

**From Disengagement to Engagement: Interrogating the Political Hermeneutics of
Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya (2000-2022)**

By

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Neo-Pentecostalism is the new face of Christianity with global and local manifestations. Studies on Christianity in Africa have shifted their focus from mainstream Christianity to Pentecostalism. This study contributed to the discourse on Pentecostalism specifically on Pentecostal engagement in the public sphere. Therefore, the study interrogated the political hermeneutics of Neo-Pentecostals explaining the shift from disengagement to engagement in politics in Kenya (2000 -2022). Towards this end, the study was guided by the following objectives: To analyse the history and the theology of Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya; to examine the theological shift of the Neo - Pentecostals from disengagement to engagement in Kenyan politics; to discuss the biblical-political hermeneutics of Neo-Pentecostals and its impact on the Neo-Pentecostals involvement in Kenyan politics; to analyse the nature, extent and the prophetic role of Neo-Pentecostal's engagement in Kenyan politics. While studies have been done on Neo-Pentecostals and public engagement, this study delved into the Neo-Pentecostal aspect of biblical interpretation regarding political involvement. On methodology, the study used a descriptive research design employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. To arrive at the appropriate study sample purposive, simple random, and stratified sampling procedures were used to sample bishops, pastors, and Church members from three Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Nairobi County and Nakuru County in Kenya. The study included two members of the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK), which is a representative body of Pentecostals on social matters. In total, the study sampled 221 respondents. Questionnaires, interview schedules, Focus group discussions, and personal observations were utilized in data collection. The field data was integrated with library research in analysing Neo-Pentecostal's political hermeneutics, especially the shift from disengagement to engagement. The study data revealed that Neo-Pentecostalism finds its emergence within classical Pentecostalism through a period of growth within the story of the church. That Neo-Pentecostal theology is pneumatic, and although initially borrowed from evangelicalism, with time their theology has become more experiential with an emphasis on the lived experiences of the adherents. Further, the study found that while historically, the Neo-Pentecostal shift from disengagement to engagement was situated in eschatological contexts, eschatology with the quest of understanding the millennium and its place in the church was not purely what informed the shift. Besides, eschatology was the different

hermeneutics that accompanied the Neo-Pentecostal emphasis on the Third person of the trinity; Holy Spirit. With a pneumatic posture in theology, Neo-Pentecostals interpret the Bible from a spiritualized orientation; what this study labelled spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics.

Concerning the Neo-Pentecostal nature and extent of involvement in Kenyan politics, the study established that Neo-Pentecostals are not normally active in terms of being prophetic. However, with a pneumatic theology and spirituality, demons and evil spirits are interpreted as the cause of individual and national problems. Consequently, their involvement in politics is spiritualized in the sense that prayer takes the centre stage. This is accompanied by a theology of deliverance, exorcising the demons which destroy the nation and its citizens. The findings of the study put together formed this thesis. The thesis will later be a source of scholarly articles and research papers on Pentecostal political hermeneutics.

OPSOMMING

Neo-Pinksterisme is die nuwe gesig van die Christendom met globale en plaaslike manifestasies. Studies oor Christenskap in Afrika het hul fokus verskuif van hoofstroom Christendom na Pinkster. Hierdie studie het bygedra tot die diskoers oor Pinkster spesifiek oor Pinksterbetrokkenheid in die publieke sfeer. Daarom het die studie die politieke hermeneutiek van Neo-Pinkstermense ondervra wat die verskuiwing van onbetrokkenheid na betrokkenheid by politiek in Kenia (2000 -2022) verduidelik. Vir hierdie doel is die studie gelei deur die volgende doelwitte: Om die geskiedenis en die teologie van Neo-Pinkstermense in Kenia te ontleed; om die teologiese verskuiwing van die Neo-Pinkstermense van onbetrokkenheid na betrokkenheid by Keniaanse politiek te ondersoek; om die Bybels-politieke hermeneutiek van Neo-Pinkstermense en die impak daarvan op die Neo-Pinksterbetrokkenheid in Keniaanse politiek te bespreek; om die aard, omvang en die profetiese rol van Neo-Pinkster se betrokkenheid in Keniaanse politiek te ontleed.

Terwyl studies oor Neo-Pinkstermense en openbare betrokkenheid gedoen is, het hierdie studie in die Neo-Pinkster aspek van Bybelse interpretasie rakende politieke betrokkenheid gedelf. Wat metodologie betref, het die studie 'n beskrywende navorsingsontwerp gebruik wat beide kwalitatiewe en kwantitatiewe benaderings gebruik. Om by die toepaslike studie uit te kom, is doelgerigte, eenvoudige ewekansige en gestratifiseerde steekproefprosedures gebruik om biskoppe, pastore en kerklede van drie Neo-Pinksterkerke in Nairobi County en Nakuru County in Kenia te monster. Die studie het twee lede van die Evangeliese Vereniging van Kenia (EAK) ingesluit, wat 'n verteenwoordigende liggaam van Pinkstermense oor sosiale aangeleenthede is. In totaal het die studie 191 respondente gestee. Vraelyste, onderhoudskedules, Fokusgroepbesprekings en Waarnemings is in data-insameling gebruik. Die velddata is geïntegreer met biblioteeknavorsing in die ontleding van Neo-Pinkster se politieke hermeneutiek, veral die verskuiwing van ontkoppeling na betrokkenheid.

Die studiedata het aan die lig gebring dat Neo-Pentekostalisme sy opkoms vind binne klassieke Pinksterisme deur 'n tydperk van groei binne die storie van die kerk. Dat Neo-Pinksterteologie pneumaties is, en hoewel dit aanvanklik aan evangelisasie ontleen is,

het hulle teologie mettertyd meer ervaringsgerig geword met die klem op die geleefde ervarings van die aanhangers. Verder het die studie bevind dat hoewel die Neo-Pinksterverskuiwing van ontkoppeling na betrokkenheid histories in eskatologiese kontekste geleë was, was eskatologie met die soeke om die millennium en sy plek in die kerk te verstaan nie suiwer wat die verskuiwing ingelig het nie. Buitendien was eskatologie die verskillende hermeneutiek wat met die Neo-Pinksterbeklemtoning op die Derde persoon van die drie-eenheid gepaard gegaan het; Heilige Gees. Met 'n pneumatiese houding in die teologie interpreteer Neo-Pinkstermense die Bybel vanuit 'n vergeestelike oriëntasie; wat hierdie studie as vergeestelike-selektiewe-letterlike hermeneutiek bestempel het.

Wat die Neo-Pinkster-aard en omvang van betrokkenheid by Keniaanse politiek betref, het die studie vasgestel dat Neo-Pinkstermense nie normaalweg aktief is in terme van profeties nie. Met 'n pneumatiese teologie en spiritualiteit word demone en bose geeste egter geïnterpreteer as die oorsaak van individuele en nasionale probleme. Gevolglik word hulle betrokkenheid by die politiek vergeestelik in die sin dat gebed die middelpunt inneem. Dit gaan gepaard met 'n teologie van bevryding, wat die demone uitdryf wat die nasie en sy burgers vernietig. Die bevindinge van die studie saamgestel het hierdie tesis gevorm. Die tesis sal later 'n bron wees van vakkundige artikels en navorsingsartikels oor Pinkster politieke hermeneutiek.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my lovely daughter Esther Mwikali.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Motivation behind the Study

“Wherever two or three of you are gathered, there is politics” so quipped John Pobee, and I asked myself, “even in Church?”

The genesis of this study stems from a series of sermons I was mandated to preach on church and politics over ten years ago. While as Pastor of the African Inland Church (formerly Africa Inland Mission) I was requested to be a guest speaker for a three-day men's conference on, "Church and Politics". The message was meant to guide the church leadership and members in their regional conference on the place of the church in politics. In my preparations, and the subject being new at the time for me, I collected books on the same subject. One of the books had the following opening remarks, "where two or three are gathered there is politics" (Stinton & Gichure, 2008).

That statement struck my mind and prompted me to wonder about the place of politics in the church. This was in contrast to the well-known scripture, "For where two are three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:19-20 –NIV). Moreover, this task gave me the impetus to read and understand more about the relationship between the church and politics. In my sermon preparation, I also attempted to find out the role of the African Inland Church in Kenyan politics, which led to my Master's thesis project. The Journey towards this study, therefore, was given further stimulus by my master's studies, especially a course I took on church and society. As part of the course assignment, I wrote a short paper on the response of the Africa inland church and politics, which I embellished for my thesis project.

The Master's thesis exposed me to quite a wide range of literature on religion and politics as well as church and politics. At that time, my interest was on the reason why the Africa Inland Church has been aloof to political engagement in Kenya to a point of

withdrawing membership from the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK). They later joined the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK) formerly Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya (EFK). Their withdrawal from the NCCCK came at a time when NCCCK was openly criticising the late President Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi's government due to its social injustices which included curtailed freedom of speech, and lack of democracy among others. In my readings, I realized that AIC supported Moi's regime but more interestingly was the fact that quite many Pentecostal churches joined AIC and they not only approved Moi's government but they praised it. I asked myself, why would they praise a regime which was facing both local and international criticism? I picked this topic later after my Master's studies and presented a conference paper on, "Church and State in Kenya after the second liberation struggle".

In one of the sections, I reflected on the place of Pentecostals in Kenya's political history. In my readings and reflections, I realized that Pentecostals in Kenya (both Classical and Neo-Pentecostals) were being lauded as the new prophetic voice after the dwindling prophetic voices of missionary Christianity. Further, in my quest to understand the history of Pentecostals and their involvement in politics, I found that what had been written widely was the Pentecostals and their Civic engagement. Moreover, I learnt that initially, Pentecostals were not active in socio-political engagement; however, with time the Neo-Pentecostal wing of Pentecostalism became active in politics, sparking my interest in the shift. Therefore, I embarked on a study on how Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya interpret the bible in the quest for political involvement. What caused a shift from disengagement to engagement in politics? Was it a different hermeneutics and or different theology? As a biblical theologian, I argue that how a church interprets the Bible (read hermeneutics) determines how and to what extent it engages with the public and/ or civic issues. My evangelical background and

studies in hermeneutics under biblical studies have greatly influenced the approach I have used in this study, with an emphasis on Neo-Pentecostal hermeneutics.

1. 1 Why the Research

The graph of church history globally has shifted from the mainstream Christianity (focused on the mission founded churches) to Pentecostalism. This phenomenon is more manifest in the global south and specifically with the “breakout” of numerous Neo-Pentecostal churches. Kalu (2010) captures this by observing that in Africa ever in the town streets, cinema halls, residential places, bus parks and in the villages the Pentecostal ‘spirit’ and practice is evident as manifested by the presence of the many church buildings and charismatic preachers. Therefore, any study in religion with the quest of examining how religion affects the society cannot ignore the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal presence, and so is this study.

Further, despite the forces of secularism and postmodernism, in which the death of religion was predicted, religion has remained a strong social element in all spheres human life. This understanding expresses impossibility of thinking outside religion or through the religious framework in Africa. It is in congruence with Sindima’s asserting that, “Religion is the heartbeat of African path ways of life” (Sindima, 1998, P. 203). It is the same old same saying and practice that has remained resisted the powers of secularism that, “Africans are notoriously religious” (Mbiti, 1977).

Consequently, in view of the integral nature of religion in Africa, religious ideas influence how Africans see and interpret the world around them. In the context of this study, the world of religious influences the world of politics and in Africa. To be precise the topics or church and politics in Kenya has remained a hot subject.

Spear and Kimambo (1990) are right in the observation that religion and politics are hot topics for Africans, “whether in bars or bus queues”. Therefore, any study on how religion influences politics and vice versa remains very critical, and so is this study.

Lastly, studies done on church and politics in Kenya initially focused on the mainstream Christianity as conspicuous critical political actors especially from the 1980’s to 2000. In these studies, Pentecostals in Kenya were interpreted as pro government and without a developed theology of political practice and a general lack of prophetic voice. Studies done on Pentecostals and politics from 2003 like those of Maupeu (2005); Parsitau (2010); Chacha (2010); Maupeu (2013) have mostly delved into the civic engagement of the Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya politics. However, not much has been critically done on the hermeneutical foundation that inform the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal political practice. Further, Pentecostal and their Charismatic variants have been lauded as the new shape of prophetic advocacy in Kenya after the dwindling voice of the mainstream clergy. However, while appreciating the conspicuous presence in the Kenyan political terrain, a critical questions arise, “Are they really the new shades of the prophetic voice given that they are easily co-opted by the political class? Does their theology envisaged in their sermons give any clue to a theological praxis? Is this theology and practice capable of being a prophetic voice? This study sought to answer these questions and fill the gaps, while at large contributing to the ever continuing discourse on religion and politics, but in particular, the biblical hermeneutics, which is becoming a lost aspect in religious studies on Christianity and politics.

1.2 Outline of the research

The study is organized into four main sections. Chapter one forms the first section. It addresses the motivation and the reasons for and behind the study which positions the researcher into the current study. It also gives a general background of the study leading to the statement of the problem, main objective, specific objectives, and research questions. Chapter one finishes by addressing the methodological framework of the study; the study involved field data.

Section two follows forming Chapter two which is an in-depth literature review. The chapter is organized into four sections as per the objectives of the study. The four sections are; Neo-Pentecostal history and historiographical approaches; theological shift from disengagement to engagement in politics; Neo-Pentecostals political hermeneutics and the prophetic voice of Neo-Pentecostals in Kenyan. In each of the four sections of the a detailed review of literature is discussed giving gaps and position this study as well as preparing for the chapter on findings and discussions of the field data.

Section three forms chapters three, four and five. Although it is in three different chapters, the sections presents the findings and discussions of the study as per the three sampled churches; Around the Globe deliverance ministries (ATG); Jesus is Alive Ministries (JIAM); and Kingdom Seekers Fellowship (KSF). In each case, the history of each church is discussed but great emphasis is laid on hermeneutical approaches and meanings arrived at and how the meanings affect church engagement into politics. An historical discussion of each sampled church on Kenyan politics in different political regimes is also analysed. The data is presented in narratives, tables and pie charts and graphs.

Section four, presents the conclusions of chapter three to five noting differences and similarities as well as key observations in the three chapters. Further, it also introduced chapter six which is the final chapter. Chapter six presents the summary and conclusions of the study. The summary and the conclusions are arranged as per the objectives of the study. It also points to contribution of the research and areas of further of research. Therefore the study is made up of six chapters. At the end are the appendixes and bibliography.

1.3 General Background

One of the recurrent questions in Africa today is, “what has religion got to do with politics?” Contextually, the question is based on modern African dualistic extremes dictated by religion and politics, which were non-existent in the pre-colonial Africa. In this dualistic view, religion is relegated to the sacred domains and politics to the profane. The sacred deals with the holy or the wholly while other perceive religion as dealing with holy/divine and or "heavenly" roles and matters. Conversely, politics with its perceived predominant of human evil(s) has been perceived as ‘worldly’ and/ or evil and thus, the possibility of religion being corrupted by politics. This dualistic imaging of the world under the two domains; sacred and profane continues to create tension straining the relationship between Christianity and politics in Africa. Aptly put, can the Church participate in the political process and to what extent without watering down its mission, vision, and integrity? (Chepkwony, 1999:247) Even though this is a pertinent question, we should recognize that the relationship between the Church and politics did not originally emerge in modern Africa, but within the early history of the church.

Since the period of Constantine the Great, through the medieval church age, the recurring question has been; what does the emperor got to do with the church, and what

does the bishop/pope have to do with the empire? Afolayan, Yacob-Haliso, and Falola (2018, p. 5) writing on Pentecostalism and politics in Africa, express the complexity evident in religion and politics during the medieval period. They situate the question of what the emperor has to do with the church, within the attempt of the Catholic Church to read from a broad universalism capturing the whole religious and political contexts without exception. Though with time different answers have been given, alluding to the fact that politics should not be left to politicians alone, and the role Christian believers ought to play in the political processes, a satisfactory answer is yet to be established. The approach taken by church in regard politics is informed by the people's understanding of religion in public affairs. This explains why from a historical perspective, there have existed several approaches to church and politics such as; passionate support, impassive approach, constructive dialogue, and absolute opposition (Gitari, 1986; Shiwati 2008; Tarimo, 2009).

The above approaches differ as per believers' understanding of religion and public life. Often, where religion is relegated to the private order of purely personal spirituality, the individual and religion are removed from the public sphere to which politics belongs. Consequently, if religion is perceived to have a public role to play, then the believer participates in the political realm. However, the historical relationship between the church and politics has shown that even when religion is given a role to play in the public domain, the question that has remained is, to what extent?

This tension between religion and politics and for this study precisely, the church and politics were informed by the sacred–secular divide. The separation of the secular and the sacred is situated in the process of secularization introduced through colonization and Christianisation of Africa. At the heart of secularization is the process of religion losing its influence in social institutions and morality (Smith, 1971; Gecaga, 2007).

This led to the secularization of politics and the gradual lessening of the impact of religion in public affairs even though religion and politics were not distinctively separated. Smith (1971) argues that the secularization of the politics was prompted and cultivated by a combination of four contemporary ideologies. They are: liberalism being emphatic on individual religion; revolutionary nationalism stressing on sovereignty and integrity of modern nation-state; Marxism with its vicious attack on religion; presenting religion's conservative role in the society and pluralism with its understanding that “ultimate religious values are incarnated in the state”. However, despite years of secularization with the predication that religion will eventually die off, religion has remained a powerful force in human society influencing nearly all spheres of life and in the context of this study, the presence of religion in politics has remained despite the tensions (Tarimo, 2009)

This explains why in the history of the church, evangelism and social concern have been closely related (Stott, 1985. p. 19). This was the style of Jesus whereby He would evangelize but at the same time heal the sick and fight for the cause of the oppressed, weak, and/ or disadvantaged. In the history of the church, the evangelical revivals of the 18th and 19th Centuries attested to the critical relationship between evangelism and social concern. For example, John Wesley was greatly concerned about the social evils of his time and thus a prophet of social consciousness (Stott, 1985, p. 21). Wesley laid the ground for the next generation, with a praxis of their faith, they successfully fought the slave trade. William Wilberforce¹ was the leading proponent of the abolition of the slave trade. They all fought the slave trade which Wesley had condemned in his writing in 1774 (Shaw, 2006). Basing their ideas to the uniqueness of the cross of Christ, sin

¹ Others in his team were Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, James Stephen, Zachary Macaulay, Charles Grant, John Shore, Thomas Babington, and Henry Thornton. These created the Clapham sect which was influenced by the gospel of Christ. It fought the slave trade perceiving it as a sin.

was not understood in the realm of the human heart, but at the jurisdiction of human establishments and social structures (Shaw, 2006, p. 157). It was this biblical-theological approach informing their social concern that buttressed their fight against the slave trade and eventually bore the fruit of the settlement of slaves in Sierra Leone (1787), the ending of the slave trade (1807), and the registration of slaves in 1833 (Stott, 1985, p. 21). Consequently, this marked the genesis of the evangelical tradition of social concern which became the praxis of the next generation of Christians.

Globally, a generation of church ministers like William Temple in England (1881-1944); Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Germany (1906-1945), Farwell in America (1933), and Gustavo Gutierrez in Latin America in 1928 (Lang, 1990), expressed the vibrant relationship between the gospel and the socio-political process. In Africa, the same intimate relationship between the gospel and social concern especially in the political process has been evident. Such are the efforts of Church ministers like the late Rev. Desmond Tutu, Steven Biko, and Martin Buthelezi among others in South Africa; the late Rev. David Gitari, Bishop Alexander Muge, and Rev. Timothy Njoya among others in Kenya and Emmanuel Katongole in Uganda and Bishop John Rucyiana in Rwanda just to mention a few African voices. Their participation has been in areas of governance, human rights, justice, apartheid, democracy, socio-economic, socio-political, and constitutionalism (Gitari, 1986, Okullu, 1987; Mugambi, 2004; Borer 1998; Walshe, 1997, Pobee, 1998 Carney, 2010). Therefore, despite the tension between religion and politics and particularly for this study, the church has continued to be a powerful negotiator in the political process

In Africa for instance, it is difficult to separate religion from politics, because of the integral nature of African life devoid of demarcation between the sacred and secular. Within African context, a religio-political matrix existed in which the philosophical

foundation of the state was based completely on religious reasoning². Therefore, the separation of religion and politics in Africa is just a theoretical concept influenced by secularization (Hayness 1996, p. 50). This explains why one common element among independent churches in Africa, is a combination of religious and political reasons against the white hegemony. In the same vein Ellis (2004, p. 2) observes the centrality of religious relationships as critical avenues through which Africans interact and interpret with all other spheres of life. Consequently, the study of religious thought becomes a privileged opportunity to observe political practice in Africa (Ibid). This study was a contribution on the relationship between evangelism and social concern, precisely the church and politics; the story of Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya 2000-2022.

With the emergence of Pentecostalism in Africa in the 1920s and the emergence of its Neo-Pentecostal version in the 1970s, mainstream Christianity has almost been overshadowed by this pneumatic form of Christianity. With the phenomenal and conspicuous nature of Pentecostalism, studies have shifted from mainstream Christianity to Pentecostalism. The presence of Neo-Pentecostals has also influenced public life quite visibly in Africa and Kenya in particular. The foregoing introduction has expressed the dynamic historical position(s) of the church in politics and thus grounded this study in the Neo-Pentecostal political engagement in Kenya.

Pentecostalism is a relatively recent development in the history of Christianity having emerged in the 20th century and taken on global significance though with local manifestations. The local manifestations have been dominated by particular cultures and

² With the understanding that African Neo-Pentecostals borrow heavily from African religion and culture, this was critical to this study in seeking to understand how Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals interpret the bible regarding political engagement. Do they still adhere to the non-separation of religion and politics or how did Christianity which also brought quite some levels of secularization affect the perception of religion and politics?

societies hosting the movement; thus, the diversity. Cox (1996), Asamoah-Gyadu (2005), Kalu (2005; 2008; 2010) and Adeboye (2018) construe Pentecostalism as the area in which the growth of African Christianity has been most conspicuous leading to the reshaping of religion in the late 20th and early 21st century. Both quantitative and qualitative growth as adduced to various Pentecostal scholars attest to the phenomenal growth and dominant presence of Pentecostalism. David Barret (1997, p. 24-25) the prominent Statistician in Christianity, estimated that in 1970 there were 74 million Pentecostals and charismatics translating to 6% of the world's population. Further, in 1997, he estimates that Pentecostal figures rose to 497 million or 27% of the Christian population. Using the available numbers and the trends in Pentecostal growth, he estimates that by 2025 the figures will rise to 1, 140 million translating to 44% of the total number of the world's Christians³. Besides, quantitative statistics are the non-quantitative aspects of the movement. Kalu (2010, p. 71) perceives these non-quantitative indices as manifested by the "vitality of practice, a high visibility in the public space, and the intensity of the debate caused by the movement's diatribe against traditional religions and cultural practices and the alleged compromises of other forms of Christianity". This explains why Pentecostal churches are evident from the most established urban centres to informal settlements, towns, residential areas, and villages.

Scholarly works on the Pentecostal movement have proliferated in the past two decades signifying the importance and interest on the subject. Indeed, the focus has shifted from mainstream Christianity to Pentecostalism. The distinctive mark of Pentecostalism is the pneumatic factor (emphasis on the Holy Spirit) with manifestations like being born

³ While acknowledging the dominant presence of the Pentecostal movement, the numbers may be more or less considering that Barret's statistics are inclusive of African Independent Churches (AICs). The question remains whether AICs are part of the Pentecostal movement. In this research, we do not consider AICs as part of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement but as crucial precursors to the movement.

again, being filled with the Holy Spirit, emphasis on the gifts of the Holy Spirit (speaking in tongues and prophecy), and extraordinary works of the Holy Spirit (like miracles - healing, deliverance among others). The phenomenal growth of the Pentecostal movement together with the accompanying mutations and diversifications has made it difficult to classify and/ or categorize its types. As a result, some Pentecostal scholars have thought of Pentecostalism(s) owing to the diversity and multiplicity of the movement (Kalu, 2008; 2010). Nevertheless, with such a vast diversity and mutations, there seem to be discernible classifications though no scholar can claim perfect classifications and categorization of the types. Burgess and Van Der Maas (2002: xviii-xx) classifies the global Pentecostal movement into three streams; the classical Pentecostals, the charismatic movement, and the Neo-charismatics.

Classical Pentecostalism according to Burges and Van Der Maas is dominated by the Topeka and Azusa Street experiences of 1901 and 1906-1909 respectively. Here, Charles Parham and William Seymour stand out as critical figures of that period⁴. The charismatic type began in the 1960s as a revival in mainstream Christianity among the Catholic and Protestant mission churches but outside classical Pentecostal denominations (Barges & Van Der Mass, 2002, p. xix; Cartledge, 2004, p. 178). The roots of the Charismatic movements have been traced to the ministries of Dennis Bennett, Oral Roberts, David Du Plessis, Demos Shakarian, and the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (Barges & Van Der Mass, 2002, p. xix). The significant identity of the charismatic movement is its trans-denominational renewal in nature, pneumatic

⁴ Recent Pentecostal scholarship has argued against the monopoly of Pentecostal origin on Topeka and Azusa Street experiences. While noting its significance, the study noted other pre-American contemporary pneumatic responses for example in India and some parts of Africa. It should be noted that the monopoly is associated with western historiography which clamps all Church history origins to the northern hemispheres. This is discussed at length in chapter two of this study with the study adopting a different historiographical framework.

factors such as emphasis on "life in the spirit", and the exercise of spiritual gifts such as glossolalia in the individual and corporate prayer fellowships. The third stream is the Neo-charismatics which according to Burgess and Van Der Maas (2002, p. xx) is the "catch-all" category comprising of 18,810 independent, indigenous post-denominations and groups that cannot be categorized either as Pentecostal or charismatic⁵.

The above typology is global and does not capture the specific categorization in other contexts, for example the African context in which this study was based. African Pentecostal typology is similar to the global classifications albeit with different meanings and additions; thus, carrying an African nuance. Kalu (2008), Asamoah-Gyadu (2005 & 2015); Marshall (2010); Anderson (2015 & 1999); Ojo (2008); Mwaura (2008) among other African Pentecostal scholars view the African Pentecostal typology as encompassing three streams: the older or classical African Instituted Churches (AICs)⁶, Classical Pentecostal denominations, and Neo-Pentecostal.

The AICs were formed as a reaction to formalism and perceived dry orthodoxy in Missionary mainstream churches. Their inclusion in a broad spectrum of Pentecostalism is pegged on their pneumatic identity. They are discussed at length in chapter two as precursors to Neo-Pentecostalism. Classical Pentecostals have been construed as those denominations (pneumatic in character) originating in the early twentieth-century revival and Pentecostal missionary movements in the western world (Anderson, 2015, p. 68). 'Traditional' Pentecostal scholarship traces the origin and spread of classical

⁵ Studying Pentecostal typologies using a global matrix brings complications. This is because as the diverse Pentecostal movement assumes local manifestations, the names given to the diverse classifications as well their meaning change from one region to another. For example, in the New International Dictionary of Pentecostal Charismatics Movement, the category of Neo-charismatics is so broad including the indigenous churches such as the Aladura. However in African Pentecostal typology, Neo-charismatics point to the third wave beginning in the 1960s. The implication is that it's prudent to be contextual regarding the Pentecostal typologies.

⁶ As already hinted previously, not all Pentecostal scholars agree on the inclusion of AICs in the Pentecostal movement. For a further discussion of this subject see Kalu (2008).

Pentecostalism to Charles Parham and William Seymour Topeka and Azusa Street revival respectively. Kalu (2010, p. 71) laments over this monopoly of the northern experience. He argues that American literature often describes Pentecostalism as American, as the apple pie and English language as its koine and that sameness pervades the movement across the globe. While acknowledging the significance of Azusa street revival, contemporary global historiography has shifted focus from the monopoly of western historiography. Using a multi-site discourse, Kalu (ibid) notes that sparks of revival occurred in different parts of the globe some even predating Azusa Street. Some of these revival flares included: Wosan (1903), Wales (1904), Mukti, India (1905) and West Africa (1910) (Kalu, 2010, p. 71).

The third category, which is the focus of this study, Neo-Pentecostals/Charismatics are a recent development in African Pentecostal Christianity emerging from the 1970s. This third Pentecostal typology has assumed several names, such as 'Pentecostal charismatics', 'third generational renewal movement', 'Independent Pentecostal churches, and also lumped together with a bigger category known as 'afro-Pentecostals'⁷. Neo-Pentecostal movements began in the 1970s and progressively became institutionalized as churches. Historically, two factors stand out as roots and orientations of Neo-Pentecostalism; North American orientation of the 1970s and the scripture union camps (in secondary schools) and Christian union fellowships especially under Fellowship of Christian University Students (FOCUS) (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2010, p. 107; Kalu, 2010, p. 9; Ojo, 2008, p. 168; Mwaura, 2008, p. 181; Gifford, 1998; Anderson, 2004; Asamoah-Gyadu 2005; Yong,

⁷ Afro-Pentecostalism as discussed by scholars such as Julius Gathogo (2012) captures a broad category that fuses the AICs, classical Pentecostals, and the Pentecostals charismatics as one group. Debates rage on whether we can lump all the Pentecostals together without noting their differences and hence the types while still preserving their common pneumatic denominator. This study advocate for the various types and therefore does not employ the word Afro-Pentecostalism rather, it uses the terms, Neo-Pentecostal and or Pentecostal charismatics.

2005; Miller & Tetsunao, 2007; Ukah, 2007; Kalu, 2008; Afe Adogame, 2008; Marshal, 2009; 2014; Anderson, 2010; Parsitau, 2011& 2012; Vlas and Sav, 2014). They perceive Neo-Pentecostals as renewal movements in holiness churches and mainstream denominations. They are the contemporary face of Christianity globally but are more dominant in Asia and Africa.

In Kenyan cities, towns, and even in villages, such churches are prominent and their presence almost engulfs mainstream Christianity while almost in competition with their classical Pentecostal counterparts. Characteristically, these churches like other Pentecostals, are pneumatic, with emphasis on being filled with the Holy Spirit as a second work of grace signified with the speaking in tongues. However, they are unique in their appropriation of media culture, charismatic leadership, appeal to upwardly mobile youth and thus, predominantly youthful in membership, urban-centred, mega-size congregations, exuberant worship styles (a mixture of African orientation and American imports), prosperity gospel, trans-denominational and transnational networks, recognition of women leadership among others (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2010, p. 106; Kalu, 2010, p. 9).

A unique feature of the Neo-Pentecostal churches gave direction to this current study in their aspect of seizing social, political, and economic opportunities. Asamoah-Gyadu (2010, p. 107) and Sav and Slav (2014) note that the older classical Pentecostals focused on personal lives of holiness and warning against materialism. Indeed, materialism was perceived as Satan's strategy in drawing the believer away from spirituality. They also emphasized the imminent return of Christ; hence, their evangelist zeal. By contrast, the Neo-Pentecostals interpret salvation from an existential matrix believed that God can deliver to the believer material things in the present life (Marshal, 2001, p. 7). The immediate product of existential reading of the bible and experiential spirituality was

prosperity theology exhibited in Neo-Pentecostal preaching and spirituality. The prosperity theology rooted in an existential reading of God's salvation has seen Neo-Pentecostals become active in society especially for this study in the politics of their countries. Some charismatic pastors have for example contested civic positions and encouraged their members to occupy political leadership positions. The place of Neo-Pentecostals in politics in Africa and Kenya, in particular, has been ambivalent.

Studies done on Neo-Pentecostalism and social, political, and economic spheres are notable (Gifford, 2009; Parsitau, 2008; 2010; 2011; Kilonzo; 2008; Gathongo; 2012). Such studies cut across various themes including civic engagement, and generally on the public's role of Neo-Pentecostals. Some studies lump together the civic and/ or public engagement of the Pentecostal movement. This study while appreciating the existing studies sought to understand the political hermeneutics that undergirds Neo-Pentecostal political engagement, limiting itself to the public sphere of politics. The study was a contribution to the ongoing debate on Neo-Pentecostal and political engagement but more precisely Neo-Pentecostal biblical and hermeneutical grounds for socio-political engagement. While Neo-Pentecostals have been lauded as the new prophetic voices in civic and general public life, the biblical hermeneutics that give legitimacy to their political activism has not been majorly explored.

As already stated, historically, Pentecostals have been perceived as indifferent to politics with their emphasis on evangelism and personal salvation. However, research carried out by Pew Research Centre in 2006, exploring the views of the Pentecostals on socio-political, economic, and other related issues; revealed that Pentecostals are more politically oriented than the other Christian organisations in the society. This led to projections that the Pentecostal movement will be a major force shaping the political as well as the religious landscape of the 21st century (Vlas & Sav, 2014;

Marshall; 2009; 2014). This turn of posture for the Pentecostals is intriguing. Pentecostal theology was initially preoccupied with “experiences of God” of saving souls in preparation for the imminent return of Jesus Christ. Their theology was informed by their premillennial orientation; that Jesus would come before the end of the millennium. Specifically, their premillennial posture was pre-tribulation; that is, the believers will be raptured before the beginning of the tribulation taught in apocalyptic books/portions, especially Daniel and Revelation. With the Pentecostal's emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, their focus was mainly on the pursuit of evangelism and holiness. Politics was deemed otherworldly. In this theological context, since Jesus was coming soon to create a new world order, the political order of the present world was not important.

However, from the 1970s and especially in the 1990s, with the emergence of Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic movements, Pentecostalism changed its stance on political engagement. Indeed, there appears to have been a theological shift to a ‘Faith Gospel’ focusing on ‘this-worldly blessing’ and deliverance theology. Out of this theological shift, there emerged Pentecostals who were involved in the political process in various ways. This has been evident as they have supported various political parties, political/party coalitions, or specific political candidates while others have contested for political offices, created political parties, and have been involved in state-decision-making forums. This phenomenon has been evident globally but especially in the south which commands a great presence of the Pentecostals. The reason for this change of posture from disengagement to engagement was worthy of investigation.

While appreciating the efforts of the Neo-Pentecostals in socio-political engagement, critical concerns need to be raised. The central question concerns the shift of focus from being apolitical to political activism. Because Pentecostals were informed by a pre-

millennial theological orientation, the shift raises critical doctrinal and practical questions. Did their engagement with politics change their theological/doctrinal focus to post-millennial theology? Do Neo-Pentecostals have a developed theology of eschatology? What is the hermeneutical basis for this change of theological dimension? What explains the change of posture from disengagement to engagement in politics of the newer Pentecostal types? Further, was it only the theological premise that underlined the change from being apolitical to political activism or there were other factors? How do Neo-Pentecostals carry out their prophetic role?

1.4 Statement of the Problem

The emergence of Neo-Pentecostals in the public sphere is an interesting subject. It is also important because any church that stays aloof to politics risks losing its relevance. This is grounded in the fact that the Gospel message that the church preaches is both spiritual and social. However, while appreciating the Neo-Pentecostals' participation in Kenya's politics, there are critical issues of concern that are emerging. The key phenomenon is the change from being apolitical to political activism and generally being conspicuous in the political scene. Initially, Pentecostal theology was centred on salvation experiences (being born again), the pursuit of holiness, and evangelism in preparation for Christ's imminent return. Besides being born again, the emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, made faithfuls to be removed from the "secular world". However, from the 1970s and specifically in the 1990s globally, Neo-Pentecostals became active in the political sphere. A question that remains, what caused this change? Was there a change of hermeneutics that allowed this engagement in politics? The investigation of their hermeneutical posture on political engagement is important. Therefore, the Biblical-political hermeneutic foundational to the Neo-Pentecostal involvement in politics is worth investigating. If their initial theological bent did not permit involvement in

politics, what happened? This study, therefore, sought to interrogate the political hermeneutics of the Neo-Pentecostals and how it compels them to political engagement in Kenya.

1.5 Primary Objective:

To examine the political hermeneutics of Neo-Pentecostals explaining their shift from disengagement to engagement in politics in Kenya

1.6 General objectives

1. To analyse history as well as the theology of Neo-Pentecostals Theology in Kenya (2000-2022).
2. To examine the theological shift of the Neo - Pentecostals from disengagement to engagement in Kenyan politics (2000-2022).
3. To discuss the biblical- political hermeneutics of the Neo-Pentecostals and their impact on the Neo-Pentecostals involvement in Kenyan politics (2000-2022).
4. To analyse the nature, extent, and the prophetic role of Neo-Pentecostal's engagement in Kenyan politics (2000-2022).

1.7 Primary Research question: Did Neo-Pentecostalism shift from disengagement to engagement in politics coincide with a change in biblical and theological premises, and if so, how and why did this occur?

1.8 General Research questions

1. What is the history behind the rise and development of Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya?
2. What are the key theological emphasis and hermeneutical grounds governing the Neo Pentecostals? What contributed to the change of posture of the Neo-Pentecostals from an apolitical stance to an active political stance? Was there a

change from pre-millennial posture to Post-millennial?

3. How do Neo-Pentecostals interpret the Bible in justification for their political engagement?
4. What is the nature and extent of Neo-Pentecostal's involvement in politics visa-a
Vis their prophetic role?

1.9 scope of the Research

The research limited itself to the Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya from 2000 to 2022. This time period was chosen bearing in mind that for most Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya they started being active in politics from 2000. Prior to that, Pentecostal Christianity was pro-Moi regime. 2022 was chose in consideration of the of the just concluded August 9th national elections picturing dominance of Neo-Pentecostals in political campaigns. Thus the time period was relevant in examining the political hermeneutics of Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya. It should be noted that, although Neo-Pentecostalism started in 1970s in terms of engagement in politics in Kenya, it became active from 2000 and reaching its peak in 2022 for rallying behind President William Ruto and openly declaring support for him. Further, while noting the historical foundation of Neo-Pentecostals on mainstream Christianity and Classical Pentecostals among other Christian elements as precursors, it limited itself to Neo-Pentecostal churches in Kenya. It predominantly focused on how Neo-Pentecostals interpret the bible in reference to political issues. This was to enable the study answer the question, of why they changed their posture from engagement to engagement in politics and extend unto which they are engaged. The study limited itself to Kenya majoring on three Neo-Pentecostal churches in Nairobi and Nakuru counties.

1.10 Research Methodology

1.10.1 Introduction

The section discusses the design and methodology the study employed in collecting data as well as data analysis.

1.10.2 Research Design

The study was descriptive in design; however, it employed some other subdivisions with descriptive design. According to Rukwaru (2015, p. 10) and Kothari and Gard (2019, p. 2), a descriptive research employs surveys and fact finding enquiries of different kinds. Mugenda (2011) avers that descriptive studies are conducted among communities to establish the extent of a range of issues. In terms of their importance, Mugenda adds that descriptive studies form a foundation upon which correlational and experimental studies emerge. They are also critical because they are geared towards generating a hypothesis rather than testing an existing one. In this context, this study being descriptive in nature sought to find out what informed the Pentecostal change from being apolitical to being politically active; in essence what informed that change. With a descriptive design the study employed a correlational and experimental aspects whereby the study sought to understand whether there was a correlation between the change from being apolitical to political and a new theology as well as the hermeneutics undergirding the new theology.

While descriptive, the study was analytical. The analytical orientation was critical to the study in seeking to analyse the history of Neo-Pentecostalism in an attempt to gain what and when the shift from disengagement to engagement happened and what caused it. Further, the analytical aspect aided the study in examining the preaching of the bishops and pastors from the sampled churches so as to understand the Neo-Pentecostal political hermeneutics and how it affects Neo-Pentecostal

involvement in political issues in Kenya. While still retaining its descriptive nature, the study was also qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative aspect meant that data is presented in a narrative format. In seeking to understand this paradigm and/ or theological shift, the study had to sample churches and the data was presented in form of charts and tables; hence, the quantitative aspect. The qualitative and the quantitative aspects were complementary in the presentation of the study findings.

The data collected in this study enabled the researcher to interrogate the Neo-Pentecostal Political hermeneutics from disengagement to engagement in Kenyan Politics. The purpose of a descriptive design is to provide an opportunity to identify the factors influencing a phenomenon of interest (Burns & Grove, 1999). For the case of this study, it was to examine factors associated with the Neo-Pentecostal change from being aloof to socio-political engagements to active engagement, their attitudes to politics, biblical/theological grounds for political involvement, and the extent as well as nature of their political engagement visa-a-vis their prophetic ethics.

1.10.3 Site of the Study

The study was carried out in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya and Nakuru City. This is because of several factors. First, Neo-Pentecostalism is characterized by the urban phenomenon. Second, all the Churches used in this study; Around the Globe Ministries (ATG), Jesus is Alive Ministries (JIAM) have their main church offices and mother churches in Nairobi while Kingdom Seekers Fellowship has its main sanctuary and headquarters in Nakuru City. Further, these Churches owing to their pneumatic emphasis and especially deliverance theology and practice have attracted large masses of people across the country. This means that the data gained from the church was representative of the large majority of Neo-Pentecostals across the country. Third, the cosmopolitan nature of Nairobi City as well as Nakuru allowed the possibility of a

complete representation.

1.10.4 Population of the Study

Mugenda (2011, p. 181) construes the term population as the, “entire group of individuals, objects, items, cases, articles or things with common attributes and characteristics”. This then becomes the target of interest which exhibits the problem of the study. In this regard, the population of this study was Neo-Pentecostal churches in Nairobi and Nakuru. Mugenda (2011, p. 181) warns that it is not just identifying the population but also the different and/ or specific levels that the researcher is interested in. In this regard, this study targeted the Bishops, the pastors, church members both adults and youths. These were drawn from the three Neo-Pentecostal churches: Around the Globe Deliverance Ministries (ATG), Jesus is Alive Ministries (JIAM) and Kingdom Seekers Fellowship (KSF).

The three Churches sampled for this study have their main worship services on Sundays with first and second services. However, they also have mid-week worship services, commonly known as lunch hour meetings and or deliverance and revival meetings. Questionnaires were distributed mainly on the Sunday main services which bring together about 1000-3000 members. Moreover, to ensure that the study got representative data, JIAM, ATG, and KSF questionnaires and interviews targeted the mid-week services which also attract lot of people even from the rural parts of the country.

1.10.5 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Sampling involves the selection of several study units from a defined study population (Varkevisser, Pathmanathan, & Brownlee, 1991; Polite & Hunger, 1995; Orodho, 2009). The sample for this study comprised of Bishops, Pastors, and members of the four Neo-Pentecostal Churches; ATGM, JIAM, and KSF. The study also sampled

two leaders (the president and the general secretary) from the Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya (EFK). EFK is an organization body constituting Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostal churches. The study employed both purposive and simple random sampling. In purposive sampling, the researcher hand picks the cases or subjects since they are informative or because they possess the required information (Mugenda, 2011, p. 196). This explains why this study handpicked the three Neo-Pentecostal churches. JIAM was chosen because the pastor has been politically active in Kenyan politics and at some point was elected as a member of parliament. ATG was chosen because the founder though seemingly does not openly engage in politics, he has been hosting prayer rallies before national elections and also because of his dominant deliverance theology which touches on social issues. KSF was preferred against other churches because of its dominance in prayers for the nation involving a prayer caravan calling for peace before and after elections since 2008. A common characteristic of the three churches is that they are Neo-Pentecostal.

Simple random and stratified sampling was used to obtain respondents from the church membership. Simple random sampling allows the possibility of every unit of the population a chance of being selected; thus, the possibility of a representative sample (Kothari & Garg, 2019, p. 56). Mugenda (2011, p. 188) observes that simple random sampling is useful when the population is homogeneous in nature. For this study, the homogenous extent of the population was exhibited in its Pentecostal nature, most specifically Neo-Pentecostal. However, to some extent there were variations between the bishops, Pastors, and church members comprising the youth, women and men. This called for a simple breakdown of the population into simple strata so as to ensure a representative sample. Towards this end, besides simple random sampling, stratified sampling was also employed in this study. According to

Kothari and Garg (2019, p. 59) and Mugenda (2011, p. 190), stratified sampling is important in cases where the population exhibits different sub-groups or sizes leading to a lack of homogeneity. Although the population of study did not have extreme cases of variation, it was important to break it down into simple strata especially in obtaining a representative sample of the church members. During the pilot study, the researcher realized that, in these churches, church membership and ministry is organized into children, youth, women and men's ministry. The last three were of interest to this study.

1.10.6 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The sampling technique employed criteria like status (leadership), length of time as a member of that particular church, age, and level of education. The study purposively selected the Bishop in each church and in most cases they are the founders. As a result, three Bishops were chosen. Further, since some of these Churches have more than three pastors, the study purposively selected the two pastors as per their seniority and number of years in service in their current Churches. This translated to a total of 6 pastors from the three Churches. The study through simple random sampling and stratified sampling sampled the church members. A total of 60 members from each Church were sampled (20 youths, 20 women, and 20 men). These figures translated to 63 study respondents from each church (one Bishop, two pastors, and 60 members). The study also purposively sampled the two leaders in Evangelical Association of Kenya (EAK). The study also sampled 10 members from each to participate in the Focus Group Discussions translating to a total of 30 participants for FGDs. Therefore, a total of 221 research participants were selected to participate in the study. The study also utilized participant observation and sampling and analysis of sermons preached.

1.10.7 Data Collection Procedures

The study utilized primary and secondary sources in data collection. Through descriptive, qualitative, and quantitative approaches, the researcher analysed the data.

1.10.7.1 Secondary Sources

The secondary sources primarily included library materials in various library archives and online Books and Journals. The researcher visited Kenyan Universities with libraries in which had books and Journals on hermeneutics, Pentecostal, political theology and African Church history such as the Scott Christian University, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, St. Paul's University, African International University, Kenyatta University, and the University of Nairobi. Since this study took place in Stellenbosch University, the researcher made use of the University library during the short visits he made to the University. Stellenbosch Main and department libraries were of immense value to this study owing to their numerous volumes in terms of books and journals especially on Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal cutting across multiple themes. Materials gained from these libraries were used to interrogate Neo-Pentecostal political hermeneutics of disengagement to engagement.

1.10.7.2 Primary Sources

The primary data was collected from the field. This was gained from the interviews, questionnaires and participant observation which were the main data collection methods supplemented by Focus group discussions (FGDs). The primary data was integrated with the library/desktop research to provide profound research as per the topic of study.

1.10.8 Research Instruments

The study employed the following research instruments: Structured questionnaires, in-depth interview schedule and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

guide as well as participant observation (PO). Considering that the research looked into the hermeneutics, a lot of participant observation was utilized. This is because the researcher paid attention to sermons being preached with a keen ear to the hermeneutical procedures. Further, other sermons were analysed from the sampled church's YouTube channels. In addition, rigorous piloting was conducted to test the validity of the research instruments. New issues and challenges that emerged from the pilot study results were used to improve the research tools and ensure their consistency, clarity, and simplicity to the respondents. For example, the study found that some questions in the questionnaires and interviews schedules needed restructuring.

1.10.8.1 Questionnaires

A pre-tested structured questionnaire was administered for qualitative data collection. The questionnaire contained both closed and open-ended questions. It was administered by the researcher with help of trained research assistants. Through simple random and stratified sampling, questionnaires were distributed to a sample of 180 respondents. The questionnaires yielded in-depth information on Pentecostal political hermeneutics and political practice. The participants were supplied with a letter of permission from their bishop's office besides being given a consent form to sign which was an indication of their willingness to participate in the study.

1.10.8.2 Interview Schedules

The study employed both structured and informal interview schedules to obtain information from the respondents. A total of 11 in-depth interviews were conducted for the Church leaders, they included: three bishops, six pastors and two EFK leaders. The researcher first obtained permission from the respective church leadership before the commencement of the interview. The bishops and pastors sampled for the study were approached and the details of the research were explained to them. They were then

requested to sign a consent form as a sign of their willingness to participate in the study. Their interviews were conducted during the weekdays owing to their busy schedules on Sundays. Each individual was approached separately; thus, the bishops of the churches were not given the responsibility of approaching the pastors serving under them. However, from the Bishop's office, written permission was sought to interview the church members and the pastors. An interview guide was used to address central research questions as guided by the purpose of the study. The main purpose of the study was to interrogate the Neo-Pentecostal political hermeneutics examining their shift from disengagement to engagement in politics. The focus of the interview was to examine the biblical-political views of the church leaders, hermeneutical grounds for various political stands or practices, nature, and the extent of Neo-Pentecostal political engagement in Kenya. The interviews took an interactive mode.

1.10.8.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

An FGD is a “group discussion of 10 persons guided by a facilitator, during which the group members talk freely and spontaneously about a certain topic” (Varkevisser, Pathmanathan & Brownlee, 1991). The study conducted two FGDs to gain information on the Pentecostal political theology and the biblical-political hermeneutics grounds for political engagement. The participants were drawn from the sampled churches. The criteria for sampling them was based on leadership positions; from men’s ministry leadership, women ministry and youth ministry leadership. Each ministry department was requested to avail at least two members for the FGD who met the inclusion criteria (aged above 20 years). They were given a consent form to sign as an indication of their willingness to participate in the study. A questionnaire guide was used to facilitate the group discussions. A tape recorder was used to capture the information/data of the group discussions.

1.10.8.4 Participant Observation

In the process of research, the researcher observed Neo-Pentecostal's participation in politics, preaching sessions, and their comments on political issues. Such data informed the study on their activeness in political issues (nature and extent) and their political prophetic ethics as well as their theology.

1.10.9 Data Analysis Procedures

Qualitative data was managed using the Microsoft Word. Data obtained from individual respondents, FGDs and interviews were reviewed to identify themes regarding each objective. Both secondary and primary data were integrated to inform the study as per its objectives.

1.10.10 Ethical Consideration

The study didn't require the mention of the participants' names on the questionnaire. Further, the study respected the ideas of the respondents and sought free-response without being coaxed. All the participants and research assistants went through an informed consent process. In reporting the findings of the study, the participant's names were not used, rather their views were presented. The research assistants were trained on how to handle the participants to ensure they uphold their rights.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The chapter embarks on an in-depth review of the related literature. The contents of the chapter were organized thematically as per the objectives of the study. To make it more organized, the chapter was divided into four sections. Section one dealt with the History of Neo-Pentecostalism which mainly situates the emergence of Neo-Pentecostalism in Kenya from a global to a Kenyan context paying attention to the different historiographical approaches. Section two discussed the theological shift from disengagement to engagement. In particular, it looks at what informed the Neo-Pentecostal shift from aloofness to political engagement and active involvement. Section three discussed Neo-Pentecostal political hermeneutics. It analysed how Neo-Pentecostals interpret the bible regarding political and/ or public issues. Section four discussed the prophetic role of the Neo-Pentecostals, that is, how and to what extent they are involved in politics in Kenya. Their involvement is discussed in a historical approach within Kenyan political history from 2000-2022. The chapter ends with a brief conclusion.

SECTION ONE

2.2 Neo-Pentecostalism: history and historiographical approaches

2.2.1 Introduction

Understanding the political hermeneutics of the Neo-Pentecostals calls for an in-depth study of her history of origins and developments putting into consideration various epochs within the Pentecostal trajectory. The political hermeneutics is hidden within and/ or attached to the history of Neo-Pentecostalism. However, the contemporary scholar in Pentecostal charismatic history is at the surface faced with one question, “where do I

start?” This is because the Pentecostal movement has increasingly become complex owing to its global as well as dynamic and mutative nature. Indeed, scholars are now advocating for Pentecostalism(s). Further complicating the study of the Pentecostal movement, are the recent divergences in its historiography as espoused by different scholars. There have been scholarly differences concerning the Pentecostal history: Is it an Azusa street origin or is it both Azusa Street born as well as simultaneously born elsewhere? So I asked myself, “Where do I start?”

In seeking to project the political hermeneutics of Neo-Pentecostals, this chapter sought to understand the General History of Pentecostals then narrowed down to Neo-Pentecostalism in Kenya focusing on the selected Churches. Further, to understand the history of NPCs the Chapter begins by analysing the various but divergent historiographies; with the adaptation or reforming of the possible perspectives for interpreting Neo-Pentecostalism in Africa and Kenya in particular. But in essence, the chapter formulated the story of the Pentecostals despite their global posture, dynamism, and mutations as the continuity of the story of the Church of Christ, the spread and establishment of the kingdom of God Worldwide, Africa and Kenya in particular.

2.2.2 Pentecostal Historiography/ Approaches

Cerillo and Wacker (2002, P. 396-401) identify four common approaches to the study of Pentecostal historiography: providential, genetic, multicultural, and functional. The providential approach invokes God as governing history. In this sense, this study concluded that God is seen as providentially occasioning and governing the growth and spread of the Pentecostal movement. The genetic approach embarks on the precedent of the 19thC holiness and pietistic movements as roots of early and contemporary Pentecostalism. The multicultural perspective takes cognizance of the ethnic diversity in the movement, especially in America. The functional approach responds to the “why and

how” of the appeal of the movement in attracting adherents seemingly borrowed from the sociological function of religion. Although Cerillo and Wacker’s (2002) contributions are significant as critical approaches to Pentecostal and charismatic history, this study noted that the four approaches favour a western ideology/ Missionary historiography. Here, the origins as well as the historical significance of Pentecostalism (especially early Pentecostals) are attached to the 1901 and 1906 North American Topeka and Azusa Street experiences. This amounts to western historiography which cannot be solely relied upon to explain the history of such a divergent and mutative movement.

Western historiography has been directly discussed or alluded to by Gifford (2009) and Ukah (2007). It situates Pentecostalism within the North American origin and thus, all other Pentecostal experiences are imports that took local manifestations with time. This perspective has received critical responses, especially from African Pentecostal scholars and beyond. According to Asamoah- Gyadu (2005, p. 11) and Adeboye (2018), such a perspective makes Africans just mere clones in the history of the Pentecostal movement. He further labels western historiography as erroneous in its portrayal of Pentecostalism as an "American export rather than Holy Spirit –led renewal of the church in the context of salvation history". In the same vein, Kalu (2008, p. 4; 2010, p. 9) takes note of the dominance of the North American voice in Pentecostal historiography. This ideology is rooted in the 19th Century missionary enterprise which dominantly places the origin and spread of Christianity in Europe. Africans are viewed as having adopted and adapted to the new faith. In both the missionary enterprise and the 20th century Pentecostalism, Africans were viewed as blank slates upon which the western missionaries wrote their gospel. Such a western dominance led to an African Historiography as a response.

African historiography is an African response to the dominance of the Euro-American story of the origin and spread of Christianity. Kalu (2008, p. 11) contextualizes

the African historiography within the study of African Pentecostalism, and perceives it as the 'African voice'. He presents African Pentecostal history as "embodying African's quest for power and identity through religion". Kalu (ibid, 11) calls for a continual liberation of the African church history from the Western world's labels of the "battered self-images of distorted identity". Second, Kalu reasons that African Pentecostal historiography is key in explaining the exponential growth of African Pentecostalism. This is because it depicts the African appeal to pneumatic aspects of the Gospel resonating with the power theme in African primal religions. But just like the western historiography and its attendant models, the African Christian/Pentecostal historiography is not sufficient in explaining the story of African Pentecostalism. This pushed the study to the next level of interrogating the suitable historiography for this study.

The intercultural/ global Pentecostal historiography has been widely accepted as the balanced approach to understanding the genealogy of Pentecostalism. Asamoah Gyadu (2005, p. 11) employ the word intercultural while Kalu (2008, P. 20) positions his African Pentecostal history within the contours of global Pentecostalism. Though different in terminology, there is a definite agreement between the two; hence, the joining of their perspectives here. According to Kalu (2008, P. 20) the global Pentecostal historiography values and absorbs the African story, not dismissing it as in the Western historiography. The intercultural approach rejects the conventional interpretation of Pentecostalism as purely a North American import. Instead, as Asamoah-Gyadu (2005, P. 11) critically observes, the strength of the intercultural approach is the value for diversity. In essence, the argument is that "despite the cultural, ethnic, linguistic and theological diversities of those constituting Pentecostalism, the movement has generated a global culture with shared features". The same concept was initially advocated for by Hollenwenger (1978, p. 4) who perceives the Pentecostal

movement though distinctive in the cadre of ways yet constituting a global family. Similar to but broader than the global/intercultural is the Kingdom framework approach.

Kalu in a public lecture at Yale Divinity School (Shaw, 2004, P. 12), saw the Kingdom of God framework as the best approach, "beyond the parochialism and institutional church history". Within the context of the kingdom framework, Kalu argues, "The basic assumption of Church history is that the kingdom of God is here among men, providing enormous opportunities for renewal and reshaping of individual and communal lives" (Shaw, 2004, P. 12). Further, Kalu saw the importance of the kingdom of God approach in raising the story of the Church in Africa beyond local and denominational biases. In essence, it becomes a global story (just like in Global Pentecostal historiography) of the church in which communities receive and differently appropriate the Kingdom of God. Richard Niebuhr is credited as the pioneer of this Kingdom framework. While grounding this concept in biblical teachings, Niebuhr sees three distinct but interconnected elements constituting this framework (Niebuhr, 1937; Shaw, 2004). The three elements are Christ's redemptive reign over hearts (grounded on the doctrine of salvation), the kingdom as an earthly utopia (doctrine of eschatology), and then ethics. This study infused the three approaches forming a global-intercultural-Kingdom framework. The value of this approach was found in the sense that it addressed not only the North American Pentecostal stream but also the broader outlook of the continuity of the establishment of the Kingdom of God in different epochs and different geographical places. It, therefore, forms a broad framework of analysis of African Neo-Pentecostalism, Kenya in particular.

2.2.3 Emergence and Growth of Neo-Pentecostals: Global Overview

The history of Pentecostalism is fundamental in understanding the different epochs, typologies, and mutations of the movement. It forms a sturdy foundation for understanding her theology as well as the political-hermeneutical posture. Further, it is this history that locates the beginnings and spread of Neo-Pentecostals (but within a Pentecostal movement) as a continuation of the history of the church of Christ in the world irrespective of the variations. The section sought an understanding of the primal history of the Pentecostal movement and narrowed down to the Neo-Pentecostal strains focusing on the selected Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Kenya.

A key question was where one should start as far as the history of Pentecostalism is concerned. Is it in Topeka and Azusa Street or simultaneously in Topeka/Azusa Street and elsewhere? Traditionally, the origin of Pentecostalism has been located in the North American pneumatic flares of 1901 and 1906 respectively. However, a current scholarship (Kalu, 2008; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2010) on Pentecostalism negates the idea of monopolizing the origins of Pentecostalism to North American experiences. It rather points out that the movement had multifaceted origins even outside America and in some cases, some revivals predate the North American experiences. But to understand the history and the theology of Neo-Pentecostals, it is paramount to engage the Pentecostal precedents. One of the key observations is that Pentecostalism is rooted in Revivalist and Restorationist Movements (Kalu, 2008; Anderson, 2013; Robeck, 2014). The same Revivalist movements are prevalent in the story of the Kenyan Neo-Pentecostalism as Kalu (2008, P. 143) indicates that Pentecostalism has strong Revivalist genes.

