Marko Kuhn

Prophetic Christianity in Western Kenya

political, cultural and theological aspects
of African Independent Churches (AICs)

Dokumentation der Leitfadeninterviews

Freiburg 2007
Index

FIRST STAGE OF RESEARCH FROM DECEMBER 2000 TO MARCH 2001:
INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL LEADERS OF AICS IN THE NYANZA REGION............................................ 1

INTERVIEW 1: CHURCH OF CHRIST IN AFRICA (JOHERA) ................................................................. 1
INTERVIEW 2: MERCY AND HOLY GHOST CHURCH .......................................................................... 3
INTERVIEW 3: CHURCH OF PEACE IN AFRICA ................................................................................. 5
INTERVIEW 4: LEGIO MARIA OF AFRICAN CHURCH MISSION (MAMBOLEO) .............................. 7
INTERVIEW 5: AFRICAN DIVINE CHURCH ....................................................................................... 9
INTERVIEW 6: ROHO ISRAEL CHURCH OF GOD ............................................................................. 11
INTERVIEW 7: NOMIYA CHURCH .................................................................................................. 13
INTERVIEW 8: LEGIO MARIA OF AFRICAN CHURCH MISSION (ST. PETER, MANYATTA) .......... 15
INTERVIEW 9: HOLY TRINITY CHURCH IN AFRICA .................................................................. 18
INTERVIEW 10: AFRICAN ISRAEL NINEVEH CHURCH ................................................................. 20
INTERVIEW 11: RUWE HOLY GHOST CHURCH OF EAST AFRICA ............................................... 23
INTERVIEW 12: NOMIYA FUENY MALER ..................................................................................... 25
INTERVIEW 13: MIRACLES AND WONDERS CHURCH ................................................................. 27
INTERVIEW 14: MUSANDA CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF KENYA ...................................................... 29
INTERVIEW 15: VOICE OF SALVATION AND HEALING CHURCH ............................................... 31
INTERVIEW 16: MUSANDA HOLY GHOST CHURCH OF EAST AFRICA ......................................... 34
INTERVIEW 17: SAYUN CHURCH OF GOD (EAST AFIRCA) ........................................................... 36
INTERVIEW 18: BETHSaida ROHO MATAKITIFU CHURCH ............................................................... 38
INTERVIEW 19: ROHO FUENY MALER CHURCH ......................................................................... 40
INTERVIEW 20: ROHO REVELATION CHURCH .............................................................................. 42
INTERVIEW 21: POWER OR JESUS AROUND THE WORLD CHURCH ......................................... 45
INTERVIEW 22: COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH ............................................................................. 48

SECOND STAGE OF RESEARCH FROM JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2003:
INTERVIEWS WITH CHURCH LEADERS (BISHOPS) AND REPRESENTATIVES OF CHURCH NETWORKS ................................................................................................................................. 50

INTERVIEW A: BISHOP SALMON OBIERO, PENTECOSTAL REVIVAL MINISTRIES OF KENYA, (IN CHARGE OF NAIROBI DIOCESE AND GENERAL OVERSEER OF THE WHOLE CHURCH) .......... 50
INTERVIEW B: ARCHBISHOP NJERU WAMBUGU, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN INSTITUTED CHURCHES (OAIC) AND HEAD OF THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENT CHURCH OF AFRICA 53
INTERVIEW C: REV. DR. KASONGA WA KASONGA, ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES (AAC) (PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER, DEPARTMENT HEAD AT THE AAC HEADQUARTERS) ............................................ 57
INTERVIEW D: MRS. MARY MUGAMBI, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF KENYA (NCCK) (DEPARTMENT HEAD AT NCCK HEADQUARTERS) .......................................................... 59
INTERVIEW E: ZACCHAEUS OKOTH, CATHOLIC CHURCH, ARCHBISHOP OF KISUMU, ......................... 62
INTERVIEW F: MATTHEW ABEDNEGO AJUOGA, ARCHBISHOP OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN AFRICA (JOHERA) .......................................................... 63
INTERVIEW G: FRANCIS MWAYI ABIERO, ANGLICAN CHURCH OF KENYA, BISHOP OF MASENO SOUTH ............................................................ 66
INTERVIEW H: JAMES KISIBO, ARCHBISHOP OF THE ROHO ISRAEL CHURCH OF GOD .................... 69
INTERVIEW I: JAMES CHABUGA, ARCHBISHOP OF THE AFRICAN DIVINE CHURCH .......................... 71
INTERVIEW K: JOHN MWERESA KIVULI, ARCHBISHOP OF THE AFRICAN ISRAEL NINEVEH CHURCH .............................................................. 73
First Stage of research from December 2000 to March 2001: Interviews with local leaders of AICs in the Nyanza region

Interview 1:
Church of Christ in Africa (Johera)

Place: church headquarters at Kondele/Kisumu
Date: 07.12.2000

Personal history of the interviewed pastor:

Parents were members of the Anglican Church, but changed to the Church of Christ in Africa (CCA) in 1959. The father was baptized in the Anglican Church while he was serving in the colonial army (King African Rifles) during the Second World War. The interviewed person was baptized in the CCA. The father joined the CCA because he was ‘chased away’ by the Anglican church-authorities. He had decided to marry several wives. Being a polygamist by that time led to the rejection by the Anglican Church. Neither could the second, third etc. wives be accepted in the church or their children be baptized. He was ‘saved’ when hearing an Anglican preacher who had come to the home. After primary school he became a ‘church teacher’ (1979), was ordained ‘lay reader’ in 1984, ordained deacon in 1988, priest in 1992, appointed ‘Archdeacon’ in 2000 (in charge of overseeing the parishes of an archdeaconry). Between the different stages of ordination there were different courses in the Bible College at the headquarters of the church. For about one month, there are ongoing seminars for the pastors. The livelihood of the ordained people is taken care of by the church. They are on a ‘full time’ salary if they want to work full time as a priest.

Ways of worshipping:

There is a liturgy being followed every time there is a service. There is a prayer book and a hymn book. Preaching is there, 1st reading and 2nd reading, clapping the hands. The liturgy being practised is the same as in the Anglican church. The books being used are the same as the ones used in the Anglican Church by the time the CCA split from it. The changes in the liturgy towards a more ‘lively’ way of praying and singing was done slowly.

Beliefs, teachings, doctrines
Feasts and events

The CCA believes in Jesus, in God the father, the son and the Holy Ghost. It teaches about love and forgiveness, love for orphans and widows. Different from the Anglican Church: The congregation of faithful is called for ‘conventions’ to hear the word of God. ‘Crusades’ are organized. There is the custom of ‘unveiling of the cross’ a certain time after somebody has died and has been buried. The burial ceremony itself is not different from the Anglican Church. The feast days of the Anglican Church are celebrated, Christmas, Easter, etc. Special for CCA is the celebration of the day the church started, which is done every year in June. Moral teachings of the church include not to commit adultery and not to take any alcoholic drink.

If a convert was baptized in the Anglican Church, the CCA does not baptize again. Those that have been baptized by immersion in water however are being baptized again.

History of the church

The CCA broke away from the Anglican Church in June 1957. There were misunderstandings and struggles within the church. Hatred and pride had disturbed the harmony. One disputed issue was the one of polygamy. The leader of the breakaway disagreed with the Anglican leaders over several fundamental issues. The dispute revolved around the question: What are the consequences of salvation? One group believed, that once you are ‘saved’, all your belongings are included in this, which means for example that your table or your utensils
could not be lend out to serve in a funeral of your neighbours. Anybody who is not saved was not supposed to interact with the saved people, nor with their family, nor with their belongings. The ones who claimed to be saved segregated themselves completely from the rest of the world. The group that broke away rejected that attitude.

The breakaway happened during the time of the Revival Movement and was finally carried out in 1957, though its history goes back up to 1952.

The revivalist clergy saw that some of the teachings and practices were contrary to the Bible. The example of chasing the polygamists: The Bible doesn't speak of rejection. It says: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" Therefore all people are called to the Lord. Our duty is to preach. The judgement is up to God, not up to us.

The present Archbishop of CCA was a key player by that time. He was a priest in the Anglican Church and got some of its insights while studying in Limuru.

Political activity

The church is active in politics as well as individual members are.

Some of the members are municipal councillors; others work in offices of high profile politicians.

The church is criticizing politicians who are going astray. It issued a political statement against the Ufungamano Initiative. The archbishop said that the constitution can only be changed by the parliament.

The bishop doesn't recommend on the voting pattern of the church members, although in words and deeds he supports the government and the ruling party.

He is one of the key leaders of the organization called ‘Church and State Co-operation’. They have prayed and called the opposition leaders in Nyanza to stop their destructive policy of opposing the government. They called the opposition leaders and the head of state to the stadium in Kisumu in order to facilitate talks. The archbishop of CCA, Dr. Ajuoga, preached at that meeting. This was in 1997, after the last elections.

Other churches in ‘Church and State’ are: The Anglican Church in the Diocese of Maseno South (the Kisumu Bishop), Power of Jesus around the World, Voice of Salvation, Living Water Church, Grace Revival, Mercy Church. Any times the head of state comes to Kisumu, he is first met by the chairman of the movement, who is Washington Ogonyo, the bishop of ‘Power of Jesus around the World Church’.

African culture

Cultural practices contrary to the Bible are rejected. For example the sacrificing animals, as it was done in the Traditional African Religion. What is not against the Bible is not rejected by the church. There is no problem about using herbs to cure ailments for example. The traditional respect taught to children towards their parents is supported and also the strong cultural rules attributed to the interaction with the family in-law of a person.

To have several wives is accepted, but once somebody has joined the church, he must not add another one. Neither can a polygamist climb into the ranks of the ordained people. They can only serve in functions like treasurer, secretary and other secular offices. Monogamy is preached as the preferable way of marriage.

Wife inheritance is discouraged as an outdated practice, though it is difficult to make the people accept that teaching and follow it, since the fear of traditional sanctions or supernatural punishment is strong. Many people believe that a widow, who is not inherited by the brother of the deceased husband, is causing the death of her children through her rejection of the traditions. It can even happen that the sons of the lady who rejected inheritance can bring a man after the death of the mother so that through sexual intercourse with the corps the tradition of inheritance is fulfilled and the spirits appeased.

Elements of traditional African religion are not found in the CCA. Driving out of the devil or of demons who have taken possession of people is done in a Christian way. There is reading of the Bible, singing of songs, clapping and shouting at the devil.

Evangelization

There are crusades being organized in order to preach the word of God to the people. Through this there are also new members joining. Also house to house evangelization is sometimes done.

Gender

Women can be pastors on a lower scale. They can preside over burial of women for instance, but can not do all the work, the male pastors can. The wife of the archbishop is an important leader of the church.

Differences and similarities with other churches

The CCA still resembles the Anglican Church in many ways. Other churches that have broken away have moved much further away from that origin.
Interview 2:
*Mercy and Holy Ghost Church*

**Place:** church headquarters, Lela, Kisumu District  
**Date:** 11.12.2000

**Personal history of the interviewed church teacher:**
He was told by his heart to enter this church. He stays near the house of the bishop and therefore knew about it. He was a member of the Anglican Church before. His parents are not members of the Mercy and Holy Ghost Church.

**Ways of worshipping:**
There is a prayer book, which is being followed. The way the service is conducted resembles the Anglican way. The baptism is done by sprinkling, not by immersion. The ‘Common Prayer Book’ is used, which is taken from the Anglican Church. For the Sunday services there is a hymn book. The songs are accompanied by drums and bells. There an extensive preaching session, which is part of the service.

**Beliefs, teachings, doctrines**

**Feasts and events**
The Bible is the word of God. The ‘Apostles' Creed’ is an expression of the faith. The Holy Spirit is having a strong part in the life and faith of the church. Speaking in tongues and prophesying. The moral teachings are not different from the Anglican Church, except for the stand on polygamy. Easter and Christmas are celebrated. July 10th is the day of the foundation of the church, which is celebrated every year.

**History of the church**
The church split from the Holy Trinity Church of Africa (HTCA) in the year 1969. Wilson Guya, the founder, was possessed by the Holy Spirit. This spirit possession and what goes along with it, like speaking in tongues, was rejected by the leaders of the HTCA. Also the ways of worshipping that the possessed person chose, namely drumming and beating of the bell, were rejected by them. One of the founders was a lady called ‘Mama Mikal’. She is the mother of the present bishop of ‘Marera East Diocese’, Martin Adero Metho (in whose house the interview was conducted). She also was a member in the HTCA. In December 1963 she suddenly fell ill while being in church. The illness lasted until 1969. Neither doctor nor diviner could heal her. Her husband knew a boy who was healing people. He looked for him and found him. The boy prayed for her. This was on Thursday, February 19, 1969. She was possessed by a spirit and unable to walk. Six months after the miraculous prayer, she was able to stand up again. Her miraculous healing and her possession by the Holy Spirit were not accepted by the Holy Trinity Church. Wilson Guya, who was a pastor in that church and mama Mikal were chased away from it at the same time. They were speaking in tongues and healing sick people. After rejection they could not attend the church services any more. They therefore sat down and looked for ways, how they could continue praying in the church. They decided to start a new church. The boy who healed the mama was a well known healer by that time. His name was Juma Pesa. He later became the founder of the ‘Holy Ghost Coptic Church’, but has nothing to do with the founding of the MHGC apart from the fact that his healing powers changed the life of mama Mikal.
Political activity

The church is not much involved in politics. It does not support anything that goes against the wishes of the government. The archbishop, who is stationed in Bondo, was attending the meetings of the Ufungamano initiative in the beginnings, but was told by Mama Mikal to stop going there, since politics and the word of God should not mix. The parliament should be the only body to review the constitution. The archbishop then stopped attending the meetings of Ufungamano. The interviewed church teacher also feels that the Christians of the church do not support political involvement of the Archbishop. The bishop of ‘Marera East Diocese’ however claims, that church and politics can not be separated, although he supports the stand of his church now in as far as the constitutional review is concerned.

African culture

According to the interviewed pastor, African Culture has not much to do with the word of God. He however feels that the way of drumming and giving room to the Holy Spirit is specifically African. In the beginning, polygamous families were accepted without any problems, which made one of the important differences when compared with the Anglicans. The founder himself had nine wives. During the early times, polygamists could therefore also climb the leadership ranks and become pastors. By now however, the church preaches the message of ‘one man, one wife’. People with more than one wife can still enter the church, but should from then onwards not add more wives. The moral teachings towards this question has changed with new and young leaders coming up.

Evangelization

People just see what the church is doing and get interested. People see the gatherings and hear the preaching when they pass the churches. No big crusades are being held, although ‘fellowships’ and ‘door to door preaching’ are being practised.

Gender

Although Mama Mikal is an influential person, being on of the founders, women can not be made pastors and can therefore not climb in the high leadership ranks. They can however hold lower offices like being a ‘church teacher’ or a ‘lay reader’.

Differences and similarities with other churches

The life and worship of the church centres around the Spirit (Roho). This is what makes it different from the Anglican church. The robes of the pastors are only put on during pastoral work, not all the time like in other independent churches.
Interview 3:
Church of Peace in Africa

Place: Pandipieri Catholic Centre, Kisumu
Date: 07.12.2000

Personal history of the interviewed pastor:

He was baptized the Africa Inland Church in 1968 where his parents were also members. The Church of Peace in Africa split from the African Inland Church in his home area Kajulu. His parents were among the first members who had moved out of AIC in 1972. When growing up he found the doctrines and beliefs of the CPA fitting to his understanding. He was 'saved' in April 1991, when listening to a preacher. After this he had to confess, that he had been a sinner. Through this he was also healed from a long ailment that different hospitals had not been able to treat. He was holding different positions before becoming a pastor. First he was a youth secretary, then the youth development co-ordinator. After his wedding in 1994 he became a local church teacher. 1995 church deacon. 1999 ordained pastor. For the last five years he has been the development co-ordinator of the whole church. The parents were members of the church since it started. He has undergone theological training through the TEE programme of the OAIC, as well as different leadership seminars organized by the church.

Ways of worshipping:

There are different types of service. The normal Sunday service during which the word of God is preached is followed by Bible study groups attended by the members in the evening. If it is a Sunday service with Holy Communion, then the Communion service is following the preaching and teaching. Collection of money (offering) is also part of each service. There is the tradition of ‘laying of the cross’, when the grave of a deceased person is fitted with a cross. It is followed by a service including preaching. The wedding ceremony has it own way of celebration and worship. Anybody can be involved in the preaching, as soon as appointed by the pastor. For singing there are hymn books. There is a church choir that also uses drums and other instruments. When there is no choir, the drum is rarely used. The singing and dancing in the church goes moderate. Lively, but not too loud. There is also a gospel band in the church that uses all the modern instruments used by bands.

Beliefs, teachings, doctrines

Feasts and events

The Holy Bible is the foundation of the teaching. The believe in one God and in the Holy Trinity is central. The baptism is done by immersion in a river (‘water baptism’), which is an important difference with many other churches and an act that the CPA treasures very much. The major difference between the Church of Peace in Africa and the African Inland Church is the dealing with the question of polygamy. In the African Inland Church, a polygamous person can not be baptized nor take the Holy Communion. The CPA allows them in the church, grants baptism and Holy Communion, but does not allow a man to marry another wife again after joining the church. Before being baptized, a person must be 12 years of older. He or she must be able to announce his or her salvation and state his or her belief. The Holy Communion and baptism are very important, because these are the only two ceremonies Jesus left to be undertaken by his followers. The members of CPA believe in the healing power of Jesus. Healing comes by faith and the church elders pray for the sick. Healing is however not a regular part of the Sunday service.

February 11 is the day when the church was founded. It is celebrated every year. On this day, the historical background of the church is read out by the bishop before the preaching session starts. Easter and Christmas are important feast days. They are in line with the feast day of the New Year.
History of the church

The pastor who started the church was called Samuel Opondo. He had been trained in ‘Scott Theological College’ in Machakos. He was also trained at Kijabe, after which he was ordained a pastor in the African Inland Church. It was him who led the word in a disagreement with the American missionaries of the Africa Inland Mission over the question, whether the new local pastors should be allowed to wear the typical clerical collar that the missionaries were wearing. The missionaries felt that they had the exclusive right to do so while the African pastors should not. Also the question on how to deal with polygamous families was disputed as well as the question as from which age onward somebody can be baptized. Because of the different vision pastor Opondo had on those questions he was excommunicated by the leader of the African Inland Church. The District Council of Churches in Kajulu supported the pastor and encouraged him to register a new church. He became the bishop of the newly formed Church of Peace in Africa in 1974. It was called Church of Peace after John 14, 27.

Another reason for the split was that pastor Opondo was not paid well and that the church building was in a very poor state, although the Christians of Kajulu were contributing a good amount of money continuously to the mission headquarters of the African Inland Church in Ogada.

Political activity

The CPA is politically active and has the right to question politicians on their work. The spiritual leaders are allowed to speak on political issues, especially when the elected political leaders are not doing the right work. The spiritual leaders are however not allowed to contest for political offices themselves. The church is a reconciliatory agent that has to pinpoint what is going wrong in secular politics. The bishop can invite politicians to tell them the view of the church. An example is to put on the right track those politicians who are supporting the cultural practice of wife inheritance, since in the times of HIV/AIDS it has disastrous consequences. When the road is bad, it is bad for everybody. And since the church has to speak for the poor, it has to get involved in politics. It has to speak for the freedom and for the rights of the people as Jesus did. The CPA does not support the Ufungamano initiative. Ufungamano is made of a few mainline churches that now want to speak on behalf of the churches as a whole. The CPA feels that the constitution can not be reviewed in a state of disunity. Ufungamano has not brought about unity. Moreover, the church should not oppose the government in a direct way, but agitate reconciliation.

African culture

The African culture is an important aspect in the church, since it has always taught discipline and respect of the young towards the older members of the society. Whichever cultural practices are in line with the Bible are supported, the ones who are not, are rejected. A polygamous family can join the church, but not marry again after and not become a leader. The lively way of the service reflects the African way of celebrating. Wife inheritance is not accepted. A widow or widower has to look for a new spouse to marry. The church helps in counselling. Elements of the African Traditional Religions are not found in the CPA.

Evangelization

Evangelization is an important aspect. There are crusades and Evangelical outreach programmes with the help of preachers, gospel choirs etc.

Gender

Women can become leaders, evangelizers and church deaconesses. There is one pastor who is a lady, who is doing the same work as the male pastors. In future they may be more. All the training given is given to women and men.

Differences and similarities with other churches

The CPA is drawing all its teachings from the Bible, which not all churches do. The dealing with polygamous families differs greatly from the way the African Inland Church handles the matter. Water baptism is very important - i.e. immersion of the whole body as opposed to those churches that baptize by sprinkling water. There is no infant baptism as in many other churches.
Interview 4:
Legio Maria of African Church Mission (Mamboleo)

Place: Cardinal’s house at Mamboleo/Kisumu
Date: 14.12.2000

Personal history of the interviewed Cardinal:

He was baptized a Roman Catholic. During his time of working as a policeman in Uganda, he came across the Legio Maria Church. The Government of Uganda tried to suppress the Legio Maria. He however, knowing that this was not a dangerous movement, tried to defend them within the reach of his abilities. By that time the Legio Maria Church was also accused in Uganda of being responsible for the failure of rainfall in certain areas. While he was working as a policeman, his parents had already joined Legio.

He returned to Kenya in 1979. After this he decided to join the Legio Maria Church also, since he liked their way of worshipping. What impressed him most was the fact that he saw the Holy Spirit being with them and guiding them and doing miracles. The Holy Spirit was speaking to them and telling them the truth. He knew the way the Catholics conduct the Holy Mass well, this helped him to conduct the Holy Mass within the Legio Church later. After being a member for three months the Holy Spirit told him to be a Padri. He found out that that was really God’s will, since he met different people independent from each other, to all of whom the Holy Spirit had told the same message: That he should become a father. He therefore accepted and was ordained a priest by the bishop. It is always the Holy Spirit who guides the priest while reading the mass. He is the big teacher of the faithful. That is the reason, why there was no education of training involved in the process of becoming a priest. Since he was doing his job nicely, he was later made a bishop. In 1981, the spiritual Leader Malkio Ondeto made him an Archbishop.

In 1991, Ondeto passed away. After some time the leaders of the church now chose him to be a cardinal. Today he is the ‘Cardinal Dean’ of the Legio Maria of African Church Mission, the one who follows the pope (Wilson Petro Owino Obimbo).

Ways of worshipping:

The way the Catholics Pray is the way the Legio Maria Church does. An important difference is that the Catholic Church has changed the way of conducting the mass. The Legio Maria did not do that. The missal book that was used in the Catholic Church is still being used in Legio. As it was done in the beginning is still the same way of doing it today. The Rosary is being used and prayed in Dholuo. The mass is conducted in Latin, while the preaching again is done in Dholuo, Swahili or English.

The priest is facing the altar when saying the mass, the change within the Catholic Church where the priest is now facing the congregation, was not supported by the Legio Maria.

Believes, teachings, doctrines
Feasts and events

Moral teaching is strong on prohibition of alcohol and adultery. Also speaking badly about others, backbiting and telling lies is taught to be wrong. The Holy Trinity is what the church believes in and the sign of the cross is the same as in the Catholic Church. The way Christmas, Easter and other feast days are celebrated is the same way the Catholics used to do it. There are many rules concerning the consumption of different types of food. Goat meat for example is not eaten, while mutton is liked very much. On the side of fish, the Tilapia (local name: Nyamami or Ngege) is the one that is eaten, while Lungfish and Nileperch (Mbuta) are rejected. Also not allowed is the consumption of termites and ants.
History of the church

The Legio Maria was started in 1962 by the spiritual leader and founder Simeo Messiah Melkio Ondeto. It started at a hill called Calvary somewhere near Migori. Ahead of this place on the way to Migori is Jerusalem, the big place for the Legio Maria. Baba Simeo Melkio was together with his mother. They started the church together. Baba Simeo came from nowhere. He said he was born in Awasi Angoro, when his followers tried to confirm that, they found out, that what he had told them was not the same as what the villagers said. They therefore concluded that he must have come from nowhere. When he and his mothers came, they taught the people about heaven. They went to Oruba Catholic Mission near Migori. The priest there did not allow him to enter the church and called him a devil. Ondeto then told the priest, that he was send by the father in heaven and therefore claimed to have back the things of his father, after which he went to the altar and took away the Holy Sacrament. The Catholics called the police. The police however did not find an offence and told Ondeto to start his own church. He acquired a piece of land there and built a church equipped with Catholic things. He took away the sins from his followers and performed many miracles. He could tell a person unknown to him exactly where he comes from, where the grandmother and grandfather is, where he went to school, wherever he has been. He could just read people like a book. That is how people knew that that is the son of God and could believe in him.

At the present time there is a split in the Legio Maria. But the Cardinal is very optimistic, that the matter will be settled and that the two groups will be together again soon.

Political activity

The church is not politically active at all. If a leader of a church wants to enter the political field, he has to resign from his church work first. Politicians can only be members and pray in the church. Politics should also not be talked about in church. Ufungamano is not liked. It wants only violence for nothing. It is like a wind that doesn't know where it blows. The Legio Maria sticks to the government and follows what the government says. The Pope of Legio does not involve himself in politics, except in the way of teaching.

African culture

Legio Maria is trying to eradicate cultural practices of the olden days. The word of God and the cultural traditions of the olden days can not go together.

Evangelization

The people who are not in Legio Maria can recognize the church members by their special clothes and by the rosary hung around the neck. Through this they can become interested and ask more about the church.

Gender

Women are very much part of the church and are well taken care of. Especially widows are cared for. At the same time it is impossible for them to be ordained pastors and become church leaders.

