

**THE MEDIATIZATION OF RELIGION: AN ANALYSIS OF KENYA'S
ELECTRONIC PULPIT FROM 1990 TO 2015**

BY

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DECLARATION

Declaration by the Candidate

This research thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this Thesis to the late Prof. Naomi Shitemi, who saw a small spark of scholarship in me and fanned it into a flame. As my high school teacher of Kiswahili History, Grammar and Literature, she gave me an unquenchable thirst for books, and as my personal academic adviser, she single-handedly ensured that I enrolled for Journalism and Media Studies at Moi University, after I had ditched postgraduate studies altogether following bereavement in 2006.

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ABSTRACT

This Study is on the Mediatization of Religion in Kenya, specifically analyzing the Electronic Church pulpit from 1990 to 2015. The Study offers some new reflection on what happens when the institution of the Church is mediatized, focusing on the agency the media gives to the Electronic Church ministers to experiment with media technology and formats in order to constitute and retain their audiences. Centering the study in Kenya is significant because not only is Kenya ahead of many nations of Africa in media investments running into billions of shillings but besides South Africa, Kenya has the most liberalized media, giving the emergent Electronic Church a unique and competitive space to experiment with technology and creative arts. Drawing from Ben Armstrong's (1979) concept of "the Electronic Church", the Study examines a new phenomenon we have called the "Electronic Pulpit" and how it has tended to dominate the definition and operation of Kenya's Church, especially in the post-liberalization period. It is evident from the Study that, following the liberalization of the airwaves, the Church in Kenya could no longer ignore or be separated from the media. Kenya's mediatized Church makes a new form, face, structure and appeal of the Church's expression to society. As some of our key informants have observed, not being on radio or television is synonymous with being irrelevant or insignificant. The main objective of this Study is to analyze and find out what happens when religion is mediatized and establish the results of such mediatization. To achieve this, it was important to outline the historical factors that led to the emergence of Kenya's Electronic Pulpit, analyze how the Electronic Church employs language and sensorial experiences to cajole and maintain the loyalty of her media audience, and assess the agency media gives the Electronic Church to experiment with media technology and formats as well as the results of that agency. Using Mediatization and Discourse Analysis, both as theory and concept, and a strand of postmodernism espoused by French critical thinker, Jean Baudrillard as an interrogative theory, the Study has analyzed select media texts in the form of radio and television programmes in the post-liberalization period spanning 1990-2015. We have employed the descriptive method to explain the results of our analysis. With limited resources on the Mediatization of Religion in Kenya, this Study probes an area that is under-researched in African scholarship. The Study intends to make a contribution that will help fill this gap and move the discourse away from subjective debates on Tel-evangelism and 'prosperity preaching' to objective academic inquiry. The bulk of the literature on the relationship between media and religion in Kenya centres on scandals and accompanying exposes from investigative journalists. The main finding in this Study is that the media gives social institutions such as the Church new ways of experimenting with technology for the propagation and packaging of their messages, while transforming those institutions in some irreversible ways, the end result being the birth of new definitions of the same institutions which, as Baudrillard would view them, end up like a social coup d'état of a map taking over from the original territory it once represented. Reading the final portrait of Kenya's Electronic Church through Post-modern eyes, we conclude that the Electronic Pulpit is a hyper-reality that has replaced the way Church was viewed before. This is notable in the way media transforms the identity of the preacher through new language and expression, technology and the perfection of performance. Media changes the preacher's status, character, and appearance and gives him power to amass and manipulate the public social space. Although our study confirms this, there is room for more inquiry.

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Consecrated, Lord, to Thee. ...

Take my intellect and use

Every power as Thou shalt choose.”

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If the Lord’s the Lord of them,

And a friend will not say ‘never’

Cause the welcome will not end ...

That a lifetime’s not too long

To live as friends.”

To you, dear friends, I say, live long to see God’s goodness in the land of the living.

Soli Deogloria!

ABBREVIATIONS

- AG – Attorney General
- A.I.C. – Africa Inland Church
- AMDI – Africa Media Development Initiative
- BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation
- BHB – Biblia Husema Broadcasting
- CA – Communications Authority of Kenya
- CCK – Communications Commission of Kenya
- CITAM – Christ Is The Answer Ministries
- CNN – Cable News Network
- Ed – Editor
- Eds – Editors
- Et al – and others
- E.U. – European Union
- I.T.U. – International Telecommunications Union
- KBC – Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
- KTN – Kenya Television Network
- NTV – Nation Television
- NMG – Nation Media Group
- N.P.C. – Nairobi Pentecostal Church
- P.A.G. – Pentecostal Assemblies of God
- P.A.O.C. – Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada
- RFI – Radio France International
- RK – Reuben Kigame
- RMS – Royal Media Services
- SAYARE – Sauti Ya Rehema
- SMS – Short Message Service
- UK – United Kingdom
- UN – United Nations
- US – United States
- V.O.G. Voice of the Gospel
- V.O.K. – Voice of Kenya.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

On the night of November 2nd, 2014, Kenya's television audience was shocked when KTN's John Allan Namu and Mohamed Ali unveiled their investigative piece titled *The Inside Story: Prayer Predators* in which they exposed Salvation Healing Church Pastor Victor Kanyari's fake miracles and financial scandals via media¹.

Pastor Kanyari had regularly used television to amass an audience that became bigger than his immediate Church membership and which became endeared to him because of his charisma, authoritarian style and the promise of miracles for anyone who attended his Church, watched his programs or sent money to his mobile phone. Having watched the broadcast that night as well as reviewed it several times for this study, it became evident to me that Pastor Victor Kanyari was not only unique in packaging his message, but extremely concerned and detailed about how each episode appealed to his audience. In their investigative piece, Namu and Ali depict an incident where Pastor Kanyari is shown coaching some select faithful on how to testify about supposed miracles².

In July, 2012, and November, 2013, NTV broadcast similar Exposés. In the first instance, Ferdinand Omondi and Mohamed Ali exposed the fake miracles of Pastor

¹<https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/ktnhome/video/category/47/the-inside-story-prayer-predators>
video downloaded on 15th February 2015

²*ibid* 1

Michael Njoroge of Fire Ministries who had been duping commercial sex workers to record false testimonies of miracles which would be televised on TV³. In the second instance, Mr. Dennis Okari released his lethal investigative piece like that of KTN cited earlier, which he titled “Seeds of Sin”⁴.

The broadcasting of these programmes ignited an interest in me to look a little closer at how programmes of electronic media preachers are prepared for consumption by the public. I desired to understand the relationship between media and religion, whether the two institutions need each other and especially how preachers use media to package their messages and appeals and why so many preachers were turning to radio and television more than ever before.

The KTN Expose of Pastor Kanyari and his predecessor mother, Lucy Nduta, who had successfully used the media to gain a large following and many unsuspecting faithful out of hard earned money in the name of religion set me seeking for information on this phenomenon on the internet, in surrounding libraries and discussions with family and friends⁵. I was quite disappointed not to find much on my specific area of interest, hence this study.

While independent sociological studies could be carried out to explain the criminal and psychological nature of the above type of scandals (Wright, 1974; Warner, 1993; Taylor, 1989), and while the fraudulent activities involving televangelists have been

³<http://www.nation.co.ke/news/Pastor-in-miracles-saga--threatens-journalists----/-/1056/1460994/-/dli47n/-/index.html> Accessed on 20th January 2016

⁴Seeds of Sin by Dennis Okari NTV Investigates <http://www.nation.co.ke/video/1951480-2508806-kjvs83z/index.html> Video downloaded on

⁵Self-styled prophetess Lucy Nduta defends her money <http://www.nation.co.ke/video/1951480-2060664-n6qthxz/index.html> Accessed on 7th June 2017

studied and analyzed (Armstrong, 1979; Schultze, 1987; Peck, 1993; Mokaya, 2015), there is an aspect that has received little attention in African media scholarship, viz-a-viz, how media have become popular agents of religious communication and what happens when media and religion converge.

The television broadcasts cited above are only a few examples of a new phenomenon in Kenya's media culture where the Church and media have become so interwoven that it is difficult to think of one without the other. This new "marriage" has resulted in the birth of an entity which scholars such as Ben Armstrong (1979) and Quintin Schulz (1987), have called the "electronic church."

A closer look at Kenya's electronic media history will show us that, while the Church has always used radio and television to reach a wider audience, the commercialization and liberalization of Kenya's air waves in the early 1990's saw a lot of preachers take to electronic media to start sharing their sermons. However, something began to change in the way these preachers did Church. Many began to use new methods of packaging and communicating their messages. Besides, something else also changed with regard to Church membership in that those being reached by the Electronic platform did not have to belong to the congregation of the preacher. In a sense, the audience resembled customers who frequented a restaurant on the basis of what they got.

While this new way of Church communication via media has commonly been referred to as the "electronic Church", the study proposes a slightly different way of looking at the phenomenon and probe what shall be referred to as the "Electronic Pulpit." The term "pulpit" is preferred over "Church" in the study because of the acephalous nature

of this use of the media by the Church. However, the two terms have been used in the same sense and occasionally interchangeably in our discussion.

The convergence of media and religion is real and affects many aspects of social culture. Scholars during the last twenty years have directed attention to both the ubiquitous nature of this convergence and the resulting symbiotic relationship with various social institutions, for instance, media and politics (Havard, 2008; Strömbäck, 2008), media and performance (Auslander, 1999, 2008), media and cinema (Justice, 2014) Media and Communication (Lundby, 2014), media and aesthetics (Meyer, 2006), media and the public sphere (Passitau, 2008), as well as media and religion, which is our interest here. Several studies on this phenomenon have concentrated on Televangelism and a good amount of reflection in this direction done by scholars such as Quintin Schulz (1987) and Richard Kyle (1991) and with a most recent effort by Esther Nyaboke Mokaya who approaches the discussion in her thesis of 2015 from a quantitative approach focusing on TV consumer behavior in relation to worship in Nairobi. Other Afro centric efforts have been ethnographical concentrations such as Birgit Meyer's study of the Pentecostal movement in Ghana (2003) and Damaris Passitau's discourse on Kenya's religious public sphere (2008).

The study investigates the extent to which this convergence has affected the Kenyan society as well as examines religious media texts that speak to this interest. Kenya, like the rest of Africa has seen a robust growth of the media sector (AMDI, 2006). However, recent media studies have tended to lean towards broadcast media development (Mbeke and Mshindi, 2008), prosperity preaching (Ongong'a and Akaranga, 2014), media historiography (AMDI, 2006) and the public sphere (Passitau, 2008). Religion and media convergence as an area of interest has only been

reawakened recently by the increase in religious media scandals primarily focusing on the abuse of radio and television. Recent media exposes such as that of Pastor Victor Kanyari's fraudulent miracles, Archbishop Gilbert Deya's "miracle babies"⁶ and the various electronic media "prosperity preachers" necessitate a fresh look at this convergence and how we can understand and consume religious content in the media.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The Kenyan society is increasingly turning to the media for spiritual nourishment, guidance and entertainment. At the same time, more and more religious leaders such as Church pastors, Muslim imams and Hindu priests are realizing that they can reach more people with their message and have a greater impact than they ordinarily would at their regular places of worship. This reality implies that electronic media, especially radio and television, are becoming more popular as sources of religious content and guidance, but it could also be argued that the media is increasingly annexing previously powerful social institutions such as the Church and subsuming them under her logic (Livingstone, 2009; Harvard, 2008).

The study analyzes the use of the media by the Church in Kenya, seeking to understand the extent, agency and power electronic media have accorded Christian preachers and their ministries to cajole audiences and reach them with their message. This has resulted in the rise of a "new pulpit" without boundaries and without a clear or predictable definition. Radio and television studios have become the focal point of a new way of holding Church services and the packaging is quite different from the

⁶ Gilbert Deyathe chequered story of a Kenyan preacher <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/Gilbert-Deya-The-chequered-story-of-a-Kenyan-preacher/1056-3053514-pirs2xz/index.html> Accessed on 7th June 2017

traditional setting and style of the Church. In a sense, the new electronic pulpit has become Para-Church.(Augsburger, 1990),soliciting clients or consumers, not members. These can simply listen to radio or view television broadcasts passively and privately in their homes and other public places, but without direct participation as the case usually is in regular Church services.

The Church in Kenya has embraced media, but the media have also opened their arms wide to embrace the Church and given her a voice, a face, a home and a great influence. Indeed, the Church-media marriage has been so successful that a new “offspring” having been born and given the name ‘electronic Church’, has in turn given birth to the electronic pulpit, which is the centre of our inquiry. The key interest of the study is to see how Kenya’s media relates with this new entity and how different it is from the ordinary church given that it is shaped by the media and in turn shapes the institution of the media.

The Electronic Church is different from the original Church institution in that, first, it cannot exist or operate without the media. The media defines it and gives it life. Secondly, it is audience-driven and must sustain that audience or it will die and go off the air. Thirdly, it stays alive and grows by employing the latest technology and communication formats, and, fourthly, it must be funded or it will not survive (Schulz, 1991).

The research assesses and clearly establishes how the media affects our understanding of the Electronic Church and how, as a pulpit, it utilizes media to stay alive and communicate to its audience.

The electronic pulpit has not always been there in Church history. It is a recent phenomenon. Where did it come from and how was its birth process? With the audience resembling solicited clients, the study seeks to understand its functional characteristics that define and promote it. The study seeks to understand its relationship to the media and see if the media gives it any agency to be what it is and do what it does.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to establish what happens when religion is mediatized and to analyze the emergent results.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- (i) To outline the historical factors that led to the emergence of the Electronic pulpit in Kenya.
- (ii) To analyze how the electronic church employs language and sensorial experiences to cajole and maintain the loyalty of her audience on radio and television in Kenya.
- (iii) To assess the agency the media gives the Electronic Church to experiment with media technology and formats as well as the results of that agency.