According to Dayton (1987) and Anderson (2003), Pentecostalism is rooted in the 19th Century evangelicalism especially radical evangelicalism expressing itself in

pietism/puritanism /holiness, methodism, and healing movements. These movements were revivalist and restorationist in nature and thus, influenced Pentecostalism in the same vein. Employing the pneumatic posture of Pentecostals, Dayton (1987, P. 37) situates Pentecostal roots in methodism but links it with Roman and Anglo-Catholic, Puritanism, and Pietism. Concerning Roman Catholicism and Anglo-Catholicism, Dayton finds a connection with the belief and tendency of separating the Holy Spirit and water baptism. The idea connects with the Pentecostal teaching of the second work of grace wrought by the infilling of the Holy Spirit. The Puritanism link is used in reference to the Puritan teaching on the work of the Holy Spirit extending beyond regeneration and sanctification. Here, the context used is Ephesians 1:13-14. The puritans believed that one must receive the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit before the rest of the works like a comforter. Dayton (1987, p. 37) notes the mixture of the teaching of the Holy Spirit as a sanctifier with a renewed sense of eschatology and the "latter-day glory" of the saints. Such theological themes led to a typology of millenarianism within Puritanism. The early Pentecostals besides the emphasis on the Holy Spirit also and simultaneously emphasized eschatology, and the coming glory; hence, the need for evangelism to hasten the coming of Christ. Being emphatic on individual salvation and the imminent return of Christ, they stayed aloof to the socio-political process.

According to Anderson (2003, P. 15), the cradle of pietism was the personal experience of "new birth" through the Holy Spirit. This theme of victory over sin and the world is found in classical Pentecostals and more emphatic in Neo-Pentecostalism. Although Dayton (1987), warns the Pentecostal reader that Roman and Anglo-Catholic Puritanism, and Pietism are more parallels than direct causes, studying Pentecostalism in the African context, however, reveals this puritanism and pietism in bright colours.

Further, it was pietism and puritanism that influenced John Wesley and John Fletcher, the Fathers of methodism. It was the lifestyle of the pietistic Moravians that influenced John and Charles Wesley; thus, the effect of pietism and puritanism on methodism. Methodism then became the immediate precursor of Pentecostalism. It was the premise of this study that pietism and puritanism in seeking holiness and victory for sin and the 'world' theologically bore the need for the presence of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life. It thus laid the foundation for Pentecostalism. This literature laid a solid foundation for an understanding of African and Kenyan precedents to Pentecostalism.

Anderson (2003, P. 12-18), agreeing with Dayton (1987) on the place of methodism, Holiness, and healing movements as immediate precursors to Pentecostalism, emphasizes the revivalism theme within evangelicalism in the 19th Century. The revivalism theme was inclined towards an emotional appeal in encountering God through the Holy Spirit. Anderson embarks on two significant revivals; The Scottish Presbyterian Revival of 1830-31 and the 1857-1860 United States, Ulster, Wales, and Scotland Revival. The Scottish Presbyterian Revival is associated with Edward Irving⁸. Irving came to believe in pre-millennialism but also in the restoration of charismatic gifts of prophecy, healing, and speaking in tongues, plus a belief in the restoration of the fivefold offices of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Anderson, 2003, P. 12). It is reported that glossolalia occurred in Edward's congregation in 1830. This study found a connection with the Pentecostal's emphasis on speaking in tongues as an outcome of being baptized and being filled by the Holy Spirit. The second Revival in 1857-60, was derived from evangelicalism but specifically from the Methodist⁹ version with emphasis on the second work of grace

⁹ The early methodism insisted on a personal "born-again" conversion experience. Indeed it was the trademark of perfection seen through the lenses of "entire or complete sanctification". The process was

brought by the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Anderson (2003, p. 13) captures the extent of the revival in the Northeastern United States, Ulster, Wales, Scotland, and by extension to Liberia and India. However, he further explores the extent of the indigenous revivals in other places including China, Uganda, and South India. The extent of the revival to Uganda which by extension came from Rwanda received the East African Revival Movement (EARM) this is very critical since EARM became a significant precursor to Neo-Pentecostalism in Kenya.

This second Revival with its central theme of infilling of the Holy Spirit gave birth to the holiness movement, faith missions, and healing movement. Faith missions meant that the missionaries believed by faith alone God was to provide for their daily support. The healing movement emphasized the Holy Spirit's power in the exorcism of demons and healing. In this context, a restoration theme was put in focus with the teaching of the restoration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Anderson, 2003, P. 13).

The holiness movement embarked on a personal encounter with an appeal to emotions and a "crisis experience of holiness" which would later be known as baptism with the Spirit. The holiness movement has been radicalized as the immediate predecessor to Pentecostalism. Anderson (2003, P. 15) explores the key concerns of the holiness movement as a "reaction against liberalism and formalism in established churches" and operating under the principles of biblical literalism, as a call for personal, emotional and individual experience of conversion, moral perfection" that is the holiness of the individual Christian. This explains why Pentecostals took the characteristics of the movements that preceded them. Evidence is also given to the fact that even the names of the churches then assumed a holiness posture. An example is,

through a "crisis experience" in which one had to hold on to his faith leading to baptism of the Spirit after the conversion. See Anderson, 2003, p. 15.

the First Baptized Holiness Church of God by the Americans (Dayton, 1987:19). With the experience of the revivals, the 19th Century was characterized by the upsurge in missionary movements. Further, with the second revival's restorative theme of spiritual gifts, the radical evangelicals expected the restoration of gifts of speaking in tongues for the effective spread of the Gospel to all nations. As a result, these revivals prepared the ground for American Pentecostalism. Anderson (2003, P. 13) situates this ground within the lives and works of Frank Sandiford and Charles Parham. It was Parham who by "linking speaking in tongues with Spirit baptism" would become an icon in Pentecostalism. Within this revivalist and restorationist framework, the radical evangelicals and early Pentecostals saw themselves as restoring the apostolic mission. It is this context that led to the North American Pentecostal experiences of 1901 and 1906. However, the history adduced above means that North America's Azusa street revival was not a " sudden new start" but rather a continuation and growth of ideas that had their origins much earlier" (Anderson, 2003, P. 13). Its revivalist and restorationist motif also runs through African Pentecostalism as will be seen later. The study investigated how the revivalist motif influenced the coming of Pentecostalism and its charismatic variant in Africa and Kenya in particular.

Pentecostalism is grounded in the 19th Century evangelicalism manifesting itself in pietism/puritanism, methodism and Holiness, faith missions, and healing movements. But theologically and ecclesiastically, all these precedent movements and Pentecostalism, in particular, were an attempt to make sense of the New Testament in a post-apostolic period(s). The restoration motif is centred on the book of Acts especially chapters one and two, while Protestantism centred on Pauline Theology. Pentecostalism leans towards Luke, especially in Acts. In essence from pietism/puritanism to methodism and holiness, and faith missions and healing

movements, a theological idea of preaching the "whole Gospel" is created. This is why radical evangelicals and early Pentecostals saw themselves as restoring the preaching of the whole gospel as well as restoring the Church after the dark ages. Dayton (1987, P. 19-20) captures this in a classic quote:

During the Reformation, God used Martin Luther and others to restore to the world the doctrine of justification by faith. Rom.5:1. Later on, the Lord used Wesley and others in the great holiness movement to restore the gospel of sanctification by faith. Acts 26:18. Later still he used various ones to restore the gospel of divine healing by faith (Jas.5:14, 15) and the gospel of Jesus' second coming. Acts 1:11. Now the Lord is using many witnesses in the great Pentecostal movement to restore the gospel of the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5) with signs following. Mark 16:17-18; Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; 19:6; 1:1-28:31. Thank God, we now have preachers of the whole gospel.

2.2.4 NEO-PENTECOSTALISM IN KENYA

Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity (NPCs) emerged in the 1970s bringing with it changes to the religious sphere of Kenya's Christianity. However, to understand the origins of Neo-Pentecostal in Kenya, its historical and theological precedents anchored on mission Christianity, indigenous/independent churches and classical Pentecostalism must be explored. The proceeding section then situates the history of NPCs in Kenya in five themes: missionary Christianity, African independent/indigenous Churches (AICs), Classical Pentecostalism, East African Revival movement (EARM), independent/indigenous Pentecostal churches, and now the Neo-Pentecostal/charismatic churches.

2.2.4.1 Missionary Christianity

This is associated with European and American mission agencies between the 18th and 19th Centuries in Africa. Scholars (Mugambi 2009; Shaw 1996; Sundkler & Christopher, 2004; Baur 1994; Shaw 2004; Kalu, 1980; Githiga, 2001; Sundkler & Steed, 2004; Sandgren, 1999; Gifford, 2009; Ukah, 2007) have extensively explored missionary Christianity in Africa. Missionary Christianity favours missionary

historiography which emphasizes the role of the expatriate missionary as the church planter and discipler (Shaw, 2004). This historiography perceives the African as a compliant/ unquestioning receiver of the missionary gospel and culture; predominantly a story of the white missionary establishment. Missionary historiography being regarded by African scholars as propagandist was met with nationalistic historiography. Nationalistic historiography is seen as a reaction against Euro-American dominance. This study perceived nationalistic historiography as a response of the African people expressing "indigenous" appropriation of the new faith. The Africans were not a tabula rasa upon which the missionaries wrote their gospel, but they had their religion(s) and an organized social order; hence, they responded differently to the missionary gospel. In seeking to strike a balance between the two approaches, ecumenical historiography was espoused. However, Shaw (2004) warns that ecumenical historiography just like others has the capacity of being propagandist since not all Christian churches have joined ecumenism; thus, the possibility of unfair interpretation. This study sought to understand how missionary Christianity is one of the precedents to Pentecostalism and later Neo-Pentecostalism, adopting a kingdom framework as discussed previously in telling story of Christianity in Africa.

Therefore, in exploring the mission of Christianity and its impact as a precedent to Pentecostalism, and the response of the African people, the story should be founded on the perspective of the entrance, development, and establishment of God's kingdom among individuals and communities *visa- a- Vis* the response they gave. One of the outstanding features of missionary Christianity is its connection to colonialism where the success or failure of this overlap can be debated. In Kenya for example, there existed a close connection between missionaries and colonial masters that the locals developed

a statement, "There is no difference between a priest and a colonial master" (Githiga, 2001). This overlap had consequences leading to cultural and ecclesiastical conflicts.

Theologically, the missionary gospel especially its protestant version was centred on salvation. Its key terminologies were "rebirth' or "change of heart after conversion" (Githiga, 2001). Pentecostalism later built on this theology of rebirth and conversion, adding a pneumatic strain. Ukah, (2007) in writing about mission Christianity concerning Pentecostalism sees three other features of mission Christianity: The Euro-American theology, liturgy, and method; the use of foreign language, and the Euro-American culture. All the three features had extreme alienation elements to the African people. The structured and systematized theology was new to African believers as well as the worship. Another alienating factor was the foreign language as a medium of communication. Fuelling the fire of alienation was the Euro-American culture with its superiority paradigm; thus, demonizing African culture and the people as well. Helgesson (2006) paints the picture for 'us' in that the missionaries perceived Africans as "savages" in need of liberation from their "barbaric" stage of development towards the stage of "civilization" represented by the western/missionary culture. The civilization narrative was strong that Livingstone, a pioneering missionary in Africa believed that, "the general influence of 'civilization' was more important than the conversion of individuals" (Welbourn, 1965, P. 73; Githiga, 2001, P. 22).

To intervene in Africa's "barbaric" stage, the missionaries introduced their social ministry as represented in education and hospitals. Both education and medical care were seen by the expatriate missionaries as part of the great commission. However, it is observable that their gospel aimed at changing the African way of life. In this regard, a spiritual conversion meant a change from African culture to western culture with an idea of development based on economic and monetary concepts (Githiga, 2001;

Welbourn, 1965). The increased levels of alienation from the missionaries together with land alienations from the white settler community prompted a response from the Africans. For example, the salvation preached by missionaries leaning more towards "saving souls" from moral sins made the missionary Christianity a list taboos (Anderson, 2015, P. 65). Worse still was the distortion of the holistic integral African worldview with the missionaries introducing a demarcation of life between the secular and the sacred. For example, the problem of sickness was given a secularized answer by western medicine in hospitals. In primal Africa, sickness, healing, and protection from evil were part of the religious life; part of a holistic African worldview. Anderson (2015, P. 65), reasoning from a Pentecostal history concludes that the established mission churches in Africa preached a gospel message that was out of touch with the daily experiences of the Africans. But it is important to note that despite the lapses by the missionaries, the kingdom of God conquered the lives of individuals and was established in Africa and Kenya in Particular. The efforts of the mission agencies bore mainstream Christianity like the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), Africa Inland Church (AIC), and Roman Catholic Church among others. However, the alienating features of missionary Christianity in collaboration with colonial masters led to an African response, religiously, socially, and also politically. The AICs were the immediate response to the both political and ecclesiastical dominance of the whites.

2.2.4.2 African Indigenous Christianity

This type of African Christianity has attracted various labels such as African Independent Churches (AICs), African initiated churches, African independent Christian movements (AICM), and African Religious initiatives (Shaw, 2004, P. 282). All these names are emphatic of their 'Africanness' in origin and practice. The purpose

of this section is to ground the AICs as precursors to African Pentecostalism and then to Neo-Pentecostalism. Though from an African perspective, the section will be nuanced to the Kenyan church history.

According to Ukah (2007, p. 8), AICs are dated in the early 20th Century. They are characteristic of those churches that broke away from the mission churches or mainstream missionary churches or were founded independent of European missionary efforts and were headed by Africans. They mostly emerged on the African religious scene before independence and they tend(ed) to be revivalists. Barret (1968, p. 68) and Shaw (2004, p. 282) estimate that by 1970 there were about 13 million AIC members. South Africa was leading with the highest numbers (3000 thousand various AICS groups), followed by Nigeria with 700 and then Kenya with 150 (Barret, 1968, p. 64). By 1990, a study by John Baur estimated AICs at 8000 groups accounting for thirty million followers (Baur, 1994, P. 353; Shaw, 2004, P. 282). The above statistics are an expression of the fact that AICs are an indispensable aspect of African Church historiography.

Debates on what triggered the origins and spread of AICs are varied. However, there is a common agreement that they are a result of Africans responding to white missionary and colonial supremacy. As already noted in the previous section, missionary Christianity brought certain alienations to the African people besides its failure to adequately address their needs. For example, the African understanding of evil as found in the African worldview and cosmology was very different from the western missionary's understanding. Shaw (2004, p. 283-284) captures a threefold understanding of African cosmology on evil. The first one was the concept of evil as **humiliation and shame**. Therefore, alienating an African by inhumanly treating him was tantamount to evil. The second understanding was the “**mysterious world of the**

spirits". The second category was feared for it was what destroyed life through sicknesses, famine, pestilence, and witchcraft among others. For the missionaries the hospitals took care of the sicknesses; however, for Africans, a religious remedy was needed. The third aspect of evil was the alienation **of humanity from God**. Though already an aspect in primal African religion but now more explicit in missionary theology, it needed an understanding from an African worldview more essentially how in the new faith one conquers the powers of darkness. As the bible was translated into African languages, the African Christians appropriated the biblical teachings in their indigenous ways and thus, resulting to conflict with the missionaries as they realized the inherent gaps. Further and to a large extent, the alienation of the Africans as secondary human beings in comparison with the expatriate missionaries, coupled with land alienation and forced labour from the colonial masters forced Africans to start independent Churches.

In African church historiography especially the study of AICs with respect to Pentecostal and charismatics, a debate has always existed on whether AICs should be included in African Pentecostalism (Kalu, 2008, p. 65). The pneumatic posture prevalent in these churches has been the source of justification for marking them part of African Pentecostalism. This pneumatic aspect exhibited in prophetism, healing, eschatology (envisaged in millennialism), and opening the space for women leadership makes AICs synonymous with pentecostal/charismatics. Anderson (2015, p. 67) for example, places AICs under the name "African independent 'spirit' churches" under the subtopic, types of Pentecostalism in Africa. The implication is that the Zionists and Aladura churches are part of the growing African Pentecostalism. Other proponents of this inclusion of AICs to African Pentecostal historiography are H.W. Turner, Walter Hollenweger, Rosalind Hackett, and Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (Kalu, 2008, p. 69).

The argument of these scholars is on common religious forms between AICs and pentecostal/charismatics. Other scholars such as Poewe and G. Oosthuizen see the inclusion as anchored on common and shared worldviews between AICs and Pentecostals/Charismatics.

Despite the shared primal African worldview, common religious features, and the pneumatic posture as a common denominator between AICs and pentecostal/charismatics, there are glaring distinctions that defy their inclusion. This study took the opinion that AICs are not an extension of African Pentecostalism; rather they form the roots of African Pentecostalism. This is done, though with an acknowledgment that although there is sharing of the African worldview, and emphasis on the pneumatic element, the differences are enormous to allow for the inclusion of AICs in African Pentecostal terrain. This debate on inclusion and exclusion is broad for discussion in this study¹⁰.

Typologically, AICs can be grouped into two categories: the Ethiopian, and the prophetic (Zionist and Alandura). This section discusses these typologies grounding them as precedents to Neo-Pentecostalism in Africa but particularly in Kenya. The Ethiopian-type churches were not different in terms of doctrine from the mainstream missionary churches from which they separated (Shaw, 2004, p. 283). They also carried with them some political sentiments against colonialism. But Gray (1990; 1999; Shaw, 2004), captures the reason for their existence as being racial discrimination as well domination in church and state by the whites. AICs especially of the Ethiopian type have been criticized for abhorring political ambitions. However, Falk (1979, p. 455) rightly observes that the underlying ideology of AICs was the conversion of Africans

¹⁰ For the purposes of this study, the AIC's are assigned the aspect of being the roots to Pentecostalism. See Kalu 2008 for a complete discussion on the distinction between AICs and Pentecostals.

and an establishment of a Christian theocracy to embrace all of Africa. Examples of Ethiopian-type AICs were the Nigerian Native Baptist church by Mojola Agbebi, the Tembu National church in South Africa by Nehemiah Tile, and the African Greek Orthodox Church in Uganda by Spartas. In Kenya, there was an outburst of AICs in the 1930s and 1940s (Shaw, 2004: 288). An African orthodox church was started in central Kenya among the Agikuyu and in 1947 most schools and churches broke away from AIM. The Ethiopian type of church while against the domination of white in Church and State opened the way for the 'Africanization' of the gospel leading to the next typology.

The prophetic churches were the second type of AICs. They are mostly known as Zionist or Aladura churches. Shaw (2004, P. 289) poignantly notes that these churches were formed around a charismatic figure. The charismatic leader was claimed to have a metaphysical force (Ossthuizen, 1992, P. 19: Shaw, 2004, P. 289) that promised to solve people's needs, especially one related to sickness and illnesses as well as misfortunes emanating from an African worldview of spirits –entrenched in sorcery and witchcraft. Examples of such prophets were Isaiah Shembe in South Africa, W. Wade Harris in Ivory Coast, Simon Kimbangu in Zaire, and Garrick Braide as well as the Aladura prophets in Nigeria (Shaw, 2004)¹¹. These churches had several features as historical and theological precedents to Neo-Pentecostalism. One, they were emphatic on prophetism. For example, Shembe, Harris, and Kimbangu saw themselves eschatologically as the last final prophets ushering in the second coming of Christ. The prophetic element would be carried heavily within Neo-Pentecostal theology and practice by utilizing the fivefold gifts of the Holy Spirit: Apostles, prophets, teachers,

¹¹ See a full discussion of these prophets by Shaw (2004), 290-296

evangelists, and pastors. Today in Kenya, most of the Neo-Pentecostal preachers carry titles such as “prophet so and so” or a combination mostly referring to themselves as “apostles”. Another feature of these churches was an emphasis on healing. Borrowing from the African cosmology, sicknesses, and general life misfortunes were given a religious (spiritual) origin and the remedy as well – from evil spirits of sorcery and witchcraft as well as the spirits of the dead and curses. The contemporary Neo-Pentecostal theology as reflected in preaching has an emphasis on exorcisms and deliverance as well as healing from powers and curses. Shaw (2004, p. 289) observes that the healing power of the charismatic prophet was critical for example among Zionist churches in South Africa. Today in Neo-Pentecostal churches and their media, miracles, and healing are part of their practices even found in their adverts for open-air preaching. The third element is an emphasis on prayer. For example, the Aladura movement meant the praying people. Neo-Pentecostalism encourages prayers even with night vigils. Finally was the idea of a “purer church and life”. Prophetic churches saw the mainstream churches as tainted; therefore, calling Africans to leave and join the AICs which were “pure”. These are not the only elements as others like approval of women as prophetesses, millennialism, and others feature in AICs. Most importantly they were significant pointers to the development of Neo-Pentecostalism. Kalu (2008, p. 70), emphatically grounds the contemporary Pentecostalism in “African Prophetic Christianity” by observing that:

These prophets tilled the soil on which modern Pentecostalism thrives. They were close to the grain of African culture in their responses to the Gospel and the felt resonance between charismatic indigenous worldviews and the equally charismatic biblical worldview... William Wade Harris trekked from Grebo Island through the Coast to the Gold coast (Ghana) baptizing, healing, teaching new choruses, and charismatizing the religious landscape. The charismatic fire that (prophets) lit became more important for Christianity in Africa than the grand (1910) Edinburgh conference that shut out African voices (Kalu, 2008: x).

The evidence of Kalu's observation is revealed in the next revivalist movements borrowing from the prophetic Christianity of earlier AICs brought home the birth of classical Pentecostalism. This is discussed in detail in the following section below.

2.2.4.5 Classical Pentecostalism

According to Mwaura (2008), classical Pentecostalism emerged in the 1920s with its inception and growth credited to Pentecostal missionaries from America and Canada. They are associated with Friend's Quaker mission (FAM) and Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada revivals (Kalu 2008; Kasiera 1981; Samita, 1996). These revivals arose in the already existing mainstream churches and thus, the formation of classical Pentecostal churches. They arose as Holy Spirit movements. The key movements are the Revival movement in 1912 in the Anglican Church in Kenya and the Revival movement among the Quakers in Western Kenya

Mwaura (2008, P. 183), argues that the Anglican Church of Kenya revival was pioneered and spearheaded by young people with emphasis on strong pneumatic elements – commonly charismatic (Roho) tendencies. Ibrahim Osondo and Alfayo Odongo Mango are credited as the leaders of this movement. The pneumatic elements in this revival involved baptism of the Holy Spirit plus a host of spiritual experiences. Within the same period in 1928, the revival among the Quakers came buttressing the grounds for the coming of the Neo-Pentecostal charismatic variant in Kenya. This revival had strong pneumatic features expressing themselves in public confessions of sins, fasting, night vigils, and spiritual emotionalism (Kalu, 2008, p. 43). Western Kenya, particularly Kaimosi did not just happen to be the place of this revival. Strategic occurrences existed that prepared the ground. The most salient one was the completion of the railway line from the Coast (Mombasa) to Kisumu in 1901 and Western Kenya (Especially Kaimosi and Malava) in 1920. Uganda being the new British protectorate,

Western Kenya being at the border of Kenya and Uganda proved a promising connection for colonial masters. With the missionaries coming along with colonial masters, several missionary agencies surged in Western Kenya. Among others, two stood out for this study; the Apostolic Faith Mission of Iowa (AFM) and Friends Africa Mission (FAM Quakers). Their spirituality was marked by an element of being charismatic. Kalu (2008, P. 43) observes that their charismatic orientation owed to the 19th Century evangelical awakening. The evangelical awakening was a call for active faith against the dry orthodoxy of the 16th Century. This revival took the same revivalist genes. At the same time due to the spread of Pentecostal spirituality from Azusa Street, there seemed to be a great borrowing from it. For example, Kalu (2008, P. 43) notes the connection between AFM and the Pentecostal assembly of Canada (PAOC).

According to Kalu (2008, p. 43), Arthur Chilson was the central figure in this Revival. With the FAM opening a station in Kaimosi in 1902, Chilson and Edgar T. Hole under the leadership of Willis Hotchkiss became the pastors. But critical were the efforts of Chilson and his wife Edna. Kalu (ibid) identifies him as a practical as well as an electrifying preacher. While standing in for pastor Ford (AFM leader at Malava station) who was out for Furlough and in preparation for the 1927 annual conference, Chilson put together a team of locals, four missionaries and teachers to pray. During one of the sessions in these joint prayers as Chilson was sharing from Acts 2:1-4 and Romans 10:9-13, the Holy Spirit descended upon his audience (Kalu, 2008; P. 44). The coming of the Holy Spirit was manifested by crying, shaking, falling, speaking in tongues, and public confession of sins. Thus, a new spirituality was founded expressing strong pneumatic tendencies manifested in speaking in tongues, prophecy, exorcism, and long night vigils, and an emotional liturgy. Indeed this pneumatic posture would be appropriated and refined by Neo-Pentecostals from the 1970s. The adherents of this

new spirituality were literary labelled 'people of the spirit' (*abandu baroho/abaroho*). Their strong and new pneumatic theology and practice saw them expelled from the Quaker church. Consequently, they formed their church known as African Pentecostal Church, which later split into four churches. Nevertheless, this new spirituality had a great impact on Western Kenya, but also nationally.

Kalu (2008), Mwaura (2008), and Parsitau (2010) observe the impact of the revival movements buttressed by the efforts of Pentecostal missionaries such as Rev. Otto and Maria Keller. The revival led to the birth of Pentecostal assemblies of East Africa (PAEA) which later became Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG). Through PAEA several churches, as well as pastoral training centres were planted. Kalu (2008) and Mugambi (2009, p. 10) note that by the 1930s the gospel had spread to the Maragoli, Tiriki, and the neighbouring Kalenjin and Luo communities. By the 1950s, the revival movement under PAEA had spread to the rift valley, Nairobi, Central Kenya, and Mombasa. Mugambi (2009, P. 10) notes the contribution of Claude Miller, an independent Pentecostal missionary to the establishment of PAG. His efforts were realized by the purchase of Nyang'ori land on which PAG headquarters and Nyang'ori Pentecostal Bible College are built. Further, in 1948, the Bethel bible institute was opened still in Nyang'ori.

Mugambi (2009) and Parsitau (2010), rightly observe that a major product of PAG was the birth of Nairobi Pentecostal Church (NPC) which is now Christ is the Answer Ministries (CITAM). This is another evidence of the connection of classical Pentecostalism to PAOC. This was because of the contribution of Dennis White and Ella McBride all Pentecostal missionaries from Canada who crafted the vision of an English-speaking church in the 1950s. NPC was for years led by the mother church in

Canada. Dennis White and his wife Esther, are credited with the tremendous growth of CITAM and the mentorship of the pastors.

Besides CITAM, other classical Pentecostal churches included Pentecostal Fellowship of African (PEFA), Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG), and Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK). Sheppard (2006) observes the characteristics of classical Pentecostals including; emphasis on the experience of the Holy Spirit baptism, divine healings, visions, trances, ecstasies, uncontrollable weeping, and the feeling of God corporeally, fasting, public confessions of sin, spiritual emotionalism and a strict dressing code. However, many classical Pentecostals have metamorphosed into Neo-Pentecostalism (Parsitau, 2010). Therefore, the churches were revivalists attracting young preachers with the main slogan “You must be born again” (Freeman, 2012). Classical Pentecostalism prepared the ground which together with the EARM quickened the presence of Neo-Pentecostal charismatics.

2.2.4.6 East African Revival Movement (EARM)

In 1928, the East African Revival movement (EARM) began in Rwanda and spread to Uganda, Tanzania, and then Kenya. Besides other elements like a response to white supremacy in missionary churches, this movement which was revivalist in nature took an issue with the spiritual dryness and deadness in mission churches (Shaw, 2004, p. 296; Mwaura, 2008, p. 183). This revivalist approach emphasized evangelism and spiritual renewal through charismatic gifts like speaking in tongues, and healing. Reacting to the spiritual lethargy and coldness in missionary Christianity, the revival developed a pneumatic theology and a practice centred on: Public confession of sins for salvation and forgiveness; strict personal holiness; ascetic (featured in frequent, and long periods of fasting), and moral rectitude among the members (Mwaura, 2008, p. 183). Owing to their spirituality, the revivalists were known by different names varying

from one country to another such as “*abaka*” meaning those on fire (Rwanda), *Balokole* meaning the “saved ones” in Luganda (Uganda), and *Ahonoki* – “saved ones” in Kikuyu (Kenya). Ideally, these names were to identify the new spirituality. A lot has been documented about EARM by scholars such as Warren (1954), Mambo (1973), Ayanga (1986), winters (1983), Samita (2004), Mwaura (2005), Kalu (2008), and Parsitau (2010). Together with classical Pentecostals, EARM contributed to the birth of a new Pentecostal typology which Parsitau (2010) labels indigenous/independent Pentecostal churches.

2.2.4.7 Indigenous/Independent Pentecostal Churches

Indigenous/independent Pentecostal churches emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. Their inception is situated in the work of international evangelists (Mwaura, 2008; Parsitau, 2010). According to Mwaura (2008, P. 183), from the 1960s – 1970s, Kenya experienced an upsurge of visits from international evangelists. They included: Billy Graham, T.L. Osborne, Joe Blinco, Grady Wilson, Morris Cerullo, and Oral Roberts. They held mega ‘crusades’ in Kisumu and Nairobi attracting quite a big number of attendees. Mwaura (2008, P. 183) cites the 1976 Pan-African Christian leaders assembly in Nairobi (sponsored by Billy Graham), the 1975 and 1986 mega ‘crusades’ in Mombasa, and the 1968 and 1973 crusades by Oral Roberts and Morris Cerullo respectively as major milestones in the planting of Neo- Pentecostalism in Kenya as their preaching ignited revivals. These international evangelists brought in a gospel of faith-healing coupled with training church leaders and their laity on evangelism. Their theology was pneumatic emphasizing charismatic gifts like speaking in tongues and healing.

Mwaura (2008) further notes that the efforts of these Pentecostal evangelists found fertile ground among the youths in schools and educational centres. Imbued with

this new pneumatic spirituality (against what existed in mainstream Christianity), the youths carried evangelism with great vigour and zeal. According to Mwaura (2008, P.184), the efforts of these youths bore Christian ministries such as Kenya Students Christian Fellowship (KSCF), Campus Christ Ministry, Trinity Fellowship, Life Ministry, and Fellowship of Christian Unions (FOCUS) among others. Omulokoli (2017) sees the 1950s to mid-1980s as years marked by a tremendous Christian upsurge in Kenya, especially among the youth in schools, colleges, and universities. According to Kalu (2008, p. 20) and Omulokoli (2017, p. 183-184), this new spirituality was characteristic of youths being filled with the Holy Spirit, the experience of divine miracles such as divine provisions for personal needs, healing, miracles such as raising the dead, and moral rectitude. Omulokoli (2017, p. 184) without putting types in the movement perceives it as what contributed in part to the modern Pentecostal movement (read Neo-Pentecostal) in Kenya. Just as Kalu (2008) and Mwaura (2008), Omulokoli gives first-hand information on the value of schools, colleges, and universities to the growth of the movement. He sees Maseno as the epicentre of the new spirituality. He observes the significance of the Trinity Fellowship convention in Maseno in 1971 to the growth of the Pentecostal Movement. It was in this convention that some youths such as Simon Mulandi (The founder of Christian Church international - CCI) experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the subsequent divine change in his life. The effect and impact of these ministries by students went beyond the schools to the village churches as the students preached the new spirituality during the school holidays. According to Omulokoli (2017:185-186), this new spirituality produced a very radical and revolutionary group of Christian students. Later they were appropriately dubbed "Guerrillas for Christ". The youths later appropriated the label by forming a ministry; "Guerrillas of Christ Evangelistic Ministry". Omulokoli while an

outside supporter, is credited as the brainchild of the term "Guerrillas of Christ". Omulokoli (2017, p. 186) captures the Pentecostal and almost charismatic nature of the new spirituality in the following words:

In a move in which the miracles were the order of the day, "many souls were won to Christ. The sick were healed, and the oppressed were set free. So great was the anointing of God upon his servants". As per Joel 2:28-29, the Holy Spirit set these young men and women ablaze with fire such that the lives of those who came under their Christian ministry were radically transformed.

The proof of the presence and testimony of the new spirituality was the miracle-saturated ministry of a young school girl, Margaret Wangari from Nakuru who later became the Bishop of Bethel Church. Her transformation into the new birth and new spirituality is traced to a High school Camp in 1974 by Guerrillas of Christ and also another variant of the movement; Rift Valley ambassadors. Wangare became a star and a household name after praying and healing her crippled grandmother; thus, a powerful miracle saturated in ministry in her Banana Hill Village in 1974- 1975 where she conducted weekly healings (Omulokoli, 2017, p. 186-187; Kalu, 2008, p. 22).

Mainline Christianity perceived these youths as violators of the already existing ecclesial teachings, principles, structures, and liturgy, and consequently, expelled them. Most leaders of these ministries now expelled from their mainline churches founded their churches and later became prominent church leaders. This explains why the churches that emerged are labelled indigenous/independent Pentecostals because their leadership was local. They include Joe Kayo – founder of Deliverance Church; David Kimani – founder of Bethel Mission and Rt. Rev. Margret Wangare – founder of the Church of the Lord (Mwaura, 2008, P. 185). Parsitau (2010) adds the list of the other key personalities who were the product of this revival. They include: Bishop Mark Kariuki (DCK); Bishop Arthur Kitonga of Redeemed Gospel Church (RGC); Bishop Wilfred Lai of Jesus Celebration Centre (JCC) and Teresia Wairimu of Faith

Evangelistic Ministry (FEM). Therefore, the emergence of these Pentecostal types cannot be singly attributed to international evangelists but also to unique local contexts. Parsitau (2010) notes that there cannot be a single factor that explains the emergence. She further observes that these churches operate independently and the only thing that unites them is the Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya which is the common voice uniting all the Pentecostals in Kenya. The study found that indigenous/ independent Pentecostals were the immediate precursors to the Neo-Pentecostal charismatic Churches. However, a careful reading of the history, as well as a critical observance, defies a Pentecostal typology between indigenous Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostal charismatics. Their doctrine and practice as well as the time of emergence are the same with very few differences.

2.2.4.8 Neo-Pentecostal/ Charismatics

Scholars in Pentecostalism interpret Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatics (NPCs) as the recent and contemporary typology in the Pentecostal movement (Anderson & Hollenweger 1997; Asamoah-Gyadu 2005; Kalu, 2008; Mwaura, 2008; Parsitau, 2010, 2012, Lindhardt, 2015). They are particularized as the churches and ministries that began in the 1970s and gained steady growth in the 1980s. Their origin is mostly through local leaders and local evangelism while others by international evangelists from Europe, Asia, and America and also other parts of the African continent, especially Nigeria.

According to Mwaura (2008), from the classical Pentecostal efforts and buttressed by itinerant Neo-Pentecostal preachers like Reinhardt Bonke, Ben Inn, Morris Cerullo, Joyce Meyer, Cecil Stewart, and African Nigerian preachers like Emmanuel Eni and Simon Iheacho with their frequent visits to Nairobi, from 1980s NPCs, proliferated in Kenya. It should be noted that most of the NPC's prominent

personalities were interpreting (into the local language) for the itinerant preachers as they preached in English. Others have come from divisions from the classical Pentecostals emanating from financial wrangles or moral lapses. As Kalu (2010, p. 22) observes the splintering nature of Pentecostals for the creation of new 'altars' produced an uncountable number of NPCs in Kenya. NPCs in Kenya are so many and new ones are born every other day and they involve leadership from within and also from other African countries mostly from Nigeria. In its initial stages, the movement was associated with the poor; however, today it is not the case. It has now attracted a significant number of university students and young professionals. Besides, the continuation of the Pentecostal spirituality, their biblical and theological practice adopted a faith that is focused on this-worldly blessings and deliverance theology (Gifford, 1998; Kalu, 2008; Mwaura & Parsitau, 2012).

Parsitau (2010) classifies the Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals and charismatics into five types thus, pushing the argument of lack of homogeneity in the Pentecostal movement in Kenya. According to her, the first group comprises those churches that came to the scene in the late 1980s and early 1990s mostly through the local preachers and a few from international ties or mother churches abroad. Examples of these churches include: Jesus is Alive Ministries (JIAM) by Bishop Margaret Wanjiru; Miracle Maximum Centre (MMC) by Bishop Muiro; Jesus Celebration Centre by Wilfred Lai (JCC) and Neno Evangelism Centre (NEC) by Apostle Nganga. These ministries are registered as NGOs or FBOs. Their uniqueness consists of urban phenomena, occupying public spaces, bus parks, marketplaces, lunch hour meetings, revival meetings, prayer meetings, Bible study, cinema and theatre halls, as well as conference rooms in hotels.

The second category comprises what Parsitau (2010) labels as quasi-religious ministries/structures with Neo-Pentecostal congregations emerging in the 1990s. Examples include: House of Grace International (HOG); World Harvest International Ministries, Jubilee Christian Centre (JCC), and Kingdom Seekers. Parsitau observes that the preachers in this second type were mentored by the first-generation Neo-Pentecostals. A good example is Bishop Allan Kiuna and His wife Kathy Kiuna who were mentored by Faith Wairimu of Faith Evangelistic Ministry. The third category is what Parsitau sees as the proliferation of smaller congregations, particularly in informal settlements, and residential areas in both cities and towns. Collins (2007) refers to them as informal Pentecostals. Parsitau (2010, p. 111) see Helicopter Ministries, Rivers of Joy, and love and Peace Sanctuary, among others as examples of the third category.

The fourth category comprises Neo-prophetic movements expressing a new aspect of prophetism in contemporary African Christianity. They exhibit a certain level of hybridity with their beliefs influenced by African religious worldview, AICs, classical Pentecostalism, Neo-Pentecostalism, and charismatic. A good example of this type is the Holiness and Repentance Ministry of David Owour (Parsitau, 2010, p. 111). The last category is what Parsitau labels as smaller congregations that specialize in the selling of anointing oil, salt, cards, and other ritual paraphernalia. They include churches like Around the Globe Ministries of Apostle Musili in Nairobi.

While this research appreciated the attempt of defining the Neo-Pentecostal types as adduced in the above immediate literature, it also observes the difficulty of typologies in Neo-Pentecostalism. For example, ATG which ten years ago was referred to as a smaller congregation has today grown with more than 4000 members and more than fifty branches across the country as is discussed in Chapter four. Similarly, Kingdom Seekers Fellowship has grown from a small congregation to a mega church.

However, the literature discussed above at length was important to the study for it informed on the deep roots of the Pentecostal movement from its global multifaceted origins, establishment, and development, to the contemporary origins and development of Neo-Pentecostalism in Kenya. It thus prepared the study informing it on the history of the Neo-Pentecostal churches sampled for this study; that is, Jesus is alive ministries (JIAM), around the Globe Ministries (ATG), and Kingdom Seekers Fellowship.

SECTION TWO

2.3 Theological shift; from disengagement to engagement in politics

2.3.1 Introduction

This section deals with the theological shift of NPCs from disengagement to engagement in politics. It is guided by the primary question of the study, “Did the Neo-Pentecostal shift from disengagement to engagement in politics coincide with a change in biblical and theological premises, and if so how and why did this occur?” Understanding that earlier Pentecostals were apolitical and perceived politics as otherworldly, but with a sudden change in NPCs' engagement with politics and public life in general, the study capitalized on the hermeneutical and theological premises undergirding that phenomenon. In this pursuit, the section begins by discussing the challenge(s) in doing Neo-Pentecostal theology, the hermeneutical and exegetical presuppositions undergirding it; the basic feature of the theology of NPCs then locates the biblical and theological shift. It explains how different eschatological hermeneutics and theology coupled with Pentecostal experience informed the disengagement to engagement in politics. It then opens up the space for the discussion of hermeneutics and theology of the sampled churches for this study.

2.3.2 The Challenge of Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic Theology

The discussion of Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic¹² theology is met with a challenge as manifested in the following two questions, “Do Neo-Pentecostals/Charismatics have a theology?” two, “What is the methodology for doing Pentecostal theology?” The first question has its base in Pentecostal emphasis on experience and emotionalism (of or in the Spirit of God) thus seeking to understand the nature and or dynamics of Pentecostal theology. According to Cartledge¹³ (2014, P. 254) and Jacobsen (2003, P. 2), Pentecostalism has simply been perceived as lacking cognitive posture in its theology and thus just an experience. The emphasis on experiences is evident in her worship services as well as in daily life to an extent of being referred to as mystic and fundamentalist. Hence, what normally may be referred to as “Pentecostal theology” is to many an oxymoron. Percy (1997, P. 3)¹⁴ asks the same question but he affirmatively responds that there is no existence of such a thing as ‘Pentecostal-Charismatic theology’. He firmly maintains that the Pentecostal movement is based on experience¹⁵ rather than doctrine or scripture; thus, amounting to an ideology or set of ideologies having their foundation on distorted popular concepts of divine love and power and consequently constituting a theological gloss (Percy, 1997, P. 7-8). Further, he laments that even the Pentecostal works of renowned Pentecostal authors like Walter Hollenweger, Peter Hocken, and even the Dictionary of

¹² Though this study is in particular contextualized in Pentecostal charismatic typology, in the discussion of Pentecostal theology, it includes also the classical Pentecostal variant because of the Neo-Pentecostal charismatic theology just as the history is anchored on classical Pentecostalism.

¹³ Cartledge, M. J. (2014). Pentecostal Theology. In Robeck Jr. C and Amos Young. The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism. NY: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁴ See Cartledge. J. (2004). Charismatic Theology: Approaches and Themes, *Journal of Beliefs & amp; Value*, 252:2, 177-190. DOI: 10.1080/136176704200051591 and see his bibliography for Martin Pery (1997 and 200).

¹⁵ This kind of reasoning about the experience has been an obstruction to the understanding of Pentecostal theology. It is a kind of reasoning based on the western protestant doctrine that true theology must be rational and thus experience is not part of theology. In this study, I argue that though theology should be based on sound hermeneutical principles, experience is also part of theology, experience is also a way of human beings responding to God and having a relationship with him.

the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement (1998)¹⁶ lacks a theological reflection rather than a discussion of the primal Pentecostal history (Cartledge, 2004, p. 2). Subsequently then, according to Percy there lacks a global Pentecostal theologian who shapes and defines Pentecostal/Charismatic theology. Percy's criticism of the lack of Pentecostal /charismatic theology is displayed in his humorous words, "For Charismatic's, theology is done through the hormones and not through the head" (Percy, 2003, p. 38; Cartledge, 2004, p. 2). Although Percy acknowledges the existence of Pentecostal/charismatic doctrines, especially pneumatology, he decries its lack of systematic rational aspects, such that the lack negates the existence of the theology. Though he might be seemingly right in the lack of rational aspects in Pentecostal theologizing, this study asked, is a rational, systematic, and protestant post-reformation approach to theology the norm of all theologies? And is it true that Pentecostal theologizing is devoid of rational capacity? And must theology be rational for it to be theology proper?

Jacobsen (2003, p. 2) in justifying the Pentecostal experience (as grounds for Pentecostal theology) argues that Pentecostal experience is circumscribed by an experientially driven theology thus creating reciprocity between Pentecostal experience and theology. But in his discussion, he does not show how they are related or how they reciprocate. Further, he does not elucidate the hermeneutics undergirding the Pentecostal theology he is alluding to. He only states that it is an experience guided by the truth. One is left probing what he means by truth and its basis. According to this study, this way of thinking is predominant among Pentecostal scholars and it's more subjective and less critical; thus, making the experience more mystical than a reality.

¹⁶ But the second edition has ...see Machia, 2002.

Percy, M. (1997). Is there a modern Charismatic theology? *Farming papers, Modern series*, 6, pp.1-12

Percy, M. (2000). All things bright and beautiful: a theological response, *Journal of Empirical Theology*, 13 (1), pp.35-41.

Taking an example with William Durham's experience of alleged baptism in the Holy Spirit as given by Jacobsen (2003), critical questions are left unanswered on the relationship between Pentecostal experience and theology. Durham narrates:

I was overcome by the mighty fullness of power and went down under it. For three hours He wrought wonderfully in me. My body was worked in sections, a section at a time. And even the skin on my face was jerked and shaken and finally, I strangely felt the quiver. This continued for a while when finally my throat began to enlarge and I felt my vocal organs being, as it were drawn into a different shape. Oh how strange and wonderful it was! And how blessed it was to be thus in the hands of God. And last of all I felt my tongue begin to move and lips produce strange sounds which did not originate from my mind (Jacobsen, 2003, p. 1).

Durham's experience is one of many Pentecostal 'spiritualized' discourses. However, as already stated, one can objectively question what is theological in the case of the above-cited experience or where experience and theology reciprocate. Other scholars have also struggled with locating Pentecostal theology. Veli-Matti (2010, P. 225) labours in expressing the difficulty of constructing a Pentecostal systematic theology. He locates the challenge of doing Pentecostal theology in four aspects. The first deals with the shapers of the identity of Pentecostal theology; who are the people informing its theology in general and hermeneutics in particular? This is discussed below on the methodology of doing Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal theology. The second aspect is the overwhelming diversity of global Pentecostalism. With such diversity manifested in culture and theology and ecumenism, is it possible to have a homogeneous Pentecostal theology? The third element is whether Pneumatology is the first theology for Pentecostals and whether it should continuously be. Finally, it is a challenge of getting resources for the task of theologizing in Spirit because Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals are predominantly marked by testimonies, dreams, prophecies, and such related elements and thus it's a big challenge to translate them to analytic discourse theology. Veli-Matti (2005) reasons that Pentecostals have no systematic theology but spirituality entrenched in experience. He concludes that for Pentecostals

experience is much more important than dogma. On the contrary, Young (2005, p. 33) construes Pentecostals as having a theology but refined within spirituality based on experience.

2.3.3 Hermeneutics and Methodology for Pentecostal- Neo-Pentecostal Theology

What is the best methodology for doing Pentecostal theology (PT)? What hermeneutical principles or orientation undergirds it? Jacobsen (2003) construes PT as entrenched in experience and theology. Though it is not clear what he means by that, his dependence on Steven Land's reasoning gives a picture of Jacobsen's idea. Land (Jacobsen, 2003, P. 6) perceives a PT as built on a spiritualistic but less rational platform. It is understandable now that what Jacobsen labels experience is captured in spirituality. The idea of theology with less rational emphasis is meant to challenge the traditional protestant method of theologizing which systematically presents the Christian dogma. Further, Land, in a seemingly balanced methodology, argues that PT proper must of necessity value three aspects for it to be theologically true: Orthopathy (right experience), orthodoxy (right belief), and orthopraxy (right behaviour) (Jacobsen, *ibid*).

The experiential methodology is also expressed by Cox (2002). Cox laments that he used to approach Pentecostal theology from a traditional protestant western approach. He reveals that such a methodology is incongruent with PT. He rather invokes experience as the right approach to PT; "experience of God has absolute primacy over dogma and doctrine". Consequently, he locates this experience as narrative theology whose centre of expression is a testimony. In agreement with experiential methodology in PT are Howard and Albrecht (2014, P. 235). They argue that the most distinctive feature of Pentecostals is not their theology or ecclesiastical structures but their *sense of experience with God (italics added)*. Within the context of

this sense of experience with God, Howard and Albrecht (ibid) see spirituality as the methodology for understanding PT. Accordingly, this spirituality is found in the lived experience of faith. The spirituality approach has also been espoused and held by Veli-Matti (2005, P. 223). He reasons that “spirituality rather than theology¹⁷/creeds or sociology of religion is the key to understanding Pentecostalism” (ibid). However, for Veli-Matti, the idea of the Full –Gospel is the hallmark of Pentecostal spirituality. The theme of the Full Gospel is the fivefold role of Jesus as, a saviour, sanctifier, and baptizer with the Holy Spirit; a healer and soon coming, king. The spirituality espoused by Velli-Matti, argues against Pneumatology as the matrix of understanding PT, rather as a spirituality that is Christ-centred (Christ being the bearer of the Full Gospel) (Jacobsen, 2003, P. 224).

According to Roy (2008) and Graham (1996), Pentecostals have traditionally been known for a “common sense approach to the Bible”. This approach takes the bible at face value, with a literal merging of the distance and context of the original readers and the present readers. This is in contrast to the Protestant and Post-reformation norm of Historical –critical exegesis. An analysis of some Pentecostal academic works confirms this approach to Pneumatic hermeneutics.

Gerald T. Shephard is among the first scholars to attempt a Pentecostal understanding of scripture. In his works in 1978¹⁸ (Thomas, 2009, p. 280), he observes that the historical-critical method of reading the bible is untenable in the Pentecostal

¹⁷ The separation of spirituality and theology can be very problematic. Indeed, it can only be a rational separation. In this study, it is the spirituality of the Neo-Pentecostals and Pentecostals in general that reveals their theology. The practice of their lived spirituality is what reveals what kind of theology they have; a lived theology. Therefore, spirituality cannot be divorced from theology. While the western approach to theology was greatly influenced by protestant thinking and influenced by the enlightenment period, theology is dominantly pneumatic because of its emphasis on the third person of the Trinity.

¹⁸ 1978a and 1978 b. see Thomas, J. (2009). ‘Where the Spirit leads’ – the development of Pentecostal hermeneutics. *Journal of Values & Beliefs*, pp 289-302.

tradition. In pursuit of a pneumatic approach, he penned that the Pentecostal approach to scripture; it is literal against historical-critical, experiential, and with immediate application to a believer's life. Larbi (2001)¹⁹ and Arthur and Omenyo (2013), have the same interpretation that Pentecostals are fundamentalists owing to their biblical literalism. Larbi reasons that mostly for Neo-Prophetic preachers (see charismatics) their biblical approach is "revelation knowledge"; which is manifested in the "over-spiritualization" of their spirituality. Howard, M. Ervin is another critical scholar in Pentecostal Pneumatics hermeneutics (Thomas, 2009, P. 290). Ervin, from an intersection of existentialism and historical-critical exegesis, develops a Pentecostal hermeneutics which he labels, "Pneumatic epistemology". Ervin (1981, P. 12) argues that this kind of Pneumatology is rooted in biblical faith and should have the ability to create a formula that can explain empirically verifiable experiences such as miracles, healing, and other related themes. This epistemology is subsequent to Spirit baptism (ibid). He further posits that one cannot understand the scriptures unless baptized in the Holy Spirit. This baptism creates a divine encounter between the interpreter and the Holy Spirit; thus, the interpreter gains the apostolic experience; continuity of the apostolic experience and witness in the early church. Consequently, the interpreter also reads and applies the scripture within the contemporary community of faith (immediate community of faith). He, therefore, advocates for a pneumatic continuity from the early church to the present-day Church. As a result, this pneumatic continuity is more experiential, manifesting itself in the continuity of miracles, healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues, and exorcism (Ervin, 1981, P. 18). Therefore, his ideas are Pneumatic in knowledge, based on Spirit baptism, experience, and the immediacy of

¹⁹ Larbi, K. 2001. Pentecostalism- The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity. Center for Pentecostal and Charismatic studies, 32

the community of faith. The same Pneumatic methodology though, with different emphasis (but with central features of Holy spirit baptism as a point of discernment, experience in the community of faith as expressed in biblical literalness, and the immediacy of the community of faith) has been the posture of other proponents of Pneumatic methodology (Mclean, 1984; Splinter, 1985; Moore, 1987; Mckay, 1994; Thomas, 1994; Arthur, 2005, 2005, 2009; Veli-Matti, 2005; Young, 2005; Cartledge, 2014).

Since Pentecostals are pneumatic in approach, their theology is more experiential owing to their lived spirituality. Therefore, theology is pneumatic in approach, expressing itself in the daily experiences of the adherents as they seek to relate with God. However, while respecting the uniqueness of PT, it should be based on biblical truth (based on sound biblical hermeneutics) since the bible is the standard measure of truth. The question of hermeneutics was critical in this study in seeking to understand how the Neo-Pentecostals interpret the bible regarding the meaning and engagement in politics.

2.3.4 Theological Shift: From Disengagement to Engagement

(Premillennialism to Postmillennialism and or Amillennialism and from the Gospel of salvation to the Gospel of the Kingdom)

Traditionally, Pentecostals/Pentecostal charismatics took a completely "otherworldly" approach. Even in the contemporary age, Charismatic Pentecostals on some levels have been aloof to socio-political processes (Karkkainen, 2002, P. 181). According to Gerrard (1986, p. 213 – see Velimatti 275, 179) despite the Pentecostal and charismatic strong feelings on the presence of evils in the world, “they are indifferent to the social gospel and take no interest in politics”. Jurgen Moltmann (1993) questions the presence of Pentecostals /Pentecostal charismatics in public life. He asks; what is the place of “charismata of the ‘charismatics’ in everyday life, for

example in the peace movement, in liberation struggles, and ecological movements? Moltmann critically reasons that since the charismata are not given to flee from the world to a 'world of religious spirituality but to witness the liberating lordship of Christ in a world torn with conflicts, then of necessity, the "charismatic movement must not become non-political religion let alone de-politicized" (Moltmann, 1993, p. 186).

The Pentecostal movement especially with the 1950s and 1960s emergence of Pentecostal charismatics have with time changed from the traditional "otherworldly" stance to a more "this-worldly" approach. This forms the focus of this section. What dictated the shift from disengagement to engagement? What theological and hermeneutical premise(s) and or social factors informed the changes? Is it true that Pentecostals/charismatics have completely embraced a theology of engagement?

The doctrine of eschatology stands at the centre of understanding the shift from disengagement to engagement specifically from being premillennial (pre-tribulation millennialists- Dispensational eschatology) to postmillennialist and or amillennialist. This study questioned whether it was this theological dimension that informed a shift from a "gospel of salvation to the gospel of the Kingdom and the other Pentecostal charismatic theologies and practices like the Word of faith and Prosperity theologies. Kay and Ann (2004, p. 25) observe that historically, the early Pentecostals were informed by a dispensational eschatology that was common in the late 19th and early 20th centuries among evangelicals. The dispensation theology was unique with a belief in a two-stage second advent, belief in the *literal millennium*, and a *future central role of re-established and re-gathered Israel*. While the dispensational evangelicals believed that the cataclysmic events of the Second Advent were being restricted to the apostolic era, the Pentecostals understood them as either never withdrawn from the life of the church or being restored in their time (their church age). Bosch (1991, p. 277)

though writing from a missiological dimension situates such changes within what he calls a theological paradigm shift involving a shift from premillennialism to postmillennialism within 19th Century evangelicals. Premillennialism and postmillennialism are both doctrinal perceptions drawn from an attempt to understand the millennium.

The word millennium has been associated with eschatology and or apocalypticism and other times it has been interpreted as “the biblical vision of a final golden age within history” (Moorhead, 1988, P. 30; Bosch, 1991, P. 273). In the Latin language, the term millennium derives its references from Revelation 20:4-6. With the intriguing nature of the passage, diverse interpretations ensued within protestant hermeneutics and theology and thus, approaches such as premillennialism and postmillennialism. One key element in millennium discourses is the centrality of the imminent return of Christ to establish his reign; for some before the millennium and others after the millennium giving rise to the pre and the post dichotomy. However, initially, evangelicals were not exhibiting such differences. Bosch (1991, P. 273) rightly asserts that:

Until the early nineteenth century, there was a spirit of cooperation among denominations and no clear dividing line between pre- and postmillennialists. The accent fell, rather, on the responsibility of all believers in the present and on united action. After 1830, however, the united evangelical front disintegrated. A fierce spirit of competition arose among the various Protestant denominations in North America. Differences rather than similarities were emphasized during the new "era of controversy." As it became necessary, more and more, to be explicit about what one believed, the latent divergences between pre- and postmillennialism began to surface.

Such differences were not just eschatological but also on the praxis of faith leading to a twist to salvation and humanization. Sectarian approaches emerged with some quarters emphasizing "service to the body" (gradual improvement of the society towards the start of the millennium) and others "service to the soul" (gradual deterioration of the world until Christ will come to inaugurate his righteous rule at the

advent of the millennium) (Bosch, 1991). The emergence of the two theological paradigms and how they influenced the Pentecostal shift from disengagement to engagement in politics are discussed below.

2.3.5 Premillennialism (Dispensational Eschatological) Theology of Early Pentecostals (The Gospel of Salvation)

Marsden (1980, p. 201) and Kay and Dyer (2004, p. 27) share the view that premillennialism has its roots in the nineteenth-century traditions of revivalism, evangelicalism, pietism, Americanism, and variant orthodoxies. Pentecostalism was among the species spawned by premillennialism besides Adventism, holiness movements, fundamentalists, and conservative evangelicals. This study embarks on the Pentecostal wing. The study reasoned that Pentecostal theology of the future was grounded on the understanding of Millennium; a literal one-thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. This theology has its base on Revelation 20:4-6. Before the emergence of Pentecostals in the history of world, Christianity and theology, eschatology was a significant theology for evangelicals (Bosch, 1991; Kay & Ann, 2004). Pentecostals just borrowed and transformed the existing eschatology²⁰ in line with their pneumatic nuance. The evangelical theology of eschatology featuring the millennial concept was rooted in the understanding of salvation as an individual responsibility. This understanding influenced missionary activity in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. The missionary activity embarked on the salvation of the masses of the world before the premillennial return of Christ. Indeed, understanding of the second advent of Christ

²⁰ But this study found out that in contemporary Pentecostalism (both classical and NPCs) eschatology is a very rare subject or theme of preaching. In the evangelical tradition where the pandemics or earthquakes or any other crisis would be taken as a sign of the imminent nature of the second coming of Christ, in Pentecostals and their charismatic variant it is not so. Such occurrences are interpreted as the work of Satan whose purpose is to destroy God's plan for the born again, who are perceived to be destined to enjoy life and prosperity on earth.

captured within a millennial posture took three approaches within systematic theology; Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, and Premillennialism (the last one attracts the attention of this section as discussed below)²¹.

With the three millennial approaches, the early Pentecostals aligned themselves to premillennialism. This view holds that Christ will return before the millennium. It should be understood that historically and within systematic theology, premillennialism has a double approach: classic/historic and pre-tribulation, premillennialism/dispensational premillennialism (Grudem, 1994, p. 1111- 1112). The classic or historical premillennialism construes the continuation of the present church age until towards the end of it when the great tribulation will occur on earth. After the tribulation, Christ will return to establish His millennial reign. There is however a variety of the meaning of the millennial reign some taking it to mean a literal; one thousand years and others symbolically; about a long and indefinite period (Grudem, 1994, p. 1112). Christ's millennial reign will exhibit perfect peace. The perfect peace is attributed to the binding of Satan (Rev.20:1-3). Christ will reign together with resurrected believers and those found on earth in his return. This view holds that non-believers will also turn to Christ during this one-thousand-year reign though not all of them. Further, at the end of the one thousand years, the devil will be released, and join forces with the non-believers to wage war with Christ and his elect. However, according to classic premillennialism (Grudem, 1994), Satan and his army will be defeated. Christ will then bring to life all unbelievers who died in the history of time to appear on the day of Judgment. The believers will enter the eternal blessed peace and non-believers the eternal torment.

²¹ For a detailed discussion of the millennial eschatology see Grudem, W (1994). Systematic theology an Introduction to Biblical doctrine. MI: Inter-varsity Press (pages 1109-1139).

Dispensational premillennialism is the second approach in premillennial eschatology. It was the position adopted by early Pentecostals (Kay & Ann, 2004, p. 25 Vlas & Sav, 2014). The evidence is found in their statement of faith. A practical example is the Statement of Faith of Word Assemblies of God article 11 on End Time. A paragraph on one of the article reads:

We believe in the *premillennial* (italics added), imminent, and personal return of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ to gather His people unto himself. Having this blessed hope and earnest expectation, we purify ourselves, even as He is pure, so that we may be ready to meet Him when He comes (John 14:1-3; Titus 2:13;1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; 1John 3:2-3; Revelation 20:1-6). (Young, 2014, p. 29).

