ghanaian society. He describes the way in which demonic forces are used as explanations for the blockages to material success (Gifford 2004:148). Cox (1995:256) points to the way in which the Pentecostal message speaks into this world of malevolent spiritual forces not by demythologising them, nor by placating them, as in traditional religion, but by overcoming them, banishing them through the power of the Holy Spirit. This he sees as a highly significant aspect of Pentecostal ministry.

### ***2.4.4 Pentecostals and social transformation.***

If David Martin (in Berryman 1996:3) is correct the Pentecostal movement in Latin America contains values of “Anglo” culture which will form cultural foundations needed for ascending to modernity and development. In considering the meteoric growth of Pentecostalism in Latin America Martin makes the following observation:

What remains central is that the kind of religion which gave initial direction, tone and colour to the USA has crossed the Rio Grande on a truly massive scale. It has established itself as an autonomous centre of cultural reproduction and expanded so as to alter the psychic and social environment of tens of millions of the Latin American poor (Martin1990:277).

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Martin's (1990:6) argument is that Pentecostalism has followed Puritanism and Methodism to become the "Third wave" of Protestantism. This "Third Wave" has entered into the Hispanic, Catholic culture of Latin America. This religio-cultural invasion from the North brings with it the secularising impact of Protestantism, and its approach to modernity which Martin holds as being on an altogether different trajectory to that of Catholic societies. The end result will be the infusion of values of participation, voluntarism, self government and personal initiative which will have a transforming impact on the economy and polity of Latin America. In short, Pentecostalism, like Methodism before it, provides a positive cultural force towards socio-economic change and development.

Martin's argument is not necessarily that Pentecostal churches bring development. There is little evidence to suggest that the large growth in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches has been accompanied by extensive social programmes (Gifford 2004:33). Both Gifford (2004:34) and Anderson (2000:92) note the way Pentecostal churches have often operated within a culture of silences on key justice and human rights issues and are not known for their efforts to change and uplift society (Anderson 200:164). Similarly Khathide (2002:352) notes that an intense preoccupation with individuals within Pentecostalism has led to the Pentecostal movement generally finding it difficult to engage with issues at the socio-political and economic level.

What Martin is suggesting is that Pentecostalism provides a cultural environment conducive to economic development. This argument is countered by Gifford. In particular he notes the growth the prosperity theology within the Pentecostal movement which he sees as entirely counter to development. Quoting Freston, he notes that prosperity theology represents an advanced stage in the decline of the Protestant work ethic (Gifford 1998:37). Secondly, the usage of demonic cosmology to comprehend social problems appears to provide little scope for practices and policies which will transform society. From this perspective the growth of Pentecostalism is not the harbinger of socio-economic development but a significant stumbling block to it.

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Gifford and Martin both approach the question of the transformative impact of Pentecostalism from very different theoretical frameworks. Martin draws upon a logic based on historical developments across Europe and the United States and from within an understanding of the role of religion within the process of secularisation. Gifford conversely appears to take a more empirical approach, looking at the phenomena of Christianity in Africa and its contemporary impact on African society. His argument that prosperity theology is virtually endemic to large sections of Pentecostal Christianity in Africa and that the “faith gospel” ultimately runs counter to economic development seems the more convincing, at least within the context of Nairobi.

Before leaving the subject of the Church’s role in socio-economic development we need to ask whether mainstream Protestantism offers a more hopeful model of economic progress to those situated at the margins of urban society. One hypothesis within this thesis is that formal churches fail to provide a significant presence in the informal settlements through a failure to relate to and actively engage with the socio-economic environment of the informal context. But it must be asked why there is little engagement with the socio-economic environment. This will be considered later but at this stage it is worth noting Haynes’ (1996:111) comment that mainline churches, both Catholic and Protestant, have generally not challenged the political powers in post independent African societies because of the close correlation between their interests. This view is possibly overstated. Significant and prophetic voices within the mainline churches have been evident, including in Kenya. However, it remains the case that the reality of the overwhelming majority of the urban population living in slums barely seems to register, at least in public action and statements, as a concern for mainline churches in Nairobi.

So far our discussion of the transformational impact of Pentecostal churches has focussed particularly on economic transformation at the macro level. However in addressing the role of informal Pentecostal churches our concern is less with national economic policies and processes and more on the impact of churches on informal settlement communities. This is not to deny the critical significance of macro economic issues in relation to the creation and maintenance of informal settlements but rather to acknowledge that the

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impact of such churches will inevitably be more focussed at the micro level of individuals and local communities.

At this point some clarity may therefore be required as to what constitutes transformation. The Micah network<sup>49</sup> describes transformation as the proclamation and demonstration of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Here transformation is understood as an integration of a proclamation of the gospel and action which leads towards social change. Transformation is deemed to incorporate the material and spiritual life of the individual and the community. This perspective of transformation takes us beyond economic development into an arena that is defined holistically, incorporating and uniting both the material and spiritual dimensions of human life and community. Pentecostal spirituality offers the promise of radical personal change and a message which, within its particular spirituality, addresses the whole person. The question is whether a spirituality which identifies spiritual causality behind socio-economic problems has within it the resources to effect material change within urban poor communities or whether it simply enables people to survive their lot. This is considered more deeply in the research findings.

### ***2.5 Roots and routes: informal Pentecostal churches navigating a global world.***

My route into Kibera begins in a matatu which looks as if it belongs in North London. The emblem of the Arsenal football club is emblazoned on its side and rear window as it transports passengers between Kibera and the city centre. I get out at Karanja road and walk towards Kibera, passing Wembley Stadium video hall advertising the latest offering on the blackboard in front of its premises. A short distance from here the “formal”



Globalisation in Gatwikera

<sup>49</sup> Taking its inspiration from Micah 6:8 The Micah Network is a network of 290+ Christian relief development and justice organizations from 75 countries which advocates for social justice and seeks to promote integral or holistic models of Christian mission. See <http://en.micahnetwork.org/>



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permanent area of Kibera disappears to be replaced by the mud wall and iron sheet homes of the informal settlement. Wending my way along the mud path I pass the Cardiff Millennium Stadium advertising football matches to be viewed on satellite TV. Today it is Arsenal versus Man. Utd. It seems football, if nothing else, confirms that Kibera is also part of the global village or at least an onlooker peering through the cracks in the global fence to a world observable for Ksh10 at the nearest video hall; gathering the crumbs that fall from the table of the global city. Next door a woman cooks beans in the road over a mix of mud and charcoal, inches from the image but miles from the reality of the Premier Division of the global north. This is a community where football millionaires are household names and most homes have no electricity and one pit latrine may be shared by twenty houses.

I have already sought to demonstrate the relationship between informal churches and the informal economy. However, informal settlements and the churches which emerge within them cannot be seen in isolation from wider global influences. Holland and Henriot (1980:28) describe the way in which social analysis needs to address the different levels of issues within a social context. Here we need to move from the local level to the global. At the macro level we need to explore the impact of globalization on the informal settlements and on church life in the city.

Globalisation can be understood in terms of the closer integration of countries and peoples of the world and in the creation of new institutions which have joined existing ones to work across borders (Stiglitz 2002:9). For Wagner and Schaefer globalization is concerned with how contemporary experience is interpreted and how new understandings of interdependence are lived out (in Karecki 2002). Anthony Giddens (2000:25) suggests that globalization has something to do with the thesis that we all now live in one world but poses the question of whether that is a valid perception of the world. Andrew Davey (2001:21) describes globalisation as an amalgamation of the most significant forces shaping our urban areas and our world today. To deny that globalisation is a significant force shaping urban society would require a closing of the eyes to almost every billboard

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in Nairobi. However, to suggest that we now all live in one world would be to ignore the reality that most of Nairobi has no access to the alluring products of this global market.

Globalization is a highly disputed concept fraught with questions ranging from whether it actually exists as something new to whether it is something deeply destructive to human life or a positive evolution in human social organisation.<sup>50</sup> Axford observes that the only solid conclusion that can be drawn about globalisation is that a cognitive global order has come into existence, rather than a political, let alone a moral one (in Droogers 2001:52).

For Giddens (2000:31) globalization is new, revolutionary and complex. Like Davey he points to the profound way in which it is shaping human society around the world. He points to its contradictory nature, the way in which globalization has both a positive and negative impact on democracy, pulling power away from nations, at one level and yet creating pressure for local autonomy at another. Four elements in Giddens' reflections on globalisation are of particular relevance to this thesis.

First, is the relationship between globalisation and urban poverty. Giddens (2000:34), though largely optimistic about the impact of globalization, notes that the share of global wealth of the poorest 5<sup>th</sup> of the world's population fell from 2.3% to 1.4% between 1989 and 1998 and, significantly, 20 African nations have lower income per head in real terms than in 1970. These figures point to what Dussel (1998:143) perceives as the global catastrophe of globalization where transnational capitalism is heading for some kind of economic Armageddon through the impoverishment of most of humanity "located in the post colonial peripheral horizon of late capitalism." In this context we can see informal settlements as a product of globalization. The 2003 UN report makes this very point suggesting that the political and economic environment in which globalization has expanded over the past 20 years has had a substantially negative impact on the urban poor (United Nations 2003:3).

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<sup>50</sup> See Dussel, E Globalization and the victims of exclusion: from a liberation ethics perspective. In *The Modern Schoolman*, 75, January 1998. pp119 – 155 Dussel argues that Globalization will be responsible for economic destruction and ultimately the destruction of life on earth through the environmental consequences of global capitalism.

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In this respect Kibera, as the context of this thesis, cannot be seen detached from the wider economic, cultural and political forces influencing our world and from economic apartheid which excludes much of continental Africa from that global connectivity.<sup>51</sup> Simone (2004b:11) similarly notes that Africa appears to have been left out of most facets of globalization, unable to transcend its traditional role in the world economy as a supplier of raw materials and as a market for imported manufactured goods.

Whilst recognising the significance of the global inequalities emerging through systems of trans-national capitalism it is equally important to recognise that Kibera is not simply a product of the inequalities of the global economic system. Nairobi is not a lame pedestrian standing helplessly at the side of the information super highway. Nairobi is a regional hub, for aid and trade, business and tourism; globally connected through its banks, businesses and burgeoning internet cafes. It is a city offering its residents wireless access from their homes and “hot spots” in its cafes. A city advertising shopping trips to Dubai and a thriving car import business for four wheel drive vehicles and top of the range Mercedes. This is the nation which once boasted one of the world’s highest ratio of Mercedes cars to other road vehicles.<sup>52</sup> In short, global inequality should not disguise the realities of internal inequalities which may be explained in part, but not in whole, by the vagaries and injustices of the global economy.

Secondly, alongside arguments regarding the economic impact of globalization are the arguments about culture. The Muslim scholar Mahmoud Ayoub describes globalisation as “the latest manifestation of global imperialism” seeing it as another expression of Western cultural domination (in Rajaei 2000:30). Giddens questions this perception suggesting that globalization is only partly Westernization and that the cultural process also involves non Western countries influencing Western cultural development. Farhang Rajaei (2000:8) similarly argues that it is not plausible to see globalization as a new form

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<sup>51</sup> On the isolation of Africa within the global economy Castells writes of technological apartheid. See Castells, Manuel 2000 *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture Volume 3 The End of the Millenium* Oxford Blackwell P.92

<sup>52</sup> Email conversation with Gavin Bennet editor of the Auto News, the magazine of the Automobile Association of Kenya 11 September 2006

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of imperialism. He suggests that it is something more complex creating as he puts it “one civilization in many civilizations”. To describe globalisation as imperialistic suggests some nucleus of origin, some intentionality from a common source which prescribes the process of globalisation. While conspiracy theorists may see America as home to this global beast that preys upon traditional cultures, globalisation seems in reality more hydra than leviathan, a many headed creature of which no nation can assume control.

The irony here may be that while informal settlements may be in part a product of global capitalism they may be less influenced by the cultural impact of globalization. David Clark (1996:101) makes the point that large sections of urban populations in developing nations retain patterns of association and behaviour more akin to those in rural areas. The lifestyles of many first and second generation migrants have not yet been incorporated within urban society. You can buy a pizza at almost every other gas station in Nairobi but you will be hard pressed to find evidence of one in Kibera. The question of global urban lifestyles in Kibera became very apparent within the research where many church members were uncertain as to whether life in Kibera genuinely represented an urban existence or simply an extension of the village at the margins of the city.

Urbanisation provides the entry point for global cultural influences. Mbiti (1969: 224), stressing the impact of city life on African culture, argued that whereas in rural life the individual is “naked” to everybody else, in the city he is a locked up universe of his own. Here he is observing the cultural impact of individualism on urban societies. It is easy to see urbanisation and the influences of global culture as undermining traditional cultural values. We have seen earlier that it is these very values that Roho churches seek to preserve within the urban context. This research considers how such values are perceived by the informal Pentecostal churches.

The notion of the cultural impact of globalization leads us into Giddens’ (2000:36) discussion of what he calls “shell institutions”. His argument is that traditional institutions such as the family and religious institutions are finding themselves inadequate to meet the task they are called to perform. He suggests that the impact of

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globalization is that we live in a society after the end of tradition where tradition is expressed in an untraditional way. Within the informal churches considered in the research we see urban migrants change denominational affiliation as they move to the city, often leaving mainline churches. This is not an aspect of church life that is specific to the informal settlements. Again it is tempting to see this shift as part of the impact globalisation has both on traditional culture and church affiliation, both in informal settlement communities, and elsewhere in the city. However to make these connections again overstates the impact of globalisation on a community that is largely at the margins of global society. A rise in more individual forms of ministry and a movement away from more traditional mainline churches are evident in Kibera but the origins of this may largely lie elsewhere.

Finally both Giddens and Rajaei argue that globalization has brought with it a rise in religious fundamentalism. Droogers similarly notes the way in which fundamentalist forms of Christianity and Islam appear to thrive in a globalising climate. Rajaei (2000:30) observes a new form of radical, modern and in many cases revolutionary fundamentalism as a reaction to globalization. For Giddens (2000:66), fundamentalism is a direct consequence of globalization. Fundamentalism, as he sees it, is beleaguered tradition. It is about how tradition and belief is justified, asserted and defended. Fundamentalist groups generally have access to global communication technology. Their influence can be seen in Nairobi which has been described as a show case city, playing host to any number of international ministries (Perkins 2000). However, to identify fundamentalism purely as a product of globalisation appears too simplistic if nothing else because the origins of modern fundamentalism, let alone any fundamentalist type movements which may predate it, go back to the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Richardson 1969:132), prior to the emergence of globalisation.

Attempts have been made to place what are here termed informal Pentecostal churches within a context of global fundamentalism. Shorter and Njiru (2001:53) argue that the establishment of “mega” churches and ministries in the city have a direct impact on the emerging ministries of churches in the informal settlements as pastors seek to replicate

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the style and message of the mega church. Inevitably this leads towards an understanding of informal churches as inauthentic; poor imitations of the classy acts available in the city centre. It would be absurd to deny any relationship between the message and ministry of the informal Pentecostal churches and message of other Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in the city. However, to see them purely as small scale imitations ignores the distinctiveness of these churches, which is revealed later in the research.

In an attempt to explore this dimension of the local and the global within Pentecostalism Droogers (2001:53) poses the question of whether Pentecostalism changes when it crosses cultural boundaries such that the “global message” is translated into local forms. He goes on to consider whether Pentecostals form and transform their religion. Drawing on the work of Hall and du Gay (in Droogers 2001:53) he explores the notion of identity as being something defined by both roots and routes. Roots in the African context implies that desire to protect and retain one’s cultural identity in a rapidly globalising world. Routes, on the other hand represent a simultaneous process of people developing their own history and making strategic use of new opportunities. Pentecostal churches present such a route into a globalising and urbanising world providing people with an opportunity to reshape their identity whilst retaining cultural roots.

Pentecostalism helps solve the individual quest for a reliable and convincing orientation in life and, in addition, it offers a formula that corresponds to the scale of the globalised world in so far as it links personal and global worlds. (Droogers 2001:55).

In exploring the earlier discussion about the distinction between Roho and Pentecostal churches it may be argued that Roho churches emphasise identity in terms of cultural roots while Pentecostalism, whilst retaining some measure of cultural rootedness, offers the opportunity to explore identity in terms of routes into a globalising and urbanising world. As will be seen in the research findings, a number of churches appeared to provide both a cultural root into traditional African cosmology and “primal spirituality” whilst

simultaneously proving a cultural route into the challenges of a primary product of urbanisation, modernity.<sup>53</sup>

### **2.6 Informal churches and the challenge of modernity.**

In Kenya most mainline churches have emerged as a product of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century missionary enterprise. These early missionaries, with their blend of gospel, health care, formal education and modern agricultural methods, sowed seeds of faith and modernity on the path, among the thorns and rocks, and in the fertile ground of East Africa's varied landscape. Modernity posits the uniformity and universality of human nature as axiomatic (Graham 1996 27). People are deemed to share the same conditions and characteristics by virtue of their possession of reason. This leads to a "one size fits all" model of church where liturgies and ecclesiastical structures were simply exported alongside the rest of the colonial baggage of that era. Mainline churches were planted and developed along with their Western schools and clinics in a way that challenged the fabric of traditional African society.

African Independent Churches can be seen, to some degree, as a reaction to modernity, a rejection of the values and customs of Western culture that were introduced alongside Christianity. They formed a bulwark against Western inculturated Christianity and a modernist mindset that conflicts, at the most basic level, with African values and cosmology. In the city AICs have been described as forming an adaptive mechanism for urban migrants, enabling the new arrival to hold to and retain traditional rural values and access the social capital of village life (Shorter & Njiru 2001:17).

Within this thesis it is argued that a culture rooted in modernity, as a largely urban manifestation, is less present in informal settlement communities. The apparent failure of the mainline churches to make a significant impact in informal settlement communities, with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, may be understood through the

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<sup>53</sup> Harvey Cox identifies the strength of Pentecostalism being in its ability to connect with the core of human religiosity which he calls primal spirituality. See Cox, H 1995 *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty – first Century*. Cambridge MA: Da Capo Press P81.

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mainline churches having neither provided the material benefits of modernity within the informal settlements, by investing in schools and health facilities, nor provided a spirituality which addresses the needs and world view of the community.

A central hypothesis in the research is that the historical and cultural roots of informal Pentecostal churches are not found either within the modernity carried within the modern missionary movement, expressed in the mainline churches, nor in the rejection of it, that is evidenced in the Roho churches. Rather, it is the liminality of informal settlements which define the churches. For informal Pentecostal churches it is the nature of the trajectory of the faith community, towards or away from the city and from urban modernity, which I take to distinguish them from or draw them closer to Roho spirituality. In navigating this liminal environment consideration is given to whether informal Pentecostal churches in the informal settlements offer some kind of cultural rootedness, in spite of a rejection of certain aspects of traditional culture, whilst providing trajectories for routing into the modernity of the urban environment. While all churches at some level relate to pre-modern and post modern world views, as a working model it may be helpful to see Roho, mainline and informal Pentecostal churches as differing responses to modernity.

### ***2.7 Informal church and secularisation.***

In the late sixties Harvey Cox (1968:17) could boldly proclaim “This is the age of the secular city.” For Cox at that time secularisation was the process by which, using Bonhoeffer’s words, man (sic) comes of age, and urbanisation describes the context in which this takes place (1968:18). For Cox secularization is a liberating process and one which has its roots in biblical faith. The disenchantment of nature is manifest through the God of creation. Pre secular cosmology, an animistic world of spirits in nature is dispelled by the revelation of God who is apart from the created order. Secularization is therefore a process born of biblical faith. It is not to be rejected but embraced as part of our Christian tradition. Similarly, in his early work the urban context is portrayed as the crucible of the process of secularization. It is within this urban crucible that humanity



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becomes increasingly less religious, Encountering God, not within an I- thou relationship but, in hiddenness, in the “I-you” relationships and interactions of urban life (1968:273).

Leaving aside for a moment Cox’s theological presuppositions we need to consider the accuracy of his thesis that urbanisation leads to secularisation, to the creation of post religious societies. Cox himself has since challenged this earlier assessment. He writes “Today it is secularity not spirituality which may be headed for extinction” (1995:XV). Ground Zero is a memorial to those who lost their lives on September 11,<sup>th</sup> yet it may be interpreted as a memorial to the notion of an increasingly secular world. Religion plays as great a role in shaping the modern world as it has ever played in human history. Whether in the religious right of US politics or the influence of radical Islam, or the search for other expressions of spirituality, religion continues to play a critical role in shaping human history.

What then of the relationship between urbanisation and secularisation? Shorter (1991:143), reflecting on the Nairobi context, shares Cox’s earlier assessment of the impact of urbanisation on secularisation but does not share his enthusiasm for such a process. Secularisation, he argues is the harbinger of secularism, the total displacement of the sacred by the secular. He describes secularism as “a virus carried by modernisation and urbanisation. It betokens religious indifferentism, a loss of the sense of God and the sense of sin.” (Shorter 1991:43) Pointing to the findings of the Nairobi Church Survey (1989) he provides data and anecdotal evidence to indicate a correlation between urbanisation and declining church attendance.

Any assessment of the relationship between urbanisation and secularization in Nairobi will uncover deep contradictions. Percentage levels of church attendance may be less in urban centres than in the rural areas but this may be as much a feature of the social control exercised in rural communities as any decline in religious belief. Religious broadcasting dominates the airwaves; supermarkets play popular worship songs as background music; evangelistic crusades, rallies, the constant construction of churches and mosques hardly suggest religion in decline.

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A criticism made by African Independent Churches of mainline churches has been that they are “un-spiritual”. While this has many levels of meaning one is the rejection of missionary Christianity as un-spiritual in its recourse to modern Western medicine. The modern missionary movement challenged traditional African cosmology, attributing rational explanations and modern solutions to problems of sickness and disease. Mainline churches with their health, education and development programmes in this sense may appear secular to many African Independent Churches. In this respect Welbourne and Ogot (1966:6) note Sundkler’s observation that independent churches are attempts to recreate, in the name of Christ, the unity of the sacred and the secular, which is fundamental to tribal society, and seems to be inevitably lost by older churches as they grow in membership and bureaucracy.

Shorter and Njiru (2001:36) point to a growth of new religious movements in contexts of urban poverty suggesting that these contexts breed such movements because they point to a problem solving God. Part of the success of African Independent Churches and informal Pentecostal churches in the informal settlements then concerns the way they address problems of urban living by providing accessible spiritual solutions, rather than inaccessible material solutions, to the challenges of urban living in informal settlement communities.

Within this discussion of secularisation there remains the question of whether the world can in any sense be divided into the sacred and the secular. In returning to the pastoral cycle with its starting point of incarnation we may argue that the very theology of the incarnation points to the artificiality of distinctions between the sacred and secular. As God takes on human flesh, so the divine and dusty are eternally incorporated into one person where secular and sacred can no longer be divided. While it is important to note the way in which urbanisation may contribute to a decline in religious activity or to the creation of world views that separate spheres, defined either as sacred or secular, we may at the same time argue that such divisions are ultimately invalid, representing a world view contrary to Christian faith and experience.

## **PART THREE: DISCERNMENT**

### ***3.1 Discernment as a process of re-envisioning.***

The logic of the pastoral cycle in respect of theological reflection or discernment is that the whole theological enterprise points towards what can be as well as reflecting upon what it is. It has, in this sense, an eschatological and anticipatory dimension with a vision of how the future can be different, and is committed to finding some of the mechanisms that make that a reality (Davey 2001:12).

Mark Lewis Taylor ( 2004:77) argued that theological reflection upon cities is a form of “utopics”, a form of studying and creating utopias. The processes of theologising about the city in general, and informal settlements in particular, becomes a process that envisions God’s reign of justice and peace within the city. From Augustine onwards a utopian notion of the city has often been expressed in terms of the relationship between the earthly and the heavenly city. An emphasis on the heavenly city can lead either to a disengagement or abandonment of the city as something that is essentially not “home” for the citizen of the Kingdom, or a reformist agenda which seeks to build the heavenly city on earth. This misses the fundamental ontological difference between the two cities, between the heavenly city as the destiny of the pilgrim people of God and the earthly city of bricks, mortar or, in this instance, mud, sticks and iron sheet (Barnes 2000:5).

Barnes (2000:5) argues that what is required within the theological process is an anticipatory embodiment of the rule of Christ which contests those powers that presently dominate the city. The notion of “anticipatory embodiment” suggests something that is both eschatological and incarnational.

Barnes’ argument is important. His rejection of a detachment from the city reinforces the notion of incarnational presence. His argument is for a presence, but a presence of critical solidarity which stands in opposition to destructive forces and which anticipates

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regenerative ones. The use of the term embodiment takes us into praxis. This anticipation is not merely expectant waiting but requires an engagement which lives out, and seeks to incarnate that which it anticipates, the rule of Christ.

In the pastoral cycle embodiment is expressed as insertion, experience, identification or incarnation. But anticipatory implies a theological process that envisions a different future. Crucially here, that which is hoped for and anticipated lies not outside the realities, hope as escape from Kibera, but hope as something embodied, experienced within.

Zanotelli (2000:18), reflecting on the vocation of the church in Korogocho, a community similar to Kibera, makes a similar observation. He argues that the church must go back to God's dream and carry it out in real life, building a world different from the one we experience; building a new Nairobi that can pass from economic apartheid to the New Jerusalem. He is illustrating the fact that urban mission involves this contest with the economic powers and oppressive structures which dominate life in the city, on "creating communities alternative to Empire" (Zanotelli 2002:18). In this sense the task of doing urban theology requires a critical engagement between the Good News of Jesus Christ and the social, economic and political forces which shape the lives of people living in the city. It requires a re-envisioning of the city which is practically evidenced in the life of the Christian community. If Spiritual churches have been marked by a non-engagement with the city, an almost subversive anti-urbanism which holds to traditional, rural, communal values, do the informal Pentecostal churches provide that embodiment that can construct a new urban narrative in Nairobi's informal settlements?

We see that both Barnes and Zanotelli describe a theological process that leads to the contesting of oppressive powers within the urban environment. But what precisely are these powers?

### **3.2 Power and the Spirit: contesting the “Powers” in Kibera.**

Earlier social analysis within the thesis pointed towards historic, economic, social and political factors which have shaped life in Kibera and helped to shape the informal Pentecostal churches which minister there. With Zanotelli (2002:18), I argue that a primary task of the church is to engage prophetically with the socio-economic factors which create and perpetuate communities such as Kibera. Hence the pastoral cycle becomes an important tool for that process. However “powers” need not be only interpreted in a purely socio-economic sense and this is certainly the case in the churches under discussion.

As will be seen later, the churches in the research clearly saw themselves to be engaged in contesting powers which oppressed the lives of the believers and the community. However these powers were generally not understood from the perspective of socio-economic structures but rather in terms of demonic forces. Hollenweger (1972: 337) notes that belief in the demonic is a central tenet of many Pentecostal statements of faith. The role of the pastor, therefore, becomes important as one who is able to confront demonic forces by the power of the Holy Spirit. Anderson notes that the Holy Spirit is the *sine qua non* of, what he terms, African Pentecostal churches. It is by the Spirit that demons are exorcised, and through whom people have dreams and visions and live holy lives (Anderson, 2000:240). Gifford similarly points to the deliverance ministries in Pentecostal churches in Ghana noting the role of the “prophet” as one who releases the demonic blockages towards health, wealth and success (Gifford, 2004:90).

The pastoral cycle, with its use of the social sciences in its analysis, leads towards a theological position which engages primarily with structural and socio-economic causes of poverty, injustice or oppression. Its historic roots are close to liberation theology where poverty is interpreted as a product of economic, social and political situations and structures (Puebla 30/128 in Boff & Boff 1988:4). Theological reflection becomes an attempt to get to the root cause of problems (Boff, 1988:1). It is out of that examination of root causes that liberation theology then emerges. The re-envisioning anticipates some form of social action that will impact on society. Pentecostal churches in Africa similarly

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seek to identify the root cause of social problems but more frequently through categories of spiritual causality rather than socio-political ones (Gifford 2004:89). Isichei (1995:335) similarly notes the tendency of Pentecostal churches in Africa to interpret social problems in terms of demonic activity.

In using the pastoral cycle as a theoretical framework it is therefore evident that the theological presuppositions within it could be at odds with the theological perspective of the churches we are considering here. The pastoral cycle assumes a process of theological reflection which requires using tools of social analysis as a basis for theologising. Pentecostal theology does not find its roots within that process. Rather, prayer is the praxis of the Pentecostal (Cartledge 2003:26). Human problems and difficulties are countered through prayer and the ministry of the Spirit. Anderson describes a process of “enacted pneumatology” in which the existential needs of an African holistic world view are met either through an anointed leader or through the congregation in worship (Anderson 2000:252).

While Anderson is right in pointing to the role of Pentecostal worship in addressing, speaking directly into, the existential needs of a congregation, the significant movement of Christians between churches in places such as Kibera would suggest caution in asserting that these needs are necessarily met. What is clear, however, is that a theological process is involved which, like liberation theology, speaks into practical realities and social problems. While the pastoral cycle leads to a questioning of the roots of social problems the praxis of Pentecostalism leads to a dialectic which seeks to discern the activity of the Spirit in a given context or experience and discern what the Spirit is saying to the church within that experience (Cartledge 2003:26).

In terms of the process of theological reflection we appear to be faced with two contrasting world views. One analyses social realities in terms social, historic and political factors. The other uses spiritual categories. Gifford (2004:164) notes two ways in which the newer Pentecostal churches in Ghana address social ills within society. The first he terms enchantment, whereby demonic forces bring evil upon society and the

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nation as a whole. The second, which he terms biblical, relates to 2 Chron 7 14. Here the overriding hermeneutic is that of Deuteronomic history, of divine blessings and curses. The logic of faith is that sin and rebellion are the cause of human misery and repentance and holy living are the route to health, wholeness and all that God desires for our lives. The logic of this position is not to question the structures of oppression which perpetuate communities such as Kibera but to rather to call people to repentance and holy living such that the nation and its people receiving the blessings of God.

My perception is that it is the hermeneutic of blessing and cursing which best captures the theological position of the churches in the research, although, as will be seen, other dimensions are also present. What we see therefore is two different forms of envisioning. The pastoral cycle leads to a re-envisioning of the future based on transformative social action inspired by biblical faith and Christian tradition. The logic of a blessings and curses hermeneutic is that it also re-envision the future but a future not shaped by a practical quest for justice but by personal holiness. The holy life becomes the key to a transformed society.

The above discussion appears to create some form of theological canyon between the methodology the pastoral cycle and its links to liberation theology and the praxis of Pentecostalism. While differences are significant there is a danger in over stating the case. This is true on two counts. Firstly, it must be acknowledged that Pentecostals do also have a history and present experience of socio-political activity. On the one hand Anderson (2000:93) observes that in an era of apartheid oppressors and oppressed in South Africa found within Pentecostalism a vehicle in which to avoid “worldly” issues which screamed for attention while concentrating their efforts on their “spirituality”. However he also points to the witness of Pentecostal figures such as Frank Chikane and others who prophetically challenged the system of apartheid. Hollenweger, (1994:2005) argues that the roots of Pentecostalism, in a black oral tradition, offer a spirituality which can express solidarity with the poor and oppressed and become a political voice. Similarly, while Pentecostals may not be renowned for their efforts to uplift society (Anderson 2000:164), we see evidence of Pentecostal churches engaged in social welfare

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programmes. Berryman (1996:23) makes this observation in South America and similar Pentecostal ministries can be observed by some churches in Nairobi.

Secondly the distinction between a form of social analysis and spiritual discernment need not represent two diametrically opposed perceptions of reality. Wink (1984) among others points to ways in which these two perceptions of reality can be brought into conversation with each other and this will be discussed in the final chapter.

### ***3.3 Sojourners, Wanderers, Exiles and Citizens: theological reflection on the context of Kibera.***

Any theological engagement with informal settlements and the communities that inhabit them has to engage with the key issue of land. Landlessness and confusion and uncertainties in land tenure are the primary factors in shaping life in informal settlement communities. Land in Africa is not a commodity. It has spiritual and cultural qualities which endow it with value beyond that measurable by market forces. To be poor is to be without land. Brueggemann (1977:2) notes that land within the Bible refers both to material substance, to “turf”, but also it is suffused with symbolic meaning; “land is wholeness of joy, well-being characterized by social coherence and personal ease in prosperity, security and freedom.”(1977:2) To live in Kibera is to reside in a place where you have no legal rights to the ten square feet you occupy. Whilst Kibera residents pay more rent per square foot than their not too distant neighbours in suburban villas they have no security of tenure and freedom to remain on the land.<sup>54</sup>

Brueggemann (1977:2) notes that the biblical text is chiefly concerned with being displaced and yearning for place. Within the biblical text we see people rooted in land but facing expulsion from it (Gen 1 – 11), and the experience of not having land but moving hopefully towards a promise. The OT story moves between these two positions of having but losing, expulsion from land, and of not having land but living in hope and expectation. The primary interest of scripture Brueggemann argues is that of hope,

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<sup>54</sup> relative costs of land can be shown in that a Kibera resident may pay KSh 10 per square foot in rent. This is way in excess of that paid for residential homes with large gardens.



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yearning and anticipation of land. He helpfully identifies three images of this yearning process, the **sojourner**, the **wanderer** and the **exile**.

It is the motif of the sojourner which appears to have the strongest resonance with life in Nairobi's informal settlements. Reflecting on the patriarchal narratives of Genesis, Brueggemann describes the sojourner as follows:

It means to be in a place for an extended time, to live there and to take some roots, but always to be an outsider, never belonging, always without rights, title and voice in decisions that matter. Such a one is on turf but without title to the turf, having nothing but trusting in words that will lead to a place (Brueggemann 1977:7).

The sojourner in Brueggeman's typology is one who is in a place of hope because trusting in words is trusting in Divine words. The sojourner is the pilgrim whose final destination is sure even while the present reality is one of landlessness. For now s/he is the resident alien in the land. The sojourner may appear to be struggling, barely coping, just surviving but s/he is on the way to toward a promise (see Gen 47:9). For Abraham the sojourn was to abandon land, Ur, (Gen. 11:31ff) to become landless, for the sake of a promise. The land is revealed as promise to the landless and the promise is certain.

This notion of the certain promise is in stark contrast with the trust informal settlement dwellers place in the political rhetoric of upgrading which historically has led only to the demolition of their homes to be replaced by middle income housing. A danger here, therefore, lies in the spiritualising of the experience of the sojourner. In the biblical account the promise is of actual land as well as eschatological hope. So often the language of faith, particularly in hymnody, altogether displaces the material dimension of land as promise by preserving only the hope that is located in an eternal future.

Brueggemann's (1977:8) second motif is that of the wanderer. Here he draws on the wilderness experience. He distinguishes the wanderer from the sojourner as the one "who is not on the way anywhere." Here the essence of life is survival. Parallels may be drawn here between slums of hope and slums of despair (United Nations 2003:9). The wanderer

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is the one who without a sense of direction seeks only to survive within the confines of his/her environment. Whilst within some prophetic writing, notably Jeremiah and Hosea, there is the image of desert wanderings as the place of Israel's true faith and devotion (see Jer. 2: 2 and Hos 2: 14 – 15), in general it is described as a place of death and rebellion. It is on the way to the land, but for a whole generation hope and promise becomes rebellion, faithlessness and death outside the land. Wandering therefore becomes a place of anger and unrest. We may interpret it here as a place where tenants burn down landlord's structures in community conflict, where girls escape the confines of family life in a single room for an early pregnancy and a transient relationship, where young men sit by the road playing checkers and cards and "waiting for manna from heaven."<sup>55</sup>

The final image that Brueggemann (1977:8) employs is that of the exile. Here the experience is less one of economic oppression and more one of being alienated "from all the shapes and forms which gave power to life and faith". In the exile all the conventions that seemed to give shape and meaning to life are gone. It is about being cut off from all that gave meaning to life with no way back. It becomes a place of yearning, weeping and remembered loss (Ps 137).