The study seeks to ask a number of research questions:

1. What developments took place in Kenya's media to produce the electronic pulpit?
2. What means has Kenya's Electronic Church used to persuade and maintain the loyalty of her audience?
3. How has the use of radio and television transformed the identity, behavior and thinking of Kenya's Electronic Church preachers?

4. What agency has the media in Kenya given preachers and teachers to experiment with formats and technologies previously not utilized by the Church? And
5. What are the results of mediatizing the Church pulpit in Kenya?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study's importance lies in the fact that there are many unanswered questions regarding this convergence, what characterizes the preparation of religious broadcasts, and what agency media gives religion to formulate her message as well as the application of these aspects to the African context. How are these questions to be understood especially in a continent that seems to borrow a lot of media practice from the West? Our literature review clearly shows us that African scholarship is yet to come to terms with this symbiotic relationship. A visit to several libraries and a meticulous search on the internet, this far, has yielded little information on the discussion. It has been necessary to corroborate diverse sources related to both religion and media to clearly conceptualize our discussion. To achieve this, the study has had to call upon the combined contribution of history, religious studies, theology, philosophy, media and Communication studies and the area of language, particularly the aspect of discourse. In our field research we interview several people in order to fill in the missing gaps in the study as well as confirm certain assumptions.

Looking at the historical context of this discussion, the study notes that between the early 1990's and 2015, Kenya's media underwent radical changes following the commercialization and liberalization of the airwaves. Before this, only a few, select Churches got to appear on the only broadcaster, KBC, and such participation was largely on invitation to share epilogues or Bible expositions on existing KBC

programs. However, following week over the entire class liberalization, not only did we see the emergence and proliferation of privately-owned stations with more Church content, but also the establishment of Christian media houses such as Baraka FM, Family Media, Biblia Husema Broadcasting, Hope Media, Sayare Radio and Television and Fish Media, among others.

Sadly, there is hardly any comprehensive study to evaluate what led to these changes as well as the emerging trends that drastically shaped media practice and expanded access to media by many who previously could not be on air. This radical transformation of media and religion was colossal in shaping Africa and her social institutions, but strangely, there is hardly any publication on the phenomenon. Kenyan scholarship, in particular, has not captured the convergence phenomenon, but has also not documented the Church's media history. Kenya's liberalization of the media has been captured from a purely socio-economic perspective (Mbeke and Mshindi 2008), but there is no study from the religious perspective. One more thing can be said of the significance of this project. Studies have been carried out on Televangelism (Schulz 1991 and Armstrong 1979) but these have been conducted from the American setting. There is need to analyze the mediatization of religion as a phenomenon that is bigger than the focus on Televangelism, but there is need to particularly show how it fits in our Kenyan context.

While liberalizing the airwaves meant that any denomination could benefit from Kenya's media changes, Pentecostalism seems to have benefitted the most from it, perhaps because the most dynamic expression of electronic Christianity was Televangelism as seen in the study. Liberalization and commercialization of the airwaves led to the growth of strands of Pentecostalism that stopped at nothing in

harnessing media for her discourse and especially the solicitation of ministry funds. This has been a dominant subject of discussion for both the Church and government in Kenya. Kenya's Attorney General as well as religious and legal institutions have floated the need for censorship of religious content and a call for more legislation, but without a clear understanding of how religion becomes mediatized, it is possible to formulate such legislation on wrong deductions and assumptions. This study is, thus, needed to fill in the gap for such discourse and move it away from emotions to academic inquiry.

The study is also significant in that it sets out to fill the gap in media research on the question of how the adoption of media by the Church tends to change the identity of the preacher, his language, and overall behaviour, the delivery of the message and thereby definition of the Church as an institution. A close analysis of the 'electronic pulpit' will unravel this identity and provide explanations for what happened when Kenya's Church was brought to the world of the media.

With the growth of the Electronic Church, there is increasing debate on the tension between those who view it as a fraudulent brand while there are those who celebrate it as a great opportunity to preach the Gospel through a new media avenue. The Study examines this debate in the light of existing Electronic church texts and interviews. It is hoped that these interviews, together with a close look at media texts, existing literature and Church practice will help us clarify issues in the debate on the relationship between media and religion in Africa with Kenya as our area of concentration. Besides, as a new media phenomenon in Kenya, there is need to critically analyze and describe what it does in our context.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to probe the results of the fusion between the Church and the media. We want to dissect the Electronic Pulpit and understand how a virtual reality can end up replacing a live Church experience. We want to bring to the limelight a phenomenon that has taken over how the world “does” Church without multitudes realizing that this is the *modus operandi* of religious expression in the world today. It is apparent that the pastor and priest are no longer real people at a sanctuary next door, but simulations of them and removed from us as far as a performance of a play can be from the reality of the scenes enacted. The study sets out to uncover the new identity of Kenya’s preachers, something they acquire through the agency of the media. We want to engage with this performance and branding of religion in order to find answers to why there are such colossal differences between live and mediatized Church.

We want to carefully examine the discourse surrounding mediatized religion in Kenya’s electronic media in order to establish the role media plays in the definition, branding and communication of the Electronic Church as well as how audiences are cajoled through sensory experiments. We want to know how this convergence happens, its history and outcomes. The study draw conclusions as a guide for further discussions and, hopefully, provide some light for national discourse on religion and the media. It further seeks to establish, analyze, and fill the missing links in the dialogue.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The main focus of this study is the post-liberalization period of the early -nineties to the present, dwelling on the consequences of a liberalized media landscape particularly after the communications Amendment bill of 1998. Given the extensive use of radio and television by the preachers of the electronic church, media texts of some of Kenya's key "owners" of Electronic pulpits are examined, including Bishop Allan Kiuna, Bishop Pius Muiro, Bishop Dr. Margaret Wanjiru, Bishop Likavo, Rev. Judy Mbugua, Bishop Dr. David Oginde, and Bishop Wilfred Lai. These are some of the regular Church voices in Kenya's religious broadcasts and represent a diverse approach to media usage. Their language, broadcast styles, audio and visual dynamics, are analyzed as well as how they address their audiences and the kind of feedback received from their programmes.

In the study a select group of media practitioners and scholars were interviewed to get insights into the historical and media rudiments. The research discussion has restricted the understanding of Electronic Church to the use of radio and television, although social media platforms could fit in a future broader study. The units of analysis employed are media texts comprising radio and television programmes selected from the period of study, as well as responses from some of the key industry players in Kenya's broadcast industry.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

While a vibrant and productive interaction was expected during the study, a few challenges were encountered. For one, with limited literature on the mediatization of

religion in Africa, the bulk of the thematic survey of the study was driven by Western scholarship, which had to be interpreted in Kenya's media idiom and context.

Another key limitation of the study was the difficulty in tracing key players in Kenya's radio and television history. For example, Gladys Erude and Rev. Samuel Waitinde who significantly contributed to the establishment and operations of the Religious Department of KBC could not be located. Rev. Waitinde, in particular, had established and headed the department and contributed to its becoming a robust source of religious programmes. It was also difficult to trace and hold discussions with some of the most important informants from the pre-liberalization period because some have retired from broadcasting and some have passed on.

Finding access to key media texts such as recorded radio and television programmes was challenging in that a lot of the early broadcast material was preserved on cassette tapes, VHS and spools, which have since been overtaken by digital technology. For instance, programmes such as those of Bishop Lai, recorded in the 1990's were preserved poorly and hence were shaky in audio and video quality. The converted files did not play easily on several devices that were utilized to analyze the texts. A great deal of digging into the archives of individual media houses and Churches was also necessary.

Again, given my visual handicap, a lot of the symbols and images in the visual texts had to be explained by sighted assistants. Hence there was need for verification by comparing the explanations of such visuals with two or three people before committing my observations to paper. All in all, the research process was manageable and the results achievable.

1.7 Assumptions of the Study

The basic assumption in this study is that the mediatization of religion has given rise to the concept of the Electronic Church in Kenya. In turn, the emergence of the Electronic church has led to new forms of relationships between preachers and their audiences as well as new means and formats of Church communication. As a result, the very definition of the Church as an institution that was limited to the assembly of real people has been replaced by a virtual reality that is stage-managed along the notion of performance. The preacher's identity has changed and the Church membership reduced to a scattered, unpredictable audience. Media have given preachers an unusual agency to experiment with new forms of delivery such as the inclusion of symbols and entertainment, as well as the utility of technology to solicit funds for and through their broadcasts. The study seeks to interrogate these assumptions in the research.

1.8 Operational definitions of key Terms

Mediatization: This term is being employed as done in recent scholarship, such as the sub assumption of social institutions and culture under the logic of the media. (Hjarvard, 2008), as well as “convergence” between media and other institutions (Stromback, 2014). The discussion is purely on a social context where two institutions such as media and religion come together into a ‘marriage’ that operates on a symbiotic relationship. The study tries to carefully distinguish mediatization from the concept of “mediation”, with the latter being understood as “linking” or bringing together two social institutions for macrocosmic results (Livingstone, 2009). For this reason, concentration on mediated Church services and the relaying of live events

through the media will be limited. The study instead centres the research discussion on convergence rather than the linkage of social institutions.

Religion: In the study, religion is viewed, not merely as systems of belief and practices towards the supernatural as seen in most early studies (Mbiti, 1969, Hick, 1964), but more as embodied practices that “cultivate relations among people, places and non-human forces” resulting in communities and sensibilities which shape those who participate in them.” (Morgan, 2013). In short, it is engagement with the supernatural to enhance personal and social growth; belief in the Supernatural and the sub assumption of one’s life under metaphysical reality. Religion is viewed as the spiritual “Way of Life” that informs and in turn shapes the way one thinks and lives.

Electronic Church: The Church as represented in and branded by Electronic media. This includes sermons, music programmes as well as Bible-based lessons which are referred to as media texts. The Electronic Church (Armstrong, 1979) has tended to lean towards Televangelism, although its usage in this study goes beyond the concept as understood in American media practice. For the Kenyan context, all media Acts that convey the Christian message to an audience including publicity material will be subsumed.

Electronic Pulpit- The term ‘pulpit’ is not used in the traditional sense of “an elevated platform or high reading desk used in preaching or conducting a worship service”⁷. Instead, the term is used to refer to media as a representation of that physical pulpit. In this sense, pulpit refers to the electronic space and agency from which preachers reach their audience. It is a virtual platform, stage or desk from where mediatized sermons

⁷<http://www.merriam-webster.com/.../pulpit> Accessed on 12th May 2017

are given. It is that media-generated space from where masses are cajoled as clients of a new spiritual reality. In Baudrillard's idiom, it is the map of that "territory" of the real pulpit."

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Theoretical Framework

Mediatization in this study has been adopted both as a theory and as a conceptual framework. As a theory, it is an agent of change, which provides an unlimited avenue of possibility for the transformation of social institutions especially by subsuming such institutions under media logic (Harvard, 2008, 2011). As a concept, Mediatization has been applied as a process of explaining the results of this agency. (Stromback, 2008). While most of the recent scholars (Morgan, 2013; Hepp, 2009; Harvard, 2008; Meyer, 2002; Stromback, 2008) see the theory as a recent media influence, spanning, perhaps thirty to fifty years, the study prefers to read it in the light of Sonia Livingstone's understanding where Mediatization plays an annexing role towards the other socio-cultural institutions the same way Napoleon Bonaparte annexed institutions of the 19th century under his imperial rule. The concept, at least in Germanic scholarship, may have been around for much longer.

As an agent of religious change, Mediatization has significantly altered the form and appeal of the traditional Church and introduced a new phenomenon, i.e. the Electronic church along with media as the pulpit that redefines preaching and Church in general. Indeed, most of Kenya's radio and television programmes readily fall under this new format. As a process, experimentation with technology and new ways of branding religion is going on. This process implies that the Church continues to adapt to new media formats as time progresses. For instance, the study looks at how the Church's utility of media has moved from the radio epilogues of the 1980's and 1990's to complex studio productions of TV programmes, culminating in Churches preferring

to own media houses given the convenience accorded by the migration from analogue to digital packaging. While most of the recent scholars are satisfied with terms such as ‘convergence’, ‘symbiotic relationship’ and even ‘mediation’, we can conclude with Sonia Livingston that Mediatization is an unstoppable, ubiquitous force which, like a polygamous husband, marries every imaginable social institution and forces her to operate within her logic and technology.

This study, thus, uses “mediatization” to show how media and Church depend on each other and cannot avoid operational convergence. On the other hand “mediatization” is also used the same way Marshall McLuhan (1964) saw the relationship between media and communication, that is, as extensions of man. He said “the medium is the message”, seeing it as impossible to separate the technology from what was relayed through it, including the people who were involved.

However, Mediatization alone cannot fully provide the necessary means to describe and understand the media texts under examination. We have, thus, employed both Discourse analysis and Postmodernism as analytical lenses to complement our analysis of the complex aspects of these texts. Discourse Analysis is employed to interrogate the radio and TV programmes, which are considered as texts and read the same way a book, a newspaper, a website post or mobile phone message is read. Our use of postmodernism, as shall be seen, is limited to the aspect of Simulacra and Hyper-reality as espoused in the work of French critical analyst, Jean Baudrillard.

2.1 Discourse Analysis

As mentioned above, Mediatization alone cannot account for what happens when Church and media converge. One needs to closely examine the media texts of the Electronic church and understand the agency media accords preachers to communicate with their audience. For this, Discourse analysis has been employed, again as theory and concept. Through Critical discourse analysis (CDA) the language of the media texts is analyzed both as a means of packaging religion and as a key element that defines the preacher and his influence. Language and various symbols and imagery are examined to help us see how media uses it to cajole audiences. Here the study has borrowed from the writings of Norman Fairclough (2003), Ferdinand de Saussure (1993) as well as Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Phillips (2002) who discuss Discourse Analysis as both theory and method. Discourse Analysis has been used to examine the texts of the electronic Church such as videos, Compact Disks as well as radio programmes. The study also looks at the preachers' programme formats, language, symbols, role-playing, words, phrases, moods, icons, images, analogy and other forms of expression.