Differences and similarities with other churches

The big difference with other churches is that the Legio Maria claims that Jesus has come back to them. They believe in 'Baba Messiah'. Other churches don't like to hear that. For them Jesus was only the man from Israel. Legio Maria follows the prophecy that a black Jesus has come in the person that founded it and who performed a lot of miracles. In development matters, the Legio Church is very much together with other churches. The Cardinal is very well known to the leaders of CCA, Matthew Ajugua and Voice of Salvation and Healing, Silas Owiti. The way of praying and the faith are however very different. The Legio believes very much in the sacrament, which they don't.
Interview 5:
African Divine Church

Place: church headquarters at Boyani, Vihiga District
Date: 20.12.2000

Personal history of the interviewed pastor:
During the time of the split of the African Divine Church from the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) the interviewed person was a child. His parents were among the followers of Saul Chabuga.
Born in 1937 he used to attend the church services of the PAOC mission at Nyang'ori. In 1944 he was staying with the Canadian Missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Keller. They were taught songs and prayers. Later when Keller died, he was continuing to stay at the mission which was now under Mr. Morrison, the next missionary in charge.
As the child of the first supporters of Chabuga, he then grew up in the ADC. As a young man he was asked by the leader to work with the church as a preacher and pastor. From 1966 he was one of the secretaries of the church. Later he was chosen to be a treasurer and remained close to the leader until the death of the latter.
He is also a pastor in charge of a local church.

Ways of worshipping:
First people have to confess their sins by declaring openly what they had done wrong. This includes the pastor. After that, there is a prayer followed by songs. Then comes the preaching and after that the offering.
The singing is accompanied by small and big drums and by dancing.
During the church service people also speak in tongues.
The Lord’s Supper is celebrated only on the day of baptism. The baptism is done by immersion, the way the Pentecostal churches and the African Inland Church are doing it.
The way of praying, celebrating weddings etc. is done in the same way as in the Pentecostal church the ADC has split from.
Healing and casting out of demons is very common.

Beliefs, teachings, doctrines
Feasts and events
People have to become saved and from that day onward stop bad behaviours like drinking alcohol. For the rest, the doctrines are much the same as in the Pentecostal church.
The founding of the church is being celebrated every ten years (1989, 1999).

History of the church
In 1949 there was fighting within the Nyang’ori Mission of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. There was a group opposing the Canadian missionary Morrison on issues.
The leader of this group was Saul Chabuga, a local chairman of the churches branch of Gamalenga. He and his followers were expelled from the church by Mr. Morrison and after leaving, he took along a big number of followers, including entire communities belonging to small outstation churches of the mission. Very soon even the Luo people at Nyahera followed.
One of the main reasons for the conflict was that Morisson wanted to install a new African Pastor and had chosen Jacob Ananda from Bunyore, the neighbouring Luyia area. Ananda was rejected by Chabugas people, because he had married a lady from Nyang'ori and was therefore considered an in-law. Their customs did not allow for them to be led by an in-law. Morrison told them that they have to leave the Pentecostal church if they are not ready to accept Ananda.
They started what the first called ‘Pentecostal Assemblies B’. Bwana Hunter, the District Commissioner from Kakamga, came with policemen and arrested Chabuga and a number of his followers for interrogation. After that, they were ordered to drop the name ‘Pentecost B’ and to choose a different name for their new church. The DC was satisfied when in 1950 a constitution was drafted that showed no dangerous activities.
On July 17, 1952 the certificate was issued by the registrar general.
Chabuga became the bishop of the newly registered African Divine Church.
After his death, his son James was chosen in 1971 to be the next Bishop.
Political activity

The church abstains from political activity. When people are saved, it becomes very difficult to get involved in this, since when being a Christian, you are supposed to talk as a Christian. The bishop is not issuing political statements. Politicians can be members of the church, but can not say anything political in the church. The church is not part of the Ufungamano initiative although it participates in the National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCK).

African culture

There is dancing and clapping in the church, but in a Godly way, not the way it was done traditionally. Polygamous men can join the church, but can not hold any office and can not become pastors.

Evangelization

The church is very active in preaching and singing at market places. This they do systematically in many towns in different parts of Western Kenya and other parts of Kenya. By so doing they spread the gospel and at the same time win new members. Since this method is very successful, the church has grown very big. There are now 1.1 million members.

Gender

The women can become leaders only among themselves. They can not lead the church service or be pastors.

Differences and similarities with other churches

The ADC resembles the Pentecostal Churches very much and has a lot in common with other independent churches from that tradition. It differs however in the way of evangelizing, since in this field it is much more active than most of the others.
Interview 6:
Roho Israel Church of God

Place: Bishop’s house at Nyamasaria, Kisumu District
Date: 21.12.2000

Personal history of the interviewed bishop:

He entered the Roho Israel Church of God (Roho Israel) in 1981. Before he was in the Sayun Church of God, which he had joined in 1978 and in which he was a leader on a lower, local level. There was a leadership struggle in the Sayun Church, which he did not like. He wanted to pray in an atmosphere of peace.

The Holy Spirit showed him Roho Israel, where he was soon made to be an elder. He was stationed in the headquarters in Nyakach, before the headquarters had been moved by James Kisibo, the present leader and Archbishop, to Maragoli.

In 1985 he was moved to Maragoli after he had been the assistant of the bishop in Nyakach. When he came to this new area, he was put back in a very low rank, since the leaders in this area were many. He agreed to that, since his intention was not to be a leader, but to serve God and spread his word. The leader of the church, Archbishop James Kisibo, liked the way he was doing his work and made him to climb up again until he was made bishop of Kisumu district. In the whole church there are ten bishops.

Ways of worshipping:

When somebody is sick and wants to be healed, the spiritual leader lays hands on the sick person. In the Sayun Church, where he was before, they spread a cloth on the sick and hold up a cross in front of the person. But the interviewed person likes the way of letting God work straight, without any other means in between.

Drums are beaten in praise of God. The dancing is done in a holy way, where women dance on this and men on that side. The dancing is done when facing up to God, in the right way the Holy Spirit wants it and not the way it was done traditionally, where people faced each other.

The Spirit is speaking to the people when they praise God. No work of witchdoctors or diviners is involved. Only God is the one that works.

The main day for the church service is Saturday (Sabbato), not Sunday. People pray together when the service starts, then comes the confession of sins. The door of the church is then opened and people look towards the door.

Then people pray individually and praise God for the forgiveness of sins. Somebody who sits in front, at the sinagogi, closes this prayer session. Then there are songs. After this people testify what they have experienced in their life with God.

Then one of the people up there tells the people which verse of the Bible to open, after which one of them reads it out aloud as the others read along.

The people who are preaching later will stick to this foundation of the word, laid through the Bible reading. There can be two or three people who are preaching and teaching.

There is singing again and beating drums and ‘the bell’ accompanied by dancing and praising God. Then there is a collection of money. After this, the leader in the sinagogi ends the prayer with his closing words.

Then all the people greet each other again. As opposed to the Roho Musalaba Church, where people don’t shake hands, the congregation in Roho Israel great each other with strong shaking of hands and singing together, before the service is closed.

Beliefs, teachings, doctrines

Feasts and events

Drinking of alcohol and smoking of tobacco is forbidden. Also going to see the witchdoctor is not allowed. During the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, some other liquid is used to replace the wine.

There are rules attached to the Sabbath day. People have to stay in the house.

On Thursday the faithful pray in their houses, not in the church. On the day before that, the men don’t come close to their wives. And the same abstinence is observed on Friday, since the Sabbath follows that day. People have to be clean on Sabbath and must therefore also not quarrel or fight with anybody nor annoy anybody on Friday.
There is a special ceremony for wedding and also one for the new birth of a child. After eight days it is brought out of the house and gets gifts from the Christians.

Christmas is celebrated and the day is used also as a day of meeting of all the members in the headquarters, where the Archbishop is staying. There is the celebration of the Lord’s Supper attached to it. On Easter there is also a church service, but the celebrations are much less than on Christmas.

The foundation of the church is celebrated only at the headquarters of the church and only the bishops go for that celebration.

History of the church

The present Archbishop and leader, James Kisibo, used to be a member of African Israel Nineveh, before he started his own church in 1963. The Holy Sprit told him to start a new church. It was not because of leadership wrangles or any other fighting. The leader of the Israel Nineveh church even gave Kisibo his blessings.

First there were only a few members. It grew fast and spread to Nairobi, South Nyanza and other places. There are now 278 churches from Maragoli up to Musoma in Tanganyika. The biggest density is in South Nyanza. Nairobi also has a bishop.

There are a number of other churches bearing the name of Roho that have in the course of time split from Roho Israel.

Political activity

Politics of the world have nothing to do with the church. The chief of the area might call the bishop of Roho Israel to pray before the start of the area meeting. After praying however he will remain quiet and will not contribute at all to the political discussion. A Christian should not enter into politics, since he can only work for one master, who is God.

African culture

The interviewed person could not see how the African culture should come in the church. Drums, bell and dancing have some reference to the local ways of doing things. The driving out of daemons are now done in the name of Jesus Christ, not in the traditional way any more.

The leaders of the church must not be a polygamist. The men among the normal members however can have as many wives as they wish and can also marry more once they have become a member of Roho Israel. This applies to the traditional way of marriage. Once somebody has married in church, he can not do that with another additional wife.

The tradition of wife inheritance can only be observed by the ordinary members of the church. The leaders are not allowed to practice it.

Evangelization

Many people join because of being healed by people of Roho Israel. Otherwise it is the word of mouth that spreads the news of Roho Israel. People join because of seeing and hearing.

Gender

Women are wearing special dresses. There are leadership ranks for the women. They can preach in the church, but not sit in the sinagogi. The can only lead fellow women spiritually, but can not become leaders of the whole church or climb into the ranks of bishops.

Differences and similarities with other churches

There is very little difference between Roho Israel and Israel Nineveh, where it came from. It is only the heart of a person that may tell him or her to be in this church or in the other.
Interview 7:  
Nomiya Church

Place: Bishop's house at Nyabondo, Nyando District  
Date: 10.01.2000

Personal history of the interviewed bishop:

He was born into the Nomiya Church. His parents were members and therefore he followed the order of all the initiation rites the church has. He is a pastor who is in church of the area which belonged to his father before. All the people of the area are worshipping in it on Sunday. He worked for the Government for 37 years but has now retired. After retirement he became the bishop of Koru Diocese.  
While he was working as a civil servant he was already a teacher in his church. He is now a high leader in the church. His father was the third Archbishop of the church.  
He is involved in the work of development and in advising the church members in many ways concerning their lives as a hole. In the local church he is serving as a pastor, while at the same time serving as a bishop, responsible to the Archbishop.

Ways of worshipping:

Before somebody enters into the church, the shoes have to be removed and left outside. There is a liturgy that is followed closely. They start worshipping at 8.00 AM and finish at 10.00 AM. There are specific hymns for the Nomiya Church. The prayers also are unique. There is also special Nomiya scripture from which the teachings are drawn. There are seven stages of the 'mass', containing singing, praying, preaching and collection of money. A very important feature of the Nomiya Church is the circumcision of men, which has its special way of celebration and prayer. During prayers they intercede for the Government and for the poor, the pregnant women and other people in need. If somebody dies, they also read a mass on the funeral service.

Beliefs, teachings, doctrines  
Feasts and events

Somebody who is a leader must have a wife. He must not drink alcohol or smoke tobacco. He is not allowed to inherit the wife of a deceased brother. He must not attend local meetings and involve himself in secular problems. The founder of the church taught his follower that Jesus is the son of God. Others believe that Jesus is God. The Nomiya Church does not believe that. As the son of God he was a prophet above all the others, but not God himself. This teaching is following what is written in the Bible. If somebody challenges that, they open the Bible for proof. The Spirit also is not God. Everybody has a spirit. The Holy Spirit does not play a role. Only God the Father is God. The faith of the Nomiya Church has been given directly by God. That is how the name comes about, which means: 'It has been given to me' or 'He has given to me'.

Some churches preach, that the sick should only be prayed for, but not brought to the hospital. The Nomiya church teaches a different message. Somebody who is sick must be brought to a doctor. On Thursdays there is a special session for the teachings of the church, called 'catechism', where people learn for instance how to pray before taking a meal. In the evenings a bell is rang to remind people in their houses that they should pray. The same happens at later at night and early in the morning. After a women has given birth, she has to stay in the house for 14 days and must not share a bed with the husband during that time. After this the child has to be baptized. The lady must not go to church for 66 days. During these 66 days she must not wash her husband's clothes. She must just be left alone. The most important sign in the Nomiya Church is Circumcision of the male members. This is drawn from the Bible: Luke 2,21. Jesus Christ was circumcised after eight days. This is why a boy child has to be circumcised also eight
days after birth and any man who enters the church as an adult. Also Abraham received the law of circumcision: Genesis 17.9.
The day for church service is Sunday. There is the tradition of collecting ten percent of the wealth of the members once a year.
Christmas is being celebrated, other feasts like Easter are not celebrated.
January 11 is the day for remembering the death of the founder. March 1 is celebrated, because on that day God spoke to Yohanna Owalo. New Year is also celebrated.

History of the church

The founder, Yohanna Owalo, was first a Catholic. He was upset by the Catholic statement of Jesus being God and Mary being given the title ‘mother of God’. He received messages from God that included the law of circumcision of all men. Many ethnic groups in Kenya practice circumcision, but not because of the law of God: The Kisii, the Luhya, the Kikuyu. Owalo was now told to teach the Luo about circumcision, although they traditionally don’t do it. Jesus Christ was also circumcised, that is why a Luo Christian has to be circumcised also.
The Nomiya Church was founded in 1907. By then it was called Nomiya Luo Church. Later when the church wanted to spread into other areas also, the word ‘Luo’ was dropped in the official name.
Yohanna Owalo was a catechist in the Catholic Church. He later became a member of the Seventh Day Adventists and again later of the Anglican Church. He received the messages from God when being in the Anglican Church.
He also lived for some years in Mombasa. God spoke to him over a lengthy period of time and told him to start an own church. The colonial government was afraid of political upheaval that could spread from such a movement. After all it was the first breakaway from any major church in the history of the Mission work in Nyanza. It was therefore difficult to get registered.
After his death, Owalo was buried in Omboch (Asembo), where the church headquarters are.
Benjamin Oundo, the father of the interviewed bishop, was the third Archbishop of the church. He was followed by the present one, who is Gideon C. Owalo, the son of the founder.

Political activity

The church is not politically active. The leaders have the order not to involve themselves in worldly conflicts. The Nomiya Church is not part of the Ufungamano Initiative.

African culture

The Nomiya Church has its own cultural values and teachings that have been revealed to Yohanna Owalo by God. There is therefore not much room for traditional practices and customs.

Evangelization

There are regular big meetings being held in different areas. During that time outsiders can see the church and its activities and can become interested in joining.

Gender

There are women groups. Women can not be pastors or church leaders.

Differences and similarities with other churches

The teachings about the Trinity, which other churches consider to be the foundation of their faith, is rejected by the Nomiya Church. There have however been groups within Nomiya who wanted to change these teachings. They have subsequently broken away and started their own church.
Interview 8:
Legio Maria of African Church Mission (St. Peter, Manyatta)

Place: Centre of St. Peter’s Parish, Manyatta/Kisumu
Date: 19.01.2001

Personal history of the interviewed pastor:

He entered the Legio Maria of African Church Mission (Legio Maria) in 1963, when he was a child. He was called by the Holy Spirit when he was in class 5 of primary school. His parents were also members of the church.

Ways of worshipping:

The rosary is being used and another chain with beads attached to it, called ‘Katena Antifon’. The latter one is used to drive out Satan. It is only found in Legio Maria. The Catholic Missionaries did not give it to the people, because they knew that it is holding powers. They gave only the well-known rosary. The Katena Antifon is used for prayers in the evening and in the morning.

When the Messiah came he gave it to the Legio Maria people. To pray along with it takes a long time. When Satan sees it, he just cries. He is asked who he is and a conversation can be held with him to find out who is with him. He is then removed with the help of that special rosary. The person possessed by him is then healed and can leave the bed and eat.

When people want to join, they first take an oath and are then baptized. After that they can also drive out evil spirits and curse Satan. There is also a prayer of the ‘Jo-Mikael’ (the people of the Arch-Angel St. Michael). They can pray for a possessed person in the evening, wearing a red dress and holding up the cross.

Another prayer is prayed by the ‘Jo-Katherina’ (the people of St. Catherine). They wear green clothes.

There is also the Holy Mass. There is a Sunday mass and a different one for different feast days. There is a mass for the dead. The masses can be read in reference to problems that people have.

Beliefs, teachings, doctrines

Feasts and events

The Holy Spirit is the greatest leader of the church. He can do anything.

The people who are priests in Legio Maria are not priests because of education, but because of the power of the Holy Spirit that they have received. The Spirit leads them much more than a high education. Would the Holy Spirit ever leave the church, it would surely collapse.

History of the church

The Legio Maria was started in 1963. The founder, Baba Simeo was living in Migori District. He said that he had died and risen again on the third day. He taught people that they should not drink alcohol and not smoke tobacco, so that they can be saved. Those are the things that he saw in heaven. He saw that the people drinking and smoking should be burned.

He was teaching especially the Catholic People and was called a prophet.

He told people that his mother was with him and that they needed each other very much. He recommended his mother to the faithful. By the time she appeared to them, the followers of her son were already many. The mother died in 1966 in the homestead of one of the members. That place is still honoured very much and the Christmas ceremony is being held there every year. The Holy Spirit revealed that this mother was the Virgin Mary in Africa.

Her son was healing many people by laying his hand on them and with the same hand he was driving out many evil spirits that had possessed people. Even by his mere preaching, evil spirits could be told to leave those possessed by them and people could be healed from illness. Seeing this, many people joined Legio Maria.

Once, the spirits, which he was trying to drive out, called him: “Jesus the son of God, why have you come to disturb us”. He then shouted at them and chased them away.
A short time after that, he and his followers were in the home of a man called Johannes Baro. In the evening of that day at around 6 PM, the Holy Spirit came down. Before he came down they heard songs coming from the east. They could however not see anybody singing, they only heard the hymns coming from many, many voices. They sung four songs: “O God, our help in ages past”, “Ave Maria”, “Alleluia”, “My Jesus has come”. After this they heard a big and loud thunder and felt a strong wind coming. Many people fell down and spoke in different tongues. The Holy Spirit called out: “This is Jesus Christ”. From that day onwards, Simeo was called ‘Baba Messiah’. The followers of him went along with him, knowing that he was Jesus Christ, who is an African.

After the Holy Spirit had come down, Baba Messiah ordered people to climb a mountain called Mount Calvary, for he wants to build a big homestead there for the Legio Maria people.

When he did that, the Kenyatta government started to disturb him very much. There was also a chief in that area called Serrubabel Baraza, he said that Simeo was a bad man who spoils the women. Also the Priests of the Catholic Church tried to fight against him. His followers cried out to him: “How can we get the Holy Communion?” He saw the sheep coming in big number and they did not know that Priests would be selected from amongst them. It was the Holy Spirit that started to select the leaders. He also chose the assistant of Baba Messiah, Pope Timotheo Ahitler. He also chose somebody to be the Cardinal Dean and Archbishops and Bishops. Baba Messiah sent those people to many places.

He chose also somebody, who was given the strong power of the Holy Spirit. This was a lady called Gaudencia Aoko. She was also sent out to another place. She had incredible powers and could do a lot of miracles. Many people thought, that Aoko was the leader of Legio Maria, but it was Baba Messiah who gave her the power. When she was to be arrested by the government, the car to bring her away did not move.

By that time many people got salvation in different ways.

When Baba Messiah died, he left the Legio Maria with the Holy Spirit to be their teacher, but also told the people that he will continue to be with them.

The first Pope has died and his successor, Laurence Pius Ochiel, is now the leader of the Legio Maria Church. There are other ranks among the faithful that have been created. There are religious brothers and sisters, there are watchmen called ‘Jo-Mikael’. They are guarding the gates and nobody can enter, without being checked. The church spread and built many church buildings through buying of plots and through donations of plots by members. St. Peter Manyatta is built on a plot donated by somebody. The land title deeds however must be written out in the name of the Church.

The Legio Maria is one. But because of certain desires there can be problems. In a family there can be an elder and a younger brother. The younger one can not make himself the older one.

When Baba Messiah died there was a problem with people who wanted to have his wealth. He however had given all the property to the Legion Maria of African Church Mission and registered everything under that name. He did not register anything in a person’s name. There were however people who wanted personal riches. This desire is still there. But the Legio Maria is only one. There is no other group.

Political activity

The Legio Maria has only got the Holy Spirit as a teacher. Many churches in Kenya have entered into politics. Only the Legio Maria has not. The founder told the followers that they should not enter into politics, because nobody can work for two masters, the government and God. That is why most of the Legio people who used to work for the government have left that work to be only followers of the church.

Even the Archbishop residing at St. Peter Manyatta left to work for the railway company when he was a young man. Ordinary members are not banned from taking on political offices. Leaders however can not hold such posts.

The Legio Maria Church is very far away from the Ufungamano Initiative.

African culture

The traditional African culture has been rejected and even fought against by the Legio Maria. It is only the culture of the Holy Spirit that matters and whatever Baba Messiah and Mama Maria have left behind.

Evangelization

Almost all the 42 ethnic groups in Kenya are represented in Legio Maria. Even in Tanzania and Uganda the Legio is present. It should not be mistaken to be a Luo movement only.
Gender

The women have a chairlady in every church, diocese and archdiocese. There is also a chairlady for all the women in the church. The women have groups in the church that initiate development activities and collect money for the building of churches.

Women can not be priests.

Differences and similarities with other churches

The Legio Maria differs from the other independent churches in that it is like a copy of the Catholic Church and the service of the two churches is just the same. Unlike other independent churches the Legio is upholding the sacraments. Some independent churches immerse people when baptizing. Not so the Legio Maria.

The difference with the Catholic Church is that they don’t have the Holy Spirit as much as Legio Maria and that the Holy Spirit has told the Legio people not to do certain things that the Catholics do, like drinking and smoking. The Catholics also do not remove their shoes before entering a holy place. The Legio people do so.
Interview 9:  
**Holy Trinity Church in Africa**

**Place:** church headquarters at Manyatta/Kisumu  
**Date:** 20.01.2001

Personal history of the interviewed pastor:

His father had been in the Anglican Church and left it in 1957. He later became a church teacher in the Holy Trinity Church of Africa (HTCA). The son was therefore baptized and grew up in the same church.  
In 1980 he got a very severe accident and had to stay in hospital for more than three years. When he left the hospital finally, he got another accident. Arriving home he was in a serious condition and people already started the traditional way of mourning, since they believed he was dead. He however heard a voice at the same time that told him: “Arise and go and preach the word.” People were astonished to see that the one they had believed to be dead had in fact risen from the bed and was shouting. The words he said they could not understand. They thought he was mad. He preached for three weeks in this language that he himself could not understand. After three weeks he spoke again in Dholuo. He preached and was taken by the local pastor to the church where he continued preaching for six months. He was then given the chance to study the word of God for three years at ‘Faith College’, Nairobi. After completing he became a preacher. He worked as a preacher for two years and then went back to study for another three years. After that he was ordained a pastor in 1986. He was first stationed in Mombasa and was then transferred to Kisumu to work as a pastor and at the same time as a teacher in the local Bible school, where some students are training for being a pastor.

Ways of worshipping:

For the church service there is a prayer book that is also used in the Anglican Church.  
There are other services on weekdays, when the prayer book is not used.  
On such occasions the pastor is opening the service by a prayer. Then there are choruses and praise-songs for about 20-30 minutes, after which the people sit down. Then the Bible is read. Another worship song follows. Then there are announcements being read out.  
After this, it is time for preaching. The preacher will preach according to the way he has prepared the sermon for the day. The spirit of God will direct him as to how much time to use for that.  
The Sunday service follows the prayer book. On Sundays there can also be the celebration of the Lord’s Supper with the Holy Communion. This is done about twice a month.  
The church choir is using drums and tambourines for certain hymns. These instruments are however only used in case there is a choir singing. There are also hymns that need a humble way of singing, where no drums are wanted. The dancing must be biblical and glorifying God.

Beliefs, teachings, doctrines  
Feasts and events

Any teaching must be in harmony with the Scripture, the word of God. Any doctrine out of the Bible is prohibited. Holy Communion and baptism are very important.  
Salvation is only found by accepting Jesus Christ alone.  
The idea of being saved is important. The personal sins are forgiven from then on and the person is in harmony with God. The time and day does not matter. The time of salvation must not be made into a cult and to be glorified. What matters is to be saved and born again.  
After being born again, people must now see your faith and salvation. You must not drink and smoke any more and not do any other sinful acts.  
Christmas is celebrated, the Passover also - that is the day Christ resurrected. There are only these two feasts. The day when the church started is not celebrated.

History of the church

It split from the Anglican Church in 1957. There was a misunderstanding between a white pastor in Maseno and the African pastors. It was about the church doctrines. By that time a born-again believer would have to quit his home after the death of his wife. Also he was not supposed to enter a home where somebody has died in order to console the bereaved. That was the main course of the split.
There were two pastors. Bishop Ajwuoga and Bishop Owira were pastors among others. They led the other pastors. In 1961 there was a misunderstanding between the two. The disagreement was on the question who should be the leader of the Church of Christ in Africa (Johera). Owira then remained with the HTCA, while Ajwuoga stayed with the Church of Christ in Africa. Bishop Owira was the leader of the HTCA until his death. The highest leader is now called Archbishop. There are Bishops in Kisumu, Siaya and Nairobi. In 1999 there were over 8700 members.

Political activity

The HTCA is very active in the field of development. It runs different schools and an orphanage home. A pastor or the bishop can speak out on political issues, especially when people are deprived of their rights or of what they are supposed to get from the government. God doesn't allow church leaders to remain quiet when his people are suffering, or when corruption rules the day. Any matter that interferes with the people of God must be rectified. The Ufungamano Initiative is not being supported by HTCA. It is the parliament alone that has to change the constitution. Therefore the bishop has never gone to the meetings of Ufungamano.