This image of exile in the city engages with questions around the cultural impact of urbanisation. It explores the issue of cultural dislocation. Returning to earlier discussion it connects with the notion that the city is place of the *nyumba* but not *nyumbani*. Roho or Spiritual churches in the city can perhaps be perceived as churches in the diaspora, churches which seek to retain the shapes, forms and symbols of rural community which continue to give power to life and faith in the city. The flags flying across Kibera may be perceived as a proclamation that exiles can still find a home, or perhaps more accurately a refuge, in the city. It may be argued that in the marginal world of informal settlements, transit camps that are neither village nor city, Roho churches seek to retain the shapes, forms and symbols of *nyumbani* while Pentecostal churches must look to new shapes and

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<sup>55</sup> A quote from a group of unemployed young men sitting by the road in the neighbouring "village" of Kisumu Ndogo.

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forms that will breathe power into life and faith at the urban margins. It is this search/need for new symbols of faith rather than existing rural and traditional symbols that defines the more urban trajectory of the Pentecostal churches.

Within the marginal context of informal settlements the concept of citizenship is of particular significance. This can be seen in a number of ways. Firstly, it is important to note here that informal settlements are in some sense a physical embodiment of non citizenship. The nature of the environment of the informal settlement declares that this is a place of the non citizen. The absence of basic utilities and basic infrastructure communicates to the residents that they are not citizens of the city. The city is elsewhere, a place to go to from the settlement. The privileges of being a citizen of the city, of enjoying the goods and services of the city, are simply not present or obtainable. Informal settlements are almost by definition places of social exclusion; places that deny to would be citizens basic standards of living and the opportunity to participate in major social and occupational opportunities within society.<sup>56</sup>

This exclusion can be understood both locally and globally. Locally there is the exclusion from basic urban infrastructure and amenities. Globally, Castells (2000:72) points to the way in which, in the context of what he calls a “network society”, whole regions and nations can experience global exclusion. He argues that, areas that are not valuable in terms of informational capitalism, and which do not present significant interests for the powers that be,

are bypassed by flows of wealth and information and ultimately deprived of the basic technological infrastructure that allows us to communicate, produce, consume, and even live in today’s world (Castells 2000:72).

Thus, in Nairobi we have the experience of a Central Business District which is globally connected financially, culturally and technologically while the informal settlements share the technological exclusion experienced by much of rural Africa.

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<sup>56</sup> For a further discussion of social exclusion see Castells, Manuel 2000 *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture Volume 111 End of Millenium* P.71 - 72

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Secondly if citizenship of the city is not possible can one speak of citizenship of the settlement? However, in what sense can one claim citizenship of an environment in which one has no right to remain? Jeremiah urges the exilic community to find a new citizenship in the place of exile (Jer. 29:5). But that citizenship is expressed through establishing a tangible relationship with the city that is first expressed through settling, building and planting, it is about connectivity to the “turf” in which ultimately the exiles share in the *shalom* of the city. But such connections are not open to informal settlement communities who have no right to build and no place to plant.

Thirdly it is important to understand the nature of the liminality of informal settlement contexts. By this I mean that they exist on the boundaries, in contradiction, as permanent places of impermanence, as thresholds to nowhere. Being neither rural nor urban, in the sense of being city, they exist permanently on the border. Life on the border means possessing neither the communality of rural life, nor the economic independence of city life, of the suburb, the apartment, the estate. This is the frontier town where going back is the prerogative of the elderly and moving forward, as in entering the city, is the privilege of the few. It is at this place of threshold, margin, border that the gospel must connect with the settlement and give expression to what it means to find hope in the city.

The typologies of sojourners, wanderers, exiles and citizens each capture at some level the experience of life in informal settlements. The older generation may well experience a deeper sense of exile if their cultural attachments and aspirations remained tied to a rural homeland. For some of the younger generation, the experience of wandering, living without tangible signs of direction and hope may best encapsulate the realities of their life experience. For others, Kibera is a sojourning on the route to a better future which may or may not materialise. For those who will remain, for the majority, the challenge may be the reconstruction of degenerative narratives of wandering and exile into regenerative narratives of hope, sojourning towards citizenship, a citizenship which expresses a belonging that is realised eschatologically and in contemporary experience. Informal Pentecostal churches are embodiments of life in Kibera, the question we are pursuing is

whether they embody in word and action a regenerative narrative, a story of hope. This is the task of mission.

## **PART FOUR: MISSIOLOGICAL RESPONSE**

### ***4.1 Mission: a problem of definition.***

The fourth “turn” of the pastoral cycle takes us into the area of missiological response. Here the objective of the thesis is to both describe the missiological praxis of informal Pentecostal churches and to explore their significance for the wider mission of the Church. Mission here is expressed as a mode of response within the pastoral cycles.

Any evaluation of the missiological impact of informal churches requires some working definition of mission. Bosch (1991:9) highlights the problem of developing too narrow a definition of mission observing that ultimately mission remains indefinable. Whilst recognising the importance of avoiding narrow and rigid definitions of mission the fact remains that any discussion of the subject requires some clarity as to what is under discussion. In this section I will not attempt to summarise the considerable wealth of material written in the area of mission. Rather, I will indicate the broad understanding of mission adopted in the thesis, identify the relationship of mission to the pastoral cycle and make particular reference to a Pentecostal understanding of mission. Finally, drawing on the earlier section of theological reflection I will attempt to identify a perspective on mission which emerges from that process of reflection.

### ***4.2 Mission as *missio Dei*.***

Tracing the developments in missiological thinking over the past fifty years, Bosch (1991:390) notes a decisive move towards an understanding of mission as *missio Dei*, God’s mission. He observes this as a movement that has embraced Christians of all traditions where mission is now expressed as the mission of God rather than the mission of the Church. He quotes Moltmann’s assertion that,

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It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfil in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the Church (in Bosch 1991:390).

As an observation of the development of Christian thinking in respect of missiology I think Bosch was correct. As an observation of the practice of mission I have serious doubts as to whether what occurs in the context of this study reflects a missiological praxis which conforms to an understanding of *missio Dei*. Whilst *missio Dei* may now reflect a mainstream position in respect of a theology of mission, a position which I share, I suspect that empirical evidence may indicate that ecclesiocentric models of mission are still primary, and not only amongst the churches identified in the research. The mass marketing of global ministries through TV and other media; the emergence, globally, of so many independent Charismatic churches; the competitive nature of church planting initiatives and what Khathide (2002:356) observes as the fissiparous tendency within Pentecostalism, all suggests that the ideological dominance of *missio Dei* may be less observed in practice.

### **4.3 Mission as the embodiment of a regenerative narrative.**

In looking at the way our understanding of the pastoral cycle contributes to an understanding of mission we return to the first movement of the cycle, that of incarnation. Here the model of the pastoral cycles provides an important contribution to understanding of the praxis of mission. In the model of the cycle used here mission begins with incarnation. This leads us into an understanding of mission which involves some depth of engagement with the realities of life in any given community; an entering to the experience of the other. It involves a theology of presence in which the message of the gospel is lived out within, and not merely proclaimed to, a given community. In particular it points towards mission in which Christ not only offers eternal salvation but also enters in to the experience of victims of oppression (Bosch 1991:513).

As we seek to analyse the missiological significance of informal Pentecostal churches, using this model, their very presence within the community becomes a matter of

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missiological significance. However, incarnation takes us beyond presence. It is not only the fact of being present but the redemptive nature of that presence which points towards an incarnational model of mission. This presence, therefore, is one which, in the logic of the pastoral cycle, expresses itself redemptively through having, to some measure, both comprehended the context and discerned the response of faith which is required within it. If we are to follow the flow or movement of the pastoral cycle then mission should be seen as that which emerges from this process of comprehension and discernment.

To say that mission is the embodiment of a regenerative narrative is, by the use of the term embodiment, to place incarnation at the heart of mission. The Christological paradigm of mission found in the gospels is incarnational (Escobar 2003:106) To say that mission is the embodiment of a regenerative narrative is to say that the Word became flesh and that the Word becomes flesh in the mission of the local church. Here, therefore, we are considering informal Pentecostal churches as embodiments of the gospel in a given context. Our quest is to understand if and how they embody that gospel within the context of Gatwika and how that role can be enhanced. This latter task recognises the missiological task of the thesis itself in pointing towards or re-envisioning a regenerative narrative in respect of the churches.

The term embodiment takes us into the language of *missio Dei* where Christian mission embodies the mission of the Father who sends the Son. Here also mission is about seeking to embody the practice of One who is not simply the saviour of souls but also the hope of the poor and the oppressed (Ella 1994:172). Embodiment implies the Word becoming flesh in such a way that the proclamation of the Word has social consequences and social involvement has evangelistic consequences in bearing witness to the transforming grace of Christ.<sup>57</sup> Embodiment, in essence, implies an integral expression of mission in which word and action become unified expressions of the same narrative.

So far I have used the phrase regenerative narrative as if the nature and content of this narrative is a given. That is evidently not the case. Gifford (2004:69), as earlier noted,

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<sup>57</sup> Taken from the Micah declaration on integral mission.

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identifies within many Pentecostal churches a narrative which speaks of wealth, health, success and prosperity. Many “successful” charismatic leaders set out, consciously or unconsciously, to embody that message in a lifestyle of conspicuous affluence. The text of prosperity draws on the narratives of Christ’s healing and the promises of blessing to the faithful. This message contrasts sharply with the narrative of liberation theology which stresses the liberating work of God in overcoming injustice and oppressive social structures. The Mexican catholic priest who enters into the life of the Kibera community and shares in their poverty, and the Charismatic preacher with the designer suit and the stretch limousine preaching at a city centre hotel, are both embodying a narrative, the problem is that it is not the same narrative.

We need therefore to be clear on the both the content of the narrative and its regenerative nature. A theology of mission which is incarnational will be one which seeks to embody the whole life and ministry of Christ. Incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection form the pattern of mission that is done in the name of Christ (Escobar 2003:106). Mission becomes an embodiment of this narrative. To describe prosperity theology or the faith gospel as an expression of this narrative is to miss the point that the mission of the Church is to embody the cross as well as the empty tomb. Moltmann (1994:7) emphasises the centrality of a faith rooted in the cross of Christ when he states that in Christianity the cross is the test of everything that deserves to be called Christian. The faith gospel argues that at the cross poverty, death, disease are taken away. An incarnational view of mission argues that the cross represents that which the church is also called to embrace and embody in expressing Christ’s presence in the world.

The phrase regenerative narrative contains the assumption that the narrative of scripture is life giving and life sustaining. If urban theology points towards an anticipatory embodiment of the rule of Christ then mission becomes the lived out experience of that embodiment in the life of the community. It is a concrete expression of commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord in the totality of life and of all creation (Padilla 2004:2). Mission praxis therefore is understood as activity, rooted in faith, which is life giving and life sustaining and which embodies an obedience to Christ in all areas of life. This



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“orthopraxis” becomes a litmus test of mission. This life giving, regenerative narrative of scripture embraces both personal regeneration through the redemptive work of Christ on the cross, and all such liberating activity which frees individuals and communities from all oppressive forces, whether political, social, cultural, economic or spiritual.

In looking at mission praxis within the churches therefore we are looking at the ways in which the churches form a life giving presence within the community. We are looking at their effectiveness in both leading people in to an experience of life lived in obedience to Christ and also at the ways in which the church confronts the degenerative forces and realities of life in the community and by their presence embody Christian hope. This hope, as stated earlier, can be understood as both anticipatory of the future and as embodied in the now. Moltmann (1965:16) argues that Christian eschatology is hope. It is forward looking and forward moving and therefore also revolutionising and transforming the present. Christian mission that is incarnational therefore becomes the praxis of mission which is an embodiment of a future hope that has a transforming impact on individuals, communities and wider society.

Pentecostal theology has tended to emphasise the personal experience of the Spirit. The experiential emphasis of Pentecostalism is not so distant, theologically, from Moltmann. We see the connection in the emphasis on the present experience, a life transformed and empowered by the Spirit, of the future hope experienced in the now within the life of the believer. However, Moltmann is clear that this hope is not simply expressed in personal terms. It is not enough, he argues, to say that the Kingdom of God has to do with persons. Mission becomes not simply the propagation of faith and hope but also an historic transformation of life which includes social and public life (Moltmann 1965: 330). Mission in this sense becomes the embodiment of a re-envisioning, of a regenerative narrative which is both prophetic and socially transformative. It opposes what Taylor (2004:80) describes as degenerative utopias and embodies, incarnates, within the city and the slum, a vision of hope. Moltmann (1965:330) summarises this as follows,

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In practical opposition to things as they are, and in creative reshaping of them, Christian hope calls them in question and thus serves the things that are to come. With its face towards the expected new situation it leaves the existing situation behind and seeks for opportunities of bringing history into better correspondence to the promised future (Moltmann 1965:330).

### ***4.4 Pentecostals and mission.***

Defining a Pentecostal understanding of mission is not easy given the diversity of Pentecostalism and the fact that it exists as a movement more than a single unified body or denomination. Pentecostal contributions to an understanding of mission are largely overlooked, perhaps because of the more oral nature of the Pentecostal theology. David Bosch's (1991) extensive survey of historical paradigms of mission covers Calvinism, Lutheranism, Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism but makes almost no reference to Pentecostalism in spite of its rapid growth as a movement throughout the twentieth century.

While the contribution of Pentecostalism to missiology may be overlooked the contribution of Pentecostalism to mission is difficult to ignore. Pentecostalism has probably been the fastest growing religious movement in the twentieth century (Anderson 2004:206). Cox (1995:249) notes that within a year after the "fire fell" on Los Angeles the message of the movement of the Spirit in Asuza Street had spread as far as Africa and within another year the Apostolic Faith Mission had been formed. Since those first beginnings Pentecostalism has been on the move as a rapidly growing expression of world wide Christianity transplanting itself around the world. Anderson (2000:115) suggests that the freedom, enthusiasm and spontaneity of Pentecostalism have been the positive factors in the acceptance of its tenets around the world, not least in Africa.

It is perhaps in the understanding of the work and action of the Spirit in the life of the Church that the Pentecostal movement adds a distinctive contribution to our understanding of mission. Anderson (2000:310) describes Pentecostal churches as understanding themselves to be "churches of the Spirit" proclaiming and celebrating a salvation that encompasses all of life's experiences and afflictions and offering an

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empowerment which provides a sense of dignity and coping mechanism for life. While Newbigin (1994:19) points us towards the presence and action of the Holy Spirit as the beginning of mission and Taylor (1972:3) reminds us that it is the Holy Spirit who is the chief actor in the historic mission of the Christian Church, it is perhaps within the Pentecostal movement that the role and experience of the Spirit in the task of mission is most fundamentally emphasized. Khathide (2002:340) describes Pentecostal mission as doing mission in the power of the Spirit. It is by the Spirit that the forces and powers which oppress people's lives are overcome. It is through the Spirit that God's power is demonstrated in signs and wonders. Critically the role of the Spirit in the Church's mission is perceived to be experiential. The role of the Spirit in mission becomes not a matter of theological orthodoxy but a practical experience to be manifest in the life of the church.

If one is to speak of the incarnational dimension of Pentecostalism it is perhaps best understood in what Anderson (2000:115) describes as its inherent flexibility. Cox describes this dimension of Pentecostalism as follows:

The great strength of the Pentecostal impulse is its power to combine, its aptitude for adopting the language, the music, the cultural artifacts, the religious tropes, even the demigods and wraiths of the setting in which it lives (Cox 1995:259).

However, having acknowledged that within a Pentecostal understanding of mission the powers that oppress people's lives are overcome by the work of the Spirit, it must be asked how this process addresses the social and economic forces which shape and at times oppress human society? Is a Pentecostal understanding of mission incarnational in the sense both of identifying with the lost and the oppressed and also by embodying a regenerative narrative which ultimately transforms both the individual and society? Anderson's (2000:164) observation that Pentecostal churches are not known for their efforts to uplift society suggests that this dimension, which engages with socio-economic and political structures, may be less evident in a Pentecostal understanding of mission.

### ***Conclusion***

The goal of this thesis is to describe and analyse the phenomenon of informal Pentecostal churches in Gatwika and to explore their missiological significance. The pastoral cycle is being used as both an instrument and a framework from which to analyse the churches and to discern their missiological significance.

Within this chapter I have identified a discreet group of churches which are defined here as informal Pentecostal. This definition is drawn both from their relationship to the informal context from which they emerge, and to the wider Pentecostal movement, particularly in Africa, of which they are a part. The first two “movements” of this chapter have therefore focused primarily on literature surrounding these two key dimensions of the informal sector and Pentecostalism, particularly in Africa. Particular attention has been given to the relationship of informal settlement communities to the rural urban continuum and the way in which informal settlements become liminal places on the threshold of urban life.

Informal Pentecostal churches have been distinguished from another key group of churches which the informal settlements, the Roho churches. While a number of distinctions are identified it is the relationship to modernity and a more Western facing urban environment that is seen as distinguishing them from each other. Roho churches are presented as exiles in the city, with roots into a rural identity, while the possibility is raised that informal Pentecostal churches stand within a different trajectory as sojourners in the city, journeying in hope by providing routes into urban society. That argument will be explored in the following chapter.

The movement of theological reflection or, as used here, discernment, is described as a process of re-envisioning which seeks to both reflect on current experience and to anticipate, by faith, an alternative future. This future is envisioned as one which anticipates God’s reign of justice and peace and contends with oppressive powers which

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perpetuate social injustice. Expressing the process of theological reflection in this way illustrates an understanding of theology, intrinsic to the pastoral cycle, as that which seeks not only to interpret society but to change it. It also defines theology in a way which appears to speak more directly and relevantly into marginalized urban communities such as Kibera.

The identity of oppressive powers as either socio-economic, as in much liberation theology, or demonic, as a dimension of Pentecostal spirituality, was also explored. The difference between these two interpretations of reality raised questions of whether the pastoral cycle is a suitable tool for considering Pentecostal churches; a question to be revisited in the final chapter.

In considering a definition of mission from which to analyse the churches I have argued for a process which begins with incarnation and which is an expression of mission as *missio Dei*. Further, following the discussion on discernment, it has been argued that the response of mission is one which embodies a regenerative narrative, a message of hope. This understanding of mission, alongside the distinctive emphasis in Pentecostalism of mission in the power of the Spirit, forms the basis to explore the missiological significance of the churches.

## **Chapter Three:**

# **The Research Findings**

### ***Introduction***

As with the literature review, the structure of this chapter is developed around the pastoral cycle. Here the field research will be examined and analysed with the pastoral cycle serving as an instrument and structure for that process.

Again the movements of the cycle should not be seen as operating as entirely distinct processes but rather as discernable stages in a movement in which much overlapping will have to be acknowledged. In the first part of this chapter I have used the context dimension of the cycle to present the material gathered from the questionnaires conducted amongst the churches. The material is presented with little comment or reflection and forms background information identifying the ecclesiastical context from which a smaller group of churches were then drawn.

The second section, of social analysis, explores in greater depth at a smaller group of churches selected from those identified in the questionnaire. It also considers the ministry of two mainline churches in contrast to the ministry of the Pentecostal churches. This section is both descriptive and analytical. It seeks to tell the stories of these churches and to analyses their experience.

The third turn of the cycle, discernment, offers a theological reflection upon the experience of churches. Connecting back to earlier discussions, themes of incarnation, calling, the processes of discernment and models of church are revisited in this section.

In the fourth movement of the cycle, missiological response, particular attention to the way the churches reflect an understanding of mission as *missio Dei* and the impact the

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churches have on their members and on the local community. The question is asked of how the churches perceive transformation to take place through their ministry and whether the churches embody a regenerative narrative capable of changing individual lives and communities.

## **PART ONE: THE CONTEXT**

### ***1.1 Types of churches.***

Of the churches identified in the enumeration of churches three could be identified as mainline Protestant churches. These were the Anglican Church, The Presbyterian Church of East Africa and the Friends Church, Nairobi Yearly Meeting (Quakers). The Roman Catholic Church has a presence in the community through a school run by the Sisters of Mercy and through a local congregation of St Michael Parish, Langata which meets at the school on a Sunday. There is also a small Baptist church which is registered with the Baptist convention. The Seventh Day Adventists also have congregation in Kibera situated a short distance from the Kingdom Hall of the Jehovah's Witnesses. All other churches would fall into the categories of African Independent Churches, either Roho or Nationalist, and Pentecostal churches. Of the Pentecostal churches the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church and to a lesser extent, the Maranatha Church form part of an international Pentecostal denomination. Gatwikera Church of Christ is technically part of a wider denomination but appeared to have no meaningful relationship with it beyond the name and the source of the registration.

Of the remaining churches some are recognisably part of the historic development of African Instituted churches. These would include the Holy Spirit Church of East Africa, the African Divine Church, Lyahuka Church of East Africa, Holy Trinity Church of Africa and the Nomiya Luo Church.

The remaining churches were either Roho or Pentecostal churches whose origins were not known to me prior to the research process. The map on page vi illustrates the distribution of churches within Gatwikera as surveyed between December 2004 and January 2005.

The enumeration identified three Sabbatarian churches, namely the Seventh Day Adventists, the Holy Spirit Church of East Africa and Ruwe Holy Ghost Church but it is



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likely that other Sabbatarian churches may meet within the settlement which were not identified in the enumeration which took place on Sundays.

The number of churches identified within the settlement does not give a full picture of church attendance within the community. Some AIC churches worship in the open air without a constant place of worship each Sunday. Also, a significant number of Gatwikera residents attend worship outside Kibera. Possibly the highest number attend Our Lady of Guadalupe Church at Adams Arcade close to Kibera. Members of the community identified the Winners Chapel, a church established from Nigeria, and the Maimin Church, a Korean church which provides free transport from Kibera every Sunday, as being churches that were often attended by local residents.

All the churches in Gatwikera meet in temporary buildings made of mud and wattle, iron sheet, or timber. Many had earthen floors and most churches met in rented structures which often served a different function during the week. Seven of the churches met in school rooms.

#### ***1.2 Introductory notes on the founding of churches covered in the questionnaire.***

##### **Mainline denominations.**

**St Jerome Anglican Church.** Founded as a daughter church of Holy Trinity Kibera this church became a Parish, the first in the informal area of Kibera, in 2003.

**Presbyterian Church of East Africa.** This church remains a daughter church of a much larger church established in the formal area of Kibera. The Church has an entirely Kikuyu membership which declined following tribal clashes in Kibera in 2001. The church has only six elderly members.

##### **Independent Congregational churches**

**Kibera Baptist Church.** Founded by an expatriate the church has been under local leadership since 1997. It is an independent church although comes under the cover of the Nairobi Baptist association and is a member of the Baptist convention

### **Pentecostal churches**

**We Care Christian Ministries** – founded in Kibera but with 2 Churches in Oyugis and Kobala. The founding pastor has since left Kibera and leads the two churches which are in the Western region of Kenya. It was established following a split from another Pentecostal church in Kibera, Soul Winning Miracle Ministry.

**Shammah Gospel Church** This church comes under the “cover” of Shammah Gospel Church in Nairobi. The denomination has seven congregations in Nairobi and many others in Central Province. The Kibera congregation was only established in 2004 being founded by its current pastor.

**Jesus Gospel Centre.** Founded in 1994 by the current pastor, the church has its headquarters in Kibera where the pastor resides. It has a further 7 churches in rural areas outside Nairobi.

**Gatwikera Worship Centre** Founded by a lecturer from a local teacher training college this church is part of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church although it has its “cover” through Calvary Worship Centre. This was the only church in the survey to have cover from a suburban church.

**Jesus Life Liberation Church** was founded from Satellite, an area of permanent and semi permanent housing on the outskirts of Nairobi. This church has a further 3 churches in Busia in Western Kenya .The pastor is the founder of this congregation and was originally with Abundant Life Church in Kibera. He is one of only two pastors who were not resident in Kibera.

**Holy Salvation Community Church.** This small church was founded by the Pastor in May 2004 and, along with three other churches, meets in a local school. The pastor indicated that he has other churches in Western Kenya with the headquarters of the denomination in Kisumu.

**Brilliant Holy Gospel Church.** Covered by Brilliant Holy Gospel Church based in Kisumu. This church was founded by the son of the founder of the original church in Kisumu and is now led by one of the members.

**Grace and Truth of Jesus** The denomination was started 1999 and has its headquarters in Nakuru. This branch of the church was established in Kibera in the year 2001.

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**Jesus Life Evangelism Church** The church meets in a local informal school. It was founded by its members including the pastor. The church comes under the cover of Oasis Church of God which is based in Kayole, an area of high density permanent and semi permanent housing on the east side of Nairobi.

**Full Gospel Evangelistic Ministry.** A locally founded church which is not formally related to any other church.

**Praise Miracle Liberation Ministry.** Established in 2001 this church was founded in Gatwikera by its Pastor. It now has two congregations meeting in Western Kenya near the border with Uganda.

**Ambassadors for Christ Fellowship.** This church was founded in 2002 by members, including the pastor, from an existing branch of the church meeting in another village in Kibera. The denomination was founded in Central Province where it retains its headquarters.

**Restoration of the World Gospel Centre** This church was founded by its members, including the pastor, following a split from another Pentecostal Church in Kibera. It is affiliated to Light of the World Ministry, based in Nakuru, from where the church receives its cover.

**Full Gospel Fellowship Deliverance Centre Church.** This Church was founded by its pastor who had previously been pastor of the Lamp of Jesus Church in another village in Kibera. He planted this church in 2005 when his earlier church “collapsed”. The church is part of a small denomination consisting of four other churches based in S. Nyanza.

**Gatwikera Church of Christ** was founded by its members, including the pastor in 2000. It is a member of the wider Kenya Churches of Christ, which in turn is part of the International Churches of Christ. Technically it is therefore a Protestant Mission Church. However the affiliation of the Gatwikera branch appears to provide little more than legal cover and the local autonomy of the congregational model of Churches of Christ appears to have given it the freedom to develop as an independent Pentecostal church.

**Upendo Centre Church** was founded by its pastor in 2004 following a split from Church of Mercy. It is not affiliated to any other church.

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**Maranatha Church Gatwiker**a was founded by an expatriate missionary in 1990. It is part of a wider Pentecostal denomination which has its headquarters in Migori in Western Kenya. It is one of seventeen Maranatha Churches in Nairobi

**Pentecostal Revival Church of Christ.** The church was founded by its pastor in Gatwiker but has since established congregations in Kisumu and Siyaya district.

#### **Roho Churches**

**Teko Injili Roho Church.** This church was founded by its pastor in 2001 as a break away church from Africa Roho Msalaba church. It has other congregations and the headquarters of the church is in Siaya.

**Ruwe Holy Ghost Church of E.Africa** This denomination was founded in 1939 in Ruwe in Ugenya district. The local church in Gatwiker was founded in 1987 by another pastor. The church has about 10 branches in Kibera.

**Children of God Regeneration Church Yei: St Jeremiah.** This denomination was founded in 1958 by Prophet Kilion Orina. The Gatwiker branch of the church was founded by the pastor in 2003. The church has its headquarters in Migori in South Nyanza and has congregations in Nyanza region, Coast province and Nairobi.

**Lyahuka Church of East Africa.** Established in Vihiga district in 1972 this local church was established in Kibera in 1982. The church headquarters are in Vihiga. The church has two congregations in Gatwiker.

#### **Nationalist African Independent Churches**

**Holy Trinity Church of Africa** was founded in 1958 and has its headquarters in Kisumu. The Gatwiker branch was established in 1987.

**Injili Takatifu** This Church broke away from the Anglican Church in 1972. The Gatwiker branch was founded in 1983. The church has its headquarters in Asere and has one other congregation in Kibera.

#### **Roho/Pentecostal**

These are churches which could be characterized as either Roho or Pentecostal and illustrate the blurring of distinctions between the categories of church.

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**Faith and Deliverance Church.** Established in 1992 this church was founded by its pastor and has its headquarters in Kibera. This small denomination now has twenty churches with seven in low income areas of Nairobi and the remainder in Western Kenya.

**Pentecostal Church of Mercy.** Although calling itself a Pentecostal church this church has the appearance of a Roho church with all members wearing robes. The denomination, consisting of 15 churches, was founded in Nyando district and established a congregation in Gatwikera in 1984.

**Pentecostal Prayer Centre.** This denomination was founded in Kangemi, an informal settlement area of Nairobi in 1988. The founder, now bishop of the church, was then a member of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God. The denomination now has 8 churches in informal settlements in Kibera and further four in the Rift Valley and Western Kenya. The pastor of the Gatwikera branch of the church moved to the denomination two years earlier from the African Divine Church, a Roho Church from Western Kenya.

#### ***1.3 Patterns of attendance***

One of the features of the informal economy relates to its scale. Informal businesses operate on a small scale. Assessing attendance figures was intended both to establish the relative numerical strength of churches within the community but also to ascertain whether churches followed the pattern of functioning on a relatively small scale. I was also interested in who attends the churches in terms of age groups, gender distribution and ethnicity. The reported levels of attendance are given in the table below.

Adult attendance	Number of churches
1 - 20	9
21 - 30	7
31 - 40	3
41 - 50	4
61 - 50	3
Over 60	4

The findings indicated that the largest group of churches in the survey had 20 or less members in the congregation and more than half the churches had less than 30 members. The church which indicated the lowest level of attendance was the Presbyterian Church

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which recorded having six members. The largest attendance recorded was at the Anglican Church with 120 members. Church attendance figures given by the churches were generally higher than the attendance levels observed when visiting them. This may reflect the fact that many pastors appeared to indicate attendance in terms of how many would be in attendance on a given Sunday if all members were present rather than average weekly attendance figures.

The figures for youth and child<sup>58</sup> attendance were interesting in that the youth seemed to be less well represented in the churches in relation to their presence in the community as a whole. This could possibly indicate lower levels of church attendance among young people or may be indicative of higher levels of mobility with youth choosing to go to churches outside Gatwikera. It was beyond the parameters of the research to establish why the figures for youth attendance were lower than might be expected.

Attendance level	No. of Churches. <b>Youth</b>	No. of Churches. <b>Children</b>
1 – 10	13	2
11 – 20	14	13
21 – 30	1	4
31 – 40	0	5
41 – 50	2	1
Over 50	0	5

Most churches were very hazy on the number of children and the reliability of estimates must be taken with some caution. The church with highest reported level of church attendance was Praise Miracle Liberation Ministry with an estimated 100 children which I would observe to be high. The lowest figure was again the Presbyterian Church which recorded no youth or children.

When looking at the gender distribution of the churches, the most frequently found ratio was that of 60% female 40% male. In seven instances women outnumbered men by a

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<sup>58</sup> In assessing attendance levels among youth and children, children were defined as those below twelve and youth as those aged thirteen to twenty. This represents a low cut off age for how youth are generally defined in the community. Youth are generally defined in broad terms as those not yet married.

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ratio of two to one or more with one church reporting 80% of its membership to be female. In just three churches the balance was noted to be in favour of male attendance.

In looking at the ethnicity of the congregations there was found to be a bias in terms of the Luo membership. Given that the Luo are the largest community within Gatwikera this is not surprising. Thirteen churches reported that their congregations were at least 80% Luo of which three said they were entirely Luo. Two other churches were largely Luo with a smaller Luyia populations. However, the concentrations of one ethnic community within a church are not to be explained entirely by the ethnography of Gatwikera. Amongst the churches surveyed, two were almost entirely of Kikuyu, and three were virtually exclusively Luyia. One other church drew 95% of its membership from the Kamba community. Four churches recorded that over 50% of their congregation were drawn from one ethnic community and only two churches recorded having a membership where at least 50% of the congregation was not made up of one community.

In terms of distinguishing between Roho and Pentecostal churches it was noted that both types of churches had congregations which were drawn almost exclusively of one community. However, while some Pentecostal churches showed significant ethnic mix in their congregations this was not true in churches identified as Roho.

The relationship of the churches to a specific ethnic group was more noticeable in the use of language. Only three churches worshipped entirely in one language and these were all Roho churches. Similarly where more than one language was used the Roho churches would use a regional language and Kiswahili or, in one case English. Some Pentecostal churches used a mixture of a regional language and Kiswahili or English, but, unlike the Roho churches, more than half the churches used a mixture of Kiswahili and English. The Anglican Church was the only church in the survey to have a service conducted entirely in English.

In looking at where congregations came from the questionnaires revealed an expected bias towards very local congregations. Fifteen churches reported that their entire

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congregation was drawn from within Kibera with a further nine showing 90% being local to Kibera. Only two churches showed less than 70% of the congregation being drawn from Kibera

### **1.4 Worship.**

All the churches surveyed in the questionnaire, bar one, The Ruwe Holy Ghost Church of East Africa (Saturday 3 – 6pm) met on Sundays. Services were held in the morning with start times varying from 8:30 to 11 am and service lengths ranging from two to five hours. Some churches had a Bible study or children's service prior to the main service. Service times appeared flexible and that was mirrored in the experience of recording Sunday worship where official start and finishing times could vary from the actual time by up to one hour. The only church with a service of less than two hours was the Anglican Church.

Liturgically it was found that many of the Pentecostal churches had no distinctive, material, religious symbols. Most Pentecostal churches did not have a cross and the most common religious artifact would be a preaching desk. This contrasted with the Roho churches which often made greater use of visible symbols such as crosses, crucifixes, candles, table coverings and robes. While in the Roho churches robes were generally worn by the service leaders and, in seven instances, by the congregation, no robes were used by Pentecostal churches<sup>59</sup> although one church had sashes to be worn by ushers.

The questionnaire also explored the way in which churches divide worshippers according to gender. The practice of dividing seating arrangements for men and women in church is a common practice in rural areas, respecting traditional ways in which gender is constructed and defined. This practice, however, is generally not upheld in the city. The purpose of asking the question was to provide a measurable indicator of the way in which rural values still help shape and influence the churches in Kibera. Eighteen churches

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<sup>59</sup> Full Gospel Evangelistic Ministry reported that the bishop or overseer wore robes on special occasions.



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reported that the congregational seating was divided on gender lines and this included all the Roho churches.

The types of musical instruments used in worship also provided some indication of the ways in which churches were more urban or rural facing. Rural churches tend to make use of traditional instruments, particularly percussion instruments while the trend within the city is to more western, electrified, instruments. Six churches reported using electronic amplification and musical equipment, generally a keyboard. With the exception of the Anglicans these were all Pentecostal. Eight churches had no form of instrument and again these were all Pentecostal churches. Eleven churches reported using a traditional drum and this included all the churches identified as Roho churches.

#### ***1.5 Church structure and history.***

In seeking to show the relationship between informal churches and the informal economy it was important to discover something about the history of how the churches came into being and their organizational structure. In particular I was interested to establish whether the churches were all entirely autonomous or independent of other churches. This produced the most unexpected findings of this stage of the research. Only three churches reported being entirely autonomous and this included the Baptist church which is affiliated to the Baptist Convention. The other two were Upendo Centre and the Full Gospel Evangelistic Fellowship. Gatwikera Worship Centre reported that it came under the “cover” of Calvary Worship Centre but is not part of it in a denominational sense. Gatwikera Church of Christ is similarly part of a wider denomination but there appeared little meaningful relationship to the church with, as will be seen later, the pastor being ordained by a pastor from another church.