According to Grudem, (1994, p. 1113:25) and Kay and Ann (2004), dispensational premillennialism was common in both the United Kingdom and the United States in the 19th and 20th Centuries. As hinted earlier, it was prominent among evangelicals. Beyond the common denominator with classic premillennialism of Christ returning before the millennium, dispensational premillennialism has its unique points; First, Christ's return is before the great tribulation thus pretribulation premillennialism – believers will not experience the great suffering. Second, is the double return of Christ that is before the tribulation and at the start of the millennium. The first one will be a secret return only to be experienced by believers; theologically referred to as the rapture. Within systematic theology, the double advent is referred to as, one, "coming for the saints" (rapture) and two, "coming with the saints" (the beginning of the one thousand-year reign). This understanding is anchored on 1Thess. 4:13-17. There is also a borrowing from Revelation's idea of 3 1/2 years on the understanding of SEVENS creating an understanding that after rapture, believers will be with Christ in space for seven years after which they will descend for the millennial reign²²

²² For further discussions see Grudem, pages 1112 -1113.

Kay and Dyer (2004, p. 25) as well as Vlas and Sav (2014, p. 155) observe that the Pentecostals adopted dispensational eschatology to interpret the future events as pre-ordained. But of critical importance is the ‘pneumatological’ angle the Pentecostals brought to this theology. The belief in the pouring of the Holy Spirit in the 20th century was an incentive to preach the gospel, as it signalled that the end of the world was almost at hand and thus, ushering in a new age. However, in the context of this study, this approach was not new. It was evident in the evangelicals of the 19th century²³ who embarked on preaching the gospel to hasten the coming of Christ (see Bosch, 1991, p. 273 -276). With an emphasis on the Olivet discourse (Matt. 24), the Pentecostals perceived the events from a pre-ordained spectrum, and with the fusing the 20th-century outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a *dispensational but pneumatological eschatology* was born. The Pentecostal pre-ordained eschatological scheme was presented in timelines/charts. Kay and Ann (2004, P. 26) note that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the 20th century and its equation to the "latter rain" is very significant. Borrowing from the Israelite idea of the former rain and latter rain²⁴ the latter rain is equated with the 20th Century outpouring of the Holy Spirit²⁵. Kay and Ann reason,

...the identification of the Holy Spirit with the latter rain indicates that a period of abundant spiritual harvest is forthcoming before the end of the age. It gives a wider eschatological purpose to the phenomenon of speaking in tongues and the charismaticization of the church (Kay and Ann, P. 2004:26)

The Pentecostal equation of the pouring of the Holy Spirit with the latter rain informed how they interpreted their involvement in politics and general public life. The

²³ While the 19th C evangelicals had a balanced theology that allowed them to get involved in the socio-political issues, the Pentecostals with a dominant theme of pneumatology, stressed the presence of the Holy Spirit in an individual’s life to the detriment of the social life. It was just the same case with African Pentecostals, while the African context was religio-Political, the Pentecostals were emphatic on personal spirituality; holiness/purity at the expense of the social-political dimension.

²⁴ The former rain was interpreted as the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as evidenced in Acts 2. The latter rain was equated with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the 20th century.

²⁵ Among the Israelite community, the rain seasons were marked by former rain and latter rain. Former rain came before the planting of the crops but the latter rain would fall before the harvest, swelling the grain and the fruit and thus, increasing the yield at the end of the agricultural year.

manifestation of the Holy Spirit and particularly with the sign of speaking in tongues was significant. The gift of speaking in tongues was interpreted as significant missionary empowerment in evangelizing the nations. This understanding was based on Jesus' Olivet discourse in Matthew 24:14. It made the gift of tongues significant as it aided in propagating the gospel of the kingdom to all nations (Kay & Ann, 2004, p. 25; Vlas & Sav, 2014, p. 155). This created what is commonly known in the Pentecostal circle as the "Gospel of salvation"²⁶. This understanding created an "eschatological hope" perceived through the imminent return of Christ. As a result, it contributed to great evangelistic and missionary zeal and practice (the gist of the Gospel of salvation), as it would hasten the return of Christ²⁷. Further, and within the scope of this work, it should be noted that this eschatological hope based on a dispensational theology, meant that, the early Pentecostals, perceived their main purpose as "saving the nations" to hasten the return of Christ. According to Gerrard (1986); Moltmann (1993); Kaikkainen (2002) and Vlas and Sav (2014), this was done to the detriment of social concerns. Politics was deemed as part of the corrupt and evil systems that Jesus would defeat at the beginning of the Millennium. This means that premillennialists were dichotomous with a clear-cut line between; the good and evil; the saved and the lost. As a matter of consequence, the lost needed salvation so as not to fall into the impending judgment when Christ returns. The social world would be fixed once Christ establishes his millennial reign and therefore it was of no or minimal attention to the premillennialists.

²⁶ The Gospel of salvation means a complete preoccupation of the church with evangelistic and missionary work. Since Christ is coming soon, involvement with the world either socially or politically is ignored. The believer is focused on saving souls for the imminent return of Christ and eternal bliss.

²⁷ See how David Bosch (1991) exploits this idea within the context of missionary theological paradigms. Therefore, the gospel of salvation was not a new idea crafted by Pentecostals, but rather an idea adopted from the evangelicals of the 19th C. D.L. Moody was a major proponent of this approach that the church existed for the conversion of the world, something which was manifest in his preaching.

Dispensational eschatological theology explains the disengagement of early Pentecostals from politics. It had its hermeneutical basis in the Olivet discourse and other biblical portions (Rev. 20:1-4; I Thes. 4:13-17) that hinted at the pre-tribulation return of Christ. It was this theological view that placed the primary existence of the early Pentecostal church within evangelism and mission work. This posture would hasten the return of Christ and usher in the millennial reign. Therefore, revivalism and evangelicalism adopted premillennialism, and progressively the protestant social gospel was replaced purely by a gospel of salvation which was dispensational in orientation (Bosch, 1991, p. 274). The gospel of salvation was exclusively emphatic on the gospel verbal evangelism at the expense of social involvement. Marsden (1980, p. 86, 120) summarizes it as, "Over time virtually "all progressive social concern, whether political or private, became suspect among revivalist evangelicals and was relegated to a very minor role". Premillennialism was then served to the soul and not to the body neither as a mixture of the two. Pentecostalism, as discussed earlier in this chapter emerged from the revivalist, evangelical, and holiness movements of the 19th Century. As a result and in agreement with Kay and Ann (2004), they also adopted the same premillennial traditions. But what changed later such that the Neo-Pentecostals became and manifested postmillennialism tendencies and approaches in their spirituality and praxis and thus from the gospel of salvation (message of salvation) to the gospel of the kingdom? How did these changes occur and how did they inform a shift from disengagement to engagement (from service to the soul to service to the body (social engagement)? This is discussed in the section that follows.

2.3.6 The Shift: Premillennialism to Postmillennialism Eschatology

(From the Gospel of Salvation to the Gospel of the Kingdom)

The study could not address this section without going back to its original premise and question, “Did the Neo-Pentecostalism’s shift from disengagement to engagement in politics coincide with a change in biblical and theological premises, and if so how and why did this occur?” Equally important was the question, was it just a theological shift that dictated the change, or were there other factors? The previous section dealt with the dispensational eschatology of the early Pentecostals, with an emphasis on the 'Gospel of salvation. This section discussed the shift from a Pre-tribulation to Postmillennialist eschatological theology. The section attempts to explain what underlined that theological shift and consequently, the praxis.

Bosch (1991) arguing from the vantage point of missiology and in particular paradigms in missiology, advances a paradigm that helped this study in locating the theological and practical shift from disengagement to engagement in social issues (read politics here). Bosch borrowing from Marsden (1980), argues that it was the social changes that informed this shift. It was the effects of the First World War, the Russian Revolution with its attendant communism, the American anti-communism ideologies, and the effects of the Second World War historically known as "The New Religious Right". In essence, these social crises called for a Christian reconstruction to deal with the emerging social problems which the then church could not run away from and which could not be solved utilizing the old biblical-doctrinal approaches. A critical Christian reconstruction and significant to this study was the emergence of the Prosperity Gospel of Kenneth Hagin (Bosch, 1991, p. 278). While Kenneth Hagin’s eschatological orientation was premillennialist, his fundamentalist hermeneutics which later influenced Neo-Pentecostal spirituality and praxis of faith, significantly contributed to the shift from

disengagement to the engagement of Neo-Pentecostals in society. Bosch (1991) explains that the prosperity Gospel of the Hagin was attractive to the American unworldly mobile as it was perceived as blessing their aspirations and achievements as well as relieving them from guilt feelings (of materialism as taught by revivalism and conservative evangelism). Further, the unworldly mobile class preached the message of their virtuous wealth as a commendable example to the poor (Ibid). This study concluded that with the emergence of the prosperity Gospel of Hagin which was fundamentalist in nature, a different hermeneutics looking at the 'nowness' and the not the future millennium was born. This was to influence the Neo-Pentecostal theology of public engagement.

It was what brought a paradigm shift from premillennialism to postmillennialism. According to Bosch (1991), in the middle of the 19th Century, postmillennialism had started though gradually stamping its authority in some quarters of American Protestantism. While no one doubted the cataclysmic end of the world, within the new Christian reconstruction, attention was shifted to what can be done now in 'building God's kingdom. As already stated, the world was facing social problems which the old theologies were unable to sustain; hence, the need to deal with them as believers awaited the Parousia. This thinking spawned a social gospel as a way of advancing the kingdom of God. This theological orientation was evident among prominent theologians in the 19th Century such as Albrecht Ritschl and Samuel Harris (proponents of the American Social Gospel) ..." who Perceived God's kingdom as a present ethical reality rather than a dominion to be introduced in the future...By 1917, Walter Rauschenbusch, a major exponent of the social Gospel, could confidently declare that the doctrine of the kingdom of God was "itself the social gospel" (see Bosch, 1991, p. 278).

It was this theological shift, influenced by the emerging social problems then, with its attendant different interpretation of scripture (fundamentalist-against the

Western-Protestant model) that to a great extent contributed to politically engaged Pentecostal Charismatics; with an emphasis on the 'Gospel of the Kingdom' against the 'Gospel of Salvation'²⁸. Kay and Ann (2004, p. 38) capture this shift in the most simplistic words:

Though most Pentecostals of the twentieth century believed that Christ would literally rule in the millennial glory on earth after his return, charismatics interpreted the crucial biblical passages differently. Christ rules *now* and there are only two ages: the present age and the age to come. There is no intermediate millennial period.

The theological shift is juxtaposed with the change from classical Pentecostalism to /Neo-Pentecostalism. Although premillennialist eschatology was a fundamental statement of faith²⁹ for classical Pentecostals, with charismatic Pentecostals on the scene, the premillennialist view was questioned, doubted, and at times perceived as an embarrassment. Kay and Ann (2004, p. 35), discuss the historical development of this change of theological posture. They write that with time, the Pentecostal-charismatics started reasoning that the pre-tribulational eschatology was contentious. Further, following the eschatological works of Grier and Murray³⁰ the classical dispensational eschatology was retraced to Edward Irving and his circle of believers as having no sound biblical foundation. The eschatological works of both Peter Kuzmic and Miroslav Volf also influenced the shift from premillennialism to postmillennialism. Kuzmic (Kaikkainen, 2002, p. 181) critiqued the premillennial eschatology with its aloofness to societal concern as a Western conservative posture with its base on culture and theology rather than a "clear reading of the scripture". On the other hand, Volf believed in the existence of eschatological continuity of God's

²⁸ But it cannot be assumed that it was just the theological shift. There seem to be social and economic factors. For example, most of the initial Pentecostals were from poor backgrounds, for an imminent return of Christ for people of such a status is dominant in their spirituality. However, the contemporary Pentecostal charismatic church members express a level of affluence as exhibited materially. The "world" has become a good place to live and not a place to shun away from; in the language of prosperity wherever your feet shall set, God shall give you possession.

²⁹ See it cited as a fundamental eschatological truth in British Assemblies of God.

³⁰ See Kay and Ann, 2004: 35

reign in the present reign and the reign to come; thus, guaranteeing the validity of human efforts. With the dissatisfaction with the premillennial eschatology, a new posture emerged with the emphasis that, “it is the return of Christ which is fundamental and not the sequence or scheme of eschatological events” (Kay & Ann, 2004, p. 35).

This explains why Pentecostalism with her Charismatic variant shifted from premillennial to postmillennial theology³¹. Postmillennialism believes that Christ will return after the Millennium. Pentecostal Charismatics, while still retaining the Pentecostal main emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues, explain their postmillennial posture within the *reign* of Christ. Their emphasis is on the “already” and “not yet” dimensions of eschatology, with the understanding that “Christ reigns here and now”, thus decreasing the futurist emphasis and creating a present emphasis. This new posture is anchored on the understanding of the Kingdom of God. The new understanding was that God brings his future reign to the present with the manifestation of the preaching of “Good News to the poor” everywhere (Kaikkainen, 2002, p. 182). Fee (1991) interprets the resurrection of Christ as the grand certainty of the consummation of the future glorious reign. As a result, Christian believers await the fullness of that future consummation of God's kingdom, they should live that future in their present age. They should proclaim that Kingdom as 'Good News to the nations. Gordon Fee takes the Pentecostal infilling with the Holy Spirit as empowerment to do "kingdom works' in a world replete with human suffering (Dempster, 1989).

³¹ But while noting the theological shift, this study observed Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals although they trace their origin to Revivalist, Holiness movements, and 19th Century evangelicalism, their emphasis on the third person of the Holy Spirit has superseded the evangelical theological traditions of millennialism. Their dominant theme of pneumatology in their spirituality lacks eschatological doctrines, for them, the believer lives in the present with great efforts in making life all good in the present moment and not in the future. In other words, for Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals, the beauty of that eschatological future and or its power is lived now. This is manifested through a fundamentalist approach to biblical interpretation and experiential spirituality. This was evident in the discussions in chapter four where a very small percentage of the Neo-Pentecostal believers expressed knowledge of eschatology.

The new understanding of the reign of God was given biblical backing. A few biblical passages here reveal the new hermeneutical justification undergirding the postmillennial dimension. Here, we sample some passages as discussed by Kay and Dyer (2004, p. 35-41). The first one is a combination of Rev. 1:5-6 and Rev. 20:1-6. In this text, the phrase, "He made us a kingdom and priests" becomes the fulcrum of understanding the idea that Christ "reigns here and now". The kingdom imagery leads to the interpretation that those liberated from sin are a kingdom, meaning they reign in life now, not in the future. Likewise, the imagery of priests means that Christ's followers are priests now, in the present, not in the future. Concerning these two portions of scripture in revelation, J. Rodman Williams (Kay & Ann, 2004, p. 38), concludes:

It seems unmistakable, therefore, that both kingdom –reigning and priesthood refer in both Revelation 1 and 20 present victorious lives of all who have been freed by Christ from their sins. It is not a fact of the future, but a present joyous reign.

Kay and Dyer (2014, p. 35-41) see Revelation 5 as another passage just like Rev. 1 and 20 painting the imagery of the kingdom. Christ having bought unto God men and women, he makes them "kingdoms and priests" and they "reign upon the earth". Rodman Williams (Kay & Dyer, 2014, p. 39) from his interpretation of Rev. 5 again concludes,

...this reigning refers to the present. Reigning over the earth, therefore, signifies the victorious reign of believers over everything that formerly held them captive. It is –in the language of Paul to be 'in all things...more than conquerors' (Rom.8:37). (Kay& Dyer, 2014, p. 39).

The emphasis on the present nature of both reigning and priesthood then shifted the Pentecostal premillennial to postmillennial eschatology. A new hermeneutics was given on how to understand the millennium. While the classical Pentecostals saw (borrowing from revivalist, holiness movements, and 19th C evangelicals) it as a literal one thousand years, the charismatics approached it as being symbolic. In interpreting Rev. 20, the millennium is then perceived as a complete but indeterminate period. It is

contrasted with the eternal reign of believers in Rev. 22:5. The one-thousand-year reign is then a period before the eternal reign of saints. According to this interpretation, the millennium is placed between Christ's first coming and his final Parousia placing it as a period of the gospel age. This means, Christ's Second Advent means the end of the millennial period ushering in eternal reign (Kay & Ann, 2004, p. 39). The same is also found in the sampled churches. There is a lot of biblical interpretation and application nuanced towards spirituality controlling and influencing all spheres of human life. This is mostly done through decreeing and declaring through prayers and other ritualized practices as discussed in chapter four.

The Pentecostal charismatic postmillennial theology with its emphasis on Christ reigning now and not in the future, and its consequent belief of believers reigning now, led to a triumphalist theology³². It was reasoned, since Christ reigns 'here and now and with the interpretation of believers reigning now as kings and priests; then, they (Christian believers) must 'possess the land (the world). This understanding translated to Dominion Theology (DM) mostly known as the 'Seven Mountains Dominion Theology' (7MD). According to Vlas and Sav (2014, p. 157), the 7MD theology teaches that Christian believers must dominate the world. They must pursue the seven "mountains" of society. These "mountains" of society are: family, Church, education, government, arts and entertainment, business and media. From Pentecostal charismatic thinking, whoever occupies the top of these seven "mountains" carries the ability to influence the agenda of the nations. As a result, the followers of Christ should not just preach the gospel but must of necessity transform these seven spheres of influence as well as reclaim them from demonic forces. Lance Wallnau (2013) argues that 7MD

³² As a result of triumphalist theology, the idea of a millennium and its various interpretations of both premillennial and postmillennial disappeared in Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal theology and spirituality.

theology puts a distinction between the "Gospel of Salvation" and "Gospel of the Kingdom". In favour of the Gospel of the Kingdom (entrenched in postmillennial eschatology), Wallnau teaches that Christian believers should be taught and encouraged to "occupy their apostolic³³ assignments and occupy the most influential positions of these 'mountains'. Wallnau further elaborates, that "believers should heal and deliver the nations from demonic control by influencing six significant spheres of the society prone to demonic control. The six include: sex, racism, poverty, AIDs, undrinkable water, and illiteracy (Vlas & Sav, 2014, p. 158).

The dominion with a complete break from millennial thinking with the particulars of premillennialism and postmillennialism crafted a new theological construct that, "Christ rules here and now", and that his follower's reign with him presently. This new Christian biblical teaching then allows for the participation of the Neo-Pentecostals in society's social concerns. This is in contrast to the traditional classical Pentecostalism which was more aligned to the "Gospel of salvation" anchored on dispensational eschatology and thus, futuristic and to the detriment of social concerns. Dominion theology is displayed in the practice of prosperity theology, Word of Faith theology, and spiritual warfare. In the context of this study, prosperity, word of faith and spiritual warfare should not be perceived as distinct theologies from each other. They are taken as elements of prosperity /Dominion theology.

The prosperity aspect is known for its emphasis on wealth and health. Gerald-Bunnet (2012, p. 23) discusses the interpretation of Jesus' words, "...I have come that you might have life more abundantly" (John10:10) as the key passage in understanding wealth and healthy gospel. For most Pentecostal interpreters, these passages call for

³³ Apostolic in the sense of the continuity of apostolic power in Acts 2

material and personal aggrandizement. It is also based on the preaching of men like Aimee Sample Mcpherson with the belief that God rains down blessings upon his faithful people. This peculiar Pentecostal charismatic theology is more localized, for it addresses the material needs of the people. Further, it is amplified by the current society where success is measured in the words of Gerald-Bunnet (ibid, 22) exclusively by affluence and consumption and where also sin and grace are categorized respectively by poverty and wealth.

Therefore, the above literature was very significant in aiding the study to understand the dynamics of theological shift that affected the political practice of Neo-Pentecostals. But this study asked, was the hermeneutics only affected by eschatological teachings? This study took the position that it was a mixture of theological shift as well as social crisis calling for new ways of thinking that culminated in Christian reconstruction in theology and practice. Moreover, that was the international scene, what of the African Neo-Pentecostalism?

Throughout this study, there seemed to be a borrowing of the African worldview (African perception of God, humanity, and the environment) mixed with biblical interpretation resulting in enchanted approaches where spirits are responsible for an individual and national crisis. While the evangelical tradition of the 18th and 19th Centuries saw literate church ministers, what about the 21st century African Pentecostal preachers whom many claim are being guided by the Holy Spirit. Did they understand biblical hermeneutics with deep biblical and theological reflections on issues such as eschatology? This led the study to the next level of interrogating Neo-Pentecostal political hermeneutics. The above literature was very significant for it gave a glimpse of the biblical/theological changes based on different eschatological hermeneutics that informed the shift from disengagement to engagement in politics. Further, it remains a

sturdy foundation upon which this study sought to understand the biblical/eschatological views held by members of the selected churches and how it affects their involvement or lack of involvement in the political process.

SECTION THREE

2.4 Neo-Pentecostal political hermeneutics

2.4.1 Introduction

The previous section discussed the Pentecostal political shift from disengagement to engagement in politics. This section anchors on the Pentecostal political hermeneutics, that is, their biblical interpretation regarding political involvement. Most scholarly works on Pentecostalism and social dimension or even civic engagement, venture mostly into the nature of their involvement. Very few works have sought the hermeneutics undergirding their political engagement. As discussed earlier, Pentecostal charismatic theology is pneumatic in nature, manifested in spirituality and lived experiences.

2.4.2 Church and Politics – Towards a Political Theology

The common question has been, ‘what does the church and politics have in common? This is because, from a general perspective, religion and politics seemingly operate in opposing spheres of life. For example, in my master’s thesis, I cited the incumbent President of Uganda (Yoweri Museveni) as expressing a dichotomy between religion and politics. During an interview on Citizen TV in Kenya (in 2013) he said, “Church leaders like commenting on political issues which they know very little about, I am a committed Christian but you have never seen me baptizing people” (David, 2013, p. 54). By implication, he meant that the religious leaders should limit themselves to the spirituality of religion and politicians to politics. Just as the president cannot baptize people, so religious leaders should not participate in politics; in other words, politics is

outside their mandate. This tension and controversy exists not only in Africa but globally as discussed in chapter one. In seeking to unearth Neo-Pentecostal political hermeneutics, the study embarks on a discussion of Christian perceptions of politics, their relationship, the biblical and theological teaching on church and politics. In discussing the relationship between church and politics, a dichotomy comprising of the negative and the positive approach arises.

2.4.2.1 Negative (Limited) Approach to Church and Politics

The negative perspective on church and politics is built on a dichotomous view of life; sacred and secular. According to Shiwati (2008), this dichotomous model seeks to make the church apolitical on the pretext that her jurisdiction is in the spiritual realm. By placing politics in the secular domain, it reasons that the church can be polluted by politics. Though the argument is premised on a broad outlook of religion and politics, in essence, it is built on solid religious foundations of sacred and the profane of phenomenologist scholars such as Otto (1923), Eliade (1957), and Wach (1944). According to the phenomenological ideas of these scholars, the “sacred” entails the ‘Holy’ or ‘wholly other’; it is the hallmark of religion marked by being qualitatively different from everyday life occurrences. On the other hand, the anthropological ideas of Steiner (1956) and Douglas (1996) regard the profane as implying the ‘unclean’, ‘disorder’, and ‘incoherence’. From both the phenomenological and anthropological studies, the relationship between the sacred and profane assumes a double sense; the abstract and cognitive.

At the abstract level, the sacred and profane are exclusively different spheres of reality. Applied to the study of religion (church) and politics, then “the spheres of religious and political thought tend to be conceptualized opposites” (Gecaga, 2007, p. 60; Chacha, 2010, p. 110). By implication, the politics reflect a secular power of this

‘world’ and Church (religion) a divine power from another ‘world’. The cognitive level demarcates the sacred and profane in terms of relationships. Gecaga (2007, p. 61) perceives the profane as what is accessible to humanity. Bu Implication then politics operates in the context of human social relations while religion is concerned with men and divinities and or spiritual dimensions. (Gecaga, 2007, p. 61 Chacha, 2010, p.110). Contextually, religion deals with sacred matters while politics deals with the profane. Corollary to the ideas of sacred and profane is the birth of perceptions of politics (profane) as “dirty game” and the Church as “holy and separate” (David, 2013. P. 62)

Politics has been and continues to be labelled a ‘dirty game’ by some if not a majority of Christian believers. This label is gleaned from the vices evident in political practice across the globe. A good example is Blaine Harden’s (O’Donovan, 2000) description of description of the status of political leaders in modern Africa:

A big man who looks like this: His face is on the money. His photograph hangs in every office in his realm....He names streets, football stadiums, hospitals, and universities after himself. He insists on being called doctor... ‘the big elephant’ or ... ‘the wise old man’ or ‘the national miracle’. His every pronouncement is reported on the front page...He scapegoats minorities to show up support. He rigs elections. He emasculates court justice. He cows the press....His enemies are detained and exiled, humiliated or bankrupted, tortured or killed. He uses the resources of the state to feed a cult of personality and defines himself as incorruptible, all-knowing...and kind to children. His cult equates his well-being with the well-being of the state.

Though the above quote is not exhaustive, it serves to express the vices present in the practice of politics especially in many African Countries. Consequently, it leads to the definition of politics as ‘dirty’ and outside the scope of church mandate. Most Christian believers even give a biblical justification. They cite verses like Romans 12:2, “do not conform to the standard of the world (read politics),” or I John 2:15-17; “warning not to love the world (profane – add politics included) and Jesus teaching on God and Caesar (Matthew 22:21).

The perspective of the church as ‘holy and separate’ is attributed to the teaching of Martin Luther (Lutheran Theory whose ideas came to influence puritanism and later

Pentecostalism) the protestant reformer (Fowler, 1998, Sinnema, 1995). Luther's ideas were based on his understanding of the two kingdoms; "God's kingdom under Christ and the kingdom of the world under the governing authority". However, to a greater extent, Luther's perceptions were developed from St. Augustine's (Bishop of Hippo) conception of Rome as two cities; God's kingdom under Christ (city of God) and the kingdom of the world under the governing authority (the city of man). According to Fowler (1988, P.24), Luther's writings point that the church and state function in different spheres. The church functions in the kingdom of God where Christ is supreme while the state functions in the kingdom of men, led by men. In this sense, the church is perceived in predominantly perceived in through the lenses of "inward" and "spiritual" consisting of the "company of the regenerated by the Holy Ghost" and "ruled by Christ alone" (Fowler, 1988. P.24). Further, while the church accepts to be under the leadership of the state, the state cannot interfere with the core business of the church which entails the "preaching and administration of sacraments" (Fowler, 1988. P.24). Luther viewed the government as ordained by God with the sole purpose of maintaining law and order. However, in a literal sense, Christian believers are not governed by the civil government. Sinnema (1995, p. 82) argues that, for Luther, Christian believers get involved in government for the sake of their neighbours in helping the government to maintain law and order. This is because they are righteous; therefore, they do not need coercion by the government. This approach gives a limited approach to the church and politics. It is further buttressed by theories such as Reformed Heart and Realized Kingdom Perspectives. Besides, it is based on selected hermeneutics to express the opposite extremes of Church and politics. The above discussion gave a clue as to why Pentecostals were and are today in some aspects indifferent to the church involvement in politics.

2.4.2.2 A Positive Approach to Church and Politics

According to Gitari (1986) and Nabende (1999), this positive approach to church and politics has also been known as “progressive approach”, “creative participation” and “evaluative/critical engagement”. Chaplin (1995, p. 70) argues that in this approach, the church believes that the Gospel transforms politics. Andrew Dumas (Okullu, 2003:2) reasons that, “...the real reason as to why the church cannot run away from the sphere of politics is that it does not simply preach a particular religion ‘which is a private possibility for individuals’.

The positive approach to church and politics is based on a wide range of understanding of the connection between religion and politics. Lang (1990, p. 1) observes that “religion and politics have been inextricably related since the dawn of human history”. In the same line of thought, Nthamburi (2003, p. 149) argues that “in contemporary society, religion and politics are like twins”. Within the context of this study, it follows that, since religion and politics are intertwined, church and politics cannot be separated.

Agostoni (1997, p. 373-374) traces the meaning of politics from the Greek word “polis” – meaning city-states. In this context then, “... groups of citizens unite to pursue and exercise political power in order to solve economic, political and social problems in accordance to their own criteria or ideology”. But this forms a limited approach to understanding politics. It translates to party politics and the thus inevitable phenomenon of powerful groups pursuing their interests at the expense of others in society. Agostoni (1997, p. 373) argues against the limited approach of the party- politics; he notes that a broad approach is needed. Consequently, he defines politics from a broad perspective in the following words:

...that science that teaches man to seek the common good at both national and international levels. Its task is to spell out the fundamental values of every community in the temporal sphere and to enable the leaders of a nation to provide the community with ways and means of honest, just, and peaceful life, combating elements of backwardness, such as lawlessness, poverty, hunger, ignorance, diseases, and corruption (Agostoni, 1997, p.373).

In the same disposition, Nthamburi (2003, p. 136) approaches politics as, “...being involved in the affairs of the people and trying to find meaning to the most perplexing questions of human existence such as social ills, economics, gender equity, human rights, and governance representation”. Another broad-spectrum is the one used by political scientists. Here politics is defined as, “...the authoritative allocation of values and resources for all society (Henry, 1979, p. 65). Henry further notes that politics construed this way means that it is concerned with distributive justice. Consequently, distributive justice, implies that the allocation of resources reflects value judgments concerning what is or not a “just” allocative formula within a society (Henry, 1979, p. 66).

Politics understood from such a broad and critical spectrum of seeking the common good for all and being involved in fundamental aspects of human existence means that the church is endowed with the word of God which is the paradigm for the human society; therefore, it cannot be left out in the political life of the society. Henry articulates this understanding in the following words:

...when the Christian community speaks forcefully about concerns relative to racism, sexism, world hunger, environmental limitations, war, and so forth, it is effecting a political role – in so far as it shapes the civic culture and the public philosophy which informs the moral assumptions of the public policy. The Christian community, through its recognition of God’s call to justice in society, affects the social context, from which political decisions are made (1997, p. 67).

The church must then make the Gospel bear practical relevance to the socio-political sphere since the gospel itself holistically addresses humanity. This means that the church cannot relegate itself to the sphere of spirituality only. Moltmann (1984, p. 104) argues that the reason why the church cannot stay aloof to the socio-political

process is that the salvation the gospel brings is not private but public, not only spiritual but bodily, not purely religious but also political. Therefore, God is concerned with every sphere of human life. This is why in the same vein, Taylor (1957, p. 59) writing from the perspective of the African church warns:

If the church in Africa (by which is meant the whole Christian community spread throughout Africa but focused as it must be in the congregations of the locally organized churches) gives the impression that God is not concerned with man's social and political affairs, then men will not be very much concerned about such a God. And this is not because men wish to use God in their own ends and demand that his thoughts shall be their thoughts; but if they feel that God cares nothing for things that vitally affect their daily lives and stir their deepest emotions, they will not easily be persuaded that such a God loves them in any real sense at all.

The church is then called upon to critically preach a gospel that touches on the holistic aspects of human life; thus, amounting to making the gospel practically relevant in the day to day lives of the people, owing to the fact that the Biblical message is holistic; God engages with humanity from day to day aspects of their lives; not just the spiritual dimension. According to Moltmann (1984), this results in political theology for the church. The practice of political theology, calls the church to critique the dogmatic nature of Christian theology. While being careful not to politicize the church, it seeks the political involvement of Christians and takes upon itself the “modern functional criticism of religion” and urges a move from the orthodoxy of faith to the orthopraxis of the discipleship of Christ” (Moltmann, 1984, p. 99). In my prior work on a similar subject (David, 2013, p. 62), the orthopraxis of faith that informs church involvement in politics takes three closely related biblical perspectives: “the bible and the socio-political welfare of humanity, the prophetic task of the biblical prophets, and the messianic anticipation motif”³⁴

³⁴ For more details on this approaches, the thesis is available in Kenyatta university library repository, David, S.K (2013). *The Response of the African Inland Church to Kenyan Politics, 1975-2012*.

2.4.3 Neo-Pentecostal Political Hermeneutics

With a dominant belief in the Holy Spirit, Neo-Pentecostals approach politics from a pneumatic posture; “spiritualized politics” (Gifford, 2004; 2009; Marshall; 2010; Kalu, 2008). The Pentecostal pneumatic approach links every occurrence to spiritual causality. According to Gifford (2004:162)³⁵, Neo-Pentecostal’s political hermeneutics is anchored on spiritual causality. He locates their political hermeneutical worldview to two but closely related approaches: “enchanted” and “Biblical” approaches.

Gifford (2004, p. 164) argues that the ‘enchanted’ approach blames the political situation on the demons. Consequently, it believes that for the political situations to change, the power of the demons must be broken. Social and political ills such as poverty, economic crisis, civil wars, famine, and such related themes are interpreted as the works of evils spirits. This results in a form of spiritualization of politics with ‘spiritual language’ like the “spirit of poverty”; the ‘spirit of war’; the spirit of drought’ among other social and political crises that ensue. Kalu (2008, p. 215-216) images Pentecostal spiritualized politics as having a biblical justification. He stages it in a Pentecostal theology of “recovery of the land” and “the theology of a new community.” To the Pentecostal/Neo-Pentecostal, the land is perceived as a “gift from as well as a covenant signifier”; thus its recovery from loss is critical. Pentecostal Charismatics reason that when Man was chased from the Garden of Eden and when the Israelites (Abraham’s children) were exiled, there came a double loss, of Eden and the Promised Land. This understanding creates a paradigm of loss of a gift and by extension the weakening of the covenant relationship. The double loss was wrought by rebellion, neglected stewardship, idolatry, and pollution. Therefore, the land must be recovered

³⁵ Gifford’s study is contextualized for Ghana, however, Pentecostal and their charismatic variants display almost the same characteristics in regard to public life.

from its illegal and hostile occupiers such as the “*spirits* at the gates of the communities”. Their removal marks the renewal of the covenant and regaining of the gift (The land).

Kalu (2008, p. 216) observes that Neo-Pentecostal utilize the biblical imageries of the reign of peace and return of prosperity upon restoration for the land to its owners (believers). The Pentecostal charismatics appeal for God’s mercy and his covenant keeping nature, for a restoration of Eden and the Promised Land; though from a spiritually figurative language. Having dealt with the loss and having a renewed covenant, an army of the Lord is nurtured that deals with the political foundation. According to Kalu (2008, p. 216), this is done through exorcising the pollution caused by traditional rituals, secret societies, and practices reinvented by the predatory elite. This is the same reasoning held by Pentecostal Preacher David Arubitem (2017, p. 7)³⁶. He reasons from a spiritual causality where demons must be exorcised for the success of the country. He says, “The devil has structures that have enabled him, though not omnipresent to rule nations and keep them in bondage. He has established systems in place”. Kavulla (2008, p. 257) observes the emphatic Pentecostal / Charismatic rhetoric of spirits being held responsible for societal problems. She presents christianized politics of Bishop Margaret Wanjiru³⁷ from a spiritual perspective. This is heavily borrowed from the Bishop's campaign captions in 2007. After her anointing by Breda

³⁶ David Arubitem is Nigerian Pentecostal charismatic preacher residing in Kenya, He is the Senior Pastor of The Governing House Church International in Nairobi, Lavington. His book on: The Governmental Anointing, is a rich source of how Pentecostal charismatics utilizes selective hermeneutics in justification of the church involvement in politics. This will be discussed in the following section.

³⁷ Bishop Margaret Wanjiru is a Kenya Neo-Pentecostal preacher, the founder and senior pastor of “Jesus is Alive Ministries”. She is a clergy cum politician having been elected as a Member of Parliament in Starehe Constituency in Nairobi in 2008.

Todd³⁸ for a victorious election, arising from her knees, Bishop Margaret Wanjiru, declared:

We have eight wards in Starehe Constituency and God will be felt in each of them today....the rulership of *evil* (italics added), the rulership of dictators, they will be destroyed. I say [this evil]: Get out of my constituency, get out of the Kikuyus, get out of the Luos, get out of Kalenjins, get out of every man and woman....The captives of tribal conflict, the captives of poverty, the captives of witchcraft, we begin to set you free. ...Jesus, come and take your place in our nation. Jesus, come take your place in our parliament, in our statehouse, in every village and every town (Kavulla, 2008, p. 257).

Bishop Margaret Wanjiru, using a pneumatic posture prevalent to all the Neo-Pentecostals, described her political journey to Parliament as a “showdown between good and evil”. She viewed her political opponent, Maina Kamanda, as a representation of evil and they had clashes involving violence. At one time, while addressing her electorate and having met Maina Kamanda at the vote tallying centre she exclaimed, “Have you ever seen the *devil* (italics added) exalt himself just in front of your eyes?” (Kavulla, 2008, p. 259).

Kalu (2008, p. 216) notes that the dominance of spiritual causality gives birth to a theology of restoration and deliverance. Taking the bible as a literal historical book, Neo-Pentecostals perceive themselves as the new Israel and using the paradigm of Moses, whose staff swallowed the magician’s serpent, they coalesce into a new community of warfare. This explains why for the sampled churches, the common preaching theme was spiritual warfare. The warfare targets recovering the “blessings” and “prosperity” from Satan and his demonic agents. The Pentecostal believers then must be on the public spheres recovering prosperity from Satan and demonic agents holding people captive. This is mostly done through deliverance and intercessory ministries. According to Kalu (Ibid),

³⁸ See Travis R. Kavulla. ‘Our enemies are God’s: The Religion and Politics of Bishop Margaret Wanjiru. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol.2. No. 2 (254-263), 2008. [Http://tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?Journalcode=rjea20](http://tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?Journalcode=rjea20). Downloaded on 03.04.2017.

Pentecostals /Neo-Pentecostals give supernatural explanations for the failed socio-economic development. In this understanding, evil takes the image of a personal force that inhibits and manipulates to control places and systems. The remedy to this Satanic and demonic control of places and systems is deliverance involving the expulsion of hindering spirits from individuals, places, and offices as well as affairs of the people and communities and generally the spheres of influence (Kalu, 2008, p. 216; Arubitem, 2017, p. 20). Beyond the exorcism of the evil forces is the replenishment with new victorious power. Neo-Pentecostal discourse maintains that when one is born again, victory marks his/her life. However, in some quarters, deliverance through the breaking of old covenants such as generational family curses is called for owing to the belief that the devil is legalistic, thus may hold people captive even after the new birth.

The second approach is the biblical approach which borrows from the Old Testament Historical Books. According to Gifford (2004, p. 162), the principal biblical text is II Chronicles 7:14: 'If my people who are called by name humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and heal their land'. Pentecostal charismatics interpret this text to mean that national crises are as a result of apostasy. Gifford argues that this apostasy (according to Pentecostals) is particularly in the failure of the political leaders to worship God properly. The act of improperly worshipping God is located in the political leader(s) act(s) of consulting occult powers when running for the various political offices. From a Pentecostal charismatic posture, God gets angry and allows calamity to prevail. For the political plight to change, the leaders and the nations as a whole must repent. Proverbs 30:34: 'Righteousness exalts a nation' becomes an attendant key verse to II Chronicles 7:14. With the two verses combined, repentance leads to righteousness and

thus, inviting God into human society; hence, prosperity. Gifford's (2008, p. 163) quote from one of Ghana's Neo-Pentecostal preachers sums it all, "The bible does not say good governance exalts a nation, [or] that good policies exalt a nation...Anytime God visits a nation the economy of that nation changes. [Like the dry bones of Ezekiel 37] Ghana will rise again". In this regard, life and its occurrences are perceived from a spiritual realm. Such kind of a spiritualized worldview reaches extremes for example as Gifford (2004, p. 163) narrates, according to Neo-Pentecostal, the 2001 fuel shortage in Ghana was as a result of apostasy. The political leadership then becomes sacral in the sense that the political leaders should only and only worship God, and their worship translates to the prosperity of the nation. The implication is that the leader's functionality, and/ or productivity are not questioned, but only his automatic obedience to God.

Kalu (2008, p. 214) grounds this biblical approach in Pentecostal-Charismatic prosperity discourse, but nuanced to repentance and spiritual renewal. For the Neo-Pentecostals, impoverishment of individuals is manifested in physical (health), psychological (emotional), and material in a hostile economic environment created by the political leadership. In such an environment, Christian believers seek to restore hope and wholeness to the people. Towards this goal, the search for God's promises and assurance over anything either physical or emotional that dehumanizes the born again. Kalu (ibid) observes that this epistemological perspective produces a Pentecostal charismatic prosperity discourse. However, the prosperity here is qualitatively different for it does not concern itself with material wealth. Instead, it becomes biblical with emphasis on spiritual renewal of the relationship with God in Christ through the Holy Spirit's power. Accordingly, the spiritual renewal restores all manner of brokenness, thus, the restoration of health, economic despair, political and social wellbeing of the

individual and the community. It is important to note that this renewal and restoration are attached to repentance. Therefore, the idea of repentance first assumes a biblical posture then it is translated to bear effect to the whole of the community and nation at large. Nonetheless, it is critical to note the thin line between the enchanted approach and biblical approach of Neo-Pentecostal political hermeneutics.

Marshall (2010, p. 205) espouses a messianic dimension that reveals Pentecostal charismatic political hermeneutics. She locates it in a ‘prophetic and providential reading of history and a messianic structure of time’, which is based on the understanding of conversion. The conversion here is meant the believer's redemption; according to Pentecostalism: being born again; nevertheless, the individual salvation proceeds to collective salvation. In Pentecostal-Charismatic, this redemption has an eschatological nuance but is now premised on the understanding of the messiah. The messianic emphasis by Neo-Pentecostals is built on the “Gospel of the Kingdom” hermeneutics. The Gospel of the kingdom is a new strand in its eschatological orientation; that there is no future end time, rather the Church is living in the end time. Therefore, from a Greek understanding, the present church is living in the Kairos time in a chronological time (Marshall, 2010, p. 205); hence, it must incorporate the Parousia in every daily life (Chronological time).

This kind of understanding produces a Neo-Pentecostal's double Messianism- first with the presence of the Holy Spirit and second with the return of Christ. With the presence of the Holy Spirit as an attestation of the “already” aspect of the Kingdom of God, then a Pentecostal perception of operational time, links the past, the present, and the future. Contextually then, the believer can already enjoy the victory of Christ as well as the coming victory in the newness of time here (present age). Providentially, since God has promised (read the victory), then the believer can claim that victory in

the current generation. With the biblical teaching on the future victory of Christ over all forces in the world and the establishment of his eternal reign, a Pentecostal charismatic believer interprets the promised victory as also happening now. Citing Revelation, 5:6 & 7; 20:1-6; Neo-Pentecostals interpret believers as reigning now with Christ, though still awaiting the final consummation of the Kingdom. But since Christ died and rose from the dead in victory, Pentecostal charismatics translate Christ's victory also to mean the believers victory over anything that holds him/her (believer) captive. With this understanding, buttressed in Word-Faith theology, then the believer is taught to claim for justice and demand for 'life more abundant in 'here and now' (Marshall, 2010, p. 205). The more abundant life calls for a victorious living built on the victory of Christ over the satanic forces. This is best captured by Marshall in Pastor Ojewale's prayer for Nigeria:

...the warfare we are presently engaged in is the battle of translating the victory of Christ over the devil into every day, natural realities of our personal lives and also our political, religious, economic, and social systems. It is a battle of reclamation: to reclaim from the devil what he illegally holds in his control...it is warfare but we are on the winning side. This is the time to muster the army- the Lord's army. Here is the clarion call to battle... (Marshall, 2010, p. 197).

Marshall (2010, p. 205) reiterates that with this understanding, for the Pentecostal charismatics, individual salvation precedes the collective salvation of the society. Further, with a strong emphasis on providential thinking manifested in the word of faith and prosperity theology, every born-again believer is encouraged to be successful through struggling with demonic forces by "naming and claiming his blessings". This produces an enchanted biblical perspective in which the personal and societal problems are caused by demonic forces. Therefore, the preaching of the gospel while serving as the urgency of ushering the second coming of Christ³⁹ also acts as the redemption of

³⁹ But as already discussed, for Neo-Pentecostals the theme of the second coming of Christ is very rare. Their theology and spirituality deals with the present life of the believer. It is very rare to get a sermon on eschatology in Neo-Pentecostal circles and if any, it is a reference not a main preaching theme. Though Neo-Pentecostals are evangelistic it is not to quicken the Parousia rather to redeem the unborn again from

the land. Consequently, with the Gospel of the kingdom, encouraging the “abundance of life” in the present time, the believer then enters into a form of spiritual warfare; claiming his prosperity providentially promised by God but held by the devil illegally.

While Marshall (2005) sees Pentecostal charismatics’ zealous evangelism as meant to win the masses to hasten the return of the messiah, this study realized that for NPCs it was not about the Parousia but rather the dominion theology emphatic on spiritual warfare. Marshall (2005, p. 206) within the context of hastening the return of the Messiah (but dominion theology and spiritual warfare in this study) notes the place of biblical passages outlining the return of the messiah. Of critical example is 2 Thessalonians 2:3-9. In this passage, the “day of the Lord” will be preceded by apostasy and lawlessness; Marked by the appearing of the “lawless one”, who will be manifested after whatever is holding him is taken away. According to Marshall (ibid), the Pentecostal hermeneutics identifies the “lawless one” as Satan and his demonic hosts who are already at work in the world. Marshall further notes that among the Pentecostals mystery lies in identifying the “katechon”- the restraining force not alluded to or mentioned in the text. Marshall (2005, p. 206) reads the Pentecostal tradition of designating the Holy Spirit as the one restraining the lawless one. With the understanding of the Parousia of the spirit (both former and latter rain), the lawlessness is held back in the present age. The Pentecostal theology and practice marked by infilling of the Holy Spirit in every believer’s life translate to the “church” constituted

Satan and to make them find the purpose of their lives on earth. The purpose is commonly given terms like “finding one’s destiny” or “one’s star in life”. The bliss of heaven dominant in the 19th Century evangelicals is almost non-existent in Neo-Pentecostals. Instead, a pneumatic power gospel exists, manifested in spiritual warfare, dominion theology and practice in the lived experiences of the born again. Therefore, the preaching of the Gospel in the context of Neo-Pentecostalism should be positioned as part of spiritual warfare and not necessary for hastening the return of Christ.

as part embodying the restraining force (katechon) until the rapture (Marshall, 2010, p. 207).

The restraining of the lawlessness and wickedness propagated by Satan and his demonic agents puts the Pentecostal believer in a spiritual warfare. Neo-Pentecostals utilizes Ephesians 6:12 that expresses the nature of spiritual warfare as that against demonic forces. The spread of the gospel through evangelism is part of the spiritual battle and Marshall (2005, p. 207) puts the evangelization as the prophetic actualization of God's plan within the experiences of the Pentecostal believers. Within this context, Charismatic Pentecostals consider the battle already won: the believer is on the winning side. Biblically and theologically, the immanent is made possible in the present time but within a state of Messianic potentiality albeit this status is enacted through faith. With this understanding, the Pentecostal political hermeneutic assumes an enchanted approach with demonic forces responsible for societal problems; injustices, corruption, poverty, among others robbing the believer off the providential prosperity promised by God, and thus must be dealt with.

Neo-Pentecostalism political hermeneutics also borrows heavily from the realized kingdom model. Fowler (1987) explains that this model encourages Christians to influence the political sphere by taking possession of key structures in the society, making them instruments of God's kingdom. Owing to their fundamentalist approach, Neo-Pentecostalism results in a 'realized theocratic "fundamentalism" model. Realized theocratic fundamentalist approach reasons that Christian believers should strive to populate Christianity through evangelism to create a Christian government, led and influenced not only by Christians but also Christian ideology. It is fundamentalist in the sense that it is guarded by literalist biblical hermeneutics. Indeed, utilizing selective hermeneutics justifies its endeavours. Its basic premise is evangelism with the idea of

propagating the gospel such that it permeates the society, bringing an influence to all spheres of life. Nothing reveals this approach better than Ruth Marshall's citation of Pastor E. A. Adeboye's address, the general overseer of Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria: Pastor E. A. Adeboye's speech entitled "who is on God's side" delivered in 1993 is critical:

...It is written in Proverbs 29:2 "when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice". And how are we going to get someone righteous in authority? Don't let anybody deceive you, thieves will never vote for policemen. Never. Thieves will always vote for thieves, robbers vote for robbers, in other words, only the righteous will vote for the righteous. So how are we going to put the righteous in authority? *It is by winning the masses to Jesus Christ* (italics added). Nobody can bribe him to vote for the wrong man...we will become a force of change not by loving politicians, but by winning souls. If we do what God wants us to do, i.e. if we can get at least eighty percent of the people in Nigeria born again, you can be sure a Christian will be a president. You do not even need to spend a Kobo to get them; you won't even need to be a rich man before you become a president, because people will say you are the one they want and you must be there...

The plan of God is not limited to Nigeria alone. Very soon, there will be an extension of when PFN will become PFA, i.e. Pentecostal Fellowship of Africa. We will take over the whole of Africa. And that is not the end of the vision. The almighty God wants PFN to become number one in the gospel of the whole world, and other nations of the world will say, what is happening? ...Because I want you to know, brethren, when the spiritual climate is right, things will happen in the economy...if you want to *take over Nigeria* (italics added) you better win the students, win the market women, the media, the broadcasters, the rich, the poor, and the press. Glory to God, I am sure they are here today. By the time they leave, they will be born again. (Marshall, 2010, p. 204-205).

The above citation is a perfect example of how Neo-Pentecostals exchange personal or ecclesial prophetic responsibility with mere spirituality. The perception is that the preaching of the gospel to the masses automatically brings good/moral leadership. While agreeing that the preaching of the gospel is the critical mission of the Church, it should not be forgotten that the Church has a prophetic mandate which is beyond mere preaching.

SECTION FOUR

2.5 The prophetic role of Neo-Pentecostals in Kenyan politics

2.5.1 Introduction

The previous section analysed Neo-Pentecostal political hermeneutics. It concluded that her political hermeneutics is pneumatic in posture resulting in ‘spiritualized politics’. This section looks at the role of Neo-Pentecostals in Kenyan politics. In it, I address the place of religion in society, the historical significance of religion in public life then locate the role of Neo-Pentecostalism in Kenyan political history.

2.5.2 Church and Politics: Historical Perspectives

Chumar (2009) observes that “true religion is the conscience of a society; it enables truth and justice to prevail amidst the tumult of violence”. The church as a religious institution and most poignantly bestowed with the Word of God, must of necessity play a critical public role. Julius Nyerere, the former president of Tanzania observed that the church has a role in the political process involving the “establishment of justice, freedom, equality, and human dignity; values which the church cannot relegate to the political system only” (Magesa, 1991, p. 78). Stott (1984) addresses the social responsibility of the church. He avers that there should be a relationship between evangelism and preaching of the Gospel. He further argues that Jesus combined both evangelism and social concerns; besides preaching, Jesus healed and fed the hungry as well as siding with the marginalized⁴⁰.

History records that whenever the church abdicates her prophetic role, she loses her relevance. According to Gitari (1987, p. 120-121), the Dutch reformed church support of racial segregation; the privileged position of the Ethiopian orthodox church

⁴⁰ See feeding five thousand, healing, speaking to a Samaritan woman

amidst the citizens suffering from abject poverty, amounted to a loss of relevance of the church. However, historically the church of Christ has manifested a significant role in public affairs besides the main mission of propagating the Gospel. It is from this backdrop that the role of Neo-Pentecostals in Kenyan politics can be discussed. It specifically centres on Church-state relationships with the church being the conscience of the society.

2.5.3 Neo-Pentecostals and Kenyan Politics

Understanding the nature, extent, and role of Neo-Pentecostalism in Kenyan politics calls for a historical perspective on the relationship between church and state in Kenya's various political epochs. The political eras that define Kenyan politics have been placed within the tenure of the various Kenyan presidents and their political regimes. These are: The Kenyatta Era, the Moi Era, the Kibaki era, the Coalition government era, and now the Jubilee era under the leadership of Uhuru Kenyatta. While knowing that Neo-Pentecostal political engagement in Kenya is barely two decades old, looking at the historical development of the whole Kenyan church on political engagement, rightly brings to the surface the role played by Pentecostals and particularly their charismatic variant.

2.5.3.1 The Kenyatta Era: The Missionary Factor and the Learning Church

Although Kenya attained independence in 1963, making it a sovereign state, as far as the church was concerned, it was still largely under the leadership of expatriate missionaries. Missionary Christianity consists of the mainstream Churches such as the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), Africa Inland Church (AIC), Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), and Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) among others. According to Abuom, (1996), and Githiga, (2001), the church and state relationship in immediate postcolonial reign was dictated by the missionary factor as well the learning stages of

the church. The missionary factor meant that since church leadership was dominantly under of the missionaries, the church-state relationship in independent Kenya was reflective of the church-state relationship in the colonial period.

Hyness (1996) and Githiga (2001) observe that the church-state relationship during the colonial period was one of hegemonic control. The expatriate missionaries (except unique cases of Walter Owen and Leonard Beecher) collaborated with the colonial masters. Therefore, the church during the colonial period did not uphold her prophetic stance, the same posture was continued during the Kenyatta era. Then, the church practiced a cooperation stance towards the African government if not total allegiance. Githiga (2001, p. 55-60) further reasons that this cooperation posture of the Church was buttressed by the fear of the missionary church leadership being interpreted as interfering with the independent state. Githiga gives the example of the expatriate missionary, Leonard Beecher of ACK who would prefer the Kenyan Bishops to speak so as to avoid being perceived as interfering with the state's independence. Another factor affecting the church-state relationship at independence was the lack of a developed public theology. Most of the churches carried on the legacy of evangelism geared towards personal evangelism as introduced by missionaries. Further, much of the theological training to full-time ministry emphasized personal spirituality. Githiga (2001) and Throup (1995) note that the training of pastors on political and social responsibility would be adopted by St. Paul's Theological College in the 1970s. However, with the winds of liberation theologies blowing, the same theology was challenged by the older clergymen as being liberal.

The other aspect of the church-state relationship in the immediate post-independence era was the learning stage. Githiga (2001, p. 63) captures this when he notes that both the government and the church were at a learning stage on how to co-

exist with each other. Abuom (1996, p. 98) observes that the church was at the cross-road because the political leadership expected her to be loyal to the new authority as it had appeared to be during the colonial rule. Nevertheless, the church did not cast a blind eye on the evils present in the Kenyatta regime. A few instances of the church's prophetic voice though from mixed standpoints were evident. The first one was the 1966 prophetic voice of the church through NCKK exposing the ruling Party's (Kenya African National Union- KANU) plan to misuse public money in building an ostentatious headquarters at Uhuru Park. Okullu (2003) and Nabende (1999) observe that the government interpreted this move by the church as meddling in KANU politics. The church in response dissociated herself in the Target News Paper which carried the exposure associating it with East African Venture Company. The editor was also pressurized to resign to maintain the state/party-Church relations. In this case, the church compromised and lacked the courage to carry out her prophetic mandate. Another example was 1969 secret oath-taking ensuing from uprisings after the assassination of Tom Mboya. Githiga (2001, p. 54) notes that the Baptist church, and the AIC, gave a press release condemning the oath-taking; however, it was purely on moral grounds. The prophetic voice was wanting in its enforcement since the church feared being interpreted as being political. These two examples serve as instances of the church at the learning stage. It helped this study to ground dynamics of church state-relationship in Kenya; thus, how it would later manifest itself during Neo-Pentecostal dominance.

2.5.3.2 Moi Era- The Active Mainstream Prophetic Clergy/ Co-opted Evangelicals and Pentecostals

The Church and state in the Moi era especially the roles of the mainline church to democratization discourse has been extensively documented by various scholars (Githiga, 2001; Gifford, 1999; 2004; 2009; Throup, 1995; Throup & Maupeu, 2004;

Okullu, 1979; 1984; Njoya, 1987; Gitari, 1990; Chacha, 2010; Mue, 2011; Ntaragwi, 2011; Parsitau, 2008; 2011). These studies express the active prophetic message of the church to a closed-one-party state bedevilled with social and political injustices.

The church-state relationship during Daniel Toroitich Moi's era which lasted 24 years, can be grouped into two: the honeymoon period (1978-1984); and the varied prophetic stance (1985-2002). The honeymoon period is labelled so because of the cordial relations between the church and state which was cultivated by Moi depicting himself as a religious leader. Abuom (1996, p. 99) in respect to the Moi's strategy comments, "before too long the president hijacked the pulpit and was busy cultivating for himself the image of a Christian leader" (Throup & Hornsby, 1998, p. 20). Githiga (2001, p. 69) and Okullu (2003, p. 55) argue that president Moi's habitual church attendance painting himself as a Christian leader resulted to church leaders sacralizing his political leadership and thus, the belief that he would lead the nation with godly values. Further, according to Githiga (2001, p. 73) and Gitari (1986, p. 128-129), Moi's ideology of the Nyayo Philosophy of peace, love, and unity which would later be introduced in the school curriculum as part of sacralization of his political leadership, blinded the church from critiquing his political leadership. In this sense, the Church was co-opted to the government system only to wake up later from 1985 as the nation entered a closed one-party state. During this time, the voice of the Pentecostals and the emerging Neo-Pentecostals was not felt. The next section that discusses the active prophetic church opens up the role played by Pentecostals and their charismatic variants. The relationship of the church and state would drastically change with sudden changes emanating from the 1982 coup de tat.

In response to the challenges of the attempted coup de tat, the president introduced sudden political changes such a mono-partyism and changes in the electoral

system. The church responded by being prophetically active to the extent that it was labelled the bulwark against authoritarianism (Githiga, 2001). This marked the period that would culminate into the second liberation, seeking liberation from KANU's one closed mono-party state with multi-faceted injustices and lack of democracy. Most scholars documenting this period view the change of secret ballot box to queuing (mlolongo) systematic as the first element that the church raised her voice on (Adar & Munyae; 2001, p. 3). The church leadership consisting of key clerics such as the late Alexander Muge, the late David Gitari, and the late Manasses Kuria; Timothy Njoya, and the late Ndingi-mwana-a-Nzeki and various social groups like the Law Society of Kenya condemned the government for infringing on citizens' civic rights. The churches coalesced their efforts through the National Council of Churches Kenya (NCCCK) issued pastoral letters condemning the political evils in the KANU regime (weekly Review, October, 1988 & May, 1990). According to Maupeu (2005), Githiga (2001) and Okullu (2003), the efforts of the church bore fruit in 1991 when the president headed to their pressure and repealed section 2A of the constitution allowing multiparty democracy.

Researchers (Maupeu, 2005; Githiga, 2001; Abuom, 1996; Waihenya & Ndikaru, 2009) note that from 1994, the church carried the second liberation struggle through a call for constitutional change. This was because the constitutional change was perceived as the only certain avenue to curtail KANU's authoritative regime. The church leadership especially from ACK, PCEA, and RCC through NCCCK and Ufungamano initiative and with support of social groups such as the Law Society of Kenya and human rights activists pushed for the agenda of constitutional reforms. Their efforts bore fruit with the minimal constitution reforms before the 1997 general elections. Key among these reforms was the presidential term limits of two terms each five years. So the mainstream Church leaders have been labelled the voice of the

voiceless as they fought for a second liberation. However, it was a mixed prophetic stance since not all churches were against President Moi's political excesses.