African culture

Some traditional dances are done without control and in a way naked. This is not a Christian way of doing it. Nakedness is not of God. Women have to wear long dresses and dance decently. In Luoland, very often the word of God is mixed with tradition. The HTCA does not do that. It is for instance very common to appease the dead. A Christian however knows that a person who has died can not come back and attack somebody. God is the security. The tradition of ‘unveiling of the cross’ formerly celebrated some time after the death of a church member has been rejected as something rather cultural and not in line with biblical teaching. This ceremony, celebrated at the grave with the help of a pastor, has now been abolished. There are distinguished members of the church, who study the word of God even in far away countries. Through this they find out, what sound doctrine is and can identify things that are not in line with the Scripture. A number of such things were only brought up by culture and cropped in because pastors wanted to please the Africans. Unless they are in harmony with the Scriptures, the African traditions are rejected. Those that do not collide with the Bible are not taught to be wrong. Polygamist families are accepted but after conversion one must not add another wife, since that would be adultery. The Bible does not accept leaders to have more than one wife. St. Paul says that leaders should be husbands of only one wife.

On wife inheritance: The Bible says that before a woman is 60, she should not live alone. A younger widow should therefore marry again, but she can only marry somebody, who is unmarried himself or who has also lost his wife.

Evangelization

There is a group of 'evangelists' and a group of 'church planters'. They go to town and do open air preaching in public places, accompanied by a choir. There is also door-to-door evangelism, where pastors are going round a certain estate to preach the word to every house. Hereby the pastor should only be an agent of God and not of the church. If anybody asks what church he is from, he can be told and invited.

Gender

There is a group called 'mothers union'. It keeps a bursary for instance to sponsor orphans for going to school. They also do handwork, like making ropes to earn funds for the church. Women can be leaders of their own groups, but can in no way become pastors. That would be against the words of God. It is done in other churches in order to please the women. The HTCA however sticks to the Bible against all odds. Churches who allow women to be pastors are becoming cults.

Differences and similarities with other churches

The doctrines and the church service are almost the same as in the Church of Christ in Africa (CCA). The CCA is having a celebration day called ‘rapar’, the anniversary remembrance of the day when it was founded. Another difference is that in the CCA is celebrating something they call the ‘unveiling of the cross’. This used to be done also in the HTCA, but the more the leaders thought about it, the more they realized, that it is unbiblical.
Interview 10:
African Israel Nineveh Church

Place: Kisumu District Hospital, Kisumu
Date: 01.02.2001

Personal history of the interviewed pastor:
Both parents are members of African Israel Church Nineveh (AICN). He was born in 1960 and on the 8th day dedicated to God according to the traditions of the church.
The mother had been in the African Inland Church, while the father had not been in any church.
The interviewed person grew up in a Christian way. At the age of 18 he decided to receive Jesus Christ as his personal saviour, when he heard somebody preaching on Matthew 28.
In 1978 he became very active in the youth movement of the church. In 1984 he was appointed pastor of one of the local churches in Kericho. Later he became one of the senior ministers of the church. Now he is a ‘chief minister’ in the Muuroni Region. At the headquarters level he is the ‘international director for legal services and human resources’. He is also teaching at a college of the church, since he is holding a diploma in ‘evangelism, discipleship and Christian fellowship’.
He is married and has six children.

Ways of worshipping:
The main day for worshipping is Friday. Sunday is also a day for prayer.
On Friday the AICN commemorates the death of Jesus Christ, when he shed his blood in order to bring people to God and to cleanse our sins.
The church service starts at 9.00 AM. At 12.00 midday, all of the church members kneel down to remember how Jesus died on the cross. They confess their sins, pray and worship by hitting drums and singing. By 3.00 PM the service is finished and people go home.
Those who have to work on Friday should remember the death of Jesus at 9.00 AM and in their thoughts to be with their brethren who are by that time in church.
The Friday service starts with singing hymns. While the singing is going on, sins have to be confessed one by one. People stand up, confess and ask for forgiveness. Then they sit down again and continue singing.
After the individual confession all the people stand up and confess jointly.
Then there is a Bible reading, for instance Matthew 26, the crucifixion of Jesus.
Then the people fellowship together by singing three songs and beating the drums.
After this people pray individually, followed by a prayer of a leader on behalf of everybody.
Now comes the time for prophecy. Anybody who has received a revelation should stand up and tell the others about it. Some people speak in tongues during the service. This however does not always happen, since it is a gift from the Spirit.
The celebration of the Lord’s Supper plays no role in AICN. Whenever two or three are together and eating or having tea, they pray together to remember the Lord.
It is the togetherness in the Spirit that has always been stronger in AICN than the material signs.
Preaching takes a very significant role in the service. The pastor can do the preaching himself, but can also ask other members to preach to the people.
On Sunday there is also a service, which has its most obvious sign in the procession that takes places before. The congregation and their leader walk along the road holding banners up, while singing and beating drums. This habit has been copied by many other churches.
After this there is a normal service.
There is the tradition within AICN, that a child has to be dedicated to the Lord by a pastor, eight days after birth.
Beliefs, teachings, doctrines
Feasts and events
The AICN believes in the Trinity. It also believes that salvation is not by works, but by faith through Jesus Christ. It is only Jesus who can save.
It is not allowed to drink alcohol and to `move with ladies'. Going to discos is sinful.
Anything that the Bible prohibits is not allowed.
An important rule is also not to eat any flesh (meat) on Friday.
That Friday is being taken as the Holy Day has no other reason than the fact, that it was revealed to the founder by the Holy Spirit to do so.
The meaning of the name ‘African Israel Nineveh’ is: ‘African’ stands for the land where the church was founded, ‘Israel’ refers to the people that belong to God and have been chosen, ‘Nineveh’ refers to the city to which Jonah was sent and that was a place of sin. The whole world is a place of sin that has to be changed by the people of God.
The flag used by the church has the colours green, white and red.
Near Nineveh, the headquarters of the church, there is a mountain called `Mount Sinai`. On top of it is a rock besides which the Lord spoke to the founder and after that made a spring of water to come out of the rock. This place is still honoured very much.
Pasaka (Easter) is celebrated as well as Christmas. Christmas is celebrated by all members who can make it to Nineveh, the headquarters of the church. Before the Christmas celebrations there is the annual general meeting of the church on December 24.

History of the church
The church started in 1938. The founder of the church was a member of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. The Lord spoke to him to leave that church and to start a new church. The leader of the PAOC by that time was Otto Keller. He went and asked permission from Keller to go and start his own church. During those days of the colonial government it was not easy for an African to do this, since the suspicion would always be there that it could be a political movement.
The founder, Paul David Kivuli from Nyang'ori area, had however received the order from God, which made him to be persistent in his request to Mr. Otto Keller.
In the year 1942 Keller gave him a letter indicating his consent. Now the new church could be registered.
It has spread now all over East Africa.
There was no disagreement between Kivuli and the Missionaries. The letter given by Keller is proof of that. The latter even told Kivuli to go and try; and in case he would fail, to bring his people back to the Pentecostal church.
Kivuli obviously had great gifts given by God, which might have threatened the work of Mr. Keller in his Mission. When Keller tried to silence him but did not succeed, he thought it better to let him leave and try his own venture.
The first name of the church was ‘Huru Salvation’ (freedom salvation). This was sparking off suspicions and prompted the Governor, the highest official in the colony, to come himself to the headquarters and to do investigations as to whether this movement was connected with the Mau Mau. Only after this, when Kivuli and his followers were found to be ‘clean’ and doing no other than worshipping the Lord, the church could be officially registered.
It was through revelation again that the name was changed later. After prayer the Holy Spirit spoke and gave the name African Israel Nineveh. This was in 1942.
It is common that church members in one area hear the voice of God speaking on one issue and saying how a particular thing should be done. This is written down and kept. If after a short time a person comes with a message from a completely different place where God has spoken to one of them and these messages are the same in content and if this is again repeated three or four times, then the church knows that this message is truly a new rule given from God.
The present leader of the church is John Kivuli, the grandson of the founder. The policy concerning the leadership succession is: If from that family comes a capable person, he is given the post. If not, somebody from outside the family is chosen.

Political activity
The church is active politically. The members are free to associate with any political party. The constitution of the church differentiates between ‘unnecessary politics’ -that should be shunned- and necessary politics.
The pastors can give their personal opinion on political issues, but not claim that to be the opinion of the church. The same applies to the Archbishop, who is the overall leader.
During the last general elections in 1997, a very peculiar thing happened: The Archbishop himself contested for being a member of parliament in his area on a ticket of the ruling party KANU. He did however not hand in his name as a leader of the African Israel Church, but only as a private person, namely as John Kivuli.
He said publicly that he does not want to force any church member to follow him in the party were he is a member and that he completely leaves it to God whether he is chosen to win the election or not.
The church is not a member of the Ufungamano initiative. The Archbishop attends the meeting in the name of the National Christian Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCK), since all the member churches of NCCK are called to participate. He does however not go in his official attire in order not to be to closely associated with his church.

**African culture**

Since the church is mainly in the Luhya and Luo areas, the question of circumcision could easily come in since the former practice circumcision as a rite of initiation, while the latter don't. It does however not matter for the church whatever such traditional practices may be. They are done outside the concern of the church and do therefore not affect it.

All the ethnic groups included in the church are left to whatever tradition they have.

Drums and the African way of singing are featuring prominently in the church.

Polygamy is not supported by the New Testament. Polygamists can enter the church as members, but can thereafter not marry more wives. Pastors must be the husband of only one wife.

Wife inheritance is not accepted, if the one to inherit is already married.

**Evangelization**

The public gatherings and especially the processions are meant to glorify God. Only if somebody asks, he or she will be given instructions how to get into contact with the church.

**Gender**

Women can also be pastors. When the present archbishop is going away, his wife takes over as the acting archbishop. When the founder of the church died, his wife took over as the leader.

Women pastors do the same things as the male ones and are in charge of local churches just as their male counterparts. They have also climbed into the ranks of chief ministers and senior ministers.

**Differences and similarities with other churches**

African Israel Nineveh church members wear a cap that bears that name. There are also other clothes unique to AICN and the way the processions are carried out is also different from those churches that have later copied this way of showing the faith.
Interview 11: 
Ruwe Holy Ghost Church of East Africa

Place: Church compound at Kondele/Kisumu
Date: 03.02.2001

Personal history of the interviewed pastor:

He became to be a member of the Ruwe Holy Ghost Church of East Africa (Ruwe) in 1951, when he was born. In the same year his father, husband of six wives, passed away. His father was also born into the same church. He was chosen to be a church teacher later. He is now in a local church in Kondele-Kisumu with a congregation of about 260 Christians.

Since he has been doing his work well, he was later made a pastor and has now been put in charge of 16 churches. He is married and has got big children.

There are much more educated people in the church, even people who hold university degrees. It is however because of his character and good work that he was chosen to be a leader.

Ways of worshipping:

In the church, the people are separated: The elderly are given a special section, the women also away from the men etc.

Before the pastor enters in the ‘sinagogi’, he finds the women praying certain prayers that are meant for private worshipping. When the pastor enters they stop.

He is holding up the Bible and is then reading from it. After this, he preaches to the congregation. Then he gives the people a chance to say whatever they have to say while he is listening. This chance is mainly taken by the older people in order to teach the younger ones. To finish this part up, the pastor offers a prayer.

During the service there is also singing, drumming and speaking in tongues.

The Lord’s Supper is celebrated once a month.

The main day for worshipping is Saturday, not Sunday.

Beliefs, teachings, doctrines

Feasts and events

The Sabbath day has to be honoured. There must not be any work done, it is reserved only for praying.

Drinking of alcohol, smoking, fighting with people and dancing in discos etc. is not allowed.

The faith in the Holy Spirit is very important. That is why they are also called the ‘Roho people’.

An important feast is the commemoration of the foundation of the church on January 15.

This celebration lasts for a whole week. It features the signs of fire and of the flag.

The flag is raised again the way it was raised when the church was started. The fire is a symbol to remember how their forefathers in faith were tortured and burned.

Other feast days are Christmas, Easter and New Year. On the eve of those feast days, the church members sleep in the church building.

History of the church

During the time the Holy Spirit entered into many people, there was a lot of fighting between those possessed by the Spirit and those that did not believe in that happening. Through this there were some people tortured and some people were burned to death. This was in 1934. In those olden days Spirit possession was not yet well known and had not yet happened to many people.

The one who started the church of Roho first, was a pastor in the Anglican Church and experienced this possession by the Holy Spirit. He talked to him, after which he left the Anglican Church and worshiped outside. His preaching brought the Holy Spirit upon many people and made them to fall down.

Those however who did not believe in this started to fight with him. It was the power of God that was with him. He was called Alfayo Odongo Mango and lived and worked in Ugenya in a place called Musanda.
The beginning of the Ruwe Church is connected with one person who was together with Odongo Mango. His name was Lawi Obonyo and he was killed with a spear after his companions had been burned to death. The Musanda Church sprang from the Ruwe Church. Ruwe is therefore the original one following Alfayo Odongo Mango. It was the none-Luos that left Ruwe and started Musanda. Ruwe is the name of the place in Ugenya where the church started and where its headquarters are. It is near the place called Musanda, which again has the headquarters of the other church mentioned.

**Political activity**

The church is active in development. For example in collecting money for children's school fees or for the transport of dead bodies to their homes for burials. If a politician comes to church during campaigning, he is free to speak to the people. On the election day however each member is free to vote for whoever he or she wants. The church can talk on political issues that are not good and have to be rectified. It is however not good for a church leader to become closely involved in politics. Ruwe is not concerned about the Ufungamano Initiative. It neither supports it nor rejects it.

**African culture**

The Holy Spirit talks to people and makes them a strong African church. Ruwe has some rules that have reference to the African culture. There are for instance certain types of food that are not eaten: Nileperch (mbuta), Catfish and others with no scales are forbidden by the Holy Spirit. During church ceremonies only sheep can be eaten but not goats.

**Evangelization**

There are many cases where the sick people are attended to very quickly by the church members and when somebody dies, they also help wholeheartedly as well as in financial needs of people who want to send their children to school, but can not afford the fees. These deeds make others to see and follow the church. Crusades and preaching in streets and market are not done.

**Gender**

The women play an important role. The elderly mothers are teaching the younger ones. They can not be pastors or leaders of the church.

**Differences and similarities with other churches**

The main day for worshipping is Saturday, not Sunday. Other churches have given women leadership post. For Ruwe it is not in line with the right faith if women can enter the 'sinagogi'. The members of Ruwe are not greeting others by shaking hands. The Bible says: "once you are out to work for God, don't greet the people along the road". They also do not eat with other people from the same dish or plate, since the one who ate with Jesus from the same dish was the one who betrayed him.
Interview 12:
Nomiya Fueny Maler

Place: Home of Rev. Daniel Oguso, Migosi/Kisumu
Date: 07.02.2001

Personal history of the interviewed church leader:

He started to be a member of Nomiya Fueny Maler (NFM) in 1988. He saw the way of prayer and other things like the practice of circumcision. He joined the congregation in their prayers and services and after one year he was circumcised and therefore became a ‘full member’. Before this he was a member of the Anglican Church.
He found the way the Anglicans are praying not lively enough (no dancing and singing rhythmic songs) and also saw that they don't have the Holy Spirit as much as the church he joined later.
He also did not like it that women were leaders in the Anglican church, which is contrary to the Bible.
After changing to NFM also his wife and children went along.
Although he was baptized before, he was now baptized again by immersion into a river. After this he was also circumcised.

Though still a young man, he has now climbed into the rank of being ‘rural dean’, which is the third person after the archbishop and the assistant archbishop. They are at the level of the mission (headquarters). Under them are the dioceses with their respective bishops, archdeacons and pastors.

Ways of worshipping:

There is a small book that is followed during Sunday services. Before entering the church everybody has to remove the shoes and leave them outside.
After entering the church people have to kneel down. The pastor in charge is now praying on behalf of the people gathered in the church. They then stand up and sing some songs, then kneel down and pray again following the book.
The book used for that is the same in all the Nomiya Churches, not only in NFM.
After that the people present give reports concerning the church. Then comes the preaching. The last part is the offering of 10 %.
The Bible is read before the reports are said.
Sometime during the prayers people speak in tongues.
Apart from the Sunday service there is another weekly service on Wednesday which is for the Holy Spirit alone. The Bible readings are only about the Holy Spirit. The prayer book is not used during that service. There are songs and drums and a lot of prayer for the sick.
The day for worship should really be Saturday, as it is done in the church where NFM has split from. In Kisumu town however the service is held on Sunday, because many people have to work on Saturday, which is still the main day (Sabbato) in the rural areas.

Beliefs, teachings, doctrines
Feasts and events

The ten commandments of Moses are followed closely.
The central sign is circumcision of all males. An uncircumcised person can not be a leader. The circumcision of a boy born into the church has to be carried out on the eight day. The baptism has to be done before that (this also applies to adult).
A girl has to be baptized after 14 days.
A child is baptized in the house by pouring of water. As an adult the same person has to be baptized again by immersion.
The NFM Church believes in Jesus Christ as the saviour and God. Different from the original Nomiya Church. NFM Church also believes in the Holy Trinity.
During the time of menstruation women are unclean and can not enter the church. They have to be purified after seven days.
When somebody comes from a place where there is a dead body, he or she has to be purified before entering the church. A dead body is something unclean.
A women who has given birth is also not clean and has to be purified.
If she has given birth to a son, she can not enter the church for 33 days. After this period of time she has to be purified. If it is a girl, the period extends to 66 days.
The purification is always done with water and has to be carried out by a pastor.
The celebration of Circumcision is very important. Christmas is celebrated, Easter not.
History of the church

The founder of Nomiya Fueny Maler was formerly a member of Nomiya Luo Sabbato. Nomiya Luo Sabbato came from the original Nomiya Luo Mission. The word “Luo” was erased later to make it Nomiya Mission. The original founder of Nomiya, Yohanna Owalo, had instructed his church to pray on Saturday. The colonial government however forced them to pray on Sunday.

After the death of Owalo, a disagreement arose between one group that wanted to go back to the original Saturday celebrations, while the other one claimed that the church should continue doing, what Owalo himself had done: to pray on Sunday.

The former therefore split and formed Nomiya Luo Sabbato Church. The split of NFM occurred because of doctrinal reasons: The Nomiya Luo Sabbato do not accept Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as being God. It was however the Holy Spirit, who told the founder in a dream that Jesus is the saviour. This revelation in a dream brought about the name “fueny maler”, which means “clear revelation” or “clean revelation’. The church was registered in 1975 by the founder Simeon Ndara Owang’. He is now an old man (around 90 years) and his son has got the post of the ‘dean’. The Archbishop (the highest office) is not from the family of the founder. The church has only spread within the area of the Luo.

Political activity

The NFM is abstaining completely from political activity. Members of the church can be politicians, leaders however cannot hold political office.

NFM has never been part of Ufungamano and has no stand on it.

African culture

The circumcision in the Nomiya churches does not resemble the traditional way of circumcision which is done by other tribes outside the Luo area. Before the circumcision is carried out, there are certain verses from the Bible to be read. If somebody joins who is already circumcised (for example a Luhya), he has to be cut symbolically with a small wound. The circumcised person has to stay in the house for a certain period.

Evangelization

NFM is only preaching through actions. It often happens that through the prayer of the members sick people are healed. After this the healed persons are likely to join the church. There are no crusades or other public prayers being held in markets etc.

There are now eight dioceses in the whole of Nyanza and more than 400 members.

Gender

Women can organize themselves in special groups, but can not become leaders.

Differences and similarities with other churches

The issue of Jesus Christ (and the Holy Spirit) being God has brought division between the Nomiya churches. That is why there can still be unrest between NFM and others like Nomita Luo Sabbato.

The way of worshipping is the same in all Nomiya branches. The difference with other independent churches is not very big. One difference is, that each church build by Nomiya has something called ‘kibla’. Each church has to face into the direction of North East.

Other differences: The purification rules, the rule that a dead body can not enter the church, the rule that the shoes have to be left outside the church.
Interview 13: 
Miracles and Wonders Church

Place: church headquarters at Manyatta/Kisumu
Date: 09.02.2001

Personal history of the interviewed pastor:

He became a member of the Miracles and Wonders Church (MWC) in 1980 after one of the elders had preached in his homestead at Migosi (01.05.80). Through this preaching he received the salvation by accepting Jesus Christ as his personal saviour.

He was encouraged to come to the church and attend the weekly fellowships. He would sometime also go out with a team of church members to hold crusades outside Kisumu municipality.

In 1983 he organized a crusade around his home area (which is Wich Lum near Usenge) for three days. During those three days many people received salvation. Afterwards a big church was build there, that later also produced other sister churches, one of them on a small island in Lake Victoria.

He became a teacher in the church and became a pastor in 1986. He has now risen to the post of an overseer in the Nyanza region with 21 churches under him, while still being the pastor of the local church in Manyatta/Kisumu.

Ways of worshipping:

On Sundays there is ‘praise and worship’ in the morning. The adults start around 10.00 AM, the children a bit later. The children have their own service.

After ‘praise and worship’, people give testimonies: About their lives before salvation and how it is now, after they have received Christ as their personal saviour.

This is followed by some teaching and then by singing. The preaching part of the service is started by contributions from different people, mainly church elders. Sometimes the passage of the Scripture that is the centre of the preaching of that day is read out. After this comes the main sermon of the main preacher of that day (20-30 minutes), who is normally the pastor of the church. This is followed by prayers. Before the end of the service there is an offering. The Lord’s Supper is celebrated around once a month. The Holy Communion is shared with everybody. On the last day of big crusades there is also the sharing of the Holy Communion.

During singing there are no drums or bells beaten. Only if a choir is leading the congregation in singing, they might use instruments like drums and kayamba.

The songs are lively and accompanied by clapping. People often get filled with the Holy Spirit at the end of singing. This leads to speaking in tongues. People can also start speaking in tongues after a long prayer.

Beliefs, teachings, doctrines

Feasts and events

The work of the Holy Spirit is an important part of the teaching, as well as the forgiveness of sins.

The power of faith and prayer is stressed.

The moral teaching is based on Galatians 5,19ff. The faithful are taught not to drink alcohol, not to smoke, how wives should behave to their husbands and vice versa.

Salvation happens at a particular time on a particular day. Somebody may be a member of the church, but not have this experience of receiving Christ in his life, after which he/she confesses the sins and becomes born again. It is very important to have this experience.

Healing and performing other miracles is a common feature. This happens through prayer and preaching. Laying of hands is rare and happens mainly during door to door preaching.

History of the church

Miracle and Wonders Church was established in 1978. It was founded by somebody who was a street preacher in Nairobi. He used to go to the pubs and preach to people during lunch hours or early in the morning. He would later proceed to places like bus stations, would preach to the passengers in the busses and would stand at the crossroads to preach again when people return home after work.
Later on he met a group of other people who had received the salvation. They were from Luoland, some from Siaya, some from South Nyanza. They joined hands and started working together. Later on they started a branch in Kisumu. The man who had started the church was a Kamba by tribe. He was called Abdallah Davish. His mother had been a Muslim and his Father a Christian. He had been preached to by another church during a crusade. He might have joined that church but later decided to start his own church.

**Political activity**

MWC has not taken time with politics. It only preaches the gospel. Development activities are part of the church work. The pastors should abstain from speaking out on political issues. Most of the people who speak on political issues don't believe in salvation. They think that salvation only happens after death. The Anglican Church of Kenya for example does not believe in people who speak in tongues. The MWC however knows that the Holy Spirit is there. The churches that don't believe in the Holy Spirit have a big voice in politics. The Ufungamano Initiative is not supported by MWC. The church should play the role of a mediator. If it plays a major role in politics and something goes wrong, there is no chance of reconciliation.

**African culture**

African Culture is a thing of the past that has nothing to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Most of the old traditions are in fact contrary to the Bible. Polygamy is not encouraged during the teachings of MWC, the same applies to wife inheritance, since the latter is leading to polygamy. A polygamous man can still enter the church is he has received Christ as his personal saviour, if he does not add another wife. He can however not be a teacher in the church or a pastor.

**Evangelization**

Around once in three months there are big crusades being held. Though the more effective way of spreading the gospel is the door to door preaching, since hear the church reaches out to those who have not received salvation. Crusades are attended by many people who are already saved or who listen to the word but stick to their denomination. Through the Kisumu Town Churches Fellowship, MWC takes part in organizing big crusades with famous preachers. These crusades are announced with a lot of publicity and are usually attended by big crowds of people.

**Gender**

Women are encouraged to take active part in the spreading of the gospel. They are part of the body of the church. There should not be a barrier between men and women. Women can not be pastors. There are times when women are not holy before God, this is during the time when they are in their period. Women can not be ordained pastors and therefore not climb into the higher leadership ranks.

**Differences and similarities with other churches**

MWC is part of the Kisumu Town Fellowship of Churches. Most of the churches that are part of that network are Pentecostal churches, like MWC. Most of them are indigenous churches: Power of Jesus around the World, Voice of Salvation and Healing, Church of Christ in Africa, Redeemed Gospel Church. The ACK (Anglican Church of Kenya) is also part of it. Other independent churches believe in circumcision of the body. MWC believes only in circumcision of the souls. When somebody is buried as a member of MWC, there is no “stick” in the shape of a cross being put up. It has bears no spiritual meaning at all. The burial rite is based on 1 Corinthians 1, 18. The power of the cross is strength for those who have received salvation. Many of the traditions of the Luo that go along with burials are rejected. Other churches have ceremonies after the burial and practice the custom of ‘baro liel’, tomb breaking. MWC does not do that. The idea of keeping babies in the house after birth including the mother also has no room in MWC.
Interview 14:
Musanda Christian Church of Kenya

Place: Kibuye Market, Kisumu
Date: 13.02.2001

Personal history of the interviewed pastor:

He used to be a member of the African Inland Church. He left that church in 1973 and joined Musanda Christian Church of Kenya (MCCK).

He became a member when he had a big problem with a serious sickness. The doctors in the hospitals were unable to heal him. The Municipality of Kisumu, for which he worked, had dismissed him from his job. He also went to a witchdoctor (diviner), who told him, that he is unable to heal him. He should instead look for help from those people who beat the drums and run along the roads.