Fifteen Churches reported that they were part of a wider denomination which had its headquarters outside Nairobi, most often in Western Kenya. In the case of the Roho Churches all of them had their headquarters outside Nairobi. Five churches, all Pentecostal, began from Kibera, have their headquarters there and have since planted churches outside Nairobi, while four churches, again Pentecostal, began in Nairobi but

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not in Kibera and have their headquarters in another part of the city. What was significant from these findings was the degree and nature of the relationship between churches in Kibera and churches in other, largely rural, areas of Kenya. Twenty churches had significant relationships with churches in rural areas of Kenya either as the parent church or as the offspring of a ministry established outside the city. However the precise nature of the relationship was not always easy to discern.

In order to be legally registered as a church in Kenya it is necessary to obtain a Certificate of Registration under the Societies Act. This is often a difficult exercise for many churches and they therefore resort to a process called “cover” whereby they come under the cover of another church. This cover provides a legal shelter for the ministry and may involve the church seeking cover having to pay a “tithe” or some financial contribution to the church with the Certificate of Registration. In this way the church may become part of the denomination of the church holding the certificate. However the arrangement may be little more than a flag of convenience rather than representing a genuine relationship.

Within the research five churches reported having no cover at all, which is technically illegal and two other churches were, perhaps understandably, unwilling or unable to divulge that information. A further five churches operated under the cover of another church. Thirteen churches reported that they were part of a wider denomination and this included all the Roho churches and the two mainline churches which participated in the research. Five churches, reported that they had been able to obtain their own registration.

#### ***1.6 Church ministry.***

Churches were questioned as to the nature of ministries which ran from their churches outside of Sunday worship. Four churches reported no activity whatsoever and those which did run programmes tended to do so in a way which focused exclusively on the spiritual needs of their congregations. Prayer meetings and overnight prayers were the most common activities followed by Bible studies and house fellowships. Four churches

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were running a nursery school and one a primary school. Two churches reported having failed attempts at running schools. Four churches, including the Anglican church, had HIV/AIDS related projects.

#### **1.7 The minister.**

Questions asked of the minister focused on four areas. Firstly, I sought to know how many pastors were fully supported by their churches. Secondly, following the argument that churches emerge along similar lines to the informal economy, I set out to discover how many churches were founded by the pastor. Thirdly, giving consideration to the incarnational dimension of mission I sought to establish how many pastors lived in Kibera. Finally I enquired regarding the training the pastors had received in preparation for their ministry.

Only eight of the pastors were involved in fulltime ministry and this included the Anglican and the Presbyterian pastor. Of the remaining pastors fifteen were employed in the *jua kali* sector, one obtained casual employment and six, all Pentecostal, had secured permanent employment. Only one had “white collar” employment, as a college lecturer and he also lived outside Kibera. Only two other pastors lived outside Kibera. This does not include the Anglican and Presbyterian pastors who lived in permanent housing constructed on the outer edge of the settlement. Fourteen of the pastors living in Kibera lived in Gatwikera.

The argument that informal churches would emerge in a similar way to the informal economy would require that in a significant number of cases the pastor of a church would be the founding pastor. This was borne out to some degree in the research where it was found that fourteen of the churches were led by the founding pastor. The pastors had a wide range of experience in ministry with the one having served for twenty five years. Five had been in ministry for less than two years and twenty of the pastors had less than ten years ministry experience.

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In considering training the vast majority of the pastors had received no formal training whatsoever. In all twenty two of the thirty pastors has received less than two weeks training and, other than the two mainline church pastors, only one had been to a Bible college. One means by which pastors receive training is through short courses sometimes run by expatriates or through courses using training materials developed outside Africa. Pastors' networks provide one of the key avenues through which pastors connect with these programmes or with the ministry of foreign visitors running evangelistic crusades in Kibera. In the research it was found that seventeen of the pastors were not connected to any local pastor's network. Nine churches, all Pentecostal, we part of Pastor's fellowships within Kibera and specifically the Pastor's Accord run by a local Pentecostal pastor.

## **PART TWO: SOCIAL ANALYSIS**

In this section eight churches are considered in greater detail based on interviews and attendance and the video recording of services. Included among the churches is the Pentecostal Prayer Centre which I have indicated could fall into the category of being either Roho or Pentecostal. Additionally the section includes material gathered from interviews with the Presbyterian and Anglican pastors who have churches in Gatwikera. The section is principally an exercise in the study of religion, describing and seeking to analyse the experience of the churches, based upon the research questions identified in the opening chapter. These research questions form the subheadings for this section other than the section on transformation which will be considered under missiological response. The churches considered in more detail in this section are:

Gatwikera Church of Christ. (GCC)  
Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA)  
Grace and Truth of Jesus (GTJ)  
Jesus Gospel Centre (JGC)  
Praise Miracle Liberation Ministry (PMLM)  
Restoration of the World Gospel Centre (RWGC)  
Shamma Gospel Church (SGC)  
St Jerome Anglican Church (SJACK)  
The Pentecostal Prayer Centre (PPC)  
We Care Christian Ministries. (WCCM)

### ***2.1 The minister***

A primary area of enquiry within the research was in regard to who becomes a pastor of an informal Pentecostal church. In the original hypotheses I set out to demonstrate that the emergence of informal churches has some parallel to the emergence of businesses within the informal economy. This will be analysed later in the chapter. This section records the pastors' own understanding of how they came in to ministry and the role of the pastor in the ownership and vision of the local church.

### **2.1.1 The pastors.**

All the pastors interviewed within the research were male. The bias towards male led ministry was not intended within the research but no female pastors were identified within the community. The pastors ranged in age from early thirties to mid fifties. All of the Pentecostal pastors lived in Kibera, five of them in Gatwikera. Only two of the Pentecostal pastors were fully supported by the ministry of their church. The others worked as a stone mason, a chef, a wholesale fruit and vegetable seller, security guard and a tailor in the *jua kali* sector. The mainline church pastors were both in full-time ministry supported through their churches and denominations.

The pastors had been in ministry for varying lengths with the longest having been in ministry for fourteen years whilst the pastor with the least experience had only been ordained that year. All the Pentecostal pastors had been adult members, evangelists or assistant pastors in other Pentecostal churches before establishing their own ministries. The churches where they had served were generally not in the larger Pentecostal denominations although Bishop M of PPC and Pastor D of GCC had served in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God and Full Gospel Church respectively.

### **2.1.2 The call.**

The interviews with the pastors began with an exploration of their sense of calling into ministry. A common theme among many of the pastors was that of a calling coming through a vision. The work of the Holy Spirit in speaking directly to pastors through dreams, visions and voices was an experience shared by most of the Pentecostal pastors. Critical to their sense of calling appeared to be some direct intervention of the Spirit through voices, dreams and visions directing them into ministry as a pastor. One pastor described his calling as follows:

Now it was in the year 1995 when God came and preached to me and I saw in a vision that there was a call from God and I saw myself pastoring a church and preaching to many people. The vision was a dream (Interview with C. Smith 15 06 2005:164).

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Within this sense of calling the primary role of the pastor is as a preacher and within the vision is the implication of a ministry that would be fruitful in terms of a significant following. The assurance of fruitfulness through obedience to the call was echoed by other pastors. One described his experience of calling in terms reminiscent of an Old Testament prophetic calling but with a distinctly African dimension to it.

The Lord gave me a vision about a mango tree. He showed me a mango tree and this is the ministry I got from the Lord that I may go and bear fruit. By that vision there was some word from the Lord that you are like that tree (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 117).

In this vision the pastor also believed the Spirit had shown him that he should not expect to profit from his ministry. The Lord spoke to him that it is the farmer not the tree that eats the fruit. He also believed that within the dream God gave him the name of his church, Jesus Gospel Centre.

Those pastors who described their calling as being through a vision shared two things in common. Firstly they described experiencing a calling which was to lead them to leave the church where they were currently either worshipping or serving as an assistant pastor. The vision appeared to serve to validate the step of leaving or breaking fellowship with another church. One pastor reported,

I was an assistant pastor at the Church on the Rock and one day I heard the voice of God speaking to me to come out of that church and begin a ministry. (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 135)

He went to describe how, whilst meditating on the call, he heard the voice again “*speaking to me*”. In the context of a church that perceives itself to be led by the Spirit of God this “word from God” provides important justification for the decision to leave an existing ministry and perhaps offers a mutually acknowledged basis for conversations with the pastor of the church. The same pastor noted, “I did not want to go out somehow like that servant without the Spirit of understanding”. In the sharing of this vision with

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the pastor he commented that “God gave me favour before my pastor” and, recognising that this was the voice of God, he released him to begin a church.

The second experience generally shared by pastors who received a vision was that they sensed their calling was to begin a new ministry. In other words their calling was not to join the ministry of another existing church but to begin an altogether new ministry under their own leadership. The vision was not simply to be a pastor but to found or plant a church. In fact the call to ministry and the call to plant a church appeared to be one and the same thing. The pastor of the Pentecostal Prayer Centre (Interview with C. Smith 15 06 2005: 174) reported that God spoke to him three times through a sound. “I heard a sound telling me to go and proclaim my Word to my people”. That call directed him out of the church which he had attended from childhood and in which he had served in a lay capacity. “I got the vision and I was told to go out of PAG”.

One pastor’s call to ministry did not begin with a vision or dream but a dream was clearly important in the personal confirmation of the call. With this pastor the prompting to establish a new church also came later. The pastor of WCCM (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 150) reported that it was through the prompting of a brother evangelist that he first sensed a call to ministry but he noted that “I refused because I wanted to hear from God personally.” That personal call happened after a period of six months of prayer, when the confirmation came through a dream. The pastor stayed within the Soul Winning Church before struggles in leadership led him to leave and establish his own ministry.

Two pastors who did not describe a vision as leading to their calling to ministry were also churches where, at least initially, the pastors remained within the ministry of the church where they experienced their calling. The pastor of RWGM began in ministry in the Power of the Holy Trinity Church. His sense of calling came through his interaction with other Christians and church leaders. “Whenever we were with other servants of the Lord they could tell me that one time I will become a pastor” (Interview with C. Smith 24 05 2005: 89). His calling led him initially to plant a church under the leadership of his pastor. However, disputes about “vision” led to the leadership of this new church being



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“sent away” by the founding pastor of the “mother” church causing them to form their own ministry. The other pastor who did not initially report a vision as part of his calling was the pastor of GCC. Here, working from the church’s congregational model of ministry, the call came through members of the congregation approaching him and asking him to become a pastor of the church, as the existing pastor had left and the church was without a leader. Of all the Pentecostal pastors interviewed he was the only one to remain within the church in which he had been called.

The visions which the pastors reported envision a church, not as something that is part of a large ecclesiastical structure, but as an independent body initiated by the work of the Spirit. The notion of splits occurring within churches based on the reception of dreams and visions is not a new phenomenon and is an experience shared by many Pentecostal and African Instituted Churches. With the exception of the PPC the churches which began from the experience of the pastor’s vision emerged from churches from within Kibera and which were themselves Pentecostal churches.

It is interesting to contrast this experience of calling with that of the two pastors of mainline churches. Both described an experience of being called but neither related this to any experience of dreams or visions. The Presbyterian pastor described his calling as coming, not from the Spirit, but from being spoken to through the Word (Interview with C. Smith 08 12 2005:248). For the Anglican pastor the sense of calling to ministry came during his childhood but the more specific call to ordained ministry came later whilst working with the Anglican Church (Interview with C. Smith 05 12 2005:262).

The most obvious conclusion to be drawn from the above is that each pastor described their sense of calling from within the traditions and frameworks of their own churches. It is perhaps no more surprising that a Pentecostal should receive a call through a vision given by the Spirit than that a Presbyterian, within a Reformed tradition, should sense a call through the reading of the Word. What is distinctive about the calling of the Pentecostal pastors was that the calling was understood in terms of establishing their own

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ministry. The calling was to something individual and personal, rather than corporate or communal, an aspect which may differentiate it from the founding vision of many Roho churches. The call leads towards a more entrepreneurial act, heading out alone to begin a small ministry without obvious means of support.

Within the process pastors were asked about how their call was in some sense tested or validated, even when it was understood to be a direct word or vision from the Spirit. The purpose of exploring the test of the call was not to provide any measure of evaluating the genuineness of it, but to assess the means and processes by which a call is understood to be tested. For all the pastors some form of external recognition of their call was important. For those leaving a ministry to start a new ministry their release by their pastor appeared to form part of the confirmation of their calling. However the key criteria for assessing calling appeared to be evidence of the Spirit blessing the ministry. One pastor commented,

I began preaching to them very powerfully and teaching them , and singing, and people were amazed to see what kind of man this is while others were saying that I was a mad person. But I was just focussing on the call (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 135).

One pastor was clear that it is gifting not the choosing that identifies a pastor.

You go to the Lord through the Holy Spirit. God can help you to help them and by that you can know you are a pastor, even if you are not chosen, but through the gift you can be a pastor (Interview with C. Smith 24 05 2005: 96).

Similarly the pastor of PPC noted that it was the evidence of your prayers being answered in the lives of others, their lives being changed, that demonstrated or validated your call.

They will see this is a man of God through your prayer. Is God really answering your prayer? When you pray for a person is the person receiving what he was praying for? (Interview with C. Smith 15 06 2005: 176)

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This sense of being a conduit of divine power seemed to set apart the called and the non-called in terms of the pastors' understanding of what it meant to be called into ministry.

The test of the calling is that you see manifestations of God in people which will come in the ministry. The manifestations of God through people are to see a desire for God. People and situations test your calling (Interview with C. Smith 15 06 2005: 166).

Pastor P specifically identified the relationship between the act of preaching and the impact that preaching has on people's lives as being the mark of a person who is called.

It is important to note that the emphasis here lies not in the ability to exegete, teach or interpret the text. Rather the mark of the preacher lies in the outcome of the preaching in the lives of the hearers, the way that God "follows" the Word. "First of all I must see that God is following that word, and then from there I can test that this is God who has called you" (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 152) This understanding of testing a calling contrasted sharply with the understanding of mainline church pastors. Both these pastors commented on a process of committees and church structures which established whether or not an individual is called. The Anglican commented, "In the sense of ordination, the bishop had to decide." (Interview with C. Smith 05 12 2005:262), while the Presbyterian spoke of six attempts at passing an examination panel before being accepted into ordained ministry (Interview with C. Smith 08 12 2005:248)

In looking at the different experiences of receiving and testing a calling the experience of the Pentecostal pastors appeared to be largely individual with the test of the calling being the manifestation of the Spirit in ministry. In other words, the qualification for ministry is not about being chosen in a process but actively demonstrating a gift. The experience of the mainline church pastors was less individual but perhaps more corporate than communal in that qualification as a pastor ultimately, whatever the gifting, rested upon being chosen through a system or process involving ecclesiastical structures.

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The apparent lack of a need for some form of external validation of ministry was also evidenced in the way that four of the Pentecostal pastors had not received any form of ordination. Those who had been ordained present a picture that may seem confusing to those accustomed to ordination as providing a point of entry into a specific form of ministry in a given church. None of the Pentecostal pastors were ordained by a pastor from within the church in which they served. This was generally understandable given their status as founding pastors. However even the pastor of Gatwikera Church of Christ had not been ordained by anyone within the denomination but by a visiting Kenyan evangelist from another church who also happened to be the preacher on the Sunday I attended the service. The church had worked with him a few weeks before in holding an evangelistic rally. The church members “after discerning the Spirit”, and using the scriptures, decided their pastor should be ordained and, recognising the powerful ministry of the evangelist, he was asked to ordain the pastor (Interview with C. Smith 21 06 2005:188). Similarly the pastor of JGC had sought ordination from the Bishop of New Life Ministry in Kayole and by fellow pastors (Interview with C. Smith 24 05 2005:118).

These experiences are clearly different from the mainline churches where part of the function of ordination is to incorporate an individual into the structures, including the authority structures, of the church. With the Pentecostal churches the ordination does not signify any bureaucratic function. Where practiced it would appear to be relational, reflecting the recognition by the one to be ordained, of the power of the Spirit in the ministry of the one ordaining. However, interestingly, for four of the pastors even the hands of another were not deemed necessary; the witness of the Spirit suffices, at least for the present.

With the mainline Churches the process leading from calling to ministry consisted of a four stage process: the call, testing the call, training, ordination. For the Pentecostal pastors the process was largely concertinaed into a single event of experiencing the call which was to be later validated by the evidence of the work of the Spirit in the ministry. Training did not feature in the experience of any of the pastors other than the pastor of

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SGC who, through earlier involvement in Crisco Church, had received six months training.

In examining the pastor's experience of calling certain common themes emerge. Generally the pastors experienced their call in a manner which can be described as individual, pioneering, local, and self-authenticating. The individual nature of the call was something I identified in the pilot phase for the research process. Here one pastor articulated this very clearly.

When you begin a work it is a vision God has given you as an individual and you must carry it out alone. You need to know that you stand alone (Smith 2003:5).

What are the roots of this individualism which seems so contrary to the traditional African concept of identity being established within community, to the affirmation that "I am because we are"?<sup>60</sup> What factors so shape and influence a pastor's understanding of ministry that his calling is perceived not only in isolation from the Christian community but in a manner which will lead him out of the particular Christian community or congregation to which he belongs? To examine this question we need to consider the context in which the call is received.

One explanation of the individualism of the calling may lie in an understanding of the informal economy. Informal businesses, as noted earlier, are marked by an ease of entry. Entry into the formal economy may require qualifications, entry requirements and a selection process which, at least in principle, would set out to test the suitability of a candidate against certain objective criteria. This can be understood as a corporate and bureaucratic process of selection which is often mirrored in the church selection processes of mainline churches. Churches rooted within western modernity, where formal

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<sup>60</sup> Lawford Imunde sounds a note of caution in respect of an understanding of African philosophy that only acknowledges identity within communality. He suggests Mbiti's "*I am because we are, and because we are I am*" as a description of the underlying African philosophy does not recognise adequately the space given to the individual for self development." In the same paper he argues that through the community the individual had access to "self-identification, self-fulfilment, self-justification and practical answers to the problems of everyday living." Quoted in Organisation of African Instituted Churches report on *Pursuing the vision: articulating AIC beliefs and values in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. 4 – 6 April 2006. Unpublished paper

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learning is particularly valued, are more likely to place an emphasis on academic ability and suitability for an academic programme of theological education and training. Within Roho Churches leadership is identified through a process which generally involves a communal discernment of the leading of the Spirit. This is a process that has roots in the communal nature of traditional African society. However the experiences of calling described by the pastors in the informal Pentecostal churches can be neither described as communal nor corporate but individual and personal. They reflect neither the communality of traditional society nor the corporate world of the modern global city. The roots of this, I would argue, lie in a confluence of the individualism of urban society, the ease of entry into the informal economy and aspects of Pentecostal and Charismatic spirituality which emphasize the outward signs and manifestations of the Spirit within the life of the individual believer.

An individualistic understanding of calling is not unique to informal Pentecostal churches. Similar stories or dreams, visions and ministries authenticated by manifestation of divine power will be told by pastors of other churches across the city. What is unique to the informal Pentecostal churches is the context within which the call is heard and the relative ease of establishing a church *by themselves* within the informal sector. This apparent ease is a reflection of the ease of access into the informal economy. To begin a church of any description in the formal area of the city requires significant capital. Within Kibera establishing a church in Gatwikera, like opening a fried fish business, requires a minimum of capital. One pastor indicated that he began his ministry with just the KSh 450 required to rent a room for a month (Interview with C. Smith 15 06 2005:175).

One pastor drew a distinction between being chosen, which seemed to require some form of human intervention, and the idea that, “through the gift” you can be a pastor, with the implication that here no other human agency may be required. The emphasis here is not on selection, recognition or qualification but on gifting. This lies at the heart of the discernment process described by some of the pastors. It also describes the possibilities that exist within the informal economy. The ability to practise in the informal market is not bound by any means of regulation, quality control or qualification to practise a

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particular trade. What matters is the gift, the ability to perform, to establish and maintain the business. As indicated earlier, the gifted person with limited capital can make a way in the informal economy in a way that may be closed to him/her in the formal economy. It provides space for individual entrepreneurship.

It is the entrepreneurship of the informal economy that leads to the second observation of how the pastors understood their calling in a way which was pioneering. It lead them into the establishment of a new ministry rather than the extension of ministry within existing church structures. Such pioneering needs to be seen alongside an informal economy where the vast majority of businesses are individually owned, run by the self-employed on a worker/proprietor model rather than an employer/employee relationship. The informal economy provides space for very small scale entrepreneurship. The nature of life in the informal settlements means that it is easier to start a business than to get a job. The sector thrives on independent employment.

The pastor who believes he has discerned a call to establish his own church is operating within the economic framework of the settlement where proliferation of the small scale rather than corporate expansion is the *modus operandi*. Similarly it may be observed that almost all the businesses in Kibera are single worker units, supporting, partially or fully, only one household. Within these economic realities, a pastor sensing a call to ministry within an existing church will need to go out and test his/her calling in the market place. The pastor/proprietor model holds little possibility of employer and employee relationships. This is particularly so in instances where the church affords little or no income to the pastor or is even a drain on the pastor's household income.

The point that the church may afford little income to the pastor is important. While drawing parallels with the informal economy this should not be understood to indicate that pastors are entirely motivated by economic interest but rather that their church structures reflect the nature of the economy. As shown in the questionnaire, the vast majority of pastors were engaged in other employment or businesses to support their

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families and many reported that the church income did little more than cover the rent of the church building.

It is evident that while almost all the pastors interpreted their call to ministry as a call to leave their existing church and set up a new church, most experienced this call initially as a call to establish a ministry locally, within Kibera. As one congregation noted, the very local nature of the ministry sets the informal settlement churches apart from other Charismatic or Pentecostal churches in the city which are far less localized (Interview with C. Smith 6 11 2005:194). In Gatwikera many businesses are operated from or close to the worker's home and the business serves a very small geographic area, given that pretty much the same items at the same price can be found within a short distance. As in the informal economy, the pastor of the informal church experiences his call to ministry as localized. For five of the pastors interviewed this was a calling to the (urban) village where they lived. Many later sought to establish other churches away from the locality but this seemed primarily determined by their "surfing"<sup>61</sup> on the rural urban continuum and planting churches at their or their member's rural homes.

The outcome of the calling, the response to that which was discerned, by leaving the original church appears divisive. However for the pastors the separation with the original church was at times expressed in terms of growth rather than division. This was more the case when an amicable parting of the ways was reached. Nevertheless it is important to consider the impact that division has within the life of the Church in its widest sense.

This analysis of the pastors' calling in terms of the informal economy, however, raises a critical question where the parallel appears to break down. The enumeration of businesses revealed about 85% of all businesses were run by women, but in the churches no evidence was found of a woman pastor leading a congregation in Gatwikera. If a pastor experiences and interprets his calling, and *his* seems to be the correct personal pronoun here, within the framework of the informal sector then why is there not a significant body

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<sup>61</sup> I use the term surfing here to describe the way in which pastors utilise the momentum of flows of the rural-urban continuum.



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of women in ministry in Gatwikera? Here consideration may need to be given to the understanding of Gatwikera as a village in the city. Informal settlements may be more significantly connected to the values of rural communities, where gender roles are more prescribed than within the city. This was most particularly evident in the way most churches divided their seating along gender lines, a practice not usually found in formal areas of the city.

#### **2.1.3 The vision.**

With the exception of the Gatwikera Church of Christ, all the Pentecostal pastors were founders of churches which had split at some point from another church. In the case of the Pastor of Jesus Gospel Centre he had also experienced one of the churches he had planted in Kibera splitting off to come under the ministry of another bishop and changing its name to be registered as another ministry. Invariably the pastors pointed to differences in vision, as well as their own sense of calling, which led them to branch off and start their own ministries. It was therefore important to identify what pastors understood to be distinctive about their particular vision. This proved a largely fruitless exercise in that most pastors articulated a very similar vision.

In general vision was predominantly in relation to evangelism, gospel proclamation and church planting. For one pastor his vision was for preaching a gospel that was not restricted by some of the cultural constraints of his former church, such as those requiring women to cover their heads in worship (Interview with C. Smith 24 05 2005: 90). Others expressed vision in terms of holding missions and planting churches “up country” from Kibera (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 152). For GCC the vision was expressed in terms of expanding the current ministry, holding more services and purchasing a tent to have larger gatherings.

In some instances the vision had a holistic dimension to it “The vision was to preach the gospel to the needy and after preaching to teach them” (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 121). “To proclaim the gospel, to help the needy” (Interview with C. Smith 15 06 2005: 175). One pastor had a vision to do some kind of project work but only after he

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had completed a vision of planting churches “up country” (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 152). However, there was generally little articulated by the pastors in respect of their vision for ministry which indicated a ministry dimension that went beyond evangelism, church planting and church growth and little to suggest a vision for the church as a transformative agent within society.

For the pastors their vision also seemed to be co-terminate with the vision of the church. They understood their role as being to communicate their vision to the congregation. However, it may be misleading to press too hard on the content of the vision that established the churches. The emphasis may need to be understood more in relation to the significance of the one who bears the vision, receives the vision. The significance of vision was less in respect of content and more with regard to identifying the one whom the Spirit has given the leadership and direction of the faith community.

It may be important at this point to draw a distinction between the founding vision of the early Roho churches and the founding vision of these churches. Roho churches, as a movement rather than as specific denominations, trace their roots back to founding visions which marked a radical break with inherited colonial Christianity. The founding visions led to the creation of churches which manifested a significant philosophical, theological and cultural break with missionary Christianity. In the context of the churches in the research no such radical break exists. The new church that emerges is better understood in terms of replication or duplication.

Again reference to the informal economy is pertinent with its unregulated proliferation of small scale businesses. The enumeration of businesses showed substantial duplication of businesses in Gatwikera with almost identical outlets operating within very close proximity of each other. Starting a business in Gatwikera appears not as the creation of something new but rather part of a cumulative process, adding to that which is already in existence without any discernable difference beyond the personality of the vendor. Similarly the vision of the pastors appeared not to be for a new expression of church, but simply for another church under their leadership.

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At one level this may be understood as another expression of church planting. Roho churches may generally be planted by the migration of members. Mainline churches tend to plant through a process that is often directed towards the purchase of land and the erection of a permanent or semi permanent structure. The informal Pentecostal churches appeared to come into existence through neither of these processes but rather through separation and replication, or modification, of the source church. In this respect the vision to start a church can be understood as something emerging from and shaped by the socio-economic realities of the informal settlements, reflecting the way in which other sectors of the informal economy come into being.

In mainline churches vision is something which may be defined corporately. The Anglican pastor in Kibera could identify the vision of the church as something published within the denomination's diary.<sup>62</sup> It has the function of providing some measure of corporate identity and purpose. For Roho churches, the founding vision has often defined their origins as a faith community in ways that are profoundly communal, to the point that movement away from the original vision may require an act of repentance on the part of the church community if they divert from it (Padwick 2003:289). In this sense, like the ties of the community, the vision is seen as binding. The vision for Roho churches is rooted in people and events and the ongoing relationship of the community of faith to those who have preceded them.

Vision within the informal Pentecostal churches is fundamentally different. The vision of is not a published statement of desired intent, nor is it rooted in people, events and beliefs to which a community feels bound. Rather, like the signs which follow the call, it is an authenticating mark of the pastor as leader and vision bearer of the faith community. The loyalty of the church is not to the organisation or denomination, nor to the vision of the founder, but to the person holding the vision. For the vision itself, like the lines of fried fish stalls along the road side, is indistinguishable from that offered by the neighbouring

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<sup>62</sup> See ACK Church Pocket Book and Diary which states the vision and mission statement of the denomination.

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church. What the informal Pentecostal church shares is not the content of the vision but the desire to succeed and grow as a church under the leadership of the pastor.

#### ***2.1.4 The pastor as founder.***

The Pentecostal pastors shared a common experience of planting a church independently of the church they had originally been serving or fellowshipping in. The question arises concerning the process by which the pastors then began to establish the churches which they were to lead.

Pastor N of RWGC began his ministry through a split in the congregation which led to three quarters of the members of original congregation leaving with him to form a new church (Interview with C. Smith 24 05 2005: 90). Pastor D founded GCC with four friends five years ago although he only became pastor in 2005 (Doc 55). Pastor M received his calling to establish a church while he was serving as an evangelist with Mission Outreach Church in Kibera. He began entirely alone as his wife was living at their rural home at the time. He described the process of starting a church as follows. “I called some brethren and formed something like a committee to share my vision with them” (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 118). The committee was made up of members of churches other than the one he had come from. Of these, three remained with him to establish the church. One was a cousin, the other two were friends.

The significance of friends and relations in establishing churches was noted by other pastors. Pastor P of WCCM was originally in Soul Winning Ministries but in 1998, after struggles with the leadership and “because God called me”, he left with another pastor and registered the new Church. The two pastors left with two members of the congregation who happened to be pastor P’s brothers. They rented a room in Makina, another of Kibera’s villages, and then established a congregation through open air preaching and door to door evangelism (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 151).

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PMLM also began from the nucleus of family members. Pastor J commented, “I started the church with my wife and my three kids and up to now I have seen the hand of the Lord because I obeyed the call of God” (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 135).

Pastor M of PPC also pointed to the significance of family friends and neighbours in establishing a church. He began his church as a Bible study in his home in Kangemi, a slum on the North Western side of Nairobi, in 1988. He started with neighbours and later family joined the church. When neighbours complained about the number of people in his home he rented a room locally (Interview with C. Smith 15 06 2005: 175). Pastor H of Shamma Gospel Church came to Kibera in 2004 on an evangelistic crusade with Crisco ministries.

In that crusade God opened the door for me such that when I was in the crusade people got saved and people got healed. And instantly, there was a certain man of God (a Pastor) who approached me and we started something in his house and from there people are following (Interview with C. Smith 15 06 2005: 164).

The church subsequently moved from the house into the room where they currently meet. The pastor explained how this provision came about,

The place, I found it through a certain sister, who attended the crusade and received the word of God. She called me in the house for further prayers, after which she received her healing and she decided for me to be there and open a church and use her house (Interview with C. Smith 15 06 2005: 164).

The church initially began meeting on Thursdays as a fellowship with members attending other churches on a Sunday and the pastor preaching in other churches. As the ministry grew so did the demand for a Sunday service. However, a Sunday service would designate the ministry to be a church and would therefore require registration with the Government. One of his members then took him to a “man of God” in town who gave him “cover” thus requiring the church to take on the name Shammah.

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In considering the pastor as founder it is possible to again observe parallels with the structures of the informal economy particularly in respect of family ownership as a mark of the *jua kali* sector. The role of family and friends in providing the nucleus of a church was identified in my initial pilot study. In the pilot study it was suggested by one pastor that the strategy for church planting should be to begin with family, then friends and finally those who you intend reach (Smith 2003:7).

#### **2.1.5 Accountability.**

When new churches are established the question arises of who owns the ministry and to whom is the pastor is accountable. With mainline churches accountability is exercised through committees and structures, often with constitutional guidelines to determine where specific levels of accountability are required. Informal Pentecostal churches, where the pastor is the founding pastor, raise significant questions about both accountability and ownership.

In some instances accountability and ownership were very clear in that the Pastor was not accountable to anyone and was himself the owner of the church. When asked who owns the church pastor M replied “I am the one and Jesus Christ” (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 175). Pastor J of PMLM similarly reported having no one giving him oversight and when asked about ownership of the church replied “I am the founder of the ministry” (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 136). His congregation supported this view stating that he is the owner of the church (Interview with C. Smith 04 12 2005: 226). Similarly, pastor P of WCCM reported having no one to whom he is accountable. The church rents the room it meets in but the ministry itself is owned by the other pastor with whom pastor P started the ministry “I made him the owner while I am the pastor who is like the chairman” (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 151). Pastor H was also clear that he is the owner of the church. In terms of accountability he comes under the cover of Shammah Church. However, the cover offers little in the way of oversight. “They leave us as independent because I have shared with the man of God and he accommodates me and tells me to continue with the vision I have” (Interview with C. Smith 15 06 2005: 165).

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The interview with pastor M of JGC raised some of issues surrounding problems of ownership. He now at some level “owns” churches which have been taken over by another ministry. In what appeared as a kind of ecclesiastical coup he reported that another bishop had taken over the oversight of a church which he had planted and where he had appointed a pastor. In JGC he made it clear that this situation cannot be repeated because he has registered the church with the government in his own name.<sup>63</sup>

However, the desire to be independent of any structures of accountability does not preclude the desire for some form of spiritual mentorship and oversight. Pastor M was clear on his own need for a more informal system of oversight. “I have my personal needs like pastoral things, so I have a spiritual father whom I call to give me advice and to speak to me. When I feel I am low I book an appointment with him” (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 121).

GCC, operating on a congregational model, defined ownership of the church as belonging to the congregation. No form of hierarchical or episcopal accountability exists within a congregational system. Meanwhile, the presence and on going involvement of the evangelist who had ordained pastor D, suggested a desire for some form of mentorship if not expressed in terms of a structure or system of accountability.

This desire for a relational rather than a bureaucratic or hierarchical system of upward accountability was best expressed by pastor N of RWGC. When he and a group of members exited from their existing church in Kibera they did not want to begin a ministry alone and did not want to offend their former pastor by looking for alternative local oversight. Having formerly had contact with a pastor in Nakuru they asked him if he could help them establish another ministry in Kibera. The pastor invited them to attend a crusade in Nakuru and from their experience of ministry together the pastor helped the group appoint their leader, Pastor N, and an arrangement was made for him to provide

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<sup>63</sup> Technically a church cannot be registered with the Kenya Government as the property of an individual. However the pastor understood that his acquiring of the Certificate of Registration, with his name on the certificate made the church his own.

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oversight of the church. When asked why the members did not simply begin a ministry alone Pastor N pointed to the need for an external person to decide within the group who should become the leader. This need was complicated by having “members from other regions of Kenya”, suggesting that the ethnic mix within the church raised issues in selecting leadership which required external involvement.

In the current arrangement pastor David, the senior pastor in Nakuru, provides oversight as a “spiritual leader”, being present to offer advice and support. In return the church gives a tithe to the ministry, generally when the Nakuru pastor visits Kibera. Although this relationship has mechanisms of accountability and the legal provision of cover, the relationship is still significantly different to the formal structures of accountability offered in mainline churches. Although Pastor David offers oversight to Pastor N, Pastor N is not bound by that relationship and cannot be removed or transferred from his position as pastor. Similarly, although suggesting that it would not be easy, Pastor N acknowledged that the church, if it so wished, could look for alternative oversight and cover. Oversight in this relationship, therefore, seemed to be more about acknowledging spiritual leadership, and connecting the church to a wider network of relationships, than about creating formal structures of governance and accountability. In terms of ownership pastor N (Interview with C. Smith 24 05 2005: 93) was clear that it was the church members, and not himself who owned the church.

While some of the pastors were clear that they were the owners of the churches it was also clear that many had created organisational structures, which suggested that the church was not simply a ministry of an individual. Pastor M, although describing himself as the owner of the church, was quick to point out “they don’t see it as my church they see it as their church” (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 130). All the pastors had established committees to oversee the work of the church although in most instances these were appointed by the pastor. Group interviews with church members often revealed that many of the members held offices in the church. JGC has a church board and constitution which includes the appointment of elders for five years. However the



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pastor was clear that he appoints and can remove leaders “if they go contrary to the Word of God” (Interview with C. Smith 24 05 2005: 131).

#### **2.1.6 Perception of role.**

The question of the role of the pastor was asked both of the pastors themselves and of members of their congregations. Pastors tended to answer the question in fairly traditional ways. Pastor N (Interview with C. Smith 24 05 2005: 95) pointed to the need to pastor and teach the flock so that they can be righteous and dedicate themselves to the Lord. The role was largely directed towards members of the congregation. Typically pastors spoke of the need to preach and to look after the flock and care for them spiritually. Pastor J was an exception in pointing to a role for the pastor outside of ministering to his own flock commenting, “My major role is to see Kibera rooted in the gospel and also physical (sic)” (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 137).