One of the greatest contributions to our understanding and application of language and expression as Discourse is Norman Fairclough (2003), who correctly observes that language is an irreducible part of social life and that a look at language can help us understand social discourse. This means that when people write or talk, they use language in a specific way, leading to the evocation of meanings and conclusions which play between them and those who read or listen to them. The way one uses language is what we are referring to as 'discourse' and so our examination of the language of the preachers and teachers selected for this study may be referred to as

religious discourse. Such usage of language is meant to evoke religious meaning and results. Discourse Analysis involves the examination of texts and drawing meaning and conclusions from them. We have used the term “text” here the same way Fairclough (2003) uses it, in a generic sense to include broad categories such as shopping lists, newspaper articles, transcripts of spoken conversations and interviews, radio and television programmes as well as web pages and sites. It is in this light that we will render here the TV, radio and online downloads of programmes by examined preachers as texts and therefore view language as the raw material of these texts. For our analysis later, the study will extend the use of language to symbols and sound effects as well as the nonverbal communication of the preachers.

Besides employing discourse analysis as a method of analysis, we have also employed it as a theoretical tool for testing our findings by reading them against key components such as context and meaning of what is said by the preachers. Our discussion, therefore, cannot be independent of the historical context and background set out in the fourth chapter. The electronic pulpit and the preachers that use it are products of a historical context that “oppressed” the church by denying it the media space for expression and experimentation.

When we get to the actual discussion of the meanings of the individual utterances in the texts, however, Discourse analysis both as theory and method (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002) becomes inadequate in delivering the findings of our research. As mentioned above, we have need to call in on Postmodernism, particularly the brand espoused by French critical thinker, Jean Baudrillard (1994) in his discussion on meaning, symbols and images.

Thus, conducting a critical discourse of the sermons of the selected preachers is a complex task that must be informed by multiple factors and the humility of appreciating that as a researcher, more could be done and said to elucidate the themes and packaging of mediatized religion.

The study has adopted this combination approach encouraged by the observation of Marianne Jorgensen and Louise Phillips (2002) in their book, *Discourse Analysis As Theory And Method* where they suggest that while the various applications of discourse analysis must be borne in mind and seen as forming an integrated whole when analyzing a text, it is possible to create one's own analytical package by combining elements from different discourse analytical perspectives and, where appropriate, employ non-discourse analytical perspectives. American psychologist, Kenneth Gergen (1985) advances the same view by observing that different perspectives provide different forms of knowledge about a phenomenon so that together, they produce a broader understanding of a matter. That is our justification.

2.2 Postmodernism

Finally on the theoretical framework, in order to deliver on meaning accorded to the texts and, particularly, when discussing our research questions, a theory that can do justice to discourse on meaning and reality is necessary. A strand of Postmodernism that is advanced by French author, Jean Baudrillard (1994) is borrowed, especially on his discussion on Simulacra and simulations. While this study does not buy into the philosophical positions of Postmodernism, particularly because of its tendency to violate clear Laws of Logic, we find Baudrillard's concept of Simulacra and simulation a brilliant way of describing media and reality. In his parable of reality as

the territory and the map of the territory as a Simulacrum, he convincingly argues that today the “map precedes the territory.” Baudrillard’s concept has been borrowed in this study to argue that the map of Mediatized Church now precedes the territory of the unmediatized Church, leading to the view of the electronic church as a different institution from the original in its logic. Baudrillard correctly observes that it is possible to build our understanding of a territory on its map without ever interacting with the real place or thing. He says that this leads us to living in and relating to things at a level he calls “hyper-reality.”

This is crucial for our study as a whole and our findings in particular because, it is not debatable that anyone who watches a Church programme whether mediated or mediatized through radio or television, actually never interacts with the real Church service. We could also say that the audience never interacts with a real preacher but mediatized simulations of him. The audience cannot talk back to him in real time, shake a real hand after a service or put the offertory into a real basket. Everything is digitally simulated to give the semblance of the real. The electronic Church, therefore, is a hyper-reality. It is like a map to a territory. What is more, this hyper-reality comes to us at two levels, i.e. the level where the preacher never steps in Church but gives us a Church sermon, and the level where the audience that watches such a mediatized sermon receives both the packaging or mimicking of the original church by the preacher and the product of that mimicry which it must interpret independently. We must also add that the media texts that come to us on radio and television are not entirely the product of the preacher alone although he plays a big role in the broadcasts. Editors, graphic designers, producers and production assistants, camera men and women, audio engineers, station managers and media directors, etc. have a big role to play in determining what comes to us. Even when a programme is

aired, where we are seated to listen to or watch, it ends up shaping what the programme is about and how we receive it. In this era of watching television with a “second screen” such as a mobile phone or tablet will end up shaping how the audience receives, understands and discusses the broadcasts.

This will become more explicit when considering our data on imagery and imagination. In his work titled *Screened Out*, Jean Baudrillard (2002) even warns that it is possible for a media “sign” to point to itself as a sign instead of leading us to a specific object of reference or specific meaning in a text. For our study, this means that, for example, a radio or television programme can easily cease to be a means of communicating God’s truth and become a commodity to be looked at as a thing in itself. In the area of recorded Church music, this means that people no longer buy a song, but what carries the song, i.e. the CD or DVD. This is what Baudrillard says:

“...what if the sign did not relate to either the object or to meaning, but to the promotion of the sign as sign? And what if information did not relate either to the event or the facts, but to the promotion of information itself as event? And more precisely today: what if television no longer related to anything except itself as message?”

Postmodernism as a theory is critical in our understanding of the Electronic Pulpit because it provides a good rationale for the agency media has given Kenya’s preachers to adjust to global technological developments, while unveiling the new reality that is behind the understanding of the Church and its expression. I find this a most powerful description of the outworking of the media logic in Kenya’s broadcast culture as a whole. It does not matter which social institution one is looking at. This rationale is the same whether one is dealing with politics, education, economics or religion.

Let us contextualize and apply this to Kenya's media practice. Were you to tune into any late night news broadcast on KTN, NTV or K24, you may notice the picture of a clock ticking away into the hour. The clock often has a superimposition of images of past events, automatically forcing the viewer to shift mental gears into a historical mode. In the past, KBC would precede the news bulletin with the picture of the world, thus forcing the viewer to instantly feel as being part of the global community and culture. CNN, similarly uses this image, thereby giving the impression that it is a global medium. Recently, KBC has changed this to the map of Africa along with superimpositions of historical events as reported by their journalists and other happenings around the world. It would seem obvious that KBC may want us to see her as an African media house, distinct from other channels such as CNN or Al Jazeera. What one may miss in these representations are the layers of simulated forms of reality, intended to create a particular media outcome. For instance, the clock you see on the screen is a replica of a real clock, exposing you to one layer of simulation. In other words, you end up responding to mediatized simulations of the real clock, but which is made to include images of historical events. Ordinary clocks do not bear these images and are simply time keepers. When you think of it a little deeply, though, the clock is a physical image of the metaphysical thing called time. In turn, time is evoked in the mind of the viewer simultaneously with both the clock and the historical events that are equally simulated, leading to a complex interplay of broadcast dynamics that control the way one views the world as well as the news events that are televised. At once, you are face to face with media, a social power that transforms meaning through complex images that one's mind has little control over. In the case of the map of the world being shown before the news, you are forcefully made to feel and see yourself as a global citizen.

Even more interesting, though, is the fact that every viewer is taken around the world in about 30 minutes through local and international news, complete with mediatized images of events as they were captured on camera by journalists and edited for broadcast. Note that the viewer can see, interpret and discourse on floods in Budalangi, an earthquake in Haiti, starving children in Sudan and details about the stock exchange in New York, from the comfort of a sofa in the living room. Most will never be in Haiti or Budalangi, but can discourse authoritatively about these places and even make judgments on political and economic questions emerging from these news items. (Kigame 2015).

Baudrillard is vindicated over and over again here because, what the viewers are relating to and discoursing about are not real events, but simulations of them.

The mediatization of events, however, suffers from the possibility of abuse given that pictures can be cropped or entirely edited out and superimpositions end up depicting a false sense of reality. (Kigame 2015). For instance, if a politician was addressing a stadium that was half full, depending on whether the editor likes the politician or not, he may choose the picture of an empty stadium or a full stadium to show in the news. For our purpose in this study, it is clear that Electronic Church recordings are not only passed to the audience as simulations of reality, but they are subject to interpretation and construction. We are face to face with a complex media logic conveyed to the audience through language, sounds, and visual images. The viewer can, therefore, see photographs and visual images in general in the context of the medium. He can look at a photograph image and say with Rowland Barthes (1980) that photographs are a “certificate of presence”, or side with Susan Sontag (1977) who says that they are a “token of absence.”

Researchers in the area of mediatized religion must realize that any critical discourse on abstract concepts such as a preacher's image or imagination in a text is subject to a lot of salient debates that cannot be overlooked.

When using imagery and imagination, for example, pictorialism is one of the methods a researcher can resort to by assuming that the mental pictures a preacher conjures or the audience conceptualizes are real matter like photographs or films that exist somewhere in our heads. But there are no real picture frames or films in our brains. As Kosslyn (1980) has pointed out, pictorialism runs into trouble in its effort to account for what she calls "quasi-pictures" that it posits. If these mental pictures are not physical, then they cannot be subjected to an objective scientific analysis. That is why in this great debate, pictorialism loses to its sister concept, "descriptionism", which we will utilize in our textual analysis, because we can subject the preachers' images to as much verbal description as we can in order to objectivize these images. However, we must not completely throw out pictorialism. It might be helpful to subject it to the epistemological realm. For our purpose, we will subsume it under hyper-reality. It is obvious that, given the limitations of using only one theory, the above three have been employed as supportive, making the theoretical approach in this study fairly eclectic.

2.3 Literature Review

Since there are limited studies by African scholars on subject of mediatization, especially the mediatization of religion, the bulk of our review is from recent Western scholarship. Our review is centered on understanding Mediatization as a theory and concept, what religion and the Electronic Church are, and how these are operationalized as guiding aspects of our study. Most of the literature reviewed here spans about

fifty years, going as far back in time as the work of Marshall McLuhan (1964) as well as citations from ongoing studies on mediatization by European and American authors. For the discussion, the authors have been interpreted with a view to contextualize their observations for Kenya and Africa.

But what exactly is this thing called mediatization? Mediatization refers to the influence media exert on society and culture. (Harvard, 2008) It is a social change process in which media become increasingly influential and deeply integrated into different spheres of society. (Stronback and Eser, 2014) Mediatization should not be confused with “mediation”, a more unidirectional and neutral term that refers to the transmission of messages through the media. Mediation is more microcosmic, referring to how media affects a particular cultural aspect, e.g. politics, economics or religion. Mediatization, on the other hand, has a more macrocosmic leaning, referring to how society and culture is subsumed under the logic and operation of media. (Livingstone, 2009).

However, it must be noted that discourse about these terms in themselves may have misleading conclusions given divergent linguistic preferences as well as geographic limitations of language use (Livingstone, 2009; Harvard, 2008). For instance, “In the Germanic languages, while mediation (Vermittlung) ordinarily references the legal/regulatory term for seeking discursive solutions to disputes, Mediatisierung (mediatization) and Medialisierung (medialisation) refer to the meta-process by which every day practices and social relations are increasingly shaped by mediating technologies and media organizations.” (Livingstone, 2009). In the Kiswahili language spoken in Eastern Africa, the very reference to media, i.e. “vyombo vyahabari” roughly translates as “tools for information/news” or “vyombo vya

mawasiliano” which refers to “tools of communication”, which restricts both references to an understanding of media to the technologies utilized to disseminate information. Thus, it is difficult to capture the concept of mediatization in East African scholarship given the perspective that the “media tools” are separate from society and culture. This is the sense in which scholars have sought to separate the two terms, mediation and mediatization. Both radio and television in Africa can be traced back to the colonial era when, in fact, they served colonial interests only. Even with a long history of television in the West, Kenya got her first television station only in 1962, and even then, that service was at first only available for approximately eight hours per day, i.e. from 4:00 P.M. to Midnight.. With Kenya now heavily mediatized, one often wonders how we ever lived without the tube!

Indeed, traditionally, media have been understood as being separate from society and culture, but they can no longer be viewed as technologies that institutions and individuals can use or fail to use as they see fit (Harvard, 2008). Media have become part of every institution but also are responsible for the interaction between institutions and cultural dynamics. Politicians in Kenya, for instance, no longer see media merely as tools they can use to get votes; but they have come to realize that even an understanding of the political climate itself before and after the voting is largely derived from concepts and traditions media have fostered. In other words, they need the media to propagate their message as well as to define who they are and how they operate their political agenda. In religious circles, we no longer think about Church as using media. Now we talk about the electronic Church. (Armstrong, 1979) Our society has been mediatized to the extent that we cannot discuss any social institution such as a political party or Church without reference to media.

While there is no fixed way of discussing this new concept in media scholarship, several people have offered some helpful definitions and explanations of what mediatization is and how it functions. Liesbet van Zoonen (2006)⁸ suggests that media and religion can be studied by employing any one or a combination of four approaches.

The first one is similarity, where media and religion are studied as similar institutions involving similar processes of mediation between the self and the sacred. The second approach is what she calls Distinction. Here, media and religion are studied as distinct institutions or fields, and where each of the fields affects the other.