He tried MCCK, since that church is found in his home area.

When he joined MCCK, the members prayed for him and he was healed. From that time in 1973 up to now he has been very healthy.

He believes, that without that sickness, he would still be a member of the African Inland Church.

He started worshipping with them before he was married. He then found a wife and wedded her in church. He has nine children.

He was healed for free in the church and got to know God well.

When the church leaders saw that he was a good person and could be able to do the work of God, he was given the post of vice-secretary in 1989. When the person who held the office of secretary died, another person was appointed. After that one also died, the interviewed person became the secretary. He now knows all the goings-on in the church.

Ways of worshipping:

When there is a church service, the people first confess their sins; then the leader of the service gives a sermon. After finishing the people stand up and one of them leads the congregation in prayer. Then the sins are confessed.

Everybody repents his or her own sins. The leader then closes this part by praying. After this there are three songs followed by the Lord’s Prayer which is said three times while kneeling down. Then people stand up and sing again.

While the drum is beaten, people speak in tongues and receive prophecies. The rhythm and the singing makes people to be possessed by the Holy Spirit.

When people get quiet again, the ones who received messages while say what they saw and heard. Sometimes the people who have spoken in tongues rely on the translation of the leader. The prophecies can be about coming sicknesses of people, about problems that the country will face, when the rain will come or a famine, whether there will be wars in different parts of the world. All this will be revealed in the church, so that there will be no secrets and surprises any more. The Spirit also reveals sins that people have committed. These are also spelt out, so that they can be removed from the people who did those bad things.

After this it is time for teaching the word of God. There is no particular time when the service has to end. It depends on what God has to tell. Before the teaching commences, there has to be the reading of the Bible passage of the days.

Up to five people can be given a chance to speak and teach the others. It can be anybody who likes. The leader is the one who speaks last.

To finish up, there is always a collection (offering).

Beliefs, teachings, doctrines

Feasts and events

The Holy Spirit is very important. He tells the individual members and the church as a whole what to do. Through him, the people are healed and can speak in tongues. Through him people can see what will happen in the future.

There is the celebration of Easter in April. There is another celebration in July for the Holy Spirit to come. It has no particular name. It is God to decide at which day of the month that big gathering has to take place.

Another big feast day is called ‘Kiche’ or ‘Tarsoso’. This is also a big gathering at which many members of the church are camping at an agreed place for four days in order to build one another on evangelism. This happens in October.

Christmas is celebrated from 24th in the evening up to 25th December. The New Year is also celebrated.
APPENDIX: INTERVIEWS

History of the church

The MCCK split from the Musanda Holy Ghost Church of East Africa (Musanda). Musanda is the place where Odongo Mango stayed and where the headquarters of the first Roho church are. At one time was a ‘Tarsoso’ meeting of Musanda at some place in Nyakach. The Archbishop and his assistant clashed in the sinagogi. The name of the Archbishop was Alfred Odede, the assistant was called Julius Pete Okuom. The disagreement was about some of the members walking on dirty paths. They were practising adultery and sexual misbehaviour. The Archbishop did not see these mistakes, while the assistant Archbishop was condemning them strongly and urged his leader to do something about it. They were both from South Nyanza and pulled their community into this fight. The Archbishop then wanted to get rid of Pete and to install an assistant from Central Nyanza, claiming that it is not good to have both highest office bearers from the same locality. This caused Pete to leave the church and to take along those who were his followers and who saw the deeds mentioned also as bad sins. The disagreement was on moral issues and on leadership. On the side of the principle doctrines there were no differences. This is the reason, why up to now the way of worshipping and preaching of the two churches is very similar.

The church is still very poor. It is very strong in preaching the gospel, but can not afford big buildings. It uses old building materials, which have been used before.

Political activity

There is no politician in the church and there can be no preaching about political issues. The church preaches the word of God only. Pointing at things that are wrong has got nothing to do with politics. Politicians are only concerned about the development of this world, not about what is to happen in heaven. Up to now, none of the members have tried to stand for any elections and it is difficult to say, how the leaders would react, if on would like to.

The MCCK is not part of Ufungamano.

African culture

The church carries light inside itself, which makes it attractive for the local people. There is no other way how the church and the African tradition are connected. The traditional way of life has nothing to do with the church. The fact that drums are beaten and people clap their hands is having its ground only in the Bible. Polygamists can not become leaders of the church or teachers. Those in the ‘sinagogi’ have to follow what Paul wrote to Timtheo and later also to Tito. Those that are not shepherds of the flock can have many wives, but add no more once they have entered.

Inheritance of wives can not be done, since it leads to polygamy.

Evangelization

The MCCK is only preaching the word of God. There are no crusades in towns. In the villages however there are meetings being held for evangelism. Through getting in contact with those church happenings, people can get attracted to the church.

Gender

Women can not be leaders in the church. They also do not organise themselves under their own leaders. They just pray.

Differences and similarities with other churches

Some churches have accepted women to be pastors. Others accept polygamists in the ‘sinagogi’ just because they are rich. Those are things impossible in MCCK.

The MCCK is a church that is very strong in healing people. The African Inland Church is not like that. A priest in the MCCK has to constantly cover the head by tying a turban or wearing a cap.

The difference between the original Musanda Church and the MCCK is very small.

Other independent churches are also doing the work of spreading the gospel and therefore deserve all the respect.
Interview 15:
Voice of Salvation and Healing Church

Place: church headquarters at Ondiek/Kisumu
Date: 14.02.2001

Personal history of the interviewed pastor:

He became a member of the church by virtue of his birth, since his parents happened to be members of Voice of Salvation and healing (VOSH). He was blessed within the church and grew up in it. He inherited all from his parents. But December 11, 1982, when he was in 7th grade of Primary School, he was “ministered to” and there was a new touch in his life and his life changed.

From being merely a member of the church, he came to know Jesus Christ as his personal saviour and was born again.

His mother had 11 children. One of his brothers was at one time very sick and was on his way of losing his eyesight. The doctors had failed in preventing him from getting blind. The mother prayed and cried to God. By laying hands on the son and casting out of the demons she made him to start seeing again.

He later joined High School and during this time became involved in preaching and became the chairman of the ‘Christian Union’ at his school. This was a union of those who had accepted Jesus and were therefore saved. Since his family is poor and has many children, he could not continue for further education.

He instead picked up a job as a teacher (untrained) after school and was party involved in preaching, especially in schools and hospitals (‘hospital ministry’). He was also very active in the work of the local church.

After seven years he felt the urge to be much more involved in church work. He therefore resigned from his teaching job to work full time in the church. He was absorbed as an administrator apart from other jobs he was doing as a deacon.

After some time the church found it fit to upgrade him as assistant pastor of the English service on Sundays, besides being the administrator of the church.

Ways of worshipping:

During the church service there is an opening prayer first. Then the people sing songs of praise and clap their hand jovially. God feels happy about being praised.

The worship and singing pulls down God's glory and his presence is felt. The prayer after the songs is done while raising up the hands.

Now comes the part, when about two or three people testify what they have experienced with God, which deeds of salvation they have seen and how they encountered the healing power of the Lord.

After that the word of God is written out from the Bible by one of the members of the congregation. The pastor then expounds on the passage and teaches the congregation either with words that he has prepared for the day or with whatever inspired him when hearing the words from the Bible. After finishing the preaching, he will lead the congregation into worshipping the Lord. The people now pray individually in order to thank God for the living word that they have been given. During this time, those who are filled by the Holy Ghost and overtaken by him speak in tongues. Speaking in tongues however is controllable and should only happen when it fits into the proceeding of the service.

An important part of the service is the ‘altar call’: Those who have needs (sickness and other problem) can come in front to assemble together with the pastor. They express their needs and the ones present pray over those needs. So the community of Christian prays for those in need, lays hands on them and calls for God's help.

After this, the service is over. If it is a day for Holy Communion, people take it. The Holy Communion is held once a month, although the scripture says, that it should be held as often as possible.

Normally in church there is no beating of drums. Drums can only come in when there is a choir with many instruments (even guitars, piano etc.).
Beliefs, teachings, doctrines
Feasts and events

The people of the church should be silent in areas where the Bible is silent. Where the Bible is emphatic however, they should be equally emphatic. Teaching is Bible-oriented. VOSH does not want to teach anything that is not backed by the Scriptures. VOSH believes in the Trinity of Father, Son and the Holy Ghost.

The moral teaching includes not to drink. This is to prevent people from being tempted. Even if the Bible does not ban alcohol completely, it is better not to permit it, since people lose control very quickly.

It is important as a member of the church to have had the experience of receiving Christ as the personal saviour. Those that have decided to be members of VOSH when coming from other denominations and religions usually convert at the time when they get saved through hearing a preacher of VOSH.

Those that have not had that experience feel that as a burden. It is also a burden in the hearts of those who are already born again. The others, especially the pastor, pray for them and that leads them to the experience of being saved and of changing their lives. It has not yet happened that somebody remained without that salvation. Since God has so far always made those with stubborn hearts to surrender.

Until one accepts Christ in totality there is no real salvation. Somebody who has not accepted Jesus as his personal saviour and is therefore born again can not become a leader in the church.

Speaking in tongues can be very inspiring to the congregation of faithful. It is however a gift not given to everybody.

History of the church

The church started in the mid-forties. A Pentecostal evangelist came as a missionary. He was a white person from South Africa and was called Wellington Bengo. During that time there were only the big churches like the Anglican and the Catholic Church. During this time Africa was still called the ‘dark continent’, when people were really busy taking a lot of alcoholic drink and traditionalism was on the peak. Most of the people had their own African way of relating to God. This had no major form, since nothing was written down. Religion was in their way of life. Even witchcraft and superstition were on the increase.

Following the preaching of Bengo, African people of the area also started preaching the word and called that time the ‘revival period’. Many people were converted, but it was not liked by many and the government was against it since they feared upheaval in a time when the fight against colonialism had started. Anything that brought people together was suspect of political activities against the government.

But because of the power with which this came, people were very enthusiastic. So the revivalists went about preaching.

It was around that time, that the pioneers of VOSH also got saved. Those that had become saved congregated together and by 1956 VOSH was registered after having gone through a lot of trials through the hands of the colonial government. Because of the peculiar way of praying (crying etc.) and because of the fast spread of the movement, the authorities became suspicious. It also happened that people who conspired with the colonialists maligned the new religious movement by passing on false information. This was also done by the white missionaries, since they were jealous of the success of those preachers, who also converted members from the big churches.

It was however found out that these people were genuine and were only worshipping the Lord. So they were allowed to register the new church.

The present Archbishop Silas Owiti is the founder-chairman. He was first a member of the Anglican Church. He did not break away from his church, but preached without any affiliation to a particular church. The people he and his colleagues converted were either members of no church or came from different churches.

He pioneered together with a group of other people. Some of them died, some broke off and started their own organizations, but he is still were he started.

The church started around Ahero, since Owiti was born there. The founders wanted to be a voice of salvation and healing and therefore registered the church under this name.

The church spread and has now close to 1000 branch churches in almost all the provinces of Kenya and indeed in the whole of East Africa (Uganda and Tanzania). The churches in Rwanda and Burundi were closed and scattered during the civil war, but there is hope, that they will congregate again.

Political activity

In the VOSH church politics is really shunned, since the Bible only instructs us to influence the political scenario through prayer.

Leader are planted by God. The duty of the Christians is to correct them and point to them the truth which is in the Bible when they go wrong. Also to pray for them is important. Quite often, political leaders come to the Archbishop to ask for help. What he gives them is the word and his counselling. He prays for them and there he ends. He does not become actively involved in politics. His is to pray for them and to correct them. VOSH has always criticized bishops
who get actively involved and take to the political platform. VOSH therefore is also against the Ufungamano Initiative. The Ufungamano leaders have taken the roles of politicians, which is wrong. It is wrong to take people to the streets so that they through stones. To call for mass action is very much against the spirit of the children of God and against the humble spirit of Christianity.

If politicians go wrong, the church can tell them personally, instead of speaking about it in church and trough that inciting people. It is wrong to incite the subjects against their master.

**African culture**

It is very difficult to do away with culture completely. VOSH however really tries to shun it. It is important to adopt the Christian culture, to be Christ-like. Africa had a religion of its own, the traditional religion. It was in the way of life of people. They felt that there were different spirits in charge of different areas.

People were very superstitious. They believed for example, that it is a bad omen to hit one's left foot when going on a journey. Whatever people dreamed at night, had something to do with what would happen in the day, so they believed. There was even the belief that the ancestors are also eating together with a family, so that a part of the food had to be thrown in a corner for them. All this was idol worshipping.

As born-again Christians, we have to shun these cultures, which are demonic. It has much to do with spiritism. VOSH is more inside the Christian culture and shuns the African one.

Other parts of the culture are not done away with. For example the birth-rights. A younger brother automatically has to respect the older one. Another example is the tradition, that one has to be buried in the homestead. In those things there is nothing demonic, so they are accepted.

VOSH is an African indigenous church, since there is no link up with outside on the organizational level. It was started in Africa and goes on here.

There is friendship with many people, especially from Evangelical churches in America. The Archbishop is visiting America and Europe every year to preach the word. There are also a lot of visitors all the time from the USA, Canada, Norway, Finland etc.

For example the famous evangelist T.L. Osborn has come many times. This brings about a lot of friendship, but does not touch the independent character of VOSH.

Drums are not beaten in the traditional African way.

Polygamy is discouraged, but the people are accepted the way they are. If someone comes in with several wives, the church does not tell him that he has to chase away the second, third etc. one. If polygamy was practised before salvation, it is considered to have been done out of ignorance. After salvation it is however not accepted to marry more wives. Somebody who is in the church and has not yet married will only marry once.

**Evangelization**

There are a lot of crusades organized in towns and especially also in rural areas. VOSH is in fact much stronger in rural areas than in towns. When a crusade is held in an open air meeting, the truth is told to the people. During that time the people are also told where they can find like-minded believers, where they can grow spiritually in the fellowship of brethren. If the feel like joining VOSH, they are very welcome, although they are not forced.

**Gender**

The gender issue has been tackled well: The word is preached to everybody without regard of sex. The Holy Spirit does not select men only. Since both sexes have received the word, the also spread it together. In the scriptures we find women who followed Jesus closely. There are even prophetesses in the Bible. Therefore within the church of VOSH women even become pastors. Up to now, they are less in number, but they are there. The secretary general of the church is a woman. The women can also climb into the higher ranks of leadership even up to the post of the Archbishop.

**Differences and similarities with other churches**

The way the service is conducted is similar to the way Evangelical churches do it everywhere in the world. Many of the Evangelical churches have added in some doctrines that are not biblical. One example is polygamy. Some churches accept polygamy generally without any restrictions. Not so VOSH.

Another difference is that some churches nowadays are more like commercial enterprises. The membership depends on the financial contribution. VOSH is very different.

The Power of Jesus Around the World church is very similar to VOSH in their teaching and worshipping.
Interview 16:
Musanda Holy Ghost Church of East Africa

Place: Bishop’s home at Kajulu, Kisumu District
Date: 22.02.2001

Personal history of the interviewed bishop:

He was formerly a member of AIM (African Inland Mission). During his long life he has worked for many employers. He has been an employee of the Power + Lighting Co-operation in the colonial days, he worked for the Kisumu Municipality for some time and was also a nursery school teacher for three years. At one point he earned a living as a musician. Before he left the AIM, he was very sick and could not be healed by any doctor. In his home area, Kajulu, the Musanda Holy Ghost Church of East Africa (Musanda) had already been established and it were the members of this church that prayed for him when he was in a very bad state of illness. Through these prayers he was healed and therefore decided to join the Musanda Church. In the year 1980 he was ordained a pastor of the church and was later made the bishop of the area. After deciding to work full time for the church, he stopped his paid job in town and is now earning a living through tilling the land around his homestead and keeping a few heads of cattle.

Ways of worshipping:

The church service starts with opening words by the leader. People then stand up and one of them offers a prayer, after which follows the part of repentance. People confess their sins. After this people worship God by song and by beating drum and bell. Then they kneel down and cry for God. They tell him whichever problems they have. If somebody is sick, she or he tells God personally about it. After this, the congregation stands up again and sings a hymn to the angels. It is this hymn that makes the Holy Spirit to speak to people. What the Holy Spirit has revealed is then spoken out. It can be something that will happen in the life of an individual, it can also be pointing out a sin that somebody has committed and that has to be confessed there and then so that it is wiped out. Different people get different messages that have to be translated to be understood. The message can concern the world in which we live, it can contain the order to pray for the president of the nation. The preaching part can not start before the sins are removed. Only after revelation of the messages of the Spirit and after leaving demons behind, can the message of the sermon get across to the faithful. In a Roho church one can not just start the service by preaching, because it is God who speaks with the people in the church. Starting straight away with preaching would mean to combine sin with sin. The preacher in his sermon refers to a certain passage of the Bible. Preaching continues up to around 3.00 PM, after which there is a collection and the service ends.

In the Roho church, the Lord’s Supper is offered only by the bishop, not by an ordinary pastor. It is done only on important feasts like Christmas. The bishop has to take it to many churches. During the Lord’s Supper they take bread. Wine, however, they do not drink. They do it the way the Holy Spirit has told them. Which drink is used is a secret of the Holy Spirit that can not be told.

Beliefs, teachings, doctrines
Feasts and events

The teachings on doctrines and morals do not differ from other churches: The Holy Spirit is the teacher, the Bible is the foundation of the doctrine. People are not allowed to take alcohol or smoke tobacco, nor to get involved in bad sexual behaviour. Christmas is being celebrated and also a feast in April, that was copied from the Catholics. Pentecost is not celebrated. On January 19 there is the important feast of the remembrance of the burning of Alfayo Odongo Mango. On that day the church members go to Musanda to celebrate and do what the Spirit has told them.
History of the church

The history of the church can only be told properly by the archbishop, not by a bishop. Alfayo Odongo Mango was burned in 1934 because of the Holy Spirit. He was burned together with eight other people who were also possessed by the Holy Spirit. Odongo Mango, however, was seen to be the one who spoiled the others.

He was an Anglican pastor when he was burned. He started experiencing the possession by the Spirit from 1924 onwards. It was the time of the colonial government and the Anglican Church was lead by Europeans. The Europeans did not like to hear about the Holy Spirit entering into an African. When the Holy Spirit entered into the life of Alfayo, they were afraid, that it could affect the political situation and the European government. The ones who caught the nine people in a house and burned them to death, were sent by the government to do so, although they were not government employed. It was Chief Mumia who organized the burning.

The Holy Spirit had left the land of the Europeans and came to Africa. Also the Israel Nineveh people had to leave the European church and their leader Kivuli had to start his own, since the Spirit had chosen to enter into the African people. It came to select people. The signs of the cross, which the Roho people put on their clothes, was also revealed by the Spirit.

The Ruwe Holy Ghost Church split from the Musanda Church later. They were together first, but in order to spread the word of God it is good to have many branches. Ruwe and Musanda are two places near each other in the area of Ugenya. Lawi Obonyo was one of the people who were killed together with Odongo Mango.

Political activity

The Musanda Church only prays for the politicians, so that there may be peace in the country. Church work and political work can not mix. The Holy Spirit can not allow that.

If a member wants to stand for election, he has to leave the church. He might otherwise spoil the people of the church. The light can not come together with darkness.

African culture

The Roho church is the church for Africa. The beating of drums and bells has nothing to do with the African tradition. It only comes from the Bible. The church and the traditional deeds of the local people have got nothing to do with each other.

Evangelization

There are no special activities for evangelization. The church spreads by word of mouth and by the fact that those from outside can see the good things happening in the church, especially when it comes to healing sick people.

Gender

Elderly mothers are called ‘laktache’ (doctors), which means that they are able to speak prophetic words. If a lady is sick, those ‘doctors’ go to pray for this lady. If somebody is sick and has to be washed with hot water, the water can only be boiled by one of those mothers.

Women can not be leaders of the men. They can not be pastors.

Differences and similarities with other churches

The Ruwe Church and Musanda church are very similar in the way of praying and in faith. The Roho churches all have a cross on their clothes, caps or church buildings. Musanda was the first of those ‘cross churches’.

The teaching and doctrines are very similar to other independent churches.
Interview 17:
Sayun Church of God (East Africa)

Place: Bishop’s house at Ahero, Nyando District
Date: 27.02.2001

Personal history of the interviewed pastor:

The person was first a member of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) and he became seriously ill during that time. He could not be healed by the doctors in the hospital; neither could he be healed by prayer from the members of his PAG church.

There was a person from the village, where the interviewed person lived, who was also very sick. That person was healed by members of the Sayun Church of God (Sayun) as he was watching. He therefore decided to also approach the Sayun people and he was also healed. This made him to see, that the power of the Holy Spirit was with the Sayun Church. He therefore decided to join them.

He later became a pastor and is now in charge of the local church.
When he was in the Pentecostal church, he was already taught well, it seemed to him, however, as if his salvation grew in depth when he entered the Sayun Church.

Ways of worshipping:

The praying of the Sayun Church is taken from the Bible.
The main day for prayer is Sunday. This day is called Sabbato.
During Sunday service there is a small prayer first. It is to tell God: "We have entered in your house". Then there is time for announcement of church matters.
After this comes the main part of prayer. This starts with singing, after which everybody prays individually while kneeling down. Then one person by his prayer concludes this part. That person must be a pastor.
Then people stand up and praise God with three hymns, after which they sit down again.
Again one person prays. Then there is the chance for somebody to give testimony about his life.
Then there is a hymn being sung from a hymn book. Afterwards two people are chosen to preach and teach the word of God.
After this the prayer is closed by the pastor or the highest person present, unless somebody still has a problem. In that case there is a prayer over those problems before the pastor closes the prayer.
To finish up, there is a collection.
The Bible is also read out during the prayer. There is however no fixed schedule for Bible readings. Whatever somebody wants to preach about, he also reads out.
The Lord’s Supper is celebrated once a month. Although the Bible says that it should be done every week, there is not enough money to do so.
Bread is being eaten and something special is being drunk, which can not be talked about.
During the Sunday service, people can speak in tongues. This can however also happen in any other place in any meeting or even when somebody is alone in the house.

Beliefs, teachings, doctrines

Feasts and events

The Holy Spirit is the most important teacher. Somebody who has received the Holy Spirit must be baptized.
Somebody who is sick can be healed through prayer.
A leader of the church must be chosen by the people. The people have to lay hands on him. After that he must be trained and told by the people what to do.
Easter is being celebrated as a very big feast. There is also a celebration called ‘kiche’, which is done in August. It is to remember the way the Israelites suffered in the desert. Christmas is also celebrated to remember the birth of Christ. Apart from those there is also a day to commemorate the start of the church.
History of the church

The Sayun church started through the power of the Holy Spirit. The founder is called Joseph Nyang'wara Obera. He is now the leader and archbishop of the church. He was not a member of any church and only prayed in his own house. One night he had a dream. God spoke to him in that dream and continued to do so over a period of three weeks. God told him what to do and showed him his kingdom. The founder did not imagine before that, that he could have his own church. When he sent his application to Nairobi in order to register the church and to get a license, the Holy Spirit continued talking. A women came from Kabondo. God had also spoken to her. Somebody came from Maragoli, to whom God had also said, that Obera should raise the flag. Even he himself was still disturbed by the Spirit until he rose the flag. It was the flag of ‘Sayun Church of God’. The Spirit also showed him the type of flag he should use: white on top, red in the middle and yellow below. He managed to get the license and started the work of God in 1974. It was the Holy Spirit that made people to join the church. Those first converts did not come from one particular church, but from many different ones. The leader was sent by the Spirit to different areas. He had to go on foot for lack of other means. The name ‘Sayun’ was taken from the Scriptures. ‘Sayun’ is a hill, where those warriors stay, that have won the war. The ‘New Sayun Church’ broke away form Sayun Church in 1998. They do however not have a license yet. They left because of their own wish.

Political activity

The Sayun Church does not enter into politics, since it has the salvation of God. Politics is a field that is left to the government. Sayun however is only with Jesus and with the Holy Spirit. Sayun is not part of Ufungamano.

African culture

The deeds of the olden times are not done by the members of Sayun Church. The African culture only comes in when the type of singing is considered. Polygamy is accepted if somebody married many wives before his salvation. A husband of many wives can however not become a leader of the church. Wife inheritance is not accepted, since it can lead to the spread of diseases. The leaders will not be happy with somebody who follows this practice.

Evangelization

New members are found through the journey of the archbishop. He is doing the main part of the evangelization, though he is being helped by his pastors. The church has around 11600 members.

Gender

There are women who are called the ‘church mothers’. They keep the church buildings clean. There are meetings on Thursday, headed by women. There are women called ‘laktache’ (doctors) who pray for women who have given birth, since men can not go there. There are women who are called ‘padri’ (pastors). They can however not baptize people and can only be leaders of women, not of men. They can also not enter the sinagogi or climb into the higher ranks of leadership.

Differences and similarities with other churches

The big difference between the Sayun Church and other churches is that the power of the Holy Spirit is given room and that people who are sick are healed by that power. In the Pentecostal Church, the sick people are merely prayed for and the result is left to God. In the Sayun Church however the leaders come and lay hands on the sick person and the sickness leaves him or her. The Sayun church relies on the Bible more than any other church. Many churches put women in the ranks of pastors who can even baptize people. Not so the Sayun church. Many churches accept people as leaders who are polygamists or who have inherited the wife of the deceased brother. Not so the Sayun church.
Interview 18:
Bethsaida Roho Matakatifu Church

Place: Interviewees workshop at Kondele/Kisumu
Date: 02.03.2001

Personal history of the interviewed Archbishop:

He was first a member of the Ruwe Holy Ghost Church. When he was still young, he was attacked by a disease. His mother and his brother took him to the church. This was at his home in Nyakach. He was almost dying. He was however healed by the members of Ruwe. After this he was taken to Musanda. At Musanda he was taught a language of the Holy Spirit. That language had been brought when the Holy Spirit had come down in the year 1930. Among the people that had brought that church of the Holy Spirit was somebody called Alfayo Odongo, another one was called Lawi Obonyo.