Interviews with members of the congregation were perhaps more revealing in terms of the perceived role of the pastor. Paramount in many people’s minds was the approachability and availability of the pastor, particularly in terms of prayer in times of need. This role was particularly stressed by women and was used to demonstrate why attending a small church in Kibera, with a local pastor, was preferable to attending a large church outside the village.

A pastor, it is his duty to love people, to know how to talk to people, and to know how to approach people. Even if I have got a problem in my house he will try and find out what is happening to me ..... and also praying for us (Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005: 195).

Another group member similarly commented that a good pastor should, “pray and make sure the members were not having problems.” In GCC the perceived role of the pastor seemed to vary along gender lines. The women spoke strongly of the pastoral role and the responsibility to help members “His job is to visit sick people and help needy children. Only that.” (Interview with C. Smith 20 11 2005: 208). The men tended to identify the role of the pastor more as a leader, advisor, counsellor and “one who preaches the true

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Word from the Bible.” Others spoke simply of what they perceived as the biblical requirement of a pastor as being the husband of one wife, being saved, and being submissive and committed to the ministry (Interview with C. Smith 04 12 2005: 224).

These somewhat generic ascriptions of the pastor’s role appeared at odds with the pastor’s own perception of calling, where emphasis was placed less on pastoral care, teaching and leadership and more on manifestations of the Spirit. From observing the services, various roles could be ascribed to the pastor. Here the pastor was preacher, teacher, leader of worship, intercessor, caster out of demons, leader, master of ceremonies. What was particularly striking was the way in which, in the act of worship, most of these roles were shared. In three of the services I attended preaching was conducted by a visitor. In all the churches the opening worship was led from the congregation. Frequently services included both a preacher and a teacher and these roles were never performed by the same individual. Testimonies appeared to form part of the “liturgy” of the services, providing opportunities for members of the congregation to make a more personal, individual contribution the worship.

The role of the pastor in the ministry of prayer and exorcism was the one which showed the most diversity and perhaps points to one of the critical roles of the pastor as one who enables the congregation to access spiritual power. The role of the pastor as, in some sense, the gatekeeper to the divine, the one who opens the door for the work of Spirit in people’s, lives was evident in many of the services. Prayer and ministry inevitably followed the preaching. While in some churches this was introduced by the pastor, calling the congregation forward to be prayed for individually, in others members of the congregation simply surged to the front of the church kneeling, crying and weeping before God.

Pastors played very different roles on these occasions. In SGC people came forward at the invitation of the pastor. In RWGC almost half the congregation fell prostrate at the front of the church, weeping, but the pastor simply stood at the front praying and observing before finally praying for specific individuals in what I later discovered was an

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exorcism. When asked about his role and his discernment of God's presence within the worship he commented, "It is when I feel the power moving in me, it is released to the people and comes back to me. So I feel how it (sic) moves" (Interview with C. Smith 24 05 2005: 80). In one church the assistant pastor took a more active and dramatic role in the prayer ministry culminating in him walking into the congregation to somewhat violently conduct an exorcism which resulted in a woman being forcibly thrown to the ground. This "demonstration of power" appeared to me to be more an expression of power in gender relations than a demonstration of divine activity.

In virtually all the churches visited for Sunday worship time was dedicated for prayer ministry for members of the congregation. The exception this was PMLC. When questioned about this the pastor responded that "Today because we saw the Word of God was so powerful, I had just to pray for them." (Interview with C. Smith 05 06 2005: 86). I interpreted this to mean that the pastor's role of creating a space in which the activity of the Spirit could take place had been accomplished, even if not expressed in terms of an opportunity to come forward for prayer.

#### ***2.1.7 The informal pastor.***

One hypothesis was that informal churches are distinctive expressions of church emerging from their relationship with the structures of the informal economy and the social structures of the informal settlements. In looking at the experience of the pastors we see some indications of that. In particular, attention is drawn to the ease of entry in to the position of pastor, the small scale nature of the ministry, with ownership of the ministry being in the hands of the individual and often starting with members of his own family. Similarly the lack of regulation or any training requirement all reflect the nature of the informal economy.

The parallels, therefore, between establishing small businesses within the informal economy and establishing a church appear to be quite strong. A significant anomaly, however, is noted in the absence of women within church leadership when compared with the substantial role of women within the informal economy. This anomaly is

attributed to the more traditional nature of the informal settlements and their churches where prescribed gender roles are more pronounced.

## **2.2 The message.**

A group of visiting lecturers visited the Centre for Urban Mission in Kibera. Having walked through the community to the Centre one was heard to ask of the other, “How do you preach the gospel in a place like this?” Within the research it has been important to understand the message of the churches and how it relates, implicitly or explicitly to the realities of life in the community. What, from the perspective of the churches, is the Good News for those who live in Gatwikera and what are the influences that shape that message? Is it a message that identifies with the community, that is in some sense incarnational, rooted in and emerging from local realities? Are there common threads running through the churches, common themes or a common message shared by the churches and is that message in any sense distinct from or specific to the social realities of an informal settlement? The hypothesis that these churches emerge from the socio-economic realities of the informal settlements, engaging with people who are sojourners in the city but aspiring to be citizens, can be explored in the context of the message of the churches.

### **2.2.1 The name as the message.**

The message of the churches can be perceived from a variety of sources. The very names of the churches communicate a message to the community. Churches identified as Roho churches frequently used mother tongue languages in the title of the church or made specific reference to Africa in the naming of the church. Informal Pentecostal churches conversely were more likely to have references to “world” or “universal”. The use of mother tongue languages in church names implies a message affirming belonging to a particular tribe or community. Some church names included reference to place names “back home” which are either their place of origin or, as in Musanda<sup>64</sup> Holy Ghost Church, are place of symbolic significance. Words such as Yie (Luo – belief), Teko (Luo

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<sup>64</sup> Musanda was the site of a massacre in 1933

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- Strength,) Mowar (Luo-saved) Lyahuka (Maragoli - Be separate) within the title of the church also point to the particular ethno-linguistic roots of the church which are clearly identified.

Seven of the churches contacted through the questionnaire, including the five above, were categorised as Roho churches. All these churches were founded outside Nairobi. In as much as naming of churches is intended to communicate something to those inside and outside the church community, the names of these churches did not have the context of Kibera in mind when they were created. Nevertheless the use of the names within Kibera serves, if nothing else, to reinforce the continuity between the worshipping community and their rural origins. The names, like the flags that fly above many of the churches, are a reminder that even within the city deep bonds of continuity, “thickening fields” of social relationships (Simone 2004b:13), add to the viability of life in what may appear a disordered or disconnected environment. The names serve to anchor the church within its community origins, such that identity is expressed in terms of rural rootedness.

The Pentecostal churches tend to have names which communicate something of the saving power of God. Names found within Gatwikera included Revelation Miracle Centre, Praise Miracle Liberation Centre, Faith and Deliverance Church, Faith of the World Salvation Church, Holy Salvation Church. Some churches added superlatives such as the Brilliant Holy Gospel Church while others are suggestive of a ministry the church offers to the community, such as We Care Christian Ministries.

It is, however, possible to read too much into the names of Gatwikera’s churches. As will be seen, some churches depend on their cover from churches outside Kibera and so their names may be prescribed for them by the covering church. Also, as will be considered later, a number of the Pentecostal churches were founded outside Kibera and their names, while communicating something to Gatwikera, were not necessarily created with Kibera in mind. However, it may be observed that, unlike the AICs, the names of the Pentecostal churches lacked any reference to “up country” places or communities in Kenya. The Roho churches share an emphasis on the Spirit in their names but it is within the context

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or language of “home” that the Spirit appears most present and available. In the informal Pentecostal churches the references were not to such roots but more often to routes to the hope of access to divine power, healing, liberation, victory and holiness. The trajectory of the names points not to the context of cultural origin but to the hope of divine possibilities, of deliverance, salvation, liberation and miracles in the here and now.

#### ***2.2.2 Medium as the message.***

Preaching along with exorcism represented the most dramatic moments in the services. In every church the preacher was accompanied by an interpreter. In GTJ one individual served as interpreter for all speakers whilst in other churches it was common practice to change the interpreter, even mid way through a sermon. The interpreter’s role is at one level superfluous. Invariably the use one language, either Kiswahili or the mother tongue, would have ensured comprehension amongst the entire congregation. However the interpreter is as central to the preaching event as the preacher himself. He is the shadow of the preacher, moving in time to the words, emotions, and spirit of the preacher. Within the drama of the sermon the interpreter appears to shadow box with the preacher, moving together, moving apart, jumping, shouting, punching the air, adding to the drama of the event and reinforcing the message.

It is here that the oral tradition of the churches is most powerfully presented; where the sermon is not primarily a cerebral process but one which appeals to the heart, the emotion. It is a drama played out before the congregation often building towards an emotional and spiritual crescendo which paves the way for the ministry of prayer, healing and exorcism. As preacher and interpreter traverse the front of the church the message is interpreted, reinterpreted, enacted and elucidated before the congregation drawing them into the energy which moves between them. Preaching is an event, it is not merely the conveying of words and ideas, but an invitation to participate spiritually, mentally and emotionally in the emergent message. Its role appears to be, as Wendland observes, to get the congregations thoughts, attitudes and emotions engaged and involved with the sermon, the preacher and the scripture (in Mijoga 2001:126).

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The use of the interpreter can be understood as part of the Pentecostal tradition, an inheritance from the expatriate crusade speaker. This is a Pentecostal tradition and a practice not used by the mainline or the Roho Churches or by the more formal upper/middle income Pentecostal churches such as Nairobi Pentecostal Church.<sup>65</sup> The use of interpreters in the Gatwikera churches has an important symbolic dimension, particularly in relation to Kiswahili and English. These are the languages of the city not the language of “home”. English in particular is the language of the urban elite, it is the language of education, modernity and progress.<sup>66</sup>

The preacher who preaches in English is, by the very use of the language, defining the trajectory of the church towards the city.<sup>67</sup> This is the language of urban aspiration; the language of the white-collar job interview; the language of the suit and tie; the language of the city worker, the city preacher. It is a language of urban upward mobility; the language of the citizen of the city not the sojourner at the margins.<sup>68</sup> While the use of Kiswahili may be seen as a means of acknowledging and addressing linguistic diversity within the congregation, the use of English does not achieve that purpose, being, by and large a third language within the community.<sup>69</sup>

Almost universally the dress code for the Pentecostal preachers and for the interpreters was a suit and tie. One preacher commented that he was on one occasion not recognised by a member of his congregation because he was not wearing his suit (Smith 15 06 2005:65). The suit is both western and urban. It is the attire of the businessman not the

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<sup>65</sup> Interestingly, when the Anglican Church in Gatwikera holds “revival” meetings they too adopt the practice of using an interpreter. Here the usage would not seem to be driven by practical necessity but rather symbolically, again reflecting the tradition of the evangelistic crusade or “tent” meeting.

<sup>66</sup> All secondary and tertiary education is conducted in English in Kenya. Fluency in English is often an indication of secondary and higher formal education.

<sup>67</sup> All Saints, the Anglican Cathedral in the centre of the city has 13 Sunday services but only one is conducted in Kiswahili. The rest are in English, the language of the urban elite.

<sup>68</sup> At key rites of passage, events associated with “home”, particularly marriage and death, language serves a different symbolic function identifying the individual within the wider “home” community. At these points, irrespective one’s socio economic status or linguistic preference, mother tongue languages become the language of choice re-enforcing the strong linkages between the city dweller and the rural “home”. These significant life events reveal the dynamics of *nyumba*, *nyumbani* where even those who are to all intents and purposes citizens of the city acknowledge and celebrate their rootedness in *nyumbani*.

<sup>69</sup> St Jerome Anglican Church was the only church identified in the community which held a service entirely in English.

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farmer. It speaks of success and modernity and appears as an almost essential accessory for the Pentecostal preacher and often for the interpreter. The message of triumphing over adversity, of succeeding in the city, is in some sense incarnated in the suit which is the attire of the Pentecostal pastor from both the formal and informal areas of the city.

#### ***2.2.3 Defining the message.***

Within the research process pastors and church members were asked directly about the message the church seeks to communicate. Generally the pastors pointed towards a need for salvation, personal piety and some form of holy living. Pastor H stressed a theme of repentance “The message is the message of repentance, for people to repent and know God.” (Interview with C. Smith 15 06 2005:166) Some pastors spoke of a need to address the mixed messages coming out of churches which they perceived to be confusing Christians in Gatwikera.

There are some problems because many people are running here and there because of this gospel of miracles, but me I have decided to teach people to know Christ because if they know Christ, if people are taught to know God, they will be sustained in the Word of God” (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005: 137)

Interestingly this observation came from the Pastor of Praise Miracle Liberation Ministry.

In some instances pastors pointed to a need to preach in a manner that addresses some of the social problems of Gatwikera. However, the emphasis seemed to be on the need for personal piety in the fight against social ills. Pastor B spoke of prostitution and divorce but when asked about the message he preached in relation to these issues he responded, “Mostly, change your attitude, come to Christ to be saved.” (Interview with C. Smith 15 06 2005: 177). Pastor D was the only pastor to identify the issue of HIV AIDS as important to the church’s message. Again, however, the response was largely pietistic:

The disease that is AIDS ..... has killed many people, and it is only through Jesus that one can be saved, because when one is saved he (sic) is given the Holy Spirit as a seal and this Holy Spirit will teach one how to live



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a holy life without involving in such things which can bring AIDS. (Interview with C. Smith 21 06 2005:192)

Although the description which pastors gave of the message of their church seemed to reflect pietism and more traditional Pentecostal teaching, the sermons, teaching and testimonies revealed a broader picture. Each service generally had at least three speakers. These would be a person or persons to give a testimony, a teacher who prepared the way for the preacher and a preacher who prepared the way for the ministry of prayer, healing and deliverance. In spite of the different formats of spoken word and the variety of churches and speakers the messages communicated held much in common. Use of personal testimony by the preacher; an emphasis on God's power to overcome life's challenges, at times through miraculous intervention; frequent references to every day issues of life; the constant battle between the powers of Satan and the power of the Spirit in the life of the believer, and the call to personal repentance and holiness; these were evident in almost every church by one of the speakers. They will be looked at in more detail below.

#### ***2.2.4 The message and African culture and tradition.***

A woman stands before the congregation to give her testimony. She begins by declaring that she is from Siaya and that she is saved. She then continues "So God saved me and removed me from the bondage of the tribe. He has given me victory" ( Smith 08 05 2005: 47). There was no opportunity to ask what was meant by delivery from the bondage of the tribe, but the words are startling, suggesting the most profound ambivalence if not outright rejection of a cultural heritage. That she is rejecting her culture entirely seems highly doubtful, particularly given that she begins by affirming where she is from and the overwhelming majority of the congregation are from the same tribe. Her testimony is about her own economic empowerment, so perhaps her current experience in Gatwikera represents liberation from some aspect of her culture and background. Perhaps she has experienced some emancipation from culturally prescribed roles or some delivery from the bondage of poverty which she has associated with her cultural origins. Whatever the motive, the words are not questioned.

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This ambivalence towards tribal identity was expressed in other churches with phrases such as “It doesn’t matter the tribe you come from” (Smith 12 06 2005: 65) and “I am of the tribe of God.” (Smith 12 06 2005: 67). These sentiments could not be shared by Roho churches where ethnic identity is a gift to be celebrated and where the Spirit speaks in the language of the heart and the “home”. In general it was the churches which worshipped in Luo which seemed to face the greatest challenges in navigating the trajectories of rural and urban identity and the relationship between faith and culture. The heady concoction of traditional cosmology, meeting urban modernity in the context of Christian faith and tradition provided a confused picture, suggesting an uneasy process of integration of these three dynamics.

The following extract from a sermon suggests that pietism has perhaps influenced a rejection of traditional dancing by women given that there is an insinuation of promiscuity associated with it.

You know there are women who used to dance in public places. They could dance to welcome the district officer when he came. They could dance the Otenga (Luo traditional dance) style. And their in-laws knew what they could do when visitors came. Woman when you were born again, when you stopped working for the world, when you stopped dancing for the world. Praise the Lord (Smith 22 05 2005: 28).

The reference is interesting because it both acknowledges the rural; it is an example taken from rural life and experience which it is expected that the hearers can relate to, yet it suggests Christian faith, with its moral obligations, requires the leaving behind of these traditional practices. However, other cultural requirements, such as for a man to build his own house before marriage are, in another service, taken as normative (Smith 08 05 2005 50).

In other instances the rural home seems to be identified as a place in which one is more likely to encounter demonic influences associated with traditional practices. This is shown in the testimony below which begins at the rural “home”.

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There is a river at our home, where the devil made for us a place to stay. We used to go and stay there and we made the place well and he knew the place (Smith 15 05 2005:12).

The testimony goes on to speak of someone who although “saved” as a Christian still found himself oppressed and possessed by spirits which emanated from his rural home and ancestry and which follow him into his life in the city. In the story he is in Burmala on the way to Nairobi when he is called to join a fellowship where Christian brothers and sisters reveal to him the spirits at work in his life.

This devil was acting on me properly, when I discovered the spirits of my mum were hidden in me and working with me. I discovered the spirits of my dad were also hidden in me, they were also working in/with me. And I discovered the spirits that died in inheritance (wife inheritance) were also hidden in me (Smith 15 05 2005:14).

The speaker on the one hand is acknowledging the existence of ancestral spirits and the power they were still perceived to hold in his life even after his conversion. His world view is still firmly rooted within an African cosmology in which he lives in a world inhabited by the spirits of his ancestors who retain the power to influence his life.<sup>70</sup> However, the practice of wife inheritance is now interpreted, not only as a cultural practice, but as a manifestation or conduit of malign ancestral, spiritual forces. Later within the testimony he informs his hearers that all his brothers have *slept on their hands* (died) but he firmly rejects the cultural duty this places upon him in respect of the practice of wife inheritance.<sup>71</sup>

Within the testimony the faith journey is narrated as one who is moving from the rural to the urban. It is the story of one almost like Bunyan’s pilgrim who is seeking release from his burdens on the way to the city. Nearing the conclusion of his testimony he emerges as

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<sup>70</sup> Mbiti rejects the phrase ancestral spirits since it implies only the spirits of those who were once the ancestors of the living. He prefers to use the phrase the living dead or just “spirits” to describe the closest links people have with the spirit world. Mbiti 1969 P 83

<sup>71</sup> This expression, *slept on their hands*, is a euphemism often used in regard to death through HIV AIDS. The rejection of wife inheritance here may therefore be being expressed both in terms of a source of spiritual oppression and with a medical understanding how the HIV is transmitted.

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one now seeking to walk in the light in the city having been freed from the spirits that oppressed him from home.

And I say, God, if you are back in my life, put me at the level I used to be in and I get to an even a higher level.

Glory be to Jesus!

*Congregation Amen!*

And when I have gone beyond that level all the spirits of inheritance are removed from my life forever.

Glory be to Jesus!

Even in the past Sunday, I was shocked when the pastor came to me and he told me a certain word. He told me this way. “Since you came from up country, and you told us that you are saved we have seen a lot of differences from when we used to walk with you, but you were not saved

Glory be to Jesus

*Congregation Amen*

Therefore now is when you are saved, because we are now seeing what God is doing even when you walk, we are seeing how you walk” (Smith 15 05 2005:15).

However it would be wrong to read the story as a rejection or a demonising of the rural home, far from it. While recounting his deliverance from the spirits of inheritance, and the consequent obligations placed upon him by the death of his brothers, he interjects with a reference loosely based on Nehemiah 2:3

I will follow one other word, which Nehemiah cried when nobody was left in their home He cried very much when he remembered their home, and he said to the King. “Now leave me so that I go and build the house of my grandfathers first.” (Smith 15 05 2005:14).

Whatever the spiritual oppression he experienced at home, his vocation in the city will be to build the house of his grandfather *at home*. He has been released from spiritual bondage on his journey to the city, but here he will only be a sojourner preparing for the day when he can build a rural home.

A world view incorporating an African cosmology in respect of ancestral spirits was also manifest in WCCM, again a church which worshiped in Luo. The teacher, in a sermon loosely based on the man born blind in John 9, reflected on problems that can be with a

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person from birth. He alluded however to something which seemed more than a physical ailment or disability. “There is something someone is born with even if he/she he is a married person in their own house” (Smith 22 05 2005:31). The reference to the requirements of marriage and being in your own house suggest some kind of malign influence is at work but this is never specified. The implication would appear to be that this spirit is able to affect the person even in a “clean” relationship of being married in your own home, which might otherwise be expected not to block divine blessing or create an opening for an evil spirit to enter. The same theme is taken up by the preacher who follows on the words of the teacher. He is preparing the congregation for the prayer ministry and deals with matter in a more direct way.

It can be something that you were born with. It can be something that was passed down from your ancestors, something that is descending from the lineage of your family. Maybe it is something that was with your great grandparents. Even these wazungu<sup>72</sup>, they also have things that follow their backs from ancestral lineage (Smith 22 05 2005:31).

The “something you were born with” in this context is not engaging with modernity in respect of genetics, describing some form of hereditary disease. This is made clear as the sermon progresses. References are made to the Exodus and liberation from bondage, and to Christ who enters our lives to remove bondage, and to the Word that convicts the devil so that he departs. As the sermon concludes the church members rush to the front kneeling, crying, wailing out loud and the preacher and teacher move into a time of laying hands on individuals in prayer and exorcism.

Within the other churches, while exorcism was practised during some of the services, there were no overt references to ancestral spirits although occasional references to witchcraft. “When people are doing charms on you bless those who curse you” (Smith 29 05 2005:9). References to traditional African culture were limited and generally not positive. A pastor, speaking of the evils of idolatry, which he perceived in Hinduism, made a seamless connection, via Daniel Ch. 3, into ancestor veneration. He informs the congregation, “When you see your neighbour worshipping an idol do not be afraid.” In a

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<sup>72</sup> white people – a reference perhaps to my presence

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community such as Kibera, with no Indian presence at all, it is clear that Hinduism is no longer in mind. The preacher then refers to “A tribal man (man of his tribe) who told me he is serving his grandfather.”<sup>73</sup> The preacher comments that, “Even right now he will be under his grandfather.” and concludes that, “This is a way of serving an idol.” (Smith 29 05 2005:3).

Within this service cultural ties with both the living and the dead are put in question. One of the preachers testifies that he has just received word from “home” that his mother is very sick. His brother, a non-believer, urges him to return home but he replies, “Even if it is death, all of us will die, that one cannot stop me from going to church.” (Smith 29 05 2005:5).

The point here is not the callousness of the son but rather that his faith is perceived to release him in some way from familial obligations or create different values and priorities from those of the unsaved brother. We see, within these examples, attempts to chart the difficult waters of relating to traditional cultural practices and obligations in the city. The congregation are encouraged not to abide by the cultural obligations, either towards the grandfather who has died or towards the mother who is sick at home. Faith in the city creates new moral, ethical and religious obligations which either, in the case of the deceased grandfather, reject outright traditional practices, or which create new obligations, as in the sick mother, which in this specific instance, are taken to supersede acknowledged cultural bonds.

Within the process of engaging with traditional belief and cosmology the existence of, say, ancestral spirits or the power of charms is not questioned. This world view does not embrace modernity, far from it, but rather, from the position in the city, renegotiates traditional practices and requirements. There is not therefore a redrawing of world views, a paradigm shift into a world of urban modernity. Instead what appears to be offered is both the divine power and the moral obligation to be delivered from, and to defeat and to

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<sup>73</sup> The context suggests a reference to actions towards a deceased grandparent rather than practical support of a relative.

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resist, those forces which oppress the believer. The churches therefore provide tools to negotiate urban life in respect of traditional and rural obligations. While Roho churches may assist the urban migrant to fulfil traditional obligations while exiled in the city, the informal Pentecostal church may seek to provide the power to resist. There is in this sense no difference in the perception of reality, only in how that reality is to be dealt with in the city.

#### **2.2.5 Preaching between the worlds.**

Earlier I explored the role of churches in surfing the rural urban continuum, noting the deep connections between the settlements and the village and the role the church plays in relation to that connectivity. It was particularly notable that churches which worshipped in Luo made significant references to rural life at home alluding to places and activities which would be familiar to the hearers. Below is an extract from a sermon which illustrates both the way the preacher connects with everyday happenings in his community and the struggle to survive and re-enforces the relationship between life in Gatwikera and the community at “home”.

We have woman, she can smear Blue Band<sup>74</sup> because there is even one for 5 shillings.<sup>75</sup> An evil spirit of stupidity lives in her. When she smears her bread with the 5 shilling Blue Band, when she is full (satisfied) she forgets that she can go back and embrace God who can remove hunger from their home. When she is smearing the Blue Band for the fifth time the mum is languishing in somebody's shamba.<sup>76</sup> When she is applying the fifth time the rain is landing on the mum in Luo land. When she is applying the fifth time, she has no house at home. The devil has put her with one fashion that has just arrived which the husband bought her. The evil spirit which is a liar has put pride in her with this one clothe /dress and if she can go back and talk in front of God there is Jesus in the morning. There is a reason why he was stripped; there is a reason why he went to Calvary. Do you understand, can you be saved, can you depart from sinning? (Smith 15 05 2005:23)

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<sup>74</sup> Blue Band is a popular brand of margarine.

<sup>75</sup> Here the act of putting margarine on bread is considered a selfish extravagance. For KSh 5 Kibera residents can buy Blue Band *Kadogo* sachets if they cannot afford the tubs generally sold in the supermarkets.

<sup>76</sup> Kiswahili for a cultivated field or vegetable garden.

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What is the message, what is the sin which this stereotypical woman is said to have committed? Her crime appears to be innocuous, nonexistent. She is enjoying the luxury of margarine on her bread and delighting in the less than usual event of her husband buying her a dress. What we see here is urban sin. Bread and margarine are not rural products. Her sin lies, not in consuming fish and ugali, but in extravagance and consuming western/urban manufactured products. Similarly fashion is an urban phenomenon which she has responded to with pride. In the story the woman has betrayed two things that are central to her culture; she has not cared for her family and she has not affirmed her place in her community by building a home. Beneath her iron sheet roof she forgets the rain that falls on Luo land, she forgets where she belongs; she has taken pride in the city, rather than remitting the wealth of the city to where it belongs – home. In the sermon the story immediately follows a description of Nehemiah luxuriating in the palace at Susa and then remembering Jerusalem. The exile, should never forget home.

Of course there is a massive inconsistency in the story in respect of gender. It is the role of the husband to support the family and to build the home but this is Eve in the city, trading fig leaves for fashion, and, delighting in the forbidden or corrupting fruits of the city, she commits the cardinal sin, she forgets home. The sermon illustration serves to reinforce a central tenet; to forget family back home, to forget your community and to forget God, it is all of a piece. The trajectory is clear as the sermon points the hearers away from the lure of the city and towards their true home.

In contrast with the above, in JGC a testimony was given which gives almost the reverse picture of the city. People were brought forward to give their testimony and one brother spoke of how God had met him in the great challenge of the city, unemployment.

When I got my second house [wife], I was sacked.....I am a Kisii, living here in Kibera. I came to Nairobi in 1997. I started living with my uncle. He told me to find a house of my own, but I had no job. I went back home. I returned to Nairobi and I then got a job with a security company. I got a wife from Nairobi, but we couldn't agree. We then separated. At that time, I was not saved. I changed to a big security company. I then prayed. 'Father, give me a good wife that I can live with according to your ways.' I then got



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another wife. I prayed, and God blessed us with a child. Praise the Lord! [Amen] After that I was sacked, so I had to learn this work of building. That is the work that I am doing now. Praise the Lord! (Smith 12 06 2005: 71)

The Pastor then took the microphone and started praying for this man. “Father, I pray for this brother. You see how he has suffered. From now on he’s going to get a good job. Amen! Praise the Lord!” (Smith 12 06 2005: 71).

Any comparison between these two stories would again need to address the gender dynamics. The man initially takes a wife from Nairobi. Within the community there is frequently some measure of resistance to this in that the background of a Nairobi wife is not known or so carefully observed as a wife who is brought to Nairobi from “up country”. The reference to the first wife coming from Nairobi may imply that the second wife was acquired from “home”. The point is that to survive in the city a man needs both a wife, and God has blessed him with one and with a child, and a job. His need is to succeed in the city. The cause of his sacking is not explained but in the context of the story it seems to be understood as spiritual. The role of the pastor is to call down God’s blessing for a better job. There is no analysis of the reasoning behind the sacking and the taking of another wife is not questioned. This trajectory is more urban-facing; it is directed towards a future in the city where going home is failure and raising a family in the city is to succeed.

These varying trajectories towards and away from the city could be perceived at various points in sermons, teaching and testimonies. Those churches where preaching was conducted in Luo and translated into Swahili tended to draw illustrations and testimonies more frequently from rural life, serving to retain and call forth collective memories and attachments to “home”. Churches such as JGC and GCC, which appeared more overtly modern and western facing with their electrical equipment and keyboards, drew illustrations from more expanded horizons with references to “When I was in America” (Smith 12 06 2005:63) and experiences in Dar es Salaam. Illustrations were drawn from experiences of visiting a bank, “blessing” someone with the gift of a keyboard, and receiving material blessings such as a job in the office of the President (Smith 12 06:64). Here the illustrations seemed directed towards urban aspiration rather than rural

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obligation. However, the churches appeared to share a common quest as they engaged, almost universally, with the primary question of how to survive, how to overcome the trials and hardships in Kibera.

#### **2.2.6 The message as overcoming trials and the secret of success.**

We have noted that one explanation for the growth of Pentecostal churches in Africa is that they speak into the problems and tangible needs of African society (Anderson 1992:19). All the churches in the study had sermons which spoke directly about the problems of life in Kibera. What was evident was that God is the God who is involved in the very practical every day needs of people's lives. This was particularly born out in testimonies, generally by women, which indicated the ways in which God had blessed their businesses or provided physical healing. A woman with a mandazi business spoke of how her children now wear shoes when before they went barefoot (Smith 08 05 2005: 47). The God she worships is the God of the *jua kali* business who is directly concerned and involved in the crises and challenges of everyday life in Kibera.

Here testimony is to a faith that is expressed, less as confessional, than as experiential. Similar to Gifford's (2004:109) observations, testimony is not of repentance, redemption and salvation from sin and its consequences, but of divine provision. Significantly the blessings of divine provision are not expressed in terms of the gift or fruit of the Spirit but much more tangibly in the material lives of the believers who need jobs, a partner, children and shoes to put on their feet. Salvation becomes a practical experience where the work of the Spirit in the life of the believer is intimately connected with the daily struggle to survive and support the family.

In addressing those problems three distinct solutions seemed to be offered as providing the path to overcome tribulation and experience success. The first solution highlighted by all the churches was the need for a holy life. The equation that Holy living produces material blessing was largely unquestioned despite the economic context in which the message was preached.

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In JGC (Smith 12 06 2005) the two sermons focused on How to walk with God (from Gen 5: 21) and how to avoid being overcome by the “Flood” of disease, poverty and demonic oppression (from Gen 6). Both sermons ultimately pointed to the power of holy living, the blessedness of the righteous life that is rooted in Christ and the rejection of sins such as smoking, not sharing flour or salt with a neighbour, lying and stealing. Solutions to life’s problems of having no flour or, or being sick or effected by malaria or AIDS tended to be pietistic and individual. “When the flood comes, don’t ask yourself “Oh what can I do?” When you are saved you seal your ark, put a boundary on your salvation.” The congregation is reminded that, “When you live in Jesus everything you want he will do it.” (Smith 12 06 2005:69)

The second sermon at Gatwikera Church of Christ took up a similar theme of holiness using Heb 12 1-3 as the text. The exhortation was to walk with God and run the race. Running the race was largely interpreted as being an example of one who has left the path of sin. Those experiencing a lack of spiritual power in their lives are therefore experiencing the effects of sin. “God wants to heal somebody using your hands and you are ensnared in sin; God won’t give you power. He will stop using you and use a more faithful person.” The sermon concluded, “Set your eyes on Jesus, look unto Jesus, look unto Jesus. In all your tribulations, look unto Jesus, he is the author. In our faith there is no power, no victory, without Jesus.” (Smith 29 05 2005:10)

In RWGC the God who works miracles is again shown to be the God who blesses the holy and the righteous. A passage from Zachariah 3:1 was used where the priest stands before God in dirty clothes with an angel on one side and Satan on the other. The congregation was reminded that they need the clean clothes (of righteousness?). They need to rebuke Satan to remove their dirty clothes and rebuke Satan in respect of problems of having no job, no marriage or being unable to bear children. (Smith 08 05 2005:51) The transformation will come through the life of faith and holiness and from rebuking the one who acts as a stumbling block in the believer’s life, the devil.

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The understanding of holiness given within the sermons focused on personal piety and particularly in terms of avoiding drunkenness and sexual impurity. One preacher castigated the practice of women wearing short dresses and commented that “If she is a lady she puts on clothes which show off her salvation” (Smith 15 05 2005: 21)

The defining hermeneutic here lies in the Deuternomic covenant of blessings and curses. Deuteronomy 28 formed the sermon text for the preachers at SGC and the preacher indicated that this was a frequently used text because “We should tell them the truth.” The pastor later pointed to the central message of the service as being how we can receive God’s blessing when we listen to his voice and how failing to listen results in his curse (Interview by C. Smith 15 05 2005:54).

The second key to success was to draw on spiritual power. Preachers emphasized that in addressing life’s problems answers were not to be found in worldly solutions “Many think they will use a condom and they won’t die, but still the flood will carry you.”(Smith 16 05 2005:68). Nor are they to be found in “saviours” from outside the community. This was shown in one church in the ridicule of the disgraced evangelist Deya<sup>77</sup>, the politician in his Mercedes, or the stereotypical American Evangelist who will not set foot in Kibera.

When you hear a servant of God from America has come, a powerful man, a powerful word, how many times have you asked that person to come here and he says, ‘What will I do in that mud of Kibera?’ (Smith 12 06 2005:70)

Solutions it appears will not come from elsewhere, from politicians or from big name evangelists. “When a person is sick, he says, ‘I’ll go to Neno Evangelists and I’ll feel well.’ Know your miracle is here, your miracle is here in Kibera.” (Smith 12 06 2005:71).

In pointing to how one accesses this spiritual power to succeed two areas seemed to be identified. Firstly the preachers often presented themselves as people capable of accessing divine power. A number gave testimony of raising people from the dead and

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<sup>77</sup> Gilbert Deya is a well known Kenyan evangelist who became infamous for claiming to provide miracle babies to women unable to conceive. He is currently facing charges in the UK relating to alleged child abduction.

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overcoming demons as evidence of themselves as vessels of God's power. The implication seemed to be that the hearers could access to divine power by staying close to the "man of God". One preacher used the relationship of Elisha to Elijah to emphasis this point stating, "So you must receive by associating with the servant of God." (Smith 05 06 2005:43) The challenge for the pastors, however, is that their lives may not appear as living examples of their message, as people who have succeeded in life. One preacher, in acknowledging this was quick to point to the spiritual, if not temporal power which he possessed.

And you say son of Oluoko (Preacher) who is speaking has a lower education level than I. This son of Oluoko is not even richer than I am. Let me tell you that I am above you with what God's Word has given me today. I stand with the word that convicts evil spirits. I want to tell you I have no problem with the evil spirit but with the evil spirit that lives in you (Smith 15 05 2005:24).

The second way to accessing spiritual power was shown as being to hold fast to the testimony of the Bible.