The third approach she calls Articulation. In this approach, the way media and religion relate to each other is considered unstable and unpredictable and so the audience has to predict and interpret them. The fourth approach is Mediatization or Convergence, where she says that religion becomes a mediatized experience.

Van Zoonen gives some good guidance in the foregoing distinctions and backs them with an excellent array of references for further reading. However, settling at the definition of “mediatization” as a result of the convergence of media and other institutions does not exhaust the application of media logic to these institutions. In fact, when the process is defined as “convergence”, it might be more fitting to see this category as “mediation” rather than “mediatization.” When one looks at the Electronic Church, for instance, it is clear that it can only be identified as such and operate as a new institution because of the influence media exerts on the Church. The

⁸Van Zoonen, Liesbet: (2006) *Four Approaches to the Study of Media and Religion*, University of Kent, Retrieved from <http://www.kent.ac.uk/religionmethods/.../FOUR%20APPRO...>

situation of the definition for Mediatization at “convergence” leaves both Media and Religion as coexisting equals. That is why “mediation” would fit Van Zoonen’s description. While Knut Lundby’s three-prong approach to the study of mediatization fits well the theoretical framework as seen above, the study borrows Van Zoonen’s third approach, i.e. Articulation, and suggest that the texts of the Electronic Church need to be clearly analyzed and articulated in the light of our findings. Several scholars in the last fifteen years have also delved deep into this articulation and given us a better understanding of the discussion as well as insights into the convergence Van Zoonen suggests in the fourth approach.

A close look at the process of Mediatization as the subsuming of cultural institutions under the logic of the media (Harvard, 2008, 2011), reveal an overarching role by media in the ensuing relationship. Well understood, “media logic” implies some kind of dominance by media. Harvard says that mediatization is really the “institutional and technological *modus operandi* of the media” and includes the way media distribute material and symbolic resources along with their formal and informal rules. Van Zoonen’s view of mediatization as convergence or branding, therefore, does not do justice to our view of media as an institution and its tendency to swallow everything that comes under its web where it actually “mediatizes” it.

The Articulation approach by Van Zoonen as well as Harvard’s view of mediatization as a subsumption of social institutions fits the interest in this study and supports the earlier observation that mediatization is both a theory and a conceptual process. As a theory, it can be singled out as the most satisfactory way of seeing the logic of institutional transformation. It is fitting to suggest that every time an institution begins to depend on the media for its expression, it changes drastically and assumes a new

definition. That is what has happened to the Church as a social institution. As a concept, Mediatization is more visible in technological forms, revisiting Marshall McLuhan's words that "the medium is the message."

Hjarvard's Paper (2008) sums mediatization as a theory more succinctly⁹. Media are agents of social and cultural change in that they affect social institutions by transforming their constitution as well as the way they operate. As Stromback (2008) has summed this up, the question is no longer the independence of the media from society, but that of how society can really be independent from the media. It is no longer possible because, the media continues to shape how society operates. Mediatization accounts for this much better than mediation.

Harvard defines mediatization as a double-sided process of high modernity in which the media on the one hand emerges as an independent institution with a logic of its own that other social institutions have to accommodate; but on the other hand, the media simultaneously becomes an integrated part of other social institutions as more and more of these institutions' activities are performed through interactive and mass media. In Harvard's view, it is actually media that end up changing society and not vice versa. In his Introduction, he says that the Paper presents a theory of "the influence media exert on society and culture." This is not mere convergence. He actually sets out to answer the question, what are the consequences of the gradual and increasing adaptation of central societal institutions and the culture in which we live to the presence of "intervening media?" Harvard points out that his discussion is in a bid to answer the classical question in Sociology of the Media, i.e. how do media affect society and culture? This is partly what this study sets out to interrogate.

⁹Harvard, Stig. *The Mediatization of Society: A Theory of the Media as Agents of Social and Cultural Change* Nordicom Review 29 (2008) 2, pp. 105-134

The answer to this important question will focus on media effects on religious institutions and specifically the Church. It can be argued that the media have changed the composition and communication methods of the Church to the extent that it is increasingly impossible to look at the Church today without the intervening media influences. This fits the study's assumption that the media has redefined the Church and the functions of her institutions as well as her language and ultimate appeal to her audience. The Church ends up as a vassal of the media in that she operates independently but cannot do so without the media anymore. This is not just in her portrait as the Electronic church but also in her employment of media aspects such as films, visual projection of songs and Scriptures in her services as well as using the internet for publicity and to stay in touch with congregants. Deborah Justice (2014) has discussed this at length, arguing that when the two spheres come together, their individual boundaries are blurred.

Sonia Livingstone captures well the view presented in this study that mediatization of religion is more than the convergence of the two institutions. She draws on the German historical context of Mediatization as springing from the German "Laws of Mediatization" which date back to the early 1800's when Napoleon annexed the states of the Holy Roman Empire¹⁰. This annexure is referred to by the Germans as "mediatisierung" which has been translated into English as our term, mediatization. Hence, Napoleon "mediatized" the states. The act of bringing these states under Napoleon's imperialistic clutch is what forms the linguistic background for German scholars to use the term. (Livingstone, 2009) This is not the same as "mediation" which still maintains the notion of bringing two parties or institutions together. (Ibid). Thus, when annexure is introduced in the equation, convergence does not fully fit

¹⁰Livingstone, Sonia (2009) *On the mediation of everything*: ICA presidential address 2008

Mediatization. Besides, “convergence” suggests a completed process. Mediatization is an ongoing process. In fact, the ubiquitous nature of media makes it the more encompassing institution in that all of social reality is affected by it. Livingstone (2009), quoting from Wikipedia, tells us that “Mediatisierung” is the subsumption of one monarchy into another monarchy in such a way that the ruler of the annexed state keeps his or her sovereign title and sometimes, a measure of local power.

In modern media scholarship, the term is not old. Citing Swedish Media researcher, Kent Asp, Harvard tells us that the modern usage of the term “mediatization” began in 1986 when Asp applied it to media’s influence on politics (Harvard, 2008; Asp, 1986). Asp spoke of the mediatization of political life by which he meant a process whereby, “a political system to a high degree is influenced by and adjusted to the demands of the mass media in their coverage of politics.” (Asp, 1986: 359). This understanding of mediatization as put forth by Asp, argues Harvard, can be traced back to the writings of Norwegian scholar, Gudmun Hernes (1978) who described this influence as “media twisting.” Hernes did not use the term “mediatization” but each time he spoke of “media-twisted society” he used the phrase the same way most of the scholars of mediatization use the term today.

Knut Lundby (2009) not only argued that Mediatization is a multi-dimensional concept, but observes that Baudrillard had applied the term as early as the 1970’s. This multi-dimensional understanding of Mediatization ended up rubbing on other scholars. Jesper Stromback and Daniela V (2011) build on this multi-dimensional understanding proposed by Lundby in their discussion of American and European voting patterns in politics. They see the mediatization of politics as being a process with four dimensions: The first Dimension is concerned with the extent to which

media constitute the most important source of information and channel of communication. The second is concerned with media's independence from other social and political institutions. The third dimension is concerned with the degree to which media content is governed by media logic or political logic, and the fourth dimension with political actors and the degree to which they are governed by media logic or political logic. Stromback (2008) discusses these four dimensions as "phases."

Mediatization, however, is not limited to politics. It affects all of social reality (Peicheva, 2011). Different social and cultural institutions and practices have been subsumed under media logic. There are many excellent studies on this symbiotic relationship, for instance, media and performance (Auslander, 1999, 2008), media and cinema (Justice, 2014), media and aesthetics (Meyer, 2006; Morgan, 2013), media and the public sphere (Passitau, 2008), as well as media and religion (Hoover, 2006; Morgan, 2013; Harvard, 2008, 2011; Meyer, 2003, 2006). Bulgarian scholar, Dobrinka Peicheva, says that mediatized reality as a whole is a matter of fact and affects everything in society. She writes, "Nowadays we may refer to the mediatization of the home space, of social contacts, of work, institutions, cultural behaviour models, of the economy, of culture, of participation in culture, of group and interpersonal communications of globalization as tied to the media, etc." (Peicheva, 2011: 1).

Indeed, media permeate everything today. Sonia Livingstone (2009) opens her discussion by observing that no part of the world and no human activity are untouched

by media. She goes on to say that societies around the world are being “reshaped for better or for worse” by changes in global media and the information environment.

To get a clear understanding of Mediatization, one must first see and appreciate, the preceding tension between religion and media. Previously, the Church perceived the media with suspicion, even to the point of viewing media as the secular enemy of the sacred (Morgan 2013). On the other hand, media institutions for a long time bought into this separatist approach, viewing the Church and wider religion to be potentially controversial, and hence prioritized secular content. (Silk, 1998) Even Media Studies presumed that religion expired somewhere between the French Revolution and Karl Marx’s dismissal of religion as the “opiate of the masses.” (Morgan, 2013) The entertainment content of the media was hailed as no match for religious concerns which were viewed as private, as opposed to the media which was viewed as public.

Looking at the pre-liberalization period in Kenya’s media history, not only was religious content limited in quantity, but it was sourced from a select number of denominations. Church content was relegated to early morning or late night programming. The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) would play prerecorded devotions at 5:00 A.M. when starting the day’s transmission and devotional epilogues just before shutting the station at midnight. Other religious broadcasts were run during off-pick hours. The separation resembled the constitutional dichotomy of “state and religion”, which in reality are inseparable.

Mediatization is a concept that erases this dichotomy from a cultural perspective, arguing that any cultural dynamic can be read through the technological instruments and formats of media for a better view and for the generation of better discourse. The

result is the picture of two spheres previously thought to be distinct and even contradictory, articulating together in new and powerful ways.(Hoover, 2011) Media and religion are evolving in a dialectic relationship, so that it is not possible to understand one without reference to the other. (Ibid). However, even if taken in the old Hegelian dialectic of “thesis” and “antithesis”, a careful look at the “synthesis” of convergence will reveal media’s dominance in the resulting marriage. Like a polygamous husband, media indeed ends up doing to religion what it has done to other social institutions such as politics, economics, family, education, etc. This is the sense in which we speak of mediatized politics (Stromback, 2008; Hjarvard, 2008) and the mediation of everything (Livingstone, 2009).

This study seeks to defend the uniqueness of Mediatization as the most fitting theory in understanding the electronic Church in that it ensures the erasure of the old dichotomy that underlay the separation of the two institutions. Mediatization would, thus, not run away from faith as a supposed *mysterium* or a ground for controversy. It undertakes to read that controversy and the ensuing discourse through its technological symbols, language, formats and traditions. Although religion has not been at the center of media’s agenda and discourse, it must begin to be. (Hoover, 2011).

Stig Harvard (2008) in his article¹¹ argued that religion can no longer be studied separate from the media. He gave four reasons: first, that media had become the primary source of religious ideas, whether one was talking about his own religious ideas or those of others. Second, that media had become the primary source of religious imagination. Thirdly, Harvard says that many social functions of religion,

¹¹Stig Harvard (2008) *A Theory of the Media as Agents of Religious change*

especially where it concerns community building and rituals, have been taken over by the media. Lastly, he says that religious institutions themselves have been subsumed into a “media logic.” Religious institutions frame their actions and activities in a manner that appeals to or utilizes media as they reach audiences that live with media. (Van Zoonen, 2006).

The relationship between the church and the media is here to stay and the Church’s extensive adoption of media including her use of social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube is a clear sign that the two institutions will continue to need and depend on each other, though media’s dominance is evident.

Another very helpful perspective on mediatization that is useful in this study is advanced by Scandinavian scholar, Knut Lundby. Lundby (2014) has singled out three approaches to the theory of Mediatization, i.e. the Institutional, the Technological and what he calls “media as world.” The three differ on the basis of epistemology and ontology. While the Institutional approach is historical and linear, tending to see Mediatization as a process flowing from media institutions such as journalistic operations, the impact on social institutions is viewed on a causal level. The technological approach views Mediatization as interpretive, seeking meaning and justification in what technology brings to social reality. Here, for instance, signs may carry signification in their value or in their function. For example, clothes as commodities may be functionally significant in covering our bodies or keeping us warm, but may be significant at an aesthetic level through comparative designs.

In the same way, the ontological value of a song as is received on a physical disk is different from a Youtube or Spotify download. Lundby’s third approach to

mediatization, i.e. viewing media as world, is more phenomenological in application and views society and media as intertwined to a level of media being seen as a social process or institution while affecting society through its technological and communicational character. Media as world is experiential and subjective in nature, in that, instead of asking the question, “what does media and society look like?” it asks, “What do they feel like?” In short, Lundby argues that the concept of mediatization cannot be generalized. It is necessary to know how media operates in relation to society before making conclusions on the process of mediatization.

Although “mediatization” is new as a concept in Kenya’s media scholarship, Lundby’s understanding fits the social connection between the Church and the media and will be employed implicitly in the study when looking at individual texts. Lundby’s definition fits the study’s analysis of the Electronic church in that it fully covers the three basic analytical aspects of the study, i.e. the electronic church as an institution, as a product of media technology as well as an experience. It seems fitting to observe here that Lundby’s definition may apply to the discussion of the mediatization of any of the social and cultural institutions, whether one was assessing politics as did Stromback (2008), family, (Peicheva, 2011) or religion (Harvard, 2008); Morgan, 2013; Hoover, 2006).

With regard to Lundby’s second approach to mediatization, viz-a-viz the technological, this study reads its application the same way Marshall McLuhan saw media as “extensions of man”. In his book¹² he observed that when it comes to media’s influence on the society, “the medium is the message.” By this phrase he meant that the form of any medium embeds itself in its message, creating a symbiotic

¹²McLuhan, Marshall: (1964: The Ext) *Understanding Media ensions of Man*: McGraw-Hill, Canada

relationship through which the medium influences the way the message is perceived. He observed that the medium itself and not necessarily the content it carries should be the focus of study when it comes to media's influence on society. This is because the characteristics of that medium supersede the content it carries. Taking the example of a movie, McLuhan said that the way cinema plays with the conceptions of speed and time transformed what he called "the world of sequence and connections" into the world of creative configuration and structure." (Wikipedia, 2013).