At Musanda, the interviewed person was taught that holy language, which is the language of the angels, for a period of seven years. After that he returned to his home place in Nyakach. There he prayed and worshiped. While praying and worshipping, he could see things revealed to him by the Holy Spirit.

There was by then an old man called Paulo Omumbo Achola. God had entered in his heart and the Holy Spirit talked to him. He went to the leader at Musanda, whose name was Barnaba Waluoho. He was the archbishop of the Ruwe Church. Omumbo asked Waluoho in a friendly way to give him the boy called Musa (the interviewed person). The latter accepted straight away, since he wanted the word of God to be spread. In exchange for this ‘gift’ he also gave the Ruwe Church building materials, since he was a very wealthy man.

Omumba then asked the interviewed person to follow him, which he accepted. He then moved to many places to preach the word of God. He evangelized in Tanzania also and had great success.

After the death of Omumba Ochola, Petro Kariuki Wachira took over the leadership of Bethsaida Roho Matakatifu Church (Bethsaida). This new leader then said to the interviewed person, that he can not yet be his assistant, but he can be the secretary of the church, since he knows the church well. After some time he would be made the assistant of the overall leader (vice-archbishop).

When Kariuki fell sick, he called the interviewed person and told him to be the next leader. He handed over the files of the church including the registration certificate. He laid hands on the chosen person and asked God for blessings. In that dream he took him from Nyalenda to his former house in Kondele by blessing him and anointing him with oil.

Blessed and anointed, he went on doing his work as the leader and archbishop of the Bethsaida church. Up to now, he has not been able to build a big church. The founder of the church did not introduce the rule of giving 10%, so that there is now no proper way of fundraising in the church. This is also the reason, why even as an archbishop, he has to work as a labourer, so that he can earn a living. He has been given gifts by God, that include the powers of healing sick people.

Ways of worshipping:

The way of praying in the Bethsaida Church resembles the way other churches do it. The special thing about it is the fact, that first the sins have to be confessed, before the church service goes on. This is the way it is done in the Roho Churches and in Israel Nineveh. If somebody tries to keep his sins secret, it is detected by the others by the time the sinner enters the house or the church.

Beliefs, teachings, doctrines
Feasts and events

The Bethsaida Church believes in the Holy Trinity and gets all its teachings from the Bible. The members are taught not to drink alcohol or to indulge into other sinful behaviour.
APPENDIX: INTERVIEWS

History of the church

The history of the Bethsaida Church is connected with the Holy Ghost (Roho) churches of Musanda and Ruwe. Therefore it is good to look into the history of those two first. Musanda Holy Ghost church was there first. Barnaba Waluoho stayed at a place called Ruwe. There was a registration certificate, reading ‘Ruwe Holy Ghost Church of East Africa’ and one certificate reading ‘Musanda Holy Ghost Church of East Africa’. Both churches however had a very good relationship with each other. Waluoho had started the Church and had registered it. A short time later, the son of Odongo Mango brought problems and claimed the leadership of the church that his father had died for. Therefore a group led by Waluoho left Musanda and went to Ruwe. The son of Odongo Mango was then left to register the ‘Musanda Holy Ghost Church’. When Paul Omumbo Achola founded his own church, he asked for the help of the interviewed person who was by that time with the Ruwe Church. Petro Kariuki had been staying in the Luo area for many years. He knew Omumbo Achola, since they both were very wealthy men and both of them had cars. Omumbo invited Kariuki to join the new church. Omumba had first been saved in the African Israel Nineveh Church. Before that he had been just a business man with many wives. He had not been a member of any church. Later he left Israel Nineveh and joined the ‘Roho Israel Church of God’, belonging to James Kisibo. Kisibo however did things that Omumbo did not like. He therefore left and formed the ‘New Roho Israel Church’. This church does not exist any more. There emerged a fight about the word ‘Israel’. This made them to change the name into ‘Bethsaida Roho Matakatifu Church’, so that there may be peace.

Political activity

The church is not politically active. Politics and the work of God can not mix. The Ufungamano Initiative is something the church members have no knowledge about and the church has nothing to do with it.

African culture

The African culture is a thing of the past. The Holy Spirit is teaching new things to the Christians that make them leave the old ways and receive the holy ways instead of superstition and witchcraft. Polygamists are welcome to join the church and to get saved. But they can not become leaders and can not marry more wives after having joined. Wife inheritance is discouraged and the pastors try to teach the people not to practice it.

Evangelization

The church does not engage in strong evangelizing. The new members join because they see the good work of the church and the healing powers of the leaders.

Gender

Women can not be leaders in the church since Jesus left the work of leading the flock as pastors to men only.

Differences and similarities with other churches

The Bethsaida Church resembles the Roho Churches very much in the way of praying. It differs from the Catholic Church in the way of confessing the sins. The confession of sins and the guidance by the Holy Spirit are very important elements, that some of the big churches have neglected.
Interview 19:
Roho Fueny Maler Church

Place: Cardinal’s house at Kajulu, Kisumu District
Date: 06.03.2001

Personal history of the interviewed cardinal:

He was first a member of the Musanda Holy Ghost Church of East Africa. At one time he became very sick and could not be healed in any way for a long time. The members of Musanda Church did not manage to heal him. It was in the name of the Roho Fueny Maler Church (RFMC) that he was healed. This made him to leave the Musanda Church and to join RFMC. In the Musanda Church he had been a pastor, but had not climbed very high in leadership. In the RFMC he struggled hard to worship and pray and at the same time climbed very fast up to the post of the cardinal, who is the highest leader of the church. The former cardinal died recently.

As the present leader, the interviewed cardinal is staying at Kajulu, but performs his official functions at the headquarters at Otongolo, near the Kisumu Airport.

Ways of worshipping:

In the church, the women are divided according to their leadership ranks. The ‘laktache’ (doctors) sit in front. The men are also divided, whereby the ‘jopuonj’ (teachers) of the church sit in front. Before starting with the service, people repent their sins. Then the leader comes in. He then prays and the people sit down. During the church services, the drum and the bell are beaten vigorously. Speaking in tongues is also done all the time. Preaching is also very important, which is preceded by Bible reading. The confession of sins before the service starts is done like in the other Roho churches.

Beliefs, teachings, doctrines

Feasts and events

The faith is founded in the Bible. Anything taught is taken from the Bible. The celebration of the Sabbath day is taken from the Bible as well as the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. A member of the church is not allowed to diverge from his way when coming from the church service. He or she is to go home straight and ‘carry the blessings home’. This is to prevent the faithful from being tempted to fall back into bad habits, for example drinking alcohol. Members of RFMC are not allowed to take alcohol. It can however happen that an old friend tries to call one of the faithful to visit him when he is drinking in his house. Instead of following such an invitation, the church member should go home straight after the service.

Bad behaviour that is not allowed and had to be repented includes many things. Those things have to be left behind after salvation: Alcohol, tobacco, abusing people with words, fighting and quarrelling, seeing prostitutes, jealousy. Having left those things, the saved person can now be called ‘japolo’, a person belonging to heaven. In the RFMC, healing of sick people is an important feature.

History of the church

RFMC split from the Roho Fueny Church, which belongs to somebody called Obuya. Roho Fueny Church is not the same as the Roho Revelation Church started by Samson Owiti. Roho Fueny Church had split from the Musanda Holy Ghost Church. RFMC is therefore a split in the tradition of the churches that go back to Alfayo Odongo Mango. There was a fight within the leaders of Roho Fueny which was about leadership and the way the church was run. There were also quarrels about money. This made some leaders to leave and start Roho Fueny Maler. The headquarters were established in Olando, near the Kisumu Airport.
Political activity

The fields of the church and the government are completely different. The RFMC does not engage itself in politics at all. In case of bad deeds of the politicians of the area, where the church leaders are, the church still has to remain quiet since politics is not their field. Only wrong things within the church can be corrected by the leaders of the church. If one of the members wants to become a politician, that is left to him. A leader however would first have to give up his leadership work before entering the political arena.

African culture

The people in the RFMC are taught how to have respect. This resembles very much the way respect was taught in the olden days. Women for example should not leave their head uncovered when a church leader enters the house. When the elder enters the house, there must be a prayer first. Only then people greet each other and only after that the visitor says why he is here. This respectful way of dealing with each other is part of the ancient culture and is still important in the RFMC.

Having several wives is not allowed in the RFMC if one wants to be a leader. Leaders only have one wife. Normal members can have many wives and can still continue marrying once they are in the church.

The leaders also do not practice wife inheritance. Normal members can do it without problems.

Evangelization

The leaders of the church visit people who stay around. If somebody has a problem, the members of RFMC can come and console the person. This makes him or her to see how good this church is.

Crusades are not being held, but there are seminars being held in the form of big meetings. Such meetings are also called ‘kiche’.

Gender

The women of the church are given leadership among themselves, although they can not be pastors. Women have to respect men and leave leadership to them.

Differences and similarities with other churches

In the way of worshipping there is no difference between RFMC and the other Roho churches like Musanda Church or Roho Fueny Church. Also the cross as the symbol on clothes and buildings is common in all of them.

Some however have a song, which is very dear to them and which others don’t have. It is called: "Yesu in misangona" ("Jesus, you are my keeper/shepherd").

The Roho churches are not after money like those other churches that are connected with Europe like for example the Anglican Church. They just build their churches out of their own resources.
Interview 20: 
Roho Revelation Church

Place: Home of Rev. Daniel Oguso, Migosi/Kisumu 
Date: 15.03.2001

Personal history of the interviewed leader:

He joined the Roho Revelation Church (RRC) in 1996, because of seeing a relative being healed by the leader of the church. The lady was about to lose her eyesight completely. She was living in Nairobi and was given the message by a friend, that just outside Kisumu there was a man living by the name Nabi (Prophet) Samson Owiti and that he is known for being able to heal such ailments. The interviewed person and his wife helped the sick relative to search for the man. All of them had not known him before. After finding him they left her to his treatment and the next day she was healed. She had received back her eyesight.

That was the first move that made him join the RRC. The prophet was a very simple man, who told him, that he only believes in one God, who is the creator of heaven and earth and that he does not use any witchcraft to heal people. The prophet subsequently visited the interviewed person at South Nyanza and they also built a church at his home. They remained close to each other until Owiti's death in 1998. Before joining the RRC, the interviewed person was a Catholic. He was born and grew up in a staunch Catholic family. He was baptized and confirmed in a Catholic church. He went to a Catholic mission school. Before seeing the healing of the relative, he had never thought of leaving the Catholic Church.

The way of praying he found in RCC looked not very different from what he was used to in the Catholic Church, he only found the people of RRC more serious in their approach to religion. They are not taking anything for granted. They pray about everything and do not make a move before God gives answer. They can fast for a very long time, until what they want happens. He and his wife had witnessed how Samson Owiti prayed for the relative. She was a cousin of the wife and was working with the City Council of Nairobi. Owiti prayed for her and told them to come back the next morning. Already at that following morning, she could see a lot of improvement and after three days she was healed completely and could go back to Nairobi to work. Before seeing the prophet, she had gone to several hospitals. This was her last hope. After joining the RRC the interviewed person became a very strong member and decided to become saved. He stopped drinking alcohol, since the RRC teaches strongly to abstain from it. He also stopped doing other bad things like being violent, unnecessary quarrels etc. He strongly showed his commitment and even built a church in his home.

The members of the church are many in number, though most of them are illiterate. They decided to give him a strong role in their leadership. After some time he was made the deputy secretary general (the post of the secretary general is held by a son of the late founder). He is currently also a councillor of the Municipality of Homa Bay.

Ways of worshipping:

The main part of the service is singing. The RRC believed that people can get salvation through preaching or through singing. During the singing people can get influenced to see visions. There are also instruments like drums and bells being used. People clap and move their bodies very fast. The Sunday service begins with the ‘our father’, after that the singing starts. The part of the singing continues for a long time. Then the preacher asks the congregation about the visions that individual members had seen. People now tell their visions to the others and somebody interprets them. Through this a lot of good has come to the church and a lot of warning about bad things happening has been there beforehand. The preaching that now follows must have a solid foundation in the Bible. The common everyday life also features in the sermon, but the main source is the Bible. For this there is no schedule prepared before. The pastor or bishop chooses any part of the Scripture, that he would like to preach about. This choice is often influenced by the Holy Spirit. After the sermon people give reports about matters that concern the church. Then there are songs again and the service ends with the ‘sadaka’, the collection of money for the work of the Lord. The service officially starts at 9.00 AM and ends at 3.00 PM.

During the service people also speak in tongues. The preaching starts from the congregation members. Anybody who would like to teach about something can be chosen to speak. It is the pastor, or the bishop that concludes all that with his sermon. The Holy Communion is taken on Christmas and on New Year day. During this time, there is bread and wine being given to the faithful.
Beliefs, teachings, doctrines

The RRC teaches that there is life after death and that there is salvation. Anybody who is saved must turn away from the normal earthly things, to the heavenly ways in order to prepare oneself for the second coming of Jesus Christ. The RCC believes in one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. An important belief is that God can send visions during prayer, singing and during dreams. Pastors of the church are not consecrated, but simply elected by the executive board.

During a recent meeting of the administrative committee (the executive board), the wife of the late founder was suddenly possessed by the Holy Spirit and had a vision. She asked the board to open the Bible and look at a certain passage. She can not read and write herself, she could only speak out the book and the chapter. The passage she had mentioned however turned out to be completely relevant for the meeting. The meeting had been in despair, since there were not enough members and the invitation letters had not been sent in time. Some had mentioned that the quorum for the meeting was not there. The mother told them however that the angels in heaven were not happy about that talk about the quorum. The work of the Lord cannot be dragged, it has to be done.

After opening the Bible, the chosen passage was talking to them on something that was related to what had been discussed.

The belief in miracles is paramount. Healing of sicknesses, both physical and mental is a very important feature of the life of the church.

Easter is celebrated in the RRC. There is also a feast called ‘kiche’, when several local churches come together and camp at one place to receive teaching for several days. There is also Christmas and there is the New Year. Pentecost day is not celebrated.

In the headquarters, January 1st is also celebrated as the ‘remembrance day’, that is the day when the founder was saved. In future there will be another feast day on April 26, to commemorate the death of the founder.

History of the church

The RRC was started in 1967. On January 1st, Samson Owiti, the founder, became possessed by the Holy Spirit and did not know what was happening with him. He started seeing visions. The Lord talked to him in broad daylight. He also was told to open the Bible and read certain passages from the book of Revelation.

God told him to come and see him on that day. He told him to hang up a white piece of cloth. On that cloth he could then see all his problems like on a photo. Later he saw the angels destroying those pictures of the problems that had appeared on the white cloth. And by doing so the real problems were also removed and were no more.

He was also given instructions by God to tell his people never to take any water that is not boiled. Sicknesses should be healed by prayer or in the hospital, but a sick person should not go to a witchdoctor.

Owiti often cured people with water. He could put the water on the table and through his prayer it would start boiling without fire. He would then put that water on the mouth of the sick person and she or he would get cured.

Before receiving his visions, Samson Owiti had been a member of the Church of Christ in Africa (Johera). He used to play the guitar and used to drink and even go to discos and other night gatherings.

The RRC is part of the Roho churches and uses the well-known cross as a symbol, although it has not emerged as a split from the tradition of the churches that go back to the events around Alfayo Odongo Mango. Odongo Mango however is kept in great honour also by the members of the RRC, since there are a lot of similarities between Odongo Mango and Samson Owiti.

The headquarters of the church are at Ogango, just outside Kisumu on the way to Kibos. After the death of the founder there has been a strong fight for the post of the Archbishop. There are currently two groups who are fighting for their respective leaders to take the seat.

At the moment there is also a man who is still a member of RRC and who was once healed by the founder. He seems to be thirsty for money and therefore wants to break away and start his own church. He has already started to do this but has not yet received a registration certificate. He also uses the same symbols.

Political activity

The church has very little to do with matters of politics. The RRC believes in fairness. In politics however, there is no fairness. Politics of the nation however is not ruled out completely. Sometimes the churches have to give their stand on national issues. One example for this is: During the time when the multi party system was about to be introduced in Kenya, that was in 1991, many church leaders were called for a meeting and their opinion was sought. Samson Owiti was in that meeting and also recommended the introduction of a multi-party system.
When the president came to Kisumu to visit the Dala Hera some years later, the founder and leader was also part of writing a memorandum that inaugurated the ‘Church and State Co-operation’ and he was then among the first signatories. This shows, that politics are not ruled out, particularly when the opinion of the church leaders is sought and especially when matters of peace are involved.

The interviewed person is a holder of a political office himself: He is a town councillor in Homa Bay. When he was asked to stand for election, his church leader first advised him not to do so, since this would bring him into a lot of controversies with people. After the elections, his party (one of the opposition parties) wanted him to join the council as a nominated member, since he was very active in the party. He then asked the leader of the church again for advice. He was asked to wait, since the leader wanted to pray over this first. The following day he told the interviewed person to go and work as a councillor but to try and keep on working within his salvation and to do his political work as a Christian.

This was the first case of one of the members of RRC to become a politician. The church has no stand on the Ufungamano initiative, since it could not take part or reject it, the reason being that there has been no official leader of the church after the death of the founder due to wrangles for that post.

The interviewed person himself believes that the Ufungamano group is doing a very good work and that it is needed very much in order to correct the work of the Parliamentary Select Committee. Would the church have an official leader, it would probably not support Ufungamano, since it is part of the ‘Church and State Co-operation’.

**African culture**

The African Indigenous Churches are attracting many new members, because the big churches seem to have been left by the Lord. They are only rich and can do wonders with money. But they have nothing spiritual to offer to the people.

The indigenous churches are very poor, but one can see the hand of the Lord working in them. The African Culture however does not come in very much. It is the ‘Roho factor’ that matters. The indigenous churches should also try to modernise themselves to be in the same international marked as other churches.

Polygamous people are accepted to become members, but can not add more wives after that. If by the time of salvation a man has several wives, he should not chase away any of them.

The post of a pastor or a bishop can not be taken by a polygamist.

The tradition of wife inheritance is silently practised by some members. It is however not recommended, since it leads to the spread of diseases.

**Evangelization**

Many people have joined the RRC because of the miracles that are performed. People want to see first and then they join the church.

In the past, there have been crusades organized. This does not happen now, because of lack of funds.

One important activity is the house to house prayers. When the RCC people are called to a house, they many time heal the sick in that home.

Through this word goes round and people see the good work that happens for example in a neighbours house.

**Gender**

Women have a big role to play in the RRC. They are usually the majority of the congregation. They come together and raise funds. There is now the ‘Roho Revelation Church Women Caucus’. Their leader is representing the views of the women in the executive board meeting.

Most of the women unfortunately are poor and illiterate.

The women can be teachers of the church, they can take posts like secretary general, treasurer etc., but they can not be pastors.

**Differences and similarities with other churches**

The RRC is praying and celebrating the Sabbath Service in the same way as the other churches do, that are part of the Roho family. The songs are also almost the same. They also have the speaking in tongues in common.

The teachings and doctrines of the RRC are very similar to those of the Catholic Church. The difference is in the strong belief in healing powers and in miracles.
Interview 21:

Power or Jesus Around the World Church

Place: Pandipieri Catholic Centre, Kisumu
Date: 24.03.2001

Personal history of the interviewed pastor:

He was saved when he was a young man and still in school. By that time he was a Catholic. He heard a preacher of the Power of Jesus around the World Church (Power) and was getting saved through that. Then he joined Power. He worked for the government for many years, before he heard the call of the Lord to work for him full time. In 1991 he joined the Bible college in Kisumu and later went to Canada for further studies in a Bible college related to the one that had donated the funds for the build-up of the one in Kisumu. He became a pastor and was later appointed to be the Secretary General of his church.

Ways of worshipping:

People are clapping their hands and shake their bodies when singing and praying. The preaching is a very important part of the church service. But equally important is the testimony of the people present. Anybody can give an account of the great things God has done for him or her and how she/he was saved. There is also a collection for the church during the service. The Lord’s Supper is celebrated occasionally, approximately once a month. Then bread and wine is shared with everybody. The way of worshipping is not very different from other Evangelical or Pentecostal churches in other parts of the world. Healing is a very common thing during the prayer sessions. People are healed just by hearing the word and going along with the songs and prayers. Sometimes they are also healed by laying of hands from the pastor and especially the bishop.

Beliefs, teachings, doctrines

Feasts and events

The faith in Jesus Christ as the personal saviour is central. Every doctrine has to come from the Bible. People are taught not to take alcohol and not to closely control their sexual behaviour. The youth should not go to discos and other places that lead them into sin. The feast include Christmas and Easter. Pentecost day is not celebrated.

History of the church

The Power of Jesus around the World church started as a split from the Voice of Salvation and Healing Church. There was a leadership wrangle, whereby the present leader of the Voice of Salvation mislead his own bishop in order to gain the leadership. The bishop then left Voice of Salvation and went to register his own church. This was in 1955. The present Bishop Washington Ogonyo Ngade is the forth successor of the founder as the leader of the church. Power does not differ very much in the approach and the way of teaching and preaching from the Voice of Salvation. They both have very strong links to other parts of the world, especially North America.

Political activity

The church is politically active since it is important for the Christians to change the face of the earth. As the prophets in the Old Testament spoke to the kings, so the Christians of today have to speak to the leaders of the nation. The bishop of Power is the chairman of the ‘Church and State Co-operation for Development’, which has been instrumental in bringing the Luo of Nyanza back into co-operating with the present government of Kenya.
The Ufungamano Initiative has been rejected by Power, but it is very fortunate and obviously the work of the Holy Spirit, that Ufungamano has now merged with the Parliamentary Review Committee. They are therefore now on the right track.
African culture

The African culture comes in when the liveliness of the church service is considered. Although the way of worshipping resembles the way it is done in sister churches in Canada for instance, there is still a greater freedom in expression and giving way to the Spirit when the people in Africa are praying.

The parts of the local customs and traditions that are compatible with the Christian ways are accepted, the others rejected.

Polygamous families can join the church if the man restrains from adding more wives thereafter. Inheritance of widows is supported as long as the man who inherits the sister in-law is yet unmarried. In this case the two are blessed by the pastor, but do not celebrate the usual marriage rites.

Evangelization

The Power Church is very active in doing crusades in Kisumu town, but also in many other towns. In market places they preach and sing and give testimony of their salvation.

This resembles largely the street crusades done by other Evangelical churches. Power is part of the ‘Kisumu Fellowship of Churches’ that jointly organises big crusades with famous preachers from other parts of the world (mainly North America).

There is also ‘door to door evangelization’ whereby a preacher with his team goes to the estates and visits people in their houses.

Gender

Women can be pastors just like men. Whoever the Holy Spirit has chosen to serve in the church can do so irrespective of sex.

Theoretically women can also climb into the high ranks of leadership, even up to the bishop’s position. It has however not happened yet and is unlikely to happen soon.

Differences and similarities with other churches

The difference with big churches like the Anglican or the Catholic Church is the freedom of worship and the lively way in which people can sing, pray and express themselves.

From other indigenous churches like the Roho Churches, the Power church differs in that the way of worshipping is much more orderly and not as uncontrolled as they do it, since their way is again too wild and ecstatic.
Interview 22:  
Coptic Orthodox Church

Place: Church compound at Rabuor/Kisumu  
Date: 26.03.2001

Personal history of the interviewed deacon:

The interviewed person was a deacon in the Coptic Orthodox Church. He joined it in 1979, when it was established in the Kisumu area. The building at Nyamasaria was erected during that time. The grandmother had been a member of the Greek Orthodox Church. But the leadership of that church had left the area. When the Coptic Church was now established, she realized, that the way of worship she was used to resembled the way of worship in this new church. The grandmother took along the family, including the interview person. The boy liked the way of praying, the songs, the doxologies. Later on, he was healed from sickness through his grandmothers' hiding of the unique orthodox cross under his bed. In the same night he dreamed of that cross shining with light. After this night of healing, they went to the priest, who by that time was an Egyptian. He blessed them and anointed them with oil.

Before this, he had been criticizing the strong worshipping of the cross as it is practised by the fellow faithful. He used to consider this idol worshipping, which is contrary to the Bible. The interviewed person was later ordained a singer in the church leaders. Some years later he was ordained by the bishop as a sub deacon. The ordination for becoming a deacon was done by Pope Shenouda of Egypt during his visit to Kisumu.

Ways of worshipping

Apart from the mass there is a service called ‘the raising of incense’. There is a book of liturgy which is closely followed when the mass is celebrated. When the priest enters the church, he and the deacons recite a certain psalm. Many psalms have to be recited before the actual beginning of the mass. At the beginning the congregation asks for the forgiveness of sins ("Lord have mercy").

The drums used during the service are beaten slowly, not in the quick rhythm which is used in other churches. Incense is used intensely. The liturgy followed is the same in any Coptic Orthodox Church anywhere in the world.

Beliefs, teachings, doctrines  
feasts and events

St. Mark is the founder of the church. (The present pope Shenouda is the 117th successor of him. ‘Pope of Alexandria, Patriarch of the see of St. Mark’).

The Bible is the centre of teaching. All the songs have words which are quotations of the Bible (psalm, words of Jesus). The church believes in one Lord Jesus Christ. The deacon didn't feel firm enough in the more detailed question of the doctrines and therefore referred that part to be his seniors.

The teachings on alcohol are not as strict as in the churches where people are ‘saved’. Christmas is celebrated on the 7th of January. It is preceded by a period of fasting and prayer starting from the 25th of November. On the eve of 7th, a midnight mass is celebrated. After the mass on 7th, there is a big communal meal to which everybody contributes.

Easter and other important feast are also observed.

History of the church

The church started very long ago. The founder was St. Mark, one of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, who went to Egypt after the Pentecost, in order to spread the gospel.