Maybe you are in great trouble, maybe you have nothing to eat today, or maybe you are so sick, or you are greatly troubled, the Bible tells me that we should not fear. You should run to the King of Kings, to the deliverer. I don't know what you are passing through. When you are called today then it's today. Seek the Kingdom of God, the Bible tells me God will save you. (Smith 29 05 2005:5)

Within the preaching it was indicated that a life lived in faithfulness to God's Word would result in blessing. One preacher expressed it in this way,

If you want the house of good health then you must fear the Word and obey it ..... If you want riches then before you get it you must receive the Word of God.....When there is no Word of God in you there will be no miracle (Smith 05 06 2005:40).

He then drew on the book of Deuteronomy, although with no specific reference, before urging the people, "When trouble comes, when sickness comes, just apply the Word of

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God.” His sermon concluded with a prayer to release miracles within the congregation and to “cast out devils that may arise in the people” (Smith 05 06 2005:41).

In a sermon based on Luke 9 1-2 another preacher took the theme of how to be a dominator. Again the essence of the sermon is about how to have power victory and dominion in your life through the scriptures. This preacher then emphasized how ignorance of the scriptures can lead to a life devoid of divine power.

Many of us know the word dominator for Jesus gave us the power to heal and drive out demons. So Jesus said “Go and dominate.” Many of us we have been given the power to get our victory, but because of ignorance (of God’s Word) we don’t get what God wants us to get. We have authority, we can do everything we want to do (Smith 05 06 2005:42).

The third solution through which people were encouraged to receive God’s blessings was through giving. This was not necessarily expressed in some of the cruder forms of prosperity theology. Building on the parable of the sower one preacher firmly rejected prosperity teaching based on planting a seed, “A seed is not about money the seed is the Word of God” (Smith 05 06 2005:39) urging people to seek God’s Word first rather than financial miracles. However within the same sermon the relationship between poverty and giving was highlighted with poverty being expressed as a failure in giving and stewardship.

The reason why you are so poor, it is because we get our wages, we just enjoy ourselves, even sometimes we are budgeting, you see the budget is not enough....When you give to the Lord you are going to get wisdom on how to spend your money (Smith 05 06 2005:44).

This sermon finished with songs and an offering followed by prayers for a financial breakthrough in the lives of the congregants.

The sermon at WCCM drew heavily on Malachi 3:10 pointing towards the material blessings which can flow from giving.

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The Lord says try me to see if I will not bless you. I will open the windows of heaven” I tend to think that if the Lord opens the doors instead some women will go to live in Runda estate.<sup>78</sup>He says he will only open the windows because if he opens the doors we won’t have a place to store the wealth. Try me and see, I will remove diseases from you. There is no one who won’t get healed. Jehovah has stood to protect his wealth and assets. Praise Jesus! Amen. Now the woman who has faith and says I want that, removes the demon from within and the devil runs making a noise as it moves off and leaves for its home (Smith 22 05 2005:30).

When later questioned on the relationship between giving and receiving blessing the pastor was clear that the motive for giving includes the expectation of receiving. In WCCM the congregants were prayed for as they brought their tithes and offerings. He saw his role as an intermediary so that the believers may receive the things they desire having first given their offering. The pastor later commented that the person coming forward to give has something in their mind which they want God to do for them “You cant just bring an offering to God for nothing” (Interview with C. Smith 22 05 2005:75). This idea of giving will produce material blessing was most clearly articulated by GTJ. In the teaching prior to the offering the pastor made explicit the benefits accrued from tithing.

There is a time I said that tithes act as a security to your lives. God can’t let enemies attack you if you give your tithes. He won’t permit you to get sick, go to hospital and incur expenses if you give in your tithes (Smith 15 05 2005:25).

#### **2.2.7 Overcoming Satan.**

If the message of many churches was an encouragement to overcome tribulation and achieve power and victory by walking with Christ, in holiness and faithfulness to his Word, the source of the tribulation was frequently attributed to Satan, the Devil or demons and ancestral and evil spirits. Combined references to Satan, the devil, demons, and evil spirits within the sermons and recorded testimonies in one service were as follows.

Grace and Truth of Jesus 104 references

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<sup>78</sup> Runda is an up market estate on the outskirts of Nairobi.

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We Care Ministries 25 references  
Restoration of the Word Gospel Church 20 references  
Jesus Gospel Centre 15 references  
Praise Miracle Liberation Ministry 13 references  
Gatwikera Church of Christ 6 references.

It is perhaps unsurprising that the three churches with the highest levels of references to malign spiritual forces were also the churches which conducted exorcisms during the service. These three churches showed by far the most dramatic responses to the preaching, with much apparent show of pain and emotion as, mainly women, wept, knelt, cried out and at times beat the walls of the church. The two churches which worshipped in mother tongue languages had the highest number of references to the demonic while GCC as perhaps the most youthful and “modern” of the churches, had the least.

In WCCM, GTJ, and RWCM the individual was still subject to spiritual forces capable of possessing him or her even when a Christian. In GTJ the preacher interpreted Romans 7: 20 to indicate that even the apostle Paul experienced evil spirits within him after his conversion. In this church spirits were also specifically described as ancestral spirits suggesting a closer connection in thought forms to traditional African cosmology. In the other churches the role of the Satan was more as the tempter who must be resisted rather than the possessor who must be expelled. In PMLM however, the service began with an act of cleansing as the pastor prayed:

I come against Satan who may come into our midst, may he be defeated this morning. Satan you have no power, get out of the church of the Lord. Get out this morning. In the name of Jesus I pray (Smith 05 06 2005:38).

However, in all the churches spiritual forces appeared to lie at the root of human problems. In an interview, Pastor N described some of the social problems effecting Kibera, but when looking for reasons behind peoples’ behaviour he commented,

But to me I say it is the spirits that are affecting normal human beings because a person who has not accepted Jesus as Saviour, and not known him these spirits can affect him (Interview with C. Smith 24 05 2005:101).



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Here the role of the church and perhaps particularly the pastor comes to the fore as the one who provides access to the means to dispel those forces by the greater power of the Holy Spirit. In this context the devil at times serves as the one who, in defeat, authenticates the pastor as the man of God, the one who has access to divine power. In one testimony a visiting preacher describes how two children were brought to him who were being “strangled by devils.” He cast out the devils in Christ’s name and in the strength of that victory went on to raise to life a woman taken to be dead. (Smith 12 06 2005:70). As in most sermons, testimony by the preacher of God’s power at work in and through his ministry, in overcoming evil, forms part of the authentication of the Word and the preacher. It is in recounting the overcoming of demonic forces that the preacher demonstrates his calling.

References to holiness of living and staying saved become important not as acts of obedience but as lines of resistance to a spiritual oppressor and modes of access to divine power. In PMLM the pastor, in the same prayer, calls on God both to release a miracle and to “cast out devils in the hearts of your people” (Smith 05 06 2005:41). Releasing miracles and overcoming satanic power seem to be the two actions that lead the believer to those things most sought for and desired.

The emphasis on removing the demon as the route to material prosperity is seen in the sermon based on Micah 3:8, referred to earlier, where giving and exorcism are spoken of together within the sermon. This sermon was immediately followed by an exorcism and it is perhaps in the light of this teaching that the exorcism can be interpreted. Exorcism, in this context, is not simply the releasing of the individual from some form of demonic oppression which prevents them from following Christ. Rather, exorcism becomes the removal of barriers to material success and prosperity. In this sense the repeated action of exorcism in the life of the Christians begins to make sense. In somewhat simplistic terms exorcism removes the blockage to prosperity and giving opens the doors to receive. The formula of being and staying saved as a route to physical, spiritual and material benefit appeared to preclude any other possible explanation or analysis of events.

### ***2.2.8 The message and the Word.***

In churches with no formal liturgy and where preaching forms the central part of the act of worship it was noteworthy that the reading of the Bible did not play a significant part within the services. In one church I was only aware of one verse being read in the whole service. In another worshippers were instructed to shut their Bibles once the passage had been read, perhaps because they would be a distraction from listening to the preacher. The majority of preachers, and there were up to five in any one service, would either hold a closed Bible as they preached or put it down as soon as the passage had been read. In a style of preaching which involves much movement and use of the hands and, in churches without a reading desk, putting the Bible away in order to preach may seem a practical solution. However, it was also evident that in many churches the congregation did not carry Bibles and, in a community where literacy levels amongst women is well below the urban average, these were churches where literacy was not required for participation within the worship.

To say the Bible was not read is not to imply the Bible was not used. Sermons were littered with references to scripture either directly, by naming a passage, or indirectly through naming scriptural events. Critically we see the Bible as a story, or a repository of stories which make connections to the hearer's own stories. The Bible was not used as a source for dogmatic statements about the Christian faith but rather attention was given to its meaning and application for the hearers. The process, which Mijoga (2001:126) observes, of moving from concrete situations to generalized exhortation around a particular theme was evident in much of the preaching.

The preference for narrative texts, noted by Mijoga and Padwick, was observable in the preaching with virtually all the biblical references in the sermons being to biblical stories. Pastor J's teaching on the parable of the sower was the only sermon which gave any explanation of the passage used in any detail. Generally, scriptural verses were used to illustrate a point rather than the other way round. Usage was made of both the Old and the New Testament with perhaps a greater emphasis on the Old even where the opening text was from the New. At times scripture was used allegorically as in one obscure

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section of a sermon where David's five stones, in the face of Goliath, were connected to the five wounds on the body of Jesus (Smith 29 05 2005:9). Here, as Padwick observes (2003:299) scripture is open to be expanded and rhetorically exploited to fit the only context that the sermon seeks to address, the context of the hearers.

The Bible was clearly important as the following comments from a preacher at the start of a service indicate.

I want everybody to lift his/her Bible. *The pastor lifts his Bible.* This is your weapon, how can you go to the war without your weapon? Lift your Bible and say this after me. This is my Bible, I love my Bible, the Bible will help me to know the way, the Bible will show me the way, because it is there that is the truth, in this Bible, God help me. Amen (Smith 12 06 2005:62).

In preaching and interviews much stress was often placed on the centrality of the Word. However, this centrality appeared more in respect of the symbolic function of the Word rather than the specific textual content of scripture. The power of the Word was acknowledged, not as something intrinsic to the text, but more as something immanent and dynamic, a power released in the preaching. The Bible was held by some pastors as they preached, though not by all. I never observed any preacher using notes and in one church the decision as to who would preach that morning was to be discerned during the act of worship. One preacher commented "When you go to the front (to preach) you have nothing pre planned. You take a line from the teacher." (Interview with C. Smith 22 05 2005:76). The preparation therefore, was less the preparation of a text or a message but the preparation of the messenger.

In all the churches there were three ways in which the Word was presented. This was through testimony, teaching and preaching. Testimony could be understood as giving witness to the benefits of applying the Word in the life of the believer. The difference between teaching and preaching was one which I found hard to discern as an observer, although the pastors were clear that these were two different events serving different functions and were often conducted by different people. From their explanations, the teacher is the harbinger of the message, "counselling the heart" and preparing the faithful

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for the preaching. The preaching appeared the more dramatic event which inevitably led into some form of prayer and ministry. In all the churches the Word was something perceived to have a tangible power which required a response. This was evidenced in people falling to the floor and weeping, screaming, crying, standing with arms raised or, in one church, coming forward in a line at the front to be prayed for.

#### ***2.2.9 Message and context.***

In what sense does the message of these churches represent something genuinely contextual? How much can this be said to be a message from within Gatwikera to Gatwikera where God's Word is incarnated into the life and experience of the community?

It is important to begin by affirming those places in which, in as much as such things can be observed by the outsider, the church seemed to authentically speak into and out of the experience of the community. Most evidently this came in the role of the testimony. While some testimonies spoke of events outside the community even these traced a journey to where they now stood. Other bore witness to the faithfulness of God in events of everyday life. Critically, testimony came from the congregation. It provided points at which one could observe some form of theological discourse in which the voices of the laity, of the youth, and of women could be heard within the message of the church. I heard no woman preach or teach but a number gave testimony of God's grace in their lives.

Secondly, in the examples of preaching, the illustrations often touched tangible experiences of life in the community. The neighbour who won't lend you salt; the neighbour who asks for flour; the neighbour who disciplines your children; the husband who comes home drunk; the woman who uses her five shillings on a sachet of margarine; the fear of AIDS and malaria; the politician who will only visit Kibera when they build a road; all these and more reflected a gospel preached from within the story of the community.

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Thirdly, in the ministry of prayer we see the churches engaging with the life, experience and struggles of its members. Here, the message is indirect, unspoken. However the times of prayer ministry seemed, at least to an observer, to be a cathartic time which gave space to individuals, particularly women, to express, both individually and corporately, what often seemed to be a well of emotion and most specifically of pain. Such moments of extreme vulnerability are open to the possibility of abuse, and while some events within the services seemed to highlight that possibility, the overwhelming sense was of churches creating space for a freedom of expression which appeared to communicate a message that values the life and experience of the congregation. This emphasis on testimony and open times of prayer creates liturgical space for voices within the community. The small size of the churches means that there is space for this which is simply not available in the larger gathering.

Having noted the contextual nature of the preaching it can be observed that the context considered was always at the level of the local and the immediate and frequently at a personal and relational level. The historical context of the community or the structural, political or economic factors which give shape to Kibera were not considered. If the biblical text is read pre-critically, so, it may be observed, is the context. Political references only point to the arrogance of the individual but not to the political and economic systems at work within the city. This one dimensional, pre-critical reading of context has important implications for any consideration of the transformative impact that such churches may or may not represent.

#### ***2.2.10 Summarizing the message.***

It is difficult to generalize about the message of these churches. Some connections can be made with the wider Pentecostalism. Similar to Gifford's observations in Ghana, none of the testimonies spoken within the churches focused either on conversion or on repentance from sin. This is in stark contrast to, say, the testimonies of the East African Revival. The primary message of the churches was of God's ability to overcome tribulation through holy living and through overcoming the power of Satan. In this the preacher plays an important role as the one who has at some level experienced God's victory in his own

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life. However, no preacher spoke of their own wealth or success (a matter which would have proved difficult given their own position of living in Kibera). Rather preachers indicated the ways in which God had used them, particularly the healing or blessing of others. In this sense their role as mediator of divine blessing is preserved without having to illustrate that within their own lifestyle and experience. This may represent a way in which some of the aspects of prosperity preaching are taken, modified and adapted by the informal churches to fit the realities of their own context.

The message of overcoming Satan was not primarily presented as a means towards resisting temptation but rather as a means to releasing God's blessing in the life of the believer. Whilst the faith or prosperity gospel was no doubt influential to differing degrees within the churches it could not be described as the defining message. Anderson's (2000:116) observation that Pentecostal churches provide answers to worldly needs of sickness, poverty, unemployment, loneliness and evil spirits seemed much closer to what was observed within the churches. Similarly the use of the Bible had much in common with what Padwick (2003:299) observed in Roho Churches in Western Kenya. The Bible served as a repository of stories which connected with the stories of this community providing examples to the faithful both of the need for personal holiness and of the power of God to overcome Satan and release, largely material, blessings in the life of the believer. In respect of sheer time given to the scriptures it may also be observed that personal stories and testimonies, narratives of the faithful, formed a more significant element of time allocated to preaching than the meta narrative of the gospel.

Croatto's claim for the proprietorship of the poor in biblical interpretation and his observation, along with Mesters, of the poor reading the Bible as a liberating text seems somewhat idealised in this context. Certainly Croatto is right in asserting that a reading of the text is a creation of meaning. However my impression is that he seeks to then steer the direction of that meaning towards a theology of liberation as if this is an empirical fact rather than an ideological position. For my own part I would have celebrated a sense of liberation theology being expressed within the churches but found no hint of it. Where the Exodus and liberation were specifically referred to it was as a prelude to the ministry

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of exorcism and the liberation of the individual from the oppression of the Devil rather than liberation of the poor from socio-economic and political oppression. The message was not about liberating or transforming society but more often of surviving and progressing within it, removing demonic obstacles along the way.

### ***2.3 The Members.***

Within the research questions I posed the question of who attends informal Pentecostal churches and why. What is it that draws people into these churches rather than in to the other churches which exist both within and outside the community of Gatwikera? I also sought to understand something of the values expressed by the churches and whether these churches constituted a distinctly urban expression of church, as I had proposed, or something rather different. These two themes will now be explored.

#### ***2.3.1 Who are the members?***

As noted in chapter two Pentecostal churches are observed to flourish in contexts of rapid social change and social disorganization, particularly in contexts of urban crisis. If this is correct then the emergence of Pentecostal churches within the informal settlements is far from surprising. However the question remains as to whether the informal Pentecostal churches are any different in their membership to other churches within the community. Do these churches attract a particular type of person; is there anything distinctive in the membership of these churches?

The first thing to note is that there were distinct differences between the membership of the churches considered in the research. At one end of the spectrum churches such as WCCM and GTJ appeared to have predominantly female congregations with a significant representation of older women. In these two churches the women almost uniformly covered their heads. In WCCM only three men were present and they were all involved in preaching. These churches worshiped primarily in Luo. At the other end of spectrum JGC and GCC had much younger congregations, with greater fluency in English and in JGC many of the men in the congregation were wearing suits. However even in GCC one

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young woman gave her testimony Luo to be translated into Swahili and important parts of the notices were given in Luo, presumably to ensure comprehension.

When contrasted with mainline churches some comparisons can be made. Both the Anglican and Presbyterian pastors pointed to the presence of structure owners within their congregations. Meanwhile the informal Pentecostal churches could not record having any structure owners within their congregations. This could suggest a relatively higher socio-economic standing among the mainline churches. However as Kikuyus form the majority of Christian structure owners in Gatwikera the figures could reflect ethnic rather than socio-economic factors in the churches. The fact that the Anglican Church had a service which was conducted entirely in English would suggest levels of access to formal school within this congregation which were not equalled by other churches in the research.

In terms of how long church members had resided in Kibera it was evident that these churches appeared to have a high number of recent migrants. In GCC group nobody had been in Kibera over six years and a number had arrived within the previous twelve months. This may reflect the fact that it was a young congregation and therefore reflected the age at which migrants generally come to the city. In the other churches members recorded having spent more significant lengths of time in Kibera although here the membership was generally older. However in all the Pentecostal churches there was a marked absence of those who were born or had been brought up within the community.

An accusation levelled against Roho and, to some degree, Pentecostal churches in the informal settlements is that their membership is essentially established on ethnic grounds. To some extent this was borne out in the research where churches made extensive use of mother tongue languages, particularly Luo. However it must be noted that the Presbyterian Church was entirely Kikuyu and the Anglican Church, reflecting Gatwikera generally, was predominantly Luo. Perhaps more importantly the suggestion that Pentecostal and Roho churches are established along lines of ethnicity ignores the relationship between language and socio-economic status. For those who have not had



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the benefits of significant formal schooling the mother tongue may be the only language of genuine proficiency. For the women who have migrated to Kibera and possibly married before completing their primary education the mother tongue language may be the only language in which they can worship with any fluency. Pastor W. commented,

One problem, language matters a lot. There are so many people which are not learned if they go there (to churches outside Kibera) they miss. Sometimes they use English, they don't understand what is going on (Interview with C. Smith 10 12 2006:284).

Some Roho Churches will celebrate tribal identity and may have an ideological or theological commitment to mother tongue languages as evidenced even by church names. The Pentecostal churches identified themselves in English even where no English whatsoever was used within the service. My impression was that use of mother tongue language was to some degree a pragmatic decision, as reflected by pastor W, rather than an ideological one, and one which reflected the socio-economic status of the congregation.

#### ***2.3.2 Members as sojourners in the city?***

My initial argument was that Spiritual churches are churches of the exile in Kibera while informal Pentecostal churches lean more towards being churches of sojourners in the city. While I did not sense an ideological commitment to ethnic identity within the informal Pentecostal churches there was a strong sense in some of the churches that this was a community in exile in the city, deeply conscious of their roots lying elsewhere. Whilst the majority of Nairobi may identify in some way with a rural home what was distinctive in two of the churches was the way in which the place of reference was so often a rural community. This was particularly true in WCCM and GTJ.

In both these churches testimonies and preaching drew heavily on rural images and illustrations. In WCCM one lady who gave her testimony was then repeatedly referred to as daughter of Ugenya as if to confirm her true identity (Smith 05 06 2005:30). In this aspect, by my categorization, these churches appear closer to the Roho rather than

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Pentecostal churches. The church which seemed the most urban facing was GCC yet even within this congregation one member alluded to Joseph's bones being buried in Egypt as being justification for the notion that everyone must return to a rural home (Interview with C. Smith 20 11 2005: 224). Here the city was perhaps Egypt the place of enslavement and hard labour, but not the place of home.

While the notion of having a rural home is by no means unique to these churches, what is distinctive is the way in which they incarnate the transient nature of life in Kibera. This is seen in the way many of those interviewed held dual membership of churches, belonging to another church at their rural home. A member of PMLM described how she came to faith through the ministry of the pastor in Kibera but still belonged to a Seventh Day Adventist Church at home (Interview with C. Smith 04 12 2005:240). Similarly members of churches in the study were found to belong to Anglican, Seventh Day Adventist, Roman Catholic, African Divine Church and a variety of Pentecostal churches at "home" whilst belonging to an informal Pentecostal church in Kibera. The pastors appeared uniformly unconcerned about their members belonging to other churches at home.

Given that most of these churches would not have a branch at the rural home of their members it is unsurprising that they have dual membership. However the fact that many belonged to churches that were theologically and ecclesologically quite distinct from their home church is interesting. Also, given that most of the churches which they come from have a branch in Kibera, sometimes only a few hundred yards from the church they attend, one needs to ask what attracts the members to their churches.

#### ***2.3.3 Reasons for joining the church.***

The reasons given for attending particular churches tended to fall into three areas. Firstly, a number of interviewees spoke of having received some kind of spiritual blessing through the preaching and ministry of the pastor, generally in the area of healing or salvation. This was particularly true for member of RWGC where four members described how they formerly belonged to the Roman Catholic Church but had come to this church having "got saved" by the preaching or through having received healing

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(Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005:213). Similarly pastor W reported that people joined his church, “because they can hear testimony that someone came and got healed when he was sick. Then another person can come if he has got the same problem.” (Interview with C Smith 10 12 2006:281 )

However salvation and miracles were not the only reason. The capacity of the church to be close to its members was clearly an important issue. A member of one church spoke of attending the Manmin Church on the other side of Nairobi but left it, “because they were looking down upon the common man.” (Interview with C. Smith 04 12 2005:241). In this instance the person also spoke of receiving a vision which called her to change churches. Another person spoke of how the big churches have no love for the community and are only interested in those with money. This view was echoed by others, “in big churches people don’t care” (Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005:214) and reflected views given in the pilot study that smaller local churches offered a ministry which placed higher value on informal settlement residents than other churches (C. Smith 2003:6).

This dimension of caring was clearly important with one pastor indicating that people generally looked for churches where their spiritual and material needs could be met and where their burdens could be carried if they were in a difficult situation. One member noted how member’s needs can be considered in the small church and how their presence can be acknowledged and affirmed by the pastor. She commented,

But here there is love. The pastor has the time to acknowledge all the members of the church. He has time to visit them door to door but the big church with the bishop has no time to acknowledge the members of the church. (Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005:214).

This role of the church in caring for her members is borne out in some degree in the way in which finances are used. As indicated earlier few pastors receive any significant material support from their churches and some were contributors to it. In most churches part of their finances were often redistributed among members in times of need. Pastor W commented,

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You have so many people which don't have a job so you have to help them with something small you get from the church; you have to give to them to support them financially (Interview with C. Smith 10 12 2006:284).

He went on to explain how church finances were generally redistributed among members who had problems at any given time. Pastor P (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005:160) similarly noted that the church uses its finances to support members with financial difficulties. This was echoed by pastor D. who indicated that church members can sometimes go without food unless assisted by the church (Interview with C. Smith 21 06 2005:203).

In this way the church functioned to enable members to survive financial shocks and vulnerabilities within household economies. What the churches offer at this point is some form of security, the knowledge that help in some small way, is available at points of financial crisis. In an earlier discussion of calling I looked at the two axis of corporate and communal reflected in the mainline and Roho churches respectively and then identified a greater individualism within the informal Pentecostal churches. Their usage of finances both supports and contradicts that finding. At one level the use of finances within churches reflects a communalism found in Roho churches. In one Roho church I attended a large section of the service was spent collecting a levy from every member which was set aside for members' needs particularly in respect of funeral expenses. In the Pentecostal churches there appeared to be no formal process of regular contributions to be redistributed among members. However, the pastors appeared to have a strong sense of their individual responsibility to provide for members from church funds in times of need. In this way the pastor appeared to function as a patron of the church members providing for their needs from his church.

A further dimension which congregants appeared to value was the size of the church which afforded members the opportunity to exercise a role or ministry. One member spoke of how he had a role in preaching and teaching in the church which he might not receive in a larger congregation (Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005:214). Similarly in

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almost every church I was introduced to committee members, leaders of ministries, interpreters, part time preachers and teachers such that it was difficult to imagine that one could belong to the church without having some fairly significant role within it.

The final area in which members appeared to value the church was in the way in which it enabled members to pursue a more holy life within Kibera. There was some criticism of larger and more anonymous churches with their short services. One person spoke of how church members can observe each other's lives to ensure that there is no hypocrisy (Interview with C. Smith 04 12 2005: 284).

The notion of holiness within the churches was different to that expressed by the mainline churches particularly in respect of marriage. In the mainline churches a church wedding is an essential qualification for church leadership. This was not the case within these churches. In some instances the pastor had not been married in church or conducted marriages for his members. Most churches indicated that membership was based on being "born again" and a church wedding was in no sense a pre-requisite for church membership or leadership.

#### ***2.4 The ministry.***

As noted earlier, with the exception of the Anglicans and the Presbyterians only three of the churches contacted through the questionnaire were not related to another ministry. This was an unexpected outcome of the research. Those churches which I categorized as Roho churches were all founded outside Nairobi and have their headquarters away from the city. The Pentecostal churches tell a different story and fall into five basic categories.

- a. Autonomous churches where this is their only congregation.
- b. Churches planted in Kibera from up country.
- c. Churches planted in Kibera from within Nairobi.
- d. Churches planted in Kibera which have established churches up country.
- e. Churches established in Kibera which have attached themselves for legal and or mentoring purposes to churches outside Kibera and in some instances outside Nairobi.

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The urban historian Lewis Mumford (in Massey, Allen and Pile 1999:16) described cities as a geographic plexus. He was referring to the way cities operate through a complex set of relationships which involve movements and flows of such things as goods, capital, people, ideas, culture and information. These networks can be static and formal; a rail link or motor way; or they can be dynamic. Pentecostal churches, I have argued, operate in the settlements by surfing the rural urban continuum, they operate within the flows and, distinct from Roho churches, these flows tend to be multidirectional rather than specifically emanating from the rural. Secondly, unlike mainline churches these patterns of connectivity are not bureaucratic or formalised. They do not exist within constitutions and legally formulated agreements. These lines of connectivity are relational, vulnerable and unpredictable.

All the churches that were examined in more depth within the research had relationships with other churches. However the nature of these relationships was frequently far from being clear. The most obvious relationships were where a pastor had established a church in Kibera and then established other churches in rural areas either near his own rural home or that of his members. This was the case with Pastor J of PMLC who after establishing a ministry in Kibera in 2001 established two other churches in Western Kenya near to his rural home. His headquarters are in Kibera In a similar way WCCM was started in Kibera in 1998 with the founding pastor subsequently returning to Oyugis where he has planted two further churches in the same denomination (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005:158).

In other instances pastors established churches and then sought “cover” from another ministry. Occasionally this cover appeared to be very peripheral, as a flag of convenience, rather than a genuine relationship offering practical oversight. Shammah Gospel Church was established in Gatwikera by pastor H in 2004. Having established a church in Kibera he needed legal cover and so, on the advice of one of his members, went to Shammah Church in Nairobi and arranged for the church to be attached to that ministry. (Interview with C. Smith 15 06 2005:165) However the nature of the

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relationship remained unclear other than that it contains no financial requirement until the church develops in size and strength.

RWGC chose to come under wider Restoration of the World Church which has its headquarters in Nakuru. However this body is itself licensed as an affiliate of Light of World. The legal relationship therefore appears somewhat tenuous. However, as indicated earlier the relational ties to the Nakuru pastor are strong and in this relationship the church also pays a tithe to the Nakuru Pastor who visits every month (Interview with C. Smith 24 05 2005:93).

In one instance the initiative to plant a church in Kibera appeared to come from outside Nairobi. Grace and Truth of Jesus Church was started in 1999 in Nakuru and then established in Kibera under pastor S in 2001. The only other church which originated outside Kibera was the Pentecostal Prayer Centre which was founded by pastor B in Kangemi, Nairobi in 1983, when he left the PAG. The church has three churches in Kibera and five in rural Kenya. However, the headquarters of the denomination is now in Kibera (Interview with C. Smith 15 06 2005:181).

GCC appeared to be in a different category to the others being technically part of a wider denomination. The Gatwikera branch was founded in 2000 by 3 members. However, although the church is registered under Kenya Churches of Christ the pastor was ordained a few months before the interview by an evangelist from another denomination in rural Kenya who had



Jesus Creeping Evangelistic Centre: One of the ministries which emerged after the church enumeration.

been assisting the church in an evangelistic crusade. Conversation with church members also indicated that they belonged to a variety of different churches in their rural home including the Anglican and Roman Catholic Church.

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One observation which can be made of most of the churches is that they were established fairly recently. The vulnerability of such churches is evident from the fact that even in the limited period of the field research a number of churches opened and closed within a few months.

#### **2.4.1 Roho and Pentecostal.**

In the chapter on key concepts the case was made for drawing distinctions between Roho and Spiritual churches and Pentecostal churches. These distinctions were offered as models, ideal types, accepting that overlap and some blurring of categories would exist. While still holding that view the research indicated a higher degree of overlap than initially anticipated. Within the categories I identified some churches which were easily identifiable as Roho churches. These churches were part of much larger, generally older, denominations which were founded in rural areas. Leaders and congregational members generally wore robes, worship was in the mother tongue, and church names were frequently, at least in part, in a mother tongue languages. Gatwikera Layahuka Church of East Africa, Teko Injili, Roho Mtakatifu, Holy Gospel Injili Takatifu would be clear examples in this category.

Conversations with pastors also confirmed the sense of a distinction between the two types of churches. The Archbishop of Teko Injili Church was clear that his was a Roho Church, which has split from Musanda Holy Ghost Church, a Roho Church in Western Kenya. He argued that the distinction between Roho and Pentecostal churches is that Roho churches can discern the Spirit in a way that Pentecostals can not (Interview with C. Smith 29 05 2005:11). He was clear that his church was not Pentecostal. Similarly, RWGC members were clear that Roho churches were distinct from Pentecostal churches. Much of the discussion centred round prophecy and the use of symbols. One church member commented that Roho churches “prophecy to you” suggesting that they use *gonganisa* (insight) to set a person against their neighbour. Roho churches were described as doing “funny things”. In particular worship styles, use of traditional drums



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and the practice of healing were criticised. One member commented that in Pentecostal churches if a person is sick they are simply prayed for you where as in a Roho churches illness is perceived more in terms of spiritual possession (Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005:220).

One prime example of the blurring of distinctions between Roho and Pentecostal churches was the Pentecostal Prayer Centre. The founding bishop is from the Pentecostal Assemblies of God, a Canadian founded Pentecostal church initially established in Western Kenya. The assistant pastor is from the African Divine Church, a Roho church which broke away from the PAG. Church members and leaders all wore robes, a practice common to many Roho churches, and a flag was used to identify the church. The bishop was happy for the church to be called either Roho or Pentecostal on the basis that there was no difference between the two.

My presupposition had been that in terms of trajectories, Pentecostal churches were on a distinctly city facing trajectory; they were churches seeking, aspiring to be urban, whilst the trajectory of Roho churches was more retrospective, looking back towards a rural home. If informal settlements are liminal communities then at a generalised level I understood Pentecostal churches to be on the brink of the city looking in and Roho churches to be looking back. However, observing Pentecostal churches as surfing the rural urban continuum, the direction of flow is less clear. Some of the churches in the research appeared more connected to rural tradition in worship styles than would be experienced in city churches.

A typical example of this is gender division in worship. In a rural environment it is normal for men and women to sit separately on opposite sides of church. This is a tradition reflecting traditional gender divisions within society but is not practiced in city churches. In the survey almost two thirds stated that seating in churches was divided by gender. Even where policy did not dictate gender division in seating, as in GCC, experience of worshipping in the church suggested it remained in practice. Interestingly this is also the case in the ACK church but is practiced in few other Anglican churches

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across the city. Another example would be the practice of women wearing head covering which was universally true in WCC and GTJ but was also evidenced to lesser degree in other churches.

In worship it was also observable that while some Pentecostal churches used Kiswahili choruses of the kind that are sung all across the city, other churches such as WCCM and GTJ both made extensive use of traditional Luo songs with traditional rhythms but with no use of instruments. The substantial use of mother tongue languages in worship ran to some degree contrary to my initial categorising of Roho and Pentecostal where I had anticipated much greater use of Kiswahili and English.

In the use of symbolic items it was noticeable that a number of the churches had no visible religious symbols. While GTJ and WCC were the churches closest to Roho churches in terms of appearing more deeply connected into African tradition and cosmology, they had no material religious symbols other than the large Bible carried by the preacher. The same was true of RWGC. It appeared nothing had been done to the physical environment to indicate the change of usage from church to class room. This is markedly different to Roho Churches where religious symbols are generally highly significant.

In the churches which had the fulltime use of a building there were visible signs to indicate that this was a church. JGC was the most elaborate with a stage, red backdrop curtain, reading desk and plants in Kasuku<sup>79</sup> pots along the front mirroring, in a particularly Kibera way, some of the televised Pentecostal services. PMLM also had a preaching desk and a banner across the front and SGC had a cloth covered table. GCC simply had a clock and a notice board with the church name on it. None of these churches had a cross as a Christian symbol. Perhaps the most potent symbol in three of the churches was the microphone. None of the churches were remotely large enough to require amplification and none adopted the practice, seen elsewhere in the community, of placing the speakers outside the church for the “benefit” of the wider community. The

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<sup>79</sup> Solid cooking fat sold in large white tubs

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microphone symbolically speaks of progress, technology, being modern, of a church which is progressing in a direction which is distinctly urban.

From these observations it would appear that the distinction between Roho and Pentecostal can be seen in a spectrum of difference. GTJ and WCCM were churches which seemed to be strongly traditional in the language and imagery of the preaching and in the style of worship. They were churches which retained strong references to Luo culture and tradition, which in my understanding reflected a more Roho spirituality. Their cosmology, which overtly acknowledges a belief in the presence and power of ancestral spirits, also suggested churches which were closer than I anticipated to a traditional African world view. However the complete absence of religious symbols suggested something quite distinct from Roho Spirituality. At the other end of the spectrum churches such as JGC and GCC were more evidently churches which in style appeared to look towards the west and western Pentecostalism (Padwick 2003:8).

#### ***2.4.2 Ministry and liturgy.***

Whilst none of the churches used any form of written liturgy there was an obvious liturgical structure to the churches. Most followed a similar pattern of an extended time of singing and praying at the start of the service, followed by testimony, teaching and preaching which led into some form prayer ministry. The service usually concluded with the offertory and brief notices. I saw no evidence of the use of any set forms of prayer including the Lord's Prayer.

In my visits to the churches I never witnessed a communion service although a number of churches claimed to have communion once a month. WCCM held communion three times a year, generally connected with an adult baptism service. Churches were generally quite vague in terms of describing liturgical practices. This was particularly the case in terms of weddings and funerals. A number of pastors had not performed a wedding ceremony. Partly this reflected the fact that church weddings were not a priority within the churches and the pastors were generally not licensed to conduct them. The problem

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of obtaining a license was highlighted by pastor D of GCC. He described how the church has held only one “marriage” service and in this they simply prayed for the couple and they then started their life together. He noted that currently no one in his church is legally married commenting,

Yes most of us are married but you know the problem of legalising marriage it is too expensive and you know the church is still very young and for us to go and get these documents is not all that easy so it is due to that that we have not legalised marriages (Interview with C. Smith 21 06 2005:196).