McLuhan proposed that the content of any medium is itself always another medium. For instance, the content of writing is speech, print is the content of writing, and print is itself the content of the telegraph. Writing at a time television was just beginning to explode, McLuhan made some very penetrating observation. He said that the message of a newscast about a crime ends up being less about the news story itself i.e. the content. It is more about the public attitude towards the crime that the newscast engenders given that such crimes are brought into the home for people to watch. He sees the content of any medium as a "juicy piece of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind." (McLuhan, 1964).

The Electronic Church masters know this very well. They are aware that if they don't package their message in a clear, striking, persuasive and competing manner, nobody will tune into their broadcast. For this reason the Electronic church ensures that it competes with secular brands in the same media space.

In answering my last question in the Questionnaire for Electronic Church ministers, Bishop Allan Kiuna made an observation that confirms this commitment by Kenya's Church ministers to the use of media for their propagation:

RK: Is there anything else you would like to tell me as a researcher on the relationship between media and religion?

Bishop Kiuna:

*We are persuaded that if Jesus was living in our day, He would be using media to reach the masses. Using media is proof that you are convinced that your message is needed by more people than those with direct access to you.*¹³

Another interviewee, Mrs. Pamela Omwodo, a producer and programme director at Tran world Radio, in response to the same question, responded,

*“Religion must marry the media and move hand in hand, otherwise we shall become irrelevant!”*¹⁴

When it comes to the technology, brands, packaging, formats and the entire spectrum of entertainment, the electronic Church is not left behind in media utility. It employs a variety of technological methods and media formats that keep her on the airwaves. One method is the exploitation of aesthetics. As David Morgan has observed, aesthetics are no longer “the philosophy of the beautiful” (Morgan,2013). It refers to how people perceive what is mediatized and how they live as a result of it.

As part of the examination of these aesthetics, the study looks at programme formats. The Electronic church competes extremely well with secular media in formats, sometimes in ways that are enviable. Pat Robertson’s “Seven Hundred Club” is popular as a Christian programme that stations like KTN have aired it for many years.

¹³Email correspondence interview with Bishop Allan Kiuna, JCC, Forest Road, Nairobi. My request email with the Questionnaire for Bishop Kiuna was sent on 11th Sept, 2016. His filled-in response (appearing in Appendix 5 was received on 14th Sept, 2016 from the email address of his assistant, Mr. John Ndeeri.

¹⁴Email correspondence interview with Bishop Allan Kiuna, JCC, Forest Road, Nairobi. My request email with the Questionnaire for Bishop Kiuna was sent on 11th Sept, 2016. His filled-in response (appearing in Appendix 5 was received on 14th Sept, 2016 from the email address of his assistant, Mr. John Ndeeri.

The Rauka programme and the Kubamba Show on Sunday mornings on Citizen TV have become such income generators for the station as well as topping in audience ratings given the informal approach to broadcasting that is employed by the presenters. The two programmes rival many secular counterparts because of their creativity. The fish Breakfast on fish FM in Eldoret rivals a lot of the secular morning shows in the North Rift region of Kenya and the Fish FM country mile Show every Sunday evening which plays Christian country music is giving Kass FM and the Nairobi-based stations that broadcast to the region a run for their popularity given that both Christian and non-Christian listeners tune in. Pat Robertson put it well in an interview: “the biggest mistake pastors make is to superimpose their ‘thing’ on the media. They should discover what media are doing and then adapt their format” (Schultze, 1991: 66).

Lundby’s third approach to mediatization, which he refers to as “media as world”, will be read in this study as an experience, given its phenomenological nature. As he said, this approach does not ask how media “looks” like, but how media “feels” like. It may be argued here that nothing could be more applicable to mediatization as experience when it comes to the convergence of media and religion in the Electronic Church. In effect, mediatized religion is really about experience. The preachers want the audience to hear and feel something. They want people to respond to their programmes. When it comes to our quest for understanding how preachers experiment with media, this third approach perfectly fits our study.

We cannot exhaust our literature review without saying a word on the intersection of religion and media. S. H. Hosseini (2008) of Sharif University has summed this

interest extremely well in the title of his Paper, “Religion and media, Religious Media or Media Religion: Theoretical Studies” which appeared in the Journal of Religion and Media in 2008. Hosseini says that major efforts have been exhausted in trying to bring religion closer to media rather than bringing media closer to religion or by breaking down existing boundaries between the two institutions. He says that some scholars have tried to build bridges between religion and media, some of them postulating that in the media age the secular is sacred and the sacred secular. Hosseini (2008) tries to resolve this by classifying the various theories and approaches about the essence of the media into three, i.e. Functionalist, Essentialist and Interactive hypotheses.

After reviewing the consequences of each theory’s compatibility or incompatibility with the media, religion and religious teachings, Hosseini goes ahead to demonstrate that a more fundamental step should be taken to combine religion and media in an era that could be described as “global”, “religious” or “media” age. (ibid) Hosseini then proceeds to distinguish between “religious media” and “mediated religion” and concludes that religion that is viewed as neither the “institutional ministry” nor an absolute personal experience “has the potential to be consistent with the exclusive nature of media.” (Hosseini, 2008: 2). While this is theoretically possible in solving the latent tension between the two institutions, a *de facto* possibility of this seems to favour a secularized media landscape than any of the existing religious domains. It may be argued that no religious institution would be willing to be robbed of its identity by emptying it of institutional distinctive or treating them casually in order to accommodate them in media traditions and operations. Simply put, no religion out rightly desires secularization; but no secular medium would wish to wear the label of religion. This is why mediation is not the answer to the consequences of the

convergence of media and religion. Mediatization best fits this role of bringing the two institutions together because as a theory, it leaves the two intact, while assuming the transformation role. The Electronic church becomes a unique phenomenon to study under this concept of mediatized religion because it implies media giving the church autonomy to relay her message with all due purity and detail, but by employing media technology. If Hosseini gave mediatization a bit more credit in his discussion, perhaps it would have resolved that tension of whether media secularizes religion or religion sacralizes the media.

Let us attempt to balance this position by appealing to a discussion by Stewart M. Hoover (2011)¹⁵. Hoover argues that although religion continues as a significant cultural dimension of meaning and practice, in the contemplation of cultural construction via the representation and circulation of symbols, values and truth claims, there is a second more fundamental scholarly matter at stake. It is that the way religion is produced, represented and understood in late modernity is fundamentally a function of the “media age.” (Hoover, 2011, 1). He adds that religion as it exists today, and especially the way it is instantiated in global, economic cultural and diasporic relations, would not be possible without the media. Hoover observes that media and religion are no longer separate spheres. Rather, they are evolving in a kind of “dialectic relationship”, and that it is no longer possible to understand either one of them fully without reference to the other.

David Morgan of Duke University has made some useful remarks about the intersection between religion and media. He introduces a focus on the field of

¹⁵Stewart M. Hoover (2011) *Media and the Imagination of Religion in contemporary Global culture*

Aesthetics as a new study paradigm in the mediation of religion and media. He says that Aesthetics is no longer understood in the older notion of being “the philosophy of the beautiful”, but as the study of “perception in the mediated practices that make up lived religion.” He says that both religion and media have undergone important changes in their definition in the last generation. Morgan says that religion has come to be understood as embodied practices that cultivate relations among people, places, and non-human forces such as nature, spirits, ancestors, saints and gods, resulting in communities and sensibilities that shape those who participate in them (Morgan, 2013). He says that this departs from an older framework in which religions were defined as systems of ideas to which believers assented. In the same way, Morgan adds that media have come to be understood as “technologies of sensation.”, “embodied forms of participation in extended communities joined in imagination, feelings, taste, affinity and affect. He says this departs from the older perception of media as channels for targeting receivers with the delivery of messages in order to shape opinion or achieve certain effects. (Ibid.).

Morgan observes that the striking similarity for both institutions is the emerging synthesis of the two as a subfield in each domain. This means that, religion has subsumed media and media has subsumed religion. The ensuing out workings of each field, having subsumed the other, is really a matter of emphasis based on the issues of content and technology. Religion needs media to convey its message, but so does media need religion to justify the utility of its technologies and operation.

Let us close this reflection on the symbiotic relationship between media and religion by summarizing what Stig Harvard (2008) has called “Banal Religion.” Inspired by

Michael Billig's(1995) concept of "banal nationalism", Harvard advances "banal religion" to illustrate how media provide a "constant backdrop" of religious imagination in society. He argues that media have taken over many of the functions of institutionalized religions and now provide both moral and spiritual guidance as well as providing a sense of community. Consequently, institutionalized religions such as the Church have ended up playing less prominent roles in the communication of religious beliefs. Instead the "banal" religious elements of the media move to the front of the society's religious imaginations, controlling how people view religious themes. In short, it is the media and not religious institutions that shape how people think about God, the supernatural, rituals and any religious subject.

Using the example of productions such as "Chronicles of Narnia", "Lord of the rings" and the Harry Potter series, Harvard aptly observes that, by using sophisticated technology, supernatural and metaphysical phenomena have acquired an "unprecedented presence" in modern society.

Productions such as "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "X-Files" have triggered a sense of religious imaginations, not just in movie theatres but even in our homes as children enjoy their computer games. To quote Harvard, "Magicians, ghosts, elves, unicorns, monsters, possessed by evil and spirits working for the good are vividly alive and inhabit the world on a par with mortal human beings" (Harvard, 2008:2). The supernatural world, because of media representation, now appears natural.

The Church has perfected its usage of the media and now represents Church realities on the screen with sophistication that confirms Stig Harvard's point. A great deal of symbolisms and special sound effects are utilized in the communication of religious

themes, miracles as well as the publicity of meetings and other events on the Church calendar. It is safe to conclude that the Electronic Church cannot exist without the media and, in a sense, media cannot ignore the Church. The two are here to stay and relate for a long time without ignoring each other.

2.4 The Electronic Church

Let us conclude our literature review by briefly looking at the very concept of “electronic Church” as portrayed in some of the existing publications on the subject.

The “Electronic Church” is a recent term that is slowly replacing Ben Armstrong’s 1979 “Electric Church” and the more common term “televangelism”, both terms having made more concentration on the use of television by American preachers of the 1980’s and 1990’s to build economic empires and social popularity through charisma and strong marketing skills. Electronic church seeks to be all-inclusive in reference to the use of electronic media to broadcast both traditional and contemporary charismatic content.

Richard Kyle, Professor of History and Religion at Tabor College in Kansas,¹⁶ has defined the term “Electronic Church” in a 2010 Journal article titled, “The Electronic Church: An Echo of American culture”. He says the term “Electronic Church” refers to a variety of religious broadcasting methods and organizations, including both radio and television. (Kyle, 2010) According to William Fore (1979), an Adventist media analyst, the “Electronic Church” does not refer to every broadcast done in the name of religion, but those programmes that present a preacher and religious service that are aimed at creating a strong loyal group of followers. In Kenya, these services come

¹⁶Kyle, Richard G. (2006) *Evangelicalism: An Americanized Christianity*. New Jersey. Transaction Publishers.

under the auspices of what have come to be known as “ministries”, a term that has replaced the old reference to a denomination simply as “Church.” Most of the groups that end up on radio and television bear names with competitive titles that are meant to attract large numbers of members and media audiences, e.g. Maximum Miracle Centre, Fire Ministries, Helicopter Church, Jesus is alive Ministries, Gilbert Deya International Ministries, Salvation Healing Ministries, etc. These names envisage a promise of power, miracles, healing and other forms of prosperity. Of great importance, with regard to these ministry names, is the fact that names tend to reveal the identity of the preacher. Maximum Miracle Centre, for example, gives away Bishop Muiro’s inclination to the charismatic expression of Christianity, which puts a high premium on miracles. Fire Ministries may indicate Pastor Wahome’s desire for people to identify his ministry with the “fire of the Holy Ghost”, and Rev. Judy Mbugua’s Homecare Fellowship, her identity as a defender of strong families. Indeed, the way the electronic Church preachers give titles to their ministries requires a whole new study, which could yield some interesting results.

Quentin Schultze gives us six main characteristics that distinguish the Electronic Church from religious broadcasting in general¹⁷:

First, the Electronic Church is audience-supported. Donations are solicited from this audience in order to keep the programmes on the air. Second, the Electronic Churches are personality-led and the programmes centre on the charismatic persona that attracts large audiences. Thirdly, the programmes are validated by experience, and viewing the programmes gives the audience this experience. Fourthly, the Electronic Churches are technologically sophisticated, employing the latest broadcast technology that

¹⁷*Dictionary of Christianity in America* (Reid et al, 1990)

occasionally rivals secular broadcasts. Fifthly, the Electronic Church is entertainment-oriented. Schultze says, “In an entertainment age, religious programmes cannot be boring. They must capture the interest of the viewers or they will turn the dial.” (Reid et al, 1990). Sixthly, the Electronic Church is expansionary-minded. Schultze says that the audience, ratings and donations must grow or else the ministry may go off the air. (Schultze, 1991).

William Fore adds that most electronic churches feature a highly charismatic person and tend to emphasize happy sounds, pleasant faces and images of success. (Fore, 1979). Furthermore, the messages usually describe how bad the problems in the world are and focus on imminent doom, and that the solution lies in the individual’s change of heart rather than the change of the situation just described (Ibid).