The Coptic Orthodox Church in Nyanza was planted by bishop Antonius, on one of his official visits.
Political activity

The church is not active in politics. Individual members may be politicians. The church as a body however is quiet in the political field. If politicians want to address the faithful, they are given chance to do so outside the church building. The Coptic Orthodox Church is not a participant in the Ufumgamano Initiative and has no official stand towards it.

African culture

Since the liturgy followed in the mass is the same world-wide, the influence of the local culture is very small. It can in fact only be seen by the language, which is used.

The church is trying to adapt to the local culture, for example by not rejecting polygamous families. The people are however taught that having one wife is the right way to life as a Christian. The same applies to the dealings with those who practise the tradition of wife inheritance.

Evangelization

Occasionally some of the clergy go out to market places to preach and along with them goes a choir to sing the typical church songs. Some people get interested through this and make contact with the church.

Gender

Women can organize themselves within the church, but can not be pastors or climb into the ranks of ordained leaders.

Differences and similarities with other churches

The differences are rather big and easily visible when it comes to the liturgy. Other churches have adopted a lot of the local way of singing and liturgical music, while the Coptic Church is using songs and music that is strongly influenced by if not copied from the Egyptian Centre of the Church.
Second Stage of research from July to September 2003: Interviews with church leaders (bishops) and representatives of church networks

Interview A:
*Bishop Salmon Obiero, Pentecostal Revival Ministries of Kenya, (in charge of Nairobi Diocese and general overseer of the whole church)*

*Place: OAIC offices, Lavington/Nairobi*
*Date: 28.08.2003*

**Question:** How do you see the relationship of AICs with other churches, specifically the Pentecostals?

Bishop Obiero:

In Nairobi there are a number of networks, where Pentecostal leaders are coming together. I am personally a member of one based in ‘South B’. This network is trying to bring all the Pentecostals together, specifically for the purpose of organizing conferences, seminars etc. Besides that we as well co-operate with the Catholics or the Anglicans when it comes to national issues, for example within the Ufungamano initiative. I was a representative of the OAIC at Ufungamano.

At the moment we are also very much involved in the area of fighting against HIV/AIDS together with others. Here we have a forum, where we are meeting together with Catholics, Anglicans and other groups. Last week we were together with the Pentecostal group at a certain hotel in a meeting that was coming up with policies about HIV/AIDS. As a bishop of my church I am a member of the Pentecostal network I have been talking about and also of OAIC. The Pentecostal network is a movement, while OAIC is a registered organization. One is dealing very much with the propagation of the gospel while the other one deals more with development and other national issues.

I consider my church, the Pentecostal Revival Ministries of Kenya, an AIC because it has African origin. The idea of the church is of course from a Pentecostal background, which means, that it stems from America. Originally we were members of PEFA (Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa), an umbrella organization of Pentecostal churches. We left that organization in 1975.

If one looks at the divisions that have been there between churches, it has normally been because of some small doctrines, that have either not been understood or been taken up by fundamentalists.

Today we even find some people of Pentecostal background at the Bomas of Kenya, participating in the constitutional conference, although they were against that initially. What do we learn out of that: They were opposing what they did not understand.

There was lack of what we call a holistic understanding of God’s purpose towards mankind. Because I believe, that a human being is not only a spiritual being. It has many elements that make it up. A human being needs to be sorted out spiritually, politically, psychologically, economically. All these things are required for one person as a human being. So if you only see the spiritual dimension of a human being, this person will not face life with reality. So this is why I sometimes see that the approach within Pentecostalism is lacking the holistic view. And I think, they stress so much on the spiritual approach, which today is disapproving them, because they must deal with issues like HIV/AIDS, they must deal with issues like poverty. They can not run away from those. Jesus also cared for the hungry, although eating is a physical need.

One example to make a few things clear is the issue of polygamy. It is not only found in AICs. How will a Pentecostal handle a case of a person in a polygamous marriage, who has accepted to be converted to be a Christian? Will you tell him to chase away the other wives? It is not practical. People will talk about it, but it is not a reality. In that area, we are handling matters just like the Catholic Church, although the preaching may be different.

Much of the Pentecostal approach is very American, that means also very emotional. Very often it does not leave any option, but says "this is it, you either take it or leave it".
Another area: The Pentecostals looks at the use of herbal medicine as being satanic. But looking at this in the actual sense you realize, that this is Gods creation, not human. God designed, that every human being eating a balanced diet will always get good health.

If an independent church teaches, that to pluck leaves from a certain tree as a cure for a specific disease, there is not much difference from medical science.

One problem is that what was put in us by the white men has made us think that anything to do with us is bad. There has been a look of rejection on the Pentecostal side of cultural practises. But now some of us start to realize, that there is no human being without culture and that culture is important. No culture is superior to another.

Africans did not need to be told how to love. Loving was the way we were expressing our spirituality. That is why we never had a problem for example with orphans, to take care of them was natural to us. You do not have to be trained anywhere to take care of an orphan.

But when the Europeans came, they instilled something in us that was more of individualism. That is when people started struggling for individual possession.

Along the cultural line it is still not clear to most of us what is of the devil and what is not of the devil. Many churches that we have today, although they have been founded in Africa, don’t want to identify with their being African. Instead they look at it as being primitive. I believe that we have to serve God the way we are, in our own shoes and not in other people’s shoes.

This includes music in the church. I always encourage the faithful to use drums and not only keyboards and big loudspeakers. Keyboards are not superior to drums, neither are guitars superior to drums. They all serve the same purpose, which is to give glory to the Lord. We have not come to term with these issues.

Question: How would you project the future development of the AICs in general as opposed to the upsurge of Neo-Pentecostal groups?

Bishop Obiero:

Once you see the AICs passing along the road and you have your big crusade, you would see it as if the devil would appear.

There is a blow of wind in every season. Wind can always come and go, die and come up. These new Pentecostal groups and preachers might just disappear again the way they came. Some light can be brought into this by looking at the middle ages. God was sending people bit by bit. We had Martin Luther, who was first a Catholic. He didn’t stay Catholic, he moved. After Luther, God raised another person. This was William Booth, who started the Salvation Army. But if we look at what Booth did, it seems like Luther before him did nothing. That is the perception of those churches you can see across. When they thought that Luther did nothing, they forgot that they were building on the foundation of Luther.

That gave them the room of reaching a specific level. God has raised another person again; like John Wesley, who started the Methodists. And the Methodists again looked at Booth from that angle.

Every movement, every blow of wind, will always try to undermine the other movement, but take their very foundations to build on.

The movement of the new Pentecostals has its cause very much from America. From there it went straight to Nigeria. But of course the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, the Winners’ Chapel etc. they are mixed up. Some people look at them as if there is some demonic power, some ‘juju’ attached to them. This is why even the Pentecostals themselves do not talk much about them.

They are certainly not going to wipe out the independent churches. They concentrate very much on towns. But the population in towns is very low. And they can never penetrate to the house of an old mama in the reserves. But our churches, our pastors will ever be able to go and sit in the house of that person and they discuss and know what is the problem. “Today I did not have my lunch”. “Take 10 Shillings, go and buy your lunch”. For such a person you can start shooting big words, but he will never understand. He will always say; “I know so and so gave me this when I was hungry”. This is to say that AICs have got roots in the rural areas and they are able to move closer to the real homesteads. While those others are just here in towns and in the TV. With things like TV, you will only reach the towns, in the reserves they are very rare.

When it comes to the situation in towns: In the slums of the towns the AICs are very active and are also thinking about development. That is why the OAIC is active here and is trying to bring up support programmes, income generating activities and so forth.

But if you only preach good things and leave the people hungry, you will not reach far. The preaching will not have meaning.
The way forward for independent churches will be to become able to get an equal platform with the mainline churches, so that when we sit on the same table, we are able to talk on the same level. That is way we are pushing so hard to have our people sponsored for Master’s, for PhD or so. Like me, I am doing my Master’s at the Catholic University here in Nairobi.

Secondly we must concentrate so much on things like projects that take care of the general community, like schools, vocational training centres and others. I think that if we move through that line, we are having a very bright future. Even now we are already remarkable in the topic of HIV/AIDS. In the whole republic we are the only people who have trained TOTs, who are again training other people in the area of HIV/AIDS, counselling etc. This is a unique effort that might take these other churches very long to think about.

Question: Will the Pentecostal churches in the future change their attitude towards political statements, civic education etc.?

Bishop Obiero:
We have gone through a process. Initially we were told that you must always obey your leaders. That is what was locking us out. But now most of our people are able to check the political leaders and a number have even been observers to the last elections. This is no longer an issue to us, as we can also observe, that most of the fundamentalists are giving way to the young blood.

In the past, when we thought about ‘politics’, we always thought of opposing the very government that God has put in place. So if one arises to oppose that government then the Bible is condemning you. That is the way we looked at it. But I would say that there is some development happening in the thinking.
Interview B:  
Archbishop Njeru Wambugu, General Secretary of the Organisation of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) and head of the National Independent Church of Africa  

Place: His house at Tena Estate/Nairobi  
Date: 14.08.2003

Question: How do AIC’s work together, how are they networking?

Archbishop Wambugu:

The OAIC began in 1978 and I became the general secretary in 1985. It is divided into regions. We have East Africa as a region (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania), Congo as a separate region, then West Africa English speaking, West Africa French speaking, Nigeria as a separate region, and the Southern region with a big number of countries (South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia, Angola, etc.) and Madagascar as a separate region. The international chairman currently is Baba Aladura Otubu from Nigeria. The post of general secretary at the head office in Nairobi is the one of an employee, not an elected position. Each region again is headed by a regional chairman, who is leading a regional council, which runs the affairs of that region. My work is to join together, go between the regions.

Until the organisation was formed, OAIC members were not talking to one another. Independent churches did not have a forum to meet and discuss. After the formation of the organisation, people began to discover one another and they began to share one another’s views and ideas. Even the people they one time thought could be their enemies, now they began to say: Oh, this one almost worships the way I worship. That way we created the bond of friendship and the various independent churches started to visit each other, without OAIC even to get into it. But at the national level you again find them to talk like colleagues. There is a lot of interaction now also between independent churches from different areas. Those from Nyanza, would visit the ones from Central Province, those from Central province the ones from Western Province and so on. This kind of interaction has opened them up.

OAIC has been a tool, or a vehicle to facilitate people to meet. The point of networking in work however, is still a little far off. This is in terms of church programmes. For example on the field of HIV/AIDS, which really cuts across, a TOT from this church or from the other church might want to collaborate with the ones from the others. This has been working well, but only in the HIV-programmes and it has not been there in other programmes.

The other issue is the training in theological education: A facilitator from one church going to another one becomes a process of cross-fertilisation and sharing. AICs have not completely articulated their theology. So it’s not a very complicated theology and they can easily fit in which each other. Issues of doctrine rarely arise. There are no doctrinal disputes. Our basis of faith is very clear: If you want to join the organisation as a member church, you must believe in the Old and New Testament and in the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. This already disqualifies a number of churches. It disqualifies Nomiya, because they do not believe in Christ and in the Holy Spirit being God, it also disqualifies Maria Legio, because they believe that Ondeto was Christ incarnate.

There are hardly any independent churches who would purposely not want to become members of the OAIC. What usually happens, is that some of them would want to join but would not want to raise the membership fees.

The church I am the leader of is the National Independent Church of Africa. It has originated in the region of Embu and is mainly spread in Central Province.

Question: What about the relationship between the AICs and the mainline churches?

Archbishop Wambugu:

Previously there was tension, but with the coming of OAIC, we have reduced the tension by building bridges of friendship. Bridging the gaps, so that the AICs are not simply seen as people who separated from them, who broke away from them, who do not want to have anything to do with the mission church. The approach of the mission churches originally was: “After all, you came out from our churches, you can go! After all we don’t know you, we don’t even know what you believe in, go out there!” That kind of attitude made a lot of our people keep away from contact with mainline churches and in their fellowships we were not invited. But with the
coming in of OAIC, there are now forums, where we are coming together, for example the National Councils of Churches in Africa. Together with the World Council of Churches we recently had a meeting, where we tried to bring together leaders of mainline churches and leaders of independent churches. This was very interesting. We learn about each other, met some people again after a long time. Some of the mainline churches' leaders exclaimed: "Oh this was my son, this one came from me, etc." And it turned out, that some of the independent churches are actually bigger than the mainline churches. Some are just huge.

OAIC and other ecumenical bodies are able to bring independent churches in contact with others. At the same time, more independent churches are seeking membership in ecumenical bodies. I keep on seeing copies of applications sent to AACC through me. Before, nobody wanted to do that, but because of interaction and coming together. Nowadays also the general secretary calls us for conferences of international status. He comes to us and also talks about our people.

In a few exceptional cases, independent churches have already very early been members of ecumenical bodies. The African Israel Nineveh Church has even been in the World Council of Churches (WCC) for quite some time. So some saw the light quite early.

When there is a general assembly of the World Council of Churches, I always apply for a few members from our organisation. Last time I took fifteen to Harare. In that meeting we also had workshops and I was running one that was to make people understand what independent churches are. That way we open up ourselves to other people and stamp out the belief, that we are not Christians. Many people from the mission churches have seen us as not being Christians. But when they learn, what we believe and how we are doing things, they realize, that we know, what we are doing.

There could of course still be tensions now between mainline and independent churches, but not as much as it was some time ago, when nobody even wanted to hear us.

Question: How do you see the relations between AICs and the Pentecostal churches?

Archbishop Wambugu:
Originally there was a lot of suspicion, mainly because the Pentecostal churches we had were from outside, especially America. They were saying: "You people are not Christians. With all the things that you do, you can't be Christians". What they meant: In some of our churches, polygamy is not an issue, traditional practices of some AICs like sleeping in caves, worshipping on mountains, some of those things.

Nowadays we have a big number of African Pentecostals, like the church of Bishop Obiero, the 'Pentecostal Revival Ministries of Kenya'. These are people with the sympathy of the African culture and they have no problem with the OAIC, because they share the same feelings. This is why we might not fit in the main Pentecostal Group. But there is now a new African Pentecostal Group that easily understands the independent churches. This African Pentecostal group is now even criticizing the other Pentecostals. The other ones complain that the African Pentecostals do not have the real order.

The new African Pentecostals on the other side are complaining about the traditional Pentecostal preoccupation with one leading person, where everything revolves around one man. The other aspect is that they don't appreciate the kind of ordination that is done in Pentecostalism, because it is just too simple. You call a person there, you pray for him here, nothing is done and you tell him "now bishop, wake up and go".

With the new African Pentecostals, including Obiero, we have now done a full consecration service. With all regalia, with everything done properly. That gives them also a different standing. For example, when Obiero was being ordained as a bishop, the Anglican bishop was also there. He was actually the one, who was preaching.

When I was made an archbishop, the Anglican archbishop of Nairobi, David Gitari was preaching during the ceremony. Through this you can see that the relationship between AICs and mainline churches is not all that bad. We have opened all the doors.

Of course with the Pentecostals there are still too many things that they do not want to get into. I don't want to mention names, but I can tell you, that the ones we think of being steady are actually personal structures. They are not churches.
Question: What is the reason for so many AIC-leaders claiming that African culture is not part of the practise of their faith?

Archbishop Wambugu:
The problem is ignorance. They do not understand the interaction between the gospel and culture. The gospel works within a certain culture. Even Jesus Christ worked within Hebrew culture. There is no way you can remove the gospel from culture. If you do, it will die, because it has to go to people’s lives.
Take for example marriage: The gospel does not refuse you to do it the African way. It is Christianity to be woven into the traditional practises. In the African marriage you are not married unless you have paid dowry, even if you go to church and get a certificate. Marriage has a completely different connotation compared to how it is in Europe and America.
The leaders who think that church and culture cannot match together, might think that culture is something very, very difficult. But if they just begin to interact with it, they begin to see what it really is.
Let me give an example: When you go to Western Kenya there is this question of boys’ circumcision, which is done in a certain season. Traditionally people are taken to a river and for about two or three weeks they are taught very rude songs, taught about how to handle a wife and so on. What we did here as OAIC is to say to the church leaders of Western Kenya: “Instead of young people being taught funny things in those camps, why don’t you go in there yourselves and teach them about Christianity, how to behave as husband and wife in a Christian manner and such things? And when they come out of that camp they don’t come out with that rough traditional thing. But they have done it and the circumcision is taking place.
Talking about circumcision, we have to mention also the female circumcision, which is such a controversial issue.
Here the AICs are divided. Of course in a place like Nyanza you don’t even talk about it, neither in Western. In Central Province however it is resurrecting. People thought it had died, but in Eastern and Central Province it is resurrecting in the name of the culture.
Usually, where it is done, it is not done openly. You just hear about it. And it is not everybody together, but just one family. In some areas like in Meru it is very strong. It is a major issue there.
One must understand the purpose of circumcision in the olden days. The question is: Are those reasons valid now? One has to be very careful and alert there.
I do not call it “genital mutilation”, because I do not want to use NGO-language, which is usually used to look for money. Women used to go for circumcision. And they were very proud of it, because that was their rite of passage from childhood to adulthood. Anybody from that age was now a woman and not a child anymore and was ready for marriage. Without it she could not be married. We must understand the cultural aspect of it.
My church resolved in 1963 that there are two things we don’t want to fight with and we never speak about in the church: female circumcision and polygamy. Those who feel that female circumcision is good, continue with it! Those that feel, that the don’t want it, stop it! Same about polygamy, as long as a church member has a clear family. Polygamy we have never fought about and it has died itself.

Question: Are the Neo-Pentecostals posing a threat to the existence of AICs?

Archbishop Wambugu:
To me the television evangelists like Pius Muiru, Teresia Wairimu and others are creating a wave, but not a church. When people begin to understand what they are being taught, they will run away. If Muiru is not there today, what would happen to this group of his? What’s the future of it if everything is only around him? The same to Bonnke and all the others of this group.
Billy Graham was very, very famous. After he had some problems, although some of his people began to take over, nobody could really replace him.
People begin to see, what kind of message is coming out of these Pentecostal churches. To me it’s a refugee camp for people with problems. They are people who don’t want commitment, people who just want to go there to jump and shout.
What is preached there is called the prosperity gospel: “Don’t care about what you have here, give it to me, you will get yours in heaven.” The one benefiting is not the one that is preached to.
The ‘Winners’ Chapel’ is a very confused church. It is just a mess. When it came to Nairobi it was drawing a lot of divorcees, actually it was a church for divorcees. Now it has messed the lives of a lot of women.
Out at Adam’s Arcade we have seen a lot of women die on the road, being knocked by a car. They have been told: “with the Spirit even if you stand on the road you can not be knocked.” It’s all about opportunising memories and minds of people, so that they stop thinking.
Those churches may appear strong now, but their future is very shaky.
There is one thing that they completely ignore: The social aspect of the ministry of God; that it is not only worship that brings us together, but that there are also other things bringing us together, that we have to do social work. If you ask Muiru for example how much money he collects and how much goes into social work to support the needy, the poor, you will see him running away from his responsibilities.
The message is: “You are poor, because you have very little faith” – this is ridiculous!
APPENDIX: INTERVIEWS

Question: Why do so many leaders in AICs see no connection between church and politics?

Archbishop Wambugu:
The problem is that they do not understand what politics is. We have a prophetic role. If for example the government goes wrong, who will speak out against it on behalf of the people?
Let them read in the Old Testament, which they like very much. Whom was God using? It was his own prophets, whom he sent to the kings to tell them: “Your days are gone. You are making a mistake here. You are doing wrong there.” When is the church going to wake up and realize that they have to stand up and challenge the leadership? When I am driving on this road and it has potholes, is it now politics if I say that the road has potholes? If the water we are drinking is dirty, is it politics to fight against that? Somebody somewhere must be responsible for the dirty water.
God has given us his riches and we must be stewards of those riches. If God has given leadership to a president, to look after Kenya, he should make sure that every Kenyan enjoys his life and his protection here. If a leader does not secure that, he is not a leader.

Those that are members of OAIC already know the importance of getting involved in politics. When we did that, the Pentecostals refused to come with us and prayed that God punishes us.
But their agenda was not very clear. After some time they came back under a different name. This time they call themselves ‘Kenya Church’. Now I can see them running around the Bomas of Kenya where the constitutional conference is taking place. Ask them: “Gentlemen where were you? Now you are here at Bomas. When you people were struggling to get money from Moi to abuse us, what were you thinking?” I told one of them the other day: “Please now you must repent, because you have made a plunder in this country”. Let them say: “We did not see it right and now we have opened our eyes”.

Take the example of the National Council of Churches of Kenya or the All Africa Conference of Churches. You have churches like the African Inland Church, which would not want to be a member of those organisations. This church has a very Evangelical approach while they feel that the NCCK and the AACC are too much involved in politics.
I am waiting for a time when church leaders will begin to even talk economics. Because the farmers whose price of produce is reduced by WTO, these farmers are members of a church and so the church is affected.
People have to understand: If you are talking of poverty, you must ask where the poverty began and how it can be fought. If there are structures that make people poor, can we destroy them? If people say that they have no money to donate to the church, you have to ask, why they have no money. If around Kisumu many people were living of cotton, and cotton went down so much, why was it so? You begin to ask pertinent questions about the courses of our poverty which leads to confronting it instead of lamenting.

Question: How would you predict the general development of independent churches in the future?

Archbishop Wambugu:
The independent churches are a growing movement. A movement that requires to be nurtured. People want independent churches and they want to be members of them. What we have to encourage is to have more trained pastors. People should not just go there, dance, do all sorts of things and then go home empty handed. People need to be properly nourished spiritually so that even as they enjoy and praise God with their dances, they also receive sound teaching. That will help the independent churches to grow and especially to attract young people. They expect a pastor who knows his stuff and can challenge them on theological issues. That will make them to come back tomorrow and that we you will see the church growing. That is my vision for the future of independent churches.
Interview C:
Rev. Dr. Kasonga wa Kasonga, All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)
(Presbyterian minister, department head at the AACC headquarters)

Place: AACC offices, Westlands/Nairobi
Date: 19.08.2003

Question: How do AIC’s relate to the AACC?

Rev. Kasonga:
One of the main components of the work of AACC is the theological reflection, to be focused on sound theological basis. Talking about theology here we mean African theology, theology generated by Africans. If you read the trends of African theology, you find that there is a lot of interest in drawing on the traditional values and belief systems. The independent churches pay very much attention to this.

The member churches of AACC are mostly mainline churches. We have been influenced by Western theological thinking and in the course of the years we have found that we are moving far away from the way our people express themselves, as far as their relationship to God is concerned. One way of going back is to listen carefully to what the independent churches have said. That is why within AACC there is so much interest in collaborating with independent churches. There is much openness on the side of AACC and it would like to consult them wherever possible. At the same time the collaboration has to be done consciously. One of the latest efforts the AACC has been busy with is the concern of the theological developments within the Kimbanguist Church in Kongo. There are some deviations which have been observed concerning the Trinity. The problem is that they had made it clear that the founder of the church was an incarnation of the Holy Spirit and one of his sons a reincarnation of Jesus Christ, while another son is God the Father.

So when the say “in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”, you may find, that they talk about something else than we do.

The one who is now in charge of the church is believed to be the reincarnation of Simon Kimbangu himself, which means, that he must be the Holy Spirit also.

The Kimbanguist church became a member of the World Council of Churches and of the All Africa Conference of Churches in the late sixties. This was on the basis of believing in the Holy Trinity. But in the Trinity in the biblical way and not other interpretations added to it.

The way the Kimbanguist Church has interpreted the Trinity has made other churches to run away from collaborating with them and it created some uneasiness. The Kimbanguists are still members, but WCC is concerned about it and the central committee might cancel their membership. AACC is also concerned about it.

There is a consultation planned -involving a good number of theologians- in order to solve the issue the African way.

The AACC is the continental ecumenical body, which is a separate entity from the World Council of Churches (WCC). It is the intermediate body between the National Councils of Churches and the WCC.

Out of the 169 member churches of the AACC there would be not more than 10 independent churches. AACC has been founded by mainline churches, especially protestant ones. Founder members where for example the Anglicans, Presbyterians and Methodists, but also the Orthodox Churches. Pentecostals and Evangelicals are not part of it, because of interpretation problems of what is meant by ecumenism. They have not seen ecumenism as central for them because of their militant approach to mission and conversion. They also find that AACC is too much looking into the socio-political situation.

For AACC the church has the mandate of speaking out and fighting for people to live a good life. Life includes all aspects, spiritual, physical, psychological, etc.

Many of the Pentecostal or Evangelical churches don’t want to be members of AACC, because they believe, that it is what has been termed as ‘liberal’. But in future we might start working together. There have already been meetings since the 1980ies called ‘PACRA’, which were pan African meetings of church leaders of mainline churches as well as independent, Pentecostal and Evangelical churches. In these meetings some former barriers to ecumenism were broken.

AACC is undergoing some change, looking at the recent development on the continent, in our lives, economically, politically etc. The AACC must readapt itself and in that process open up to other organisations, other ecumenical agencies and other churches, so that all can give the input to that change. By making itself vulnerable, AACC would like for the others, churches or agencies, to do the same.

The independent churches are a group that the AACC wants to learn from especially in terms of the connections between faith and culture.
Question: How would you project the future development of the AICs in general?

Dr. Kasonga:

Some of them might disappear, because they have so much concentrated on their own tradition, which makes them to be withdrawn from interacting with the others.

But those that interact with the other churches or other organizations will survive. Some of them will survive, because some people in power or seeking power will like to rub shoulders with them and therefore pay attention to their existence and considering them being churches. In the Democratic Republic of Congo for example, politicians visit their church services during campaign time, i.e. before elections. Apart from independent churches, they also focus on some of the new Pentecostal churches. Politicians in power are also often supporting independent churches, because the mainline churches might not agree with the way the politicians are running things, but the independent churches might not fight their actions.

Another ground for survival could be the new openness of the AACC and the way it wants to work together with them in the future, especially in helping them to get a better theological understanding.