Ndegwa (2001), Gifford (2009), Akoko (2004), Mue (2011) and Parsitau (2012) have discussed the position of Pentecostals during President Daniel Arap Moi's reign. They argue that while mainstream Christianity took on KANU's political misgivings, the Pentecostal church leaders were pro-KANU. President Moi succeeded in co-opting the evangelical churches through AIC. AIC was the church that the president was a bona fide member. In my other work, David (2013) I argued that the then Bishop of AIC (Birech) being of the same tribe as Moi and considering Moi as one of their own who had given huge support to the church, withdrew AIC's membership from NCKK. Consequently, with the presidential support, he rallied the support of Pentecostal churches to be pro-government. The co-option of the evangelical and Pentecostal churches was meant to counter the opposition of the mainstream clergy. A critical instance of the manifestation of the co-option was important in the face of criticism. For example in the mid-1990s when Moi was facing a tuff opposition because of the ban he had imposed on opposition parties, he strategically attended a service at the Redeemed Gospel Church (RGC- a Pentecostal church). The Bishop of RGC, Arthur Kitonga in his sermon praised Moi's leadership, alleging that his leadership was divine and Kenya was like heaven because of the peace it was experiencing. He then condemned NCKK and the mainstream clerics for questioning Moi's political rule, arguing that such clerics were out for their own Gospel and not the gospel of Christ. Equally, Rev. Dennis White of Nairobi Pentecostal Church (CITAM) in the 1990s endorsed President Moi's reign terming it God-ordained. He too praised the president for his political rule that favoured the growth of Christianity with a constitution that upheld freedom of worship (Gifford, 2009). Others Pentecostal Bishops in support of

Moi included Bishop Gaitho of the African Independent Pentecostal Church (AIPC). Lonsdale (2004) and Parsitau (2012) perceive the roles played by Pentecostals during this time as driven by their theological emphasis. Evangelicals and Pentecostals have theological roots of being conservative; thus, the emphasis on personal salvation at the expense of social action. Further according to Lonsdale (2004), the Pentecostals had not developed a social activism theology. Accordingly, prayer⁴¹ was the most acute way of civic engagement. Since Pentecostals are emphatic on spiritual causalities, prayer for them is the most effective way than engaging in combative controversy (Kalu, 2008; Parsitau, 2012). Gifford (2009) and Parsitau (2012) have noted that Pentecostals also align themselves with the government of the day to gain from the states' largess. For instance, many evangelicals and Pentecostals who were pro-KANU were rewarded with parcels of land, financial support, and access to state-controlled media⁴².

From the foregoing literature, it is clear that mainstream Christianity played a critical prophetic role during the Moi regime, while Evangelicals and Pentecostals were pro-government with only a minimal prophetic role of prayer. This literature forms a solid foundation to interrogate the Neo-Pentecostals prophetic role during the Mwai Kibaki era and the coalition government period. With Pentecostals being an easy target of co-option to governments, what would be their relationships to both Kibaki and the coalition regime and later in Uhuru's Jubilee regime?

⁴¹ And this aspect of prayer as the most dominant avenue of Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal political engagement remains to date in Kenya as discussed in chapter four.

⁴² For example, Bishop Arthur Kitonga's Sermon praising Moi was televised by Kenya Broadcasting Television. In those days, KBC was a state Media limited to the state especially reporting political activities of the president.

2.5.3.3 The Kibaki Era: The Fading Prophetic Voices and Emerging Neo-Pentecostal Voices (2002 -2007)

The Kibaki era especially the first term of his reign was the most expected and longed moment for the country. It was a moment for the long-awaited realization of a New Dawn (Muamko Mpya) with the defeat of KANU and the realization of civil liberties and the culmination of democracy. Maupeu (2005) observes that President Mwai Kibaki's December, 2002 undisputable win met the expectations of the second liberation fighters; the mainstream church institution being part of the struggle. Unfortunately, it was this New Dawn that would lead to the genesis of the progressive death of public theologies albeit with weak resurgence but also dotted with new prophetic voices (Parsitau, 2012). What led to the fading of once active voices? And did Neo-Pentecostals become the new prophetic voices? What were the civic roles of Neo-Pentecostals during this political period?

According to Chacha (2010) and Maupeu (2009), mainstream Christianity was caught up in the celebration mood of the new dispensation in National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) under the leadership of Mwai Kibaki to the point of forgetting her prophetic mandate. The church coalesced in NCKK, Ufumangano initiative, and the Episcopal Conference of the RCC was a stalwart contender of multiparty politics and constitutional reforms. Having ousted the KANU regime and announced the New dawn as a fruit of the years of painful struggle for the second liberation, the country went into a celebration mood; the church being part of the celebration. In my other work I referred to this as a Christian ideology factor (David & Katola, 2016). I suggested that it was a perspective of the church associating a certain political change to God or divine occurrence leading to a celebration that becomes an end in itself and thus the loss of prophetic voice, compromise, and co-option of the church by the state.

Maupeu (2005) perceives the celebration mood as having a divine posture manifested in prayer breakfast such as the National Prayer breakfast in 2003, the Nairobi Municipality and Universities, and police prayer breakfasts. He further notes the emphatic presence of church leaders in these celebrations. As the church dined with the political leaders who were part of the struggle for the second liberation, it lost what should be her ever-active prophetic voice. The Christian ideology was cushioned by the partial *sacralisation* of Kibaki's leadership. Gifford (2009) and Chacha (2010) note that with Kibaki taking the figurative posture of biblical Moses and promising to lead the country out of the wilderness (of lack of democracy and failed economy) to the promised land, coupled with visits to churches and promising to lead the country using godly values; church leadership relaxed her prophetic stance. Besides the Christian ideology and the sacralization of Kibaki's leadership, Oloo (2005) and Parsitau (2012) note the change of leadership in mainstream churches coinciding with the election of Kibaki in 2002. They argue that most of the new church leaders who took over leadership were less vocal than the second liberation clerics. Consequently, the new clerics did not share the same theological praxis as their predecessors.

In such a cordial relationship between church and state, the ground was set for the co-option of the church. Various scholars (Gifford, 2009; Chacha, 2010; Maupeu, 2005; Parsitau, 2012; Mue, 2012) have analysed the co-option of mainstream Christianity to government. This was mainly through the appointment of senior clerics to government jobs or commissions. In this case, three stand out: The appointment of once an erstwhile critic of the Moi regime and General Secretary of NCCK Rev. Mutava Musyimi to a steering committee on anti-corruption, the appointment of two Anglican Bishops; Benard Njoroge to the commission tasked with drafting the proposed new constitution and Horace Etemesi to the commission investigating the Artur brothers.

Parsitau (2012) opines that while there was nothing morally wrong in these appointments, they were strategically aimed at winning the regime's support, compromising the advocacy of the church against the regime's socio-political injustices and state excesses⁴³. The church's voice was missing as the NARC government fell into a crisis of dishonour following the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Kibaki and the Raila faction. However, it was also a time when new voices in the political sphere emerged.

Gifford (2009) and Parsitau (2012) contrast the dwindling voices of the mainstream churches with the emerging but discordant voices of the Pentecostals and Pentecostal charismatics. The 2005 draft constitution brought the Neo-Pentecostals into an active civic engagement. Mue (2011) notes the influence the Raila faction had on churches; angered by the failed MOU they rallied the churches to defeat the proposed 2005 draft referendum in November, 2005. The 2005 draft constitution is seen by most scholars as the resurgence of the conscience of the church, it should be understood that the churches including Pentecostals got involved because of the contentious issues affecting the church's moral values. Key among these were the inclusion of Kadhi courts clauses and the perceived inclusion of same-sex marriages (Parsitau, 2012). The resistance to the draft saw the coming together of Evangelical and Protestant clergy. Key to this study is the Pentecostal clergy consisting of a mixture of both classical and Neo-Pentecostal clerics such as Bishops' Boniface Adoyo (NPC- CITAM), Margaret Wanjiru (JIAM), Arthur Kitonga (RGC), Wilfred Lai of Jesus Celebration Centre (JCC), Mark Kariuki of Deliverance Churches of Kenya (DCK) including the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK) as the umbrella body. The efforts of the church

⁴³ Talk of the Catholic Church viewing Kibaki as their own... denomination/tribal affiliation... what did Cardinal Njue do? What happened to a church that had the most polished pastoral letters

and opposition saw the defeat of the proposed draft constitution⁴⁴. Parsitau (2012) and Chacha (2010) note the presence of the Neo-Pentecostal clergy in the celebration of the constitutional defeat in 2005 and how their cordial relationships with the opposition party, now rebranded Orange Democratic Party influenced them to political offices/careers in the immediate political future of the country. Therefore, this study asked how did the events of the 2005 constitutional debate impact the roles of Neo-Pentecostals in politics of the coalition government and later in Jubilee government?

Chacha (2010) and Parsitau (2012; 2009; 2010; 2011) observe that besides the Neo-Pentecostal presence in constitutional debates, the launching of several Neo-Pentecostal clergy into politics was very intriguing. They included Bishops Margret Wanjiru of JIAM, Pius Muiru of MMC and Mike Brawan. This would be followed immediately by other Neo-Pentecostal clergy declaring interest in elective politics. Later it would be manifest in the 2007 general elections attracting about 23 Neo-Pentecostal clerics from various churches contesting for civic, parliamentary, and even presidential posts. Margaret Wanjiru would succeed in being elected to Parliament, while Muiru lost his presidential and parliamentary aspirations. The move by Neo-Pentecostal clergy received condemnation from the media and mainstream clerics but Neo-Pentecostal interest in elective politics would blossom with years. However, in 2006 and towards 2007, the prophetic voice of the Kenyan Church as a whole dwindled. Both the protestant and Catholic Church as well as their umbrella body NCKC and Episcopal Conference were criticized for the soft stance and compromise with the Kibaki regime. The Neo-Pentecostals were also busy aligning themselves for the

⁴⁴ The draft constitution divided the country between bananas and oranges. Those who side with the draft voted the sign of a banana, and those against it the sign of an orange. It was another moment of the Church being co-opted into politics but this time by the opposition. Later this arrangement would give birth to a Orange Democratic Party by Raila Odinga which some of the Neo-Pentecostals Clerics like Margrate Wanjiru of JIAM would use as a vehicle for her political journey to parliament.

coming general elections. As the country got polarized on tribal lines, the church's voice was absent. This is why Obongo reiterated:

The NCKK's recent omissions and commissions clearly suggest that the faith group's leadership has failed to exercise wisdom and restraint when commenting on issues relevant to the 2007 campaigns, thereby alienating sections of their members with different political preferences (Obongo, 2006).

Gifford (2009), Chacha (2010) and Parsitau (2012), observe the partisan role of the church towards 2007 general elections with most of the clerics declaring their interest in elective politics. Parsitau (2008) humorously portrayed the clergy as having moved from being "fishers of men to fishers of votes". The country's atmosphere was dotted with politics. A cartoon on the Daily Nation 14th October, 2007 picturing the partisan role of the church in the election politics of that period best illustrates this. In the cartoon, Wanjiku (common citizen) is pictured complaining that in Kenya there is politics everywhere; in Television, Radio, and Newspapers...name it. So she decides to search for a political neutral place and decides to go to a church. Surprisingly in the church, the pastor stands for the bible reading as follows, "*Our first reading will be from the book of ODM-Kenya⁴⁵, our second reading will be from PNU Testament, and our third reading will be from ODM proverbs*". A political analyst Baraka Muluka would comment that the church had become part of the patrimonial elements of the political system (Standard, 9th June, 2007: 6; Gifford, 2009). Reading from the cartoon portrait and the political analyst, the Church was then a politically saturated environment to the detriment of the prophetic mandate. Chacha (2010) and Mue (2011) note the obfuscating prophecies from Neo-Pentecostal clerics on 2007 elections

⁴⁵ ODM was the opposition party crafted by Raila Odinga after the defeat of the 2005 draft constitution. It was so named because Raila and his faction were leading a NO campaign against the draft which was symbolized by an Orange. PNU was the Party of National Unity under the leadership of Mwai Kibaki which from 2002 coalesced with other parties to form National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) which defeated KANU. After the dishonoring the MOU on the side of Kibaki, a rift arose between the once strong coalition, manifesting itself in Raila and Kibaki taking opposing sides of the draft constitution; hence, individual parties- PNU and ODM- Kenya.

winners. The prophecies were so tribal(ised) such that the one's prophesying Kibaki's win came from preachers from Central Kenya (his tribe's men) and for Raila from Nyanza his home place. The foregoing literature was critical to this study as it expressed the dynamic nature of the church-state relationship in Kenya in the first term of Mwai Kibaki's presidency. Further, and in particular, it brought to the surface the dynamics of Neo-Pentecostal prophetic roles being predominantly expressed in civic engagement for a NO vote in the 2005 draft constitutional referendum and besides the intriguing interests in elective politics. How did this affect the Neo-Pentecostal prophetic roles during the coalition government?

2.5.3.4 The Coalition Government: A Glimmer of Hope and the Politics of 2010 Draft Constitution

The coalition government was a shared government between Mwai Kibaki as the president and Raila Odinga as the Prime Minister after the disputed 2007 presidential elections. This came with the help of eminent personalities such as the United Nations General Secretary, the late Kofi Anan. After the signing of the National Peace Accord, Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga were tasked with restoring the country's lost glory.

Studies (Chacha, 2010; Mue, 2011; Ntaragwi, 2011; Parsitau, 2009; 2011; Gifford, 2009) poignantly document the compromised stance of the church towards the 2007 elections, and the effect of the Post-election violence (PEV) in 2007/2008 on the moral integrity of the church and the accompanying loss of moral conscience and authority. The church could not be trusted as a neutral arbiter in the wake of the PEV. Indeed the situation was so bad that even regional respected clerics like the late Desmond Tutu of South Africa could not even be trusted to lead the reconciliation dialogue. Mue (2011, p. 183) in particular notes the burning of over 400 churches in

the height of the PEV signalling that the church had lost her sacred image as well as being a neutral place of worship; rather, it was perceived as part of the contested terrain of partisan and ethnic politics. A political analyst in January 2008 when asked to comment on the role of the church said, “during this crisis, we have seen the church of PNU and we have seen the church of ODM, but pray, tell, where the church of Jesus Christ is?” (Parsitau, 2012). Even the Neo-Pentecostals who were lauded as new prophets were also caught up in this compromise and partisan politics.

According to Stinton (2008), Parsitau (2012) and Mue (2011), after the PEV the church leaders (especially from mainstream Christianity) apologized to the nation for the partisan posture preceding the 2007 general elections; nonetheless, it was evident that the church was no longer the respected voice of the voiceless. But in seeking to restore her credibility, the church took some strategies that were perceived as the resurgence of the prophetic mandate. Kilonzo (2009) notes the church’s two main strategies; the first was the interreligious forum which consisted of Muslims, Hindus, and Christians which vowed to collect one million signatures to support the prosecution of the instigators of PEV. The second was the formation of the “wheels /caravan of hope” (msafara) initiative to foster peace among Kenyans. The initiative organized National prayers, distributed food, and other material support to the internally displaced persons all through from Mombasa, Nairobi, Nakuru, Eldoret, and Kisumu. In my other work (David & Katola, 2016) I suggested that Church’s efforts to call upon both the President and Prime minister to solve their leadership issues⁴⁶ amicably was part of the glimmers of hope of resurgence of the prophetic voice of the church.

⁴⁶ The coalition government was rocked with differences between the president (Kibaki) and Prime Minister (Raila). Mostly the differences manifested themselves in supremacy battles with the Prime minister accusing the President of lack of consultation in major government decisions thus straining the coalition principles.

The 2010 draft constitutional and constitutional process leading to the promulgation of the new constitution was the next stage that brought the church to the limelight and Neo-Pentecostal clergy in particular. The proposal for a new constitution was part of the pact of the National Peace Accord of bringing the country back to its course (Parsitau, 2012). A committee of experts (CoE) was formed and within almost two years, they collected views of the public and harmonized them with the views of other constitutional review bodies. Parstiau (2012) notes that immediately after the harmonized draft was presented and passed in parliament on the 4th of August, 2010, the church raised issues with the draft vowing to vote it down. The stage was set for another church-state contest despite the draft being approved by the majority of Kenyans. It was the voice of the mainstream churches through NCKK which was heard and joined later by Pentecostals and their charismatic variants. The clerics took issue with the provision of Kadhi courts in the draft and the clause on abortion. The coalition government working as one entity fully supported the constitutional draft and the church though divided and with the support of divergent views like those of William Ruto formed the opposition to the draft. According to Parsitau (2012), a rare semblance of ecumenical unity arose with the Kenyan church consisting of both main and Pentecostal as well as the Neo-Pentecostals who formed The Kenya Christian Leaders Constitutional Forum (KCLCF). This body comprised the clergy who opposed the passage of the new constitution. In my Masters' thesis (2013), I observed the presence of critical Neo-Pentecostal clerics such as Apostle Musili of ATG, Apostle Nganga of NEC, Bishop Margarate Wanjiru of JIAM, Bishop Pius Muiro of MMC among others. The anti-constitutional clergy and politicians using the red colour (in form of banners expressing that the draft constitution was dangerous) vowed to rally their members to reject the draft and the passage of the new constitution.

According to Gifford (2009) and Parsitau (2012), irrespective of the rare ecumenical efforts towards a “No” stand to the draft, the church was still divided. While the majority of the clerics were the anti-draft, some second liberation clergy fighters such as the Late David Gitari of ACK and Rev. Timothy Njoya of PCEA were pro-constitutional draft. Bishop Gitari was so vocal in defending the draft constitution to a point of being tasked by the pro-new constitution team to lead the Yes campaigns for the referendum. On his part, retired Rev. Njoya condemned the anti-draft clergy labelling them as anti-reformists and retrogressive. After the passing of the new constitution, he would call them to apologize to the nation and their followers. Other clerics like the former Bishop of ACK Eliud Wabukala towards the referendum day on the 4th of August seemed to lower their guard and admonished the Christians to vote using their conscience. Therefore, the church did not speak in one voice and just like the political class, it was politicized. Nevertheless, despite the efforts of the church in rejecting the draft constitution, it was unanimously passed and adopted by the majority of the Kenyans with 67% of Yes votes against the 30% No. The defeat of the No faction was an indication that the faithful followers did not listen to their shepherds; hence, the loss of credibility for the church once known as a bulwark against authoritarianism. In seeking to come to terms with the overwhelming Yes vote, Cardinal John Njue of the Catholic Church had this to say, “We are convinced before God that we have played our part as mandated to us with diligence and respect. God will be our judge (in other work, David & Katola, 2016:52). The just-concluded literature was critical to this study in that it expressed another critical role played by Neo-Pentecostals in both constitutional debates. However, just like mainstream Christianity it was compromised and politicized. What would be the prophetic role of the Neo-Pentecostals in the Jubilee regime?

2.5.3.6 The Jubilee Era: The Praying Church and Pentecostalization of Political Life

Maupeu (2014) argues that the Jubilee era has seen the consolidation of Pentecostalism as the state religion. Scholarly works on church and state relationships during the jubilee regime are scarce. This owes to the fact that the jubilee era is only now in its second term. However, the few works available reveal that the Jubilee era has been predominantly dotted with the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal presence. Maupeu (2014) and Gathogo (2014) observe that the entrenchment of Neo-Pentecostalism in Jubilee politics is grounded in the International Criminal Court (ICC) politics with their roots in the 2007/2008 PEV. Maupeu (2014) rightly notes that the 2013 elections were post-crisis elections. The country was experiencing a healing process after the PEV. In seeking to avail justice to the PEV victims, several commissions were formed. One was the WAKI commission and the other was the establishment of the Truth and Justice Reconciliation Commission (TJRC). In these commissions, efforts were made to try and form a local tribunal to prosecute the perpetrators and instigators of the 2007/08 violence. Efforts to put in place an internal tribunal failed, and the WAKI commission handed its inquiry to the ICC. The ICC was seen as the only avenue to try the suspects and end impunity in Kenya.

Maupeu (2014) and Lynch (2014) capture the panic that gripped the country with the announcement of the six eminent persons (the Ocampo Six) who were accused of instigating the 2007/08 PEV. Two out of the six stand out in this study: Uhuru Muingai Kenyatta (then deputy Prime minister and Minister of Finance) and William Samoei Ruto (then minister of education) now President and Deputy President respectively. In December 2010, the news of the coming of the then ICC prosecutor (Moreno Ocampo) terrified the six suspects and the country in general. Then parliament unsuccessfully tried to halt the ICC process. Even an appeal to the UN Security Council ended

fruitlessly. With Ocampo vowing to make Kenya a good example of justice to the victims of violence, and with all political, legal, and diplomatic means failing, the suspects sought refuge in religion. Maupeu (2014), Lynch (2014) and Gathogo (2014) rightly note that Pentecostalism became the vehicle for their comfort and safety. Pentecostalism is emphatic in pneumatic spirituality manifested in infilling of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, born-again spirituality, prayer, prophetic, and prosperity. Uhuru and Ruto began by using prayer as the first avenue to political success and in dealing with the ICC case. While cooperating fully with the ICC in April and September 2011 for mention and confirmation of charges, they painted a picture of innocent people wrongly accused.

Therefore, prayer became a critical element in their prayer rallies/campaign rallies. In these prayer rallies and campaigns, Pentecostal clerics were conspicuously present. Besides prayer, Maupeu (2014) observes the influence of Pentecostal elements of redemption and prophetism. Borrowing from the political spiritualities of Ruth Marshal (2010), Maupeu exemplifies how the politicians used the Pentecostal language for their advantage. The born-again theology is entrenched in redemption but emphasizes the individual moral character which in this context would translate to the moral integrity of the nation. Uhuru and Ruto by participating in the prayer rallies painted themselves as renewed individuals whose moral character would lead to the economic prosperity of the country. Prophetically, the redemption of the nation was tied to their redemption from ICC cases. Buttressing the Pentecostal language was the creation of a peace ideology crafted by the two (Lynch, 2014). This peace pact was the ability to join two historical and political enemy tribes: Kikuyus and Kalenjins. This was critical for them considering that the international community as well internal critics like Raila Odinga were favouring an ICC process; on the contrary Uhuru and Ruto seemed to unify the

country. This close connection of Pentecostalism would lead to the pentecostalization of politics and the silent church.

The mainstream church was part of the influence in pentecostalizing the political discourse. This is because as Maupeu (2014) documents, the presidential candidature of both Uhuru and Ruto was endorsed by mainstream churches. For Uhuru it was the influence of Bishop Ilawi Mathew and Bishop Emeritus Peter Njenga⁴⁷. For Ruto, it was through the late Catholic Bishop Korir of Eldoret. These clerics expressed that Uhuru and Ruto were falsely accused and that their accusations tainted their communities as instigators of the violence.

Gathogo (2014) also sees the influence of Neo-Pentecostal clerics in pentecostalizing the political climate. He situates this with the influence of Dr. Prophet Owour's claim of having been shown by God that Uhuru and Ruto will win the 2013 general elections but he kept quiet to avert civil chaos. Pentecostalisation of political life would become so evident even after Uhuru and Ruto's win. In my conference paper (2019), I observed the unique presence of Pentecostal clergy during the swearing-in of Uhuru and Ruto to office. For the first time in the history of the country, the president and his deputy knelt to be prayed for. Rev. Dr. David Oginde of CITAM laid hands on the president and deputy president-elect, he prayed for the duo after a reading from Isaiah 45.

Gathogo (2014) also locates the strong cordial relationship between the executive and Pentecostal/Neo-Pentecostal churches persisting even after elections. For example in March, 2013, the president attended Kisima cha Neema in Mombasa reminding the congregants that he had come to give thanks as he had promised if he emerged victoriously. Similarly, his Deputy attended various Pentecostal churches

⁴⁷ See Maupeu (2014) and David & Katola (2016) for a full discussion

mostly Faith Evangelistic Ministry in Karen. In these churches, they attributed their presidential victory to God and consequently, their political leadership “Christianized”. I captured this in my paper (David & Katola, 2016), that when the President and his deputy were acquitted by the ICC, thanksgiving prayers were held at Afraha Stadium in Nakuru. Critical to these prayers was the strong presence of Pentecostal Church leaders, key among them, Bishop Mark Kariuki of DCK and Bishop Margaret of JIAM. Bishop Mark Kariuki declared that the collapse of the ICC cases was a new dawn for Kenya. This gave birth to an ideology that the redemption of both President and his Deputy from ICC meant a redemption of the nation; thus, prophetically the prosperity of the Kenyan people. One would have expected the church to be careful in her utterances because justice was still pending for the 2007/2008 PEV victims. On the contrary, the Pentecostal Church seemed woven into the Jubilee regime.

Further, in my conference paper (David, 2019), I observed the influence of Apostle Edward Mwai of Jesus Winner Ministry (JWM) in Pentecostalizing the political discourse in Jubilee era. He has been frequently visited by the president and other senior politicians. He is known for being prophetic in his preaching and practice. But just like the other Pentecostal preachers, Apostle Mwai’s response to Kenyan politics has been majorly on issuing prophetic utterances and prayer. In spite of the injustices and vices in the Jubilee government, the preacher has never raised his prophetic voice against such ills. He seemingly enjoys a special position in the executive. Therefore, there has been a strong presence of Pentecostal/Neo-Pentecostal Christianity in the Jubilee regime. In my conference paper (2019), I noted the Deputy President’s financial contributions to churches, which led to the attribution of the Kenyan Church especially Pentecostals/Neo-Pentecostals as conduits of corruption proceeds. It has been said that the church has become the “detergent” that cleans the

stolen money. There exists a close and cordial relation between the state and Pentecostal leadership and this explains why in early years of Jubilee's first term, the then deputy President William Ruto (now president) while attending a Mount Kenya Full Gospel prayer breakfast reiterated that the church in Kenya (read Pentecostal) was a key partner in Jubilee's presidential victory.

2.5 Conclusion

The above literature review was significant for this study as it aided the study to understand the emergence of the Neo-Pentecostals within the wide scope of Pentecostal literature. In particular, the literature enabled the study to situate Neo-Pentecostal history within global and local historiographies, especially the kingdom of God which sees the emergence and growth of Neo-Pentecostalism as part of the spread of the Kingdom of God in history. The literature was also critical in understanding the theological shift of Pentecostal shift from disengagement to engagement in politics. It helped the study to dissect the different eschatological positions as dictated by the understanding of millennium and thus, from the gospel of salvation to the gospel of the Kingdom. This has exhibited a different hermeneutics as shown by Neo-Pentecostalism. Further, the literature review was significant for this study in understanding the political hermeneutics of NPCs. It discussed the pneumatic posture of NPCs and how it influences their interpretation of the Bible in regards to political engagement. Finally, the literature was important in the way it aided the study to situate NPCs prophetic role within, when and how it has been involved in the Kenyan political history since 2000. It showed the lack of a NPC's uniformed response to political discourse in Kenya. Their response is fluid since it ranges from co-option to the political systems to mild prophetic stances. The adduced literature was critical in preparing the study for the collection of data in the sampled churches.

SECTION TWO: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1.1 Introduction

The section discusses the research findings. The section is divided into three chapters as per the three sampled churches that is: Around the Globe Deliverance Ministries (ATG); Jesus is Alive Ministries (JIAM), and Kingdom Seekers Fellowship (KSF). The data touches on the history of the sampled churches, their hermeneutical practices (reflected in their preaching and practice) nuanced to political issues, and their political participation in Kenyan politics from 2000 -2022.

1.2 The Response Rate

The study issued 180 questionnaires to church members in the three sampled churches. Out of the 180, 152 were returned. The study sampled three bishops and two pastors from each church as well as two EFK leaders. In total the church leaders were eleven. Out of the 11, the study managed to interview 10. This meant that the total response out of the sampled was 162 (152+10). This translated to a response rate of 82%. 21 FGDs were conducted; 8 in ATG; 6 in JIAM and 7 in FSK. Further, the preaching of the three bishops was analysed. Some of these sermons were evaluated during the PO instances and others on YouTube. The PO sessions were many as possible so as to enrich the data. This response was considered representative by the study. The findings and the discussions are found in chapter three, four and five.

Chapter 3: Around the Globe Deliverance Ministries (ATG)

3.1 The Founder and History of the Church/Ministry

ATG is a deliverance-oriented church that was founded by Apostle Francis Ngula Musili who commonly refers to himself as brother Musili. The church has its main headquarters in Nairobi City but has a network of Branches within Kenya. Although the church has got quite a great number of supportive staff including pastors and

professional staff (accountants and sound technicians) it is dominantly directed by Apostle Musili.

Apostle Musili hails from Kitui County and was initially a member of Africa Inland Church. He says that being brought up in Kitui County and in this case in the remote rural areas, he saw and experienced witchcraft in the village, something that would lead to the formation of a deliverance-oriented church. He attributes his calling to his young age in life saying that even before he started his ministry he was a preacher in high school. His ministry finds a close connection with the Redeemed Gospel church in Mombasa. Redeemed Gospel Church was begun by Bishop Arthur Kitonga and has been the foundation of many churches and ministries in Nairobi including the self-professed prophetess Natasha of the Oracle of God. Apostle Francis Musili started preaching in 1994 but he officially launched his church in 2004. After preaching in Mombasa in Redeemed Gospel Church during the clashes in 2002/2003, he came to Nairobi. He began his church at a hotel within the city centre just meters away from his present church premises (Temple Road). He is a family man and his wife is also part of the ministry. She is referred to as Reverend Cecilia, she couples up as a teacher, and frequently features in women's ministry in ATGM. Academically, apostle Musili has a Bachelor of Arts degree in leadership and management (BALM) from St. Paul's University in Kenya. He also has a master's degree in theology from Regent University in the USA⁴⁸. In an interview conducted on 19/7/21, he indicated that he will soon pursue his doctorate.

⁴⁸ Besides his learning, his preaching is devoid of that learned person in terms of his mastery of the English language as he often resorts to vernacular so many times during his preaching sermons despite the urban nature of his church.

He preaches both locally in his church being predominantly present from Tuesday to Sunday, meeting and praying for people each day as well hosting Radio and TV programs. He is the founder and the CEO of Deliverance TV as well as ATG Radio station commonly known as “Sauti Ya Ukombozi” (the Voice of liberation). With this kind of preaching, Apostle Musili has attracted an audience both physically and virtually both within and outside Kenya. His Church boasts of over five thousand members. The church services run from Tuesday to Sunday. The table below captured ATGM services in a week.

Day	Time and or Period	APROX. NUMBER of attendees	Name of the service	Description
Sunday Normal services	6.00 AM – 7.30 AM	200	Morning coffee service	It’s the first service in preparation for the other service. No literal coffee is served but a figurative name for the first service in preparation for the rest
	8.00AM – 9.30	1500	Kiswahili/English service	So to speak the first service is meant for people who cannot attend the other main service
	10.00AM – 1.30 PM	3000- 3500	Main service	Considered the main service of the ATG deliverance ministries, it is the longest at

				times it extends to 3 or 4 pm.
Sunday special services	1 st Sunday of every month	3500/online following on Deliverance TV and Radio	Iron feet anointing service	A deliverance service geared towards the cleansing of someone's feet with anointing oil from satanic traps one might have walked into (see Discussions below)
	3 rd Sunday of every month	3500/online following in both Deliverance TV and Radio	Healing Pool service	A deliverance service for a miracle healing and exorcism and general prosperity
Tuesday	6 AM- 7.30 Am	50-100	Morning Glory From Tuesday to Friday	Meant for working class before they report for work in Nairobi
	12.00 – 2.00 PM	100-200	Lunch hour service (a daily service – Tuesday to Friday)	Meant for people breaking for lunch from their places of work and thus finding time to worship
Wednesday	11.00AM – 2.00PM	500-1000	Main midweek service	Meant for the members as well as outsiders coming to meet Apostle Musili for prayers, it features predominantly a deliverance service – it's

				live on Deliverance TV
Friday	11.00 AM – 2 PM	200-300	A midweek service	Just part of midweek service though not the main

Table 1: Flow chart of ATGM services in a week

3.2 Beliefs, Theology, and Hermeneutical Practices of ATG

The basic ministry focus of ATGM is deliverance. The deliverance takes a complete Neo-Pentecostal spirit of liberation from demonic slavery mostly attributed to witchcraft and other evil spirits such as “majini”⁴⁹. This explains why this church and the entire preaching is focused on “deliverance” aiming at exorcising and casting out demons and evil spirits that have “held,” “stopped” and “hindered” the prosperity of the people/obstructing them from experiencing their God-given potential and “future”. The same spirits are believed to cause a national crisis as is discussed in the political hermeneutics and practice.

The mission of the church, which the founder also reiterated in his preaching is, “Plundering hell and setting captives free”. The captives here are people enslaved by spirits and are under the control of demonic agents. In elaborating the mission of his ministry, he likens it to firefighters and argues that the same way they do not follow laid down traffic rules (what he calls protocol) in the same way he does not follow any church protocol/hermeneutical procedure in the preacher, rather “he deals with demons head-on”. He further refers to his ministry as a “fire brigade” against the demonic and satanic forces. The study found out that deliverance is so foundational to this church that it is the main focus/centre of every preaching and everyday activity of the Apostle

⁴⁹ Evil spirits mostly are believed to live in underground mass waters mostly the Indian Ocean which people obtain and use them to enrich themselves. So as to enrich themselves, it is believed that one has to give a human sacrifice and therefore, the spirits possess that person, making them poor and/ or at times leading to death or occasioning sudden death or even tormenting them for example by making them run mad.

whether in physical or virtual church meetings. In seeking to understand the main preaching areas, the study realized that out of the 60 questionnaires given to respondents in this church, in the 49 which were returned, the respondents rated deliverance as the most preached theme by Apostle Musili and his team of pastors as well as preachers.

3.3 Dominant Preaching Themes/Topics

Area/theme	Frequency	Percentage
Deliverance	33	67.3%
Giving	9	18.4%
Helping the needy	3	6.1%
Salvation	2	4.1%
Holiness	2	4.1%
Total	49	100%

Table 2: Dominant preaching themes

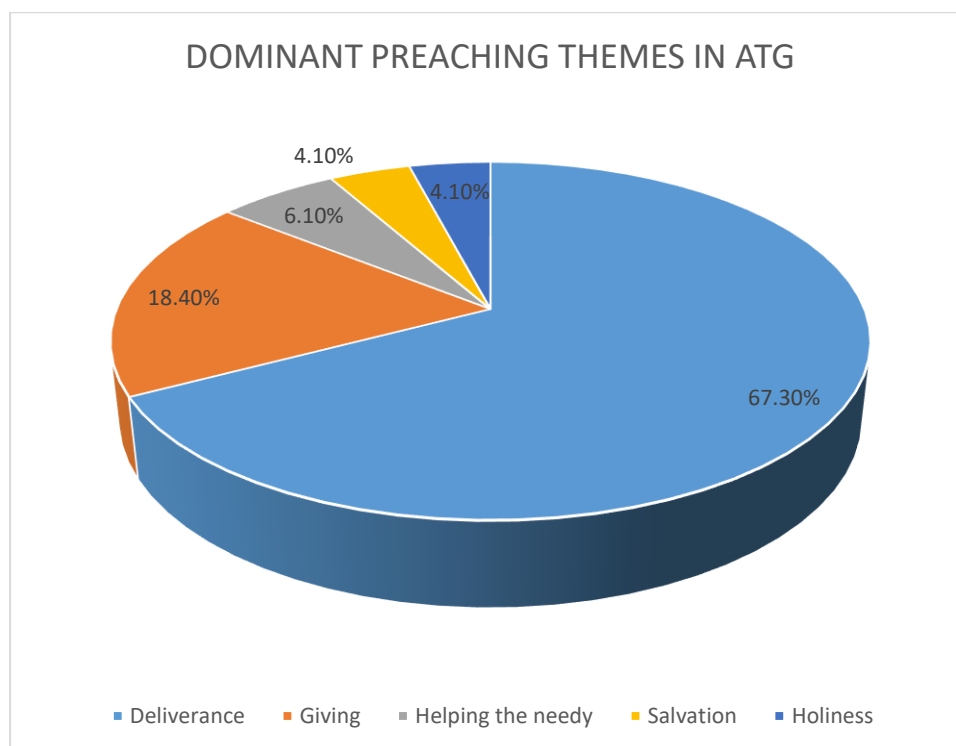


Figure 1: Dominant Preaching Themes in ATG

From Table 2 and Figure 1 above, there are five dominant areas/ themes and topics of preaching in ATGM. These are predominantly from Apostle Musili as well as from the supportive pastoral team. Data collected for this study revealed that deliverance themes/topics took the centre stage with 67.3% to the extent that all the other themes are a subset of it. The study found out that in all worship services not even one ends without a deliverance service. Further, all the preaching by the apostle and his associate pastors are dominantly related to deliverance. From the 49 respondents who returned their questionnaire, when the question was posed to them, “What does deliverance mean in your Church, all of them had a variety of words to describe the concept, and they included: being cleansed/being delivered from demonic/evil spirit of witchcraft and sorcery that inhibit success in life. Amazingly, none of the respondents perceived deliverance from sin unto salvation; rather, their theological and spiritual orientation is completely entrenched in spiritual causes with evil spirits being the cause of everything evil or misfortune. With such kind of a lived spirituality, this study observed that on daily basis from Monday to Saturday, Church members as well as pastors from outside this ministry come for deliverance services. The deliverance also involved buying anointing oil⁵⁰ and “holy blessed water”. The study found out that one bottle of anointing oil goes for two hundred and that of water is one hundred Kenyan shillings

⁵⁰ I visited the church premise for a couple of months, and members come in to buy anointing oil and water that is believed to keep the demonic spirits away; hence, making the lives of the users successful be it in business, family, academics among others. The anointing oil is applied on one’s forehead, or on arms or ailing body part while praying against the evil of spirits of sickness. It is also rubbed on the doors of the business premises or on some business items. The water is taken orally with a belief that once one has drunk, immediately the body begins to fight “spirits” of sickness. In one of the services I attended, a mother rose up to give a testimony of how one day her daughter woke up in the middle of the night very sick: she had high fever caused by tonsils. She narrated how she recalled that she had bought holy water bearing the name of Apostle Musili. After praying, she gave the water to her daughter and instantly the fever came down and the girl got healed. Though it is difficult to verify this testimony, one is left questioning how cold water can cure tonsils. However, looking at it biblically, Apostle Musili seeks to equate himself with the Apostle Paul who prayed for handkerchiefs and they would heal people. It is significant to note that in one of his books, he alleges that God did not intent the book of Acts to end in chapter 28, and that chapter 29 is what is happening today as miracles are evident in churches.

respectively. Further, it was observed that there was also a well-packed anointing oil going for between five hundred and one thousand Kenyan shillings which mostly the Apostle himself sells during deliverance services.

Giving money takes 18.4% and it is closely connected to deliverance because there is no deliverance service without payment of money. The study observed that with a lived spirituality of demonic spirits being responsible for people's misfortunes, giving money became a way of making a "sacrifice" of their earnings and thus protecting the rest from the destruction of the evil spirits. In all the worship services, the study established that apostle Musili's preaching is dominated with the Neo-Pentecostal practice of "declaring and decreeing" success and prosperity in the lives of the members. In those speaking points (of declaring and decreeing) taking the prophetic stance with a mixture of English and speaking in tongues, he begins to declare "prophetically" with statements such as, "you will suffer no more, that disease is healed, your VISA is coming, no more delays, your business will prosper, you shall be a millionaire, your marriage will be restored, among other declarations. The study categorically observed that at exactly that time when he is declaring those statements, the congregations runs to the auditorium and drop their offering on it. The study came to understand that the church auditorium is interpreted as an altar from which the Pastor who is perceived as a priest speaks from the vantage point of spiritual authority. With the enchanted spirituality that demons are the causes of both personal and social problems, it is believed that even the demonic spirits build altars meant to destroy individuals, families, and societies. In seeking to break the influence of the "evil altars" erected by witches, sorcerers, and other evil spirits against their lives, Apostle Musili begins to declare spiritual war/defeat and deliverance to the members who bring money to the auditorium (altar). The laying of their money on the "church altar" is an expression of

faith and reasoning that with their money they are uniting themselves with the most powerful “altar” (The apostle as a man of God) against the demonic altars. By so doing, they believe that they gain deliverance from anything demonic seeking to control and destroy their lives, marriages, family, business, and career as well as occasion prosperity of the same. This explains why that specific offering is not put in the offertory basket but on the floor.

The study found that the idea of “raising an altar” that speaks prosperity to the individual and society is borrowed from the Old Testament, especially in the life of Abraham and Jacob. However, it is a biblical borrowing mixed with both Neo-Pentecostal “spirit” oriented Christianity as well as African culture in which spirits reigned supreme. The act of Abraham and Jacob (Genesis 13 and 28) of erecting an altar to worship God and upon which God declared his covenant of blessings, in ATGM, becomes a point of spiritualization in which the church auditorium together with the Bishop becomes an altar which one sacrifice to (with money) and since he or she becomes united to that altar, all other demonic altars as well as ancestral spirits and curses influencing his or her life loose power. Further, by invoking the name of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit in dealing with the “demonic altars” the believer has covenanted with the altar of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. The study found out that ATGM church members are influenced so much by their African understanding of spirits; therefore, this thus affects their biblical interpretation. Their hermeneutics here is devoid of any structural insight but employs picking of biblical passages that speak to their situation directly without regard to the context or meaning of words, provided it makes “spiritual sense” to them.

The study also observed that giving messages connected to deliverance from demonic influences features mostly on Deliverance TV owned by Apostle Musili as well as the

Radio program (Sauti Ya ukombozi). After the message on how demonic spirits of witchcraft and sorcery destroy lives and businesses, the preacher begins to tell people to send money via Mpesa (mobile money transfer) to a number displayed on the screen or announced through the radio. The study found that the money to be sent is mostly in number seven either 700 or 7000. The study learned that the predominance of the number seven is to show completeness. There is a grounded hermeneutics that number seven is the number of perfection and completeness in the bible. With this thinking, it is believed that the money to be sent must feature the number of completeness so as ensure a complete liberation from the demonic spirits. Again this gave evidence to the inseparable nature of deliverance and giving of money in ATG ministries. The money here is perceived as a sacrifice that unlocks the success of the individual believer in all aspects of his or her life.

Helping the needy was also identified as one of the themes with 6.1%. It was realized that ATGM has a robust program for the needy including sponsoring poor children/orphaned for High school education besides visiting children's homes. Apostle Musili on several occasions in his service gives money to poor people attending his service, especially single mothers. The study found out in each month there is a special Sunday in which the church gives a special offering or even pledges towards supporting an identified children's home. However, this aspect of helping the needy is not much pronounced as deliverance and giving. The study interprets this as a way of camouflaging from extending real help to needy people in the church and also spare the church from criticisms it receives from outside its circles as money-minded and taking advantage of desperate individuals to enrich the founder.

Salvation and holiness themes came at the bottom of the list with an equal frequency of 4.1%. The data collected informed the study that salvation and holiness are not

significant preaching themes in ATGM. Although in his preaching Apostle Musili calls out anyone wishing to give his life to Christ as well at times talking of a holy living, such themes were given minimal attention since the church is dominantly entrenched in deliverance services. So, salvation and holiness are not the focus. It is assumed that the problems people are facing are not as a result of having not received salvation or because they are living in sin; rather, it is because evil spirits from witches, sorcerers, and also ancestral curses are inhibiting their realization of success in life.

The above dominant preaching themes revealed that ATGM does not focus much on political issues. Their preaching is mainly centred on spiritual issues affecting the lives of the members. The preaching is therefore enchanted in the sense that demons are the cause of problems in people's daily lives and societies in general. The study realized that through this understanding, the preaching is devoid of themes like church and politics, the responsible citizen or even hard work. The study then realized that Pentecostals have little if any theology or hermeneutics concerning political issues. As already alluded to at the beginning of this section, deliverance is the centre in ATGM, this was evident in the data collected, expressing that this ministry has established various ways of doing deliverance. These methods were valuable to the study in informing it about the hermeneutical posture of apostle Musili and how it affects the ATGM and its relationship to the politics of the country. These ways were discussed below.

3. 4 Ways of Doing Deliverance in ATG

After the establishing that apostle Musili's ministry is completely entrenched in deliverance from demonic and evil spirits, the study sought to understand how deliverance is done. The table below and pie chart gives the types of the means/methods employed by Apostle Musili in deliverance services

Method	Frequency	Percentage
Iron feet anointing/ healing pool	22	45 %
Stepping on the altar/breaking altars	15	30.6%
Anointing oil and blessed water	7	14.2%
Prayer and exorcism	3	6.1%
Praying for material elements	2	4.1%
	49	100%

Table 3: Methods of deliverance in ATG

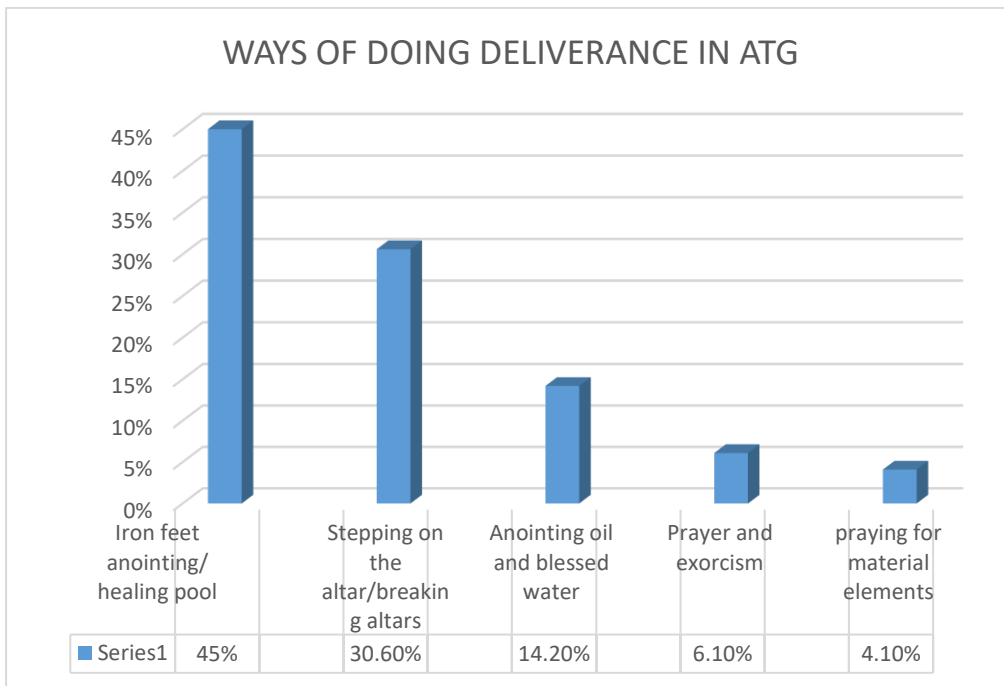


Figure 2: Deliverance methods in ATGM

Table 3 and Figure 2 above show the various deliverance methods utilized by Apostle Musili in ATG ministries to bring about deliverance to people believed to be under the control of demonic spirits inhibiting success in their lives. The study found several methods such as: Iron feet anointing and healing pool, stepping on the altar/breaking altars, anointing oil and blessed water, prayer and exorcism, and praying for material elements.

The field data collected indicated that Iron feet anointing/healing pool methods were the leading with 45%. While the two are different, they were simultaneously given by respondents as some of the common practices utilized by Apostle Musili for deliverance. The iron feet anointing was a significant practice in this church such that even the Apostle has written a book about it entitled, “The Mystery of Iron feet Anointing”. The iron feet anointing service takes place every first Sunday of every month. Apostle Musili explains its meaning and significance in his book in the following words:

The iron feet anointing service is a Christian-based ritual of walking a person through anointed olive oil mixed with salt: It is a simple physical action to the human eye, but it has a very deep spiritual Biblical meaning. It is especially useful for a person who has stepped onto a trap set for him or her through witchcraft (Musili, 2020, p. 1)

The study established that during this service, normal olive oil is prayed to cleanse and sacralize it for the service. The same is also done to the salt. In this case, both the oil and salt are said to gain “spiritual power” to fight against demonic forces directed at one if he/she stepped in the mixture. One of the Pastors informed the researcher that,

Once the olive oil and the salt are prayed for by the man of God (read Apostle Musili) the spiritual power inherent in Him by his authority to fight demonic and evil spirits, his power and authority descends to the oil and water and they stop being the usual elements, they gain the power to fight evil spirits and ancestral curses.

The service is characteristic of the Neo-Pentecostal practice of spiritual warfare against anything that holds the potentialities (destinies)⁵¹ of the individuals and societies. However, for ATGM, the warfare here is so much focused on the individual, not the society in general. The iron feet anointing is completely given a spiritual warfare orientation with an underlying belief that all life's problems are caused by evil spirits. Apostle Musili articulates this well in his book:

One must understand that we do not wage war against flesh and blood, but against principalities in the heavenly. *Not all problems that we encounter are normal. Some problems are initiatives from the enemy's camp that are sent to people through evil agents such as witches, warlocks, sorcerers, and diviners among others* (italics added). Some of the problems included evil altars, strongholds, and covenants fighting you. Other is evil family patterns such as premature deaths, barrenness, late or no marriages, still births, poverty, non-achievement, and schizophrenia among others (Musili, 2020, p. 1)

The above citation reveals a spiritualized thinking and practice which is enchanted in orientation. It is reasoned that the totality of an individual's life can be negatively influenced by evil spirits and ancestral curses thus, crippling the success of the person in life as manifested in the physical realm. While some of the problems like still births could be due to medical conditions, deaths due to lifestyle, or break of marriages due to irresponsible behaviours, the self seems isolated from the cause, and rather the cause is relegated to evil spirits. In connection to this study, then Neo- Pentecostals tend to concentrate on the individual and then translate to society.

The study sought to understand, why the concentration was on the feet; and not the head or hands. The study found that the concentration on the feet started from a sermon

⁵¹ This has become a common word in Neo-Pentecostal spirituality. The word destiny is used to express the God given potential to find and fulfill each individual's purpose in life. Statements like destiny helpers, destiny connectors, destiny diversions among others are dominant in Neo-Pentecostal preaching and life. Each individual is perceived to be imbued with God-given potentiality manifesting itself in success in life. It is believed that the devil and his demonic agents and spirits, spirits of witchcraft and sorcery hold people's destinies inhibiting them from success and prosperity. Thus, they do not find or live according to the standards of their life purpose. This explains why, even though one is born again, they need deliverance from evil spirits that destroy and or delay destinies.

Musili preached from John 13:1ff from the narrative of Jesus washing his disciple's feet⁵². Without consideration of the context of the chapter, he crafted a message entitled, "The significance of feet washing". He went on to preach that feet washing is important to cleanse anyone whose feet have stepped on evil traps waylaid by witches, sorcerers, or even ancestral spirits or curses. Analysing his preaching and writings reveals the spiritualization of physical feet, that whatever happens to them affects the spiritual realm of the person (here in the language of Apostle Musili- spiritual feet). Several extractions from Musili's book capture the idea of why feet anointing is emphasized:

...the power in the Feet anointing ensures that our spiritual legs and feet are neither lost nor incapacitated in the spiritual realm. Loose or breakdown of either spiritual legs or feet has adverse effects in the physical realm...our feet are a symbol of our walk with God: When God says He has good plans for you and me; one of the things he is saying is that 'I have given you legs to take you where I have destined you to go and be.' God gives us physical legs to take us to where we can eat the good of this earth we live in. with our physical feet, we enter into gigantic buildings and with the same feet enter into offices, business premises, sanctuaries, and secure well-paying jobs, important-sounding titles, lucrative business deals. ...in Psalm 23, our shepherd intends that our legs take us to green pastures and quiet waters. He wants our legs to walk along the right paths...I know you are asking what the devil has to do with your feet, legs, and life. The answer is in Genesis 3:15. It is written, **"I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between you and her seed. He will strike your heel and you will strike his head"**. The enemy (read devil and evil spirits) knows that we have the power to strike him on the head, and so he aims at our heels in a bid to stop us from carrying fulfilling scripture. He knows our power as followers of Christ is in our feet for it is written in **Psalm 91:13, "That though shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt though trample under."** "It is also written in **Luke 10:19 "Behold, I give power unto power to tread upon serpents, scorpions and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall hurt you"**⁵³ (Musili, 2020, p. 13-14).

The above extractions from Musili's book on "The Mystery of iron feet anointing" feature several biblical passages fused, without consideration of the context and meaning of words, he gives reasons as to why he concentrates on the feet. The feet carry both a physical and spiritual significance, with the negative effect of physical feet

⁵²The sermon is found on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvuKq3EPmpQ&t=1031s>.

⁵³ More biblical verses and the manner in which they have been taken out of context in grounding his teaching and practice of iron feet anointing can be found in his book, "They Ministry of Iron feet Anointing".

through evil spirits or spells affecting the immaterial dimension of the person manifesting itself in the physical realm evidenced in a life of suffering. In connection to this, Musili (2020, p. 14) argues that the power that one carries in his spiritual feet is what Satan tries to destroy as he strikes the heel. He reasons that it is prudent for every Christian to pray and ask God for the understanding of the connection between the spiritual and physical feet and this is why one's feet should be cleansed. This belief and practice has been given biblical backing and has become one of the main ATGM beliefs/doctrines and practices. With respect to the focus of this study, ATGM does not have any teachings related to the believer and the socio-political dimension to the extent that social problems are assigned to demonic causes.

Closely connected and similar to iron feet anointing is the healing pool ritual which happens every third Sunday of the Month in ATG deliverance Chapel Nairobi. It entails creating a temporary pool⁵⁴ of water in the church premise and salt and olive oil are added to the water. The study found out that just like iron feet anointing, a healing pool is also geared towards "spiritual cleansing" the feet of the believer against evil spiritual traps his feet might have stepped into. However, the healing pool is rooted in dominion theology and power spirituality prevalent in Neo-Pentecostal Charismatic theology and preaching. Drawing his teaching from the act of Jesus washing his disciple's feet in John 13:1ff (though taken out of context), Apostle Musili developed a theology/a spirituality of dominion and power in his quest to biblically justify the practice of the healing pool deliverance method. He argued that healing pool service is a New

⁵⁴ The study observed that owing to COVID-19 safety measures and in seeking to retain this treasured practice, now that all believers cannot each walk through the pool, Apostle Musili devised a new way of healing pool. The alternative method has been provision of several booths placed at the entrance. When one goes through the booth, automatically the booth fitted with sensors, sprays the worshiper the water mixed with salt and anointing oil. It is believed the booth works the same way as walking through the healing pool.

Testament mystery designed to restore the dominion of the saints from what was lost when Adam and Eve fell into sin in Eden. He further reasoned that Jesus' act of washing his disciple's feet was symbolic just the same way baptism symbolically expresses a believer dying and resurrecting with Christ thus, the reception of the new life/new nature. The apostle in seeking to build his dominion/power theology and spirituality emphasized that the reading from the text (John, 13) that Jesus had come from God: the locus of spiritual power and authority.

Therefore, when Jesus washed the disciple's feet, the power present by the virtue of him being God and from God, was mysteriously transferred to the disciples. Literary, the preacher reasoned, "He washed their feet so that they could enter the realm he had come from". The dominion and power alluded to here are attached to the prosperity of the individual. Musili further reiterated that "Jesus washed their feet so that their star can shine again". The star here is used to refer to the success of the individual believer in the present life and future (success in all aspects of life manifested in a material life of abundance). Again without disregard for the context or even the meaning of the words, utilizing the passage in both Genesis 37:9 and Numbers 24:17⁵⁵, the word star is spiritualized to mean the "bright future" and or the "God-given destiny" evidenced by material prosperity and good health. In application, he assured the congregation that once they walk through the pool water, all witchcraft spells and sins will be cleansed. Seeking to express the new spirituality inherent in the ritual, Musili preached that just like dominion and power were mysteriously and divinely transferred to the disciples after the feet washing, the believers who go through the healing pool automatically gain

⁵⁵ In both verses, the star has got nothing whatsoever to do with people's bright future attested by material gains. In the Genesis account, the star was part of the moon and the sun meaning that Joseph's family would bow to him in future as a king. In Numbers, the prophecy was about the coming of Christ as King from Judah. But through spiritualized and selected hermeneutics through in-reading of the text the star assumes a totally different meaning than the one intended by the author.

dominion and power against anything holding their success in life. They are literarily perceived to gain the same power and authority that Jesus had during his earthly ministry (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvuKq3EPmpQ&t=1031s>). In this sermon Apostle Musili asked his audience, “If you were to gain the power and the authority that Jesus operated with, what else would challenge you? This was a rhetorical question but affirmative on the positive side meaning that nothing will stand against the believer who has undergone the healing pool ritual.

This study seeking to understand the political hermeneutics realized that for ATG, politics and or socio-political or even the governance of the country is not part of their daily lives. Their spirituality is more focused on the success/prosperity of the individual believer. For example in both iron feet and healing pool rituals, it is never done for the nation or community but for an individual’s spiritual and material gain. Therefore, the study established that the deliverance meant to bring prosperity is very individualistic and devoid of political nuance. The deliverance assumes power and dominion for daily living against anything that destroys life and hinders the realization of abundant life evidenced in complete health and material blessings. This thinking does not perceive the politicians and the government as a solution either in alleviating poverty or improving health care. Rather, personal problems being a consequence of evil spirits are given a spiritual solution through deliverance.

The second deliverance method that the study found out was, “stepping on the altar/breaking of altars” commonly referred to in ATGM as Kuvunja Mathambau (breaking altars). Stepping on the altar is not as literary as the phrase sounds. The study observed that during the week, from Tuesday to Friday many people both ATGM members and many others who are non-Members as well as TV and Radio followers/viewers and listeners, come to see Apostle Musili for prayers. These studies

found out that most of these people are Christians as well as non-Christian (at times Muslim women). The purpose of their coming is to seek prayers of deliverance from what they believe are evil spirits working against their lives manifested in sicknesses, lack of jobs, financial constraints, failure of their businesses, lack of fruitfulness of their shambas, marriage problems, and their children's education among many other personal problems. Data gained from personal observations, FGDs, and interviews revealed that one steps on the altar by using of money. The study observed that anyone who came to meet Apostle Musili for prayers, at the reception the conversation went on like this: "have you booked to see him", then he/she is told, "Seeing him one books by paying Kshs.4000"⁵⁶. The money is never received in cash but is deposited to a displayed Till number at the counter. The study learnt that by paying the four thousand Kenya shillings, one is believed to mysteriously and divinely connect to the ministry that apostle Musili is running. In this context, his ministry is perceived as an altar raised by a man of God who is in authority and specifically against the evil spirits that hinder people from prospering in life. The payment of money equates the apostle to the Old Testament priest who would take the offering from the people and on their behalf offer it at the altar of God. Apostle Musili and his ministry become the altar unto which the four thousand Kenya shillings are offered. After paying, one waits outside until he/she is called in where he/she or a family meets the apostle and explains their case. Apostle Musili dressed in a priestly-like robe and with the use of anointing oil and with the

⁵⁶ With several days of visiting ATG deliverance ministries during the weekdays, the study learnt that in single day the people coming to book for prayers of deliverance ranges between 25-35. All these people paying kshs. 4000. This translates to the Apostle receiving over kshs. 100,000 in day. This excludes daily sales of anointing oil and the holy water which goes for kshs. 200 and 100 respectively. At times during the worship service, the study found out that there is a bottle of anointing oil nicely packed going for Kshs. 500-1000. This explains why most of the Neo-Pentecostal preachers are very wealth and affluent. For example, the study learnt that the founders of these churches, just by running them, they drive and own several expensive cars, houses in the most lavish places in the city besides running their own TV and Radio stations. A future study should done focusing on the wealth of the Neo-Pentecostal preachers and the means to their wealth. This is because the study observed that most of the people who come to ATGM for prayers are poor going by what they wore when they came (tattered shoes and clothes).

believer or client made to stand bare foot on top of a metallic object, the apostle declares and decrees the person free from any form of witchcraft spell, sorcery or any other evil spirit sent to destroy his/her life. The individual or the family is told to buy anointing oil and holy water from the reception. The oil is for anointing against the evil spirits and “evil altars” and the water for bodily healing for use at home. The act of payment of the money, the prayers, and the buying and use of anointing oil and water are believed to have the power to break “evil altars” erected by witches, sorcerers, and those who use spirits to harm others as well as ancestral spirits and curses.