Here in we see the informal church in operation providing in some respects an informal alternative to a legal wedding which was considered outside the budget of the church and the congregation.

In respect of funerals few pastors had any experience of conducting funerals and the implication of conversations was that funeral services were largely conducted “at home” by the local church. One exception was pastor M, who indicated that most of the funerals he conducts take place at Langata cemetery (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005:125). This is not a common practice in Nairobi and the pastor indicated that it was generally financial constraints on the family which led to that decision. His actions however contrast sharply with Teko Injili, a Roho church, where it was evident that the church perceived itself to have an absolute requirement to ensure a member is buried “at home” (Smith: 12 06 2005:58).

In general the churches appeared to place little emphasis on more ritualised forms of liturgy or in marking rites of passage. Within the rural urban continuum it appeared that rites of passage, where marked, were more likely to be celebrated at home than within Kibera.

### **2.4.3 A contextual ministry.**

One of the questions posed in the research is whether these churches have emerged out of the socio-economic realities of the informal settlements or whether they are simply an offshoot of global Christianity manifest in an informal context. Such a question cannot be approached as an either/or question. We have already noted that whilst the informal settlements form distinct parts of the city they cannot be seen in isolation from wider global influences. If these churches are expressions of life and faith in Kibera then, like the community itself, they will be shaped by a variety of forces and influences from both the specifics of the local context and outside it. However, if the typology of informal Pentecostal churches is to be sustained it must be shown that these churches are in some way distinct from Pentecostal and Charismatic movements within the city.

Shorter and Njiru's (2001:39) argument appears to support the view that what is happening in the informal settlements is simply an offshoot, a small scale imitation of the ministry of larger Charismatic churches operating elsewhere in the city. Their argument is largely based on the idea that the message of the city church is replicated in the informal settlements. I found some support for this view in the research. When asked about influences on their message most pastors pointed to well known international TV evangelists and preachers such as Maurice Cerrullo, T.L. Osborn, Reinhard Bonnke, Benny Hinn and Myles Monroe. In terms of African influences pastor Martin Sunna from Uganda was mentioned and a pastor Owuor who appears on KBC radio. One pastor was clear about the way in which media and high profile preachers directly affect his message.

Sometimes I watch Family TV the TBN. I see pastors preaching and I also attend conferences and seminars..... that begins to make me prepare better on the message (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005:123).

However, as seen in an earlier section, there is much which distinguishes the message of these churches from the preaching outside of Kibera. The way in which churches specifically address the problems of living in Kibera; the engagement with the rural home; the cynicism of the preacher who will not enter Kibera; the reluctance or inability

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of the preacher to identify himself as one who has prospered,; the use of mother tongue languages; the drawing of stories and experiences of life within the informal settlements, all point to a message which is not a straight transposition of the message of the international evangelist or the city centre preacher. Similarly the model of ministry that is small and decidedly local and which has a strong emphasis on the pastoral needs of the congregation distinguishes these churches from the larger Charismatic and Pentecostal churches in the formal areas of the city.

Contextualisation, however, is not only to be observed in the message. The very informal nature of the churches, their presence in the heart of the community with leadership drawn from within the community and their emergence reflecting the nature of the informal economy, all point towards a contextualisation of the church within the realities of an informal settlement.

#### ***2.4.4 An urban church.***

In revisiting the question of whether informal Pentecostal churches constitute specifically urban churches the concern is how the churches understand their own environment and whether they understand themselves to be urban churches. The question of whether the churches are urban or not emerged from within the interview processes both with pastors and church members and was not originally planned into the research.

As may be expected churches and individuals differed in their understanding of what it means to be an urban church. Members of PMLM were almost equally divided on whether their church was urban or not. One man commented. "It is a rural church because the church is situated in a rural area because Kibera is like a rural area." (Interview with C. Smith 04 12 2005:239).

A woman in the group highlighted the apparent contradiction of being in Nairobi but not being in the city. "We are in the city but not in the city, not as a person living in the city

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because the life here you cannot differentiate it from that one we left at home.” (Interview with C. Smith 04 12 2005:238).

For many in the group Kibera appeared as a liminal environment a place neither urban nor rural, a place of transition. Pastor N noted Kibera was not really in the city and described it as just like another village or, interestingly, like another “home” within the city (Interview with C. Smith 24 05 2005: 109). One church member commented,

Kibera is in between the city and the village because what is in Kibera cannot be compared with what is in the city. Even the life in Kibera is low. It is a village within the city (Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005:239).

Yet even to describe it as a threshold, a place of transition would be inaccurate. It is, more realistically, a place of hoped for transition between the village and the city. That sense of hope in making the transition from rural to urban was expressed by one member of the group when he commented:

Kibera is in the city because we came to the city. Then the life we are living here it is more lower than if we live at home but we have to live here because we know what we came for. I am still living in hope (Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005:239).

This view that Kibera is a village within the city, a place for those who have yet to make the transition to urban life was articulated by one member of the group who stated emphatically. “I am a village person. I have not yet moved to the city I am still in the village.” (Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005:240). This view was supported by others in the group. He went on to suggest that there is kind of progress from village to informal settlement to city. He commented “I think that I might be (implication here of become) a city person but before I become a city person I have to be a village (person) first. I have to start from the ground.” It was later acknowledged that few make the final transition into city life. (Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005:240).

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Within the group discussion it was clear that it was the aspiration of many within the church to become a city church. City appeared as a word associated with success and with structures that are permanent. One of the men in the group pointed to how prestige in the village at “home” is associated with the idea of living in the city and being part of a church in the city. “I think it should be city because when we say we are in Nairobi we don’t say we are in the slum, we say we are in the city. So this church is in the city, it is where we are based” (Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005:239).

In exploring what it meant to be a city church two key factors emerged. Firstly in the eyes of the group a city church is a permanent visible structure. Group members commented that when communicating with people “at home” they could not invite them to their church because “this one cannot be seen”. They



None of the churches possessed a permanent structure

noted that they could not afford a permanent structure that would make their building be seen as a city church. “We want it to be a city church. It is because most of us cannot afford to make it to be seen as a city church” (Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005:239).

The other factor of being a city rather than a village church focussed on who attends. Village churches tend to be very local attracting a localised congregation. Urban or city churches have the capacity to be more eclectic drawing membership from a variety of walks of life and from diverse areas of the city. One woman noted:

The difference between a city church and a village church is that the church of the village is only attended by people from the village but a city church has people coming from estates or from the city centre to come to the church  
Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005:239).

Views of members of GCC contrasted quite sharply with those of PMLM. Members of this church, which had a very youthful congregation and leadership, were convinced that



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they were an urban or city church. In GCC the members defined village churches as those churches which worshipped in the mother tongue as opposed to using Kiswahili and English. Secondly they saw village churches being those that held on to cultural traditions. One group member commenting about Churches of Christ in the rural areas noted “Most of them will use the vernacular and mixing traditions with it.” (Interview with C. Smith 20 11 2005:234)

Secondly, they understood city churches and by implication themselves, to be modern churches. The church had a PA system and keyboard and clearly perceived these to be marks of being an urban church. “You know right now people normally use instruments but in traditional churches or in slum churches you will find that most people only use fingers instead of other instruments.” A similar comment was made in respect of preaching. The pastor spoke of a modern style of preaching the gospel stating that “the gospel does not change but styles of presenting the gospel changes.” (Interview with C. Smith 20 11 2005:234)

Finally the church perceived itself to be a city church in the sense that it was ethnically mixed. It was stated in the group that “If it is not a church of a community, whereby it can be mixed with sectarianism, then it becomes a city church (made up of) different communities.” (Interview with C. Smith 20 11 2005:234)

GCC clearly perceived itself, particularly in the minds of the pastor and leadership, to be a church on specific trajectory that was essentially urban. This trajectory was away from what was perceived to be traditional, local and mono-cultural towards something to be understood as modern, multi ethnic and eclectic. The definition of what constituted traditional appeared to be twofold referring both to traditional African cultural practices, “mixing traditions” and worshiping styles that did not embrace modern, electrified instruments for use in preaching and worship.

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This sense of being on a trajectory away from what was perceived to be traditional and towards the modern was reflected in a lesser way by members of RWGC. The church meets in a school where four other Pentecostal churches, all with predominantly Luo congregations, meet at the same time. In response to the question of why group members attended this church rather than the other three the perception of the group was that the other churches represented something more traditional. One woman commented “I think the difference is that in this church we are saved but the rules are not all that strict compared to the others where a lady cannot walk without a scarf.” (Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005:215) Similarly, the pastor suggested that the other churches are not only traditional in respect of church tradition but also in terms of African tradition. “We find them going with some doctrines that are just from their own culture” (Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005:215). RWGC was the only church within the school which conducted its services in Kiswahili and English rather than in Luo and Kiswahili.

Can we then speak of the churches in Gatwikera as urban churches in terms of how they themselves understand their context and ministry? Some credence could be given to the concept that these are liminal churches in a liminal environment. The informal settlements exist on the very threshold of the city. They are in the city, in the sense of being within the geographic boundaries, but not in the city in the sense of being an officially recognised and serviced area of the metropolitan environment. Their position is also perceived to be liminal the sense of being a place to transition into the city.

Interviewees in the churches commented that Kibera was, “A stepping stone, so that after some days I may find a better life” (Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005:210). One woman commented, “When I came in Kibera I hoped for prosperity and after prosperity I wished to move away from Kibera.”(Interview with C. Smith 04 12 2005:238). However the prospect of not finding a better life, of the whole of life being lived out in Kibera was also acknowledged. “Some stay and they grow old and then they die and are carried to their home. That is not our hope” (Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005:211). It is this reality, the lack of transition, the possibility of leaving Kibera only to return to a rural home, either at retirement or death, that raises question of whether liminality best

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captures the reality of Kibera and her churches. Hope declares Kibera to be liminal, a threshold to life in the city; reality for thousands suggests otherwise.

While Bodewas (2005:107) identified youth within Kibera who no longer have any rural attachment, this research found that all those interviewed had a rural home although some claimed to know others within the community who didn't. In conversations with church members no one would describe Kibera as home.

Informal settlements have a particular place within this rural urban continuum. Physically they manifest the rural in the urban. They are villages in the city whose physical structures are more representative of a rural than an urban environment. The building is of rural construction, but the satellite dish and the adverts for live coverage of the English Premier League football tell another story. What is distinctive about the settlements is that people are still at some level living out a rural life in the city, they are people with a toe hold in the city but no security or effective stake in it. In this context retaining rural ties is not simply a matter of cultural and emotional attachment, it is a matter of survival. If the toehold in the city is lost there is no other place to go. It may be helpful therefore not to look at informal settlements as either rural or urban as if some threshold can be crossed at which point a person or community can be declared urban. Instead it may be helpful to consider the trajectory of communities and churches. What is the direction of movement?

What is observed therefore is not churches which are either definably urban or rural but rather churches which appear to be on varying trajectories. These trajectories either lean, in varying degrees, towards what may be perceived as the modernity and cosmopolitan dynamic of urban life or in the direction of the values to traditions and culture of a rural home. The informal Pentecostal churches essentially surf the rural urban continuum. The question needs to focus on direction, about what constitutes the centre of gravity, the overall direction of movement.

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If informal settlements are in this sense liminal communities standing at the threshold of the city, what is the function of the church at the threshold or the margin? Is it to act as a place of refuge, a place that preserves and nurtures the deep connections with rural communities, that enables people in this sense to live in the city but remain in the village? Is it a place for those whose sense of identity is almost entirely located in a rural home? Conversely, is the church a place that promotes survival, that enables people live and survive in the complexity and economic uncertainty of a life at the margins? In this sense the church, while preserving rural connections, serves to enable people to survive in the settlement, by making its home at the margins, embodying the contradictions and uncertainties of life at the margins.

A third position would be the church whose sense of direction is towards the city. In this sense the church serves neither to retain what has been, nor as a vehicle for survival in what is, but as a place of transition to what may be. The church is urban facing, perhaps at times dismissive of the traditions of the past, culturally and ecclesiastically, and consciously embracing urban life.

#### ***2.4.5 Churches in flux.***

The churches considered in this research can be defined neither as rural nor as city churches. They are churches in flux in a community that is in flux. They appear as churches at the margins of the city which lean in varying degrees towards both a rural home and towards aspirations of urban life as city people. My assumption was that Pentecostal churches would overwhelmingly lean towards the city providing some level mechanisms to engage with the city rather than providing a refuge from the city, which is how Roho churches, in their historical rejection of modernity, have been understood. But in the liminal zone of the informal settlements charting the flow between the rural and the urban and gauging where trajectories are leading suggests a less clear picture where distinctions between churches are not so pronounced and where survival would appear to require a leaning in more than one direction.

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Often churches had visiting preachers from outside Kibera. In GTJ two of the preachers were members but one seemed to be transient between Kibera and a rural home and the pastor was away speaking at another church. This was not simply an unfortunate series of co-incidences in the research process. The pastor of RWGC reported having visiting preachers twice a month, often from rural areas. The movement of pastors between rural and urban churches, generally reflecting the interconnectedness of the urban and the rural, serves only to demonstrate that this interconnectedness is the context into which and out of which the Word is spoken and meaning created.

From the outset I sought to demonstrate that these informal Pentecostal churches formed a distinct expression of urban church life as churches “born” in the city. From observing the message of the churches it appears some moderation of that claim is required. The churches do express something distinct from within their own context and speak in a way which certainly engages with life within their community. However, it may be that the term urban or “born in the city” is not the one which best describes them. It is the experience both of being within a rural urban continuum and the social liminality of informal settlements which best defines these churches rather than the phrase urban. Some, such as GCC seemed consciously urban facing whilst at the other end of the spectrum WCCM appeared more as a church of urban exiles, aware that their true home lay elsewhere, with a more rural trajectory which was closer to that generally identified with Roho churches.

#### ***2.5 Training.***

As indicated earlier the vast majority of churches in Gatwikera, contacted through the questionnaire, were led by pastors with no experience of training. Lack of access to theological education and training reflects the general lack of access to tertiary education experienced by the wider communities of the informal settlements. It reflects the economics of education in which residents of the informal settlement areas are largely priced out of sections of the education market. In this respect the Church, in its widest sense, through its provision of theological institutions, reflects the economic divisions of the city.

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The fact that most pastors were engaged in some form of economic activity in order to sustain themselves and their families indicates that for most pastors, training represents something potentially desirable but practically unobtainable. Although Pentecostal churches have in some contexts shown a resistance or suspicion of theological education I saw no evidence of this in the research. Pastors recognized training as a need and expressed a hope that one day they would receive training. One pastor identified young pastors with no training as being a major weakness within his church. However the patterns of church planting exhibited by the churches further promoted the growth of churches which have no formally trained leadership. The pastors who were planting other churches, either in Kibera or, more frequently, in the rural areas were acting as the trainers of the pastors they appointed to cover those churches. Pastor P noted how he would use his leave period as an opportunity to visit churches he had planted and train the local pastor (Interview with C. Smith 07 06 2005:161).

In exploring how pastors perceived their training needs there was an emphasis on acquiring biblical knowledge and on practical skills such as preaching, church planting and ministry in relation to HIV and AIDS. Pastors favoured a variety of ways in which training might be made available from weekday training through to evenings and weekends or one day a week. Residential training was never raised as a potential model.

The implications in respect of training will be looked at more closely in terms of a missiological response to the churches.

#### ***2.6 Formal churches in an informal context.***

The research focuses on the ministry of informal churches. However, one hypothesis points to a failure of formal churches to provide a significant presence in the informal settlements through a failure to engage with the nature of the context. This now needs to be considered.

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Within the research I considered the ministry of two of the mainline protest churches, the Anglican Church, where I am a member, and the Presbyterian Church. These were chosen primarily because they were the most clear representatives of mainline Protestantism within the community and represent churches which have a significant presence elsewhere in the city. Given the nature of the thesis my primary concern was with how a formal church relates to an informal context and how this influences the ministry and mission of the church.

#### ***2.6.1 Background to the churches.***

St Jerome Anglican church was established in Gatwikera in the 1980s as a daughter church of Holy Trinity ACK and became a parish in 2003. It was founded by a group of Anglicans who wanted a more local church than Holy Trinity Kibera. In an issue that will be reflected upon later. One of the founding members indicated that the church was founded by a group of local Anglicans who had all had a church wedding.<sup>80</sup> To date the church has about 120 adult members and about a further 110 youths and children.

As with the pattern of much Anglican involvement in the informal settlements, Holy Trinity church, the original parent church of St Jerome, is a large, stone built, permanent structure sited on the outer edge of the settlement. This pattern of establishing permanent buildings outside the settlement to serve the residents within is mirrored by other mainline denominations. The Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran and African Inland Church are all situated in a similar area and appear to work on a principle that the congregants will leave the settlement in order to attend worship. The model is based on the notion that people will retain denominational allegiance, and reflects the church planting strategies of mainline churches which tend to be planned around purchasing land and building a permanent structure.

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Information gathered by students from St Pauls' United theological college while on an urban contextual ministry course at the Centre for Urban Mission and recorded in a college assignment.

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Holy Trinity and its Presbyterian counterpart both have significant and well utilised car park areas for their Sunday congregation and both draw membership from the permanent estates which surround Kibera. Holy Trinity Church has a congregation of about 600 while the Presbyterian attracts about 400 worshippers on a given Sunday. Similarly both churches have daughter churches inside Kibera. The Presbyterian Church has one church in Silanga, at the South Eastern end of Kibera, with one hundred and twenty members and another in Gatwikera which currently has six members.<sup>81</sup> Holy Trinity has one daughter church inside Kibera, in Makina, and has planted other churches in a formal estate near Kibera and in an upmarket residential area some two kilometres from Kibera.

A significant difference between St Jerome and the Presbyterian church in Gatwikera is that in 2003, following complaints by the congregation of St Jerome members that they were ignored by the mother church, Holy Trinity, the church was made into an Anglican parish losing its status as a daughter church and gaining its own vicar. It continues as the only Anglican parish church situated within the informal area of Kibera. The parish now has three daughter churches in different villages in Kibera. Meanwhile the Presbyterian Church in Gatwikera remains a daughter church.

#### ***2.6.2 Formal churches and urban elites.***

The church attendance statistics alone would suggest that the Presbyterian and the Anglican Church have a problem in attracting or maintaining membership within an informal settlement. It is evident that their strength lies in the formal areas of the city. A 2002 strategy paper for the Anglican Diocese of Nairobi showed that while the diocese had 93 congregations in 45 parishes it had only one parish church in an informal settlement (ACK 2003: 14).

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<sup>81</sup> The Presbyterian Church in Gatwikera possibly represents a more extreme case of the issues facing mainline churches in the informal settlements. The historic roots of the Presbyterian church, through the comity arrangements of the early European missionaries, are in the Kikuyu community. Within the city it remains a largely Kikuyu church. In 2003 riots erupted in Kibera between structure owners and tenants on the issues of rent reduction and non payment. Many of the Kikuyu, who were largely structure owners fled some areas of Kibera at this time. The Presbyterian Church in Gatwikera, which was almost entirely Kikuyu lost most of its membership overnight.



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In interviews with the respective pastors both pointed to their denominational history as presenting an obstacle for mission within these contexts. The Anglican pastor expressed this in terms of an historic elitism within Anglicanism going back to its missionary foundations. Commenting on his perception of how the denomination viewed ministry in the slums he stated:

The attitude has been that the informal settlement people are poor, they are marginalised. Traditionally the Anglican Church has been the church of the elites and middle class people. So generally I think this ..... has weakened the relationship of the Anglican Church and slum people (Interview with C. Smith 05 12 2005:275).

To say that the Anglican Church is a church of the elites may not be true of wider Anglican ministry in respect of the church's presence among rural communities. However within the economic divisions of the city it appears that the Anglican Church tends to gravitate towards an identification with elite and middle income communities. The Anglican pastor was clear on this in relation to the structures of the church. "The structures are designed for the affluent and the middle classes." (Interview with C. Smith 05 12 2005:276). This notion that Anglicanism generally has a historical bias towards urban elites is perhaps reinforced in the 1986 Church of England report, *Faith in the City*.

Historical origins leaning towards elitism were also expressed by the Presbyterian pastor but in different terms. He pointed out that although his main church was four hundred meters from the informal settlement he has no church members from that area. His entire congregation is drawn from the surrounding (permanent) estates. Part of his justification for this was that the Silanga church, situated over a kilometre away, "takes care of the slum area." (Interview with C. Smith 08 12 2005:49). The pastor identified the problem facing the Presbyterian Church as being rooted in an earlier culture of *jitegemea* (self reliance). When asked whether the Presbyterian model of ministry fitted in Kibera he commented:

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It really does not fit as far as Gatwikera is concerned. It is more capitalist. We use the phrase *jitegemea*, self reliance, where all work towards self reliance. It can fit well here (*in the main church outside Kibera*) because people are well up. All they want from you is to give them Holy Communion and preach to them on Sunday, but if I were in the village (referring to Kibera) they would need more than that (Interview with C. Smith 08 12 2005:258).

The issue of elitism is not only reflected in the difference between membership levels inside and outside the informal settlement. It is also reflected in the social status of members vis a vis members of other churches. The Presbyterian pastor noted that all his members in Gatwikera were structure owners. Because of age only one was in employment. Within the Anglican church 10% of the congregation were thought to be landlords and the church itself operates as a landlord renting out houses in the community. Within the informal Pentecostal churches no landlords were identified. While St Jerome is not in any respect an affluent church it may be that its membership is drawn from an economically stronger section of the community.

#### **2.6.3 Formal and informal: the clash of structures.**

One of the issues I explored with the pastors was the way in which their church structures related to the non formal structures of the slum. Did the churches fit and if not what was the nature of the relationship between the church structures and the informal structures of life in Kibera? Both pastors pointed to problems of relating the organisational structure of a mainline church to the informal structure of an informal settlement. The Presbyterian pastor commented “Our kind of (church) government is more comfortable where there are no challenges like the ones we are experiencing here” (Interview with C. Smith 08 12 2005:261). In a general sense the Anglican pastor found the denominational structures had been helpful to him personally but not to the ministry of the church in Kibera. Following his earlier train of thought on class issues he commented that the structures are designed for the affluent and the middle class. He went on to suggest that while Anglicans in Kibera accept church structures as a historical legacy they also find themselves alienated from them.

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I think that they perceive the structures traditionally. They accept them because they are the structures Anglicans have grown up with so it is something that is in them. It is only when the structures work against their general life that they feel the structures have not understood the dynamics of the slum (Interview with C. Smith 05 12 2005:276).

When pressed on this area of not understanding the dynamics of the slum he pointed to two areas. Firstly that lay Anglicans from Kibera have no representation at the level of diocesan structures. He argued that in the area of decision making his parishioners were not given a voice. The second area was in respect of how membership is determined. In this the critical area was that voting members living in a relationship must have had a church wedding.

The Anglican Church requires that a leader to be elected must have wed. The experience I found on the ground was that most of the people who had been elected into leadership had not wed..... I think even now as we continue doing elections still many will be elected who have not wed. Now if I go rigidly, if I say as an Anglican vicar we have to go by the constitution, we will lose people (Interview with C. Smith 05 12 2005:277).

In this instance the practice of the Vicar was to allow the church community to subvert the constitutional structures of the denomination in order to accommodate into leadership, gifted and able individuals who were disqualified on the basis of marital status. He then worked with them in encouraging a church wedding. In this sense he allowed a temporary subversion of the structures but with a view to normalising the situation over time. The Presbyterian pastor faced the same issue but responded differently, seeing any relaxation of the rules in this area as resulting in an unacceptable loss of credibility in the eyes of God and the Church. He noted that “You have to stick to that one, you cannot bend” (Interview with C. Smith 08 12 2005:260). He was acutely aware of potential leaders who did not meet the criterion laid down by the church but felt that this was a rule which could not be broken. “The moment you start doing that you lose everything”. This is interesting observation given that a church marriage is not specific scriptural requirement. It also contrasts significantly with the views of some of the Pentecostal pastors, with one

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commenting that he had never conducted a marriage nor had he himself solemnised his marriage in church.<sup>82</sup>

In both the formal churches reception of Holy Communion is dependant upon having a marriage solemnised in church thus real membership of the faith community is based on this criterion. This may reflect the embourgeoisment of mainline Protestant Christianity in Kenya with its emphasis on personal morality, defined in a very particular way, which excludes those who have faithfully married according to traditional custom, but in a manner not recognised by the church.<sup>83</sup> A similar practice is noted in relation to funerals. The Anglican pastor noted that funeral services are only offered to those whose moral life is considered upright. Again the issue of marriage emerged here, “Most preferably this person must be legally married in church. That will be a crucial point to consider if his (sic) funeral service is to be done in church.” (Interview with C. Smith 05 12 2005:268).

For the above reason both pastors struggled with issues of leadership in the sense of developing lay leaders from within Kibera. The Presbyterian pastor noted that leadership is a real problem. The Anglican had made leadership development a conscious strategy for his own ministry in the community. The Presbyterian however was faced with bending age requirements at his church in Silanga, Kibera, in order to allow over age elders to be elected because of a perceived paucity of local leadership among the younger generation. He commented that sometimes you have to bring an over age leader into leadership because of pressure from the congregation. “Sometimes you have to consider the place you are talking about (Kibera). Even to breed (sic) a leader is very difficult.” (Interview with C. Smith 08 12 2005:260). This perception of a paucity of leadership material in Kibera was not reflected in the comments of the informal pastors who frequently had half their congregations in positions of leadership.

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<sup>82</sup> This comment came from the Pastor of PMLC when addressing students from St Paul’s United Theological College, Limuru.

<sup>83</sup> Interestingly Hollenweger notes a similar bourgeois captivity of Pentecostal elites which distances them from their poorer brothers and sisters. He describes the need for Pentecostalism to be delivered from its “Babylonian bourgeois captivity.” (1994: 208)

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A further dimension of leadership problems was presented by the Presbyterian pastor whose churches in Kibera are essentially daughter churches of the more affluent mother church outside the settlement. In issues of leadership it was difficult to ensure representation from the informal settlement churches when potential leaders in the mother church “received more exposure” and are seen to be materially contributing more significantly to the parish as a whole. The comment made by an informal pastor in the pilot study (Smith 2003:6) that our (small) offerings are valued in the informal churches was evidenced in this statement. Both pastors were clearly of the opinion that their own church structures were simply not designed to cater for the context in which they worked. The difference between the two was the Anglican pastor was more inclined to allow the community to subvert the formal structures, at least temporarily, as a means to creating a more inclusive leadership. He also noted this subversion in organisational processes such as published rotas for leading and preaching at services which gave an impression of bureaucratic forms of organisation but in reality ‘people have their own way of managing it.’ (Interview with C. Smith 05 12 2005:264).

The Anglican pastor had also permitted structures to develop within the church which followed more local patterns of relationship. This was evidenced in the creation of cell groups where members began to bring their wider network of relatives into the group. He commented that “Cell groups work not just because they are Christians but because they find common unity of relationships” (Interview with C. Smith 05 12 2005:278). He described how the church began to organise itself around familial and community lines which reflected relationship patterns within the community rather than the organised geographic patterns he had intended to initiate. In this sense the *jua kali* model of family ownership was being allowed to express itself within the life of the church. Whatever the merits or demerits of the particular instance of allowing groups to develop in this way, the ability of the current pastor to allow the context to subvert the structure may hold a greater prospect of opportunity for formal churches to engage in informal contexts. The question is how far they can travel down that road without betraying some of the values which they may consider central to their sense of calling and identity as Anglicans.

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This sense of denominational identity was something quite significant for the formal churches. Here it is important to note the way in which the formal churches relate to the informal context in respect worship styles. For both the Presbyterian Church the Anglican Church the churches in the informal settlement were more traditional and closer in style to a village church than their counterparts elsewhere in the city. In the Anglican Church the practice of chanting part of the liturgy is something still retained in Gatwikera even though this would seldom be experienced in the formal areas of the city. This liturgical conservatism may reflect a desire to hold onto identity in a context where identity is under threat and reflects the tensions between rural and urban identity, between the informal settlement as rural or urban. It may also reflect a desire to retain the perceived status of being mainline church.

In a context where new churches are constantly emerging the need to hold more firmly to those things which demonstrate a distinctive and historic identity; belonging to something which holds significant currency outside the context of the informal settlement, becomes important. The Anglican Church, with the creation of an English service, had found a means to creating a much less traditional approach to worship which attracted young people but its appeal remains for those sections of Kibera who can comfortably function in English and therefore at some level reinforces the elite status of the church.

#### ***2.6.4 Formal churches and the transformation of informal settlement communities.***

One of the underlying questions within the research relates to the missiological task of the churches to bring about transformation within informal settlement communities. At this stage I want to consider how the pastors of the formal churches understood their role in relation to the transformation of Gatwikera.

The Anglican pastor perceived the Anglican Church to have a specific role in terms of community reconciliation. “We strongly believe that one of the mandates we have in Kibera as an Anglican Church is to be a mediator in the midst of people.” (Interview with

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C. Smith 05 12 2005:273). The Presbyterian pastor similarly pointed to the central message of the church being one of reconciliation in the midst of tribal and political tensions. The notion that the central message of the church was one of reconciliation within a divided community contrasted somewhat with the Pentecostal pastors who stressed repentance, personal piety and holy living. None of the Pentecostal churches appeared to see themselves as being in a position to offer mediation to the community. It is possible that the mainline church pastors saw themselves as in a position to offer mediation through being in some respects distinct from the community, thus offering an outside perspective. This would contrast with the Pentecostal pastors who being more indigenous to the community may have found such critical distance to be difficult.

The Anglican pastor's analysis of the problems facing Kibera were largely political, "The political system in Kenya has largely played a role in not restructuring systems that will allow Kenyans to play an equal part in nation building." (Interview with C. Smith 05 12 2005:273). This view was broadly shared by the Presbyterian pastor who pointed towards a need to bring reconciliation between landlords and tenants. In contrast with the Pentecostal pastors, both pastors saw political roots to the causes of many of Kibera's problems and felt the church had a responsibility to engage in the political arena in order to combat issues facing the community. Both churches also identified the Roman Catholic Church as being the church making the most significant difference within Kibera.

In exploring further the role of the church in community transformation it was clear that both pastors saw the key to this lying in churches developing community projects and the Roman Catholic Church was again seen as a prime exponent of this model. Both shared the view that a pastor from their church coming into Kibera should have training on community development and the ability to initiate small projects. They also observed that it was the churches which were strong in this area which were most effective in attracting members. The Anglican pastor made the point that, unlike other parts of the city, people do not select a church on the basis that there is a good preacher there but rather because churches have projects which they may be able to participate in and benefit from. The

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pastors saw themselves and their churches as having a role in bringing development in to the community through church based projects which would both benefit the community and promote the ministry of the local church. In practice the Anglican Church had progressed much further in this direction.

The above views contrasted quite sharply with the Pentecostal pastors and with their congregations. The congregants certainly pointed towards the need for a church which addressed some of the problems and challenges of life in Kibera but seemed less shaped by modernity and did not place the same emphasis on projects and development programmes. The congregants pointed towards their need to have a pastor who was locally available and a church small enough to ensure that they could find a place and have their needs met, not by a church run programme but through a small caring community. Similarly, none of the pastors pointed towards the need for training in the area of community development as a priority in their ministries. However, unlike their counterparts in the formal churches, they had not already received a formal theological education.

In the role of the church in community transformation a broad distinction could be drawn between the mainline and the informal Pentecostal churches. A project based approach to community transformation through effective development programmes was the priority for the two mainline churches. The Pentecostals however while pointing to a desire to establish projects, offered something less professionalized, and formally organised and which focussed more on the personal spiritual transformation of the individual.



## **PART THREE: DISCERNMENT**

### ***3.1 Incarnating the Gospel in Kibera.***

Earlier I explored the question of the meaning of incarnation in a context where pastors are not inserted into a community but emerge from within it. From the start of the thesis it was suggested that incarnation cannot be understood in absolute terms as if ministries either are or are not incarnational. Rather incarnation needs to be understood as describing a spectrum of engagement, an invitation to venture into the experience of another in order that the gospel might be authentically revealed in a given context.

Moschetti (1996:60) reminds us that incarnation is a kenotic movement, a self emptying process. In this sense it is hard to describe the ministry of the informal Pentecostal pastors as incarnational. Their presence within the community is not fundamentally an act of personal sacrifice but a consequence of sharing the same socio-economic realities as the rest of the community. They do not take on the flesh of the community, as Zanotelli (2002:14) puts it; they are not baptised into it but called from within it. However, central to an understanding of incarnation is a theology of presence. The incarnate Christ is the one who is God *with us*. It is the presence of the pastors of the informal Pentecostal churches within the heart of the community which becomes significant. It is also this which distinguishes them from their colleagues within the mainline churches where the model of ministry and their status as professional clergy often precludes the pastor from living amongst the community in which he/she serves.

It is not sufficient however to equate presence with incarnation. The significance lies not only in the act of being present but in the nature of the presence. A ministry of presence can only be understood as incarnational if that presence embodies a redemptive narrative. The pastors of the informal churches are, I would suggest, embodying an incarnational understanding of mission when their presence within the community is one which actively demonstrates a Christ like presence such that life, faith and hope are revealed through their ministry.

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The stress placed by church members on the importance of having a church and a pastor which were available and present within their communities, particularly in times of need and crisis, points towards a ministry which does offer at some level a valued presence. This not to idealise the pastors or to attribute any specific motivation within the pastors for staying in Kibera. It is acknowledged that, like many in the community, their aspirations may lie outside Kibera. What is observed, however, is that the way in which the churches emerge offers the possibility of a pastoral presence within the settlements of a church leader who broadly shares the experience of the wider community, having emerged from and remained within it. Churches here can be understood as incarnational in the sense that they represent a model of church life in which the socio-economic realities of the communities in which they operate are in some respects enfleshed within the life of the church. Here are churches which are the flesh of flesh and bone of bone of the informal settlements with all the contradictions that that represents. They embody the vulnerability and uncertainties of the communities in which they operate and seek to be a Christian presence within them.

However, incarnational presence is not merely a presence which reflects the realities of what is. Incarnational presence involves critical solidarity, it is prophetic. Barnes' (2000:5) describes it as an anticipatory embodiment; it proclaims a new and regenerative narrative. In consideration of this narrative Moltmann (1974:7), reminds us that in Christianity the cross is the test of everything that deserves to be called Christian. Incarnation forms the starting point of a redemptive movement that is cross centred. There is an intentionality about incarnation, encapsulated in the notion of the kenotic movement of Christ which leads inextricably towards the cross.

This cross centred movement was hard to discern within the churches where presence in Kibera is essentially not a matter of choice and where the power and divinity of Christ appeared to be celebrated in such a way that left little space for the frailty of his humanity. Also, the stress on personal holiness almost to the exclusion of political engagement suggested an unwillingness to identify with Kibera as whole and the issues which confront the community. Membership of the faith community seemed a far greater

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concern than engagement with the wider community. In this sense we see churches whose significance lies in their presence but with an ecclesiocentric model of mission which appeared to diminish the potential of the churches to be the salt of the earth within their communities.