Independent churches have in the past proved to grow mainly when they are under threat. Being under pressure gives them more power to grow and more people joining them. Whether this is because of the added publicity or because of the ministries that attract people, especially the healing ministry, is a different question.

It might also be the message of liberation of black people. But the more they open up the more the will in the process lose that thrust to grow that they have when being in the hiding and under pressure.

If a number of them will cease to exist, it will not be because of the way the mainline churches will deal with them. At AACC level, the way of dealing with them is not to impose on them any way of doing things. It is just to understand them and then let them understand us by dealing with them at different forums where even theological issues are discussed.

They already have some leaders who express themselves very, very well and who are very articulate. We would like to see that grow. But it is hard to predict, how that will work. It is difficult to say, how far independent churches can grow or decrease.

The have been some efforts to educate some of the people from the independent churches, by sending them to theological schools. In order to give them tools so that they can be able to reflect on what they are doing. A few of them have done well in this, some of them got into difficulties with their own people, which is not always easy. The efforts done on this field have been very much worthwhile.

There have been a lot of fears of the new Pentecostal churches to wipe out or take away the faithful from the mainline churches and also from the independent churches. This fear has been quite overdone, since this new movement did not really endanger the mainline churches. With the independent churches this might be different because of the similarities in the way they practise their ministry and their emphasis on the Spirit etc. Therefore they may be absorbed.

Another problem is, that most of the independent churches are linked to certain tribes and to particular traditions of a particular ethnic group, whereas the new Pentecostal movement is more inclusive. And as we are moving towards a world in which the tribe becomes less important, given also the impact of globalization, this might negatively affect the independent churches.
Interview D:  
Mrs. Mary Mugambi, National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK)  
(department head at NCCK headquarters)

Place: (new) NCCK offices (Jumuia Place), Kilimani/Nairobi  
Date: 12.09.2003

Question: How do AIC’s relate to the NCCK?

Mrs. Mugambi:
NCCK has several members from the AICs. Some where there very early: in the late 1940ies, e.g. the African Church of the Holy Spirit (Shinyalu, Kakamega area, Western Kenya). The first umbrella body of churches started in 1918, it was later named Christian Council started in 1943. It became a ‘National Christian Council’ in the 1960ies. Now it is called the ‘National Council of Churches of Kenya’.

Other independent churches, that are members of the NCCK are the ‘African Israel Nineveh Church’ (also Western Kenya), the ‘African Christian Church and Schools’ (Thika), the ‘African Brotherhood Church’ (Machakos) among others.

The ‘African Independent Pentecostal Church’ was also a member, but when the NCCK opposed queue voting in 1987 and started discussing political issues, it withdrew.

In the late 1980ies another umbrella body, joined the NCCK: the Kenya United Instituted Churches (KUIC). They are a cluster of African founded churches mostly based in Western Province, which are not direct members of NCCK, but through this body. One of the criteria for NCCK is that the church must have 10.000 registered members. Others are: The need of a constitution and the proclamation of the Trinity.

The proclamation of the Trinity is the entrance gate on the side of dogma. The African founded churches have their own doctrine in that they believe in a specific way how the Holy Spirit works, or how they conduct their services. This doesn’t matter for the NCCK.

The NCCK also does not interfere with the way they select their leaders, whether by elections or any other way. If an African founded church believes that the Spirit reveals to them who should be their leader or if they pass on the leadership within a certain family, that doesn’t prevent them from becoming NCCK-members. At the same time however, the NCCK has tried to instil a bit of leadership skills to them in order to make them realize that a better leader might come from outside the family of the founder.

In the NCCK there is a membership committee which scrutinises applicants for membership for about two years before they can be considered. They have to be introduced by a church which is already a member. After that they become provisional members and are watched for another year or so, before they are absorbed as members.

The NCCK has only 26 members altogether plus some associate members like para-church organisations, some of the universities like Daystar, St. Paul’s Theological College, Bible Society etc. The founder members are six or seven.

There was the African Inland Church, the PCEA (Presbyterian Church of East Africa), the Methodists, Anglicans, the Friends (Quakers) and the Salvation Army.

Four of these formed the St. Paul’s United Theological College at Limuru together with the secretariate of the NCCK. St. Paul’s invites people from the African founded churches who need to be trained as pastors, as most of them don’t have a strong theological basis and a good understanding of the Bible. So the NCCK felt that they should be uplifted more theologically. So in the late 80ies the NCCK looked for founds to train two or three from the African founded churches who are interested in theology and could be good leaders. From the ‘National Independent Church of Africa’ for example, a big number of pastors have been trained. Also from the ‘African Church of the Holy Spirit’ several have been trained through this.

There are other theological colleges still apart from St. Pauls in Limuru, especially the one in Kapsabet, which also takes people from African founded churches that are sponsored by NCCK. Each of the mainline churches has its own Bible College on top of that, which the African founded churches can approach. Some of them were even trying to build theirs but due to lack of funds and personnel, that is difficult.

The World Council of Churches also have such a scholarship programme, but only take applicants who already have a first degree.

If pastors of African founded churches are not trained properly, they can easily be looked down upon, since all the pastors of the mainline churches are trained well.

In the Nairobi region of NCCK there was an incident whereby the African founded churches felt that they can’t come to the committees because they are not well informed and able to participate in the discussions. But as time goes on they found out that they have also something to contribute. It might not be at a very high level, but an issue that comes from the grassroots that the others also need to look at. So there are now coming in and they also want to take the leadership. Here however the problems come in: If the African founded churches take the leadership, the mainline churches’ senior clergy will not come to the meeting, because they feel that there is nothing they can benefit. So this
kind of problem is still there. This is why the NCCK tries to uplift them to a level where they can accommodate each other. In the Nairobi area the churches felt, that they could come closer to each other, if they meet at a more local level, that is in zones. Here they explain to each other the different ranks within each church and other matters concerning their structure. That is where independent churches also make others understand how they function, even though they might not have as many resources as the other ones. Since most pastors of independent churches are not paid for their service, they have to be employed elsewhere. If the pastors from mainline churches meet with them at the zonal level they can understand their situation better and therefore co-operate better within the neighbourhood where they do their church work. So the relationship starts from understanding each other and then they see what they can do together.

Question: How do you see the relations of AICs among each other?

Mrs. Mugambi: There is a lot of competition among the AICs, because some of them are break-aways of the other. If I wanted to be a leader and I didn’t become one, I break away and form my own church, where I’m a leader. Obviously through this I’ll steal the flock from the other group. This practice of stealing of flock becomes a stumbling block for the relationship. There is of course also a lot of looking for who can do it better – who can drum better or attract more people. Of course also the gowns they wear are a way of saying “I am the one”. So there is a lot of competition among themselves.

Question: How would you project the future development of the AICs in general?

Mrs. Mugambi: The ones that have more pastors that have gone for training are seeing a wider perspective of church. They have opened up to other issues like development, being involved in civic education and that way the ones that have been trained come up with ideas that help to uplift their church. So those ones that have opened up will be seen as attractive. Because the majority of them has mainly the older generation as members. By opening up to other attractive programmes they will attract young people, some of whom will be again trained and qualified for better understanding of the Bible and better methods of preaching and reaching more people. That way there are some that will grow. Then of course there are others who will stick only to the older generation and will not be able to train. They will remain constant, but later on they will lose the followers to others who have attractive programmes. The churches that will not send people for proper training will eventually fade out. The strong urge for power within the independent churches and the breaking away because of that will have to be reduced very much.

Question: Is theological education not going to change the outlook and identity of AICs?

Mrs. Mugambi: Probably not, because they will always remember where they came from. They have their foundations and know why the church was founded. They know their tradition of preaching etc. If they can keep their areas of tradition that are not against the training and the theological education and at the same time get a better understanding of the Bible, they will interpret these things in a better way to their people. That would be o.k. and would not necessarily change the values they have based their church on. Also in the mainline churches we have values that according to the vision of NCCK should be informed by tradition. If you use the tradition to inform you, you can improve. A young man, who comes from a local community and takes part in the worshipping services as they are conducted by his African founded churches, will certainly be changed in many ways when going through theological training at a place like St. Paul’s. He might not feel that the way of praying in frenzy and losing touch with the reality during dancing is appropriate any longer. He might want to put words into it, not only beating the drum. The visions and prophecies and speaking in tongues might also be questioned by him now. You have to speak in tongues knowing what you are talking about, not just making noise. The question of wearing specific robes will also be affected, since people will be made aware, that it is not the outer signs that make you a Christian. As all education is changing people and as there are also things that you shake off and others that you want to keep, theological education is also definitely going to change the independent churches. They might in the end see the value of not having so many different churches and reduce them to a smaller number than now.
Question: How would you explain, that although a considerable number of independent churches started as part of the movement for independence from colonial rule, they nowadays want to see no connection between politics and their activities?

Mrs. Mugambi:
This common denial of any political activity is not always corresponding with the real situation. Many independent churches and churches of Pentecostal nature have in the past been very strongly opposed against the involvement of the mainline churches and the NCCK in the pressure for constitutional change and the opposition of the Moi government on the side of human rights, civic education etc.

But now that the change of government has happened and the constitutional change is well under way, they also want to be recognized and want to become part of the process. For that sake these Pentecostal churches have formed an umbrella called 'The Kenya Church'. They have approached the current Secretary General of NCCK, to be their chairman – a move that has raised many eyebrows.

The history of conflicting views on political involvement is a much longer one however. There was a time, when NCCK opposed the queue voting system, but they felt that that was the right thing. They also felt, that NCCK was generally becoming too political and they started quarrelling with NCCK. Some of the churches that felt it wasn't their mandate to be involved in commenting about the political issues in Kenya, dropped out of NCCK, like the 'African Independent Pentecostal Church'. Also the 'African Inland Church', which even had been a founder member. Their leader was a Kalenjin who was like a father to former President Moi and at one time he refused to be a part of a group that was refusing, what their son is doing. The other ones that dropped out were the 'Church of God' and the 'Pentecostal Assemblies of God'. The latter one also dropped out because of leadership wrangles: Their leader by that time wanted to be the General Secretary of NCCK, but was not taken. He was very bitter about that and said: ‘I can even get out of it’ and took his church along. They are still not members up to now.

These churches that had dropped out, together with other Pentecostal and Evangelical churches formed a new umbrella body, which was now the opposing side. There was a time, when things became very hot and the government considered deregistering NCCK, without knowing, that NCCK is exempted from registration as a society. Finally the heat went down. But this new umbrella body was formed.

When it now came to the issues concerning the pressure for a new constitution, they came together again. They now had all the Evangelicals and Pentecostals and got stronger and stronger. They were even trying to dictate how many people of theirs should be there in the committees for constitutional review, although there were never involved in civic education and even hated it.

After the change of government and when the constitutional conference approach, they wanted now to shine and formed this body called 'The Kenya Church'. Then they went and took the chairman of the Council to be their chairman also. This caused confusion in the sense that when he spoke for them he could be mistaken as speaking as the chairman of NCCK. Later the chairman realized that he was being used.

The question is, whether the member churches of 'The Kenya Church' have decided to become involved in the process of constitutional change because they have seen the need to be politically active or just because they don't want to be left out on such an important platform. It would be having a foot in the door rather than a change of heart. Many of their members are still convinced that the work of the church can only concern the soul and not the other aspects of a person. A few of them however have realized that the needs of a person go beyond the spiritual needs. Some of them have started to go in that direction, but there are some, like the ones of Margret Wanjiru who go and pray for the people and tell them how they should pray, but do not look at any other aspect. They tell the people, to believe in their prayers and they will be answered, rather than advising them to do any activities towards that prayer.

But the leaders themselves know what they are doing, the actually live two different lives. Some of the leaders of the Pentecostal churches are changing only slowly by slowly. But in this issue of the constitutional change, they now do not want to be left out. They want to feel, that they were part of it.
Interview E:
Zacchaeus Okoth, Catholic Church, Archbishop of Kisumu,

Place: Archbishop’s office, Sifa House, Kibuye/Kisumu
Date: 01.09.2003

Question: How would you describe the relationship of your church with AICs?

Archbishop Okoth:
We have very little in common with them. Especially with the leaders of the independent churches there is very little contact.
Every year with have an event called the ‘ecumenical week’, where our church meets with a number of other churches. But the independent churches are not part of that either. The same applies to a whole number of other ecumenical bodies, where they do not participate.
There are only few points I can think of, where there are contacts.
During the launching of the Luo Bible for example, leaders of independent churches were there.
Also when political issues are concerned, we have been working together with other churches, including independent ones like the Church of Christ in Africa (CCA). During national days or days of prayer and during big gatherings I have been together with leaders of Independent Churches.
Another occasion for meetings is fundraisings and harambees that may be held at one of the churches or at one of our parishes.
At the grassroots level there are of course lots of every day contacts between their members and members of the Catholic Church. The mix freely at burial ceremonies and other feasts like baptisms, marriages etc.
What put us apart in the past, was that they very much supported the previous regime in our country, while our church, together with others, opposed a lot of things that were happening in the political arena.
One of the policies of the Catholic Church has always been that when it comes to social projects or education, we don’t discriminate. We admit students to our schools, who are or whose parents are members of independent churches, we distribute relief food in times of need to anybody, whether Catholic or not and also at our clinics, sick people are treated irrespective of their creed.

Question: How is nowadays the relationship of the Catholic Church with the Legio Maria Church?

Archbishop Okoth:
It is much easier for us to meet with the Legio people than with other independent churches and their members, since we share a lot of things.
We have always been very friendly with them.
Many of their members have left the Catholic Church out of ignorance. By now, quite a number of them have been absorbed back.
Of course in their beginnings there was a lot of hostility. Especially from their side there was hostility. But now, that in our church there are also Africans in charge, it is much easier again to communicate with Legio Maria.
We have been very careful however to prevent the movement out of our church into theirs. In places, where they are strong, we have made sure, that there are new churches being built and new parishes established, so that the our church shows its strong presence also.
A lot of people have joined Legio Maria because of the healing that is practised there.

Question: How would you project the future development of the AICs in general?

Archbishop Okoth:
Given the fact, that the youth are getting more and more educated, the future generation in the independent churches will have to make a decision: Either to change the face of their church and to do a lot of things different or to leave the church to face extinction.
Other churches like Pentecostals, Baptists and so on, will swallow up the educated members of the independent churches and leave them only with the less educated ones.
In the rural areas they will stay and continue to exist for a long time. In the urban areas however, the Pentecostals will wipe them out.
It is difficult for an educated person, to follow the rituals and traditions practised in independent churches. That is why they will lose those educated members.
Interview F:  
Matthew Abednego Ajuoga, Archbishop of the Church of Christ in Africa (Johera)  

Place: His house at the church headquarters “Dala Hera”, Kondele/Kisumu  
Date: 03.09.03

Question: “Church and politics have nothing to do with each other”.  
What is your opinion about this statement? Is it true for your church?  

Archbishop Ajuoga:  
Church and state are not really separable. They are more of less the same. I take it to be that church is one arm of God trying to fight sin and inquiring from inside, whereas state fights sin from outside. I preach “thou shalt not steal”, then I end there and the state will apprehend you when you steal and probably imprison you. State and Church are arms serving humanity. Therefore there is not very much difference.  
If local leaders of AICs say that the church should never involve itself in politics, they do that because of low understanding and low education etc.  
Only a Christian way of doing politics will be following the truth and taking care of the people without any discrimination.  
At the Constitutional Conference at the Bomas of Kenya, my wife is one of the delegates representing our church. She is a representative also of the Kenya Chapter of the OAIC.  
At the Ufungamano Initiative we were not always represented. We were sometimes called, but often we did not attend, since we did not agree with the things going on. Their suggestions were sometimes too much. We did not like that they spoke too loud as Christians. When they pushed to hard or mixed too much with the Muslims, we did not come along any more.

Question: “Church and African traditional culture have nothing to do with each other”.  
What is your opinion about this statement? Is it true for your church?  

Archbishop Ajuoga:  
There are some churches that are politically minded, some are based on African culture. Others again call themselves Christians and yet they worship the founder of their group, do not rely completely on the Bible and do not place Jesus where he should be placed.  
My church, the CCA, resembles the Anglican Church very much. We are more or less like them. We only differ in that we do not pray for the Queen or the King to rule people. Another difference is that we admit polygamous people, although we do not ordain them or give them positions in the church, since the Bible says “one man, one wife”. The Anglican church used not even to bury such people, but now they are following what we were doing. They also used not to baptize children from polygamous homes, while we always did. Now they have changed there also.  
In the past, the Luo had the tradition to knock out six teeth as a sign of initiation. Nowadays this is rarely practised. But our church does not interfere with that. If somebody want to do it or not, is his or her own affair. The Kalenjin or some of the Bantu circumcise. If they like to circumcise that is upon them.  
In the ways of worshipping of our church, there are not so many elements compared to other independent churches, since we very much follow the Anglican order of doing things.

Question: How would you describe the relationship of your church with (other) AICs?  

Archbishop Ajuoga:  
We have worked together for quite a long time. With Wambugu from the OAIC we have worked for a long time. There are a number of differences between independent churches and we don't insist that the churches need to have the same faith. As long as somebody believes in Jesus, the Trinity and water baptism, we have no problem with him. We won't force any church to be like ours.  
Our church is a member of the OAIC and we use that forum to meet. We send our delegates there. Right now there is a meeting in Wambugu office and I have sent my general secretary there. Nowadays there are many fields where cooperation is needed: AIDS, orphans, widows, creating awareness about other social problems. Even on the theological side there is no difficulty at all.
Question: How would you describe the relationship of your church with the so-called “mainline churches”?

Archbishop Ajuoga:
When we were separating they were really bitter. They fought against us very much and wanted us to be imprisoned and so on. The Anglicans, but also the Catholics would have wanted us to be finished completely. But God protected us.
Nowadays things have changed a lot. The younger priests very much work together. We also come together at very many occasions.
Of course, some are still looking down upon us. Missionaries as well as Africans working with them.
Otherwise the relationship is quite amicable and we do recognize one another.
We had a seminar here for a week and last Sunday we ordained some of our folks here, the Anglican archdeacon was present: The bishop was to come, but he was away at Mombasa so he sent the archdeacon.
We do mix during funerals, in seminars and at other occasions.

Question: How do you see the future of your church?

Archbishop Ajuoga:
We now ordain women to be priests. We want to ordain more and more, because most of them are more faithful than men. We started ordaining them three years ago to full priests with all rights that the male pastors have. In some places they have not been accepted fully by some Christians. We told them, that Jesus used to preach here and there with saved women and Paul with Phoebe. So leadership in the church is not only for men. Deborah led the Israelites when men could not withstand the enemies.
One of our future problems is money: You know, most of our followers are poor. So we have been trying to think along creating income generating projects. The difficulty is about finances. We want people to realize in the future that it is important to give. In the Anglican Church we were not taught how to give. That’s why it is difficult for our people, particularly the Luo here, to give.
We very much try to uplift our church through education. The started strongly on that and have sent the people who want to became pastors in our church to theological colleges all over Kenya. The first doctor of an independent church, who is now teaching at Daystar University, is from our church here.
We have started our own Bible College here in our place and generally emphasize education very much. A pastor can not serve this generation very well without good education.
In our church we do not believe in the leadership to be passed on within the same family. In quite a number of independent churches succession works like that. That is quite wrong. Leadership is not a family affair.
It God calls somebody from the same family, that is all right. But it is not Christian to believe that somebody must take over only because he is from the same family.
In our church we have elections. I was elected myself at the beginning of our group, which opposed the leadership of the Anglican Church. I did not force my way to the leadership.
We have elections every two years of church teachers, catechists, deacons, etc.
Funny enough I was the only child of my mother and my wife was the only child of her parents. When we agreed to marry, we were told, that according to tradition, two single children can not marry. We however refused to hear that and our parents also refused. So when we got married I asked God to give me twelve children. Six for my wife’s side and six for my side. I have now got twelve children. Not one has come up to be priest or to be a church worker. They are all lay men. But I do pray that some might come up and serve the church. Most of them are highly educated. We cannot force them to take up the ministry of the church.

Question: How do you see the future of the AICs in general?

Archbishop Ajuoga:
Now there are so many churches separating from others. Many more than there used to be. The reasons for this are: Money, loose life, desire for leadership. This is a negative development.
It is very difficult to predict, how the independent churches as a whole will develop.
People are getting more and more educated. For example the archbishop of the African Israel Nineveh Church used to be called ‘High Priest’. But because of education and other things, the present holder of the office has abandoned that and calls himself ‘archbishop’.
Through Bible teachings and through education, a number of believes and practises will be abandoned.
So if you come you will just find Pentecostal churches and independent churches. Some will go on, others stop, some grow, others become lukewarm. It’s a mixture like that.
The independent churches will not die out and they will not take over everything. The Catholic Church for example is very strong and quick to understand situations. It will stay strong. People will still continue to run here and there, change their church and go back again and so forth. The future will be very much the same as it is now. Churches that have sources of funds from outside will have the other hands, but the others will also stay in some cases. Unless we have academically and theologically well educated people, independent churches will be driven to the rural areas only. And even there, other churches are beginning to penetrate. That’s why we have to strengthen our pastors to know what they do.

**Question: Does the upsurge of so-called Neo-Pentecostal groups pose a threat to the future of AICs?**

**Archbishop Ajuoga:**
People are very much attracted by such churches, they like to jump there. They are particularly attracted by healing and by the music. But after rushing there, they later backslide again. The independent churches will not die out because of that. Some might indeed die, but certainly not all. Just like the mission churches have lost members to such movements, but not so many.
Interview G:
Francis Mwayi Abiero, Anglican Church of Kenya, Bishop of Maseno South

Place: Bishop’s office at Church House, Milimani/Kisumu
Date: 21.08.2003

Question: How would you describe the relationship of your church with AICs?

Bishop Abiero:
Generally our relationship with the African Independent Churches in the area of our diocese is cordial. We participate in a lot of things together and that has brought us very close. We enhanced that closeness in the year 1995 when we started an organization called ‘Church and State Co-operation’ which was to bring our people back to work with the government of the day. We were a group of over two hundred local churches. That was a very big force that enabled the president to visit Nyanza after he had stayed off Nyanza for ten years. As a result of the co-operation between churches here, we invited him for the first time, when the ground was very hostile those days. We believe that the co-operation, which the government and the Nyanza people had enjoyed, has been a result of the co-operation of churches here, both mainstream churches and independent churches.
I was the general secretary of this movement, while archbishop Zacchaeus Okoth of the Roman Catholics was at the background and participated on a consultancy level. So the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church the African Inland Church and all were brought together. Our focus was biblical based, based on Jesus’ mission, where he set the captives free, made the blind to see, the lame to walk and all those things.

I would say confidently that the working together is very cordial, despite small differences.
Some of the in-house management is different and on some of the dogmatics we don’t agree.
The African Independent Churches historically started of when Kenya was striving for independence while the mainstream churches were brought by the missionaries from overseas, like the CMS missionaries. They brought to us the word of God as such, but at the same time they also brought education and development, which the church is still pressing for. Those three things together make the holistic approach, as was portrayed by the missionary churches, and which they maintain up to today. That makes them very different in their approach to life, because they approach life in totality.

For example the centre of missionary activity here in Western Kenya was Maseno. The first Anglican missionaries settled there. That centre was for education, hospital, farmers' training institute etc. So we are seeing the gospel that is for the heart, the schools for the mind and other social services for the body. That holistic concept is very minimal in the African Independent Churches.
They were a reaction against the colonialists to Africanize the Church. The mainstream churches were seen as part and parcel of the Colonial system and there were weaknesses of the church on this side. But the church remained the church and what the church should do for humanity, which as a concept is not very clear in most of the independent churches.
Let us for example take the Church of Christ in Africa. Their leader Archbishop Ajuoga was an Anglican trained priest. His approach is very different from a totally indigenous church in this area, because he already had this concept, where we speak of mission and vision. Most of the independent churches do not see the difference between mission and vision and all these things unless they are trained. Our ways of operations seem to be very different. Our dogmatics, our teachings seem to be very different for them.
That is why most of the independent churches seem to be on that side of Pentecostalism or the Evangelicals, while we cherish both the liturgical aspect and the dogmatic aspect.
What makes us again very different is that we have a long history of world-wide fellowshipping. That extension out of Kenya distinguishes us very much from them being confined to a locality.

A lot of the leaders of independent churches, about 90% of them, are not theologially trained. They sprang up as a result of various interests: leadership interest or I would say power interest, or ethnic interest. This makes them break away from the mainstream churches. They either break away from the Anglican, the Catholic or from the Presbyterian Church, from any of the mainstream ones. None of the independent churches just sprung from nowhere, the leader must have roots in one of the mainstream churches. So he uses the basic lay men or catechists to establish a church, which makes it very difficult for him to see the world family in the church. Instead he uses his context on the ground, where he started his church.
For example the ‘Nomiyama Luo’. You can see already that the name is very strange. It seems like the whole world is in the hand of Luo elders. You could think that Luoland is the centre of the world. ‘Nomiyama Luo’ now means, “I was given” the Luo church. That was Owalo, who was trained at St. Paul's Theological College to be an Anglican priest but then defected.
This limitation to an ethnic background makes them very naive in their concept.
Question: How do you see the connection between church and politics?

We say: The executive leadership is in the hand of the government, which God instils. The church doesn’t have prisons. To deal with other activities and affairs we see ourselves responsible. Our concept is that the church is people and the state is people. It is a Christian who is the head of a government department or authority. In parliament 90% or so are Christians. That is church in the field, in the society.

That naive understanding of many of the independent churches makes them not to see, why we should be involved in politics. That is a problem of narrow-mindedness. That is why when we forged the ‘State and Church Co-operation’ we wanted very much to bring them in.

They have said to us even in official meetings: ‘If the state goes astray, you the Anglicans and the Catholics will be responsible, because you are the voice of the people. You understand how the government functions. Our work is just to pray, but the government won’t listen to us. The Roman Catholics and the Anglicans can say ‘no!’ to the government and the government will listen.” That mandate may be indirect, but the independent churches know that the mainstream churches have a grant responsibility to represent them when it comes to governance of a country.