Prayer and exorcism and praying for material elements had 6.1% and 4.1% respectively being at the bottom of the list of deliverance methods. The study found that these two methods had less frequency and percentages in comparison to others; therefore, less effective. However, they appear also amid the other methods discussed above. Prayer and exorcism are done during church services. The data gained from the study learnt that once a week (on Wednesdays) there is a deliverance service. This service involves preaching geared towards deliverance from evil spirits from anyone under their influence without booking to meet the apostle. The study observed that with the anointing oil in a bottle, he sprays it upon the people (instead of touching them due to COVID-19 protocols) and immediately some people start falling off their chairs chanting and screaming. Sometimes, Apostle Musili would be preaching and while passing in between the seated congregation, some attendees fall to the ground screaming. The study learnt that it is believed that they face “a power encounter”. This is meant since they are possessed by a demon or an evil spirit and the apostle is “saturated” with the power of the Holy Spirit, the evil spirits in fear make people fall. That begins another long service of praying for them, casting out the demons, and praying for them.

Praying for material elements involves people bringing soil from their farms, photographs of lost relatives or sick family members, books or pens all brought in the belief that once the Apostle prays for them, the sick person despite the distance gets healed, the lost relatives will be found and the student will pass in the exams or gain an understanding of a subject he/she has been failing in school⁵⁷.

Moreover, the study established that there was a preoccupation with individual success/prosperity that is devoid of political and national interests. Such kind of a preoccupation is anchored on a biblical theology of “power and dominion” done through spiritualization of every occurrence in life through selected texts of the Bible (Gifford, 2008). This challenges the notion that Neo-Pentecostals are politically oriented or that they are the new prophetic voices in Kenya.

3. 5 ATG Understanding of Eschatology

The study sought to examine the understanding of ATGM members and pastors on eschatology and specifically on the second coming of Christ. This was important because in understanding the Neo-Pentecostal shift from disengagement to engagement in politics, eschatology has featured as one of the elements informing the shift. Kay and Ann (2004) present Pentecostals as initially premillennial and with time changing their eschatological posture to Postmillennialism. This dictates a shift from the Gospel of salvation to the Gospel of the kingdom. The respondents (both pastors and members) were asked about their church teaching on the second coming of Christ. They were supplied with possible answers; before the Great tribulation, during the great

⁵⁷ The study found out that Apostle Musili acts as an African traditional diviner. And to his advantage is the African culture dominant element of spirit causality. Such worldview, with spiritual causality leads to spiritual solving of problems. While initially in pre-Christian days Kenyans would visit a witch doctor for such solutions, today in Kenya and across many African Countries, the Neo-Pentecostal preachers have taken the role of the witch doctors, albeit in the Name of Jesus. Further studies on the dominance of the African worldview in the growth on Pentecostal charismatics and how it affects the spirituality and social life of the African individuals and societies will be critical.

tribulation, after the great tribulation and I don't know. Part B required they explain their answers. Their responses are tabulated below for the 49 questionnaires returned and from 3 pastors (one bishop plus two pastors- interviewed) totalling to 52 respondents from ATG.

Time period	Frequency	Percentage
Before the great tribulation	14	27%
During the great tribulation	0	0.00%
After the great tribulation	3	5.7%
I do not know	35	67.3%
Total	52	100%

Table 4: ATGM members understanding of the second coming of Christ.

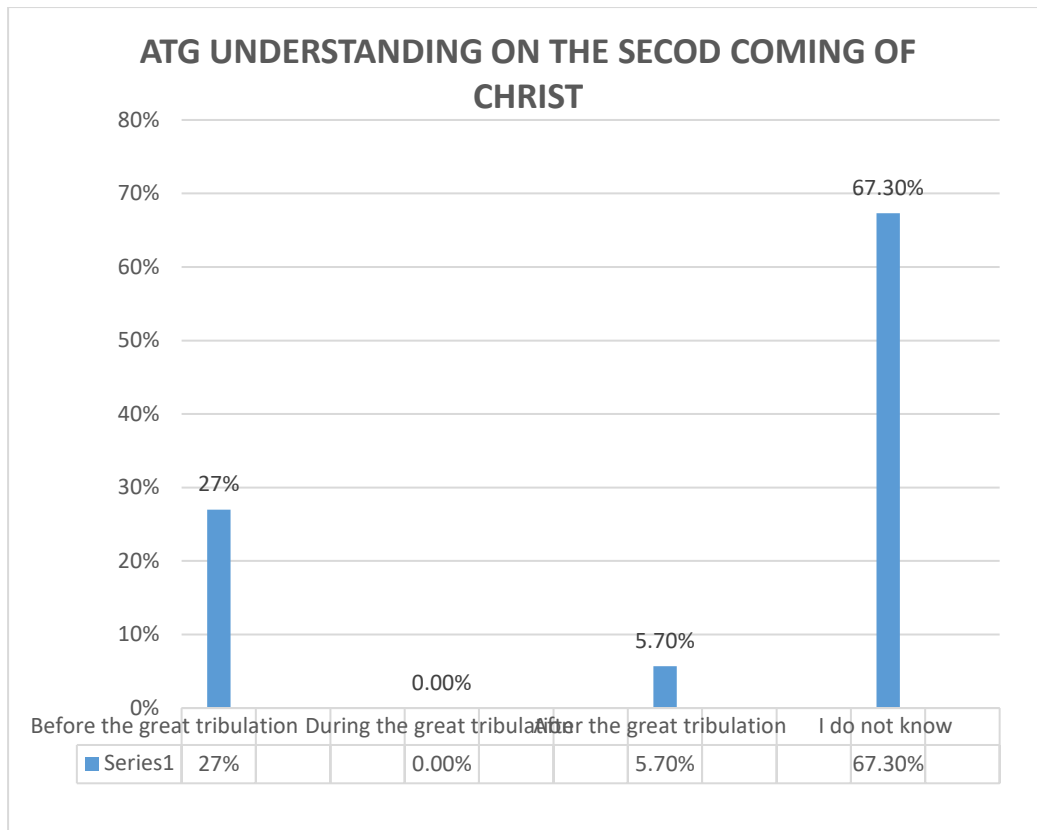


Figure 3: The understanding of ATG members on the second coming of Christ.

Table 4 and Figure 3 above show the data informing the study about Neo-Pentecostal understanding of the second coming of Christ as a factor affecting their shift from disengagement to engagement in politics. The data revealed that a great majority at 67.3% consisting of the church members as well as the pastors did not know about the teachings of the second coming of Christ. One pastor said, “I have never taught about the second coming neither have I heard about time-scales on when Christ will come, what I know is that no one knows the hour of His coming”. Another responded said, “What I know and hear is that Christ will come, but how and when I have never heard our pastor teach about it”. Another responded added upon being asked to explain his answer said, “What the Bible teaches is that we should be ready always because the hour of Christ’s return is unknown”. One of the pastors responded that Christ comes

after one dies, associating the end of the world with the death of an individual. Some respondents accounting for 27% expressed knowledge of Christ coming before the Great tribulation. When asked to explain their answers they said that Christ cannot allow his followers to suffer through tribulations. These few expressed an understanding of the millennial reign of Christ. Two of them were pastors and one was a church member. The study found out that these three accounting for 5.7% were initially members of mainstream churches before joining ATG deliverance ministries. They informed the study that their knowledge of the Bible and the second coming of Christ is derived from their previous denominational affiliation. One added, “In Pentecostalism, preaching and teaching is about demon possession, deliverance, and prosperity, you can’t find the doctrinal teachings like I used to have as a member of African Inland Church”. The category, after the great tribulation, has a zero frequency and thus 0%. The study found that none of the members knew about this teaching. Further, the idea of suffering as presented in the word persecution did not auger well with Neo-Pentecostal teachings and beliefs. Suffering is interpreted as demonic causality and therefore, all research participants could not see why believers would experience the great persecution.

The high percentage indicating no knowledge of the subject is also evidenced by the fact that eschatology was not part of the main preaching themes in ATG Deliverance ministry. This informed the study that the Neo-Pentecostal shift from being aloof to politics to being actively engaged was not influenced by a change of eschatological doctrinal positions. By interviewing the chairman (Rev. Dr. David Oginde) of the Evangelical Association of Kenya (EAK which started as a Pentecostal body) the study found out that for Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya, the main belief and practices is that Christ will come. How he will come and when; are considered

controversial issues left in the hands of each denomination. The FGDs informed the study that Neo-Pentecostals do not know the second coming of Christ, save for the understanding that Jesus will return like a thief and therefore, believers must be ready. Their spirituality and theology are directed to personal prosperity manifested in good health and financial abilities. This is discussed in the section on biblical political hermeneutics section.

3.6 ATGM Understanding of Politics

The study sought to understand how ATGM members and their pastors understand politics and whether born-again believers should get involved in politics. The first question was whether politics is a dirty game. The question had options; Yes and No. The responses are shown in Table 5 and the subsequent pie chart below presenting the views of 49 respondents; pastors and members included.

Is politics a dirty game?

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	37	75.5 %
No	12	24.5%
Total	49	100%

Table 5: Is politics a dirty game?

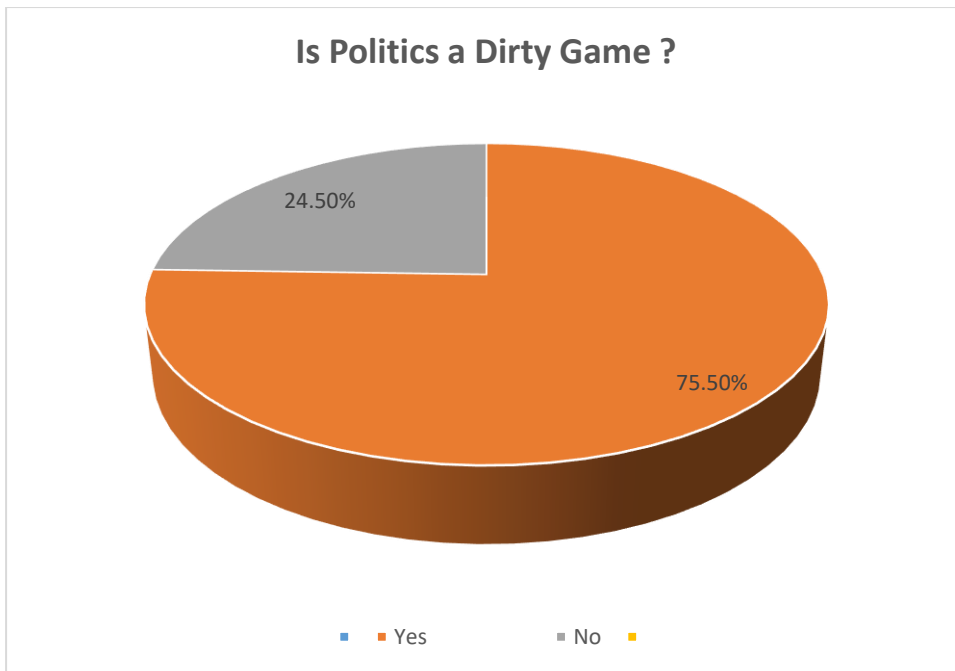


Figure 4: the understanding of ATG members why politics is a dirty game

Table 5 and Figure 4 above show responses on the understanding of the ATG members on whether politics is a dirty game. The question was meant to lay a foundation for gaining an understanding of how ATGM adherents define politics and how their understanding impinges on them getting involved in the politics of their country. This study found that a great majority (75.5%) of the ATG members perceive politics as a dirty game. The data collected from both interviews, questionnaires, and FGDs informed the study that most ATGM members interpret politics as a dirty game because they mostly focus on the abuse, insults, and a game of seeking power and influence as well as the harassment of those opposed to their ideologies. This kind of understanding of politics is limited to political positions and the search for political power. One of the respondents asked, “Have you ever seen a politician who tells the truth even when in a church service? How many Christians get into politics when they are righteous and God fearing and end up becoming corrupt and murderers?”

The study also found out that a greater majority of ATG members explain the meaning of politics from its Kiswahili word: *Siasa*. From the word “*siasa*” coupled with the vices associated with “Kenyan politics,” the respondents perceive the original Kiswahili word of politics to be “*sihasa*” (meaning not right/ not justified or literary not good). With this understanding, most ATGM remains aloof to politics with the reasoning that since politics is a dirty game, it can ruin the faith of the believer. Some of the respondents revealed that they do not even vote since Kenyan politics is riddled with injustices such that votes are mostly manipulated and the one who is supposed to win loses. The respondent asked, “Why should I waste my precious time voting when the outcome of the vote is determined before the voting date? I better spend time praying that one day things in our political scenario will change”. The study found that a greater majority of ATG members believe that any believer who aspires to join politics (positions of power) must have a special “anointing” that enables him to fight the evil spirits inherent in politics. This is discussed in the sections below on Neo-Pentecostal political hermeneutics. In the course of the study, it was found that this negative approach is dominant in ATGM and it has led to its aloofness to politics as discussed in the extent of Pentecostal influence on Kenyan politics.

24.5% of the respondents expressed that politics is not a dirty game. The study learnt that their positive approach to politics was entrenched in their definition of politics. To them, politics involves the governance of the country. While accepting the vices in Kenyan politics, they believed that governments are ordered by God but through the exercise of the choice of his people (the citizens) and if a Christian does not participate, he/she indirectly allows the reign of the wicked. They opined that a committed Christian believer cannot be influenced by the vices in politics. In seeking to justify their responses they gave examples of Joseph (Genesis, 39-52) and Daniel (Daniel 1-6)

expressing that they served in wicked governments but their faith was not compromised. Nevertheless, the study found that this positive approach to politics is held by a minority, they believe that a Christian believer can venture into politics and remain different by adhering to Christian virtues in his/her rule. This kind of reading and interpreting of the Bible is devoid of the spiritualization of politics and makes Christians responsible for the governance of their countries. The study found that this understanding perceives politics as an inescapable daily reality of human life. This is the same understanding discussed by Nthamburi (2003, p. 136), Agostoni (1997, p. 374), and Henry (1979, p. 65). With all these three scholars, politics is defined beyond party politics or the search for political power. In this context, politics is seen as means for attaining the common good and allocation of values and resources to all in the society. The field data for this study revealed that all the ATG members with a positive/progressive view of politics were not originally members of Neo-Pentecostal churches but rather from mainstream Christianity. This explains why their definitions and meaning of politics are progressive besides being Neo-Pentecostal adherents.

3.7 The Biblical-Political Hermeneutics of ATG Deliverance Ministries

The study sought to understand how Pentecostals interpret the bible; the hermeneutical procedures and how they make meaning out of a biblical text, and how they apply it to the lives and contexts of their members and in relation to politics. When asked whether there is a laid down procedure of interpreting the bible, out of the one Bishop and two ATG pastors interviewed their response was, no. One of them said, “How can you have a formula to interpret a book written by God? I sometimes stand to preach and the Holy Spirit commands me to change my sermon on the spot, he leads me the way he wants, I cannot have a formula”. Though the pastors interviewed had attended theological training and hermeneutics featured as one of the courses they took, it appears to have

been taken for the passing of exams and never to be reflected in their preaching. Only one said yes, there is a procedure, but during the interview, he could not elaborate on the procedures. Perhaps he did not understand the significance of the context and the grammar in interpretation. However, he said “one should be trained on how to interpret the Bible since it is important to acquire knowledge in biblical interpretation. Elijah had a school of training prophets” (Jeremiha 02/08/21). But the study found out that the school he was alluding to was one led by his Bishop (Apostle Musili) known as the school of ministry. This is a non-academic theological training that interprets the bible from a spiritualized angle, mostly dealing with exorcism.

The study established that the Biblical hermeneutics practiced by Apostle Musili and his team of pastors can be labelled as, Spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics. It is anchored on spiritual causality. It does not start with the context or the meaning of the text to the original hearers, or the meaning of the words, rather, it selectively chooses those texts that meet the spiritual needs of the believers or what the preacher wants to communicate. In the end, the text loses the authorial intent/meaning but assumes a new meaning given by the preacher. The study found this hermeneutical style as the only existing style in ATGM and it affects how the church perceives and gets involved in politics. Examples of spiritualized-selected hermeneutics are discussed below.

John 13: 1-17⁵⁸. The study found out that this was the chief text utilized by Apostle Francis Musili in advancing his teaching of “iron feet anointing” in a sermon entitled, “the significance of feet of washing”. The original intention of the author is to teach servanthood. Jesus being the master washes his disciple’s feet and wipes them and thus, teaching them that the greater should be the servant of all. In the text, Jesus in plain

⁵⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvuKq3EPmpQ&t=1031s>

language tells them that has set an example that they should follow. Without regard to the context of the text and in a selective way, Musili makes the feet washing symbolic. Purposively, selecting verse three, he argued, since Jesus had come from God; the position of power and authority, by washing his disciple's feet, the same spiritual power and authority (manifested in doing miracles) was mysteriously and divinely transferred to his disciples. He continues, just like baptism is symbolic of the inner truth of being born again, the feet washing was symbolic too.

He further deduces that "since power had been given to him (Jesus), he wanted to give us (believers) the same power since we live in a country where people like setting spiritual traps (read casting of spells)". The Phrase in John 13:3, "Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God (NIV)." This becomes the cradle of spiritualization whereby Musili's gives the meaning of "power and dominion". In seeking to bring into the text this meaning, he further argued that washing of the feet by Jesus was an act of restoring the saints to the dominion lost in Adam (in the fall of man). He added, Jesus washed their feet so that the disciples could enter the spiritual realm of where he had come from (from God). That he washed their feet so that their "star" can shine again. In applying the text to his audience and concerning iron feet anointing deliverance service, he told them that once their feet are dipped in the anointed water, dominion and power are transferred to them and no evil spirit, witch or sorcery can withstand them. Through spiritualized-selected hermeneutics, the text loses its original meaning, assuming a different meaning given and shaped by the preacher. One wonders why verses 1-2 and 4-17 are left out. What about the context of feet washing in the passage owing to its historical meaning?

Genesis 3:15 was another passage giving evidence to “spiritualized-selective hermeneutics”. The text reads, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers, he will crush your head and you will strike his heel” (NIV). The context of this text is the fall of man. The authorial meaning assigns a seed of the woman (Hebrew singular) as one offspring who shall rise up and crush the power of the devil manifested in the serpent⁵⁹ (Vos, 200:43-44). Evangelical tradition has rightly interpreted the seed here to mean the messiah Jesus Christ. Born of the Virgin Mary, he becomes the seed of the woman prophesied by God. His birth, ministry culminating on the cross gives the devil a final blow (crushing his head) by delivering men to God. Selectively, in an attempt to expand his theology of “iron feet anointing” Apostle Musili focused on the phrase, “...and you will strike his heel”. Without any attempt to explain the context of the verse within the fall of man, a spiritualized meaning attached to deliverance ensues. The heel is taken literary as the apostle reiterated, “I know you are asking what the devil has to do with what will happens to your legs, feet, and life. The answer is in Genesis 3:15. Using this text as his spring board and selectively fusing other both OT and NT texts, he advanced his spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics.

Without consideration of the context or the meaning, in the three selected texts, a direct application is made to the listeners specifically imaging a believer’s spiritual warfare and his promised victory expressed in words, “under foot and trampling”. Without explanation, Musili spiritualized the heel referring to it as the feet. Out of this perception, he reasoned, “The power that you carry on and in your spiritual feet is what

⁵⁹ The scriptures have predominantly used the snake in reference to the devil. See Revelation 12:1ff

Satan tries to destroy as he strikes your heel”. It is evident that what was meant to be a physical heel is spiritualized to mean “power and dominion” over evil spirits.

Daniel 2:31-35 is another text used by Apostle Musili depicting the spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics. Contextually, the chapter is about the dream that King Nebuchadnezzar had. No one could interpret the dream except Daniel under the power of God. The dream was about a human statue that predicted a succession of human governments but was expressed in different metals. The gold represented the Babylonian empire, the silver represented the Medo-Persian Empire, the bronze the Grecian empire; the iron the Roman Empire, and the iron and clay a loose federation of modern-day governments (Rasmussen, 1989:141-166). The selected text 2:31-35 hints at the succession of human governments as depicted by the different metals (Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Iron) with phrases such as, “After you, another Kingdom will arise, inferior to yours”. However, apostle Musili in seeking to express how evil spirits are envisaged as territorial spirits occupying the social, physical, and spiritual “environments” interprets the statue as the human body. He further reasoned that the devil causes, “defects” and “faults” in human bodies and lives. The defects and faults are manifested in poverty, sicknesses, failed marriages and family relationships as well as a general lack of prosperity.

Against the context of the chapter and the intended meaning, selectively, Musili brings in a spiritualized meaning. Within his crafted meaning featuring “defects” and “faults”, he interprets the statue to mean a literal human body with different metals bringing spiritual and physical meaning to human life. The head of gold (in the statue) is interpreted as “a human head endowed with intelligence, creativity and activeness of mind (Musili, 2020, p. 46). Here, what meant the Babylonian Empire with its pomp and colour was given a new meaning in the “uncorrupted head” of human beings that is,

taken to depict what God said in Genesis 1:31, that everything he created was good. In an attempt to push his spiritualized hermeneutics he asked, “What about the rest of the body parts? Are they not supposed to be gold like the head? This indicates that according to Musili, gold was given as the epitome of material prosperity and in Neo-Pentecostal language an indication of a life not controlled by evil spirits. It is an indication of the shining “star” of life of each Christian believer. The degrading value of the metals down the statue is taken to mean deteriorated human life (read “defects” and “faults”). This was well captured in the interpretation given by Musili in the quote below:

The rest of the body (in reference to the statue) depicts the *gradual degradation* (italics added) that takes place in a human body that has been corrupted by Satan, and as you can read for yourself you see the situation gets worse as we go down the body right up to the feet and toes. Think of it this way, a golden head, silver hands, brass stomach and thighs, iron legs and feet that are iron and clay...Having feet that are a mixture of iron and clay can only mean having some little amount of strength and value but strength and value mixed with weakness. Iron on its own has some strength but mixing it with clay does more harm than good (Musili, 2020, p. 46-47).

The quote above indicated how spiritualized-selective- literal hermeneutics dominated ATG preaching. For example, what was a human statue became a human body and its parts. The progressive lessening of value in the metals signifying the strength and length of the various human governments were given a spiritual interpretation down to the feet to express clay feet as a lack of “power and dominion” over the demonic forces. Out of this interpretation, personal problems like lack of school fees and dropping out of college were likened to someone having brilliant ideas (head of gold) but due to witchcraft, sorcery, and other evil spirits, his/her life would be turned into a mess (indicated by clay or mixture of clay and iron).

The study found that Philippians 2:8-10 was another expression of spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics. The context of this text is found in 2:1-2 that believers should not be selfish but should seek the interests of others by counting the others better

than themselves. Paul extends that to Christology expressing the fact that Christ being very nature God didn't consider that a position of fame or honour but his humility was displayed by his conduct of life. Further, because of his humility, God positioned Christ in the highest position of honour. Christ being God incarnate, has been put above all that all will worship him. The study observed that out of this text, Musili crafted a sermon entitled, "What God says about our legs". Now that the text expresses that "every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord, selectively Musili picked the part of the clause, "every knee shall bow" and left the second one, "every tongue shall confess". From the selected clause that every knee shall bow, he taught the importance of praying while kneeling. He argues, "We have become negligent with our use of the bent knee as a prayer position" (Musili, 2020, p. 16). While the phrase every knee shall bow is figuratively used to express the honour bestowed on Christ after his act of humility, here is it literary taken as a physical position of prayer.

The study found out that same spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics features dominantly in Pentecostal political hermeneutics. While Gifford (2009) anchors Pentecostal hermeneutics on both enchanted and biblical approaches, this study found that the enchanted approach in which demons are responsible for social problems dominates ATGM hermeneutics. A good example is Apostle Musili's exposition of 1 Kings 19:15-17 and 2 Kings 19:1-13. Both texts are about the Jehu being chosen as the new king of Israel at a time when apostasy had reigned supreme in Israel due to evil Kings like Ahab. God had instructed Elijah to appoint Jehu as king of Israel and Elisha as the next prophet. The text in 2 Kings 9:1-13; shows that it was Elisha who finished the task of appointing Jehu by sending a man to anoint him with oil to officially take up the position as the new king of Israel. Although during this time the Kingdom was theocratic, the appointing of Jehu was still a political agenda. With the understanding

that politics deals with the governance of the people. The appointment of Jehu was meant for the good of the people saving them from the wrath of God due to evil kings leading the nation astray through idolatry.

Musili (2019, p. 16-26), in his book entitled, “42 nights of might power and spiritual warfare” utilized the narrative of the appointment of Jehu as the King of Israel under the topic: “Power against witchcraft”. At the outset, the study observed the immediacy with which the narrative is spiritualized by being accorded a spiritual orientation of spiritual warfare. The study found out that Musili’s concentration was on the word anointing. The anointing here is spiritualized to express that though Jehu was anointed king over Israel, the anointing came with special spiritual power enabling him to deal with witchcraft (read the evil deeds of Ahab and Jezebel). Apostle Musili reasoned:

The Jehu anointing is given specifically for the mandate that demands the anointing be released up the person...This is an anointing for various mandates and in different fields too. A Jehu of today doesn’t have to go to destroying *witchcraft* (italics added) as the Jehu of the Bible did, you can be a Jehu in the corporate world, the political world, or in the world of sports so long as you stick to the mandate which you have been given. In this era, we need Jehus in the world of *politics* (italics added) so that we shall have the voice of God in politics and in the business world too so that the church won’t lack...

An analysis of the above citation gives evidence to the spiritualized hermeneutics. While at one point the preacher gets it right that Jehu was appointed King of Israel with the mandate of wiping the house of Ahab, both Ahab and Jezebel are spiritualized as witches and so the position and task of Jehu. His act of wiping out the house of Ahab is not seen as a political agenda but rather a spiritual one involving spiritual warfare. Instead of remaining within the political nature of the text, Musili perceived Jehu as a fighter, though spiritually argues that today there should be a Jehu in every sector of human society, politics, sports and the banking industry among others. Therefore, the text is not used to express the coming of a King who values justice, fighting against Naboth; rather, it represents the common citizen suffering injustice under Ahab and

Jezebel. Instead, reading from Pentecostal theology of “power and dominion” the narrative is tuned to a believer receiving an anointing (special enabling) to dominate in various social sectors for his benefit and as well as the church’s. In the citation above, having one like Jehu in political leadership will enable people to hear the voice of God but most important one like Jehu is the one in the banking industry so that churches will never lack financial support. What is meant by the voice of God in this preaching was not elaborated. Further, in this text, Jehu is not appointed as a prophet (it is only the prophets who were tasked with speaking on behalf of God) but as the King. The military nature of Jehu’s reign is given a spiritual warfare orientation rather than a king upholding justice and defending his people and land.

The following statements made by Musili from this narrative showed the extent to which spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics dominates:

1. Who was Jehu and can you be one?
2. Deal with the power behind your name- “When God instructed Elijah concerning Jehu, he mentioned him by his name...this means that the living God does recognize and call you according to the name which you have but if it’s a *wicked (italics added)* name which brings praise to *demonic forces*⁶⁰ (*italics added*), you won’t be effective.
3. The Jehu anointing changes blood lines – the reasoning that Jehu’s family line was not destined for kingdom duties, but the “anointing” he received placed his ancestry within the lineage of kings.
4. Some facts about the Jehu anointing⁶¹:
 - Where there is a Jezebel a Jehu must arise- Jezebel is associated with evil spirits which Jehu must victoriously fight. “Jezebel as a person was a projection of Baal’s influence on the lives of people”.
 - This is an anointing for a spiritual military operation. - “When Jehu’s anointing is over you, you will have a battalion of heaven’s soldiers⁶² working with you...”
 - Jehu’s exploits; can we do the same today? As soon as Jehu received his mandate, he immediately went into action and waged war against the enemies of God...He dethroned king Joram...He also dealt with Ahab’s wife, Queen Jezebel: this woman was the symbol of immorality, *witchcraft (italics added)*, and other demonic activities...

⁶⁰ See the spiritualization of the Name Jehu. In biblical-historical hermeneutics, the preacher would strive to understand the meaning of the name Jehu if that was part of his key words, but in this case the name is equated to the militant nature of his appointment which is given a new meaning nuanced towards spiritual warfare.

⁶¹ Here the study captures the three points given under but briefly captures key points expressing the spiritualized literal selective hermeneutics.

⁶² The battalion of Jehu’s soldiers is here spiritualized to mean angles assigned to a believer for spiritual warfare. One would think of a Jehu politician who strengthens his army for protection of the country but the hermeneutics here is spiritualized.

5. When Jehu rises and fights⁶³
 - a. People turn back to God- Reference is given I kings 18:39
 - b. Disasters are stopped or avoided in one's life – Reference is given in 2 Chronicles 34:27-28
 - c. Children have future – reference is given – Exodus 20:5-6
 - d. Curses are broken – Numbers 25:7-8
 - e. [Builders of demonic altars are stopped permanently and the righteous prosper- reference given 2 Chronicles 26:4-7](#)
 - f. [The land is cured of demonic pollution and the spiritual atmosphere becomes clear. Reference given](#) Numbers 35:33; 2 Kings 23:4-5

The interpretation given to the passage as briefly shown above is evidence of how spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics works in ATGM. The original meaning of the passage was disregarded and selectively, a new meaning is introduced anchored on spiritual causality. The only aspect where politics is mentioned directly is in point's E and F as discussed below.

Under the main point, “when Jehu rises up and fights”, among the six points, two points stood out for the purpose of this study. The first one which is the fifth point is that “when Jehu arises, builders of demonic altars are stopped permanently and the righteous prosper”. The study found it interesting how the verse is selected from Chronicles to buttress Musili's political hermeneutics in relationship to his main narrative on appointing of Jehu as the new Israelite King. While still the topic is about Jehu, Musili utilizes 2 Chronicles 26:4-7 in explaining his point on what happens when the righteous men assume political positions and offices. Chronicles 26 is about King Uzziah the King of Judah. The chapter gives a narrative of Uzziah's early life as a good king, obeying God and as result, defeating the enemies of Judah (26:1-15) and the last days of Uzziah show that how his power led him to pride and assuming the duties of a priest he died leprous.

⁶³ In this point six sub points are given all of them with explanations nuanced towards spiritual causes and or responses. Apostle Musili selects references intended to bring the meaning he wants, even texts having no relationship at all with the passage concerning the appointment of Jehu as king of Israel. The study found point five very critical with its mention of politics directly.

The study observed the selective hermeneutics done by apostle Musili which is characteristic of Pentecostal charismatics. He picked verses four to seven. One is tempted to ask what about verse 1-3; and 8-23? Verse 4-7 was selected because it brought meaning to what he wanted to convey. Verse 4-6 depicts Uzziah as a righteous king doing what was right in the sight of God. Verse 7 gives the outcome of his obedience; God gave him victory over the enemies of Judah. At this point, the study noted that any exposition of how Jehu and Uzziah's experiences would be related, selectively, the "anointing" of Jehu becomes the fulcrum unto which good political leadership ensues. Jehu's anointing seems to translate to Uzziah's righteousness in his early life. In this context, Musili argued; "When the *righteous (italics added)* rule, people prosper and after prospering they praise God. If you take up the Jehu anointing and lead in politics, you will ensure that corruption is stamped out of your country; that tendering will be free and fair and equality will be promoted..." (Musili, 2019:26). It was very difficult for the study to establish the correlation between Jehu's anointing and the righteousness of Uzziah. Nevertheless, Uzziah's righteousness is interpreted to mean the Christian believers who take up a political office. His righteousness is directly assumed to be the point of good governance. The reason is that he/she is anointed by the Holy Spirit and that anointing accords him/her spiritual victory against evils which are to blame for social problems. The victory will be manifested in the physical and material prosperity of the people.

The study realized that it's not about his governance policies or even upholding the constitution, but a direct linking of the 'righteous' to the good governance of the country. Likewise, poor governance is attributed to the leadership of the unrighteous, "when the wicked rule, tribalism and biasness take charge with abject poverty taking the masses ransom" (Musili, 2019, p. 26). The study found out that theologizing of the

government of the righteous and wicked is also directly derived from a literal reading of Proverbs 29:2, “When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice, when the wicked rule the people groan”. The word, “thrive” has been taken to mean ruling, and in this case political rule. With the biblical interpretations anchored on “power and dominion” the mere installation of a righteous person (read a Christian believer) in a position of authority automatically guarantees prosperity of the nation and its people.

From the biblical interpretation of the reign of the righteous buttressed by “power and dominion” theology and spirituality, Neo-Pentecostals then push for a realized Kingdom model approach regarding politics. Fowler (1987) avers that this model envisages the Christian believers taking possession of key structures in the society making them instruments of God’s kingdom. Towards this end, the study found out that the ATGM approach to politics takes both a “realized theocratic fundamentalism” and a “Spiritualized politics” approach. Realized theocratic fundamentalist approach reasons that Christian believers should strive to populate Christianity through evangelism to create a Christian government, led and influenced not only by Christians but by Christian ideology. It is fundamentalist in the sense that it is guarded by literalist biblical hermeneutics. Indeed, utilizing selective hermeneutics justifies its endeavours. Its basic premise is evangelism with the idea of propagating the gospel such that it permeates society; thus, bringing influence in all spheres of life. Nothing reveals this approach better than Ruth Marshall's citation of Pastor E. A. Adeboye’s address, the general overseer of Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria: Pastor E. A. Adeboye’s speech entitled “Who is on God’s side” delivered in 1993 follows:

...It is written in proverbs 29:2 “when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice”. And how are we going to get someone righteous in authority? Don’t let anybody deceive you, thieves will never vote for policemen. Never. Thieves will always vote for thieves, and robbers vote for robbers, in other words, only the righteous will vote for the righteous. So how are we going to put the righteous in authority? *It is by winning the masses to Jesus Christ* (italics added). Nobody

can bribe him to vote for the wrong man...we will become a force of change not by loving politicians, but by winning souls. If we do what God wants us to do, i.e. if we can get at least eighty percent of the people in Nigeria born again, you can be sure a Christian will be a president. You do not even need to spend a Kobo to get them; you won't even need to be a rich man before you become a president, because people will say you are the one they want and you must be there...

The plan of God is not limited to Nigeria alone. Very soon, there will be an extension of when PFN will become PFA, i.e. Pentecostal Fellowship of Africa. We will take over the whole of Africa. And that is not the end of the vision. The almighty God wants PFN to become number one in the gospel of the whole world, and other nations of the world will say, what is happening? ...Because I want you to know, brethren, when the spiritual climate is right, things will happen in the economy....if you want to *take over Nigeria* (italics added) you better win the students, win the market women, the media, the broadcasters, the rich, the poor and the press. Glory to God, I am sure they are here today. By the time they leave, they will be born again. (Marshal, 2010, p. 204-205).

Spiritualized politics is the second approach. According to Gifford (2004, p. 164), this approach is twofold: enchanted and biblical. The enchanted approach attributes political problems to demons and thus the power of the demons must be broken for a reign of peace and prosperity to be experienced. The biblical approach is based on 2 Chronicles 7:14 about the God redeeming the land if the citizens repent and turn away from disobedience. The biblical approach to theologizing about politics reasons that national problems are brought about by the failure of the leaders to worship the true God and being involved in demonic practices, especially consulting mediums and spirits to obtain political positions. The study found out that in ATGM both enchanted and the biblical approach are fused and it's difficult to separate them. The study also learnt that the enchanted approach features more dominantly in Neo-Pentecostal political hermeneutics than the biblical approach. The dominance of the enchanted perspectives was well illustrated in Apostle Musili's Uhuru park crusade in 2017. Musili's Uhuru Park prayer rally held on 25.06. 2017 is evident in the pneumatic approach to politics. The rally was organized to pray for peace in the then forthcoming August elections with the country experiencing political tensions reminiscent of the 2007/2008 post-election violence. In his preaching and prayer in part he said:

...we have come to arrest all the spirits of violence, spirits of mistrust, all spirits of darkness that come to harvest the blood of Kenyans, we ask power, we ask authority, ...power, we refuse violence in Jesus name. Let's all say Amen"....Spirits are demons, and devils and their work is drinking blood, if they had planned to harvest the blood of the Kenyans during this election, they will not see it (blood). We will put peace in place ...we will arrest all the spirits, all the demons, all devils of violence. I want us to pray and arrest the universe, the space, and the soil; the soil has ears, the soil speaks the soil has witnesses, the soil looks and the soil writes, we say, soil, soil, soil there will be no bloodshed in Kenya (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91kgpxOoWzI&t=4675>).

Musili further instructed the gathering to scoop soil into their hands and lifting up the hand holding the soil they prayed to him as follows:

Lord Jesus, this is our land and this dust is our country where I have been born, where I have my children, where I will raise my children. I pray again that this soil will not "drink" the blood of any Kenyan...I declare to the soil that it will not drink our blood, we refuse violence (we refuse violence said repeatedly). Arrest the spirits of violence, arrests the spirits of throwing stones, arrest the spirit of cutting others with pangas, arrests the spirits of politicians being proud, arrest spirits of rape...arrest, arrest, arrest... (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91Kgpx0oWzI>).

The above prayer reveals that for the Pentecostals, evil spirits are the cause of national calamities; therefore, they must be broken through prayer for the individuals and the nation to experience peace and prosperity.

The field data and the analysis given above informed the study that the Neo-Pentecostal shift from disengagement to engagement in politics was not due to their eschatological teachings, but rather to new hermeneutics; spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics. This kind of hermeneutics is spiritualized because it assigns spiritual causality to every occurrence; consequently, it pursues a spiritual solution. It is selective because it chooses only those texts that applied to that particular experience. It does not concern itself with the historical-grammatical meaning of the text but rather disregards the context, and selectively pulls out only specific verses that only bring meaning to their context and experience. The spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics brings a theological idea of "power and dominion" reclaiming what the devil through his evil spirits have stolen from the believers through the fall; hence, the restoration manifested in prosperity; health and material. The study concluded that such a kind of hermeneutics

cannot allow ATGM pastors and members to be actively engaged in the political processes. It becomes a charisma ending in wishful thinking but cannot make them prophetic. This agrees with other studies revealing that in the contemporary age, Charismatic Pentecostals on some levels are aloof to socio-political process (Karkkainen, 2002, p. 181). Gerrard (1986, p. 213) in the same spirit argues that despite the Pentecostal and charismatic strong feelings about the presence of evils in the world, “they are indifferent to the social Gospel and take no interest in politics”. Moltmann (1993) questions the presence of Pentecostals /charismatics in public life. He asks; what is the place of “charismata of the ‘charismatics’” in everyday life such as peace movement, liberation struggles, and ecological movements. He argues that the charismata are not given to flee from the world to a world of religious spirituality but for the purpose of witnessing the liberating lordship of Christ in a world torn with conflicts. As such, the “charismatic movement must not become non-political religion nor be de-politicized” (Moltmann, 1993, p. 186). This study reasons that Neo-Pentecostal political hermeneutics featuring spiritualized politics is weak to warrant any meaningful involvement in Kenyan politics. The study found that such a hermeneutic is predominantly focused on individual prosperity not the society at a large. Moreover, it is anchored on spiritual causality which cannot be used as the only framework to respond to issues of politics. This is evident in the discussion on the extent of Pentecostal involvement in Kenyan politics.

3.8 The Nature, Extent, and Prophetic Role of ATG in Kenyan Politics

The study sought to understand the nature, extent, and prophetic role of ATG in Kenya politics. The findings are captured in the tables, pie charts and graphs as shown and discussed below.

Nature of involvement	Frequency	Percentage
Praying	31	63.3%
Voting	11	22.4%
Advising the politicians	7	14.3%
Total	49	100%

Table 6: The nature of involvement of ATG in politics

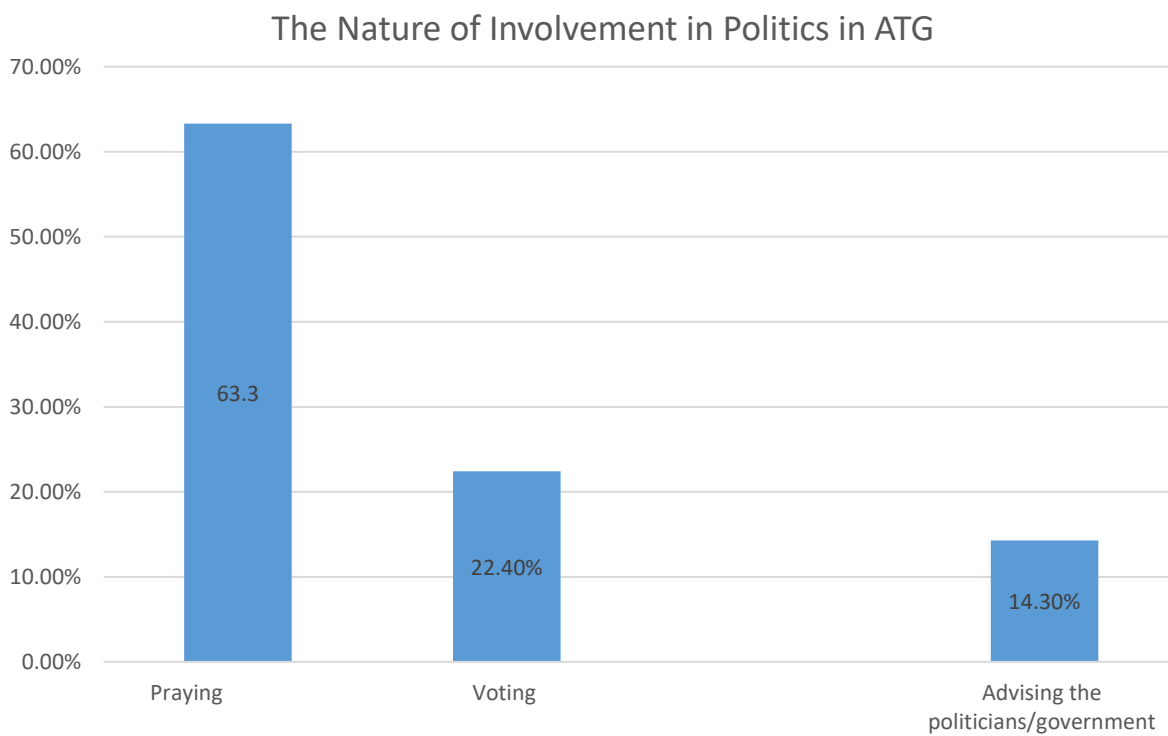


Figure 5: The nature of involvement of ATG in politics

Table (6) and Figure (5) above give data informing the study about the nature of involvement of ATG deliverance ministries in Kenyan politics. The study identified three ways used by the members of this church to participate in the political process.

These were; praying with the highest percentage at 63.3, followed by voting with 22.4% and advising the politicians with the least percentage at 14.3%

The element of prayer having the highest frequency and percentage of 31 and 63.3% respectively, was drawn from the ATG member's interpretation of what politics entail. Since politics is deemed a dirty game, with the high possibility of corrupting Christian believers of high moral standing, the highest involvement in the political process is through prayer. Prayer has been the most common way of the Church involvement in politics. The 1937 Oxford conference ranked prayer in the first position in its deliberation on the duties of the Church to the state (Kunhiyop, 2008, p. 101). Kalu (2008) argues that for the Pentecostals, prayer is a kind of civic engagement as well as a political praxis aimed at asking God to establish his kingdom on earth.

Parsitau (2012) equally observes the place of prayer as a civic engagement to the Pentecostals and it is regarded as being more effective than combatively engaging with the government. The study established that involvement through prayer is derived from selected Bible verses. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 is the key verse. Paul in this text admonished Timothy that prayers should be made for everyone, but most in verse 2 specifically to those to the kings and those in authority for peace, holiness, and godliness. Although there are no hermeneutical attempts done by ATG pastors to express the connection between prayer and peaceful, holy, and godly life, the emphasis is on praying for political leaders. Romans 13:1 which calls for obedience and honour to the government was also used in advancing the aspect of getting involved through prayer. With the idea that no government comes to power except with God's permission, the respondents expressed the belief that God holds them accountable if they do not pray for the political leaders. Other passages included Old Testament narratives such as Elijah praying at Mount camel and the Prayers of Daniel. The respondents argued that prayer is the only

means that travels where they cannot travel and that can speak what a believer cannot speak to the politicians. The study learnt that this understanding was coupled with deliverance spirituality. It is believed that prayer has the power to defeat the demons and spirits manifested themselves in poverty, road accidents, corruption, poor economy, tribalism, and national disasters among others. Since these social and political assigned a spiritual causality, prayer becomes the means of bringing solutions. This explains why ATG on several occasions have planned and successfully carried out prayer rallies at Uhuru park, especially during elections and/ or during a national crisis. However, although the prayers are said to be for the national agenda, the declarations made in the prayers are more individually than communally based.

Voting was given as second nature to ATG members' participation in politics. The frequency of 11 translating to a percentage of 22.4 shows that it is not held as a primary means of participation in politics. Temple (1956) on the responsibility of Christians to the state argues that they (Christians) must exercise their purely civic rights in the Christian spirit. The study found that most of the ATG members did not value voting as a significant way of getting involved in politics. This is because attributing politics to injustices, they reason that one's vote does not count since the politicians influence the outcome of the elections. The study determined that only a few respondents believed in voting. Data gained from respondents informed the study that those who valued voting were influenced by a progressive understanding of politics. Since politics is not dirty, voting is an exercise of the Christian faith and an expression of a God-given choice in determining the government of the day. One of the respondents said "God will never come down from heaven and decree that this person or that become the president or the Member of Parliament or Governor. God uses the choices we make. Christians like complaining about governments yet they do not want to vote for the

right people, if one does not vote, he indirectly gives consent to whatever kind of political power rule over him”.

Advising the politicians/the government came third with the least frequency and percentage of 7 and 14.3 respectively. The respondents who held this view drew their understanding from the biblical teachings of the Church being the salt and the light of the earth. This translates to the prophetic voice of the Church. The Oxford Conference of 1937 in giving a detailed outline of duties of the church to the state, number four stated that the church has to criticize the state when it departs from the standards enshrined in the constitution (Kunhiyop, 2008, p. 101). Kasene (2008, p. 15) on speaking about the church advising politicians and government reasons that both church and leaders and members alike have “the duty to be prophetic and stand for the values of the kingdom: justice and peace, truth and unity, integrity and preferential option for the poor and the oppressed”. He adds that the church vested with such a mandate must manifest Post-Pentecost leaders, courageous and uncompromising on the basic tenets of their faith”. William Temple, regarding the prophetic task of the Church said:

The Church, therefore, has to advise the state on social matters affecting the citizen’s spiritual health, including economic matters, and to move the world towards a Christian social order where exist, “the fullest possible development of individual personality in the widest possible fellowship

In the same vein, Yoder (1997), Okullu (2000) and Choge (2008) argue that the church by upholding her prophetic voice becomes the paradigm of God’s will for society. In this context, the church becomes pragmatic in revealing what the life of God looks like in concrete day-to-day terms. In my Master's theses, (2013:80), I suggested that the church cannot be preaching to people about the beauty of heaven which one cannot have foretaste here. The study found out that Apostle Musili’s ATG ministry has not been prophetic. An interview with Apostle Musili revealed that he feels he should pray more than talk. He continued to aver that the government harasses preachers who speak

against it. He gave an example in 2010 when he and other evangelical and Neo-Pentecostal preachers staged a No campaign against the 2010 proposed constitution. The government started harassing them by even sending Kenya Revenue Authority officers to their church premises. Apostle Musili reasoned that although the KRA officials were in their line of duty, why did they come at a time when we had rejected and warned our church members against the constitution? Was it not to silence us from being prophetic? The study learnt that since then, Apostle Musili has not been prophetic or even invited politicians to his Church.

However, in a very interesting move, towards the 2022 elections, when the former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, one of the presidential candidates visited his church, Apostle Musili clothed him in a priestly-like garment. In fact, in the service, it was said that Raila was being elevated to the apostolic council. And indeed, he was dressed in a priestly-like robe, given a bible, and apostle Musili himself, declared to him, “...you are now an apostle..”. If anything, Raila has never declared his stand as a Christian, and therefore being declared an apostle was an extreme case of Neo-Pentecostal extremism. Indeed, it was very apparent that he was advocating for a Raila Odinga presidency. The presence of the former vice President Kalonzo Musyoka, a friend of Apostle Musili implicated that Apostle Musili’s move was meant to woo the Kamba community and rally them behind a Raila’s presidency. Therefore, the study concluded that ATG deliverance ministries get involved in Kenyan politics predominantly through praying for the government and, or when it seems convenient to do so. Other times, the involvement of the bishops and pastors is a calculated move because of the social and material benefits. For example, it can be concluded that if Raila became the president and considering the close relationship between Apostle Musili and his excellency

Kalonzo Musyoka, then the Apostle would have benefited both socially (prestige) and materially. Therefore, the status of ATG in politics is fluid.

3.9 ATG and the Kenyan Political Regimes and Significant Political Issues in Kenya

The study sought to understand the participation of ATG deliverance ministries in different political regimes and various significant political issues such as constitutional referendums. The study was informed by the field data through interviews, questionnaires, FGDs, and observations which analysed the nature and extend of ATG's participation in Kenyan politics. This was captured in the table below.

Political regime/Significant political issue	Year(s)	Participation status (Yes or No)
Daniel Moi's Kanu regime	1978-2002	No
Mwai Kibaki's NARC Regime (First Term)	2002-2007	No
2005 Draft Referendum	2005	No
2008 Post-election Violence	2008	Yes
2010 Constitutional Referendum	2010	Yes-
The Coalition Government (Kibaki/Raila)	2008-2012	No
Uhuru and Ruto Jubilee Government (first term)	2012-2017	Yes
Uhuru and Ruto Jubilee /UDA government	2017- 2022	No
BBI and 2022 elections	2019-2022	No and Yes

Table 7: ATGM and Kenyan political regimes/significant political issues in Kenya

The table above analyses the participation or lack of participation of ATG in the successive political regimes and significant political matters in Kenya. The analysis on Table 7 shows that ATG deliverance ministry has not been actively engaged in the Kenyan politics. The discussion for the reasons for lack of engagement or engagement are discussed below.

During Moi's government, ATG was nonexistence. The study found out that during that time, Apostle Francis Musili was connected to Deliverance church in Mombasa. Though he started preaching in 1994, during the Kanu regime he was trying to find his footing as a preacher. The study further established that during Moi's era, it was the pastors from Mainstream churches especially the RCC, PCEA and ACK and the NCKK and later under the Ufungamano initiative that were involved. This has been extensively researched by different scholars (Githinga; 2001; Ndegwa; 2001, Maupeu; 2005; Gifford; 2009; Mue, 2011 among many others).

The only Pentecostal churches that got engaged in Moi's Kanu regime were the classical Pentecostals. Ndegwa (2001), Gifford (2009), Mue (2011) and Parsitau (2012) informed the study that the only Pentecostals considered to have politically engaged were Nairobi Pentecostal Church (now Christ is Answer Ministries –CITAM) then led by Rev. Dennis White and the Redeemed Gospel Church under Bishop Arthur Kitonga and other both African Pentecostal instituted churches as well as Deliverance Churches. The available documented sources informed the study that these Pentecostals were pro-KANU's regime, praising Moi and depicting him as a godly leader. Their political engagement was seen in their defence of Moi's government from criticism in both church and civil society groups and praying for the state. ATG is therefore justified by being absent from political engagement during KANU's regime.

Mwai Kibaki's (National Rainbow Coalition Government) era saw ATG still missing. This was because, as the study found out, ATG was officially begun in 2004, in 2002 apostle Musili was still finding his foot in starting a ministry. His time and energy was directed to the launching of his ministry as he focused on bringing people to salvation and deliverance. In the context of church state-relationship, Kibaki's first term in office has been described as the point of losing prophetic voice of the mainstream Christianity

and the gaining of a new voice from the voice of the Neo-Pentecostals (Parsitau, 2012). Maupeu (2005) argues that the mainstream church was so much part of the search for multi-party democracy and justice such that it celebrated the new awakening brought by Kibaki government to the neglect of her prophetic mandate.

The 2005 constitutional draft referendum is considered to have awoken the Neo-Pentecostals to active politics. This was purely on their response to the proposed constitutional changes. Gifford (2009) discusses the presence of Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal's presence involving Bonface Adoyo of CITAM, Bishop Margaret Wanjiru of JIAM, Wilfred Lai of Jesus Celebration Centre, Arthur Kitonga of Redeemed Gospel Church, Mark Kariuki of Deliverance Churches and other religious organizations under EAK. While the Church's decision of either for a no or yes vote was ethicized, Neo-Pentecostal Churches took a no stand expressing their disapproval of inclusion of Kadhi courts, and clauses leaning towards ethical issues such as same-sex unions and phonography (Parsitau, 2012). The study observed that even the voice of the church was politicized owing to its close connection with Raila Odiga who was against the proposed constitutional changes. Out of the 2005 referendum, several Neo-Pentecostal leaders got involved and/ or declared interest in elective positions (Parsitau, 2012). These included Bishop Margret Wanjiru of JIAM and Pius Muiro of Maximum Miracle Centre. An interview with Apostle Musili revealed that he did not participate in this political issue.

After the post-election violence, most churches participated by giving material and social support to the PEV victims. ATGM through apostle Musili was among those churches. Since then apart from praying for the nation before the national elections, ATGM has been absent in the Kenyan political issues including 2013 elections, 2017 elections (safe for the prayers) but now somewhat active in 2022 elections for

seemingly supporting a Raila Odinga candidacy. In fact, it was not Apostle Musili alone but the 2022 elections painted a very co-opted church by the Christianised politics⁶⁴ of William Ruto (the deputy President as well as a presidential candidate)

Therefore, ATGM is not prophetic as such in the political issues in Kenya. This is influenced by their spiritualized hermeneutics; what the study labelled spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics. The study found the approach nuanced towards spiritual causality; hence, it does not prepare the members for any meaningful political action. Since all occurrences were dictated by spirits/demons, they called for spiritual responses; prayer and exorcism. It is dominantly through prayer and/ or at certain times of interest to the bishop. The chapter section discusses JIAM of Margrate Wanjiru.

⁶⁴ The 2022 national elections especially the presidential campaigns expressed that the Neo-Pentecostals are fluid in the political engagement. In Kenyan several prophecies concerning the winner of the presidential elections were given albeit ethnic in nature and contradicting in nature. For example, Apostle Musili though not a Luo supported Raila Odinga openly due to Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka's factor. Bishop Mwai of Jesus Winner Ministry though not part of this sample openly supported William Ruto and so was Bishop Margret Wanjiru. Though the latter are not Kalenjins but they supported Ruto's presidential bid out of a fallout between president Uhuru and Ruto which drifted to president Uhuru's backyard and thus, a fallout with most of the politicians in Mt. Kenya. The presence of Neo-Pentecostal clergy in 2022 politics has been evident in their presence not only in political campaigns but openly supporting William Ruto to a point of calling him the King David of this time (read the savior of the Kenyans in the political sphere). Indeed, the prophecies and prayers were politicized all through the campaign period.

Chapter 4: Jesus is Alive Ministries (JIAM)

4.1 The Founder and History

The ministry was founded by Margret Wanjiru who is the presiding Bishop. She has multiple roles in society; therefore, she has significant influence; she is a preacher; televangelist, businesswoman and a politician (Kavulla, 2008; Gifford, 2009; Parsitau, 2010 & 2012). This study found out that what is so public about her is her position as a bishop/televangelist and her political position. Besides being a Member of Parliament for Starehe Constituency and a minister in President Mwai Kibaki government, she has sought the Governor and senator positions in Nairobi in the 2017 and 2022 national elections respectively.

Through her spiritual and political ambitions, Bishop Wanjiru has been celebrated as a woman of great influence, especially in her quest for women's empowerment. This explains why in 2007, Wanjiru was voted by *True Love* (a leading women's Magazine in East Africa) as one of the 50 most influential women in East Africa. Her ranking was anchored on her passion and practical steps in fronting the spiritual empowerment of women in East Africa. Bishop Margret Wanjiru's church was significant to this study owing to the direct combination of church and politics in the life of the Bishop and thus, one of the best ministries for unveiling Neo-Pentecostal political hermeneutics.

4.2 The Personal and Ministry Life of Margaret Wanjiru

This study learnt that the personal and pre-ministry life of Margret Wanjiru is what significantly contributed to her passion for ministry and by extension her passion for politics. She describes her past as full of difficult moments of crisis and dire poverty. Her childhood years were lived in abject poverty (Parsitau, 2010; 2011; Parsitau & Mwaura, 2010; Mwaura, 2002; 2005; 2008). The extreme poverty was manifested by

her living in the slums at Kangemi in Nairobi and her mother resorting to an illicit brew business to meet the family needs with her husband being an irresponsible alcoholic. Despite the hardship and extreme poverty surrounding her childhood, Wanjiru managed to finish secondary school. However, the crisis created by poverty manifested itself in her teenage years which almost crippled her life. The most critical one was a teenage pregnancy at 16 years of age later leading her to be a single mother of two sons to date. Her personal story concerning the pregnancy was captured by the Sunday Nation, Wanjiru exclaims that she was impregnated:

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

In 2007 and coinciding with the onset of her political journey as well as her planned marriage to a Nigerian ex-priest, a man by the name James Kamangu emerged claiming he was her husband and the father to Wanjiru’s sons. However, the Bishop vehemently refuted the claims as untrue to a point ridiculing the man (that he fell way below her standards and that he had been infested with jiggers in his legs). However, James Kamangu's account had it that he married Wanjiru according to the Kikuyu traditional marriage rites and that he was the biological father to the two sons. But Bishop Wanjiru denied the claims treating them just as mere allegations and a political witch-hunt peddled by her political enemies (Mwaura, 2002; Mwaura & Parsitau, 2011; Parsitau, 2011; Gifford, 2009).

4.3 JOB, RISING IN LIFE AND CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY

This study found out that Bishop Wanjiru is one determined and resilient woman in life. This explains why besides being a teenage mother of two boys she went back to school with the help of her mother who took care of her infants. She never regrets having gone

back to class to finish her high school education. It was immediately after high school that she got a job marking the onset of her rising in life and the later turnaround of her life to ministry and later to politics. She narrates that her first job was that of house help. She further explained that she did not like the job; however, with two sons to feed she had no choice (Mwaura, 2002, p. 202). Her second job was better since it was a company job (Philip Harrison and Cross-field in Nairobi). But Wanjiru expressed the displeasure she had with this job since it involved cleaning toilets as well as facing the fact the salary was meagre. She started feeling that she was destined for something great and better than cleaning toilets. However, remembering her two sons she soldiered on but not forgetting that she wanted to make a difference in her life. Despite the peanut salary and her hard conditions in life as a young single mother, her determination to rise in life saw her enrol in a sales and marketing course where she acquired a diploma. It was this diploma that would lead to changing fortunes in the same company; from a toilet cleaner to a saleswoman and later into marketing and the onset of rising from poverty to riches 'shame to honour' as she describes it (Mwaura & Parsitau, 2010). But unfortunately, she lost her job after accidentally spilling tea on her boss. The study found out that she attributed this to the devil who stood in the way of her rising to prominence. But she counts herself as loved by God because immediately after losing her second job she got another in a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). She counted it as a blessing and a promotion since in the previous job she was a sales and marketing person but in the second job, she was hired as a senior manager. This study found out that it was this job that would later lead her to Satanism and consequently later to conversion and the journey to Christian ministry. Her determination to succeed, her ambitiousness in life, and her quest for wealth led her to Satanism and occultism. She narrates that while as a senior manager in the NGO, a friend lured her to Satanism.