### ***3.2 Calling and ministry.***

In the social analysis attention was paid to the pastors' sense of calling into ministry. This was particularly considered in the light of how the informal economy operates and the similarities between establishing a church and setting up a business. Clearly an exploration of the pastors' experience of calling cannot be understood entirely by reference to the informal economy but the argument here is that it cannot be understood outside it. The Word made flesh reveals Himself within the life of each community and context. In the operation of the Spirit meaning is created and encountered in the diversity of human experience. The pastors experienced their call as being revealed by dreams and visions and discerned it as a calling to set up a small independent ministry in an informal settlement. How is this discernment to be compared to the one whose call is tested through interviews and committees for ministry within a more formalized and a less local ecclesiastical structure? Does the Spirit speak more or less through either dreams or committees?

Discernment takes place through the lens of our own frameworks of experience and understanding. It is an imperialistic form of Christianity which seeks to define where, how, within which form of acceptable social, cultural, political, economic or ecclesiastical framework the Spirit can speak. For the mind of the Spirit, who blows where He wills, is to be discerned within those places and spaces in which we construct and establish meaning. As on the day of Pentecost, we each hear Him speak in our own language. Here I take language as a metaphor which embraces all aspects of what it means to be addressed by God within our place, within those places which give shape and meaning to who we are. The Roho churches perhaps most embrace this understanding of the centrality of hearing God in your own language, hearing God speak in the language of

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the heart and the home. Yet the danger is of fixing tradition, locating place in a way that fails to give space to the dynamics of urbanization and the diffuse realities of liminal places which define urban existence for many.

How is the pastors' call to be understood when expressed in terms that are neither communal nor corporate? There appears to be a fundamental weakness here within the informal Pentecostal churches in the process of discerning the Spirit, if those two dimensions of the communal and the corporate are unavailable. What emerges appears to be self authenticating models of ministry where the discerning of the Spirit is not tested within the community of the Church. Pobee's (1993:117) assertion that discernment is a profoundly communal activity, essential to the mission of the church, appears not to be reflected in the experience of the pastors as they describe it.

The claim that the evidence of God's calling comes through manifestations of power in the life and ministry of the pastor, has its validity. The emphasis here is on recognizing outward authenticating signs of divine gifting rather than choosing through some form of human agency. The danger however is that such an understanding of calling leaves the pastor vulnerable to needing to reinforce the authentication of his calling before the congregation. In two sermons pastors gave testimony to having raised the dead, which I interpreted as a device to authenticate themselves before their hearers. This act of seeking to identify themselves and their ministries with such extreme manifestations of miraculous power may indicate a need for some form of external validation to justify the preacher before his congregation. Like the Corinthian letters of recommendation (2Cor. 3:1) they serve to authenticate that which might otherwise be subject to doubt.

Similarly, from Pharaoh's magicians to Simon Magus, we see within the scriptures that manifestations of spiritual power are not always authenticating signs of divine call or pleasure. Those who cast out demons in Christ's name turn out to be strangers in his presence. Pobee (1993:18) makes this very point demonstrating that manifestations of spiritual power require a discernment such that one may not be satisfied just with the manifestation; one must also discern its significance (Pobee 1993:118). All this is not to

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seek to diminish, deny or pass any judgment as to the authenticity of the work of the Spirit within the pastors. Rather it is to acknowledge that authentic Christian discipleship, and obedience to the “call” is not entirely measurable through manifestations of spiritual power and that obedience to a call can also result in apparent failure or in death.

The third and most significant problem lies in a theological understanding of the body of Christ. The problem is not fundamentally one of pneumatology but ecclesiology. That the mind of the Spirit may be discerned within both the communality of traditional community life or within the bureaucratic structures of more corporate expressions of Christianity is acknowledged. That the Spirit may speak in dreams and visions and in signs of miraculous power is also not the point at issue. The question concerns the role and place of the community of faith in the discernment of the voice of the Spirit in contexts where communal and/or corporate structures appear less evident and individual processes of discernment come to the fore. Of course it may be argued that the church discerns the call by recognizing the pastor’s gifting and thus the very act of joining the congregation is an outward expression of that discernment. However, the lack of any process of questioning and examining within the body of the faith community leaves the pastor appearing somewhat isolated in a role which can appear more grasped than given.

We have noted that discernment, as with theological reflection, is essentially a community process belonging to the very body of the church. It belongs to the church which believes itself to be a community and so discernment is the responsibility of that community of believers (Pobee 1993:116). This assertion comes from the recognition that the charismata, the gracious gifting of the Spirit, belongs to the whole body and is not the sole domain of any one individual. The question has to be asked therefore whether the processes of discernment within these informal Pentecostal churches gives true expression to a theology of the church as a community, called into being, and gifted by the Spirit. This is not to suggest that other systems, whether corporate or communal, lack imperfections but ask whether the very individual nature of the vision and calling as expressed by the pastors gives adequate expression to the essential nature of the church.

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With no apparent scope for interrogation by the body or submission to the body in respect of vision and calling, the churches appear initially to be more ministries of the individual, extensions of the individual's ministries, rather than communities and communions created by the Spirit. The fissiparous tendency of the churches, which is by no means unique to informal Pentecostal churches, also raises questions about the unity of the church. The very process of splitting in the face of conflicts in vision and leadership deny congregations the opportunity to master skills in conflict resolution or to embody the nature of the church as a community which is reconciled and reconciling in Christ (Khathide 2002:356).

Hollenweger's (2000:7) argument that the black roots of Pentecostalism create maximum participation in churches at the levels of reflection, prayer and decision-making, thus forming a community that is reconciliatory, seems to provide a somewhat sanitised view of Pentecostalism, as evidenced in these churches. The individuality of the pastor's vision, his personal ownership of the church and the splits which created most of the churches would suggest that this picture of Pentecostal churches as communities that are reconciliatory requires some modification, at least in the context of this study.

We have noted within the pastoral cycle that spirituality can be understood to provide a "motivational source" for the entire process of theological reflection (Karecki 2002:139). Discernment needs to be understood therefore in the context of the spirituality of the churches. In the churches under consideration we note that spirituality is often expressed in terms of outward manifestations of divine power. The pastor is one who has access to divine power and in some way enables the congregation to access power.

Within communities experiencing social, economic and political powerlessness this role of the pastor has a particular significance. However, it also means that discernment of calling can be understood, or perhaps re-interpreted, as a process of recognising the manifestation of the Spirit in the ministry of the pastor. Zechariah's messianic prophecy to Israel, of people taking hold of a Jew by the hem of his robe and saying, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.' (Zech 8:23), captures some of that

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spirit. It is the sense of recognising that which is seen and heard and in consequence joining the pastor in the ministry he is establishing. However, whilst acknowledging this process, the notion of the pastor as the owner of the vision, “*my vision*”, and owner of the church is one that must be critically examined. Here the closeness of relationship between the nature of the informal church and the nature of the informal economy requires critical scrutiny.

Practically, the future of a church owned by an individual faces questions of future leadership and succession. Mugambi (1995;121) makes this point in his consideration of Charismatic churches. He notes that such churches will either rise or fall with the perceived gifting of the pastor. Any future for the church beyond that leader will depend on the church moving into a congregational model, or through a new leader emerging to replace the original founder, or through creating a new ministry breaking off from the original one.

Theologically the notion of any individual as the owner of the church must be fundamentally open to question. Where a church is the possession of any individual its most basic identity as a faith community comes into question. For the churches the question must surely be addressed of how that which has come into being by the charism of an individual can evolve into a community which, corporately or communally, gives expression to a theology of the church as a body and as a faith community.

Our exploration of the ministry of the churches focussed particularly on their relationship to the social context of Kibera. I defined that as a liminal environment being in some sense neither urban nor rural but lying at the interface between the two. These are places which exist both physically and socio-economically on the threshold of the city. The theological significance of the churches lies in part in the way in which they in some sense incarnate that liminality being, contrary to my expectations, neither explicitly urban nor rural churches. Rather they exist within the flows of the rural urban continuum not defined by permanent space but embedded within the flow. This sense of being within that flow is reflected in the preaching of the churches which moved in illustration

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between the village and the city. It is embodied in the ministries of the churches as they begin to plant from the city back into their rural home. It is seen perhaps in the impermanence of the ministries themselves which seem so able to change names, allegiances, locations and leaders.

If mainline churches have a tendency to construct temples, permanent sanctuaries of Christian worship, reflecting the assured permanence of the formal areas of the city, then these are the churches of the tabernacle having no fixed place to call home. They incarnate the sojourner experience of informal settlement life, the experience of travelling towards that which is hoped for without possessing the land. In this they are in some respects no different to the Roho churches which seem to be in the city but not of it; camping on the margins of urban life. However the trajectories are somewhat different. In Brueggemann's terms Roho churches can be best seen as churches in exile. They appear as those still holding on to the rural shapes and forms which have sustained them and which give power to a life and faith lived at the urban margins. Informal Pentecostal churches share the vulnerability of the city but the trajectory of hope and aspiration is largely but not uniformly, more urban facing.

A strength of Roho churches lies in their ability to retain that which threatens to be lost; to present the hope that in the midst of physical dislocation the Lord's song, in the rhythms and language of home, can still be sung in an alien land. Informal Pentecostal churches, by contrast are not so much exilic communities as sojourners although at least two churches in the study appeared perhaps closer to the exilic model. While their members, may share a conviction that the city is not home it is the city more than home to which the church faces.

If the churches may be differentiated by the way in which they incarnate human aspiration then from their entrepreneurial inception, and through the suited preacher's message of the hope of material success, the informal Pentecostal church holds to the hope of the city which is yet to be realised in the life of the believers. Whilst Roho churches variously celebrate the distinctive diversity of where they have come from,



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informal Pentecostal churches will tend to present the greater, and more western, uniformity of that which they move towards. What both types of church represent is an embodiment of the vulnerability, fluidity and marginalisation of the communities in which they exist. What informal Pentecostal churches embody is a trajectory of hope which generally appears more ready to engage with possibilities of the city than to provide a refuge from it.

## **PART FOUR: MISSIOLOGICAL RESPONSE**

In this final section I consider the mission praxis of informal Pentecostal churches in Gatwikera and seek to discern what can be learnt from them and the impact which they make within the community. Urban theology has been described as a process of re-envisioning the city, as an anticipatory embodiment of the rule of Christ (Barnes 2000:5). Mission in turn has been described as the lived out practice of that embodiment, the Word becoming flesh, which has a life giving impact upon the community reflecting the rule of Christ in all areas of life. Mission is therefore understood to be a transformative activity, embodying hope and impacting on the individual and society. In this section consideration is given to the ways in which the churches embody or promote a different kind of vision for the community. In what sense do they represent another story, a different narrative, which holds within it the potential to transform society?

### ***4.1 Informal Pentecostal churches as agents of transformation.***

As noted earlier Martin contends that the Pentecostal movement represents a new wave within the Protestant tradition which is the harbinger of modernity and economic development. Gifford takes a more sanguine view perceiving the influence of prosperity theology to be counterproductive in terms of socio-economic development. In looking at the informal Pentecostal churches I have sought to establish what relationship they might have to the transformation of the informal settlements and what transformation might mean in their own terms.

When asking pastors directly about the meaning of the transformative role of the church in relation to the community it was clear that few were familiar with the term. However, when asked about which church was making the most impact in the community the Roman Catholic Church was frequently mentioned. This impact was always referred to in terms of the projects, schooling and training programmes which it offers to the community. If transformation is to be understood in terms of running projects and programmes which improve the living conditions of people in Kibera, then there was

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little evidence of the churches making a significant impact on the community. Only one church, PMLM was running any kind of social project, in the form of an informal school.

The fact that a number of churches met in rented rooms which were in use at other times during the week clearly made it difficult for them to operate any kind of project which required the availability of space mid week. Added to this, the size of the churches and their informal structures of organization mean that they generally lack the internal resources to have something significant to offer the local community. Like *jua kali* businesses they also lack the structures and connections to access external capital. While PMLM provides evidence that informal churches can run projects to serve the local community, utilizing their own resources, this seemed to be more the exception than the rule.

The lack of community involvement is not entirely unusual for Pentecostal churches. We have already noted Anderson's (2000:164) observation that Pentecostal churches are not noted for their efforts to uplift society. This was observable not only in the lack of social programmes but also in the way most pastors were clear that it is not the role of the church to engage in politics, even where they identified government failings as a source of problems in the community. Reasons for non involvement were usually expressed in terms of the perception of politics as non-spiritual, a sense that involvement compromises one's faith and holiness. "We are not involved because we are led by the Holy Spirit. When we enter into such things it means we do not have love in us" (Interview with C. Smith 06 11 2005:221).

Martin (1990:277), however, is clear that the impact of Pentecostalism does not lie in specific projects or programmes initiated by churches but rather in providing a cultural environment conducive to economic development. While the Roman Catholic Church may be one of the best social service providers within the settlements could it be that the Pentecostal churches provide a cultural vehicle for economic empowerment?

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While I do not share Martin's analysis of the impact of Pentecostalism on economic development I recognize there are aspects by which one could argue that the culture of informal Pentecostal churches could contribute to something which might broadly be called development. This can be seen in the following ways.

Firstly, the churches are themselves examples of an entrepreneurial spirit. By this I do not mean they are profit driven but rather they represent the creation of a new ministry (all be it very similar to those around them) which comes into being through the action and innovation of the pastor. While the mainline church model of ministry is to be given a post with a salary attached to it, as if employed in a company, the informal Pentecostal church, as I have shown, emerges more along the lines of the informal economy depending much upon the gifting and energies of the pastor. Being small, these churches offer others the opportunity to participate in the success, or failure, of the church.

The creation of the church is in many respects an entrepreneurial act and therefore may be indicative of an entrepreneurial spirit which could also influence attitudes to economic activity. However, this is also an entrepreneurial act within an informal economy. The informal economy largely sustains people within Kibera but does not generate the surplus capital that might economically change a society. This is often the economy of household survival, maintaining people in a community but offering little opportunity for socio-economic advancement within it.

Secondly, in the testimonies offered within the churches we see evidence of the desire to succeed economically in the city. Sermons and testimonies, as already noted, engage with the very practical issues of economic survival. Testimonies are given which speak of economic progress, finding a job, setting up a business. However, whilst suggesting that the churches may in some sense represent an entrepreneurial spirit it does not follow that such churches deliver social and economic transformation. The churches affirm the desire and aspiration to succeed but I saw little evidence that they provide the tools which might make this possible. GCC spoke of giving business training to members of the congregation but this appeared exceptional.

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In observing the socio-economic aspects of these churches it is evident that they may be assessed in respect of transformation against criteria which they themselves do not necessarily share. We have already noted one observation that prayer is the praxis of the Pentecostal (Cartledge 2003:26). Within a Pentecostal understanding of transformation there will be an emphasis on the ministry of Holy Spirit rather than some form of direct social action through organized programmes. When asked about the transformational impact of churches in Kibera pastor W was clear that the churches making the greatest difference in the community were Pentecostal churches. His argument for this was as follows,

We can bring so many people who are lost in Kibera. When they hear the Word of God they get saved then they can become a person who can now manage everything (Interview with C. Smith 10 12 2006:283).

His argument here is that transformation is fundamentally the action of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual which transforms the way they live. Here, the primary understanding of transformation is that it denotes and begins with salvation, an experience of spiritual transformation through “being saved”. One pastor described being transformed as being “to lead another life which he has not been used to.” (Interview with C. Smith 21 06 2005:204). He saw the Church’s mission as being to draw people to Christ to teach them how their lives can be changed. For him transformation was essentially the capacity to live a holy life within Kibera. Others described it as the change within a believer such that they are no longer as they were. This change was seen as having a depth and lasting significance within the believer. It is the change that the gospel brings. It comes and enters in someone and into the bone and marrow (Interview with C. Smith 20 11 2005:232).

The recurrent theme was that transformation is a process within the believer which changes their way of living. While churches pointed towards the need for projects and making some form of social provision within the community it was clear that the transformative impact of the church came primarily through a message of salvation and

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from enabling people to live godly lives in the community. One lady bore testimony to how the church brings transformation to her own life.

This church helps me to live in Nairobi because I find some teachings which I get here can make me gain some strength to walk with faith that there is nothing that can happen in my life because of the Word of God which I have heard. (Interview with C. Smith 04 12 2005:242).

Martin (1990:287) argues that this process of individual change within the community of the church has an impact outside the church. He suggests that within the close community which the church provides radical change can take place in the church community. This in time produces change within wider society. This apparent progression from personal change to social change needs to be questioned. Whilst not dismissing the significance of personal change I would share Monsma's (1979:97) perception that history does not support the view that evangelism alone will change the social structures which oppress the urban poor.

It was clear in discussion with church leaders and their members that one important understanding of the role of the church in transformation rested on the notion of material blessings following spiritual faithfulness. When asked what difference "getting saved" would make to someone who was unemployed within the community one pastor responded confidently "God will provide you with a job. God is a provider." (Interview with C. Smith 10 12 2006:283). However the fact that the same pastors acknowledged that many in their congregations were unemployed and financially struggling suggested some kind of disconnection between the theology and the experience of the life of faith within the churches.

In what ways can the churches be seen to make a contribution at all towards some form of community transformation as well as the personal transformation of the individual believer? It may be that informal Pentecostal churches contribute towards community transformation in two ways. Firstly, by creating social capital in contexts where traditional social structures have to some degree broken down and economic security is

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fragile. The emphasis that many congregants placed on the value of being a small church and the role of the church in assisting its members in times of need all point towards this possibility. When asked how their church addresses poverty one church member commented

We just teach people how to gain some knowledge because many people coming here are jobless. So when we *stick together*, we pray together, these people can go out, they can get a job they can start their own living (Interview with C. Smith 04 12 2005:247).

Here we see an emphasis not only on training but on sticking together and praying together, on the basis that this prayer and solidarity will also be contributing factors in enabling people to find employment or begin a business. Martin (1990:284) suggests that where people lose home, family, community and ecclesiastical ties in urban migration, Pentecostal churches can provide “an atmosphere of hope and anticipation” and a sense of belonging. Here people can reinvent themselves in an atmosphere of fraternal (sic) support (1990:286), new identities can be forged and, lost ties can be renewed (Martin 1990:284).

It is difficult to see the veracity of Martin’s observation if applied to large Charismatic and Pentecostal churches emerging in the city. Given their size and inevitable anonymity can they really offer a sense of belonging or contexts for the rebuilding of social capital, or safe boundaries within which to forge new identities? However, the strength of the informal Pentecostal churches I would argue lies in their ability to provide just this through small churches which exist within the very communities in which those social ties can be experienced and reinforced. Here too one can observe the psychological dimension which churches may offer in terms of giving individuals a sense of being valued. The repeated criticism by church members, directed towards larger churches outside the community, was that their gifts, concerns and contributions were not valued. People opted for the informal churches because their presence, their contribution and their needs were recognised and valued.

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It is for these reasons that the informal Pentecostal churches offer a home to what I have termed the sojourners of the city. They provide hope within the context of the informal settlements not only by building on the social capital of the rural home but by creating new forms and expressions of social capital which strengthen life in the settlements and bring some measure of hope to their experience of faith and life. This is not the social capital of the exile, the determined preservation of what has been and is threatened with loss. This is social capital for the journey of the sojourner whose aspiration is to find a place in the city even while there remains another place called home.

Within the social capital the churches also appeared to offer some form of small financial capital in times of crisis. As already noted, many of pastors commented on how the offerings collected within the church were often redistributed amongst the congregation. In this way church members know that they have some form of financial security, a place to depend upon in a time of crisis. One church member described the value this represents to him. "I love this church because our leaders sacrifice themselves to the flock.... in a time of scarcity of food, they give." (Interview with C. Smith 20 11 2005:227). Whilst such provision may not provide material improvement to the community it can act as an important safety net preventing further economic decline at moments of financial crisis and vulnerability. In this sense the churches exist more to sustain than transform their communities. They provide more of a localised coping mechanism than a catalyst for transformation.

A further missiological significance of informal Pentecostal churches can also be seen in making provision for faith communities in a context of significant social, cultural and demographic upheaval. The role of Pentecostal churches generally in this respect has already been observed. Informal Pentecostal churches provide faith communities in the heart of the informal settlements. They provide models of church which are accessible to the community at a number of levels and which appear to engage, at least at the level of the message, with the challenges of what it means to survive in these contexts. They represent models of ministry which are not imperialistic offerings from outside; crumbs which fall from the altars erected elsewhere in the city, but localised expressions of



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church with a leadership which emerges from within the heart of the community. These expressions of church are also more sustainable models of ministry in the sense of not being dependant on external resources.

#### **4.2 Informal Pentecostal churches and *missio Dei***

Informal Pentecostal churches create places for the construction of social capital which enable those who sojourn in the settlements to draw hope and resources to survive in their communities. However, it is important to ask what the implications of the churches are for the mission of the Church in its widest sense. We have noted Bosch's (1991:390) observation that the concept of *missio Dei* leads to a less ecclesiocentric model of mission with an emphasis on the mission of God, rather than the mission of the church. Within the research an emphasis on the agency of the Holy Spirit was evident in the testimony of the pastors and within the preaching of the churches. In common with Pentecostal spirituality, a great emphasis was placed on the power of the Spirit to call, provide, heal, save and deliver. The notion of the primacy of the Spirit in the work of mission was evident in the life of the churches and in this respect reflects an understanding of mission as the activity of God in the life of the church.

However, what is to be made of the way in which churches, called into being by the Spirit, so often emerge through a process of division? As observed, almost every pastor concluded that their calling was to leave an existing ministry to establish a new one, thus creating a new ministry through division rather than extension. From this apparent ongoing fragmentation of the body of Christ it is difficult not to conclude that the ministry of the churches is at some level divisive and thus counter to a notion of mission as *missio Dei*. How also can one speak of *missio Dei* in the light of churches which are perceived as the possession or property of an individual pastor?

There are no straightforward answers to these questions. Four of the churches met in the same school with only a sheet of metal or hardboard dividing them. At times it was impossible to properly hear the sermon in one church because of the praying or

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worshipping taking place in the church next door. Surprisingly the pastors of the churches knew very little about each other, even the name of their neighbouring church.

Gatwikera may be observed as some kind of unregulated ecclesiastical free market when anyone can set up a church. From a bureaucratic perspective the lack of any kind of regulation on who begins a church and the lack of any co-ordination between the ministries gives the appearance of a chaotic free for all which is deeply divisive. However, I am not certain that the mainline churches represent a



Mugumo school. The venue of three churches is visible in this picture.

force for unity within the slums any more than the informal Pentecostal churches. The lines of unity and co-operation in the formal churches tend to extend outside rather than within the settlements. Mainline church pastors are seldom represented at the informal pastor's gatherings which take place within the settlements. The problem of unity therefore is not one which is specific to the informal Pentecostal churches. The initiatives of many informal Pentecostal churches to establish pastors fellowships and to come together around prayer meetings and evangelistic crusades suggests an understanding of the church which is not sectarian and which recognises and affirms the reality of belonging to a wider body.

While the reality of having a large number of small churches in a given community can appear to represent a divided Christian community, this needs to be seen in the light of the socio-economic dimensions of the settlements. Lines of stalls all selling fried fish need not signify a fragmented economic environment, but rather one which is constructed along lines which reflect the dimensions of the local economy which seldom extends beyond single household support. Similarly the model of many small churches may also

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be the most authentic and appropriate model of church within communities like Kibera. Small size may genuinely add value to the experience of belonging to that congregation.

For the Church in mission it may be that faith communities of this size, as the Roman Catholic Church appears to have discovered in Small Christian Communities, offers the most strategic ecclesiastical unit to provide effective mission and ministry in the informal settlements. Whilst not glossing over the fissiparous origins of a number of the churches, the missiological quest may be to explore the potential for enhanced unity rather than dismissing the churches as intrinsically divisive. It must also be recognised that within the perspective of the churches unity lies at the relational level rather than the bureaucratic. Those pastors who left existing churches to found a new ministry saw this as an act of growth rather than division and would not perceive unity in terms of formal structures of incorporation.

***Conclusion.***

Within this chapter I have sought to describe and analyse the experience of informal Pentecostal churches operating in Gatwikera. Using the research questions identified in the opening chapter I have looked at the pastors and their sense of calling into ministry and the nature of the ministries which have emerged from that process. This experience has been contrasted with that of two mainline churches, Anglican and Presbyterian, both operating in the same community.

At the heart of this thesis is the task of establishing the missiological significance of the churches, a process which is by no means straight forward. In respect of advocacy and political engagement the churches generally did not perceive this to be the role of the church. This, combined with the small size of the congregations meant that the overall numerical strength of the informal churches, which could be translated into political power, was largely unrealised. Similarly the evidence of the churches transforming communities through local social provision was minimal. Few churches appeared to offer ministry or services to those who were not their members and few operated any kind of community development project. Some expressed a desire to do this but felt they lacked the resources to do so.

Martin's argument about the cultural impact of the churches on economic development is difficult to prove either way. The entrepreneurial nature of the pastors would give some support to his argument, but it was difficult to see how this might be translated into the economic activity of the community. In fact, I have argued that it is the entrepreneurial dynamic of the informal economy which is dictating the shape of the churches rather than churches influencing or shaping economic life in the community.

If we assess the churches by their own definition of transformation then transformation is perceived to be taking place in respect of individuals receiving and responding to a message of salvation and subsequently experiencing divine blessing in areas of their lives, including the economy of their household. However, even accepting the theological validity of this argument, this would not explain how communities devoid of

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infrastructure and lacking rights of tenure can become places of security with access to essential amenities and secure levels of basic income necessary for life in the city.

My observation is that the presence of informal Pentecostal churches will not transform informal settlement communities but can provide essential social capital to enable people to survive and aspire to succeed within them. The churches may not change Kibera, but may change the experience of living there into one marked in some way by hope. The testimony of members of feeling considered, acknowledged and valued and of the church being available to them at moments of crisis all point to this contribution which the churches make by their presence in the community.

The fissiparous nature of the churches is also one which I have sought to acknowledge whilst at the same acknowledging the value of small churches within a community such as Kibera. For the churches to become living expressions of *missio Dei* this would suggest a moderating of the more competitive and entrepreneurial aspects of the churches in favour of a deeper collaboration. This collaboration may have implications for the transformational potential of the churches within the community. However, the dynamic of individual ownership of the churches will I suspect always lean towards more competitive models of ministry. In this sense the relationship of the churches to the informal economy, built around small individually owned businesses, may militate against the wider mission of the Church.

## Chapter Four

### **Mission Praxis and Informal Pentecostals**

#### ***Introduction.***

In the opening chapter I stated that the pastoral cycle would form the research method for the thesis. In this final chapter I will begin by revisiting the pastoral cycle and evaluating its appropriateness for this purpose. I will consider both its strengths as a research tool and its possible limitations, in the form in which I have used it, in research into Pentecostal churches. At the centre of this discussion is an attempt to demonstrate that there are inherent presuppositions within the model of the pastoral cycle which I used which are, to some degree, at odds with the world view of the churches. I suggest some rethinking, particularly of the social analysis dimension of the cycle, is required.

In the second section of the chapter I consider the mission praxis of the informal Pentecostal churches, particularly in respect of transformation, and attempt to identify some of the missiological implications of the churches for the wider Church. Here what is under consideration is a response to rather than from the churches. The main emphasis within this response is on the areas of training and promoting collaboration. The role of formal churches in an informal context is also explored and the possibilities and challenges facing mainline churches working in the informal settlements.

In the final section I consider the future research questions raised through the research process before concluding the thesis by revisiting the initial hypotheses from which the research process began.

#### ***1. The pastoral cycle as a research method.***

From the start I was convinced that, within the discipline of missiology, incarnation provides the appropriate starting point for the research process. Theologically this is the

point from which I understand Christian mission to begin and I sought a process which did not entirely divorce the task of mission from the discipline of missiology. Secondly, incarnation provided a starting point which emphasized both a genuine relationship with the community and churches under consideration and some form of critical distance or what Peter Reason (1988:11) describes as critical subjectivity. Theologically I point to incarnation as a prophetic presence, a presence which embodies within a community a narrative which transcends and interrogates the church and community. I have earlier referred to this as the embodiment of a regenerative narrative. Nevertheless incarnation as a starting point always raised challenges regarding the depth of my own engagement with the churches and the community. This is a challenge that is not exclusive to the research process and continues in my own work as a teacher and pastor within Kibera. Incarnation in some sense offers an evocation as a starting point more than a location, an invitation to travel further and a critical enquiry into the boundaries of one's commitment to a people or community.

Whilst incarnation appeared ideologically and theologically an appropriate starting point it presented problems for the structure of the thesis. A framework was required which would offer some description of the churches and their environment and incarnation was not the best term to encapsulate that process. The solution was to utilize two versions of the cycle, one which set out the theoretical framework which underpinned the research and the other to provide a structural framework within which to present the material. For some time I worked with the notion of experience as the word to best describe the starting point in the structure of the thesis. However I was confronted by the question of whose experience was being described. The reality was that I was describing my experience of the experience of the churches. In resolving this complexity the solution was to drop the word experience in favour of context which provided a better category for the required purpose.

This confusion over defining whose experience is being articulated in the research illustrated a methodological problem in using the cycle as a research method. The cycle is primarily designed as a process which enables faith communities to journey from a

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problem to a solution or from a current experience to a discernment of God's will and purpose within that experience. Academic research is a different kind of process and one in which the outcome must be owned and defended by the researcher as an individual within the scrutiny of an academic community. The corporate nature of the cycle and the specific academic discipline of the research therefore raised the constant question of whose experience, social analysis, theological reflection and missiological response are under consideration at any given point. I have tried to navigate those different levels recognizing that at times there is an inevitable interweaving of them.

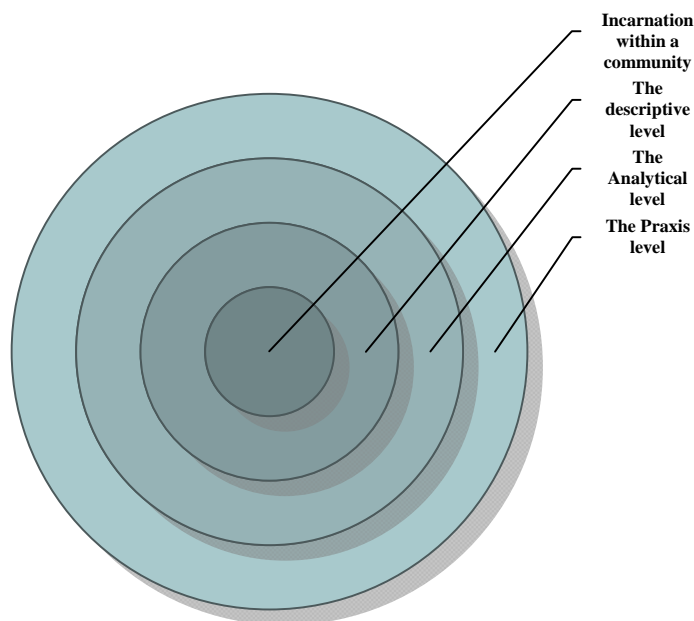
In retrospect there are perhaps three layers to the pastoral cycle which are observable within the thesis. There is the actual experience of the churches, their pastors and members; the way they analyse and reflect upon their context, and the theological reflections and missiological responses which they shape and provoke. The pastoral cycle presumes precisely this process. Within the thesis it is in the quotations that one touches upon this level of the cycle but in the end that dynamic can only be truly articulated and owned by the people themselves and is therefore glimpsed here but not entirely seen. This could be described as the descriptive level of the cycle. However, some caution needs to be attached to the word descriptive. I agree with Croatto that any reading of the text is an interpretation and, by extension, any reading of a faith community is self evidently an interpretative process.

The second level of the cycle therefore is my own interpretation of what I have heard and observed. This could be called the analytical level of the cycle. Hence, in the previous chapter the theological reflection is mine from my own frames of reference and the missiological response which follows is an analysis, again from within my own theoretical and theological framework, of my observation of the missiological responses of the churches. Finally there is a third layer to the cycle. This is where the researcher begins to offer their own discernment of what could be an appropriate missiological response to or from these emerging churches. This is what makes the research process missiological as it explores the possibility of new realities shaped by mission praxis. This could be called the prescriptive level of the cycle and that level is to be found in this



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concluding chapter to the thesis. The term prescriptive however appears too dogmatic or conclusive and has more than a hint of professional distance, rather than the committed engagement that an incarnational model would require. I will therefore call this the praxis level where a response is built around both faith and action in the community.



So far I have not made clear whether a missiological response at the praxis level describes a process to or from the churches. Clearly this distinction is critical, but must rest on both the status of my relationship with the churches and the nature of the research process. From this process I cannot claim to offer a missiological response which is from or owned by the churches. The methodology which I adopted did not make provision for that and my position as an Anglican priest living outside Kibera raises some question as to how authentically I could do that. The mission praxis in this conclusion therefore proposes a response to the informal Pentecostal churches.

Before attempting to engage in the praxis level of the cycle it is important to ask whether the pastoral cycle could have been used in a different way which might have enabled a process in which the research could articulate the experience, theology and mission of these churches. Could the same model of the pastoral cycle, but with a different research

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methodology, have achieved this end? One possibility would have been to make the “journey” of the pastoral cycle with the pastors and congregations so that it became a tool to articulate their sense of theology and mission. This is the primary purpose of the cycle.

At the Centre for Urban Mission we use the pastoral cycle as a tool to explore with students what it means to be engaged in mission in the context of Kibera and similar informal settlements across the city. However, from this research I would begin to question how effective we have been in that process in enabling students to articulate and critically engage with the world views and theological positions which they may hold when entering college.

The presuppositions inherent within the pastoral cycle and the connection to liberation theology need to be acknowledged at this point. The pastoral cycle assumes a theological perspective and an interpretation of reality not necessarily shared by the pastors. In all my reading on the pastoral cycle I have read nothing which points to spiritual or demonic forces shaping events. The pastoral cycle seeks to analyse social realities from the perspective of modernity using tools of the social sciences. It explains the world in terms of socio-economic, political and historical causes and effects and seeks to then reflect on those causes in the light of Christian faith and tradition and respond to them in ways which promote Christian values of justice, faith and liberation. In this respect Walter Wink (1984:103) is critical of the way in which liberation theologians have tended to follow a path of reducing an understanding of the New Testament language of “powers” to institutions and systems with little attempt to comprehend their spiritual dimension.

The challenge I faced in the research was to utilize the pastoral cycle with churches which share a very different interpretation of reality, where cause and effect were often understood and interpreted in terms of spiritual causation. Generally root problems were identified in terms of spiritual forces or in a Deuteronomic interpretation of history where blessings and curses are the consequence of righteousness or sin respectively. This is an altogether different paradigm to that presented by the pastoral cycle. This problem is taken into the response side of the cycle. From the perspective of the pastoral cycle the

informal Pentecostal churches appear to offer little towards the transformation of Kibera. To the members of the churches however, transformation is generally personal and spiritual, often confronting and overcoming the spiritual forces shaping the life and experience of the community. It is from this perspective that one pastor could describe the Pentecostal churches as those which most contribute towards a changed and transformed society. To say that churches are offering only spiritual solutions to material problems is then to miss the point. From within this perspective, the problems are not ultimately material and the solutions are ultimately spiritual.

The appropriateness of the pastoral cycle as a research method has been almost an assumed hypothesis within the research. My conclusion now is that while the pastoral cycle offers much as a research method it may not, at least in the form I have used it, provide the best tool for researching informal Pentecostal churches because of its inherent presuppositions. Informal Pentecostal churches have been described as liminal churches operating in a liminal environment. That liminality extends to the threshold between world views of traditional rural society and urban modernity. While I have argued that informal Pentecostal churches represent a trajectory which is generally more urban facing than Roho churches, faith is still expressed in a way which speaks into and out of a world view in which modernity and rationalism do not always offer the most satisfactory or accessible ways of interpreting the world. Theological models have to embrace that liminality finding space for porous paradigms, for a fluidity in world views. Models are needed where analysis of a social context does not only engage with socio-economic and political factors but gives space to the articulation of other interpretations of reality which the modern mind, including my own, so easily dismisses.