Question: How is now the relationship of your church with the CCA that broke away from it?

Bishop Abiero:

The issue of the Church of Christ in Africa is still very important.

As they broke away, it was the struggle for independence. The white man came and said that anything black is evil, forgetting that we have been described as being “notoriously religious”. I would make the same mistake. If I would go to Germany as a missionary. I would carry some African, even Luo elements and think that that is part and parcel of the gospel. Even if I go to Turkana I might make that mistake with my Luo identity.

I would say however that now, with a church like the CCA the relationship is now very different. Matthew, their archbishop once approached the Anglican Church, the house of bishops with the intention of coming back, so that their clergy would be trained in Anglican institutions, the ordination and all this to be done in the Anglican way again. The snag was his vows as the archbishop and his pledge of loyalty. Would he agree that he follows again the archbishop of the Anglican Church, which has only one Archbishop in this country? And how would his congregation react. Would they then follow suit without complaint?

Another thing is the property of the church: Would it be under the ‘Church Commissioners of Kenya’, which is an Anglican organisation? These things were very difficult to diffuse.

It was much easier to establish a cordial relationship of co-operation.

When Ajuoga was enthroned as the archbishop of that church, I was the preacher, appointed by our archbishop to represent the Anglican Church. When Ajuoga married his present wife, the one who wedded them was the former Archbishop of Kenya, Festo Oling, from whom he had actually broken away. He is yearning for that co-operation, to say “that time was that time”. There was a mistake in our church by that time, which was actually not his mistake. It was a revival problem that affected our church. Matthew did not brake away because he wanted to be out of the Anglican Church, but because of other historical reasons to do with the ‘joremo’ and the ‘johera’ groups.

Question: How do you see the future of the AICs in general?

Bishop Abiero:

There should not be competition between churches. There might be big crusades in towns like Kisumu here. But there will be very few people, certainly less than 5%, converted at such places. That means that the rest will already be members of a church. Those Christians are yearning for revival, but have already been Christianised. If the clergy of the church they are from are deep in teaching ministry, the young people will not go away because of such a crusade. What the Pentecostals or the independent churches are doing is not necessarily discovering a new way of worship.

What is being done is what the mainstream churches had already. For example the hymns: If a person in a mainstream church is taught properly, he will miss something when he goes to these Pentecostal churches.

In the mainstream churches, there is order. Something must appeal to my mind, before it is filtered to my heart. Then I can put my body into motion. It must be reasonable to convince me. This is the time of reasoning. People can read the Bible on their own, even in the internet.

One dangerous issue concerning the future of independent churches is the breaking away from each other. It is now difficult to break away from the Anglican or Catholic Church, so they might continue to split from each other.

The way forward is collaboration. We need to come together with them, worship together, invite them for seminars, sharing with them, recognising them at the NCCK and other conferences.

This will also open their eyes to some issues, converge them.
In future, the Pentecostal churches that are now so strong will diffuse and continue to diffuse. Many of them are only in the urban centres. Our concept is humanity, which also reaches the rural person. They steal flock from other churches with their lively services. They attract the specific target group of energetic young people. But where is the service for the father and the mother, for the older generation?

If we can teach our clergy also to be energetic and vibrant, there will be no need any more to go there. The Catholic Church has been much better on that side than us. They have very vibrant services and a lot of young people being active. We have been too conservative in the past. Improve the liturgy, and your church is full. Sound teaching is also very important. With that you deal a big blow to them.

One of our pastors, at St. Luke’s in the Manyatta slums has revived the liturgy so much, that the pastors of a Pentecostal church came to him asking “why are you taking my people”. If you tell our pastor there, that the Charismatic churches are taking our people, he will tell you that at his place it is the other way round. He has revived the liturgy to meet what people need. So they say “if there is morning glory, there is Bible study, there are several programmes in our church, why should we leave it and join others?”

With the independent churches, the diffusion might also be very strong, because of lack of capacities and because of the low quality of leadership. Indigenous churches like the Nomiya, you might find that they do not even have the capacity to develop a guideline for their church. Many independent churches are not having constitutions. Such a paper is however very important. The one of the Anglican Church is very large now. Without that kind of guideline and with people developing they might soon find that the flock is above them. People are now exposed to a lot of information via the media, the internet and so on. If you don’t work hard as a church leader and if you are not educated, the flock will complain: “You are under-feeding us, you are not teaching us properly”.

I once asked a question in a conference and it was a bitter pill for others to swallow: In which relation do the independent churches stand toward the mainstream churches when we are talking about apostolic succession? Because the church of Christ has a history, where are you crafted in? At what point do you join St. Peter? Here they discovered that they can not defend themselves in that matter.

The choice for the independent churches will either be to remain where they are and not educate their leaders properly, in this case they will fade out. The other possibility is to follow sound education and improve; in that case there will not be so much any more that will divide us. The mainstream churches and the independent ones would be very close then.
Interview H:
James Kisibo, Archbishop of the Roho Israel Church of God

Place: His house at the church headquarters, Ibwali, Vihiga District
Date: 01.09.2003

Question: How would you describe the relationship of your church with other AICs?

Archbishop Kisibo:
Our church meets with other independent churches in our area through an organization called 'Kenya United Independent Churches (KUIC)' and on the broader level we are members of the OAIC. The KUIC is supposed to work in Kenya as a whole, but is actually only working within Vihiga district.
Under the umbrella of the OAIC there are a lot of activities and seminars concerned with development issues and also about HIV/AIDS. OAIC also brings us together in seminars dealing with women issues.

Question: How is your relationship now with the Israel Nineveh Church, which your church has come from?

Archbishop Kisibo:
I started the Roho Israel Church of God when I was a member of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, not a member of the African Israel Nineveh Church (AINC). What made me to be connected to AINC, was my employment as a driver of Zakayo Kivuli, the High Priest and founder of that church.
I received the Holy Spirit from God, which directed me to start that church. When I started my church, the people of the AINC were not happy with me, instead they were bitter. But the leader himself was not against me, he was even happy. He encouraged me to continue.
Nowadays there are no more problems and we can meet freely with the members of the AINC. Recently there was a big gathering at Nineveh, which is very near to my compound here. I was invited to be there by the Archbishop of AINC and was even asked to be the main preacher of the day.
So nowadays there is no fighting, the wounds have healed, we are together as saved people.

Question: How would you describe the relationship of your church with the so-called “mainline churches”?

Archbishop Kisibo:
With the missionary churches like the Pentecostal Church of God or the CMS and others, we meet with them through the NCCK. We attend their functions regularly. Our church is not yet a member, but there are opportunities to meet with the NCCK and work together with them. We have applied for full membership, but have not yet succeeded. The KUIC is a member of the NCCK and through this the Roho Israel Church of God is also inside.
The main opportunity to come together with mainline churches under the umbrella of the NCCK is seminars which are held about different topics, especially leadership seminars.
The contact with the NCCK are however less intensive as those with the OAIC. The relations with other independent churches are closer than with mainline churches.

Question: „Church and politics have nothing to do with each other“. What is your opinion about this statement? Is it true for your church?

Archbishop Kisibo:
Politics are words that are said to someone who is doing something bad to others. I can not involve in politics, because I am a person of prayer. I can have politicians in my church and can't send them away. The topics of politics can however not be talked about in the church. They belong outside.
Question: If there is hunger in your area and there would be a case of politicians distributing relief food in a wrong way. Would you as a church leader not have to speak up, if the people of your church are suffering from such wrongdoing?

Archbishop Kisibo: I can not accept that church and politics are together, because this is an example that deals with hunger. I would only speak up about what the people are suffering from. Here we are not dealing with politics, but with hunger.

Question: “Church and African traditional culture have nothing to do with each other”. What is your opinion about this statement? Is it true for your church?

Archbishop Kisibo:
There are parts of people's culture that are in the Bible. For example circumcision is in the Bible. It started from Abraham’s time. When people practise such a custom you can not say no, because it is written.
The things that are not written in the Bible however, we reject. Although circumcision is accepted biblically and is part of people's culture, we still try to fight against certain practises around the circumcision, like the brewing of alcohol and getting drunk.
In our church service we do dance and beat drums, but not because these practises are African, but because they are in the Bible. You can take Psalm 150, where it says that people should dance and drum for God.

Question: How do you see the future of your church?

Archbishop Kisibo:
I can not foresee what is coming. The time now is different from the past that I am coming from. And the people who will be there in the future will have to continue what we have started.
But according to my vision the church will be self-reliant in the future.

Question: How do you see the future of the AICs in general?
Do you think that the recent success of churches like the so-called “Neo Pentecostals” (such as “Winners’ Chapel”, “Abundant Life Ministries”, “Universal Church of the Kingdom of God”) is going to influence the future of your church in any way?

A church that was started with the power of God will still continue. Even if these new ones come with strength, they will never affect the established ones. The old ones can only be affected if they move away from the laws of God. But if they stand firm within them, they will just continue.
We have lost a few members to those new churches. But maybe their calling is to go there.
Most of the people that belong to me are still there. I am not afraid of being too much affected by those new churches. Those churches might attract a lot of people, but a person who has been called by the Holy Spirit will not be attracted.
**Interview I:**

*James Chabuga, Archbishop of the African Divine Church*

**Place:** His house at the church headquarters, Boyani, Vihiga District  
**Date:** 02.09.03

**Question:** How do you see the future of your church?

Archbishop Chabuga:

There are so many things that can happen to a church in future. It is very hard to say what is going to happen. We leave it to God.

But we will continue with what we have started now. We have built a college for theological training. Our future should be a future in which people will be trained. This training will bring development to the church, so that the leaders understand their role and their work better.

Through this we also want our church to expand.

At the same time it is important to remain rooted in the foundations of our church. We have always cherished the Spirit very much and that is what made us to leave the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

Even the Pentecostal churches have changed very much and have been shaken. There are nowadays very many of them. They are using a lot of crafty techniques of taking money from the worshippers. But if you kneel down with them to pray, they get tired quickly, while the people from the independent churches are still going ahead with their prayers. It puts us ahead of the Pentecostal churches, that we are much more rooted inwardly.

**Question:** How do you see the future of the AICs in general?

Archbishop Chabuga:

Most independent churches have not studied the Bible enough. For independent churches the way ahead is to discover the importance of theological education. They should not only say that they are guided by the Spirit, but also study the Bible from the beginning to the end. If they only say that they have the spirit, they are not taking the word serious. Many of them have not yet realized this.

**Question:** How would you describe the relationship of your church with other AICs?

Archbishop Chabuga:

The relationship with other independent churches is one of unity. We are all united.

That can be seen through the love we have for each other, especially under the umbrella of OAIC. Within that umbrella we are very happy and get a lot of advice.

**Question:** How would you describe the relationship of your church with the so-called “mainline churches”?

Archbishop Chabuga:

We have separated from those churches and wanted to start African churches and I know that those churches are still sad about this. They don’t like independent churches very much. They say we are worshipping idols. They don’t see us as Christians. We do not want to challenge the missionary churches, but it is very strange to us, that they do not accept and respect us. Once we go to mix with them at meetings or in their church, they might tell you to remove your turban or cap. But for us these things are very important. We know why we are putting them on our heads. They are trying to challenge a lot more things that we do. But we know why we are doing them. Why do they not like the people who separated from them? The Bible we use is the same one.

Because of this lack of respect, we as independent churches decided to open our own colleges. They don’t like that however and ask themselves how we managed to get these other routes to be successful.

It seems that slowly by slowly they are now starting to accept us, since they have realized that we are also getting training. It seems as if they see that what is being taught in our colleges is the same as what is being taught in theirs. They are now starting to regard us as Christians while before they regarded us to be heathens’ churches.
Question: “Church and politics have nothing to do with each other”. What is your opinion about this statement? Is it true for your church?

Archbishop Chabuga:
The mission churches are having a lot of grudge. It is this grudge that is bringing about politics. Without such grudge, Christians can not indulge in fighting. When Christians meet, they meet like brothers and sisters. They are people of the Spirit, who can not hate their neighbours. If you hate your neighbour, you have the devil in you. That is why Christianity and politics are completely separate.
As the leader of my church I would speak about things that are not right, whether in development or in any other social field. In such a case, where things are going wrong in the area, the Christians would have to sit down and be told what is not right. If you see politicians or other leaders doing bad things, you can just talk to them. If they listen, well and good. If they don't listen, you leave them alone.
But I would not speak out on political issues, because politics brings friction. It is about fighting.

Question: “Church and African traditional culture have nothing to do with each other”. What is your opinion about this statement? Is it true for your church?

Archbishop Chabuga:
Long time ago, people were living according to their culture. But when the Bible was brought it started wiping out the culture. By that time the different tribes did not want to come together and were hating each other.
People from around Nairobi used to call us ‘Kavirondo’. But when the word came and entered these people and also us, the name ‘Kavirondo’ disappeared.
When we dance and beat the drum, we do this because the Bible says: “Sing and dance and praise Jesus”. We should clap our hands and do all this wholeheartedly for Jesus.

Question: Do you think that the recent success of churches like the so-called “Neo Pentecostals” (such as “Winners’ Chapel”, “Abundant Life Ministries”, “Universal Church of the Kingdom of God”) is going to influence the future of your church in any way?

Archbishop Chabuga:
There is also one of these churches just in our area here. But if you go there, you can only find young people. Older people are not there. Whenever these people are outside their church, their practices are not good. They are not behaving well.
In our church there are also a lot of youth and we teach them a lot about religion. If they really stick to that teaching, they will never follow those others.
We were warned by the Bible that there will be false prophets coming.
Interview K:

John Mweresa Kivuli, Archbishop of the African Israel Nineveh Church

Place: His house at Buru Buru Estate/Nairobi,
Date: 07.09.2003

Question: How would you describe the relationship of your church with (other) AICs?

Archbishop Kivuli:
My church has been playing an important role in bringing independent churches together. This is in terms of education, in terms of administration and a lot of others. As far as administration is concerned, we are ahead of very many other independent churches, as well as on financial matters. We have a school at our headquarters and we invite other independent churches to use that school. We in fact have seven schools, but all of them are under the Kenya Missionary Training College, for which I am currently the principal. We allow other independent churches to come.

Being members of the National Council of Churches (NCCK), which not many of the AICs are, whenever we participate there we are actually representing AICs at that forum. When we speak there, we speak on their behalf. Our membership at the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) implies the same and also in the World Council of Churches (WCC). I am a member of the Central Committee of the WCC and I have just come from Switzerland three days ago.

Other independent churches that are members of the NCCK are the Church of Africa Sinai Mission, National Independent Church of Africa, Holy Spirit Church of East Africa, African Church and Schools. These are the main ones. We also have an umbrella there called Kenya United Independent Churches, of which I used to be the chairman.

Question: How would you describe the relationship of your church with the so-called ‘mainline churches’?

Archbishop Kivuli:
Our meeting point with the mainline churches is mainly the NCCK. If an AIC is member of the NCCK or not has to do with either the fact that they do not have enough members, or that the objectives do not match. The NCCK would normally tell the applicants to fulfil various requirements and not grant them membership until they have done that. One of those requirements would be to lay open what they believe in, what is their theological understanding, what is their vision and what is their mission. So if they interview the church members and they find out that the leaders don’t have a proper vision and a proper mission, they will not admit them. Other things are the standing of an applying church toward baptism, Eucharist, ministry.

There is also one case I know of where it is the other way round: The Church of Christ in Africa (CCA) has not wanted to become part of NCCK, for reasons that they know, although they are very much capable to be members of any big organization. I can only guess why that is so. They came from the Anglican Church of Kenya and it may be difficult for them to be in the NCCK because the Anglicans are very strong in NCCK and they may not agree to recommend or second the CCA.

When our church became member it was difficult for us also to be recommended. We were only recommended by the Friends, that is the Quakers but those whom we had expected to second us, refused. So it is a matter also of who is seconding you. The churches that are there play an important role to admit you into membership or not.

In 1975 our church choir was singing at the General Assembly of the WCC, which was taking place in Nairobi. Through this we recommended ourselves. We had also been participating before that in the NCCK and the other member churches of it were able to recommend us to the WCC. We already had a very good theological standing by then. So it was very easy for us to be admitted in the fellowship. We also had the number of people they wanted, which was to have over 50,000 members.
Question: How do you see the future of your church?

Archbishop Kivuli: We first have to look into the past a bit to see that we have to sort out wrangles in our church first, which have to do also with tribal problems. These we have to solve in order to have a bright future.

My grandfather died in 1974 and the leader after him was Philemon Orwa. But he soon declined taking leadership. He instead opted for Kivuli’s wife to take over. When Kivuli died it was difficult for the people to accept any other person in his position of the leader. When Orwa took the mantle he realized he could not keep the Luhyas and the Luo together. He was much more comfortable with the Luo, which resulted into the Luhyas getting sidelined. When Kivuli was there, he kept the tribes together by his strong personality. It was natural for Orwa to take the leadership after him and people wanted him to, but he did not fit in the shoes very well. He became partisan with the Luo tribe and the church disintegrated. In order to save his situation, he decided to form another church. Actually it was not another church. He just changed the constitution to suit himself. So we had one church and two constitutions until the time I took over. When I took over I challenged the registrar of societies and asked why he registered two constitutions for the same church. This other leader was using another one and left the Nineveh headquarters with the old constitution.

When these matters had to be resolved we had two groups. In 1981 the mother of the church, the wife to Kivuli decided that she does not want to continue in the leadership and the church should look for another person to take over as the director of youths. I was chosen to lead from them. They noticed that as a grandson to Kivuli I may bring the two groups together. So everybody voted for me though I was very young. They said: “O.K., this position is very tough and we would like somebody to come from within the family of Kivuli, so that he can help us to bring the two groups together”. That is how I came into leadership in 1983. It tried my best.

When I was being ordained I had the two groups clashing on me. Each group now wanted their constitution to be recognized and to be used by me. But it was not possible for me to use two constitutions at the same time. I had to choose one. So I called a very big general meeting, which declared we should go by the original constitution.

In that original constitution I also saw some weaknesses, which is why I requested that we come up with a new one. Within this one we dropped the position of ‘High Priest’, which was my position, and instead called the leadership ranks ‘bishops’ and ‘archbishop’.

So in this process I managed to bring a big number of people from the other group, the Luo group, back to recognize the headquarters at Nineveh.

The remaining group had no option but to create another church in the late eighties: the ‘Israel Church of Africa’. But I am friendly to them and two years ago I went to their headquarters and told them that we need to have peace.

The way ahead for our church is to establish missions abroad. That is why we are trying hard to enhance the education of missionaries at the Kenya Missionary Training College.

I am also a missionary in the United States. Tonight I am flying there, because I am doing my doctorate at Anderson University. But at the same time I am also a missionary there. I have already founded four churches in the USA.

Our vision therefore is to reach out to the whole world as far as we can manage and preach the word of God. An important way ahead is also to establish schools, health facilities etc.

We want to go ahead in a holistic way. We want to see into the areas of development as well.

Our church is now big and it will surely survive. It has several provinces, not only one place and one tribe. Now even the whites are there, they have joined our church. We have people outside Africa, for example people in the States who are from Haiti. I am seeing the church growing. But what will happen now is that each congregation will have to survive in its own context. The way we are surviving in the USA is not the same as the way we survive here. There we use the name ‘Nineveh Ministries’, not ‘African Israel Nineveh Church’. What is important for me is what are the foundations of Christianity. The name does not matter and I am not bothered about that. The church in the USA is quite different and has taken a different dimension. I have told that to our people here also.

I my view, the church at the coast should deal with the issues at the coast and the church in Nairobi here should deal with the issues that affect the members in the city and the church in the rural areas should look into the issues that matter there.

In Kenya we have nine provinces, which means nine bishops. I am becoming a facilitator at the headquarters. I am no longer gripping on the leadership. I have given them the authority to run their own programs. They only give us money to run the headquarters. They deal with their own issues and only if they believe that an issue should reach me so that I can assist them, then it reaches me. But if you want to have the grip on the church completely, you want everything to be done from the central office, then you lose. So I am decentralising power now.

What is very important for the future is education for the members of the church. This applies especially to theological education for the leaders.

This of course also brings problems. I have challenged some of the things that are being done from a theological point of view. I have even been taken to court because of that. When they see that they know very little theology to defend themselves towards those challenges, they become very offended and defensive. They get very emotional and frustrated and they think that you, who is questioning, you are on the wrong side.

They have taken me to court for spoiling the church. They are saying that I am introducing things that should not be done. But I also challenged them in the court and fortunately I won. But still some are very bitter with me. They say...
that education has spoiled me. But I tell them that we must also understand the theological implications of things we do. Some other things I have challenged are for example the idea of not shaving the hair and letting it grow very long, or the rule not to eat meat on Friday. I asked them to give me a biblical base for that, but they did not have any. I took them to Romans, chapter 14 where it is written about those who eat meat and those who don’t, those who recognize certain days and others not. All of them, if they are all doing it for Christ, it is fine. The leader who is in charge must have a proper vision and a proper mission. Those who are not willing to change: It’s up to them and we just pray for them. We have to have a sound theology. When emotions are challenged by the Bible, so be it. If traditions have outlived themselves, we must change them. I have even challenged the members and asked them: If there are not drums and dancing any more, would we not be Christians any more? In the past they used to force everybody to only come to church in the uniform, that is in the white cassocks we normally use. Does it mean that anybody who does not wear that uniform can not be a Christian? I told them: “No, somebody can also come in other clothes. If someone wants to wear black instead of our normal white, let him come, don’t be offended, don’t be emotional!” These are some of the challenges. Leaders must be prepared theologically. If you are asked – and the young people question you vigorously – you must be prepared to answer, otherwise you are misplaced. Theological education for the leaders is indispensable. Take my example: I did my diploma in Zambia and I did my first degree in Bible and theology at the Pan African Christian College in Nairobi. Then I proceeded to Singapore and did my masters there in ministry and in intercultural education. Then I went to Birmingham University and I did a master’s there in missiology. Now I am going to the USA for my doctorate.

Question: How do you see the future of the AICs in general?

Archbishop Kivuli: I am seeing two ways: Some independent churches are going to be phased out. The ones that are not ready to make changes will die out naturally. The competition is very stiff. There are these Neo-Pentecostal churches that borrow something from the mainline churches and something from the independent churches. They have come up very strongly. They are in-between us and the mainline churches. Nowadays people are not so much committed to a particular church. Especially the young people question you vigorously – you must be prepared to answer, otherwise you are misplaced. Theological education for the leaders is indispensable. Take my example: I did my diploma in Zambia and I did my first degree in Bible and theology at the Pan African Christian College in Nairobi. Then I proceeded to Singapore and did my masters there in ministry and in intercultural education. Then I went to Birmingham University and I did a master’s there in missiology. Now I am going to the USA for my doctorate.

Question: „Church and politics have nothing to do with each other“. What is your opinion about this statement? Is it true for your church?

Archbishop Kivuli: My opinion is that church and politics can not be separated. You can’t separate church from development, from medical affairs, from education and therefore also not from politics. The church is your lifestyle it should make you able to equip yourself. What I think some people are afraid of when they are asked about church and politics has to do with our past. When we registered originally under the colonial government they were asking for a constitution. And they stressed very strongly that this should not be a political organization. On that basis they were warning church leaders, that if they are found engaging in politics or found together with politicians, they would deregister the church. It is that what makes the older generation still to be extremely suspicious about mingling church and politics. But with the newer generation this is different. In 1997 I even stood for elections, when I wanted to be the member of parliament for my constituency. I studied the reaction of people to the fact that a church leader wanted to be a politicians. And not many people liked it. They said that I should just stick to the church and not mix with politicians. But of course later they started saying that there is a very good reason why Christians should be involved in politics. In my church the majority of the younger members, not the older ones, don’t see any separation between politics and church. There are vehicles for human development which can help us to achieve what we want: politics, development, education. But as a Christian you can not divorce yourself from politics.
Question: “Church and African traditional culture have nothing to do with each other”. What is your opinion about this statement? Is it true for your church?

Archbishop Kivuli:
The founder of our church wanted to involve African culture in the church. The missionaries and other Christian thought that this is unfair and he should not mix the two. But he said: “We have some good behaviours in Africa which we should not do away with, but incorporate them in the church”.
The very staunch Christians from his area said: "No, you can’t do that, we left these things long time ago!”. Take the example of African herbs that were used to cure. He said it is o.k. God has given all that to us. But the others said: “No, it is like witchcraft”. But for him there was a difference between witchcraft and using herbs for treatment. These connotations and interpretation really brought a lot of discussion. Kivuli wanted to have Christianity entrenched in the African soil, by refusing to accept that would be contrary to the Bible, but by accepting things that were not unbiblical.
He for example stressed the African sense of community and unity and he saw it as a very important aspect in African Christianity. What he refused, were only things that are against the Bible. He said: You don’t read the culture into the Bible; it is the Bible to judge the culture. The point now is that there are a number of things about which the Bible is silent. So he said: It is us as Christians to sit down and use our knowledge to determine what is good and bad part of culture.
As far as I am concerned, there is no way you can become a very good Christian if you don’t have a strong culture. If you throw it completely out, you have no basis for your Christianity. The drumming in our church is key. We are really dancing. Kivuli was stressing that we use an African rhythm in our singing and dancing, while in the church he separated form, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, they were only singing.
The funny thing is that now they are doing the same as Kivuli did, they drum in the church. But by that time they mistreated and punished Kivuli.

Not all independent churches went the same way. It depended on the convictions of the leaders. Some even prohibited their faithful from shaking hands with others. Some prohibited their followers to use western medicine. Kivuli did not do that. He said that western medicine is good when it can help people, just as African herbs are good for cure and bad when used to kill people. He wanted both types of medicines to be used. Other independent churches told the Christians not to send their children to school. Kivuli told people to take the children to school and study. He did not dismiss the western missionaries and even Keller, who was the boss of the Pentecostal Assemblies, supported him to go his way.