But her story of occultism did not seem new to her life. This is because as she explained in her childhood, with her frequently sick sister, her mother chose protection from a witch doctor. In a newspaper interview, Wanjiru once narrated:

My younger sister was chronically ill. One day, the little girl fainted and our mother thought she was dead. My mother was weeping when a man appeared carrying a huge umbrella. He said he had been sent by the spirits to help. He started chanting gibberish and waving the umbrella and...my sister regained her strength! The man screamed: you see, she is raised from the dead. I was sent to raise her. That is my mission to this home. From then on, the stranger visited us regularly (Sunday Nation, 17/6/2013).

The above childhood experience justifies that she was not new to Satanism and occultism and that to some extent, she grew up knowing that Satanism and occultism were a solution to life's problems. In her determination to succeed in life, she left the NGO job and got into self-employment involving exports from South Africa. But it was this self-employment that would lead her to deeper levels of witchcraft but thankfully her salvation and ministry life later.

Bishop Margret Wanjiru's preaching is predominantly dotted with sermons on witchcraft even giving her account of how she was deeply engaged in it. Facing challenges in her business and to ensure that she outwitted her business rivals, witchcraft came as the best solution (Mwaura 2002; Paristau & Mwaura, 2010). Her deep involvement in witchcraft is found in her narratives, especially in her preaching. The following narration involving business competition captures the depth of her involvement in Satanism:

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

Wanjiru's account has it that she ascended the ranks of witchcraft to the highest level of witchcraft symbolized by the colour red. The colours signify the depth of Satanism and this explains why mostly in her sermons titles such as red, black, and white

witchcraft feature prominently. The colours are not meant to give any physical picture of witchcraft but rather the rising of ranks. In most of her sermons, she recounts the extent to which she got involved in occultism in the following words:

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

Her involvement with witchcraft bore fruit as she narrated how her fortunes changed manifested in growth in wealth, much traveling, and wider business deals. Wanjiru's involvement with witchcraft is typical of ideas common in Africa's cosmological worldviews that divide the universe into the material world and the invisible world. The physical world is the abode of human beings while the invisible world is the world of spiritual beings both good and evil. The invisible world is just one aspect of a rich field of religious experiences in Africa. Visions, dreams, revelations, witches, demons, and the underworld or the occult are notable elements of African religious experience that play a role in all traditions of Africa, including Neo-Pentecostalism (Ter Haar, 2003; Ellis & Ter Haar, 2004). This explains the reason for the dominance of "deliverance theology and spirituality in all Kenyan and African Neo-Pentecostal Churches"⁶⁵ especially in JIAM, KSF, and ATG Ministries. The theology and spirituality of deliverance has now become a Christian lifestyle in all Neo-Pentecostal Churches. Mwaura (2010) reasons that such kind of language helps the African Christian to decode and understand their environment. According to Ellis and Ter Haar (2004), popular stories about witches, prophets, miracles, or the use of witchcraft, spirit mediums, or diviners, is part of the religious and political vernacular in many different

⁶⁵ In most Kenyan communities, it is believed that behind every effect there was a cause; a person did not just die, there was an evil force behind it, and that a person's failure in life was because of a spirit or a spell. The individual or the family largely needed deliverance. This kind of deliverance sought was from the witch doctors. Now Jesus having the power to save, he also delivers from all powers of witchcraft and spirits which hold individuals, families, and societies from experiencing their "abundance of life" manifested in material abundance and health (no sicknesses).

parts of Africa. However, they also demonstrate the way religious thought is intertwined with political practice and how notions of political power are embedded in religious ideas. Political as well as spiritual power is widely perceived as originating in the invisible world. Religious activity is also understood as a search for a spiritual power dimension.

This study found out that Neo-Pentecostal preachers like Bishop Wanjiru employ the African cosmology of spirits and Satanism to entrench a theology and spirituality of power; that is the power of God as manifested in the Holy Spirit against the power of Satan as manifested in witchcraft and sorcery. The study revealed that this "power" theology and spirituality buttressed the Neo-Pentecostal dominion theology. However, the study learnt that the "power" of spirituality and theology is also a ploy by the Neo-Pentecostal preachers to enrich themselves with money collected from unsuspecting and poor followers in the name of deliverance. This is because, despite years of deliverance, the study learnt that most of the church members are still poor while their pastors have become rich and affluent within the shortest time. At the same time, Neo-Pentecostal preachers with political ambitions like Bishop Wanjiru, use the same "spirit power" theology and spirituality to push for their political agenda. The political constituents they represent are marked as being saved from the power of the evil spirits manifesting themselves in poverty and other social evils. For example, in 2007, Wanjiru's political campaigns for the Starabe constituency, she explained that her political victory will mean "Starabe will be for Jesus".

As earlier noted, it was Bishop Wanjiru's involvement with witchcraft that led to her turning point to Christianity. The study noted that despite her life-changing fortune, there remained unrelenting displeasure from within concerning her involvement with witchcraft (Parsitau, 2010). It was this inner pressure that led her to salvation. This was

during Uhuru Park's open-air preaching by a Nigerian evangelist Emmanuel Eni on 18th March, 1990. Wanjiru's account reveals that listening to the evangelist Eni, she felt like he was talking about her since his preaching was on women involved in witchcraft. It was that deep conviction that she needed to change that saw her give her life to Christ. The evangelist prayed for her and that marked the turning point of her life and the genesis of her ministry, JIAM. She left Satanism and became a street preacher in Nairobi. Her preaching was concentrated at the Jeevanjee Gardens which is a public space for people to rest during lunch hour breaks or job seekers. It naturally provides a crowd for many preachers in their initial ministry years. Parsitau (2010) notes that being joined by some South African preachers in the Jeevanjee Gardens gave her the spiritual impetus needed in the ministry.

After some years of street preaching, she rented a hall in Mang Building in the city centre where she held meetings until she had a significant audience. Her ministry started growing evidenced by the fact in 1998, she moved to a new premise situated along Haile Selassie Avenue, within the Central Business District in Nairobi. It was evident that her life was now geared toward ministry. On 28 June, 1997, she was ordained as a pastor by Bishop Arthur Kitonga of RGC. Six years later, on 5 October, 2002, she was consecrated bishop by Bishop Kitonga (Mwaura, 2002). Over the years, the ministry has grown in numbers and also in branches such that it now prides itself in a Bible School, publishing company, transport business, a Micro-finance (Glory Development Fund), and a Good Samaritan project (Mwaura, 2002, Parsitau, 2010, 211). She is not only a preacher but a political leader having served as the MP for Starehe as well as being appointed as an Assistant Minister in Kibaki's regime from 2008-2013. Her political life is discussed in the section on JIAM and Political hermeneutics. This section discussed her life history which was critical in laying the

foundation for understanding her ministry and even some of her preaching, especially on witchcraft. It has also revealed that she is open to her life history unlike Apostle Musili of ATG.

4.4 JIAM- Vision, Mission Main Preaching Themes

This study found out the name Jesus Is Alive Ministries (JIAM) was born from a vision that Margret Wanjiru had as captured on her church website. She revealed that she had a nine-hour vision that informed her about the name, vision, and mission of the ministry. The vision as presented in the biographical data on the church website is captured as anchored on two bible books and bible characters. In the first vision, Wanjiru narrates that God took her through the Gospel of Luke specifically the narrative of the Virgin Mary (Mwaura, 2008; Parsitau, 2010). Bishop Wanjiru likening herself to Mary, the mother of Jesus argues that God chose her because she was God-fearing, and humble, just like Mary. Wanjiru being obedient and humble, God had appointed her to restore the church to true spirituality.

The second part of the vision was based on the book of Nehemiah. Bishop Wanjiru narrates that just in the same way God used Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, God promised to use her to bring souls and rebuild the church. Further, she explains that God showed her a black book with contents but without a title. God touched the book with a figure he drew a map of Africa and wrote on it, "Revival for Africa". The words were immediately erased and replaced with the words, "The glory is here: African shall be saved". This explains why the vision of JIAM is "Africa shall be saved" and the Mission is "to reach the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ and a slogan, "the glory is here" (Parsitau, 2010).

The mission of the church is beyond Africa as she later added the word "international" thus, JIAM International. This was launched in 2002 during JIAM's 10th anniversary

where a plan for the evangelization of Africa and the world was put in focus (Mwaura, 2002; Parsitau, 2010). For three decades now, JIAM has grown to become a huge church/ministry with diasporic branches in South Africa, Britain, the USA, Uganda, Tanzania, and Malawi. Her ministry is also multifaceted encompassing programs for spiritual deliverance, evangelism, social welfare, outreach programs and varied ministries for children, women, men, and youths.

4.5 Dominant preaching themes/JIAM Hermeneutical procedures

Area/theme	Frequency	Percentage
Witchcraft/evil spirits	28	61%
Prosperity/Finances	10	21.7%
Spiritual warfare	3	6.5%
Politics	3	6.5%
Healing	2	4.3%
Total	46	100%

Table 8: Dominant preaching themes in JIAM

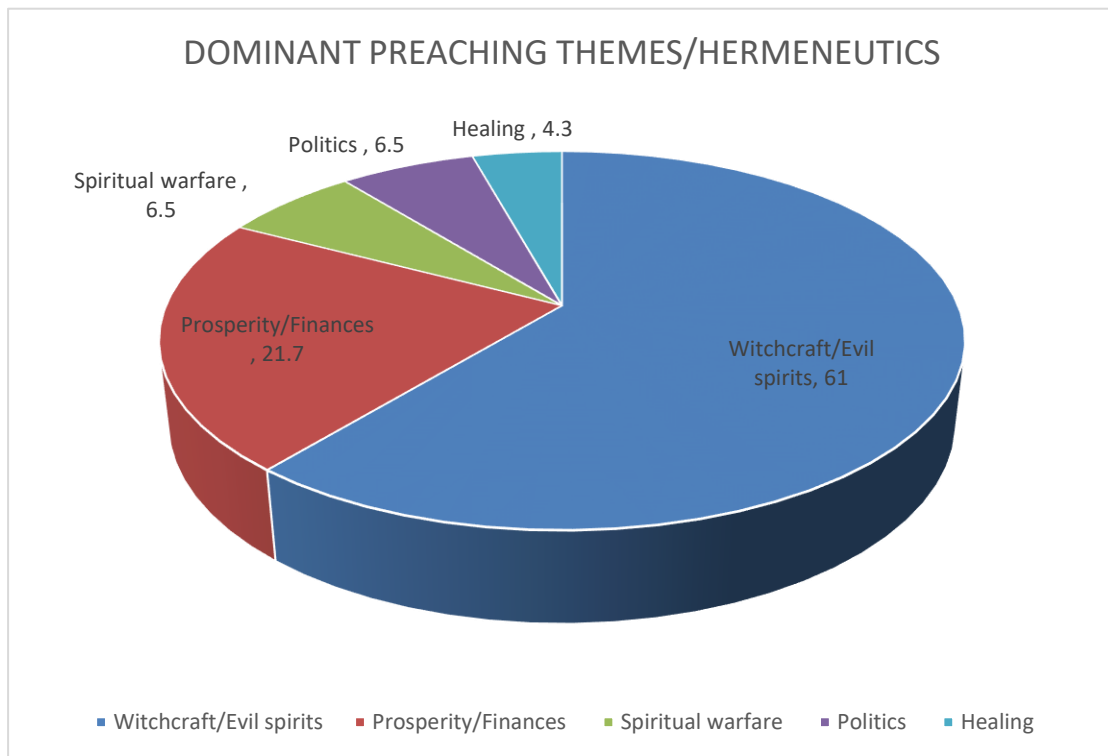


Figure 6: Dominant Preaching Themes in JIAM

Table 8 and Figure 6 above present the main preaching themes in JIAM. The main preaching themes also revealed the hermeneutical procedure/practice of JIAM. The study found out that witchcraft/evil spirits take the greatest share of JIAM's preaching with a frequency of 28 translating to 61%. The study also revealed that Margaret Wanjiru is the main preacher in all the services except for some lunch hour and morning Glory and/ or evening services. Her life was dotted with involvement in witchcraft and occultism, and her preaching was a reflection of the same. Further, the main preaching areas/themes just in like in ATG reveal a common hermeneutical posture; spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics. The dominance of the theme of witchcraft/evil spirits was attested by the topics given in the sermons. The study found sermon titles such as: Raising a standard: Destroying Satanic stronghold; Destroying the Spirit of Jezebel; shutting the gates of Hell, Opening the gates of heaven, Destroying Babylonian Spirits,

and types of witchcraft among others dominant in the JIAM. The study sampled some of these sermons and analysed them revealing the dominance of witchcraft and evil spirits in the preaching and as well as the spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics. The study noted that JIAM mostly utilizes the Old Testament narratives more than the NT (Gifford, 2009). Some of the sermons were analysed below.

Sermon 1: Shutting the Gates of Hell and Opening the Gates of Heaven⁶⁶

This sermon by Bishop Margret Wanjiru was not premised on a particular text of the bible at the start. Its introduction was nuanced to witchcraft and demonic spirits, and how they find avenues to human affairs. Categorically, the Bishop premised her preaching on what she called, red witchcraft⁶⁷ (the most dangerous according to her). Bishop Wanjiru narrates that, red witches/demonic spirits influence people by tapping the victim on the shoulder. Such kind of witchcraft or demons can also be brought by friends, she added. She further stated that such spirits come from the graves and they aim to kill, cause misfortunes, shatter people's plans, and hence, a failure in life. She added a list of their effect on people; death, breakup of marriages, and failure of businesses, and careers just to mention a few. In seeking to connect her explanation with her topic, she added, "These demons sit at the gates and doors ready to tap someone at the back or shoulders". Typical to any other Pentecostal charisma, the audience was called upon to place their hands on their shoulders and through declaring and decreeing, they were ordered to remove all the burdens that satanic spirits could have placed on their shoulders: burdens of lack, scarcity, joblessness, death, debts among others. Before continuing with the sermon, the audience was called upon to stand and praise God because they are now free people (free from the burdens the witches/demonic

⁶⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ym78myQq3SE&t=6758s>.

⁶⁷ She explains that the color red is symbolic of the highest level of the practice of witchcraft and occultism. At this stage, it is said the practitioner is said to be very harmful.

spirits had placed on them). The study found out this amounts to the spiritualization of human life in all its spheres. Everything and all occurrence were given a spiritual cause; lack of jobs, death, and poverty among others. This is typical of Pentecostal spirituality (Kalu, 2008)

In continuation of the sermon, the bishop further stated that the gates and doors determine how successful one becomes. This is because one's legs move from passing through the gates and doors. The congregation was told, if the gates and doors are dominated by witches and demonic spirits, whoever passes through them, by being tapped at the back or shoulders his or her life starts to experience misfortunes. At this level, the audience was convinced and given time to bent and lay hands on their legs decreeing, "I soak my legs in the blood of Jesus...we soak our feet in the blood of Jesus...we soak our feet in the pool of the blood of Jesus...I decree now that my feet are loosed...". This is characteristic of deliverance from evil spirits. The study found that in JIAM there are no deliverance rituals as found in ATG, only declarations.

The study further observed that all this while since the sermon began, no single text of the Bible was read or alluded to. It was after the declaration of "soaking the feet in the blood of Jesus" that the Bishop started focusing/making reference to the bible. Deuteronomy 33 was the first scripture portion mentioned. However, the study observed that this scripture reference was only mentioned in relation to a believer being promised a life of blessings. Contextually, the chapter is about the final blessings that Moses pronounced to the Israelites before he died. However, the Bishop without any reference to the context or meanings of the words or portions of the chapter, just alluded to the blessings promised to God's children. The study observed that the choice of the chapter was because it mentioned the word(s) blessings. Deuteronomy 28 was the second bible reference utilized. Again, without focusing on any specific verse or either

the context of the chapter, she told her audience, "The Bible says we walk in blessed and out blessed". The congregation was made to repeat after her, "Am blessed, profitable and fruitful in Jesus name". The chapter was meant to call upon the Israelites to remain faithful upon reaching the Promised Land. The chapter outlines the blessings and curses associated with obedience and disobedience respectively.

Margret Wanjiru selectively referred to the chapters and verses that brought out what she wanted her audience to hear. For example, she stated that the bible says we will walk in blessed and out blessed, she alluded to verse four of Deuteronomy chapter 28. The study found out that alluding to verse six was critical to match the topic of the sermon especially the "gates" and the "doors". The walking in and out literary walking through the doors and gates which determine one's success. In the two bible references, no correlation is given to doors and gates or hell and heaven. Typically one is left to interpret that the doors of hell are associated with misfortunes brought by witchcraft and demonic spirits while the gates of heaven are the blessings mentioned in the two chapters. This amounted to spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics.

Isaiah 54 was the third and final bible portion. The study found out that this was the only bible portion that was specifically read. In a biblical context, Isaiah 54 is a promise of the restoration of the Israelites after the Babylonian captivity. The message is presented in symbols with Israel pictured as a barren woman; afflicted, sad, and shame. But God promises to bring in the nearest future a change of fortunes marked by restored fellowship with God, an increase in population, the defeat of her enemies, and generally a pleasant life.

Bishop Margret Wanjiru in her sermon did not bother with the context of the chapter. The study noted that she selectively went to verses 11-17. Without exegesis of the

keywords in relation to her sermon, she declared, "*Isaiah 54 speaks of about coming of out barrenness coming into fruitfulness. ...it also speaks about the victory of God's children*". It was evident that the context was forced to be aligned with the theme of the message. Further, the study noted that the barrenness the bishop was preaching about, was a reference to the problems the believer experiences due to being tapped at the back or on the shoulders by evil spirits and spirits of witchcraft. Without any interpretation of the selected verse, and in seeking to connect the verses with her topic, she said, "Any affliction positioned at our places of work or home or offices and property, we send a word to that affliction in the name of Jesus". Selectively choosing verse 12 in which part B of the text says, "... your gates of sprinkling jewels and all your walls of precious stones..." (NIV).

The mention of the gates was literary connected to the gates and doors of hell in her sermon topic. Biblically, verse 12 is a continuation of the parable of how pleasant the lives of the Israelites will be when God restores them. Without any reference to the Israelites as the first recipients of this message, she directly went to her own life experiences and those of the hearers. She advanced a teaching that there are spirits strategically located on people's doors and they should drive them away. In this case, the study read that the suffering and abandonment of the Israelites by God was not because of their sins, but actually because of evil spirits. In each case, each text or verse read or alluded to, there was no explanation provided. However, they were selectively chosen and spiritualized, they were directly linked to the experiences of the audience nuanced to spiritual causality. This kind of selective-spiritualized and literal hermeneutics was best captured in the concluding statements of the sermon by Margeret Wanjiru. Selectively choosing verse 12 and specifically the words gates and stones, she told her audience, "The Bible says God will beautify our *gates* with beautiful

stones...the gates speaks of our lives, places of work, homes, where we go...if things do not go right in our gates, our lives go wrong...God beautify my home, calling, career, and everything and everyone called by our name..."

The study found out that eventually there was no explanation of what entails the gates of hell or heaven. One is left to imagine that hell is typical of the witches and evil spirits against the blessings (heaven) of God's people. In all the three Bible references none had a single teaching or mention of witchcraft or evil spirits. Further, no mention or observation of the context was given or alluded to, neither was the seeking of the understanding of the message to the original audience nor exegesis of the keywords or phrases, rather selected unexplained texts but linked and applied to the lives of the believers. Everything is given as spiritual causality and a spiritual remedy as well as testifying to the dominant theme of witchcraft and demonic spirits in JIAM preaching and hermeneutics.

SERMON TWO: DESTROYING BABYLONIAN SPIRITS⁶⁸

The study found this sermon by Bishop Margret Wanjiru attesting to the dominance of witchcraft and Spiritism in JIAM's preaching. It was also evident to the existence of spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics as well as Bishop Wanjiru's predominant use of the OT as well as her own former occult experiences. The reading in connection with the sermon was 2 Chronicles 36:7-10; 18.

Before reading the text, the study observed that a foundation was laid on what effect the "Babylonian spirits" have on the believers. She preached that when one is under the influence of these spirits several things happen: the destruction of life, stagnation in life, no prosperity, and death. She further outlined three key areas that these spirits

⁶⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1tXwQMIWwA&t=938s>

affect and the implications or consequences. These are mentally- bringing torment to one's life; spiritually – attacking the faith of the individual bringing to an end his or her spirituality and third, physically- manifested in diseases that enslave the person leading to poverty, considering that poverty goes together with diseases. The study established that all these introductory words did not correlate with the text provided.

2 Chronicles 36 gives the last final accounts of the fall of Judah and the subsequent Babylonian captivity. It is a narrative devoid of any symbolic language expressing that the fall of Judah was because she disobeyed God. In her sermon, Margaret Wanjiru selectively went for the verses that brought out what she wanted. Though she selected verses 7-10 and 18, her concentration was on verses 7 and 18. Both verses speak of Nebuchadnezzar carrying the golden articles used in the Temple in Jerusalem to his palace. The study observed that, without explanation of the context of the passage, bishop Margaret Wanjiru purposively settled on the verses where the word Babylon appeared. While the verses themselves are plain narrative, she spiritualized them by making Babylon no longer a city/kingdom but a spirit; thus, the title of her sermon: Destroying Babylonian spirits. The spiritualization of Babylon became her foundation for the rest of the sermon.

Her concentration turned to the temple in connection with the articles being taken to Babylon and she taught her audience that, a temple has three particular elements: a priest, an altar, and a sacrifice. The Babylonian temple was spiritualized to symbolize the capture of the people of God by demonic spirits of witchcraft. In this context, she argued, "if one has to destroy satanic spirits (now perceived as a temple), one has to destroy their priesthood, the altar, and the sacrifices". She further added, "Babylonian spirits were enslaving and not kind, they were never kind to the Israelites...they were idolatrous". The study observed that in the whole of the chapter, Babylon is given as a

kingdom and not a spirit and the contents of the chapter are not symbolic or spiritualized. With the promised rebuilding of Jerusalem under Cyrus king of Persia, the bishop declared to the audience that God was going to rebuild them. The kind of rebuilding captured areas like alcoholism in families, poverty, diseases to good health, the families to the rebuilding of the counties and the nation at large (read the political scenes). Once more, the study learnt that Pentecostal hermeneutics is spiritual in orientation nuanced to spiritual causality, literal interpretation but on selected scripture portions. It does not concern itself with the historical-grammatical contexts of the passages at hand.

SERMON THREE: DESTROYING THE SPIRITS OF WITCHCRAFT⁶⁹

The study found this sermon by Margret Wanjiru as deeper evidence of how spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics is entrenched in Neo-Pentecostalism in Kenya. Further, the study learnt that this kind of biblical interpretation is spiritualized in the sense that all occurrence is pegged on spiritual causality. The study observed that such a spiritualized-selective approach to the biblical interpretation does not consider the context of the passage, neither the grammar nor the contextual meaning of words, meaning to the first hearers. Instead, the preacher forces the context to bring out her intended meaning resulting in eisegesis.

This sermon was based on several passages which were all taken out of context. She began by saying that the devil is a counterfeiter of the things of God. Immediately, she went to the reading of I John 4:3 as the main text of the sermon. She claimed that the kind of spirits she is talking about is "marine spirits" which she explained as the "spirits of the dead people". The study found out the chapter was chosen because of the phrase

⁶⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2f5WBj34F80&t=2641s>

"testing spirits" which predominantly appears on the text. It was also evident that the Bishop specifically settled on verse three; most specifically on the phrase, "the spirit of antichrist". In seeking to connect it with the title of her sermon and bringing in the element of witchcraft, Wanjiru said that the Spirit of the antichrist is the "Red witchcraft"⁷⁰. But the study asked, does I John 4:3 or the whole chapter have anything to do with witchcraft or demonic spirits? The context of 4:1-6 is a warning to the early believers by John concerning false prophets.

The false prophecy centred Christology especially the doctrine of the incarnation. John tells his audience to discern teachings (what he labels spirits). And that every teaching that acknowledges Jesus as having come in the flesh is from God. What John meant by spirits here are the gnostic teachings refuting the humanity of Jesus. John directly connects their teachings to the anti-Christ who is already in the world. The anti-Christ is the devil, who is occasioning the false teaching. In no way in this passage does John refer to the Anti-Christ in connection to the eschatological thinking as Paul does in his epistles. Therefore, for Margret Wanjiru to bring out the teaching of witchcraft, the red witchcraft, and or marine spirits was a forced hermeneutics that was done selectively and purposely to bring out what was in her mind. It does not honour the biblical hermeneutical procedures. It was fuelled by spiritual causality and leads itself to eisegesis and not exegesis. It directly seeks to relate to the spiritual world of the believer in which the spirits are the cause of everything.

In continuation of her sermon and in seeking to advance her teaching on spirits of witchcraft and types of witchcraft, she further utilized Revelation 6:7-8. Again this

⁷⁰ The colors of the witchcraft were given to mean the highest levels one can reach in the world of Satanism. Red means the most high level which doubles as the most dangerous and lethal to the victims.

study observes the selective nature of her hermeneutics. She picked verses 7 and 8 specifically the words, death, and hades. She spiritualized the two words by labelling them, "the spirit of death and hades/hell". She added, "The spirit of death and hell is working, taking people to hell without receiving salvation (read without being born again), it is also the spirit of Jezebel". In her quest to bring out her ideas on types of witchcraft she told the audience that the spirit of anti-Christ mentioned in I John 4:3 is the red witchcraft and that death and hades she labelled as "the spirit of death and hell" which referred to as white witchcraft". This sermon was preached during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study observed that even the pandemic was given a spiritual cause and response. With different variants of the Coronavirus, the bishop labelled it the "spirit of variance". In her preaching, the pandemic with the attendant deaths were regarded as the spirit of Jezebel (read the spirit that causes death) and in line with Revelation 6:7 - 8 the spirit of death and hell. This perception and teaching are well captured in the prayers offered in between the sermon. She prayed, "we are tired of hearing another variant...we cast the spirit of Covid-19 back to *hell (italics added-read death and hades)*..."

The study reasoned that Revelation chapter six has nothing to do with the teachings of spirits or witchcraft or types of witchcraft. The context of chapter six is chapters four and five. After explaining an earthly picture of the seven churches, the apocalyptic picture in 4 and 5 turns to heaven. In chapter four, it's the glorious throne of God and in chapter five the immediate context of chapter six is the Lamb and the scroll. The lamb who is Jesus is pictured holding the scroll with the seven seals. The scroll contains the destiny of the world; what should happen before the end of the world. Chapter six is the opening of the scrolls by breaking each seal. Whenever each seal is opened, something happens, that is, smiting the human world with a calamity. Apocalyptic

literature is dominant with symbolism and figurative language which Bishop Margret Wanjiru seemed not to care about.

Chapter six is replete with such symbolisms and figurative language, for example, the white horse, bow and a crown (verse 1-2); fiery red horse, a large sword (verse 3-4); black horse and pair of scales (verse 5-6); a pale horse and death and hades (verse 7-8) among other symbolisms and figurative language in the chapter as well as the whole of the book. In chapter six, the white horse of verses one and two depicts a king of righteousness (see white), the crown is what depicts him as a King. Having a bow is a picture of the king ready for war. So it is a picture of ensuing battle and conquest. The fiery red horse is the picture of the shedding of blood in the war. After peace is taken from the earth, the result would be anarchy and men killing each other, this is also attested by the appearance of a sword, meaning slaying each other. The black horse is symbolizing famine. The interpretation is possible with the rider of the black horse having scales on his hand to measure food, expressing that there will be food rationing dictated by famine. The pale horse of verse 8 symbolizes death, pale, the colour of a corpse. This explains why it is labelled death and hades. The word hades is also Sheol or hell given as the place where the dead descend.

The chapter, therefore, does not teach about spirits or witchcraft but real occurrences that will happen on earth before the second advent of Christ⁷¹. The study asked whether the chapter was about spirits of witchcraft; then why only concentrate on verse 8 alone and specifically on death and hades? Why was not the meaning of the pale horse given? What about the colours of the horse in verses 1-6? This proves the existence of what the study has already found as spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics in

⁷¹ This chapter resonates with the Olivet discourse in Matthew 24 in which Jesus taught about the signs of the end of the times.

Pentecostal biblical interpretation seeking a direct application to the lived experiences of the believers. This was evident in the way the sermon was concluded.

The sermon was concluded by a focus on both red witchcraft and black witchcraft with no particular bible portions as the foundations of both types of witchcraft. Margret Wanjiru preached that spirits of red witchcraft bring bad dreams to people at night. She added that such dreams bring confusion and fatigue as well as defiling people. The defilement comes when one dreams of dead people or dreams of going into the deep of the oceans which according to her is the abode of the marine spirits. The audience was given time to pray and disconnect themselves from such dreams and defilement. She finally introduced black witchcraft which was not given any biblical explanation. The study found out that black witchcraft was explained as what is responsible for feeding people with witchcraft at night. No further meaning was given. The audience was ordered to place their hands on their bellies and pray against the spirits of black witchcraft planted in their stomachs. In line with this, the audience was told, "if you get home and start vomiting and or diarrhoea, do not be afraid since it will be the witchcraft (read black witchcraft) coming out". The above section has proved that in JIAM most of the preaching is entrenched in witchcraft and evil spirits and all other subjects including finances, healing, and prosperity revolved around the same theme as discussed below.

The theme of prosperity and finances came second with a frequency of 10 translating to 21.7%. The study learnt that Bishop Margate Wanjiru whenever she speaks of finances it carries the idea of prosperity but at the centre of this kind of preaching is also the demonic spirits as well witchcraft which obstructs people from financial breakthroughs. However, the study realized that JIAM's preaching is mostly geared toward finances as such. In the sampling of the sermons concerning finances, one

sermon stood out uniquely because it incorporated finances, prosperity, and Spiritism. This is discussed below.

SERMON FOUR: DESTROYING FINANCIAL CURSES⁷²

This sermon was anchored on Deuteronomy 28 and other bible portions were utilized in the process. It started with obedience as a source of prosperity, the effect of curses/witchcraft on one's finances, and prosperity and prayers of deliverance out of spirits destroying the believer's finances.

Bishop Margaret Wanjiru began by teaching the value of obedience in prosperity and financial breakthrough. She selectively went for verse 20 of the chapter which speaks of God destroying the children of Israel and everything they have (read their prosperity) due to disobedience by forsaking his ways. The members were told, for a financial breakthrough to be experienced one has to prepare an altar for God. The altar here is explained as the believer's life of holiness and repentance. They were called upon to repent their "financial sins" of not giving their tithes. The audience was called upon to pray and declare financial prosperity over their lives now that they had repented. Besides repentance, they were taught that they must also be disciplined with how they spend their money. The Bishop went on to preach that after one receives a salary he/she must be disciplined by not giving support to everyone in need. Suddenly prosperity and finances took a spiritualistic dimension; demons and curses were at the centre of poverty. Without an explanation of any biblical portion in her main text, she advanced a teaching that, covenants are responsible for the people's lack of development and prosperity. She stated:

...financial breakthrough is associated with demonic covenants...curses do not enter unless there is an open door...you only need to denounce them...the door

⁷² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UetYghsCsAw&t=4566s>

of poverty, the door of borrowing money, the door of scarcity... if a curse is not dealt with it becomes the foundation of the status of that person...

The congregation was warned that sometimes what might seem to be a normal occurrence or accident could be a demonic spirit/curse at work in the life of that person. She gave a story of a certain woman who was prone to small accidents leading to blood oozing out of her body. She said, one day she accidentally cut her finger, another day she got hurt while in the bathroom and blood was coming out of her toes, another day she was in the salon and accidentally the salon attendant pricked her finger and blood oozed out. This was given a spiritual causality that those little accidents meant that it was a curse bound to demonic influence that after working she will not be fruitful. Nonetheless, the study observed that the text of Deuteronomy 28 does not speak of a lack of prosperity due to demonic influences, but due to disobedience to God's law.

The study found that the aspect of the demonic effect on one's prosperity/finances was more pronounced than that of repentance. To entrench her teaching on curses that obstruct people's prosperity and general lack of fruitfulness in life, Wanjiru turned to Genesis 4:11. The study observed that verse 11 was purposively selected because of the phrase, "...you are under a curse..." (NIV). The phrase matches the topic of the sermon, "destroying financial curses". The study observed that the context of the chapter was not given or explained. The opening statement after reading the text was, "Cain and Abel were blessed". The focus now turned to Cain and most specifically to the curse he received. The reason for the curse was not given, nor was the kind of the curse explained. Instead, the theme of curses which negatively affect believers' blessings (read financial prosperity) was put into focus. Directly linking the curse of Cain to the lives of the audience, the Bishop taught, "...the curse went even to the ground. A curse will go to your bank and to your career..." It was evident that the career and the bank had financial implications.

Further, in a Neo-Pentecostal style of blessings as a form of prosperity, she turned to Genesis 1:28. This was again selective hermeneutics because of the phrase, "... and God blessed them and commanded them to increase and be fruitful..." The study learnt that the focus here was on the word blessings and being fruitful which in a Neo-Pentecostal perception amounts to prosperity/financial abundance and good health. Once again, no explanation was given regarding the context of the chapter save for picking the word(s) of interest, without interpretation or with a given meaning an application is made to the audience. The study contested that the use of Genesis 4:11 as well as 1:28 all amounted to spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics. Chapter four of Genesis is a plain narrative expressing the killing of Abel by his brother and the consequent curse God placed upon him. The curse was not in any way connected to evil spirits/witchcraft but as a consequence of his sin. Genesis 1:28 speaks of the command to increase in number and to be fruitful and the subsequent dominion over the creation. It is still a plain text that does not need spiritualization. It is not necessarily about financial abundance. But the Bishop attached this verse with exclamations such as, "we are kicking out the demons that hold us from prosperity...millionaires can rise out of this congregation"

In connection with the story of Cain, the curses, Bishop Margaret Wanjiru turns to spiritual causality buttressed by spiritualized-hermeneutics in the bible portions discussed above and a few other texts gives a list of 12 curses that affect the believer's prosperity. The 12 curses were:

1. General curses- explained as inheritance curses/ancestral curses. It was preached that these curses bring failure in life.
2. Curses of words – this was explained to mean negative words spoken against someone, like for example, "you will never succeed, you will never get married among other negative statements
3. Curses of destruction – explained as words that bring destruction to life
4. Curses of stolen goods – here she read Zachariah 5:1-5. This is a vision that Zachariah saw of a flying scroll. The contents have curses targeting those who obtain wealth through stealing. In

Wanjiru's preaching, the text was not interpreted or shown how the believer gets a curse as a result of stolen goods.

5. The curses of authority- explained as the curses pronounced by people in authority such as pastors or bosses.
6. The curse of lack – is explained as manifested in scarcity whereby the individual will never have enough of everything. She/lacks a life of abundance.
7. The curse of struggling – the individual never gets anything easy, although it was also given as a lack of wisdom; not working smart.
8. The curse of "vagabond"- was explained as the spirit of restlessness, one failing to settle in one place even in terms of a job or marriage
9. Curse of poverty – lack of money and means
10. The curse of barrenness- is explained as a lack of fruitfulness in life, retrogressing, lack of development
11. The curses of enchantment - explained as curses of witchcraft
12. The curses of infirmity – are explained as the curses of sicknesses and diseases which consumes an individual's wealth. The statement, "good health and good wealth go hand in hand".

With these curses, the audience was called upon to denounce several demonic spirits/witchcraft which hinders the believer from experiencing prosperity in life. The list of these included: blood covenants; any demonic principalities entrenched in red, black, and white witchcraft, the spirit of Jezebel; freemasonry spirit; animal sacrifices meant to scatter life; majini; Juju; marine spirits; Janis and Jamris which hinder one's walk affecting one's destiny; queen of heaven; queen of the air, queen of Beelzebub; and Babylonian spirits. In the second list of denouncements, the audience was taught about spirits that destroy life. With citations of biblical verses taken out of context and without explanations, another list was given. Here the list touched on what she labelled destroyers. They included Abandon ad Apollyon (Revelation 9); the Northern army (Joel 2); the wicked eastern wind; marine spirits especially one named Rahab which operates in the sea; Behemoth and Leviathan (Job 40, 41, 42); Midianite spirits (Numbers 31:1) referring to the five Midianite kings whose names were explained as meaning destruction; the spirit of Balaam who is the spirit of false prophecy and deception/spirit that brainwashes people's minds; and the spirit of Baal among others. The study noted the over-utilization of spiritual causality and the dominance of "Spiritualized-selective hermeneutics" in JIAM and the direct application of the texts to the life of the audience. The study deduced that although the sermon was hinted to teach about finances and prosperity, it was built on spiritual causality. JIAM's

hermeneutics is dominated by spiritual causality with witchcraft and evil spirits at the centre.

The study found that the themes of spiritual warfare, politics, and healing had the smallest frequencies and percentages. Spiritual warfare and politics each have a frequency of three translating to 6.5% in each. Concerning spiritual warfare, the study found out that in JIAM, this theme is not necessarily preached as an independent theme; however, it features in all sermons. The study observed that since all the sermons dominated spirits/witchcraft as the cause of human misfortunes, at the beginning of the sermons, in the middle, and at the end, were prayers and declarations directed as spiritual warfare against the spirits and witches. For example, the members would be told to place their hands on their heads, stomachs, or an ailing part of the body and through prayer command out spirits of sicknesses, or while putting one hand on their pockets declare that the spirit of poverty is defeated and thus, symbolically invite riches in their lives. The study observed that this runs through all the sermons including even the ones carried out by the assistant pastors in JIAM. But one categorical observation was that every time Bishop Wanjiru is preaching, the moments she starts praying and declaring the defeat of demonic spirits or spirits of witchcraft, there is always an assistant pastor behind her who takes over and through prayer (quite long prayers) announces defeat of all spirits working against the success of the people. Therefore, spiritual warfare comes intertwined with other preaching topics.

Concerning the theme of politics, the study recognized that although Wanjiru is a politician, she hardly preaches about politics in her Church services. The study did not find any elaborate teaching on politics or even church and politics based on biblical text. The only close biblical references found were 2 Chronicles 36:7ff especially the fall of Judah. Here the evil kings were slightly likened to the Kenyan political scene

which the preacher regarded as evil with the statement, "there was much evil that time, that sounds like Kenya". The other instances close to political issues are during prayers, especially in the middle of the sermons. Since JIAM centres on spiritual causality, the study observed that prayers to the state, the leaders and the nation as a whole were directed to the demons/spirits causing various failures in the Nation. Here prayers directed towards, "the spirit of disunity"; "spirit of evil leaders"...prayers for spiritual and physical blessings to the nation were observed. This was interspersed with the statements like, "...blessed is the nation whose God is the King". These prayers and declarations at one point were anchored on Matthew 18:16 in which Jesus said that he will build his church on the stone and that the powers of evil will not have the ability to destroy. From this text, prayer and declarations were made focusing on the state but still on spiritual causality. Some parts of the prayer read, "...we resist territorial spirits, spirits of witchcraft, powers of witchcraft, we bring down all evil strongholds, we open heaven, our riches, peace...(continues in tongues)...we uproot, we remove evil spirits and institute the kingdom of God in Kenya as a nation...". Therefore, the study found out that the theme of politics is more found in the prayers and superficial citations of biblical texts mostly taken out of context. The study observed that the times when politics features prominently in JIAM are when politicians visit the church. During these times, the bishops praise the political leaders and allow them to address their congregation. Mostly these are political leaders allied to her. Some other times she attends political gatherings and castigates some politicians or declares her next political move. However, in terms of preaching and teaching on the same, there was no explicit teaching on politics. This is also picked further on JIAM's members' understanding of politics and the historical involvement of the Bishop.

The theme of Healing had the least frequency at 2 and a percentage of 4.3. The study found out that despite the least frequency, this theme was featured in all preaching. As noted earlier, JIAM's preaching is dominantly on witchcraft/evil/demonic spirits. These evil spirits were interpreted as the cause of sicknesses. And just like the theme of spiritual warfare, during the sermons, the audience was called upon several times to declare healing in their bodies by placing their hands on their bodies and exorcising the spirits responsible for that particular sickness. However, there was a sermon on healing entitled: Anointing for healing.

The study found that JIAM's hermeneutics is expressed through her preaching and it is a spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics. Being spiritualized meaning that it was pneumatological in posture that is anchoring on spiritual causality. Selective in the sense that it only picks those bible texts which resonate with what the preacher wants to pass to the congregation. In this regard, the study found out that the context of the writer, the meaning of the text to the original audience, or even grammar rules do not apply in JIAM just as in ATG. When the pastors were asked about the meaning to context, meaning to the original audience, and the grammar, their responses expressed the overriding idea of being led by the Holy Spirit than using a particular formula.

There was a general view that there is no specific method of interpreting the Bible since every preacher is led by the Holy Spirit differently. The use of a method in hermeneutics was related to mainstream churches which from the JIAM's view (and general Pentecostal understanding) they resort to methods since they are not spirit-filled. The study observed that during the sermons, Margret Wanjiru repeated the statement, "I flow under the guidance of the Holy Spirit". She attributed this to the fact that in her preaching she can sing and pray in the middle of the sermon. The study observed that Wanjiru's sermons just like Apostle Musili's mostly lack a critical flow under the

argument that they are being led by the Holy Spirit. It was therefore ironical how the pastors in this church just like ATGM have been to theological institutions and have taken hermeneutics as a course yet they revert to Pentecostal spiritualized-selective hermeneutics in their preaching

4.3.6 JIAM's Understanding of Eschatology

The study's primary question was, "did Neo-Pentecostal shift from disengagement to engagement in politics coincide with a change in biblical and theological premises, and if so how and why did it happen?" While historically the centre of the shift from disengagement to engagement in politics was situated in the change in the eschatological teaching/doctrine, (Kay & Ann 2004, p. 25), this study reasoned that, although it was true that eschatology was a factor, it was not the main the factor, rather a combination of different hermeneutics as well as a paradigm shift. This combination of factors created a shift from a "gospel of salvation" to the "gospel of the Kingdom." Therefore, seeking an understanding of JIAM's understanding of eschatology and whether it had a relationship with her political involvement was prudent. The study sought to understand JIAMs pastor's and Member's understanding of eschatology, especially on the second coming of Christ since that has been the particular eschatological teaching informing the shift from being aloof to politics to active political engagement. Further, the study sought to understand the hermeneutics practiced by JIAM, particularly in preaching, and how it affected her involvement in the political process. The data gained is represented below in tables, pie charts, and graphs.

Does JIAM Preach on End Time Messages? (Eschatological Messages)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
No	38	82.6%
Yes	8	17.4%
Total	46	100%

Table 9: to show if JIAM preaches on End time messages (eschatological)

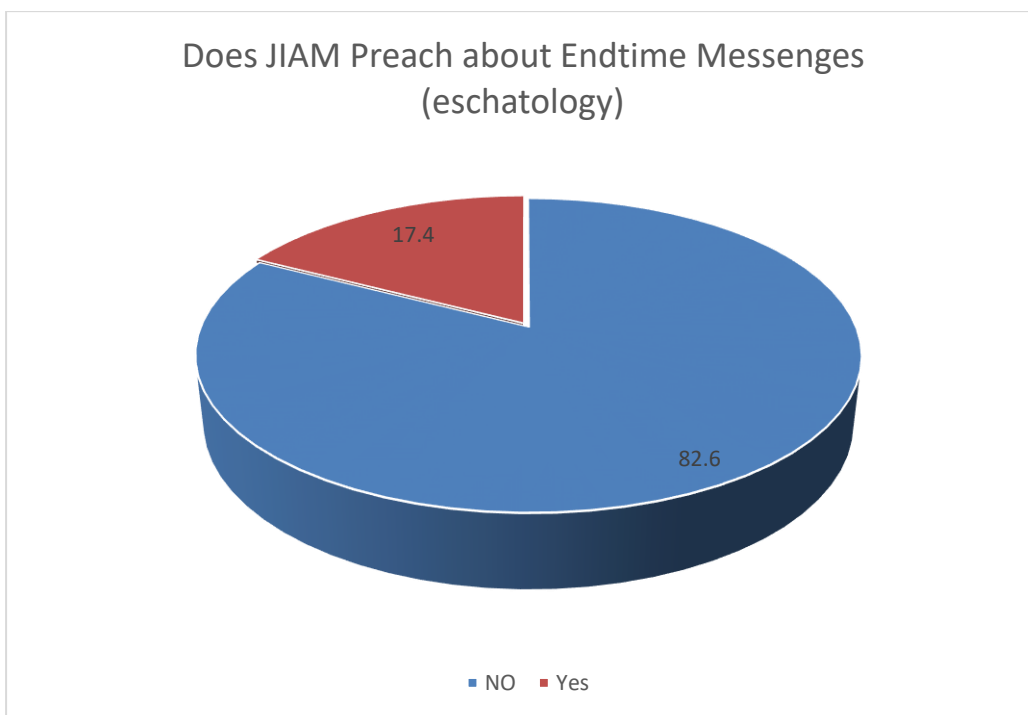


Figure 7: To show if JIAM preaches on End time messages (eschatological)

The study inquired from the members whether in JIAM pastors preach about End time messages, that is generally about the second coming of Christ. Out of the 46 questionnaires returned, 38 members accounting for 82.6% responded No while only 8 members accounting for 17.4% said Yes. The disparity between Yes and No was quite enormous and is evidence in the lack of eschatological themes in JIAM preaching. During the Focus Group Discussions, the study found out that the few who responded Yes based their argument on simple statements made during preaching, such as

".....before Jesus comes again, we must also live a comfortable life here on earth....", but not any particular formalized teaching. The absence of sermon themes on eschatological issues/doctrines in JIAM was further evidenced by the previous section on dominant preaching themes. In all the sermons sampled and analysed, none had anything to do with end-time teachings. The sermons were majorly on spirits/witchcraft, finances, and prosperity aiming at making life on earth comfortable.

4.7 JIAM's Teaching on the Second Coming of Christ

The members and the pastors were asked about their church teaching on the second coming of Christ. The historical perspectives were supplied; before the great tribulation, during the great tribulation, and after the great tribulation. The responses from the 46 church members and 3 pastors were analysed below:

Period	Frequency	Percentage
Before the great tribulation	11	22.4 %
During the great tribulation	3	6.1 %
After the great tribulation	4	8.2%
I do not know	31	63.3%
Total	49	100%

Table 10: shows JIAMs teaching on the second coming of Christ

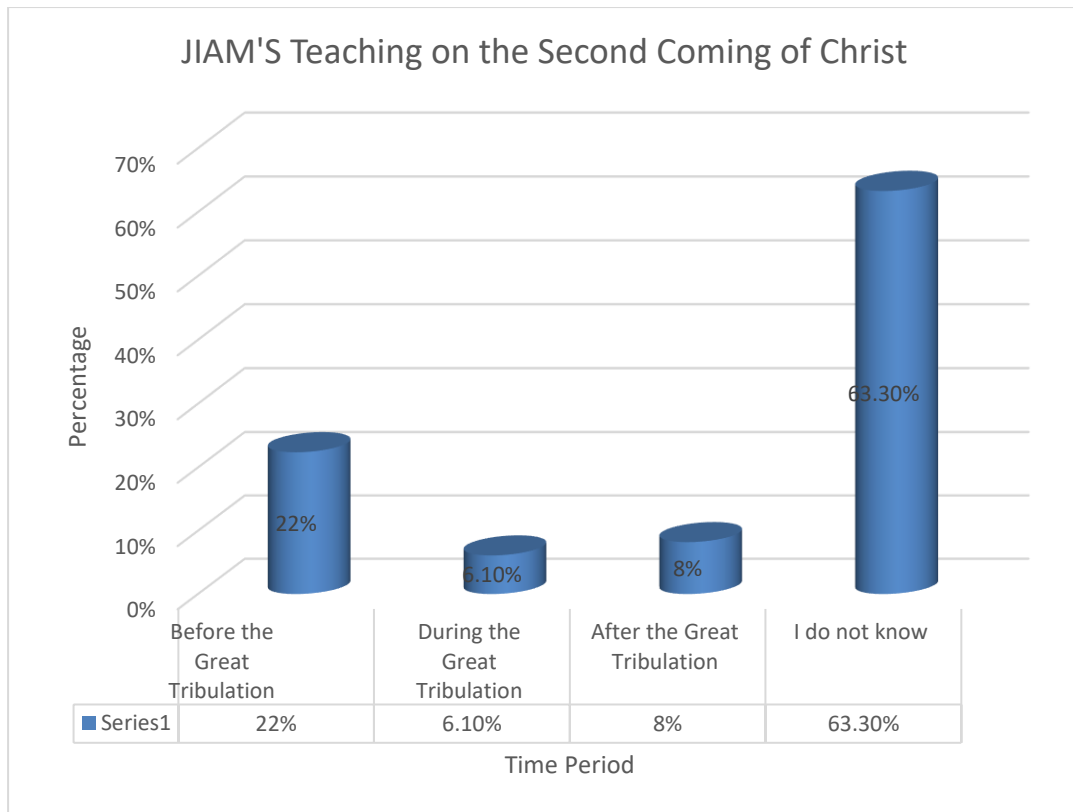


Figure 8: shows JIAMs teaching on the second coming of Christ

Table 10 and Figure 8 above represent JIAM's pastors' and members' understanding of the second coming of Christ. When asked about their understanding of Christ's second return using the historical millennial understanding, a great majority at 63.3% said they did not know about teachings on the second return of Christ. This was evident since as seen previously, JIAM does not have sermons on end times. 22.4% of the respondents indicated that Christ will come before the great tribulation; 6.1% during the great tribulation and 8.2% after the great tribulation. The study observed that in the filling of the questionnaire, the question on the return of Christ was the only major question that respondents needed clarification on. Nearly all the respondents had not heard about any teachings about the great tribulation. Their understanding was that Christ will come back but when and how remained a grey area to them. The pastors too did not have a grounded knowledge of the biblical teaching on the second coming of Christ. They also

expressed that they do not preach about the end time. Some expressed that eschatology is a very difficult subject.

The understanding of JIAM as a Neo-Pentecostal church on eschatology was very critical to this study. This was because the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal shift from disengagement to engagement in politics has been historically related to her eschatological views, especially on millennialism. Kay and Ann (2004:25) perceive the early Pentecostals as having been informed by evangelical eschatological teachings. Evangelicals had three views as far as the coming of Christ was concerned, all of them anchored on Millennialism with Revelation 20:4-5 as the key biblical text (Grudem, 2005, p. 1109). The argument here is on the one-thousand-year reign of Christ. The three views are amillennialism, postmillennialism, and Premillennialism. In chapter two of this study, it was found that early Pentecostals were dispensational in eschatology. Buttressed by the view that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was meant for the propagation of the Gospel, and with the belief that Christ was coming soon to inaugurate his millennial kingdom, the early Pentecostals concentrated much on evangelism for the salvation of the souls. Christ was interpreted to return before the Great Tribulation (Kay & Ann, 2004, p. 25, 38). With the emergence of Neo-Pentecostal Christianity, the initial Pentecostal dispensational eschatology was questioned, doubted, and eventually changed. As Kay and Ann (38) observe, the Neo-Pentecostals interpreted the biblical passages dealing with the second coming of Christ differently. For the Neo-Pentecostals, there is no future millennial reign and that Christ rules now and there are only two ages: the present age and the one to come. This means then, for Pentecostals there is no intermediate millennial reign. This study found out that although a shift from pretribulation dispensational eschatology towards a postmillennial eschatology, with Christ being considered as reigning now, Neo-

Pentecostals emphasized the reigning part at the expense of the eschatological part. However, as already indicated, the study observed that the eschatological dimension was not the main element that informed the shift. While Kay and Ann (2004) attempt to situate the shift within eschatology, for this study, Neo-Pentecostals with emphasis on pneumatology considered a different hermeneutics. It was this kind of hermeneutics that shaped their eschatology and hence, the gradual loss or lack of dominance of eschatology in their preaching and lived experiences. This explained why for example in JIAM, the members do not have knowledge of eschatology but have knowledge of the power of Christ over demonic spirits and witchcraft that tend to hinder their success on earth.

During the Focus Group Discussion, it was realized that JIAM members who know eschatology were originally members of mainstream churches. It was in these mainstream churches that they got to hear and learn about eschatology with topics such as great tribulation, rapture, and the resurrection of the dead final judgment among others. Such members informed this study that in mainstream churches, such a topic would be taught in series, however, in JIAM there is no such teaching.

4.8 JIAM Understanding of Politics

The study sought to understand how members of JIAM understand politics. This was critical because their bishop is a politician and politicians frequent their church. The first question was whether politics is a dirty game. The responses from the 46 members and 3 pastors are captured below.

Is politics a dirty game?

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	36.7 %

No	31	63.3%
Total	49	100%

Table 11: illustrating if politics is a dirty game

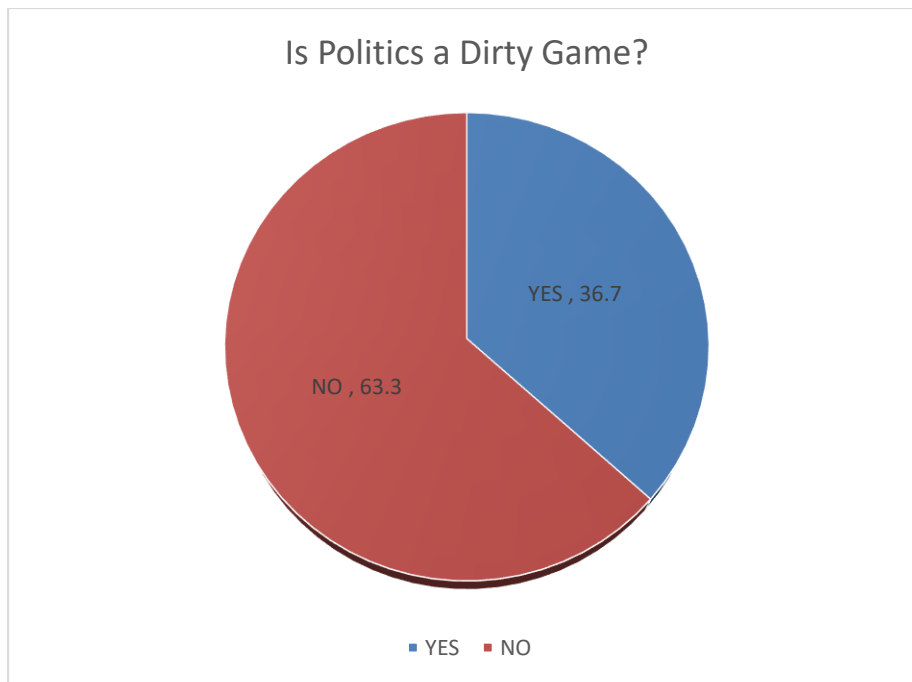


Figure 9: illustrating if politics is a dirty game

Table (11) and Pie chart (9) above represent the responses to the question of whether politics is a dirty game. The study found out that in JIAM, a great majority of 31 accounting for 63.3% responded No against 18 (YES) translating to 36.7%. The study established that the higher number of people responding No was due to being in a church where the leader was a politician. Having seen politics and church mixing, they didn't perceive politics as something to shun. However, 36.7% expressed that despite the bishop being a politician, they felt that still politics was dirty. In one of the FGDs, one member said, "Have you not realized that the bishop is at times forced to use the impolite language used by other politicians, has she not in some instances been abusive?" Another one added, "No Christian can get into politics without being

corrupted, especially in Kenyan politics". Others expressed that besides the corruption that might come with politics, the Christian believer cannot remain aloof to politics.

4.9 JIAM and the Kenyan Political Regimes and Significant Political Issues in Kenya

The choice of JIAM for this study was purposive considering the involvement of her founder in Kenyan politics. But the study sought to understand the specific ways and epochs the Bishop as well as JIAM in general has been involved in the Kenyan political process and to what extent.

Political regime/Significant political issue	Year(s)	Participation status (Yes or No)
Daniel Moi's Kanu regime	1978-2002	No
Mwai Kibaki's NARC Regime (First Term)	2002-2007	Yes
2005 Draft Referendum	2005	Yes
2008 Post-election Violence	2008	Yes
2010 Constitutional Referendum	2010	Yes
The Coalition Government (Kibaki/Raila)	2008-2012	Yes
Uhuru and Ruto Jubilee Government (first term)	2012-2017	Yes
Uhuru and Ruto Jubilee /UDA Party politics	2017-2022	Yes
BBI	2019-2021	Yes

Table 12: JIAM and Kenyan political regimes and significant political issues in Kenya

JIAM and most specifically, the founder, Margret Wanjiru has been conspicuous in Kenyan politics. Table 12 above is the analysis of the involvement of JIAM in various political regimes as well as critical political moments. During Moi's government, JIAM and the founder were not involved in politics. She was still in the founding stage of her ministry, especially in the late 1990s. As already discussed, during Moi's era, it was the Mainstream churches especially the RCC, PCEA and ACK, and the NCCK, and

later under the Ufungamano initiative which actively participated in politics; especially the clamour for multi-party democracy. (Githinga; 2001; Ndegwa; 2001, Maupeu; 2005; Gifford; 2009; Mue, 2011 among many others). Pentecostal Churches which existed during that time were pro-government. These were churches such as CITAM, Redeemed Gospel Church, and other African Pentecostal churches. Moreover, their political involvement was by large in defence of Moi's regime as a result of scathing attacks from mainstream Christianity (Ndegwa, 2001; Gifford, 2009; Mue, 2011; Parsitau, 2012)

JIAM came to the political limelight during the first term of Mwai Kibaki's (National Rainbow Coalition Government) presidency. According to Parsitau (2011, p. 135), in 2003, Bishop Margret Wanjiru started expanding her ministry beyond the borders of the church. This study found out that she started getting into the business. It was these extended horizons in business ventures that would see her start engaging in politics. This was not only for her but for most Pentecostal clergy who started hankering for civil positions especially in parliamentary (Cheeseman, 2008; Kavulla, 2008; Gifford, 2009; Droz & Maupeu, 2013). In the context of church state-relationship, Kibaki's first term in office has been described as the point where the prophetic voice of mainstream Christianity was lost and a new voice from the Neo-Pentecostals gained (Parsitau, 2012). Maupeu (2005) argues that the mainstream church was so much part of clamour for multi-party democracy and justice that it celebrated the new awakening brought by Kibaki government to the neglect of her prophetic mandate. In this context then, the Neo-Pentecostals clergy were described as the new prophetic voice in Kenyan politics. Margret Wanjiru having grown her ministry and having become an icon in the Neo-Pentecostal Circles, came to the political limelight during this time, most specifically the politics of the 2005 constitutional referendum. The 2005 constitutional draft

referendum is considered to have awoken the Neo-Pentecostals to active politics. This was purely because of their response to the proposed constitutional changes that included the Kadhi courts and other contentious issues leaning towards on same-sex unions and abortion (Parsitau, 2012). Gifford (2009) discusses the presence of Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal involving Bonface Adoyo of CITAM, Bishop Margaret Wanjiru of JIAM, Wilfred Lai of Jesus Celebration Centre, Arthur Kitonga of Redeemed Gospel Church, Mark Kariuki of Deliverance Churches and other religious organizations under EAK. The study observed that even the voice of the church was politicized owing to its close connection with Raila Odinga who was against the proposed constitutional changes. Out of the 2005 referendum, realizing that they had a political influence alongside politicians (read ODM), several Neo-Pentecostal leaders got involved and/ or declared interest in elective positions (Parsitau, 2012). Bishop Margret Wanjiru of JIAM was one of them.