Although these are true descriptions of Church programmes in the media, the characteristics shared benefit televangelism rather than an objective view of the electronic church as simply the experience of Church via the electronic media. Schultze and Fore read this definition in the light of American generalized Christian media practice, neglecting such uses of media as Canadian-based “Back to the Bible” or German Evangelist, Reinhardt Bonke’s evangelistic crusades which do not emphasize financial support from the audience nor do they utilize exotic media technology to get their message across.

In addition, Schultze and Fore leave out a crucial manifestation of electronic Christianity independently represented by media personalities as discussed by Stewart Hoover (2006). Hoover calls this expression “civic religion”. Citing the example of 9-

11, Hoover argues that media news anchors and reporters can transmit religion especially in times of national tragedy, mobilizing audiences to a sense of hope, peace or comfort. Such moments of “Church” ministry not only utilize Church language and idioms but momentarily make the media play the role of the Church.

Although we will discuss the difference mediatized religion introduces when Church becomes subsumed under media technology and formats, suffice it to note here that, unlike regular denominational services, mediatized services are concentrated within a few minutes of compact images and sounds that give the audience a more entertaining experience than what they go through in long, liturgical fellowships. Naturally, most radio audiences will enjoy the 15 or 30 minutes of a mediatized programme than a sermon lasting one hour. Most viewers will stay glued to the sound and moving images which are edited and compacted into 20 minutes instead of two hour services. The Electronic Church pastor is an artiste that can keep an audience rocking with laughter through endless humour, body language, stage dynamics, music punctuations, profuse sweating and “tearing” voice. He is likely to gain a bigger audience than regular sanctuaries and may have the power to make people stay at home and watch mediatized services instead of sit through actual real-time services.

In short, the Electronic Church is really “mediatized Christianity.” It is moving the institution of the Church from a physical sanctuary and placing its pulpit, ministers, worship experience, sermons and entire Church experience under the logic of the media. It is reaching the audience with a Church message and rituals via the technology and formats of an audio-visual culture. Worship services and the attending details are condensed and enhanced for broadcast in edited package brands as programmes or rehearsed and shown live to many beyond the immediate

congregation. The media gives agency to reach a wider audience, but also makes the experience of Church more entertaining and memorable because of additional symbols and images.

The Electronic church is not a physical entity. It is the Church as it reaches the audience on radio or television. There are obvious differences between live church and the Electronic Church as shall be outlined in Chapter five. However, one can argue that these differences do not necessarily have to be viewed under the categories of “good” and “bad”, “real” and “unreal”. The ubiquitous nature of media implies that it is here to stay. It is hard to drink the ocean of its penetration into and influence upon society. It is necessary, therefore, to find some kind of arbitration that critically looks at these differences and then accords both the Live Church and the Electronic Church credit where there is some. As part of balance in the analysis, a benefit can be drawn from Philip Auslander’s position on this matter. In his book¹⁸, he observes that the common assumption is that the live event is “real” and that mediatized events are “secondary and ... artificial reproductions of the real.” (Auslander, 1999:2). Citing Wurtzler (1992), Auslander challenges this binary opposition between Liveness and the mediated by asserting that the socially-constructed categories of “live” and “recorded” cannot account for all representational practices in performance. When music within a Live Church setting is shared, it is often viewed as raw and hence closer to reality. When preserved on tape, however, it is often viewed as less authentic, yet it is a preservation of the very same music. This is the dilemma when it comes to the mediatization of church services. Much as it is a replica or simulation of the Live, it can be argued here that it is not tantamount to the notion of the unreal. It

¹⁸Auslander, Philip (1999, revised 2008) *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*: London: Routledge

is the mediatization of the real, which is equally real. It's the application within different social contexts that matters. This is the same with sermons appearing on radio or television to the extent that they are recordings or real preachers who simply utilize extra technology to reach masses and this must operate within particular media logic. It is the mastery and utility of this media logic that was gradually discovered and operationalized by the Church in Kenya, leading to a vibrant electronic church between the mid 1990's and the present.

From the literature reviewed in this study as well as some that have been looked at, space could not allow for review in this work, there are several gaps that the study hopes to fill in a small way.

First, most of the studies from the West discuss the mediatization of religion by focusing on television programmes. Most of Africa is untouched by television and a majority of Africa's media audience is reached by radio. There is little attention given to the audio spectrum which is still heavily utilized by Africa's media audience majority. For instance, although South Africa with a population of nearly 45 million has more than five hundred TV channels, there are only five million TV sets, but more than three hundred radio stations and thirteen million radio sets in the country¹⁹.

While most of North Africa, West Africa and Central Africa are untouched by television, huge chunks of their population still rely heavily on A.M. radio. In Kenya less than a million people own television sets, but more than ten million have radio sets. The implication of this on our study is that more needs to be done to analyze mediatization through the radio dial.

¹⁹<http://www.pressreference.com/Sa-Sw/South-Africa.html#ixzz3QcTytZrb>

Secondly, it is noted that most of the literature we have reviewed does not factor in Africa's revolution towards mobile device technology. While social media is not the focus in this research, most Kenyans and a growing number of Africa's population is watching television and listening to radio via mobile devices. Kigame (2015) gives us a good picture: By mid-2014, Kenya's weekly radio listenership was at nearly 4.5 million, compared to about 3.7 million the previous year, while television viewership grew to about 655,000, up from 360,000 the previous year. In the same period, however, mobile phone subscription grew from 31.3 million in the previous year to 31.8 million subscribers. (Communications Authority of Kenya, 2014). The implications of these statistics in part are that more than 10 per cent of Kenya's population consumes radio content weekly and approximately 1.25 per cent of the population is influenced by television weekly. However, more than 75 per cent of Kenya's population communicates using a mobile phone or device. In discussing the mediatization of the Church in Kenya, it is imperative, therefore, to review the place of digital media in the propagation of Church as well as the use of mobile devices as means of feedback to radio and television preachers. The analysis of the media texts, thus, includes how the mobile phone has actually become divine.

Thirdly, as Damaris. Parsitau (2008) has observed, the liberalization of the airwaves at the end of the 1990's gave rise to a huge entry of Pentecostal Churches and groups into the media partly because these groups could fund the broadcasts through tithes and offerings collected from members. She, however, decries lack of research in this area and especially on the increase of Church content in Kenya's media. With Africa naturally neglected in the studies, it is hoped that the analysis will help explain why this is the case.

Fourthly, the experimentation with media formats by religious leaders and especially church preachers is absent from most of the mediatization scholarships. While Birgit Meyer discusses some of the Pentecostal Church experiences in West Africa from an ethnographic point of view, the discussion on how preachers use media to cajole/influence audiences is still scarce. It is hoped that this study can fill in that gap.

Fifthly, the very factors that led to the rise of mediatized Christianity in Africa, let alone Kenya, are absent in the available literature. The few studies available to us such as Mbeke and Mshindi's (2008) liberalization of Kenya's media landscape, hardly focuses on religious media. Shitemi et al (2013) has a discussion on the role of faith-based media in peace and reconciliation, but this study focuses on the post-election violence of 2007-8. The two studies do not fully address this gap. Mbeke and Mshindi give us a sketch of how liberalization took place, but they do not go into the factors per se and hardly do they discuss religious media.

Finally, there is a curious gap in the reviewed literature regarding how media in fact can independently become agents of mediatized religion. Harvard (2008) focuses on media as agents of religious change and Hoover (2006) gives a hint on how this might happen under his discussion on what he calls "civic media", but he does not include forthright utility of media for regular religious programming. In Kenya, however, there is an interesting trend where individual media houses compete every Sunday by airing religious content that is generated by the individual media houses. Pastors, music artistes and other talented citizens are invited to these shows as special guests. This is unlike the situation where pastors with existing Churches also buy air time on the existing stations. Every Sunday for between four and six hours, Citizen TV, Nation TV, KTN, K24 and even KBC, compete for audiences through in house

productions of religious programmes. Milele FM, an African rumba station owned by Mediamax, devotes most of Sunday from 5:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. to nothing but Christian music and inspiration. Radio Maisha, run by the Standard Group also devotes most of Sunday to nothing but Christian music and biblical commentaries. This study is interested in this phenomenon but our scope here will stay on the media texts aired on these stations rather than this concept of “civic religion” which itself deserves an independent study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In a study such as this which requires a deep understanding of the constitution, operation, history, language and appeal of the Electronic church, it is necessary to analyze the media history spanning the years 1950-1990 as well as a selection of texts of the Electronic Church preachers in the post-liberalization period of 1990-2015 To achieve this, the Qualitative approach has been employed in the study. In order to fully capture how the Electronic church operates and what happens when religion is mediatized, texts such as radio and television programmes as well as broadcast schedules have been analyzed and read descriptively using discourse analysis. These programmes have been reviewed as would any documents and relevant aspects described for our study. In addition, a purposive sampling of some media industry players and select Church ministers was done and interviews conducted to elucidate the findings. The discourse on the findings and the conclusions drawn from the study are given in our last chapter.

3.1 Philosophical Basis

The research is grounded in an epistemology that assumes the Correspondence view of truth which holds that a statement must correspond to its referent to qualify as true. Conversely, falsity is that which does not correspond to its referent. We must emphasize here that Epistemology is concerned primarily with the nature of knowledge, or how we know the aspect of justification and the rationality of belief (Popkin and Stroll 1993). In a study like this one which is interested in the

convergence of religion and media, the entire discussion is of epistemological significance in that it cannot be isolated from the justification of the beliefs in question. Despite this significance, our focus shall remain that convergence and its results.

The entire epistemology in the discussion will be constructionist in orientation and employ the principle of non-contradiction to eliminate logical fallacies (Copi1997). However, in the discourse analysis of emerging concepts, the study adopts the assumption that words have primary and secondary meanings and that meaning may actually lie beyond the sentence. (Jorgensen and Philippe 2002) Religious discourse in this study will thus depend on the context and the language that carries it.

3.2 Location of the Study

The study was mainly centered in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, and Eldoret where there was an English Christian FM radio station that was patterned after the Nairobi-based stations. As the capital, Nairobi is host to a population of nearly four million people. The Ministry of National Planning, Development and Vision 2030 (2010) put the 2009 Census figure of the capital at 3,138,369. Media consumption is nationwide and hence radio and TV consumption is bigger. Just taking the surrounding regions which receive Nairobi's media into consideration, would shoot the immediate terrestrial consumers of Nairobi's stations to an actual projection of nearly 10 million listeners/viewers. For instance, the Ministry's official release (2010) put the population of Central Kenya at 4,383,743 and just over 2 million for the Eastern Province. .

Nairobi is cosmopolitan to the extent that it brings together citizens from over 42 ethnic communities as well as numerous foreign residents. Kenya's major radio and television stations are located in Nairobi from where they broadcast to the rest of Kenya, e.g. Citizen Radio and Television, NTV and her subsidiaries Q FM and Nation FM, KTN and Radio Maisha, her radio wing, K24 and her radio station, Milele FM and the Radio Africa Group which runs Kiss TV as well as a number of stations including Radio Jambo, Kiss FM and Classic 105. Nairobi is also home to the major global broadcasters such as East Africa Radio and Television, Radio France International, China Radio International, British Broadcasting Corporation, Voice of America, etc. All the major Christian stations operate from Nairobi.

Government departments, ministries and agencies associated with media and communication are located in Nairobi, thus providing a huge network of information in media and communication. It must be noted here, too, that Nairobi is the headquarters of most of the religious groups in the country. Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and other faiths reach the countryside from here. A lot of the preachers discussed in this study live and operate from Nairobi, thus giving their ministries a national outlook. For example, Dr. David Oginde, Presiding Bishop of Christ Is The Answer Ministries, has his office located in Parklands, Nairobi. Bishop Allan Kiuna's office and main sanctuary are located along Forest Road. Bishop Margaret Wanjiru's Church and office are along Haile Selassie Avenue in Nairobi. Bishop Muiru operates from Odeon Cinema at the intersection of Tom Mboya Street and Latema Road in Nairobi's CBD. Some of them, indeed boast of being international. Therefore, it was useful to locate the study here because of access to a majority of sources and personalities required for interview. Most media houses are easily reachable, most of

them being located in a radius of five kilometers from the CBD. The study was based in Nairobi because it is representative, giving us a national outlook and because most of the electronic texts are prepared and sent out from here.

Focusing on the media appearances of key evangelical preachers in Kenya's media, the texts were mainly drawn from the key media companies, i.e. Royal Media Services, Nation Media Group, Standard Group, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation and Mediamax, although reference and purposive sampling of industry players included the Radio Africa Group and Hope FM as well as Fish FM located in Eldoret. Almost every of these media houses has content published on Youtube and so downloading them for the study was easy. Only Bishop Likavo's, Rev. Judy Mbugua's, and Bishop Wilfred Lai's programmes were obtained directly from the preachers themselves or from respective media houses.

3.3 Research Sample

The study employed two methods of sampling, i.e. Purposive Sampling (sometimes referred to as Judgmental Sampling) as well as Stratified Sampling to obtain specific information on the relationship between media and religion in Kenya, including the interaction between the two. Purposive Sampling is useful where specific texts as well as persons need to be identified and used as sources of crucial information such as the case is in our research. Purposive Sampling is preferred mainly because there is hardly any information on mediatized religion in Kenya, hence certain sources and persons were selected. In closely analyzing the history of the electronic Church in Kenya, it was necessary to concentrate on the texts that appear in the post-liberalization period. However, since this is a long period of time, we selected the texts for analysis in three groups of approximately eight years each. For expert media

opinion, the study interviewed some of the key investigative journalists and programme producers in Kenya. The study, therefore, employed the Stratified Sampling approach in selecting the various groups to be interviewed. At least two texts from each of the studied preachers were closely studied, analyzed and described. This includes Bishop Pius Muiro, Bishop David Oginde, Rev. Judy Mbugua, Bishop Allan Kiuna, Bishop Margaret Wanjiru, Bishop Wilfred Lai, and Bishop Joseph Likavo. Material discussing the ministry of Pastor Victor Kanyari, and Pastor Michael Njoroge have been corroborated as part of the investigative pieces on the subject.