What method or model of theological reflection and articulation can be developed which both engages with the theological framework of the informal Pentecostal churches and provides the tools to engage with other theological positions and world views? My conclusion from the research is that if a process of theological reflection and pastoral planning is to be done with the churches to enhance their ministry in the community then a modified model needs to be developed which creates the space for and accommodates

and values the insights and the theological presuppositions held by the pastors. It is only from that place that the churches can begin to engage in a conversation with other theological positions and world views which offer alternative interpretations of reality and other possibilities for the transformation of their community.

The recognition of a need for a theological position which holds together a modern world view and an understanding of spiritual “powers” is not a unique observation. Walter Wink’s (1984:5) discussion of inner and outer aspects of all manifestations of power and his articulation of the spirituality of systems and institutions is particularly helpful. He provides just one route towards a form of analysis which can incorporate a socio-economic critique of oppressive structures whilst engaging with the belief in a spiritual dimension to all human life and experience. His insights could be valuable in attempting to redefine or reformulate the analysis dimension of the cycle.

## **2. The informal Pentecostals.**

Kenneth King (1996:3) notes the way in which one of the distinctive features of the *jua kali* economy in Kenya is the way in which the workers are largely excluded from discussion about the role of the *jua kali* sector within the economy. In a similar way it can be observed that pastors of informal Pentecostal churches appear somewhat invisible to the wider church. Informal settlements house the majority of the city’s population and Roho and informal Pentecostal churches probably form the largest Christian presence within these communities. Yet, like the communities in which they live, theirs is a hidden presence. This is perhaps accounted for in two ways. Firstly the oral nature of Pentecostal theology means that the contribution of Pentecostal churches to the development of African theology often goes unnoticed. A similar argument can be made for Roho churches.

Secondly, the socio-economic marginalisation of the communities in which these churches emerge is reflected within the church as in wider society. This thesis has developed from my continuing relationship with Pentecostal pastors and their churches in

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Kibera and has sought to address that invisibility. It is based on a conviction that these churches have something to share with the wider church as well as to receive from it. As Nouwen rightly observes, the Church is impoverished by its failure to recognise and receive the gifts of those at the economic margins.

I am convinced that one of the greatest missionary tasks is to receive the fruits of the lives of the poor, the oppressed and the suffering as gifts for the salvation of the rich (Nouwen, 1986:48).

Within this research I have sought to enter at some level into the experiences and self understanding of churches which I have labeled informal Pentecostal. The term informal Pentecostal has been used to distinguish them from Pentecostal and Charismatic churches existing in other areas of the city. My argument has been that they form a distinct expression of church having emerged along the lines of the informal economy. Within this distinctiveness there are many factors which they share with other Pentecostal and Charismatic churches.

The concept of informal settlements as liminal environments emerged within the research. I sought to show that these churches are distinct from the other large grouping of churches in the settlements, the Roho churches, by the way in which they are more urban facing. Using Brueggemann's typology I suggested that they are churches sojourning in the city, looking in hope towards the city rather than communities of exile where the trajectory of hope is more rural. These are generalizations and I was surprised to find some Pentecostal churches more deeply rooted in rural life than I had anticipated. Quite simply the churches were not as urban as I had expected them to be.

Using the concept of routes and roots I similarly pointed to the informal Pentecostal churches as providing, at some level, routes into urban life rather than roots into rural communities. This was evidenced to a degree but not to the extent I expected. The way in which pastors and churches were connected to other churches inside and outside Nairobi and the manner in which pastors "surf" the rural urban continuum, creating and planting churches upon those flows, was not an anticipated outcome of the research. A

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deeper initial understanding of the liminal context of the informal settlements and their place in the flow between the rural and the urban might have led me to anticipate that.

Theologically the greatest challenge I understood the churches to represent was an understanding of the church as a ministry which belongs to an individual. This is not unique to the informal settlements and, if adopting Mugambi's model of church categorization on the basis of polity, then the majority churches in question are Charismatic rather than Pentecostal. I have however kept the term Pentecostal because although polity and more specifically ownership, is significant to the churches I felt it important to view them within the wider Pentecostal movement to which they belong.

To describe the churches purely as individual ministries, however, would be wrong. The nature of the church as community which together must discern and respond to the voice of the Spirit is one which was not entirely lacking. The great value that congregants placed on the church was in its community dimension; the sense that they could belong, contribute and receive were clearly valued. The extent to which people could be involved in Sunday worship at the level of prayer, testimony, interpreting, leading worship, all pointed to a model of ministry which had clear community dimensions to it. All the churches had organisational structures, largely appointed rather than elected, which elicited some form of corporate decision making. Direct parallels between these churches and the big name Charismatic ministries in the city centre should not be drawn simplistically on the basis of scale. However at the level of ownership the concept of an individual owning a church was undeniably present in almost all the informal Pentecostal churches.

In assessing the missiological significance of the churches I have sought to demonstrate an incarnational dimension to the ministries in the specific sense of being contextual expressions of ministry emerging from within the context of the informal sector and of providing a genuine presence within these communities. The genius of the informal economy lies not in its ability to innovate but to replicate, offering products and services which, unlike most of the formal economy, can be accessible to those at the economic

margins. The economically marginalised are seldom those who make or influence social and economic policy. Invariably however, they are the ones most affected when those policies fail.

The transforming impact of informal Pentecostal churches may lie in making churches accessible to those at the margins and in providing a form of church life that enables people to live with hope and self worth in a context which mitigates against both. That these churches with their current patterns of ministry can change Kibera seems unlikely; that these churches can enable one to survive and retain the hope and aspiration of success in Kibera seems much more likely. In this sense they appear more like the Roho churches which have been described as offering an adaptive mechanism to urban migrants. However I have suggested that what the informal Pentecostal churches offer is a greater readiness to engage with the new order rather than providing a refuge from it.

### ***3. Mission praxis.***

I have already stated that the missiological response within this thesis can only really be articulated as a response to rather than from the informal Pentecostal churches. It represents the missiological implications of the emergence of these churches for the wider Christian community. However, the notion of incarnation as the starting point for the research also requires some reflection upon how my own thoughts and actions might have been influenced through the research process. Some of that is already evident in the previous section. This section therefore looks at the missiological implications particularly from the perspective of someone who is engaged in theological education in Kibera. This is not to create an exclusive application of the findings but rather to acknowledge the influences which shape them.

#### ***3.1 Mission and transformation***

We have already recognised within the research a contradiction between an understanding of transformation inherent within the pastoral cycle and transformation as

it was largely understood by the Pentecostal churches in the study. Whilst the informal Pentecostal churches appeared to appreciate the material benefits brought to the community by the practical action of churches such as the Roman Catholic Church, their own emphasis was on the spiritual transformation of the individual rather than the social transformation of the community. One of my questions from the research is how the presence of informal Pentecostal churches in the community can be built upon to enhance their role in social transformation. I have indicated that a great strength of the churches lies in their presence within the community in a way that creates an expression of church which emerges from within the realities of these communities. I have also pointed to the way they create social capital within the community. However I have perceived their role as largely enabling survival rather than promoting social change.

The churches were clearly concerned about the material conditions of people's lives. The sermons and testimonies frequently addressed questions of living and surviving in Kibera. However the analysis of those problems tended not to lead towards practical action. My contention is that if these churches are to become a more incarnational presence in the community, in a way which genuinely embodies a regenerative narrative, then their presence must be one which makes a practical contribution to the welfare of the community and adds a prophetic voice to address the structures of inequality which create communities such as Kibera.

The problem for churches which are poor in material resources, and this describes most informal Pentecostal churches, is that even where they come to a place of developing a more holistic understanding of mission they may feel they lack the resources to actively demonstrate that belief. Prayer, preaching and deliverance become the most obvious resources that a materially poor church feels it can offer to life in the community. In other words we see that Pentecostal spirituality, combined with a sense of political and economic powerlessness leads to ministries which appear to offer little prospect of social transformation. However, this perception of powerlessness is at some level false. We have earlier observed that the informal economy provides for about 75% of all basic needs in urban Africa (Simone 2004b:69). The churches that are part of the fabric of that



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economy can contribute to the material benefit of the community by utilising its informal systems. The nature of the informal economy means that it requires little financial capital to participate and contribute within it.

If informal Pentecostal churches are to have a transformative impact on informal settlement communities then that will require both a theological conviction that this is part of the task of mission and a sense of empowerment which convinces churches that they can make a material difference to their communities. Our work at the Centre for Urban mission has attempted to address those two dimensions with a training programme which lead towards a “seed project”. The “seed project” is a simple act of Christian witness within the community which both benefits the local community and uses only the resources of the local church. At the time of the research only Praise Miracle Liberation Ministry had been through that programme. Today, from a very small beginning, they run a small informal school for 60 children. They are the only informal church in the research to be running any form of practical ministry in the community.

No argument can be built on the experience of one church. However the combination of an incarnational understanding of mission that perceives the church to be embodying, practically demonstrating, a redemptive narrative in the community, and a process of empowerment which convinces churches that they have the resources within themselves to make a material difference to their communities, appears to represent a means by which the churches can develop a more transformational impact. If churches are to move towards that position then I would suggest that two areas need to be addressed; training and collaboration.

### ***3.2 Training.***

From the research we see the emergence and growth of small churches, led by untrained pastors, which are replicating themselves within the informal settlements and in the rural communities to which the churches are often connected. Within the urban context churches led by a formally trained pastor increasingly become the preserve of elite communities in the formal areas of the city. As someone engaged in theological

education I am drawn to the conclusion that delivering theological education and training to pastors in informal Pentecostal churches is a priority. However it is not a priority easily addressed and the research serves to highlight the complexity of developing an appropriate response. Given that most pastors in the survey indicated that they supported themselves and their households through full time employment, the traditional model of residential theological education is unlikely to be accessible. Other models of training are required which are practically and economically accessible to the pastors in question.

Secondly, theological education, like theology, emerges from and presumes a context, whether acknowledged or not. Bevans' (2002:3) observation that all theology is contextual, inevitably leads to the conclusion that theological education is equally contextual. What models of theological education therefore will authentically emerge from and speak into the social and ecclesiastical context highlighted in the research? The danger is that theological education becomes reformist and imperialistic, seeking to ensure that the recipients conform to a theological position constructed outside their own context. To avoid this there is a fundamental need for a kenotic movement within the process of formulating theological education and training and a self emptying of the hegemony of often elitist models of institutional theological education. Models of theological education are needed which are empowering, which acknowledge and engage with the self-definition, wisdom and experience of those deemed its consumers, ensuring that they are part of the theological discourse which will ultimately shape the training.

My assumption and experience at the Centre for Urban Mission has been that the pastoral cycle can be used here to provide such a model for developing a theological programme which is genuinely earthed within a given context. The movements within it which emphasis incarnation, and a profound identification with the community; an understanding and analysis of the context of the informal settlements, and a communal process of discernment, have been dimensions which I have understood to promote a process of theological education and training which authentically speaks into and out of the experience of the community and the pastors. I have also understood it to be a process

which would in time lead to churches developing programmes which have a transformational impact on their communities.

Whilst not abandoning the above position, earlier discussion suggests that in the context of these churches social analysis alone forms an inadequate frame of reference from which to understand a community. Any theological process which genuinely emerges from an encounter with informal Pentecostal churches in Kibera will have to engage with a process of context analysis which gives scope to articulate explanations of reality which do not assume that modernity offers the only valid way of interpreting the world. This is not to suggest that theological education should be simply constructed around the world view of the pastors. As with all theological education, a process is required involving a questioning and critique of existing models of ministry and theological presuppositions. Education which does not engage critically with a student's self definition and theological landscape will never be transformative. However, a first step in this process is to acknowledge and promote the articulation of that theological landscape; for I suspect theological education will not lead to social transformation unless it first engages with the world view and theological horizons of the pastors.

Here Reason's understanding of the research process may be helpful. As we have seen, he proposes critical subjectivity which seeks to raise subjectivity to consciousness and use it as part of the enquiry process (Reason 1988:11). Theological education requires this kind of process, of raising to consciousness and providing students with the tools to both articulate and critically engage with their own subjectivity. What Freire (1970) reminds us is that the educator must also be ready to be subject to that process. For my own part I am challenged that for much of the time within the research process I was confronted with a world view and a theological interpretation of the world that was profoundly different to my own. I suspect that my role in education within this context will require a deeper and more critical awareness of those things which shape my own horizons if, together with the students, we are to chart that confluence of modernity and traditional African cosmology which shape life, faith and thought in the informal settlements.

The stress within such a process needs to be on the notion of confluence and what I earlier referred to as porous paradigms and the fluidity of world views. African cosmology and modernity need not be perceived as mutually exclusive perceptions of reality competing for some form of ideological dominance. Walter Wink's (1984) treatment of the concept of power and "Powers" has been cited as one example which seeks to demonstrate how traditional and modern interpretations of the world can be held together. What may be observed from the pastors and their congregations is a fusion of world views, a sense of identity in flux, where urban and rural influences must accommodate one another in a context which is neither wholly urban nor rural. It is in the charting of these waters that channels of transformation may be discerned which emerge as authentic expressions of the life and faith of churches in this community.

A final reflection on training takes us back into the concept of informality. I have said that informal Pentecostal churches thrive because they develop along the same lines as the informal economy. The same is true of informal schools which continue to educate thousands of children within the informal settlements in spite of free government education. What of theological education? The Centre for Urban Mission where I work is situated in the heart of Kibera but is in some respects like a mainline church working in an informal context. It is inserted and resourced, both human and financial resources, from without rather than emergent from within. One question which emerges from the research is whether alternative forms of theological education and training might emerge from within the informal settlements which reflect the informal context?

At the Centre we are faced with the question of whether the model of theological education we offer affirms and strengthens roots into the informal settlements or provides academic status and formally recognised training as routes out and into the formal areas of the city. Informal Pentecostal churches, like the informal economy, affirm and recognise the skills and giftings to be found within the community. The challenge is to affirm those gifts and to explore how those local pastors gifted as trainers and theological

educators could be empowered to deliver training within models which reflect the dynamics of the informal settlements.

### **3.3 Mission and unity.**

Within the thesis I have shown that the small size of the churches was perceived as a strength to many of the congregants even if the aspiration was for something larger. Whilst acknowledging the strength of small churches for the experience of individual members we must acknowledge the weakness of small churches in addressing directly or through advocacy the material problems besetting informal settlement communities. Even if the theological perspective of the churches promoted such activity, the churches lacked both the voice and the resources to address any of the structural issues facing Kibera as a community. The understanding of transformation as an individual spiritual experience further limited the potential of the churches to make a significant impact on the material conditions of the community.

If the transformational impact of churches is to be seen beyond the creation of social capital and the inner transformation of the individual then some form of collaboration between churches will be an inevitable practical requirement if they are to have a greater impact in the community. Where pastors and congregants expressed a desire to develop some form of practical ministry in the community their limited size and lack of resources was generally seen as preventing such developments. Those would be best overcome through collaboration. Theologically this emphasis on collaboration also points towards an understanding of mission as *missio Dei* whereby churches find themselves working together to co-operate in the mission of God within their community, rather than seeking to initiate programmes which only serve the interests of their own church.

However, it needs to be seen whether collaboration between churches at the level of pastor's fellowships, evangelistic crusades and prayer meetings can develop to a level of advocacy or of instituting shared programmes within the community. Churches which come into being through division will inevitably be vulnerable to the threat of future division. Similarly churches which are in some sense created through the vision and

charism of an individual may find themselves threatened by a similarly gifted pastor in a neighbouring church. The ever present threat of division or the leaching or exodus of members to another church is a primary concern for informal Pentecostal churches. In this context a primary missiological task becomes the creation of trust. A significant first level of intervention may be to encourage deeper levels of trust and communication between churches as a prelude for collaborative working relationships.

At the Centre for Urban Mission we have limited experience of churches coming together particularly in respect of HIV/AIDS ministries. Where there is a desire among churches to move into practical ministries within the community then a critical dimension may be to assist churches in developing grassroots networks and models of collaboration which enable them to more effectively realise their potential. In this process we have seen churches begin to work together in simple ministries which offer a real service to the local community. However, the very nature of the churches, as those which emerge around the giftings of an individual and which tend to have very informal patterns of organisation, present significant challenges to achieving that end.

### ***3.4 Formal churches in an informal context.***

Although the research focuses on the experience of informal Pentecostal churches consideration has also been given to the formal churches operating in an informal context. The Anglican and Presbyterian churches faced challenges from past history and current structures in terms of making an impact within Gatwikera. Both acknowledged that the context of the slum in some way subverted the structures of the church. The Anglican pastor's willingness to engage with that subversion seemed to offer greater possibilities for ministry in the community.

Within this thesis I have attempted to demonstrate that mainline churches are structured and organised in a way that makes it difficult for them to engage with the informal context of communities such as Kibera. Given the rapid rate of urbanisation in Kenya and given that in much of Africa informal settlements house the large majority of urban populations, the significance of failing to adequately engage with the informal

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settlements should not be underestimated. While the research revealed Pentecostal church members holding dual membership and maintaining links with the church in the rural area, including mainline churches, one needs to consider where the denominational affiliation will be in future generations which may have more tenuous links to a rural “home”.

A strength of the informal Pentecostal ministry is that it offers a pastor based in Kibera who has often emerged into ministry from within that context and lives with and shares the life of his congregation and community. One challenge facing mainline churches is whether they can develop models of ministry which draw on those same strengths. This would require at some level a re-examining of the models of selecting and training for ministry but also a rethinking of what it means to be the church within informal settlement communities. If the historical shackles of elitist models of church life remain then the future of the churches in these communities may be in doubt. In particular, the model of church planting based on purchasing land and constructing permanent buildings and the practice of generally not giving autonomy to churches which appear not to be economically self sustaining needs to be questioned.

Secondly, the spirituality of the churches which through prayer, preaching and testimony spoke into the realities of life in Kibera was clearly something valued by members of the informal churches. I observed a spirituality within the informal Pentecostal churches which allowed members to articulate their needs and aspirations as they struggle to survive in the vulnerable context of Kibera. While Pentecostal churches appear to thrive on their fluidity, adapting to changing contexts, the mainline churches with inherited traditions and a pressure towards the uniformity that is inherent to modernity, seem less able to provide truly localised expressions of church. One of the challenges for the mainline churches may be how, within the constraints of inherited models of church, they can develop models of ministry which authentically engage with and articulate the hopes and aspirations of people living in the informal settlements.

Thirdly, an important question centres on how formal churches can contribute to a *re-valorization* of the settlements by affirming the wisdom and gifts which exist within the community. The lack of strategies to promote local leadership and the apparent silence of lay members of the churches in the wider formal church structures of mainline churches needs consideration here. How can the formal structures be used to articulate the voices and affirm the gifting, and experience of Christians within this context. I have earlier noted (Smith 2001:93) formal churches may need to consider what is practically required to prophetically make the margins of the city the centre of the church's life.

Finally it is important to recognise the strengths which mainline churches bring to ministry in Kibera. The very nature of being part of a network which extends outside the settlement and which has a significant voice and influence from its standing in the formal areas of the city should not be underestimated. Churches such as the Presbyterian and the Anglican Church have the potential to be powerful advocates for informal settlement communities if their organisational structures are utilised to do so. Here the question for the mainline churches is whether in their very structures they will mirror the socio-economic divisions of the city or develop prophetically subversive structures of their own which speak into the power structures of a divided city. These churches also have the capacity to access resources for the service of the local community. As seen, the Roman Catholic Church has been particularly effective in this area and St Jerome Anglican Church has similarly begun to develop ministry in this way.

One question may be whether the informal Pentecostal churches will be willing and able to participate with the mainline churches in ministries which might contribute to the welfare of the community as a whole. This again takes us to the concept of *missio Dei* and the movement away from ecclesiocentric models of mission. If fear and suspicion stand in the way of Pentecostal churches cooperating with each other then it is possibly a false sense of the inherent superiority of mainline churches which impedes them. If a hermeneutic of suspicion is required to address the ideologies which defend and justify the marginalisation of informal settlements then a similar process may be required in



addressing the nature of the relationships between formal and informal churches operating within the informal settlements.

#### ***4. Future research questions.***

As I look to questions generated by the research it would be useful to understand more the process by which rural churches are planted from Kibera through the rural urban continuum. To what extent do these churches mirror the churches in Kibera and in what sense do they represent another emerging model of church within a particular context? The impact of this process also needs to be explored in relation to patterns of church life in the rural areas.

Secondly, while this thesis gives significant space to exploring the pastoral cycle as a research method I have highlighted weaknesses I perceive in the cycle when working with churches which adopt a world view which the cycle appears not to accommodate. What then is the theological process which could be used to articulate the theology of the churches and provide a framework within which they could explore more critically their missiological role within the community? I suspect that to do that requires a deeper affinity with the churches than I possess and possibly forms part of a wider process of articulating Pentecostal theology.

The third area of enquiry focuses on the formal churches within the informal settlements. Is there a way in which the structure of ministry in formal churches can be reshaped to accommodate the realities of an informal environment? If that is to take place what would that reshaping look like, what models would be needed and to what extent would the informal churches provide a model that can be learnt from?

#### ***Conclusion.***

This research was prompted by an attempt to explore the question of why there are so many Pentecostal churches emerging in the informal settlements. I proposed that a reason

behind this growth lay in their relationship to the informal economy. They thrive in the informal settlements because they emerge as an expression of church which is in some way an ecclesiastical embodiment of the informal economy. This hypothesis has largely been supported by the research with evidence of churches often mirroring the characteristics and, it must be said, the vulnerabilities of the informal sector.

Demonstrating a relationship between the informal economy and the formation of Pentecostal churches provides an important insight which can lead to a better understanding of the growth and development of the churches. However this analysis on its own perhaps fails to recognise the distinctive aspects of Pentecostalism as a movement which causes them to flourish in an informal context. The inherent flexibility within Pentecostalism, highlighted by both Cox and Anderson, has to be an important factor here. Also, a fissiparous tendency among Pentecostal churches combined with a context where establishing a church requires minimal financial capital, can be an engine for the emergence of new congregations.

The notion that these churches constitute a new generation of African independent churches is perhaps overstating their distinctiveness in relation to other expressions of Christianity in Africa. Certainly they are a product of the marginalisation of urban life. The argument that informal Pentecostal churches are distinct from Roho churches was demonstrated to a degree but with the acknowledgement that more overlap existed than had initially been anticipated. The churches were not as urban facing as I had supposed and the notion that they are on a trajectory towards the city was much less easy to prove. While some churches appeared to express and identify themselves in ways which suggested *routes* into urban life, it was abundantly clear that all the churches, to significantly differing degrees were, also still engaging with the reality of rural *roots*.

Categories of exiles and sojourners and aspirants to urban citizenship appeared too firmly located. More nuanced language seemed to be required to express the relationship of the churches to the realities of rural and urban life. In the end it was the more dynamic terms of flows and trajectories and the less locatable expression of liminality which best

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described both the context and the churches within it. Rural and urban trajectories were seen not to be uniform. The churches appeared to point in more than one direction perhaps indicating that for these churches, like the communities they find themselves in, the vulnerabilities of the city and the necessity of survival, require the ability to face in more than one direction. Where the churches differed was largely in the strength of those trajectories, a matter of degree and emphasis. While I would retain the argument that they are more urban facing than Roho churches, it was apparent that while this difference was clear in some churches it was much less discernable in others.

Writing as an Anglican I felt it important to engage with the role of mainline churches in the informal settlements. My concern had been to establish why they have a less significant presence in these communities than in the economically stronger, formal areas of the city. My argument was that the mainline churches were failing to engage with the realities of the informal sector; that bureaucratic structures are not designed for the environment of an informal economy. This assessment appeared to be supported by the Anglican and Presbyterian pastors, particularly in the way in which they perceived the informal context to have a subversive influence on church structures. The readiness to listen to and engage positively with that subversion, rather than resisting it, seemed to offer the greater potential for ministry in the community.

It had been my intention to demonstrate the missiological significance of informal Pentecostal churches as churches “born” within the informal settlements, suggesting that transformational models of mission will best emerge from such churches because of the nature of their presence within the community. The informal Pentecostal churches clearly represent a significant Christian presence within Gatwikera. Like the informal economy the churches have the distinct advantage of their accessibility. Their intimate relationship to the realities of life within the informal settlements mean there is little dissonance between the expression of church and the experience of life in the community. There are no cultural, educational or socio-economic thresholds to cross in order to enter. This is undoubtedly a strength of these churches. However the strength of their presence was not

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seen to be translated into activities likely to bring about significant change within the community.

The churches in the survey were not found to have a great impact in social transformation beyond the undeniably important role of creating social capital in a context of dislocation and providing mechanisms to help members survive and aspire to succeed in the city. Likewise, Martin's (1990:6) argument that Pentecostalism represents a third wave of Protestantism, becoming the harbinger of economic development, seemed unconvincing in this context. A spirituality which tended to "spiritualise" social problems; ill equipped leadership; a paucity of material resources, and a modelling of the unrestricted and competitive nature of the informal economy, seem to have conspired to produce models of ministry which currently appear to offer little contribution to the process of social change.

In the divine economy of *missio Dei*, formal and informal cease to be defining categories. An observation of the weaknesses of the churches in the area of social transformation is not intended to undermine their significance in the community but to point to the need for greater engagement with them. If incarnation is our model then this engagement will require a process of identifying with the churches, learning from their experience and a building upon their presence and strengths in the community. The significance of training has already been highlighted and the need for non-imperialistic models of training which nevertheless encourage pastors to critically engage with their own subjectivity. Above all I suspect we need to refuse the pattern of non engagement and ecclesiastical apartheid that leaves churches mirroring the economic divisions of our urban places and failing to recognise our unity as citizens of the same City. I hope in some small way this thesis contributes to that process.

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**Appendix 1**  
**Letter introducing the questionnaire**

10 February 2005

Dear Pastor/Church leader

Thank you for agreeing to fill in this questionnaire. The information that is being sought will assist research being undertaken by Rev Colin Smith from the Tafakari Centre, Gatwikera, Kibera.

The research is being conducted as part of a DTh degree through the University of South Africa. The focus of the research is on the nature of churches in the informal settlements, particularly in Gatwikera. Responses to the questionnaire will only be used in the dissertation and will not be passed on to any other individuals or organisations.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. I hope that the findings of the research will be useful in the development of mission and ministry in this community. When the research has been written up a copy will be made available for reading at the Tafakari Centre. I am afraid neither the church nor its members will receive any financial or material benefit from participating in the research.

Wishing you God's blessing in your ministry in this community.

With grateful thanks

Yours in Christ

**Rev Colin Smith**  
**Director of the Tafakari Centre for Urban Mission, Kibera**

## ***Appendix 2 The church questionnaire***

Gatwikera Church Survey: Date..... Time.....

Name of church..... Location  
.....

Name of Pastor .....  
Contact.....

Type of building and distinctive features  
.....

### **THE CHURCH**

Number of adults.....Youth (13 – 20) ..... Children under 13 .....

Percentage male and female.....

Percentages of ethnic communities represented in the church .....

Percentage living in Kibera .....

Language used in worship.....

Service times.....

Use of robes. Worn by whom? .....

Seating arrangements including division by gender.....

Types of instruments used .....Electrical equipment .....

Religious symbols and artefacts .....

Single church or part of a wider denomination. ....

Denomination size and location of HQ.....

Source of license (cover) (where applicable) .....

What activities are run by the church? .....

**PASTOR** Full or part time.....

Who founded the church? .....

How long in ministry .....

Experience of training (details).....

Place of residence .....

Are you a member of any network or fellowship of pastors? (details) .....

### ***Appendix 3 Pastors' interview questions.***

#### **THE PASTOR**

1. How did you become a pastor? (calling, ordination, involvement in other churches).
2. What training have you received?
3. How did you begin this church? (connection to Jua kali – note family involvement)
4. If you are the founder, why did you begin a church here? Describe the process?
5. Who are you accountable to? How is that accountability practiced?
6. Who owns this church?
7. What was the founding “vision” of this church and where has that vision come from?  
How is it shared and developed?
8. What do you see as the/your main role of/as a pastor?
9. What is needed to be a pastor in Gatwikera?
10. Who should decide who becomes a pastor?

#### **THE MESSAGE**

1. What is the most important message that your church has to say to the people of Gatwikera?
2. How is preaching and teaching practiced in the Church. How do you decide what subject or passage to preach on and who will preach/teach?
3. How does the church help people know, understand and apply the scriptures in their lives? What prevents people from growing in their knowledge and understanding of the bible?
4. What are influences that help shape your message? What resources do you draw on?
5. What are the influences that shape people's lives in Gatwikera? How does the church engage with those influences?

#### **THE MEMBERS**

1. Why out of all the churches in Gatwikera do people come to your church?
2. How many members would you gain and lose in one year? What causes movement?
3. How many of your congregation have previously belonged to another church? What prompted them to change church? What churches do they come from?
4. How do you deal with matters of marriage and burial?
5. How do you become a member?
6. Where do your members worship when they return to their rural areas?
7. How many members have no other home but Kibera?
8. How many landlords are there in your congregation?
9. How many members of your congregation are in Full time employment/casual/jua kali?
10. What do your members desire/long for as they live in this community?
11. How do you respond to those desires?
12. Where is home for members of your congregation?



## **THE MINISTRY**

1. What does it mean to do ministry in Gatwikera? What makes a good ministry?
2. What must a church do/be to be effective in this community?
3. What do people look for in a church here? What do they come for? What challenges does that present to the leaders.
4. Who is involved in ministry in your church?
5. How is prayer ministry conducted in your church? (may look at video at this point)
6. What is your church practice in relation to baptism and Holy Communion?
7. Who is your church's ministry to and how is that ministry done?
8. How does your church relate to churches up country?
9. What is the largest group of churches in Kibera and why?
10. What are the strengths of your church?
11. What are the weaknesses in your church?
12. What are the opportunities facing your church?
13. What are the threats facing your church?
14. How do you discern God's leading in your church?
15. How are you responding to what you have discerned?

## **MANAGEMENT AND STRUCTURE**

1. How are decisions made in this church?
2. How do people come into positions of leadership in this church?
3. How are people removed from positions of leadership?
4. What are the main causes of disputes in your church and how are they resolved? (give examples)
5. How are finances managed in this church?
6. What is the relationship of this church to other churches within your denomination or cover? (How is power exercised in that structure)
7. Has there ever been a split in your congregation resulting in the start of another church?

## **MISSION AND TRANSFORMATION**

1. What do you understand by the term mission?
2. When we say that the gospel brings transformation, what does that mean to you?
3. What difference does your church make to people's lives and how does it do that? (give examples)
4. What is the role of your church in relation to the wider community – to those who are not your members?
5. What are the greatest challenges facing people in Gatwikera?
6. What is the root cause of those problems/challenges?
7. What is the role of the church in relation to those challenges?
8. How is your church responding to those challenges/problems?
9. Which churches in this community do you think make a real difference to people's lives? Explain your choice.
10. Have you planted churches elsewhere? How were decisions of location made, by whom, how was the church planted, how is it monitored and supported?
11. How has your church been involved in the proposed demolitions and upgrading of Kibera?
12. What do you see as the role of the church in local and national politics?

## **TRAINING**

1. What is your own experience of training for ministry?
2. Is training necessary?
3. What kind of training is most needed for Gatwikera pastors including your self?
4. How would you want to see that training made available?
5. What areas of ministry do feel very confident in and which areas do you feel less able?
6. What training is currently available to Kibera pastors and what are the strengths and weaknesses of that training?

## ***Appendix 4 Interview questions for church groups***

### **Life in Kibera**

1. When did you come to Kibera and why did you come?
2. What do like about living in this community?
3. What do you dislike? What is difficult?
4. What do you do for a living?
5. Do any of you not have a home outside Kibera?
6. How many own your own structure?
7. What are the most important issues facing this community?
8. Where do you most feel “at home”?
9. What was your hope when you came to Kibera and what do you hope for now?

### **The Church**

1. How long have you been attending this church?
2. If you moved from another church in Kibera, which church did you move from and why?
3. How did you come to know about this church?
4. Which church were you born into?
5. Which church do you attend in the rural area?
6. Why did you move to this church?
7. What aspect of the church do you value most?
8. How do you become a member of this church?
9. Why would you choose to worship in Kibera rather than in one of the larger churches outside Kibera?
10. What is the vision of this church?

### **Ministry.**

1. What do you see as the role of the church – what is it here for?
2. What do you see as the role of the pastor?
3. What would you most look for in a pastor? What qualities make a good pastor in Kibera?
4. How important is training for a pastor?
5. What do you see as role of the church members?
6. How is the church fulfilling its calling in this community.
7. What most gets in the way of the church fulfilling its calling?
8. How does the church help you apply the scriptures in your lives?
9. What is the main message of the church?
10. What are influences most shaping people’s lives in Kibera?
11. What are the real strengths in the ministry of this church?
12. What are the weaknesses?

## **Governance**

1. How are decisions made in this church and by whom?
2. Who can become a leader in the church?
3. How does someone become a leader in the church?
4. What is the relationship of this church to .....? (church providing cover)

## **Mission and Transformation**

13. What do you understand by the term mission?
14. When we say that the gospel brings transformation, what does that mean to you?
15. What difference does your church make to people's lives and how does it do that? (give examples)
16. What is the role of your church in relation to the wider community – to those who are not your members?
17. What are the greatest challenges facing people in Gatwikera?
18. What is the root cause of those problems/challenges?
19. What is the role of the church in relation to those challenges?
20. How is your church responding to those challenges/problems?
21. Which churches in this community do you think make a real difference to people's lives?  
Explain your choice.
22. How has your church been involved in the proposed demolitions and upgrading of Kibera?
23. What do you see as the role of the church in local and national politics?

## **Appendix 5**

### ***Where are they now? An update on the churches.***

#### **Grace and Truth of Jesus.**

In 2006 the Church experienced tensions with the senior pastor in Ugenya. This was explained in terms of worship styles with the senior pastor encouraging the church to develop a more modern style of worship with dancing and electrical instruments. The result was a parting of the ways. The whole congregation moved out of Mugumo school and the pastor has established a new church in Kibera, Ephatha of the Holy Trinity. The congregation has grown in number.

**Restoration of the World Gospel Centre.** The pastor has found new employment which often requires him to be away for extended periods. The senior pastor from Nakuru was not seen to be supportive of the church and many members have left including the assistant pastor. Pastor Nicholas is of the view that the church will soon leave Restoration of the World Ministries. The church had to leave Mugumo school and has relocated elsewhere in Kibera.

**Pentecostal Prayer Centre.** This church has experienced significant growth. Moses, the overseer, has planted four other churches in Nairobi and is in the process of planting three churches in Uganda. All the churches are in informal settlement areas and his “head quarters” remains in Kibera.

**Jesus Gospel Centre** experienced a difficult time in 2006 with a large section of the leadership moving away to begin a new ministry that would not be under pastor Milo. In the end the new ministry did not take shape but he has lost over 20 members of his congregation. The church is currently struggling with a much reduced membership.

**Shammah Church** is now called Cathedral of Christ Fellowship but still comes under the “cover” of the larger Shammah Church within Nairobi. The church has experienced some growth but also division. Two members, including the assistant pastor, left in order to start a ministry but this failed to materialise.

**Gatwikera Church of Christ** has experienced little change in ministry. The church meets in the same location and the leadership has remained stable. They have experienced a small increase in the congregation.

**We Care Ministry** continues to meet at Mugumo school and retains the same leadership. The church has been actively planting new churches outside Nairobi and, since the initial interviews in 2005, has planted four rural churches Western Kenya.