In December, 2007 Wanjiru declared her interest to contest the Starahe constituency parliamentary position in Nairobi. However, as it has been discussed in this study on Pentecostal political hermeneutics as being spiritualized, her political journey found such a spiritualization being nuanced to dualism (a showdown between 'darkness' and 'light'). Her declaration of interest in elective politics was done in her church premise and during a Sunday church service. Likened with Queen Esther of the Bible who thwarted Haman's plans of eradicating the Jew, she was depicted as the hope of the People of Starehe constituency (Kavulla, 2008, p. 251). This was done by a visiting preacher, prophetess Breda Todd who together with her husband anointed Bishop Wanjiru for politics. Thereafter, she filed her candidacy with the ODM party. Throughout her campaign, she saw her contest for a political seat as a contest between Satan and God. Her rival Maina Kamanda was seen as the evil to be defeated.

Eventually in 2008, Wanjiru won the Starehe Parliamentary seat and promised to lift the livelihoods of the members of her constituency for Jesus. So this was the first time Margret Wanjiru successfully entered into active politics and her interest thereof has remained despite the many political obstacles she has faced since then. She was also appointed an assistant minister for Housing something that buttressed her voice in national politics.

The study found out that the next period of Margret Wanjiru's agility in politics was in the 2010 constitutional referendum. After the bungled 2007 elections, and after the signing of the National Peace Accord, a coalition government between Kibaki and Raila was put in place and tasked with restoring the country to its fallen glory. In effecting the constitutional agenda, in 2008 the Committee of Experts (CoE) was tasked with drafting the new constitution (Parsitau, 2012). The 10th parliament passed and harmonized the draft on April, 2010. Following the publishing and passing of the constitution draft, the Church took issue with it. Evangelical church leaders, Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal Church leadership vowed to oppose the new constitutional draft unless the government deleted the provisions and clauses allowing the inclusion of Kadhi courts and abortion. In an ecumenical spirit, the clergy from different denominations came together forming an anti-constitutional front dubbed Kenya Christian Leaders Constitutional Forum (KCLCF). In this spirit, the church leaders and the anti-constitution politicians joined hands to launch a No campaign. The church held mega prayer rallies calling upon their faithfulness not to endorse the new constitution that they deemed dangerous even using red colour in efforts to steer away their congregants (Parsitau, 2012). Bishop Margret Wanjiru, Apostle Musili of ATGM, and Apostle James Ng'anga of Neno Evangelism Centre were the leading anti-constitutional voices within Neo-Pentecostal Christianity. They were also joined by anti-

constitutional politicians. Nevertheless, Kenya Church leaders both from Mainstream, independent, Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostal were divided on their approach to the proposed draft constitution; while some vowed to reject it, others vowed to support it; therefore rallying their members.

The mainstream Christian church leaders like the Late Rev. Dr. David Gitari and Rev. Timothy Njoya were pro-constitution (David & Katola, 2016:51). Despite the divided voice of the church, this study found that the participation of Margret Wanjiru of JIAM in constitutional politics entrenched her deep interest in politics. Just like the rest of the anti-constitutional clergy, her No stance on the constitution was simply based on the inclusion of Kadhi courts and the perceived legalization of abortion.

The study found out that another moment when Margret Wanjiru became conspicuous in Kenyan politics was during the first term of President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto government (2012-2017). Maupeu (2013) has described this period as "Pentecostalization of Kenyan politics". This has been dubbed so owing to the Jubilee government associating itself with the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal wing of Christianity. This study asked, how did Margret Wanjiru become part of it? The study observed this pentecostalization of Kenyan politics to the extent of a Pentecostal church minister anointing the two (president and deputy president) during their swearing-in ceremony. Though initially, Bishop Margret Wanjiru was in ODM, she joined the Pentecostal clergy in support of prayers for the collapse of the ICC cases for both the president and his deputy.

After the acquittal of the President from ICC, and later the Deputy President and Journalist Joshua Sang, the country was set into a celebration mood. In different parts of the country, citizens flooded the streets in celebration of a late night acquittal and the

celebrations flowed to the following day (Daily Nation, 5 April 2016). Since the victory was associated with God, a thanksgiving Rally was organized at Afraha stadium in Nakuru on April 16, 2016. Bishop Margret Wanjiru alongside Bishop Mark Kariuki prayed in the rally announcing the collapse of the ICC cases as ushering in a new day, and a new chapter for the nation. Therefore, Margret got involved in the politicization and spiritualization of the ICC cases although she was initially in the ODM party. However, the study observed that Margret Wanjiru does not get involved in politics as a member of JIAM but at a personal level.

The study ascertained that in 2013, Bishop Margret Wanjiru was conspicuously present in the 2012 elective politics for the Nairobi gubernatorial race (Gez & Alvis; 2014). In 2013, the bishop was so convinced of her Nairobi gubernatorial candidature that she outwardly campaigned for herself directly from the pulpit. At one point on 20th January, 2013 during a morning service and in connection to the Nairobi gubernatorial race she said, "If you are not sure of who to vote for, call the number on the screen". This study saw this as an influence on her members towards her candidature as well as interfering with their civic rights. It was sad that she lost at the party nomination stage to Evans Kidero but she was nominated for the position of senator in Nairobi. The study observed that the Bishop was so much upset but as a typical Neo-Pentecostal she concluded it with a spiritual jargon 'that whenever God closes one door she opens another.' However, her candidature in both gubernatorial and senatorial races was marked with questions about her academic level. Her academic qualifications were questioned and especially the claim of having attained a degree. Margaret Wanjiru would respond by claiming that she had obtained a degree from a certain Bible college in the USA. She later claimed to have earned five degrees but she could not justify it. Despite being nominated for a senatorial position in ODM, after the voting exercise, she lost to Mike

Mbuvi (Sonko) of the Jubilee party (Gez & Alvis; 2014). Therefore, at the nominations and elections, Wanjiru emerged as a loser.

After her political loss in the 2013 elections, the study observed that Margaret Wanjiru kept a low profile in politics. She seems to have concentrated on earning a valid degree for future political aspirations. This was captured in her sentiments in 2014, when she ditched the ODM party because of poor handling of her 2013 candidature. She claimed that ODM tainted her name by not recognizing her educational qualifications having studied theology and pastoral courses (Business Daily, 09/10/2014). After obtaining a degree in leadership and management from St. Paul's university she declared that she was ready to run for the 2017 Nairobi gubernatorial seat. However, she lost again to Mike Mbuvi (Sonko), the former Nairobi senator. Thereafter, this study shows that although Wanjiru remained in the Jubilee party, she was not contented with the 2018 political handshake between former Prime Minister Raila Odinga and President Uhuru Kenyatta. On 9th March, 2018, Kenyans woke up to the news that the president and Former prime minister had put aside their bitter differences, and had a handshake as a symbol of their unity and brotherhood and by extension the unity of the country. Although this handshake was very important for a country experiencing financial and social breakdown owing to the political disagreements between the two at the time; their followers cried foul. Both ODM and Jubilee supporters felt they were not consulted before the handshake. They lamented that they learnt of it through TV and social media. Of interest to this study, is how the handshake changed the direction of Margret Wanjiru's political aspirations.

One key politician who was angered by the handshake to the core was the Deputy President, Dr. William Samoei Ruto. This would later lead to a fallout with the president which had become public as time as went by. In seeking to cement the handshake, a

plan for uniting the nation was put in place dubbed; Building Bridges Initiative (BBI). A task force was chosen to collect, record and analyse the views of the citizens. Eventually, BBI became a constitutional drive seeking to amend the 2010 Kenyan Constitution. This led to further fallout between the president and his deputy who openly campaigned against the BBI. Sensing that the president will not support his 2022 political aspirations⁷³ he crafted his party (United Development Party –UDA) as his political outfit in 2022. This study established that Margret Wanjiru just like other Jubilee supporters who had felt that the President failed them by having a handshake with Raila Odinga, chose to join the UDA party.

Moreover, the study noted that Bishop Margret Wanjiru from 2018 welcomed the deputy president in JIAM a number of times for a church service. Together with William Ruto and his followers, they formed a force to reject the BBI. In July, 2021 it was evident that the Bishop had decamped to UDA. In a certain fund drive in Muranga in aid of church construction, she openly supported Ruto and his party, claiming that Ruto will be the next president. In her speech, the Bishop argued that the county needs a God-fearing leadership; for her, that was none other than Ruto. She also castigated the president as well as the Nairobi governor Mike Mbuvi (Sonko) saying that they were behaving badly. This study learnt that Margret Wanjiru decamping to UDA is part of her quest for the Nairobi gubernatorial seat in August in the 2022 elections. Therefore, the handshake and the resulting BBI allowed Bishop Wanjiru to fully come back to politics. Conversely, the study noted that Margaret Wanjiru as a bishop does not have any developed theology or hermeneutics that guide her political journey. Apart from

⁷³ William Ruto's political aspirations were anchored on a memorandum or rather a verbal campaign agreement they struck with the president in 2013, that the president (Uhuru Kenyatta) will go for ten years of presidency and then support Ruto for ten years. However, the fallout between them has seen the president support his former bitter enemy Raila Odinga for the presidency. All these started with a handshake in early 2018.

citing Proverbs...when righteous are in authority people prosper, nothing comes strongly as her political hermeneutics. The study observed that she gets involved in politics as part of her ambitions not as a church leader or for the church. Politics has become part of her life to the extent that it influences the running of the church. A good example was in 2019 when I went to seek an interview with her. On the request form in one column, I was supposed to fill which Ward and constituency I reside in. This shows how politics is entrenched in her church business. Margret Wanjiru also got involved in the just concluded 2022 elections. She started by campaigning for Nairobi gubernatorial position which she was to face off with John Sakaja the immediate former Nairobi senator. However, both being in the same political party (UDA), there seemed to have been party consensus and thus the bishop stepped down. Instead, she contested for the senatorial seat which she lost to her opponent in ODM. The study has therefore learnt that Margaret Wanjiru is the most active bishop in political matters in Kenya, albeit not prophetically as a church minister but as part of her life ambitions. Even when it came to the management of Covid-19, she was caught at the centre of government controversy. The citizens doubted her claim of having contracted Covid 19 and was discharged after three days health and strong than there before. The citizens saw her claims as a plot by the government to either squander Covid-19 million given as aid or even as a planned expression of the seriousness of the presence of Covid-19.

In seeking to further understand Neo-Pentecostal political hermeneutics the study analyses the next church; Kingdom Seekers Fellowship by Apostle William Kimani.

Chapter 5: Kingdom Seekers Fellowship (KSF)

5.1 The history and foundation of Kingdom Seekers Fellowship

The biographical data provided on the church website describes Kingdom Seekers Fellowship (KSF) as an apostolic church founded on Biblical teachings and Christian principles, Holy Spirit empowered and driven. The study found that KSF is built on the biblical teaching of Mathew 6.33, *But Seek Ye the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness and all other shall be added unto you*. The church was founded by Apostle John Kimani Williams, a former prison warden. He hails from a very humble background having been raised by a single mother. With his mother unable to cater to his education, he dropped out of high school in form two. Thereafter, he will do casual jobs before eventually getting a fulltime job as a prison warden.

The data collected informed this study that initially, Apostle John Kimani Williams was a member of Crisco Church in Nairobi. He was one of the members when Crisco church used to hold its services at Nairobi Cinema Hall. He also later served as a pastor at NEMA ministries. NEMA was a charismatic non- denominational fellowship in Nairobi. Apostle William Kimani attributes the foundation of his ministry to moments of passionate prayers at Ngong forest. In these prayers, he was seeking the will of God for his life and ministry. And it is evident in his KSF that prayer has remained one of the central tenets and practices⁷⁴.

In 2003, he quit his job to establish KSF together with his wife Naomi and two of his former colleagues; Pastor Ndekei and Wanjohi who unfortunately later died in a road accident⁷⁵. They initially held their meetings/services in a small room at the Grey House

⁷⁴ This explains why KSF has one of the most largest, renown and glamorous prayers centers in Kenya- Heaven's gate prayer Mountain.

⁷⁵ After the unfortunate death of his two former colleagues, Pastor Ndekei and Wanjohi, with deaths described as untimely and undeserved, their bodies were brought to church prayers with the faith that they will come back to life. Apostle William Kimani described the two pastors as strong pillars of his ministry (KSF) that their work was not yet over. This led to the bodies of two pastors to be brought in

building near the Nakuru wholesale market. The first fellowship was composed of his immediate family and a few friends. As time went by, people started flooding the place for lunch hour fellowships. As membership began to swell on Sundays, he sold his car and bought a plot of land where he started building the Kingdom Seekers fellowship. In 2007, he bought land and started building a 10000-seater hall which was later expanded to 1500. KSF is currently becoming a mega-church in Kenya.

Field data demonstrated that three factors boosted the growth of KSF. These were: the death of the two pastors and a resurrection controversy; the Nakuru Church Pastors Fellowship and Prophet Owuor's Pastor's conference, the 2007/8 Post-Election Violence, and the fall decline of Deliverance Church Nakuru. This study found out that, the resurrection controversy led to a surge in membership. This was because of two reasons: one, the event dubbed the resurrection mission was televised on major Television stations in Kenya in February, 2010. Two, the resurrection prayers fitted very well within Neo-Pentecostal realities of power Christianity and literal interpretation of the scripture. The Power Christianity teaches that with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, whatever Jesus was able to do, the church can; therefore, as Jesus resurrected the dead, it was also possible with KSF of Apostle John Kimani William. With the Pentecostal and Charismatic miracle-loaded ministry of Prophet David Owour in Nakuru, KSF became another "power" and with the African worldview of Spiritism and power, many people joined the church leading to its upsurge in membership.

Church for a three day prayer in February 2010 and fasting with the belief that they would resurrect on the third day. The members gathered and pastors sang and prayed as they went round the coffins and times some laying on them beseeching God to bring back to life the two pastors. However, after three days, no resurrection miracle happened and they were buried. Still the Founder, Apostle John Kimani William believed that God was able to resurrect from the dead.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CuqXwOgiOY4>

The Nakuru pastor's conference and Prophet Owour's factor gave membership mileage to KSF. In 2007, the Nakuru Pastors Fellowship, an interdenominational prayer group that meets frequently for prayer and fellowship for which Apostle Williams is part of hosted Prophet David Owour for a pastor's conference. Prophet David Owour of the Ministry of Repentance and Holiness had no church of his own at that time. He travelled around the country preaching and issuing prophecies. At the start of his now controversial ministry, he worked well with clergy from various denominations. The Nakuru Pastors fellowship invited him to a pastor's conference for which he accepted to speak. Apostle William Kimani who served on the committee that planned the pastor's conference offered to host the conference at his Kingdom Seekers Fellowship. After hosting a successful Pastor's conference, many Christians who admired and followed Prophet David Owour began to attend church services at the Kingdom Seekers Fellowship. Apostle William was seen as a sober clergy who preached a gospel of repentance, and forgiveness and shunned prosperity teachings. Since many people had come to respect David Owour as a prophet with a unique message, many who followed him went to Kingdom Seekers church because it was friendly to the 'Prophet.' After the successful pastor's conference, Apostle Kimani William's church exploded with new members. So big was the membership that Apostle William began to hold three church services on Sunday in a bid to accommodate the crowds. Kingdom Seekers Fellowship could be seen as a beneficiary of Prophet Owour's national wave before he established the ministry of Holiness and Repentance which has since become controversial.

The 2007/8 post-election violence was the third development that buttressed the growth of KSF. In 2007/8, the political crisis that started way back in 2007 boiled over, resulting in the senseless violence that wrecked every aspect of the Kenyan life. Before

the violence, the biggest Pentecostal church in Nakuru was the Deliverance Church led by Bishop Mark Kariuki, the general overseer of all DC of Kenya and formerly chairperson of the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya. In the run-up to the 2007 general election, Bishop Mark Kariuki is perceived to have taken sides between the Honourable Raila Odinga and former President Mwai Kibaki, an act that infuriated many of his non-Kikuyu followers. After the PEV, he is rumoured again to have taken sides, supporting only his Kikuyu displaced persons pitting one tribe against others. Interviews with pastors revealed that many aggrieved members left DC for KSF. At the same time, the death of Bishop Mark Kariuki's first wife Joyce from cancer which was followed by the death of his senior pastor Mwangi and his wife in a road accident as well as bishop Mark's elevation to the Archbishop and Overseer of Deliverance church in Kenya and beyond, a move that necessitated his transfer to Nairobi also impacted on his church members who left for other churches. The internal developments within the DC at that time left members frustrated and many, nearly 40 percent of DC members left for the KSF which was fast growing. Today, it's the largest mega-church in Nakuru, and Apostle Williams is one of the most influential clergy in Nakuru. All the three factors combined have seen KSF grow from a small congregation to now a mega Church influencing not only Christianity but also national issues.

5.2 KSF Major Preaching Themes and Biblical-Political Hermeneutics

The Kingdom Seekers Fellowship has varied but interrelated preaching themes. However, just like ATGM and JIAM, there is a dominance in spiritual causation. Data collected from this church through, participant observation, interviews and questionnaires, as well as FGDs, categorized three dominant preaching areas: Spiritual warfare/Believer's destiny, Prayer, and righteousness. All these three areas of preaching also brought out the biblical political hermeneutics of Kingdom Seekers

Fellowship. The preaching of the various sermons by Apostle John Kimani William, as well as his pastoral team were analysed. The views of the church members were also listened to and other times checking the feedback of the online members and non-members on the church without walls- through YouTube.

Dominant Preaching Themes and Biblical Political Hermeneutics

Area/theme	Frequency	Percentage
Spiritual warfare/Altars	23	50%
Prayer	15	32.6%
Righteousness	8	17.4%
Total	46	100%

Table 13: dominant preaching themes in Kingdom Seekers Fellowship

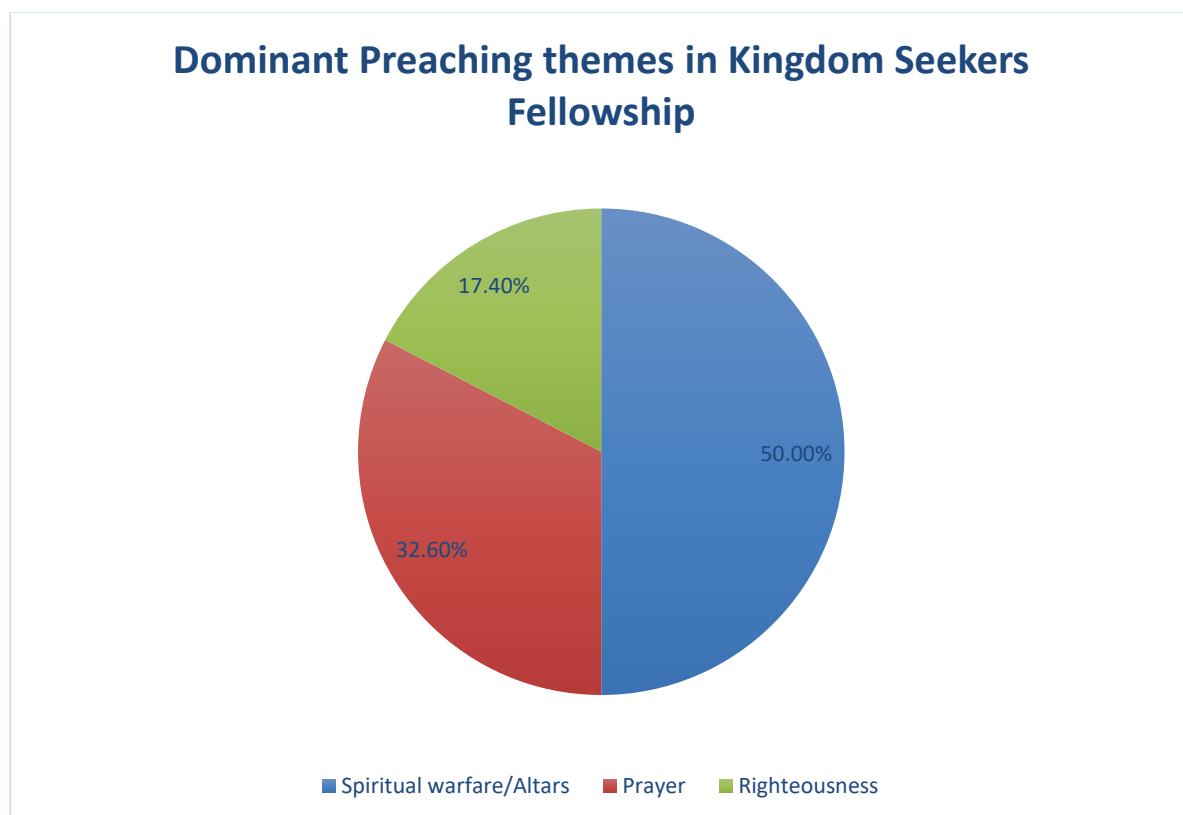


Figure 10: dominant preaching themes in Kingdom Seekers Fellowship

Table 13 and the Figure 10 above were evidence of the major preaching themes in KSF. However, the study realized that there were overlapping themes and thus for KSF it is not easy to get a one clear-cut preaching theme. The three themes identified were spiritual warfare/altars, prayer and righteousness. It was through these dominant areas of preaching that the study was able to understand the biblical political hermeneutics of KSF. An analysis of sampled sermons by Apostle John Kimani Williams and his pastoral team and listening to the response of the church members as well as noting online responses on the virtual church greatly informed the study.

Spiritual warfare/altars had the greatest frequency of 23 accounting for 50%. This was through the questionnaires given to the church members. This was also in agreement with the participant observation data which revealed that spiritual warfare tied to the idea of altars dominated KSF preaching. Examples of sermons preached under this theme were: Releasing judgment on evil altars, Battle of altars, How to build an altar; Dealing with altars through your tongue; Dealing with evil covenants; Repentance for evil altars on seven mountains; The altar of the heart; Destroying the strongholds of the enemy; The lost donkeys among many others. A sample of a few of them informed the study of the political hermeneutics of KSF. However, as a typical Neo-Pentecostal preacher, one sermon addressed various elements of the believer's life.

SERMON ONE: DESTROYING THE STRONGHOLDS OF THE ENEMY⁷⁶

This sermon was based on various bible passages. It began with reading from Psalm 9:9; 144:2. While in both passages God is described as the deliverer and source of victory for the oppressed, John Kimani categorically focused on the word, stronghold. With complete disregard for the context of the whole of the chapters. While the passage

⁷⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Rms8F0kO_I&t=19s

presents God as a stronghold upon which the righteous hide themselves against the attacks of their enemies, the enemies in this interpretation are given a spiritual –demonic nuance. After the reading, the apostle stated, “The devil has his strongholds”. In both passages, there is no mention of the devil or demonic spirits but the preacher uses the stronghold as a stepping stone to teach about destroying strongholds of the devil. In seeking to advance his preaching, he turned to 2 Cor. 10:3-5. Without an explanation of what the text is about, he jumped to spiritual warfare but still centred on ‘strongholds’. Verses 4 and 5 became key. Verse 4 because of the presence of the words, ‘stronghold’ and ‘weapons’, and verse 5 because of, “we demolish every argument...”. Out of verses 4 and 5, it was interpreted that, “Satan’s place of safety is the human mind”. In further explanation of this point and in connecting it with the idea of the mind, he cited Hosea 4:6, a common passage for Neo-Pentecostals, “My people perish for lack of knowledge”. Without an explanation of the context of the verse, it was stated that the devil works with the human mind by giving it distorted knowledge about God.

It leads to people ignoring God and consequently God rejecting them. Again the apostle cited Daniel 11:32 and his interest was the second clause, “...but the people who know their God will firmly resist him”. While Daniel chapter 11 is about the wars between the two Grecian generals of Alexander the Great (Ptolemy and Seleucid) who fought to control Palestine (the promised land of Jews), no interpretation was given concerning that context. The point of interest was the second clause which was directly applied to the audience. In fusing the passages, an application was given, that: “we must fight the philosophies Satan has pushed in our minds”. They were explained as humanistic philosophies teaching that man can live without God, philosophies build on the devil’s lies. The sermon ended with a prayer rejecting every erroneous knowledge about God. Part of the erroneous knowledge was the poor confessing they are poor instead of saying

that they are rich. This kind of biblical interpretation in KSF indicated that for Neo-Pentecostals, biblical interpretation is literal with an immediate application to the world of the audience. Further, such a biblical interpretation does not respect the context of the passage, the meaning of the words, and the meaning of the first audience. This amounted to spiritualized-selective- literal hermeneutics.

SERMON TWO: TERRITORIAL DEMONS⁷⁷

In its introduction, this sermon was not based on any biblical text. The opening statement was, “just the same way governments have boundaries and territories, it is the same with the kingdom of darkness”. It was added that demons have a way of controlling some areas and that explains why some areas are dominated by the ‘spirit of poverty’; the ‘spirit of gays/prostitution’ among many others. The believers were told that they must silence the spirits occupying their environments for whatever they keep silent about will reign over them. Therefore, such territorial spirits must be brought down. The apostle cited the book of Jeremiah without reference to any particular chapter or verse that Christian believers have an anointing to bring down any demonic spirit reigning over the people and built a spiritual environment under the control of the spirit of God. He further stated that “territories have power”. Further, in a Pentecostal characteristic of prosperity, the apostle told the audience that they have the “DNA” of the blood of Jesus which has power over the demons and that the blood of Jesus brings riches and blessings. Without mentioning the bible portion, he referred to the verse in the gospels in which Jesus said that if you want to take a strong man’s belongings, you must first bind him. Out of this reference, it was applied that in the spiritual realms

⁷⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwjNEzPEUDQ>

things (real blessings) are forcefully taken spiritually before the victory is manifested physically.

All these while, the scripture portions alluded to were not interpreted within their context, nor the meaning of the words explained, but taken literary and applied to the audience. The apostle in seeking to advance his teaching on territorial demons turned to Mark 5:1-10. This was a gospel narrative about a demon-possessed man who used to live in the cemetery and no one would hold him except in chains. Without an exegesis of the passage, and to advance his topic, he concluded that these were territorial demons and that is why the man lived in one area. He told the audience that the sad state of the man (in this story) is typical of our days where there are many insane people in the market, but it is not mental problems but demons of witchcraft reigning in that area by possessing some people. Casting such demons through prayers that involved speaking in tongues he cites, Exodus 22:18. He settled on the clause, “Do not allow a witch to live...” However, the text was not explained but evoked a prayer declaring and decreeing that no powers of witchcraft or any other demonic powers will reign over the people of God. Going back to Mark 4:35 and with the boat that Jesus and his disciples were experiencing a violent storm, the storm was not given a natural cause but rather a spiritual-demonic cause. Apostle John Kimani reasoned that since Jesus was crossing over to the other side of the sea where the demon-possessed man lived, the demons knew that Jesus was coming to cast them out of the man and from that region and therefore, they tried to stop Jesus by causing a violent storm. Within the topic of the sermon, the demons were trying to stop Jesus from encroaching on their territory.

It was concluded that Jesus came to expose the kingdom of evil. It was added that demonic spirits bring struggle in life expressed in difficulties in life, poverty, and sicknesses among others. In seeking to justify this point, he explained to the audience

that when the demonic spirits cast from the man entered the pigs, they pigs ran into the sea and thus, death. The audience was told they should be aggressive in fighting the devil and they should note that some demons, just like Jesus said, are powerful and therefore call for prayer and fasting.

Again the study realized that this was another case of spiritualized hermeneutics. Pentecostal preachers do not have regard for the context of the passage to its first hearers, they do not concern themselves with the meaning of words, but they simply pick them literary and spiritualizing the contexts, they apply them to their audience as if they were the first recipients. This leads to forced meanings of words, and thus, eisegesis. In the end the central truth of the passage, that is, the author's intention is missed. For example, in the text in Mark 4:35 ff, the sea of Genesseret was prevalent to winds because of its geographical location. But apostle John Kimani does not look at that, instead, the violent storm was spiritualized given a demonic explanation and in this case territorial demons. This explains why even political problems which require citizens' actions are given spiritual causation and spiritual responses.

The second dominant preaching theme is prayer. The analysis of the data collected reveals an almost complete overlap between spiritual warfare and prayer. Even the questionnaires issued to the research participants revealed that several of them on the question of main areas of preaching wrote spiritual warfare/prayer. This overlap was also evident in the content of the sermons. A sample of the sermons on prayer revealed this as well as the continued spiritualized-hermeneutics in KSF which is characteristic of all the three churches sampled.

SERMON THREE: THE WEAPON OF PRAYER⁷⁸

This sermon was preached on 14th October, 2019. At its start, Apostle John Kimani did not base it on specific scripture references. This is a common practice in his preaching as well as in other Neo-Pentecostal preachers. Their sermons are not a springboard from a certain text (rarely) but they start by describing the topic mostly from a spiritualized perspective; spiritual causality. In the opening statements the apostle said:

...we do not fight to defeat the devil, but we fight to enforce the victory of the cross of Christ...it is just like enforcing a court order, the case has already been determined in the court but it needs enforcement by police...in the same way, the devil has been stripped off the power of harassing believers through sicknesses, through poverty...he has been stripped authority of owning and ruling cities...the church has the court order....

Turning to Matthew 11:12, with disregard to the context of verses 1-11; he picked the statement, “the kingdom suffers violence”. There was an emphasis on the statement, “the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and violent people take it by force”. The word force was interpreted to mean the spiritual force of prayer and thus prayer as a weapon⁷⁹.

Out of this text, he interpreted and thus deduced the application that:

... although the kingdom of the cross (of Christ) has given you healing, riches, and everything you need for godliness...you must take it by force...through the weapon of prayer...we are facing an invisible battle and that battle is already in our city, that battle is already in our nation, that battle is already in our family...we have power and we shall overcome the forces of darkness and like Jacob, we shall possess what is ours...

With the characteristic Neo-Pentecostal emphasis on prosperity, Obadiah 1:17 was cited with the emphasis of the phrase, “Jacob will possess his inheritance”. Such a hermeneutics implies that the devil is responsible for sickness, poverty among other life’s unfortunate circumstances. Without regard to the context and meaning of the words, the audience became Jacob and the possessions meant gaining riches, good health, good houses, and good governments including anything else that brings an abundance in life. The idea of possessing from the devil what he illegally holds brought

⁷⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMHcRr1PSr8&t=74s>

⁷⁹ This is an evidence of the overlap between the theme of spiritual warfare and prayer.

back the idea of spiritual warfare. In view of this, the apostle fused several New Testament verses: Ephesians 6:10-18; 2, Corinthians 10:3-5 and Matthew 16:18. After reading the Ephesian and 2 Corinthian passages, no interpretation was given, rather it was followed by the statement, "...God is raising a mighty army in the church...people who know how to use spiritual weapons (prayer)...The devil wants you to remain ignorant"

In the Matthew text (16:18), emphasis was made on the clause, "...and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it..." without regard to the context of the chapter, the gates of hell, were interpreted as machinations of the devil, powers of evil that control economies, forces that control communities as expressed in demonic cultures". While it is true that the gates of hell refer to the kingdom of Satan, for this study it was interesting how the same demons were to blame for the failed economy, and community problems emanating from backward cultural practices. This amounted to spiritual causality and thus, human beings are not responsible for political or community problems but rather the demonic spirits that deserve a spiritual response.

With demonic powers interpreted as the ones controlling economies and cities, the apostle preached to his audience that they must be able to take their possessions and control their destinies (future). In seeking to advance the warfare nature of the task of repossessing what the devil illegally owns, he cited Numbers 13:16-33. While this passage is a narrative of Moses sending the twelve spies to Jericho, the context of the passage, or even why Jericho, was disregarded. Without any interpretation of this text, an application was made, "...the children of Israel feared to fight the battle of possessing Jericho, in the same way, any Christian who does not fight the spiritual battle will not reach or control his destiny..." Deuteronomy 2:24 was read and without interpretation or putting the text in context, the last clause was selected. The clause

reads, “Begin to take possession of it and engage them in battle”. The words “take possession” and “engage in battle” were categorically emphasized. This is a narrative where God through Moses was directing the children of Israel to conquer the inhabitants of Canaan's Promised Land to occupy it. However, in KSF it was spiritualized with the devil being perceived as the one in possession of the believer's prosperity and general breakthrough in life. To possess what is rightly theirs by the virtue of them being children of God, and being like Israelites, Christian believers must engage in spiritual warfare. In view of this, the preacher added, “We must fight the enemies sitting on our possessions, but the victory is already granted... we have the victory... do not use prayer to just cry to God but as a weapon”. The study asked, what was the relationship between the explanation given and the contents of the passages read? In this case, the meaning is assumed. Neo-Pentecostal believers read and interpret the bible from a decontextualized perspective making it say whatever works for them.

One of the study questions posed, what about Ephesians 6:10-18 in which Paul teaches about the Armor of God? Why did the preacher not teach one weapon after another; the Gospel of peace; shoes of the good news, the breastplate of righteousness, and the sword of the spirit and the shield of faith? But selectively, without regard to the context, grammar, history, intended meaning of the author, and the meaning to the first hearers, Apostle John Kimani chose the scripture portion that fits with his points and applied it directly to the immediate life situations of the audience. Going back to the subject of spiritual weapons, the apostle cited 2 Cor. 10:3-5. Again without explanation, he emphasized the mightiness of these weapons. And in way of coming to an end of the sermon, he asked, what are these weapons? He gave three, that is: the blood of Jesus, the word of God and the Name of Jesus. The manner in which the three points were explained and applied with the supportive scripture portions chosen and the manner in

which they were interpreted as evidence that Neo-Pentecostal hermeneutics is basically a spiritualized-selective –literal approach.

The first point on the blood of Jesus as a weapon is justified by reading Rev. 12:11. This passage alludes to the victory of the saints through the blood of the lamb (Jesus) and that believers in that text stood their ground and did not compromise their faith. The chapter is part of the seven significant signs that the writer John saw after the breaking of the seven seals (6-8:4) and the blowing of the seven trumpets (8:5-11:1-19). While revelation is apocalyptic literature, with apocalyptic literature being dominant with symbolism and figurative language, the apostle did not consider that. He rather literary took the mention of the blood of the lamb as a weapon. He reasoned that the blood of Jesus was the basis of human redemption and that God paid blood to Satan for the release of his people. While biblically and theologically, the blood of Jesus became the legal and spiritual ground of the redemption of his people, God paying the blood to the Devil is false teaching. This is because the sin was a transgression to the law of God and not the law of Satan. But the preacher seemed unaware of such deep theological truths. The study learnt that Neo-Pentecostals preachers were not concerned with theological reflections since their hermeneutics is spiritualized-selective and literal. The redemptive aspect of the blood of the lamb was not much emphasized but rather the ability of the blood to bring everyday victory. Fusing, Rev. 12:11 and Ex. 12 the apostle prayed and concluded this point, "...I speak the blood of Jesus over your life...the blood has a voice...it speaks over your life...it doesn't matter what has been spoken over your life...it doesn't matter what has been spoken over your destiny... I command the devil to lose your life..."

The second weapon, the word of God, received an explanation from Matt. 4:10 that expresses how Jesus responded to the devil using the written clauses of the Old

Testament. Here the word was given an oral victory that whatever one confesses with his or her mouth becomes a powerful weapon against the Devil. At that point, the preacher went back to Eph. 10:17 which talks of ‘the sword of the spirit’ as one of the parts of the armour of God. But no interpretation was given concerning the sword, despite Paul drawing the idea from the Roman soldier’s battle gear. Instead, the audience was told that they must pray using biblical words.

The third and last point, the name of Jesus as a weapon, was further evidence of spiritualized-selective –literal hermeneutics of the Neo- Pentecostals. This point was based on two biblical texts. John. 17:11 and Ph. 2:9. The keyword for the apostle John Kimani to his audience was the word ‘name’; the name of Jesus. In Johannine text is part of the whole chapter (17) of Jesus praying for his disciples and the future church before his ascension. In verse 17, he prays that God will protect the church by the power of his name (God’s) name and also it is by the same name, God had given Jesus. Here the name is used to express the oneness of God the Father and the son. Jesus having come to the world, by the virtue of his work in his person and ministry, he brought the presence of the kingdom of God though awaiting its consummation. The name is not necessarily for declaring and decreeing through the name of Jesus as characteristic of the Neo-Pentecostal. The Philippian text expressed how Neo-Pentecostals are poor in hermeneutics which ends up in eisegesis rather than exegesis. Phil. 2:9 has its context from 2:1.

The chapter is about the incarnation of Christ. Paul taught the humility of Jesus that although he was God in every way, he did not take it as the point of pride (Phil. 2:6). Instead he lowered himself taking the form of human flesh, but without sin, he took the form of the people he came to save. In reward for his humility, God raised him above anything_else, he gave him honour equal to that of God the Father. This explains why

nations kneel and bow to him (expression of worship) and all tongues confess that He is God. However, the spiritualized-selective literal hermeneutics of Neo-Pentecostals did not delve into the context and meaning of words. Instead for this text, it was said that one should pray using the name of Jesus and all the demons expressing themselves in various life issues will be defeated. The incarnation of Jesus is one of the foundational elements of the Christian faith. However, the study learnt that for Pentecostals, it's not about the pillars of Christianity but everyday victory against Satan. The study realized a certain shallowness and ignorance of biblical and theological understanding⁸⁰. What they do mostly is to use biblical portions out of context as oral weapons against demonic attacks and because life is seen from spiritual causality with the devil and his agents being the source of all life's problems.

Prayers for the Nation

Data collected from the study indicated that KSF holds prayers specifically to pray for the nation, especially in the preparation for national elections. In connection to this, the study sampled three sermons related to prayer for the nation; aligning our nation to God's will; turning the course of our nation through prayer and patriotism. These three sermons were categorized as preaching on church and politics. However, KSF does not have a dominant theme on church and politics as separate topics/themes. Instead, how KSF interprets the bible in view of church involvement in politics is found in the theme of prayer.

⁸⁰ While here I do not propose that hermeneutics has always to follow the western protestant approach, I argue that the Bible was not written directly to Neo-Pentecostal contexts. This means that the language of the bible, its original context, the specific author's intention and meaning of the words must first be understood within their original context for justified import and or application to current preacher's context. Therefore, hermeneutics cannot be reduced to a common sense practice where all passages are taken literary and or spiritualized to fit within the pneumatic lived experiences of the adherents. At least there should be a sense in which meaning is arrived at.

The first sermon on “aligning our nation to God’s will” was preached during a lunch hour service by Pastor Peter Mbungua of the KSF pastors. This was on 29th April in preparation for the 40 days of prayer for the nation before the elections. Pastor Mbungua began by citing Daniel 2:20; 4:17 and Isaiah 40:15. Without consideration of the context of those passages or the intention of the author, Pastor Mbungua preached, “... God is the one who brings into existence every power/kingdom; it is God who gives rulers...” By citing Daniel 5:21, the fall of Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon, he advanced his point that it’s also God who brings down every king and rule which is not in line with his will. The main points of his sermon gave evidence of spiritualized-selective – literal hermeneutics. He asked, “How can we align our Nation to the will of God? And he gave three points that were critical for this study.

The first point was, “**By creating the right spiritual atmosphere**”. This point though not grounded on any biblical support was based on thinking that demons/evil spirits control what happens in a given geographical place. It was also drawn from a common perception that most Kenyan politicians during elections resort to occultism/witchcraft to win various political positions. As a result of a Neo-Pentecostal spiritualistic perspective, the acts of these politicians bring a demonic influence over the land and the people (demonic spiritual atmosphere). Prayer then becomes the instrument of cleansing the demonic atmosphere and ushering in a “godly atmosphere” conducive to the choice of the right political leaders. He concluded this point by declaring, “ ...we are going to destroy the demonic atmosphere in Kenya...we are going to cleanse our atmosphere by praying for 40 days...I disagree with atmospheres which are not godly...”. By alluding to the book of 1 Kings 18, the narrative of Elijah closing the heavens that would not rain for three years, the audience taking the position of the children of Israel represented by Elijah, and in the same vein, pastor Mbungua preached

they are going to close ‘heavens’ of Kenya against any demonic influence. This point alone justifies the Neo-Pentecostal spiritualized politics emanating from spiritualized-selective- literal hermeneutics. It is spiritualized in the sense that all individual or national problems are given a spiritual causality as well as a spiritual response. The believers are not taught on voting wisely and putting into positions of leadership the right people, instead, demons are to blame for national problems. This prevents them from being responsible citizens.

The second point by Pastor Mbugua was, “**Through repentance**”. As a characteristic of Neo-Pentecostal preaching of fusing several biblical portions without regard to their different contexts, pastor Mbugua cited Jer. 8:6 and 2 Cor. 7:10. Jer. 8:6 finds its context in the whole of the chapter, in which God was angry with the Israelites particularly Judah for having forsaken his commands. The word repentance used in 8:6 is not a call for repentance, however, God was expressing the stubbornness of Judah that even after forsaking the way of the Lord, they claimed to be innocent. Failing to understand the context and the meaning of the word repentance as used in this text, its presence in that text was selectively and literary applied as meaning a call to repentance.

In 2 Cor. 7:10; Paul used the word, ‘sorrow’. The context of this word is found in the overall theme of the book. Paul was writing to comfort the Corinthians over a previous letter he had written to them; the severe letter. After he had written his first letter to them, warning them to correct the many wrong practices in the Corinthian Church, they did not take heed. Instead, they celebrated the man who had taken his father’s wife (1 Cor. 5). Paul wrote to them a severe letter (which got lost later). In that letter, Paul castigated them and in his capacity as an apostle powerfully condemned them to the point of sorrow and repentance. Therefore, he wrote the letter (now second Corinthians) comforting them for his previous severe letter. This explains why in 2 Cor.

7:10 he wrote that, “Godly sorrow brings repentance...” 2 Cor. 7:8 is the immediate context to 7:10; that his letter (severe letter) made them sorrowful. However, his intent in 7:10 is that though he caused them sorrow, they repented. Pastor Mbugua, doing selective-literal hermeneutics which characteristic of Neo-Pentecostals, selectively read and used the words, “repentance” and “sorrow” to mean the same thing and in his understanding a call to repentance. The study also observed that while Jer. 8:6 addressed Judah as a nation, and 2 Cor. 7:10 specifically addressed the church. Further, the use of the word repentance and sorrow meant different things in both passages.

The theme of repentance (biblical approach) was dominant in prayers for the nation. It was the main point of the second sermon, “Turning the course of our nation through prayer” which was preached by Rev. Naomi Kimani (Apostle John Kimani’s wife). Her main text was 2 Chronicles 7:14. The study noted that this verse is commonly used across all Neo-Pentecostal preaching and spirituality. Here, it was used to refer to repentance over sin so as to gain God’s forgiveness over individual and national sins. The fruit of this repentance in Pentecostalism is the prosperity of the individual and the nation at large (Kalu, 2008). Rev. Naomi told her audience that if they fulfilled the words of 2 Chron. 7:14, the nation of Kenya will be okay. She also cited 2 Chron. 15:1 and centred on the clause, “... if you seek him, he will be found by you...” She rightly taught that when King Asa repented and turned to God, God forgave the nation of Israel and brought prosperity. Without much explanation, the audience was told to seek God in prayer and that he will forgive Kenya and bring peace. Rev. Naomi was unique in the way she maintained the context and the meanings of the word repentance in perfect unity with her main point on repentance. She further read 2 Chron. 33:1 and 33:6; 12-13. She rightly utilized the context in this narrative. It was about Manasseh King of Judah. Manasseh forsook God by erecting altars to other foreign gods and other

detestable practices. (2 Chron. 33:2-7). God banished him through the Assyrian army by taking him a prisoner. Rev. Naomi was categorical in verse 12, that when Manasseh in his distress prayed and asked God for forgiveness, God restored him to Jerusalem as a King. It was then applied that KSF in the next 40 days will have prayers for the nation as a way of standing in the gap and repenting for the sins of political leaders and Kenya as a whole and God will grant the country peaceful elections. However, the study observed the presence of spiritualized-literal hermeneutics in Rev. Naomi's sermon. Upon reading Chron. 33:4, in which Manasseh build altars in the temple of God in honour of foreign gods, the word altar, was spiritualized and connected to demonic spirits. They were perceived as demonic spirits which shed blood during elections as it was witnessed in 2007/08 PEV in Kenya. The church was then called upon to pray and break those demonic altars responsible for a national crisis during elections. Through the data collected, the study learnt that the enchanted approach and biblical approach remain two main areas in which Neo-Pentecostals engage in the political issues of their countries. Further, the study learnt that these two approaches are informed by Neo-Pentecostal hermeneutics which is spiritualized-selective –literal. With such a hermeneutics that disregards the historical/contextual meaning of the passage to the first hearers and with words taken literally and mostly spiritualized, the message is applied directly to the immediate life experiences of the hearers. This leads to forced contexts, wrong meanings attached to words, and inappropriate application. In the context of church and political engagement, the KSF owing to her spiritualized-selective –literal hermeneutics, fails to meaningfully engage with the political issues of their countries. For example, in these two sermons about prayer, there was no single application that after praying, the audience should vote. There was no specific prophetic condemnation of any national evils, rather, declaring and decreeing defeat of the

demonic altars and spirits responsible for the blood shed during elections. This was repeated in the launch of the 40 days for the national prayer: the national prayer caravan.

The third sermon entitled Patriotism was preached on 30th April, 2022 which was the inauguration of the 40 days of national prayer/national prayer caravan. The prayers were hosted at Heaven's Gate prayer centre which was strategic for the prayer centre and has been hailed as an altar raised to God; where man meets God. They comprised Neo-Pentecostal Pastors and members across the country. The study learnt that the representation of members was to ensure that the prayers would be a complete representation of the country. In the introductory section, the study learnt that there has been a national prayer committee that united with the MBCI of Apostle John Kimani and thus receiving new impetus since 2014. The prayers started on 9th April, 2022 and ended on 19th May, 2022.

In seeking to express the patriotic nature of the prayers, apostle Kimani said that he wants Kenya to be the best country ever. That he had no intentions of getting a Green Card to the USA. However, he wants God to change Kenya to be the best country. He hoped for a better country and he humorously commented that people will be looking for a "Blue Card" (an equation of Green Card) to settle in Kenya. According to him, this would be possible through the 40 days of national prayer. He added that the prayers were powered by his love for the nation and the people of Kenya. Giving examples of Ukraine and Kenya during the 2007/08 PEV, he added that whenever a nation has a problem, people suffer. He, therefore, explained that it was prayers that will keep the nation from trouble. In the usual characteristic of Neo-Pentecostal, he perceived the devil as the one behind all national problems. Citing Jesus' words to Peter that the devil had asked to crush him like wheat, he reasoned that it is the demonic spirits that are

responsible for the national crisis. In a Neo-Pentecostal trend of preaching and injecting prayer (mostly with declaring and decreeing statements) sections in between, he prayed:

...if the devil wants the same (crushing the country) for Kenya, we shall stand in the gap...we shall pray and God shall save us...we say no to refugees, we say no to Internally displaced peoples, we say no to people running after one another with pangas and machetes...we refuse bloodshed, we refuse destruction of property....oh God have mercy upon us, do not forsake this nation...this nation is your inheritance...do not give us over to the enemies...we shut their moves in Jesus name...

For purposes of grounding his topic in the bible, he gave some examples of bible imagery of patriotic people. This was critical to this study because the interpretation is given to the particular bible passages chosen which added knowledge to the political hermeneutics of the Neo-Pentecostals. The first example of a patriotic person was Paul the apostle. This point was based on the reading of Romans 9:1-5. Apostle John Kimani chose and emphasized the word sorrow. In the text, Paul wrote that he had great sorrow and anguish to point of being cut off from the privileges of being a Jew for the sake of his fellow Jews. Without consideration of the context of the passage and paying attention to the meanings of the theological words here, the word sorrow was interpreted to mean that since Paul was sorrowful, he had a 'burden' for the nation of Israel and therefore, an example of a patriotic citizen. Without much interpretation, the application given from this text was:

...many people do not have the heaviness of heart for the nation...we should seek the influence (through prayer) of God's kingdom in our territories...or are we going to allow demonic altars to influence our nation? ...many witches and sorcerers are being sought by politicians for powers in the coming elections...but believers should pray...thy kingdom comes...to influence the nation with the kingdom of God...May God raise people who have a burden for the poverty in our country, the burden for the immorality in our country...

A research inquiry of the study posed, was this Paul's intention in writing the passage of Romans 9? What were the context and the meaning and focus of Paul's sorrow? Was it because of a national crisis? Romans 9 finds its context within the theme of the whole book on justification by faith. It falls under doctrinal chapters, 1-11. In this chapter, Paul, as an apostle to the Gentiles realizes that after preaching/evangelizing to many

people, the Gentiles found the faith but his people Jews had not found saving faith in Jesus (Stott, 2005). Paul wonders what the problem could be that the Jews; his kinsmen had not found the faith. Fuelling his sorrowfulness was the fact that the Jews had all advantages of finding the faith; they had the covenants; the law, the glory, and the temple all of which would have led them to understand the nature of the new covenant and accept Jesus. Unfortunately, they didn't, but the Gentiles who did not have that advantage found the saving in the faith in Jesus. This is what made him sorrowful and he wished that he could be accursed for their salvation. In this chapter, Paul answered the question of the failure of the Jews to find saving faith in Jesus as based on God's pre-ordained choice- the doctrine of predestination. He utilizes the Old Testament narratives of Ishmael and Isaac, Jacob and Esau and adds to it God's sovereign power and choice to explain the failure of the Jews to find the saving based on predestination. In chapter 11, he shows that it was because of disobedience of the Jews; they heard but they did not believe and in Chapter 11 it was because of God's sovereign and wise plan, that he made the Gentiles find salvation to make the Jews envious, out of their jealousy they will also find the saving faith; and thus the plan of saving both Jews and Gentiles made complete (Stott, 2004). This means that although chapter 9 finds context in the theme of the whole book, it extends as one narrative to chapter eleven.

Therefore, this passage against what Apostle John Kimani taught, has nothing to do with being patriotic. Paul's sorrow and heaviness of heart were not because of any political and or national issue, but rather a spiritual issue of Jews not finding salvation in Jesus. It is a chapter that forms part of the last three doctrinal chapters (9-11) with deep theological teachings on the subject of justification by faith. This was another evidence of the practice of spiritualized-selective- literal hermeneutics. In this text, Paul did not assign a spiritual causality to the failure of the Jews to find faith in Jesus as KSF

will see demonic altars. Apostle John Kimani selectively settled on the word “sorrow” (Paul being sorrowful for his people), but he did not check how the word was used, rather he used it literarily. The context of the chapter was missed as well the historical-grammatical procedures. The application was directly applied to the immediate context of Kenya in need of sorrowful believers who will pray for the nation against perceived possibilities of chaos after the 9th August, 2022 elections. This was not Paul’s idea. Once more, this kind of Neo-Pentecostal hermeneutics, reveals their deep-seated worldviews about the causes of individual and national problems as situated in the spiritual realms and thus a spiritual response; prayer and repentance.

Jeremiah the prophet was given as the second example of a patriotic leader. The chief passage was Jer. 9:1-10. This portion of scripture was written as a lament for the fall of Jerusalem. In the text, Jeremiah is writing a lament from God since his people Judah forsook his law and covenant, and Jeremiah as prophet prophesied about the fall. Apostle John Kimani got it right that the fall of the Israelites was a national crisis. However, immediately after reading the passage, instead of interpreting the factors behind the fall of Judah such as disobedience, he spiritualized the case of Kenya. He asked, “Who is like Jeremiah to be sorrowful about the land ...and say no to the spirit of tribalism, the spirit of bloodshed ...? This was followed by a prayer of cursing and breaking down the ‘spirit’ of ethnic and tribal divisions. This was another evidence of spiritualized hermeneutics⁸¹.

⁸¹ This kind of hermeneutics lead to the Neo-Pentecostal leaders to reduce their prophetic mandate only to prayer of cursing demons that are responsible to national problems. Since the national problems are attributed to demonic spirits and apostasy, the leaders are not taken responsible. For example, corruption which should be condemned becomes the ‘spirit of greed’ and instead of seeking for justice, prayer fills the gap.

The third example of a patriotic person was Nehemiah. Apostle Kimani William expressed the fact that since Nehemiah was bothered by the state of the broken walls in Jerusalem, he was patriotic. He was presented as sorrowful about the sorry state of the walls of Jerusalem and thus, his action of seeking the king's intervention. This study observed that for this point there was not much interpretation given to the passage in terms of its context. The focus was only on Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the walls.

The conclusion of the sermon took a spiritualized enchanted approach. While recounting the devastating nature of 2007/08 PEV in Kenya, Apostle Kimani told the audience that elections open doors for demons. In a typical characteristic nature of Neo-Pentecostal of declaring and decreeing through prayers in the middle of the sermon, he prayed, "...I refuse demons entering the door of elections...we invite God to enter that door..." utilizing Judges 3:9, it was reasoned that just the same God raised a deliverer to the Israelites after they cried unto him, it will be the same after the 40 days for the nation. It was said that there will be a prayer caravan to 43 counties. With all the pastors and Bishops present holding the Kenyan flag, and the audience white handkerchiefs, then prayers were made mostly cursing the spirits of divisions, bloodshed, and other crisis during the coming elections. The study learnt of the dominance of spiritual causality, especially on political problems. The apostle and his team of bishops and pastors from across the country, had anointing oil branded with the name of the specific counties it was assigned to. The instructions were, during the prayer caravan, upon reaching that county, the oil will be poured into the soil in different parts of that county. With the dominance of the teaching on altars, it was reasoned that the poured oil will mean that an altar will be raised to God and in return, God will descend and bring a godly influence in that county against the demonic spirits. Genesis 28, was utilized with the story of Jacob erecting an altar to God being directly borrowed and signified by the

pouring of oil in the 43 counties. The study further noted that no preaching on the individual responsibility of maintaining peace, or loving people from other tribes was made, instead, there was rampant cursing of demonic spirits. While waving the Kenyan flag and the white handkerchiefs, Apostle John Kimani with a mixture of English and speaking in tongues prophetically declared that there will be peace, that there will be an influence of God's Kingdom that will break the altars of sorcery and witchcraft.

The analysis of the sermons in KSF revealed what the study labelled, spiritualized-selective- literal hermeneutics. It is spiritualized in the sense that it is enchanted in approach. It is selective to the extent that it chooses the texts of the bible purposely to convey the preacher's intent and ideas and thus does not consider the context/history and/ or grammar of the author. It is literal in the sense that it is applied directly to the audience with words that simply mean what they literary display oblivious of hidden meanings or at times different meanings. The immediate world of the audience is literary and directly connected to the passage. When the pastors were interviewed on bible interpretation, hermeneutics for them was not necessary. One Pastor said, "rules and procedures of interpreting the bible amount to 'religiosity' ...look at those churches which emphasize on the systematic procedures of interpreting the bible...they do not have many church members...why the procedures and rules when you have been possessed by the Holy Spirit? He will teach you what to say and how to say it..." Therefore, Neo-Pentecostals lack proper hermeneutical procedures. The study found out that with their pneumatological emphasis, their hermeneutics is spiritualized. Further with their African worldview the spiritualization of causality blames demons for individual and national crisis. Their ignorance of the historical-Grammatical hermeneutical procedures makes their hermeneutics literal in the sense that it is applied to the immediate life of the audience.

5.3 KSF Understanding of Eschatology

Previous studies done on Neo-Pentecostals and politics expressed that initially, they were passive to political engagement. However, with time they changed from disengagement to engagement. Kay and Ann (2004) reasons that this shift was informed by a change in eschatological theological positions, that is, from pre-millennial to post-millennial. In line with this view, the study examined the understanding of KSF members and pastors understanding of eschatology. Their understanding was critical to ascertain whether it was the change in their theology/or doctrine and how it affected their hermeneutics most specifically on church and political engagement. Through oral interviews (for pastors) and questionnaires for the church members, the respondents (both pastors and members) were asked about their church teaching on the second coming of Christ. They were supplied with possible answers, before the Great tribulation, during the great tribulation, after the great tribulation and I don't know. Part B required that they explain their answers. The reason why the study supplied the respondents with possible questions, was to ensure that the study was within the historical basics of eschatology and millennial thinking. At the centre of premillennial and postmillennial eschatological discourse, is the question of when Christ will return. With a common belief of the great tribulation of the church (borrowed from Revelation), the question has always been, is it before, during, or after the great tribulation that Christ will return? This justified the prescriptive questions given to the respondents. Their responses are tabulated below for the 36 questionnaires returned and from the four pastors/bishops interviewed (all 40 in number from KSF

Period	Frequency	Percentage
Before the great tribulation	7	14%
During the great tribulation	3	6%

After the great tribulation	3	6%
I do not know	37	74%
Total	50	100%

Table 14: KSF understanding of the second coming of Christ

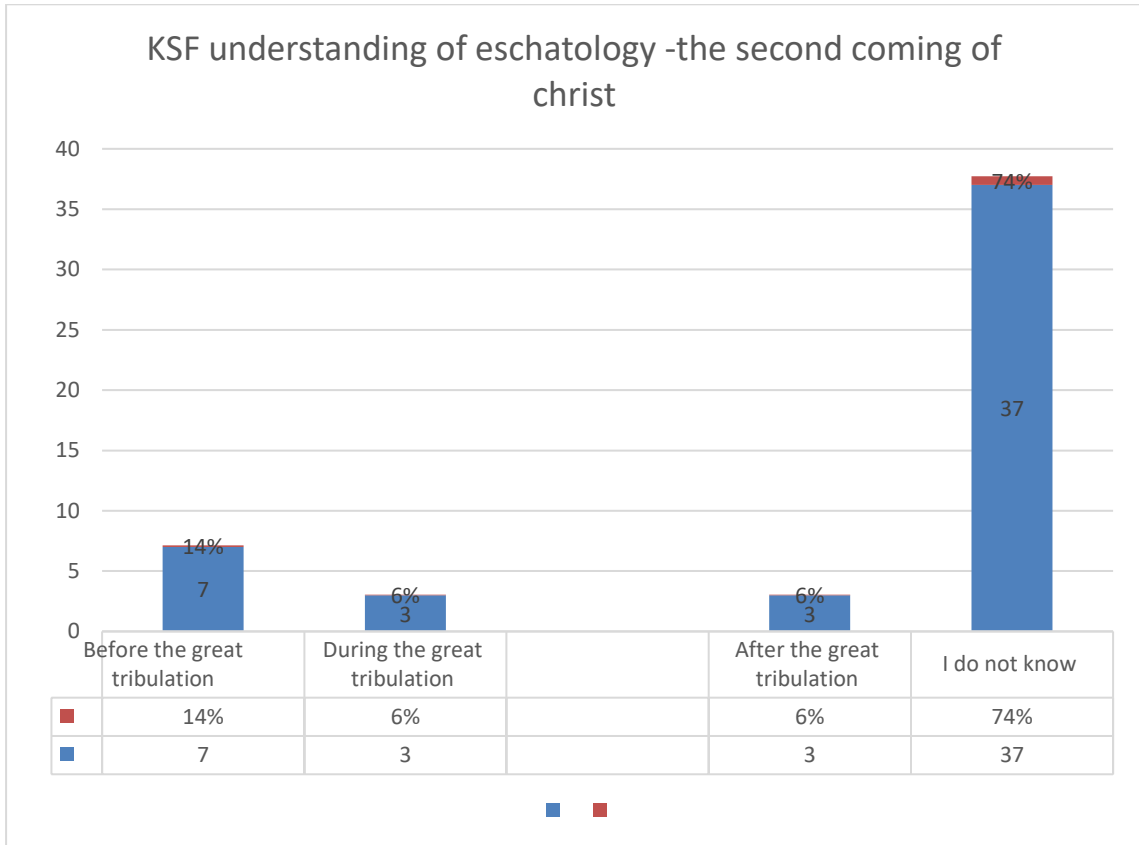


Figure 11: KSF understanding of the second coming of Christ

Table (14) and Figure (11) above give the understanding of the KSF members and pastors on eschatology specifically the second coming of Christ. The theological teaching of the second coming of Christ has been presented in timeframes, that is, before the great tribulation, during the great tribulation, or after the great tribulation. This also goes hand in hand with premillennialism and postmillennialism. The table and the graph were evidence that very little if any is known about the doctrine of eschatology in KSF. Before the great tribulation which means Christ will come before the start of the great suffering of the Christians caused by the antichrist had 14%. During the Great Tribulation, a theological position that Christ will return in the middle of the

great suffering of Christians had 6 %. After the Great persecution, an eschatological theological position that Christ will return after the great suffering of believers had 6%. The fourth category of this question was to indicate, “I don’t know”. 74% of the research participants responded that they didn’t know about such a teaching. The analysis of these responses showed that two pastors seemed to have little knowledge of the terminologies and their meanings. Only two church members expressed knowledge of the terminologies. Data collected from both research participants and FGDs expressed that the doctrine of eschatology is not a common subject of preaching or discussion among KSF members. This evidence was in agreement with the analysis of dominant preaching themes. Indeed, in the preaching themes for three years, none featured eschatology specifically the second coming of Christ or anything closer to it. It was also evident that most of the KSF members were initially members of other Neo-Pentecostal churches since they did not seem to know eschatological teachings found in members of mainstream churches, especially Africa Inland Churches. The data then informed this study that Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal change from disengagement to engagement was not informed by a change in eschatological theological position. Instead, it was the emphasis of the third person of the trinity (Holy Spirit) which created a power; Christianity diabolic in nature: God and Satan. In this kind of power Christianity, God through Jesus Christ has done everything that a believer needs for this life; blessings in form of money, houses, free from sicknesses, and general victory over anything and everything that causes suffering. The devil is interpreted as illegally holding or standing in the way of the prosperity of the believer. This understanding explains why most Neo-Pentecostal preaching is anchored on spiritual warfare. The believer is encouraged to possess what rightly belongs to him or her which the devil is illegally holding or seeking to have. With a mixture of African worldview (dominant

with belief in spirits) and biblical passages on spiritual warfare, there results in a spiritualized hermeneutics in which all life's problems are relegated to demonic spirits (spiritual causality). In seeking to speak to the direct and immediate life experiences of the believer (audience), Neo-Pentecostal preachers purposely select and utilize those biblical passages that address those experiences. With a complete disregard of the context, history, and grammar of the passage, the message deduced from the passage(s) which is more of eisegesis than exegesis is literally applied to the life experiences of the audience; thus, Spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics. Such hermeneutics is devoid of deep biblical and theological reflections needed for themes and topics such as eschatology.