The sample of preachers in this study who use Electronic Media is representative at different levels. It includes both genders, early media users of the 1990's as well as those of the most recent period and ensures the inclusion of those who come from established institutions as well as those who run solo ministries which tend to centre on the individual rather than the institution they represent. For the media texts to be analyzed, a historically progressive approach was followed, looking first at material spanning 1992 to 2001, then 2002 to 2010 and then 2010 to 2015.

3.4 Research Design

This study utilized the descriptive method as well as textual analysis to analyze the texts selected from Kenya's Electronic Church. Various discourses were examined and deductions made. Since a large corpus of material was analyzed, the study grouped this material into themes and read them in the light of their historical context, language, symbols and appeal, among other aspects. Key Informant Interview method was adopted to obtain information from the selected preachers and media experts. All the interviews were semi structured (Refer to appendices 4, 5, 6, and 7).

3.5 Unit of Analysis

In our textual analysis, the media texts are our units of analysis. Discourse analysis was done on the selected texts and the descriptive method employed to draw deductions. Beyond the analysis of specific texts, the study looked at images as products of media technology and agency. We noted that the camera, microphone, graphics, and several other media techniques gave preachers a new ability to communicate with, and cajole audiences (Refer to chapter 5 & 6).

3.6 Data collection method

The study employed documentary Source Evaluation and Key Informant interviews. The study analyzed also radio programmes as well as television programmes and recorded interviews with the key informants by use of a digital audio recorder. Several media houses were visited to collect programme schedules as well as request for copies of certain key recordings which were then analyzed. Several broadcasts from the preachers the study examined are available on YouTube, hence a number of those recordings were down loaded for analysis. Questionnaires were also given to select informants in order to obtain answers to specific questions. Most of the information before the liberalization of the media in Kenya is lacking in studies carried out on Kenya's media history (Mbeke and Mshindi, 2008; Amdi, 2006). In order to mitigate this, I had to go beyond my questionnaire and obtain missing information such as factors that led to increased usage of media by the Church in Kenya. The most useful historical data on the period before 1980 came from Pastor Wilson Mamboleo and Rev. Christopher arap Mutai (Refer to Appendix 1). The greatest challenge was identifying two of the greatest contributors to the growth of Kenya's electronic church, i.e. Rev. Samuel Waitinde and Mrs. Gladys Erude who

had since left the country; I had to be content with secondary information regarding the religious department they worked under at KBC by drawing from information given by their colleagues, Mr. Isaac Anunda Sakwa, Mrs. Sarah Kihara and Mr. Karanja Kimwere (Refer to Appendix 1).

3.7 Data Analysis

The study employed textual analysis in analyzing the media texts including audio and video recordings of programmes which were obtained from media houses as well as downloads from Youtube. As discussed in Chapter 2, this method is employed to examine, categorize and draw deductions on how language is used by the Electronic church. The study has utilized Tables to organize and analyze our data. For content analysis, the descriptive data analysis method was employed.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Both in medical and social research, specialists have come up with principles that are aimed at protecting research participants. First, the principle of Voluntary Participation ensures that nobody is coerced into involvement or giving information in a research project. Secondly, there is the principle of Informed Consent which requires that participants be informed fully about the process of research as well as possible risks that may occur if they participate. They must then give consent to participation with that full knowledge (Trochim 2006).

Before interviewing each of the participants, it was necessary to begin by explaining what the research was all about and what it aimed at finding out. In several instances

where the appointments were made by telephone, such explanation had to be done during those calls. With regard to the administered questionnaires, there was an ethical statement at the beginning of each copy, which read as follows:

“The purpose of this research questionnaire is strictly academic and intended solely as a source document for information to help understand the relationship between media and religion in Kenya. It is not in any way interested in or to be used for personal vilification, promotion or undermining of anyone interviewed. The answers solicited by it shall be treated with the confidentiality that shall be assigned to the project environment alone and shall not be used maliciously against any respondent. All respondents shall be treated with maximum respect and dignity in relation to the information provided during and after the interview.”

There are several pastors who were contacted for a face-to-face interview, but declined. We respected their decision in this regard.

In a study such as this one, a lot of personal and institutional data have been shared. It is our commitment to ensure both confidentiality, respect and the use of this information only for the intended purpose of this research. No manipulation or coercion was employed in soliciting the needed information. In cases where money for transport was given, the researcher ensured that it was only given at the end of the interviews as an appreciation for their traveling to the interview venues. The researcher also paid for the tea and snacks taken when the interviews were held at restaurants to give the interviewees a natural environment to talk from. None of them was made to pay for the refreshments.

To this end, this study contains a binding clause of honest work and procedure, which is answerable to the supervisors.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RISE OF ELECTRONIC CHURCH IN KENYA: A HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.0 INTRODUCTION

As seen in Chapter 1, there are five main questions that this study sets out to answer. First, what led to the rapid explosion of the Electronic Church in Kenya from the early 1990's and why did Church ministers find it important to employ radio and television for the propagation of their messages?

Secondly, what means has Kenya's Electronic Church used to persuade and maintain the loyalty of her audience? In this regard we shall examine the language and other appeals commonly used.

Thirdly, how has the use of radio and television transformed the identity, behavior and thinking of Kenya's preachers?

Fourthly, what agency has Kenya's liberalized media landscape given to preachers and teachers to experiment with media formats and technologies previously reserved for "secular media?" Lastly, what are the results of mediatizing Kenya's Church pulpit?

We will answer the first question in this chapter. In Chapter 5 we shall examine several media texts in answer to our second question. We will conclude our study by answering the last three questions in chapter six.

In order to outline the factors that contributed to the emergence of the electronic pulpit, we will share data gathered from key informants of the study as well as statements from secondary sources such as media reports and publications. The

historical roots, media practice and national developments highlighted in these factors are limited to the period from 1950 to 1990. In the next Chapter, we shall focus on post-liberalization period of 1990 to the advent of media digitization in 2015.

As seen in Chapter Two, there is a scarcity of resources on media historiography in Africa. The early chronicles of broadcasting in Kenya appear in brief documents and student papers online, making it difficult to achieve a good handle of media developments from a Kenyan perspective. What is more, the area of mediatization, let alone that of religion, remains a recent phenomenon mostly limited to Western scholarship as seen in our literature review. Thus, in order to ensure comprehensiveness and information accuracy, guided, open interviews with the most prominent participants in Kenya's early media history were conducted over a period of seven months on appointment basis as seen in appendix 1. The study attempted to seal some of the information gaps in Kenya's early media history and offer a good link between early and current media practices in Kenya while staying focused on the institution of the church.

4.1 Factors that led to the birth of Kenya's Electronic Church

Mbeke and Mshindi (2008) in their Kenya Media Sector Analysis report prepared for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) correctly observe that Kenya's current media is the product of a combination of factors including the colonial legacy, political, social, economic, cultural and technological forces. Since their goal was not specifically a look at religious media, their analysis gives us important insights into the general growth of the media sector in Kenya, but does not address the particular focus of this study, viz-a-viz, the birth and growth of Kenya's Electronic Church.

With scarcity of information on specific factors that led to the use of radio and television by the Church to expand her electronic pulpit in Kenya, this study undertook interviews with several key informants who were part of Kenya's early media history. The most valuable data on the time immediately preceding the liberalization period and the factors that led to the proliferation of Electronic preachers was provided by Mr. Karanja Kimwere, a prolific and gifted television programme producer with KBC, Mr. Isaac Anunda Sakwa, and Mrs. Sarah Kihara Mwaka. Who worked with KBC radio, and Mr. Isaiah Masibo who worked with the Nairobi Pentecostal Church media department. The most significant pre-independence information was given by Rev. Christopher Arap Mutai of the Kijabe-based Biblia Husema Broadcasting studios, and Pastor Wilson Mamboleo, who was a radio presenter of the programme, "Wazo La Asubuhi" (translated as "morning reflection) from 1958-1960. The programme was prerecorded by Jon Lee at the studios of Nyang'ori Bible college and then sent for airing in Nairobi by the then Kenya Broadcasting Service, which was later renamed the Voice of Kenya and Kenya Broadcasting Corporation respectively.

From the discussions held with these informants, it is possible to deduce five main factors that influenced the birth and growth of Kenya's electronic Church:

1. The influence of global missionary media trends;
2. Government promotion of religious broadcasts;
3. The commercialization of radio and television programmes;
4. Technological advancements, and
5. The liberalization of Kenya's media following the repealing of Section 2A of the Constitution.

4.2 The Influence of global missionary media trends

From interviews carried out with key informants during the study, it can be concluded that the birth of the electronic church in Kenya has its roots in European missionary efforts to proselytize East Africa as well as the rise and influence of American televangelism in the 1950's. While European missionary efforts in Kenya prompted the establishment of mission centers, Churches, schools, hospitals and Bible training institutions in order to provide a community-based spread of the Christian faith, American missionary activities in the 1950's saw the rise and exploitation of radio and television to reach masses with the Gospel. Missionary institutions such as the Kijabe Mission station of the Africa Inland Mission and the Nyang'ori Pentecostal Assemblies of God mission became important training grounds for the future Christian broadcasters as well as important pioneers of Christian media in Kenya.

While Richard Kyle (2010) traces the history of the Electronic media influence to the 19th Century urban revivalist preachers such as Charles Phinney who attracted large crowds as well as the print efforts of Bible and Tract Societies, he places the rise of modern-day American televangelism to the 1950's with the emergence of prominent media personalities like Rex Humbard, Kathryn Kuhlman and Oral Roberts. Kyle adds that the success of radio broadcasts financed by many small donations in America, paved way for the birth of televangelism. He adds that "ABC televised the first religious program in 1949" and that "the broadcast featured prominent theologians discussing the relevance of religion for daily life." The following two decades were to experience the growth of televangelism, partly inspired by the success of radio which was kept on air through listener funding.

The rise of radio evangelism and, especially, televangelism in America during the 1950's was to drastically affect missionary efforts in reaching masses with the Gospel. With the apparent success of such media usage in America, several missionaries found it extremely effective to introduce media usage in spreading the Gospel in Kenya. The 1950's and 1960's saw the birth of Christian radio programming in Kenya, beginning with house recordings of music and sermons by American missionaries who began by doing house recordings of music and sermons in their houses around Kijabe. The sermons were translated into local Kenyan languages and dialects and then audio cassette and vinyl records were prepared and sent to different parts of the country. The missionaries trained and then passed on broadcast skills and responsibilities to African pastors such as Rev. Timothy Kamau and Rev. Christopher Arap Mutai of the Africa Inland church and Rev. Wilson Mamboleo of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God. It may be possible to conclude that the early presence of these two denominations in Kenya's early media history is a ground for their occupation of the largest spots in Kenya's Electronic church broadcast space. The Africa Inland church and the Pentecostal Assemblies of God not only sent several programmes to V.O.K, but, following the liberalization of the airwaves in the 1990s they rushed to apply for licenses to operate 24-hour media channels. Today, the A.I.C. runs a nationwide FM radio service called Biblia Husema Broadcasting with frequencies in Nairobi, Machakos, Nakuru, Kisumu, Eldoret, Lodwar, Lokichogio, Voi and Marsabit. The P.A.G. runs Hope FM with frequencies in Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru, the Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western Kenya. They also have emerging TV broadcasts.

As one of the oldest players in Christian broadcasting in Kenya the Africa Inland Church actively began to prepare Christian radio broadcasts at the Africa Inland

Mission station in Kijabe as early as 1953 pioneered by missionaries Bob and Lilian Davis²⁰. Rev. Christopher Arap Mutai puts this commencement date at 1952.

The radio work from Kijabe was supported by an American broadcast group called Back To The Bible which sent material as well as money to keep the Kenyan broadcasts going in the 1960's and the 1970's. Bob and Lilian also supported the work with their personal funds.

The Kijabe broadcasts mostly consisted of music and preaching programmes. Later the missionaries began to involve African trainees who assisted with developing devotions, biographical broadcasts, request shows as well as feature programmes. One disciple of Mr. Davis that picked up the radio ministry and later contributed to the training of several African broadcasters was Rev. Timothy Kamau, a gifted speaker, teacher and radio anchor. Rev. Timothy Kamau eventually became the Programme Manager and then the Director of the Kijabe broadcasts. With the help of the missionary pioneers of radio at Kijabe, he prepared programmes for the Voice of Kenya in different languages as well as sent programmes to other stations in the region such as the Seychelles-based FEBA Radio.

Two of the African broadcasters identified and trained by Rev. Timothy Kamau at the Kijabe Mission, Christopher Arap Mutai and his wife Esther, distinguished themselves and became the radio voices of the 1980s and the 1990s. Other key voices from the Kijabe studios who were trained to work with Rev. Mutai included Pastor Festus Muini Kimuyu and Mr. Dan Miyumo. The former handled a bulk of Kiswahili productions while the latter distinguished himself as an English programme producer

²⁰<http://www.aickenya.org/departments/?ContentID=2> Accessed on

and presenter. I had a unique opportunity to interview Rev. Christopher Arap Mutai and learned a lot about the transition from American missionary broadcast efforts to the indigenization process that followed in the 1950s to the 1970s, before the government domination in broadcast policies²¹. In my interview with Rev. Mutai, he placed the start of the Kijabe broadcasts at 1952 with missionary efforts to produce radio programmes that went out in different languages around East Africa. To quote Rev. Mutai:

“We were recording messages ... I mean our forefathers who were beginners of broadcasting in Kenya ... They were missionaries. They came up with a thought: Why don't we preach to people through ... recordings. They were using these LP's (by LP's he means Vinyl records) ... They cut LP's right there in the Mission ... in Kijabe; They recorded choirs on LP's right there in Kijabe and messages ... and they were to give people messages and to listen music. ... So these missionaries were doing them in their houses then eventually it grew into a department.”