Therefore, it was a different hermeneutics that informed the change from disengagement to engagement. Pentecostals with their emphasis on the Holy Spirit unlike their predecessors developed a different gospel from a gospel of salvation to a gospel of the kingdom. This shift dictated their views on the world not as a place to be avoided in anticipation of the coming kingdom of heaven, but as a place to bring the influence of the kingdom of God, and thus, one can enjoy prosperity and abundance here. That one's life here should be a true reflection of how it should be in heaven now and not just in the future. Therefore, among Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals, there is an emphasis on the 'nowness' of life than the future of it. This explains the preoccupation with spiritual warfare over the demonic spirits expressed in sorcery, witchcraft, and curses which control and hinder people's prosperity here on earth. This explains why in KSF preaching on the second coming of Christ is not an issue of concern.

5.4 KSF Understanding and Participation in Kenyan Politics

After observing that the KSF of Apostle John William Kimani just like ATGM and JIAM tends to lean towards a spiritualized-selective hermeneutics, the study sought to examine its pastor's and members' understanding of politics. The themes examined were: the meaning of politics, whether a believer should get involved and ways of getting involved, and a historical position of KSF in Kenyan politics (2000-2022).

5.4.1 Meaning of Politics

Data gained from the questionnaires, interviews, FGDs, and PO revealed that KSF members and pastors' understanding of the meaning of politics can be grouped into two: leadership and a game of power. Out of the 40 research participants, their understanding revolved around the two ideas as reflected below.

Meaning attached	Frequency	Percentage
Leadership	31	62%
Game of power	19	38%
Total	50	100%

Table 15: showing meaning of politics among KSF pastors and Members

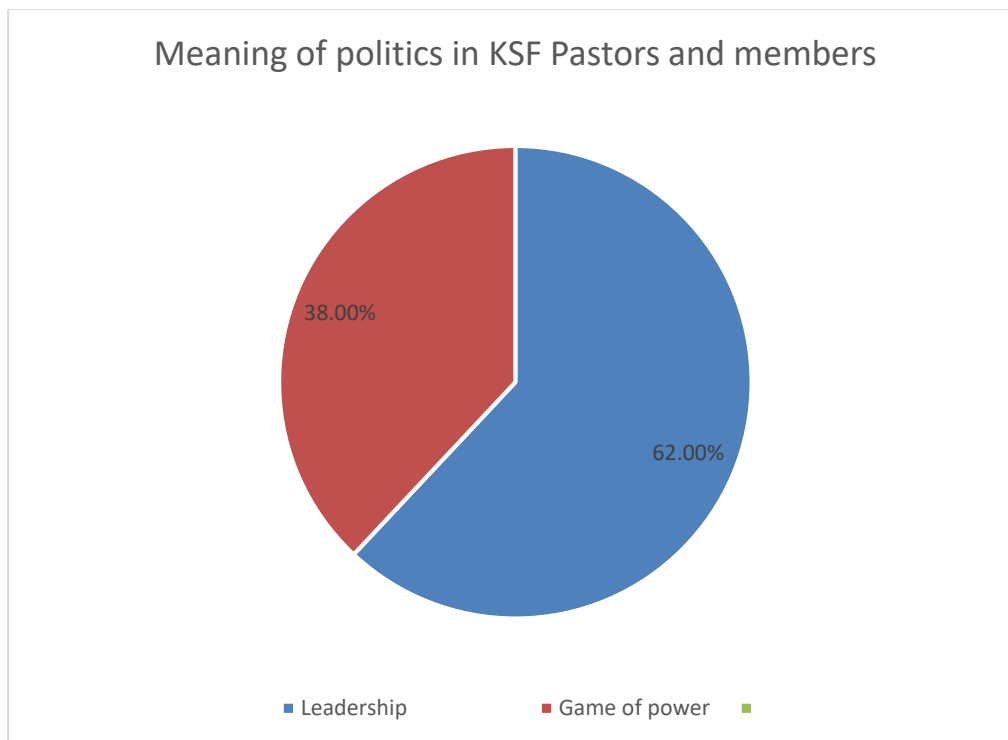


Figure 12: showing the meaning of politics among KSF pastors and Members

In KSF, as shown by the table and pie chart above, the meaning given to politics cuts across two main areas; leadership and a game of power. The majority represented by 62% relegated politics to the realm of leadership. The pastors who were among these saw politicians as leaders raised by God to lead his people to their 'destiny'. The study learnt that this destiny is characteristic of Pentecostal prosperity of thinking evidenced by a life of abundance. The 38% explained politics as a game of seeking power. They expressed that most politicians are just out to seek power and money and this explains why most of them never want to leave those positions of power. It was further explained that the politicians use strategies of lies and false promises yet nicely packaged to influence the masses only to forget them once they get into power till the next election period. Some research participants informed the study that as a game of power, some politicians result to witchcraft and/ or occultism to retain their political positions. Accordingly, this explains why in most cases there is bloodshed since some of them must sacrifice human blood as the price for retaining their positions. This understanding

emanates from a typical charismatic tendency of interpreting all occurrences from a spiritual perspective.

5.4.2 Is politics a dirty game?

Item	Frequency	Percentage
YES	26	52%
NO	24	48%
Total	50	100%

Table 16: illustrating if politics is a dirty game

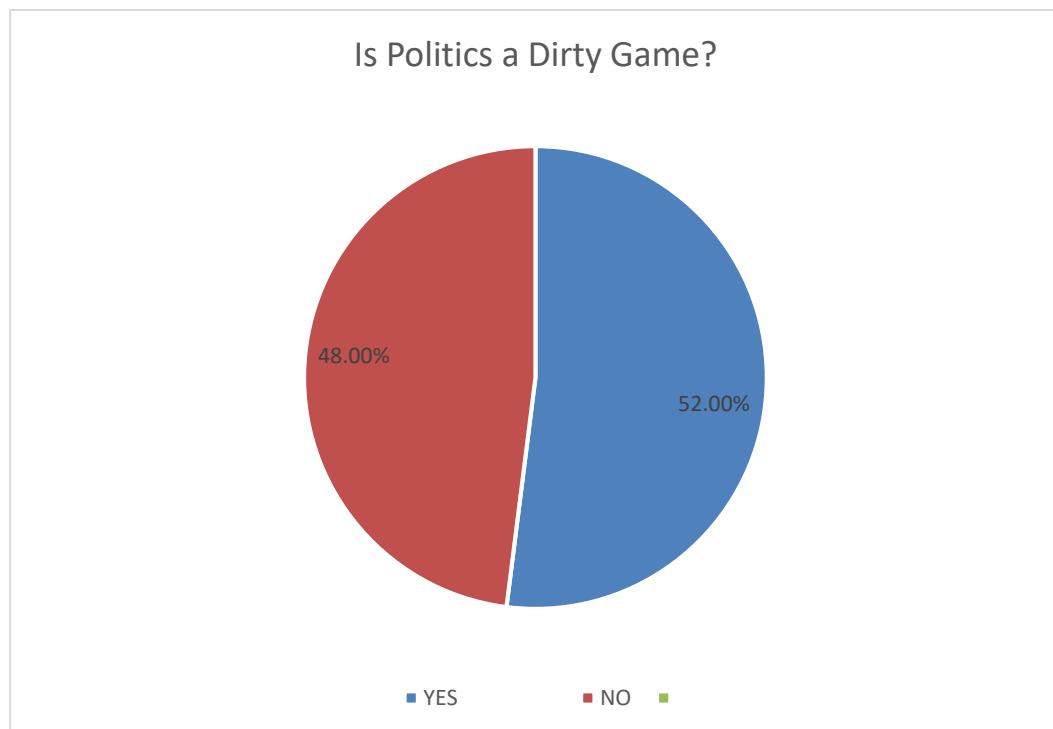


Figure 13: illustrating if politics is a dirty game

When the researcher asked the research participants whether politics was a dirty game, the answers given almost had a tie. 26 accounting for 52% responded yes. Through the oral interviews and FGDs, the study understood that in KSF, politics is perceived as dirty because of two reasons. One, because of the perceived evil actions of the politicians such as the use of vulgar language, lies evidenced in false promises, and

corruption among others. Two, the presence of demonic spirits during elections as the various political aspirants consult witch doctors. The result of the second reason was attached to a crisis like the post-election violence. One member said, *“Majority of Kenyan politicians consult witches here in Kenya as well as in Tanzania. They make blood covenants with them and that is why nearly all elections are associated with shedding of blood....this also explains why some of them or their opponents die mysteriously...”* Therefore, the study learnt that “dirtiness” in politics is mostly associated with the presence of demonic spirits. Another research participant added, *“...most of the politicians do not know God, and this explains their evil actions since they are not filled with Spirit of God...if they were genuinely born again, they wouldn’t get themselves into such corrupt deals or even in occultism...”*.

Close to the Yes responses were the No responses with a frequency of 24 accounting for 48%. These research participants believed that politics is not a “dirty game” but only that men and women who happen to know to be political leaders do not know God and that is why they get into corrupt or demonic deals. Some reasoned that since the political sphere is vulnerable to demonic influences and general evil, the church should support the political class through prayers so as not to drift to evil and occultism. Another participant reasoned, *“...politics is not dirty, we need people who are born again and committed to Jesus, people who will serve the country as serving God...we assume that politics is dirty because we do not put the right people into office....”*

Therefore, for KSF pastors and members, there is almost a tie between the two divides; politics as a dirty or it is not. But even where politics is deemed as a dirty game, the evils associated with politics are blamed upon demonic spirits finding their way through occultism practiced by some politicians. Those holding that political is not dirty were influenced by a realized kingdom approach in which they believe that if the right people

(born again) were in political positions then, politics would be “cleansed” of its perceived wicked elements.

5.4.3 Biblical Passages Associated with Church and Politics

The study sought to examine some of the biblical passages that inform the church’s participation in the political processes. Out of the 36 questionnaires returned and the 4 oral interviews with the pastors and data gained from the FGDs, there emerged three common passages and/ or narratives. These were; the narrative of Daniel being part of Babylonian political government (Daniel 2 and 6); Romans 13:1-7; and 1 Timothy 2:1-3. The Daniel narrative was cited to explain the fact that there can be God-fearing people in the government who never fall into the compromise of power or corruption. The Romans 13 passage was cited to indicate that God is the one who permits rulers to be in power. Further, believers must obey the authorities. The passage on 1 Timothy 2:1-3 remained the strongest point in all the explanations given by the KSF respondents. In the passage, Paul taught the necessity of prayer, giving priority to those in leadership since their leadership will bring peace. The study attributed the strong factor of the Timothy passage to the dominance of prayer in KSF. As discussed earlier, KSF has a magnificent prayer centre as well as a discipline for hosting national prayer conferences and prayer caravans during election periods.

5.4.5 KSF and the Kenyan Political Regimes and Significant Political Issues in Kenya

The researcher sought to examine the extent of the involvement of the Kingdom Seekers fellowship in Kenya politics. With Neo-Pentecostals being actively present in Kenyan church history in the last two decades, the study purposively chose a time period from

2000 to 2022. The study listed significant political moments in Kenyan political history to examine the involvement and the extent of the involvement of the sampled churches.

Political regime/Significant political issue	Year(s)	Participation status (Yes or No)	Nature of involvement
Daniel Moi's Kanu regime	1978-2002	No	No
Mwai Kibaki's NARC Regime (First Term)	2002-2007	No	No
2005 Draft Referendum	2005	No	No
2008 post-election Violence	2008	Yes	Prayed – organized pastors for prayers
2010 Constitutional Referendum	2010	Yes	Prayed and advised movement
The Coalition Government (Kibaki/Raila)	2008-2012	Yes	prayers
Uhuru and Ruto Jubilee Government (first term)	2012-2017	Yes	Prayers
Uhuru and Ruto Jubilee /UDA Party politics	2017- 2022	Yes	Prayers
BBI /2022 elections	2019-2021	Yes	Stand not certain but prayed

Table 17: KSF and Kenyan political Regimes and significant political issues in Kenya

Table 17 gave evidence of the extent of the Kingdom seeker's involvement in Kenyan Politics. From the table, it is clear that Apostle John Kimani William became visible national issues' participation during the 2007/08 PEV. He was actively involved in the CARAVANS of HOPE, which offered prayer and material support to the Post-election victims (Internally displaced people –IDPs). Nakuru being one of the epicentres of the PEV, as a Bishop Apostle William was forced to act. During the launch of the National prayer caravan for the 9th August election, 2022, he remembered how his in-laws called him via a mobile phone that their neighbour's house had been set ablaze and they thought they were next. The apostle lamented that most of the Kenyans watched the destructiveness of the PEV without doing anything. He added, the most important thing to do was to pray. According to him, all things begin in the spirit world, and PEV was

therefore a demonic attack on the nation of Kenya; hence, it needed prayer and fasting to destroy the spirits of destruction.

In 2010, the apostle was part of the section of the Christian church that rejected the proposed new constitution. The Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches united under EFK as well as NCKK establishing a strong ecumenical force against the New 2010 constitution referendum. However, once more, the apostle mostly got engaged through prayers. Concerning the Building Bridges initiative (BBI), the stand of the KSF was not clear whether they were for it or not. However, in one of his sermons apostle John Kimani in early May 2021, stated that Kenyans should wait for the ruling of the Supreme Court on the BBI which will be the will of God. In his statement, he referred to the politicians as having lost direction. The study inferred from his statement that he was against the BBI process though no specific clear position was given on the same. In the 2022 general elections, KSF through Apostle John Kimani as indicated in the major preaching themes, engaged in politics through prayer. Before the August 9th national elections, they hosted forty days of fasting and prayer for the country. The forty days were also dubbed PRAYER CARAVAN. The caravan traversed at least forty-three counties, praying and pouring anointing oil. The prayers and the pouring of anointing oil were believed to be the raising God's altar against the demonic altars erected by politicians through consultation with occultism. By raising godly altars, it was believed that there will be no bloodshed in Kenya but peace during and after the elections.

One thing that stood out for KSF throughout their significant political moments in Kenya is prayer. Indeed, the study found that the most conspicuous avenue in which KSF leadership gets involved in politics is through prayer. The study further observed that emphasis on prayer is derived from a pneumatological emphasis which finds a rich

context in the African worldview of Spiritism. The emphasis on the third person of the trinity renewed a rich sense of the spiritual world. With spirits and spirit causality being a rich element in the African worldview, joined with biblical passages/narratives dealing with demons an understanding of things being moved or first happening in the spiritual world and manifesting themselves in the physical world has been advanced in KSF. Consequently, the spiritual world becomes the first world to conquer before the physical one. In KSF this spiritual paradigm was best captured with the many sermons on “spiritual warfare” but most specifically sermons on altars. The altar has been believed to be a place and a position of power expressing itself dualistically: the power of God and that of Satan. In this case, the individual and the nation prosper as per the altar erected to speak on their behalf. If an altar is raised unto God, there is prosperity but if an altar is raised to the devil, there is the destruction of life and the nation. Therefore, the altar becomes the point/place of power. For example, KSF as a ministry with a physical entity becomes a physical as well as a spiritual altar from which prayers and offerings are made for the prosperity of the individual and the nation. Further, the act of praying for the nation within the church premise and also through a prayer caravan touching all the parts of the country (counties) is perceived as raising an altar for God against the demonic altars.

5.4.6 Means of Getting Involved in Politics

Means	Frequency	Percentage
Prayer	33	66%
Voting	10	20%
Advising/condemning politicians	7	14%
Total	50	100%

Table 18: showing the means of getting involved in politics

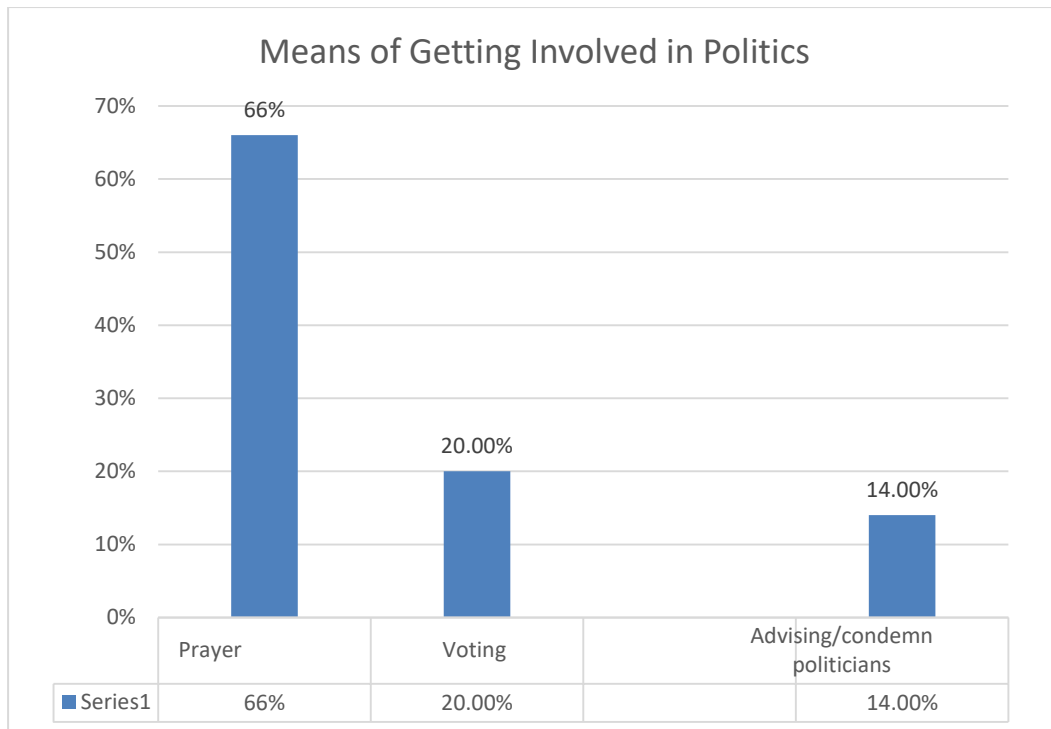


Figure 14: showing Means of getting involved in politics

Table 18 and Figure 14 give the results of how the research participants thought the church gets involved in politics. Three avenues were cited as the most dominant among KSF pastors and members. The avenue of prayer was cited as the dominant avenue through which KSF gets involved in politics with the highest frequency of 28 accounting for 70%. This was in agreement with observations made findings from the FGDs. KSF is built on a very strong foundation of prayer and this explains why prayer becomes the greatest avenue for involvement in politics as already discussed above. Voting was cited as the second avenue but with a low frequency of 7 accounting for 17.5%. The study learnt that prayers took the central place in KSF involvement in politics such that the avenue of voting is almost a forgotten practice. During the FGDs, some members expressed why prayer is the most important avenue, "...even if I vote, it is not my vote which determines who wins...the elections are not fair....votes are stolen or manipulated. Therefore, it's better to pray for God's intervention so that the right candidate will win the race...." Throughout the study, it was observed that there

was no single sermon that encouraged or urged the believers to vote in exercising their civic responsibility save for a few statements discouraging tribalism posted on the apostle's Twitter account. There lacked an expressive clear direction that voting is crucial as an exercise of prayer and faith. Advising or condemning the politicians came third with a frequency of 5 resulting in 12.5%. Some pastors reasoned that it is not good to condemn leaders publicly as it might lead to a lack of respect. But the study learnt with an emphasis on spiritual causality, the pastors would see the national crisis as emanating from evil spirits and therefore, prayer would be the best to deal with the crisis than condemning the political leaders. It was reasoned that it is not the leader per se but the influence of the demonic forces which must be destroyed through prayer.

The study revealed that KSF gets involved in other development processes in its locality, like partnering with the county government to build a multi-billion maternity hospital, as already discussed, prayer takes the centre stage since all things are interpreted from the spiritual realm. When asked about the importance of the church getting involved in the political process, most of the pastors and members responded by giving it a spiritualized approach. As already explained in this chapter, for KSF, spiritual world translates into the physical one; therefore, when believers pray for the country, they spiritually raise an altar (point/position of power of God) which influences the outcome of things on the physical realm. It is believed through this, the believer influences the political sphere in ways that physical means like voting cannot. This kind of political hermeneutics is based on a spiritual warfare mentality. It explains why the dominant themes are prayer, spiritual warfare, and altars. Therefore, if the spiritual world is within the will of God, the physical order takes the same form.

PART THREE: conclusions of chapter three to five and introduction to chapter six

1.1 Introduction

This section is a transition from section two which covered chapters three, four and five. It gives a summary conclusions of the previous three chapters and introduces chapter six.

1.2 summary of Chapter three, four and five

The section analysed the three sampled churches regarding their history, and political hermeneutics with an analysis of the various sermons preached paying attention to how the meaning of the text was arrived at and the subsequent application. The study also discussed the understanding of the sampled respondents on eschatology in order to understand the shift from disengagement to the engagement of the Pentecostals in politics and general public life has been historically situated within the understanding of the millennium. Finally, the study discussed the prophetic role of the Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya from 2000 to 2022. The data collected yielded to chapter three four and five and the summary is discussed in chapter six below. While this was not a comparative study, the three churches sampled expressed similarities and differences. For example, they were all pneumatic in theology, spirituality, and lived experiences of the adherents. Further, all causes of events were given a spiritual causality. This explained why their hermeneutics was spiritualized-selective and literal in orientation. Spirits and demons were largely to blame for the personal, social, and national crisis; hence, a call for the building of godly altars. However, there were notable dissimilarities. ATGM for example is dominantly a deliverance-oriented ministry. The preaching and everything else are geared towards deliverance from spirits of witchcraft,

curses, and other underworld spirits. From Monday to Sunday there exist various services and all of them are geared towards deliverance from spirits of witchcraft, sorcery, and underworld spirits which are interpreted as crippling one's life. There is a lot of concentration on individual prosperity. ATGM rarely resorts to political issues and if any, they are spiritualized. Only in a few instances has the church come out clearly on political issues.

JIAM is similar to ATGM in terms of preaching and spirituality oriented to witchcraft and occultism which finds a connection with the founder's previous life. The sermons in this church are dominant with red, black, and white witchcraft and other forms of spirits like the spirit of Babylon or the spirit of Jezebel. Again, just like in ATGM, any cause is relegated to spirits; demonic spirits. The preaching is completely spiritualized involving selecting passages and verses that bring out the intended meaning of the preacher. Regarding politics, Margaret Wanjiru gets involved in the political process not from within a prophetic mandate but for personal ambitions.

In KSF, one thing that made this church unique is the place of prayer in the individual and life of the church. The hermeneutics is spiritualized-selective and literal just like in ATGM and JIAM. In terms of political engagement, demons and other spirits are established as the cause of individual and societal problems; thus, the need to be exorcised. The language of building altars for God to destroy demonic altars which control individuals and national progress was very dominant. There was no specific prophetic voice exhibited except through prayer. Prayer was so pivotal to the political process that the founder of KSF runs a prayer caravan before every national election. Therefore, prayer seems to be the solution to all individual and national problems and not voting for the right leadership.

The specific summary and conclusions of the study are presented in the chapter six which is the last chapter of the study.

Chapter 6: Summary and conclusions of the research findings

6.1 Introduction

The chapter presents a summary of the findings, conclusions, relevance of the research and contributions. The summary and the conclusions are presented as per the four objectives of the study.

6.2 Summary and Conclusions of the Study

6.2.1 The History and Theology of Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya

The study found a tension that exists as far as the primal history of Pentecostalism is concerned. The tension was presented in the question, is Pentecostalism an Azusa street origin or simultaneously elsewhere? In response to this, several historiographical approaches were discussed. They included: providential, genetic, multicultural; functional, western historiography, African historiography, intercultural/global historiography, and the kingdom framework. In seeking to avoid relegating the origin of Pentecostalism to Azusa Street only, while respecting its significance and also noting the multiple origins, the study fused the last three approaches. The study then utilized a global-intercultural-kingdom framework/historiography. The value of this approach was found in the sense that it not only addressed the North American origins but also a broader outlook that saw the coming of Pentecostalism and later Neo-Pentecostals as the continuity of the establishment and spread of the Kingdom of God in different epochs and different geographical places.

This approach was wide enough to understand the multiple origins and spread of Neo-Pentecostalism in Africa and Kenya in particular. From a global perspective, the study found out that Neo-Pentecostalism was born out of classical Pentecostalism. Classical Pentecostalism was born out of the 19th Century evangelism expressing itself in

puritanism, pietism and holiness/methodism movements. These movements were restorationist and revivalist in nature nuanced towards the third person of the Trinity (Holy Spirit). They believed that one must receive the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, have a renewed sense of eschatology and the personal experience of salvation. All these elements were fertile grounds for the germination of the Pentecostal spirit and its charismatic variant- the Neo-Pentecostals. This explains why primal Pentecostals bore names such as, “First Baptised Holiness Church of God”. The puritan, pietist, and methodist/holiness movements would later lead to a revival in the 19th Century, which was evangelistic. By evangelistic, it was a missionary in nature with the aim of reaching the whole world with the good news. As a result, the theme of speaking in tongues arose as a means of spreading of the gospel effectively. This would lead to a linking of speaking in tongues with the baptism of the Holy Spirit by Sandford Charles Parham in the USA and then later in 1901 and 1906 and the spread of the Pentecostal spirit.

In Kenya, Pentecostalism which led to the formation of Neo-Pentecostalism was anchored on different layers of Christianity. The first one was missionary Christianity which due to its western hegemony led to the coming of African instituted churches. These churches with an emphasis on African worldview and emphasis on Holy Spirit, prophetism, and holiness tendencies formed the background of Pentecostalism. They formed the first nucleus of Pentecostalism; classical Pentecostalism. In some cases, there was a close connection between AICs and Pentecostal churches such that all of them have been labelled Pentecostals. However, for this study, the AICs were perceived as precursors to Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism. The coming of Neo-Pentecostalism was also influenced by the East African Revival Movement (EARM) which led to the first Indigenous/Independent Pentecostal churches in Kenya in the 1960s and 1970s. This was buttressed by international evangelists visiting Kenya from America. Through the

university Christian unions as well as secondary school Christian unions, the first independent Pentecostal churches were founded such as Deliverance Church, Christian Church International, Campus Christ Ministries, and movements such as Guerrillas of Christ. This kind of Christianity had a renewed sense of speaking in tongues, the experience of personal salvation, night vigils, miracles, and emphasis on holy living.

The Current Neo-Pentecostal church leaders such as Apostle Musili, Bishop Margret Wanjiru, and Apostle John Kimani Williams were mentored by the first independent indigenous Pentecostals. This explains why before they began their ministry, they were active members or assistant pastors in other Pentecostal churches. Therefore, Neo-Pentecostalism in Kenya is anchored on the immediate background of the classical Pentecostals and independent/indigenous Pentecostalism. Theologically, Neo-Pentecostals are pneumatic in posture with great emphasis on an experiential form of theological and spiritual experiences. This is because of the emphasis on the Holy Spirit. While mainstream Christianity was emphatic on God the Father and Jesus Christ, Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism were emphatic on the Holy Spirit. Their theology is more ingrained in the Acts of the Apostles; therefore, it explains the pneumatic approach evidenced in speaking in tongues because of the infilling of the Holy Spirit, and an experiential-power Christianity expressed by miracles. The study found that this pneumatic factor borrows from an African worldview and philosophy that informs the spiritual causality approaches in all Neo-Pentecostal churches.

It is this African worldview and philosophy that has dictated the hermeneutics of the Neo-Pentecostals leading to dominant themes of deliverance both at a personal level and national level. African philosophy and culture being dominant with spirit causes, national problems (even those with a direct cause from the negligence of the political leaders like corruption) have been interpreted spiritually. This explains why during the study

statements like, we condemn the, “the spirit of corruption”; the “spirit of tribalism’ among similar and related statements were prominent. The study concluded such kind of spiritualised theological practice makes Neo-Pentecostals lack the critical approach needed for church prophetic mandate.

6.2.2 The Theological Shift of Neo-Pentecostals: Disengagement to Engagement in Politics

The history of Pentecostal and social engagement has it that, the older classical Pentecostals were indifferent to social or public and civic engagement. They were emphatic on the gospel of salvation and an imminent return of Christ. Concentrating on personal lives of holiness and a warning against materialism, the world was explained as a sphere where a born-again believer should run away from. However, the Neo-Pentecostals have historically been interpreted to be actively involved in social, political, and general public life. This study sought to understand this shift from disengagement to engagement but most specifically on politics in Kenya. Traditionally, the shift was placed under the eschatological theology of the classical Pentecostals. The older Pentecostals were millennialists and pre-tribulation regarding their eschatological theology. This eschatological theology was borrowed from the 19th and 20th Century evangelicals who believed in a literal millennium and a future central role of re-established and re-gathered Israel. They held tenaciously to the gospel of salvation, and with an immediate return of Christ. This brought a dispensational eschatology buttressed by the teaching of the infilling of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues as preparation for evangelism and the resultant imminent return of Christ. This kind of eschatological theology and practice did not consider involvement in politics as important since Christ was to come soon; therefore, saving souls was more urgent. This explained why older Pentecostals embarked on the Gospel of Salvation.

Neo-Pentecostal scholarly works have presented the shift from the Gospel of the salvation

of the older Pentecostals to a gospel of the kingdom of the Neo-Pentecostals. Historically, this new posture was informed by a change from pre-millennial to post-millennial theology. A new eschatological nuance emerged based on the understanding of the kingdom of God. It was believed that there is no future millennial reign and that God brings his future reign into the present. This was manifested by preaching the good news everywhere. The resurrection of Christ was perceived as the grand certainty of the consummation of the future glorious reign. Consequently, as believers await for the fullness of that future consummation of God's kingdom, they should live that future in the present age. The Neo-Pentecostal emphasis on Christ reigning now led to a triumphalist theology evidenced in dominion theology and prosperity preaching. This led to the opening of Neo-Pentecostals into public and specifically to politics which initially was regarded as worldly.

Nevertheless, this study found that Neo-Pentecostal involvement in politics was not wholesomely informed by a change in eschatological theology or premise. Indeed, Neo-Pentecostal in their preaching rarely preaches about eschatology. In all the churches sampled, and with the analysis of sermons for three years, none of the sermons touched on eschatology. When the research participants were asked questions about the return of Christ, what they knew was that Jesus will come but the eschatological timeframes or eschatological theology remained a grey area to them. There was therefore a complete silence on eschatological theology in the sermons and spirituality of the Neo-Pentecostals sampled. Little knowledge of eschatology was found among members who were initially from mainstream churches.

Therefore, the study concluded that it was not the eschatological (only to some extent) premise that dictated the shift from disengagement to engagement in politics. It was the birth of a new biblical hermeneutics that dictated the shift. The study found out that with

Pentecostal emphasis on a pneumatological theology and praxis of faith as well as borrowing from an African worldview in which spirits are responsible for all causality; a dominion theology and practice emerged. Since individual and national crises were attributed to the devil/demonic/ancestral spirits and/ or witchcraft/sorcery, spiritual warfare was given as the best response. With spiritualization and selective reading and the literal application of the biblical text, a dominion theology expressing itself in prosperity preaching emerged. This study concluded that dominion theology is based on Gen.1:28. The statement that God said he has given dominion to all humanity was spiritualized to mean that man has authority and power over anything in the world. With an African worldview of the religious informing the physical; the success or the failure of an individual or the community was given a spiritual explanation. With a dominance of spirits of witchcraft, sorcery and curses, which are believed to cripple people's lives as evidenced in sicknesses, lack of jobs and finances, failed marriages and a general lack of progress in life, a theology of power over all the spirit-driven obstacles to one's life emerged.

This kind of theology and praxis of faith has resulted in a concentration on theology and practice of deliverance evident in Neo-Pentecostal preaching and spirituality. This explained why in all three churches, no service ends without a deliverance. It also explained why in all the Neo-Pentecostal preaching, in nearly all sermons, there was over-emphasis on spiritual warfare, spirits, curses, and victorious living evidenced in good health, financial prosperity, and a general material progressiveness in a believer's life. Deliverance has become a common widespread theme in Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya to exorcize the evil spirits that hinder personal and national progress. It was this new hermeneutics that linked communal problems with spirit causalities. In this sense, the born-again believer is called upon to influence his or her surrounding which also involves the political surrounding. This explained why these new hermeneutics saw the Neo-

Pentecostals start engaging in the public sphere. This is because if they do not exorcize the evil spirits within their surroundings, there will be retrogression instead of prosperity. This study concluded that this explains the dominance of dominion theology in which the believer is encouraged to dominate in all areas of life, politics being part of it. However, in Neo-Pentecostal circles, this is done mostly through declaring and decreeing spiritual statements against the evil and demonic spirits and/ or curses. Therefore, the study concluded while the eschatological theology ignited the idea of Christ reigning now and the church living triumphantly now, it was rather the different hermeneutics that influenced the shift to engagement in politics and not the eschatological theology.

6.2.3 The Biblical-Political Hermeneutics of Neo-Pentecostals and its Impact on Involvement in Kenyan Politics

The study in seeking to understand the biblical-political hermeneutics of Neo-Pentecostals analysed the preaching of all the sampled churches. The study found that Neo-Pentecostal hermeneutics was first influenced by their pneumatic emphasis. It is this emphasis on the third person of the trinity that guided their biblical interpretation and spirituality. The study found that in all three churches sampled, the common hermeneutical approach is what the study labelled spiritualized-selective-literal hermeneutics. This kind of hermeneutics is spiritualized in the sense that it is emphatic on spirit causality. Nearly in all the texts chosen, even where there was nothing to do with demons or spirits, the passage was forced to address some spirit causalities. This is because, with the Pentecostal thinking of dominion theology, one must engage in warfare to repose from the devil what he illegally holds which is meant for the believer. The dominance of spiritual warfare was at the heart of all the sermons preached. The dominance of themes on spiritual warfare was also borrowed from the African worldview which is emphatic on spirits and curses as the cause of human suffering. This explained why all the preaching of sorcery and witchcraft as well as the “spirit of curse” was pictured predominantly. Since the Neo-Pentecostals think from

an enchanted approach, their hermeneutics was spiritualized. The spirit causality is so dominant that the sermons were punctuated with short sessions of decreeing and declaring war against the devil and/ or the spirits of witchcraft or sorcery as well as spirits of waters and underworld and curses. In the end, a deliverance service would follow to exorcise demons that are believed to be the cause of suffering and lack of personal and national development. The study found that in this kind of preaching, the theme of deliverance was dominant, especially in ATG and JIAM.

The Neo-Pentecostal hermeneutics is equally selective in the sense that, their preachers selectively chose those passages that bring out their intended meaning. The study found out that, Neo-Pentecostal preachers while using one chapter of the bible or a specific text or portion of scripture, deliberately picked some verses and left or skipped others even when the rest of the verses are part of the context of the whole text. By doing so, they did not care about the context of the passage, or the original meaning of the words but the words were simply selectively chosen; those words, phrases, and verses that brought out their intended meaning. In the end, Neo-Pentecostal preaching turned out to be a form of eisegesis rather than exegesis. The preachers gave meaning to the text rather than the text giving meaning to the preacher and the audience.

The Neo-Pentecostal Hermeneutics was literal in the sense the meaning of the text was understood and applied. For example, where words called for a symbolic meaning in apocalyptic literature which is dominant with symbolism, the literal meaning was considered. Most specifically where the word spirit or spirits appeared they were mostly interpreted to mean evil spirits and/ or demonic spirits. A good example was a case in ATG whereby apostle Musili preaching about deliverance and utilizing Daniel chapter 2 understood the metals represented in the statue literally. For instance, the iron feet which represented the Roman Empire were interpreted as real human legs. The strength inherent

in iron was interpreted as strength against spirits of witchcraft, sorcery, and curses. The application found fertile ground in the daily life experiences of the members. Their experiences were informed by an African worldview anchored on spirit causality. Moreover, where there was the mention of spirits, the audience was told to pray against the power of evil spirits. The study, therefore, concluded that Neo-Pentecostals do not have a critical approach to biblical hermeneutics. Even with some of the pastors having attended theological training and having taken a unit in hermeneutics, they do not consider the historical-grammatical approach. It was very rare for any of the preachers sampled to find the context of the passage or the original meaning of the words. The study learnt that Neo-Pentecostals refer to a historical-grammatical procedure or any critical hermeneutical method as “religion” meaning “lacking the power of the Holy Spirit”. Their hermeneutics was based on the understanding that it is God through the Holy Spirit who gives the preacher the meaning of the word. This meant that the preacher does not need a lot of preparation, in studying the word, but rather preparation in praying so that God can give him or her the meaning of the text the moment he/she stands to preach.

This kind of hermeneutics with a dominance of spiritual causality and the spiritual response thereof, mostly evidenced by exorcism, affected the way the Neo-Pentecostals got involved in Kenyan politics. This is because, if individual and national problems were relegated to spirit causality so was the response; thus, the lack of a meaningful critical participation in the political process.

6.2.4 The Nature, Extent, and Prophetic Role of Neo-Pentecostal Engagement in Kenyan Politics

The study sought to understand how Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya have engaged in the political process since 2000 to 2022. The study found out that most of the Neo-Pentecostals became visible in public life in 2005; 2007/2008 and 2010. Three events brought them to the limelight; the 2005 constitutional referendum, 2007/08 post-election

violence, and the 2010 constitutional referendum and the debate on the promulgation of the 2010 constitution. Before these three significant political events, what was known as the Pentecostal political engagement was the classical Pentecostal type. However, Kenyan political history has shown that Pentecostals largely supported Moi's presidency and the Kanu regime. When mainstream Christianity united under NCCCK to critique the one-party state KANU government known for its social, civil and democratic injustices evidenced in tortures of critics, the Pentecostal church leaders were pro-KANU.

In 2005, Neo-Pentecostals like Margret Wanjiru of JIAM sided with the opposition against the government of the day (Kibaki's government). Towards 2007/08, several Neo-Pentecostal pastors contested civic posts. The election resulted in violence and the Kenyan church leadership was accused of having lost her place as the conscience of the society. In response to that accusation and in a move to bring calmness and social and psychological healing with also a view of praying against the 'spirits' of bloodshed, interdenominational prayer caravans were started, traversing various parts of the country. In these interdenominational prayers, Neo-Pentecostals featured prominently. Important to this study was the presence of ATG and JIAM in Nairobi and KSF in Nakuru which indeed marked the start of the Kingdom Seeker Fellowship.

The 2010 constitution also brought Neo-Pentecostal churches into politics. This was due to the debate over the inclusion of Kadhi courts and same-sex marriage clauses in the constitution. While the Kenyan church leadership was divided in its approach to the constitutional referendum, Neo-Pentecostals were out rightly against it. Neo-Pentecostal Bishops in Nairobi including apostle Musili and Margaret Wanjiru among others out rightly campaigned against the constitution by talking about it in their sermons, praying against it, and hosting rallies in Uhuru Park carrying red ribbons to express the dangers inherent in the proposed constitution. The study concluded that this was the significant

period in which the voice of the Neo-Pentecostal church leadership was significantly felt. Further, the study concluded that Neo-Pentecostals are not specifically prophetic, but their prophetic role is raised whenever an issue arises that directly touches the preaching of the Gospel or something significantly contrary to the bible. In essence, they are not politically active as it has been indicated.

The study also found out that with the experience of PEV in 2007/08, the Neo-Pentecostals developed the strategy of prayer as a means of getting involved in politics. As already discussed, Neo-Pentecostals are enchanted in approach: meaning demons are responsible for personal and national ills. This belief has been buttressed by a common belief that most of the politicians during the campaign period do seek the occultic powers which are believed to give them victory. It is also believed these occultic powers are spirits that grant victory and in return they are paid with human sacrifices (human blood). This has been used to justify the fact that nearly every election, there is bloodshed. In response to this, the study found that before every election, mostly ATG ministries of Apostle Musili and KSF of Apostle John Kimani organize prayers for peace before, during, and after elections.

Further, the study learnt that prayers are specifically enchanted to exorcise spirits/demons which cause bloodshed. In the prayers, decrees and declarations are made against Satan and his hosts and perceived occultism within the political class. Apostle Joseph Musili hosts his national prayer rallies in Uhuru Park. But the study found out that KSF under Apostle John Kimani has in the recent past become prominent in the prayers for the nation. Indeed, the only way apostle Kimani is significantly heard in Kenyan politics is through prayer. He first holds a prayer conference in Heaven's gate; the church prayer centre. This prayer conference representing Neo-Pentecostal all over the country marks the beginning of a prayer caravan targeting each county. However, just like Musili the prayers are enchanted in the sense that they are predominantly aimed at casting out evil spirits and

demons believed to be the cause of post-election chaos. With the relegation of national crises to spirits and demons, Neo-Pentecostals eventually do not actively participate in the political process. Politicians and citizens are not held accountable for their offenses. For example, instead of dealing with negative ethnicity which is common in Kenya during the campaign period, and which is the one that fuels violence, the demons are blamed. The study realized that in these prayers, the Neo-Pentecostal church leaders do not task their members to be peace ambassadors nor do they educate them on their civic responsibility. Instead, they over-emphasize on praying against spirits and demons that bring a lack of peace through violence and bloodshed. Although Neo-Pentecostals support victims of post-election violence through food and other forms of material support, they abdicate their responsibility of being prophetic.

It was established that from 2012 to 2022, there has been a close relationship between the Jubilee government and the Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals. The study learnt that this was informed by Rev. Dr. David Oginde of CITAM praying for both the president and his deputy to take office in 2013. The deputy president, Dr. William Samoei Ruto, now president, has managed to co-opt many of the Neo-Pentecostal churches to the extent that these churches have been accused of helping politicians clean their unclean money gotten through corrupt deals. Apostle Musili has been silent on political issues since the 2010 constitutional referendum. This study learned that the silence is occasioned by the harassment from government agencies because of the stand he took during the anti-referendum in 2010. However, in 2022 he openly supported Raila Odinga's presidency even crowning him in church and declaring him an apostle. KSF has only participated through prayers. But Bishop Margret Wanjiru has been conspicuous in the Jubilee regime. Out of a fallout with her former party boss, honourable Raila Odinga, and his ODM party, she joined Jubilee party. She was very prominent in Afraha stadium together with bishop

Mark Kariuki of deliverance in 2016 for national prayers hosted to thank God after the collapse of ICC cases for the president and his deputy. Further, with the president falling out with his deputy, she sided with the deputy president and openly welcomed him in her church, and openly campaigned for him from the pulpit. She declared her interest in the position of governor in Nairobi but later she stepped down for Honourable Johnson Sakaja opting to contest senatorial seat which she lost to Sifuna of ODM. Having supported UDA one can speculate that she stands to benefit in Ruto's government. On several occasions, while campaigning for herself and a Ruto presidency she has condemned the president for the failed leadership witnessed in the country.

However, this study concluded that Bishop Margaret Wanjiru is not prophetic, rather her involvement in politics is for her own ambition. While in her sermons she alludes to political issues, these are very rare occasions. If anything, her sermons are dominantly on spirits and witchcraft, as well as prosperity. Other Neo-Pentecostal church leaders resorted to openly campaigning for the deputy president now president. This study learnt that Neo-Pentecostals are easily co-opted by the political class. This is mostly because of their materialist tendencies and most of their leaders having political ambitions. The study concluded that Neo-Pentecostal in Kenya are not actively involved in politics as it has been argued previously. Prayer is the only dominant means they use to participate in politics as they cleanse the land from spirits and demons of bloodshed, poverty, corruption, same-sex marriages, immorality, and the demons and spirits of other vices. In this approach, the believer as a citizen is not driven to see his or her responsibility as a citizen. Further, the politician is not held accountable; thus, the Neo-Pentecostal remains absent in the quest for justice for the minority or the victims of PEV.

6.3 Research contribution

While previous studies such as Gifford Kalu (2010), Marshall (2008), Parsitau (2010; 2011; 2012) have been ground breaking on the area of Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals in Politics, they have focused on mostly on the civic engagement. Though they continue on to be of immense value as part of the discourse on church and politics, the unique contribution of this study was the focus on hermeneutics as the foundation of the Neo-Pentecostal involvement. While the Neo-Pentecostals are conspicuous in the Kenyan political landscape their popularity should not just be observed, but how and how they form their theology of political praxis is critical and worth investigation. This was the unique contribution on this study anchored on Pentecostal hermeneutics.

Further, the study becomes a continuing voice on church and politics the church being a critical actor in the political process in Kenya. However, while the previous studies like of those of Parsitau (2008, 2010, 2011, and 2012) and Chacha (2010) have lauded the Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostal's as the prophetic voices in Kenya, this study was of the opinion that they are not since they are easily co-opted by the political class and robbed their prophetic voice. In their quest for prosperity as dictated by prosperity preaching, the gifts (money and cars) they receive from the political class, are interpreted as God's blessings however it is meant to silence their prophetic mandate. Consequently, they end up praising if not sacralising the political leadership. A good example is Kenya today where the Neo-Pentecostal Churches were influenced and influenced President William's Samoei Ruto's presidential campaign; they actively involved in his campaigns through prayers, prophecies and in direct words. After his election, it is evident that the Neo-Pentecostals are losing their voice. When the proposed list of Cabinet secretaries was released, and with most of them having corruption cases or criminal cases, and with the courts acquitting them in a very questionable manner, the Neo-Pentecostals did not raise

their voices.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The research recommends a further study on the influence of the African worldview on Pentecostal hermeneutics and its impact on the political process in Kenya. Further, the study suggests further research on Neo-Pentecostalism and the Jubilee regime. This is because there has been much pentecostalization of Kenyan politics since 2013.

Appendixes

Appendix A1: Questionnaire for Church Members

My name is Stephen Kioko. I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Stellenbosch (South Africa) registration number 21382786. My research aims to look at how Pentecostals interpret the bible in regard to their involvement in political issues. You are invited to participate in this study. Note that writing your name is optional. Put a tick (✓) to indicate YES and (X) to indicate NO. The blank spaces provided are explanations of answers where possible. Kindly note due to COVID -19 safe protocols, after you fill this questionnaire you will return it to the Church office (reception desk of your Church). In cases where an assistant will be helping you, everyone MUST have a Mask and keep a distance of 1.5M. Also, in case of any question or concern call me (0727 270 956) or email me: stephekioko@gmail.com

Section I: Personal Details

1. Name (optional)
2. Name of your church.....
3. For how many years have you been a member of this church? i. 1-5 () ii. 5-10 () iii. 10 -15 () 15> ()
4. Do you hold any position in this church YES () NO ()? If yes mention
.....

Section II: History and Doctrine

1. When did this church start.....
2. Who is the founder?
3. What are the key beliefs of your church (if you know)?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
 - e)
4. Respond to the following:
 - a) Every born-again Christian must receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit. YES () NO ()
 - b) Everyone filled with Holy Spirit Speaks in tongues. YES () NO ()
 - c) Being filled with Holy Spirit is accompanied by miracles? YES () NO ()
 - d) Give some bible verses/passages that explain your churches main beliefs
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - e) What are the commonest areas/ themes that your pastor (s) mostly preaches about:
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.

f) What is your church’s teaching on the second coming of Christ?

When will Christ come:

- i. Before the Great tribulation ()
- ii. During the Great tribulation ()
- iii. After the Great tribulation ()
- iv. I don’t know ()

g) What does deliverance mean in Pentecostal churches

.....
.....
.....

h) What is the purpose of deliverance services and practices if any of your church

services.....
.....

i) How do your pastors do deliverance to members of the church?

.....
.....

f). Section **III: Pentecostal’s, Bible and Politics**

- 1. Politics is worldly and a “dirty game” YES () NO ()
- 2. Born again Christians should not get involved in politics? YES () NO ()
- 3. Getting involved in politics taints the faith of a born-again Christian. YES () NO (). Explain you answer

.....
.....
.....

4. What is the meaning of politics to you?

.....
.....

5. Does the bible allow Christians to get involved in politics? YES () NO (). Do you have some examples of bible passages to give?.....

6. If Yes in 5 above, explain why they should get involved.....

7. What are some of the ways of how Christian believers should get involved in the political matters to their country:

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.
- v.

8. What causes poor political leadership in countries?

- i. Poor political leadership ()
- ii. Demonic Spirits ()
- iii. Poor voting patterns ()

- iv. Others.....
- 9. What should be the response of a Christian believer to the above causes
.....
- 10. Give some verses and bible portions and/ or themes in the bible that you think encourage born-again believer’s participation in politics.
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
- 11. According to your views, has your church/denomination been actively involved in Kenyan political issues? YES () NO ().
- 12. In Yes in 11(above) in which ways does it get involved.....
- 13. Initially, Pentecostals in Kenya were against born-again believers' involvement in politics? YES () NO ()
- 14. Today Pentecostals get involved in politics more than the other denominations YES () NO ()
- 15. In general, how would you rate the extent of Pentecostals in Kenyan politics? A. very active () B. Active () C. Moderate (). Not active ().
- 16. Why do you think it’s important for Christian believers to get involved in the politics and governance of their country?
.....
.....
.....

Appendix A2: Interview Guide for Bishops and Pastors

- 1) Name of the Church
- 2) When and who started this church? Was it born from another church or ministry?
- 3) Which church were you affiliated to before?.....
- 4) What is the mission and vision of this church?.....
- 5) What is your highest educational level? Do have any training in theology? If yes, which theological school did you attend? What are some of the core units you took in your theological training?

- 6) Doctrinal issues. What is the teaching of Pentecostals on:
- a. Infilling of the Holy Spirit. When does one get filled and baptized with the Holy Spirit? i. Immediately after being born () ii. Later in Christian life ()
 - b. Infilling of the Holy Spirit is accompanied by speaking in tongues YES () NO ()
 - c. What is the importance of being filled with Holy Spirit for an individual believer
 - d. What is the place of the Holy Spirit in interpreting the Bible.....
 - e. According to Pentecostal teachings, when will Christ return? i. Before the Great Tribulation () ii. During the Great Tribulation () iii. After the Great tribulation ()
- 7) The pentecostal practice of interpretation of the Bible.
- a. Is there a laid-down procedure for interpreting the Bible? YES () NO ()
 - b. When preparing for a sermon, do you consider the following?
 - i. The context of the writer YES () NO ()
 - ii. The meaning of the text to the original audience YES () NO ()
 - iii. The grammar/usage of the words YES () NO ()
 - c. Does the presence of the Holy Spirit mean that one should not study the portion of preaching since the Holy Spirit will automatically teach the preacher? YES () NO ()
 - d. Now that one is filled with the Holy Spirit is there a need to undertake theological training? YES () NO ()
- 8) Pentecostals and politics.

- a. What is your understanding of politics? Is it a dirty game? YES () NO ()
what does it entail?
 - b. Does the Bible allow the church to participate in politics YES () NO ()
 - c. In view of b above, are there biblical passages explaining either the church's involvement or against involvement? Explain and mention if any.....
.....
 - d. What should be the place of pastors/bishops in the politics and governance of their countries? Condemn social/political evils () Guide political leaders ()
get involved in political offices/positions () Praying for the leaders ()
 - e. What causes bad governance/ poor political practice in Kenya? Evil spirits () poor leadership () others ()
 - f. What should be the response of Christian believers to the political problems mentioned in E above? Praying
- 9) What has been the place of Pentecostal pastors/Bishops in the governance and politics in the following political periods in Kenya?
- a. The Kibaki government (2002- 2007)
 - b. 2005 constitutional referendum.
 - c. The Coalition government (Kibaki- Raila) 2008- 2012
 - d. 2010 constitution referendum
 - e. The Jubilee government (Uhuru and Ruto) 2013 – 2021
 - f. The BBI debate 2019-2022
- 10) During President Daniel Arap Moi's government, Pentecostals unlike other denominations were not active in politics. YES () NO (). Explain your answer.

- 11) Those active in President Moi’s government and KANU politics fully supported the KANU regime. YES () NO (). Explain your answer.
- 12) Is it true that most Pentecostal pastors are co-opted by the political leaders YES () NO ().
- 13) If Yes in 12 above how does it affect their authority in condemning the social/political ills in the government and political class?
.....
- 14) In your own assessment has the Church in Kenya failed or succeeded in taking up its prophetic role in politics and governance. YES () NO (). Explain your answer.

Appendix A3: Guideline for Focus Group Discussion

NB. Due to covid-19 safety protocols, this discussion will be limited to 6 people. In most cases, the participants will be encouraged to adopt an online discussion via Zoom or google and their permission will be sought beforehand. Where it’s a must for one on one meetings, every participant MUST have a mask, sanitize himself and herself before entering the room, keep a distance of 1.5M and the room will be spacious and properly ventilated.

Questions

- A. What is your understanding of the relationship between church and politics?
What is the meaning of politics?
- B. How do Pentecostal pastors interpret their bible in their preaching? Do they consider the context? The meaning intended by the author? The language?
- C. What is the place of the Holy Spirit in interpreting the Bible? Is theological and Biblical training important
- D. What is the place of Christians in:
 - i. General elections/voting
 - ii. Governance of their country
 - iii. Constitutional debates

- E. What is the eschatological teaching of the Pentecostals? At what point do they say that Jesus will return? Before? After the great tribulation?
- F. What are some of the biblical verses/ passages used by Pentecostals in justification for their involvement in politics? How do they interpret and apply such biblical texts?
- G. In which ways should the church get involved in politics? What role do Pentecostals play in Kenyan politics? Are they the new prophetic voices in Kenyan politics?
- H. Are Pentecostals closely connected to the government in power? Give examples in Kenya. Does this close connection to the government compromise their prophetic mandate?

Appendix A4: Interview Guideline for top EFK leaders

NB. Due to COVID-19 safety protocols, this interview will observe all the necessary measures. In most cases, the researcher will seek an online interview or via a call to avoid much contact in person data collection. In cases where an in person is necessary, everyone will (MUST) have a Mask and a distance of 1.5M will observed, no shaking of hands among other safety measures.

Name (optional).....

- 1. What is the mission and vision of the Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya (EFK)?
- 2. What are the key biblical and theological doctrines/Mission statement of the EFK?
- 3. For how many years has the organization been in existence?.....
- 4. Is EFK exclusively a Pentecostal organization? What are the qualifications for membership? How does it recruit a new member? What is the current number of churches registered with EFK? Is it related to NCCCK?

5. What is EFK's stand on church and socio-political issues? What are the biblical passages used in justification for Pentecostal involvement in politics?
6. In the history of Kenyan politics, what has EFK done as a voice/conscience to the society? What specific roles has EFK played in Kenyan politics? For example in:
 - a. The Kibaki government (2002- 2007)
 - b. 2005 constitutional referendum.
 - c. The coalition government (Kibaki- Raila) 2008- 2012
 - d. 2010 constitution referendum
 - e. The Jubilee government (Uhuru and Ruto) 2013 – 2021
 - f. The BBI debate 2019-2022
7. Pentecostalism has been accused of being overly connected to the government in power, is it true? And can Pentecostal leaders carry their prophetic mandate without compromise while closely linked to the government in power and/or being part of the ruling regime?
8. What are some of the challenges that EFK leadership faces in an attempt to get involved in the politics and governance in Kenya?
9. Is it true that Pentecostals were not active in politics before? What changed their posture? Any theological or biblical, economic, or any other reason?
10. Is there any laid down procedure on biblical interpretation for EFK members?
How do Pentecostals interpret their Bible?

Appendix A5: Permission Letters and Consent Forms (sample)

STEPHEN KIOKO DAVID

P.O. BOX 5892-30100

ELDORET

DATE-----

TO

BISHOP -----NAME OF THE BISHOP

NAME OF THE CHURCH

P.O. BOX _____

NAIROBI

DEAR SIR,

RE: A REQUEST FOR A RESEARCH PERMISSION

I am Stephen Kioko David of Kenyan Identification Number 22804418. I am a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Stellenbosch, student number 21382786, under the supervision of Prof. Retief Muller (retiefmuller@sun.ac.za).

I am carrying research entitled “From disengagement to engagement: Interrogating the political hermeneutics of Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya from 2000 -2022”. I have sampled your church particularly the Nairobi CBD branch for this research.

I hereby kindly request your permission to interview and give questionnaires to pastors and church members respectively. Find also an attached copy of the questionnaire and interview guide to be supplied to your church members. We will also conduct a Focused Group Discussion comprising 6 members of your church.

Kindly note, due to COVID-19 safety protocols, any mostly face-to-face interviews will be discouraged and if they have to happen, all the participants **MUST** have a Mask, and keep a distance of 1.5M. In most cases, the researcher will seek permission to do online interviews. Further, as for the questionnaires, an empty box will be left in your church reception office where one can drop his her filled questionnaire.

I hope my request will be considered as the data collected will be purposely used for academic purposes.

Yours faithfully,

Stephen Kioko

Appendix A6. Research Consent Form

I am Stephen kioko David a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Stellenbosch (South Africa). I am conducting research entitled: **“From disengagement to engagement: Interrogating the political hermeneutics of Neo-Pentecostals in Kenya from 2000 - 2022”**.

You are requested to sign this form as an indication of your voluntary willingness to participate in this research.

1. Name _____
2. Name of your church _____
3. Position in church: Bishop () Pastor () Member ()
4. I am willing Yes () No ()
5. Due to COVID-19 safety protocols provide the best way you prefer to participate in this research a. Face to face with a Mask and social distance b. Via a call c. Online meeting via zoom or Google meet ()
6. Your phone number _____ email

7. Date _____ signature _____

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