When asked if he remembered any of those who were preparing the music and messages on Vinyl in their houses, Rev. Mutai responded:

“Charles Tisdale for example, who was also a teacher in a Bible college called Moffat, and his student called Yohana Nyenjeri who was the producer ... as well as introducing pastors from other languages to come and preach and be recorded and all these messages would be sent to their regions and be distributed. ... We were getting LP's here in the Rift Valley (the interview was carried out in Eldoret town, in the rift valley) in our own languages and they were produced from Kijabe²².”(Interview with Arap Mutai, Eldoret, 06/01/2017)

When asked what kind of machines were in use for these early recordings, Rev. Mutai, whose wife Esther is versed with production, said, “They were using the Ampex machines; tape recorders, which is reel-to-reel machines.”

²¹ Interview with **Rev. Christopher Arap Mutai** (Informant No. EBI008/06/1/2017) conducted at the Tilil Café Zion Mall, Eldoret on 6th January 2017 from 10:45 am to 12:20pm conducted via Digital Voice Recorder.

²² *Ibid.* 19

Rev. Mutai entered the active broadcasting scene in 1979, following an interview by the A.I.C. church's central organ and some communication training in Limuru Conference run by the National Council of Churches of Kenya (N.C.C.K.). He says it all had begun in 1978 when he was a "simple choir director" in the Eldoret area when Rev. Kamau singled him out during a choir performance at a fundraiser service. Rev. Timothy Kamau then trained him to take over several popular programmes he had been running, i.e. "Chochote Chaweza Kutokea" (translated from Kiswahili as 'Anything Could Happen') and "Salamu Na Nyimbo" (greetings and music) which was later overtaken by a more popular show, "WimboNiupendao" (translated from Kiswahili as 'The Song I Like', basically a request show.)²³

It may be observed here that the packaging of "Cho Chote Chaweza Kutokea" in itself introduced something in early Kenyan Church broadcasts that was not just the mediation of eschatological themes, but also something new and fresh in that it relayed end-time messages that called Christians to be prepared for the Second Coming of Christ, but, because of media use, the programme was unique in that it presented these themes in a most interesting way by employing drama, guest interviews, music interludes as well as postal contacts for feedback.

Rev. Mutai said of the show, "Cho Chote Chaweza Kutokea was a programme that catered for anything that comes or anything that happens. So you could report it through the programme ... anything that comes in the Church or in the country, or even in the studio. ... Probably you are my guest; I put you to Cho Chote chaweza Kutokea."

²³*op.cit.* 19

His description of this much-loved programme that came at 11:00 in the morning to 12 Noon gave me the idea of a current affairs programme patterned after B.B.C. productions such as News Hour or World Report.

Wimbo Niupendao, a request show that aired greetings read from what were known as "Salamu Cards"²⁴ and then played the songs requested on the cards every Sunday afternoon from 3:00 to 4:00 P.M.²⁵ was one of the early Kenyan Christian programmes to be patterned after secular V.O.K. shows such as "Yours for the Asking" aired on Saturday afternoon on the English Service and "Salamu Za Majeshi" aired on the Swahili Service every Friday from 10:00 P.M. to 11:00 P.M.²⁶.

Another missionary trend that inspired the Church's use of radio in Kenya was that of the Far East Broadcast Associates (FEBA) which pioneered Shortwave services to Africa patterned after their broadcast work in Asia. They sent their signal from the Seychelles which for a long time had been under British rule. FEBA established their presence in Nairobi as early as the 1970's and only changed their style of reaching the local community in Kenya in 2003 by turning their focus from shortwave and Medium wave to FM broadcasts.

It may be observed here that Rev. Christopher Arap Mutai drastically changed how Christian programming was done on radio. Previous broadcasts emphasized condensed teaching sessions. He emphasized both live transmissions as well as recorded broadcasts that sounded live. His efforts also introduced the element of

²⁴Salamu cards- Cards used to relay greetings through electronic media

²⁵<http://www.truthfm.org>

²⁶*op.cit.*

entertainment through music interludes and increased audience response through the “Salamu Cards.”

Another distinct element that Rev. Mutai introduced was to travel to location for the recording of broadcasts. Usually they would drive their vans with recording equipment to a Church compound or school and record the real voices of members of these institutions. This researcher recalls recordings of hospital visits patterned after the “Ugua Pole” shows of Radio Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, where sick people were given a chance to reach out to their families at home from their hospital beds. This way of doing broadcasting was not just new in the country, but it was also completely new in Christian radio.

From the discussion held with Pastor Wilson Mamboleo, it could be deduced that, apart from the physical entry of missionaries and establishment of Christian institutions such as Churches and schools, the only other massive spread of the Christian message in East Africa was through radio and television. As early as 1927, the Kenya Broadcasting Service aired religious programmes patterned after the BBC format, which broadcasts were mainly intended for Settler consumption. Around independence, Kenya and other African as well as Asian nations were reached from Addis Ababa by the Radio Voice of the Gospel started by Norwegian missionary, Sigurd Aske. (Launhardt 2004) Rev. Mamboleo observed that the programmes from Addis Ababa were very popular in Kenyan homes and that they inspired him to be involved with local production of programmes. Both online sources as well as the interview with Pastor Mamboleo confirmed that when Mengistu came to power in

Ethiopia, he took over the studios of Voice of the Gospel and began to use them to broadcast his revolutionary messages²⁷.

In colonial Kenya, efforts to spread the Christian faith were made by European Pastors on the then Kenya Broadcasting Service. Africans participated only under the direction of missionaries who felt that training black converts to Christianity to do broadcasting would make it easier to reach the “natives.” This is confirmed in part by Pastor Mamboleo in response to the inquiry as to whether the colonial station carried religious programming. He responded thus:

“...in Colonial times, I am here to witness religion or Christianity had a high preference ... the difference is that it was the white missionaries and pastors who taught on the radio ...” In discussing how such religious broadcasts contributed to the independence of Kenya, Rev. Mamboleo excitedly recalled and cited one broadcaster during the colonial period by the name, Derek Prince. “Derek Prince,” said he, “was a man with a different spirit. He told the whites don’t stand against the Nationals when they want independence, for they are fulfilling prophecy²⁸.”

On this point, it can be concluded that what was going on in the West in the mediatization of the church pulpit, especially radio outreach and televangelism, influenced media developments in Africa which, in missionary terms, was viewed as a “dark continent” needing massive and rapid evangelism. Western-styled broadcasting methods, techniques and even message packaging, were imported by Christian missionaries to Kenya and the wider Africa. Seeing Kenya as an unreached territory with poor infrastructure, radio overtook early missionary methods of evangelism and was preferred because it could reach many “natives” at once unlike the former approach of missionaries going to live in a village for many years and winning souls

²⁷ Interview with **Pastor Wilson Mamboleo**, (Informant EBI006/01/9/2016) conducted at his office situated at Town House Kaunda Street Nairobi, on 1st September 2016 from 1:35 pm to 3:30pm conducted via Digital Voice Recorder.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 25

to Christianity one by one. Groups like the American-based Back to the Bible, not only exported their radio programmes to the Kijabe station, but continued to give correspondence courses on air. Later radio and television pastors learned from these Western missionary methods and, when the media was liberalized following the repeal of Section 2A of Kenya's Constitution in 1992, they took the liberty to do exactly what Rex Humbard, Kenneth Copland, Oral Roberts, Kathryn Kuhlman did in early American media, such as put their programmes on radio or television and ask the audience to give towards the sustenance of the broadcasts by sending donations.

4.3 Government Promotion of Christian broadcasts

Until early 1990 when KTN was launched, Kenya had only one media voice, i.e. V.O.K. which was rebranded as KBC in 1989 to enhance commercial competition and relevance. (Mutunga, 2013). From the time of independence in 1963 to 1992, the government of Kenya closely controlled media. The situation was worsened by an attempted coup in 1982, which made the then president, Daniel Arap Moi's rule keep a tight censorship on content to ensure that there was no more threat to his rule. The implication of this is that the government regulated everything that went on air, including religious programmes.

This study was not interested in the rightness or wrongness of this government regulation. Instead, our interest remained that of the causal connection between what the government did and the enhancement of religion in Kenya's media.

In order to enhance national unity, the government of Kenya ensured that both the Christian and Muslim faiths were represented on both radio and television. Demographic data from the Central Bureau of Statistics supports why the Christian faith was given more airtime than the Islamic, Hindu and other faiths with smaller

populations. 45 per cent of Kenya is Protestant and 33 per cent Catholic, indicating that Christians formed a majority 78 per cent of the population. Muslims comprise 10 per cent, Traditional African faiths at another 10 per cent and others such as Asian religions as well as the nonreligious made up 2 per cent of the population (BBC 2006).

Most of the government leaders, civil servants, media personalities as well as presidents such as Moi and Kibaki openly aligned themselves with the Christian faith and so government was seen to lean more towards the church. As a result, especially during the dominance of the V.O.K. and the reign of President Moi in particular, the airing of religious content was viewed as part of the national broadcast policy. If the president attended a Sunday service, the details of the service including the sermon, the singing as well as what the president said, became part of the news. Prime news on Sundays was not complete if it did not show the president in church, and it occupied the front headline all the time.

It is, thus, very clear from the foregoing that the government directly contributed to the promotion of religion in Kenya's media. It became difficult for anyone who went on air to criticize Kenya's government and anyone attempting to do that could suffer immensely. (Mbeke and Mshindi, 2008). Both Mr. Isaiah Masibo and Mr. Isaac Anunda Sakwa confirmed during the interviews that every programme they were involved with had to be edited to ensure that it did not criticize the government or divide the nation along tribal or sectarian lines. All of my key informants who worked in Kenya's media before liberalization confirmed that every programme ran strictly against printed scripts which had to be submitted for scrutiny. Each of them also confirmed that religious broadcasts were not funded by Churches or individual pastors

as the case has been since the liberalization of the airwaves, except for Church and mission groups that had foreign funding or connections, which gave towards the sponsorship of the broadcasts.

During my discussion with Mr. Sakwa I learned that the government closely monitored pastors who would go on air very meticulously and had the Criminal Investigation Department closely checking the media for any possible dissidents²⁹. The Religious Department which, according to Mr. Kimwere, was in existence from the early 1970's, recorded sermons from different Churches or aired them live.

It was important," said Mr. Kimwere, "for the news editor to make sure that where the president went to church and what he said came as the first item in the news. ... You could lose your job if you put it second or if you omitted that news³⁰."

KBC's Religious Department, which Mr. Sakwa was Chair of for a long time, had to maintain religious balance and neutrality for all, especially between Christianity and Islam. "The government," said Mr. Sakwa, "ensured fairness for all religious groups in order to ensure national unity³¹."

For this reason, both Christian as well as Muslim preachers and teachers were asked to pre-record inspirational devotions which would be aired at the opening of the station at 5:00 A.M. as well as the closing shortly after the Midnight news summary.

²⁹Interview with **Isaac Anunda Sakwa**, (Informant No. LBI007/02/9/2016) conducted at Alfajiri Restaurant off Dennis Pritt Road Nairobi on 2nd September 2016 from 12:15 pm to 2:00pm conducted via Digital Voice Recorder and Windows Phone recorder.

³⁰Interview with **Karanja Kimwere**, (Informant EBI009/07/1/2017) conducted at his home in Karaba Mbeere South Constituency Embu County, on 7th January 2017 from 10:45 pm to 12:20pm conducted via Digital Voice Recorder.

³¹Interview for Isaiah Masibo conducted at Java House, Adams Arcade, Nairobi 1st September 2016 from 10am to 11:30 am via Digital Voice Recorder

My observations are that while the government allowed both Christian and Muslim programmes, there seemed to be a policy/practice where Christian programming was generously served, with both music and sermons. Both Pastor Mamboleo as well as Mr. Sakwa confirmed that in the 1970's and 1980's, the government regulated who went on air by asking the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) to vet and recommend preachers.

Mr. Sakwa recalled the times he had to edit the preaching of several pastors who did vernacular programmes: "It was hard because I did not understand many of the languages and ... I don't know what I would have done, but the good thing is they had to keep away from politics." He adds that he had to listen to all religious broadcasts including those that came prerecorded from Biblia Husema studios in Kijabe³².

According to Mr. Kimwere, "the government did not have programmes of its own. As a producer you had to come up with ideas but since there was only one station and it was owned by the government, these were just like government programmes....The president and his people would only be concerned if you began to speak against the government, and that is why people like Bedan Mbugua ... the one who was producing that magazine, *Beyond Magazine*³³ ... had a lot of problems and that magazine was banned ... even Hillary Ng'weno who was publishing *The Weekly Review*. The media supported the government in every way, but also the government completely controlled everything even the media³⁴."

³²*op.cit.* 27

³³ *Beyond Magazine*-important magazine run by the national council of churches Kenya
Hillary Ng'weno-Havard educated nuclear scientist.1st editor-in-chief of Daily Nation and founder of STV

³⁴*Ibid.* 28

The government promoted religion right from the allocation of time for programmes such as “Lift up your hearts” in the 1960’s to the Sunday evening services that were aired from Churches such as All Saints Cathedral, Nairobi Pentecostal Church on Valley Road or from chapels of Christian schools. The government invested in Outside Broadcasting vans and accessories to relay such services live. This gave exposure to many different pastors who did not have to pay for the airtime to be featured.

While Pastor Wilson Mamboleo presented programmes such as Wazo La Asubuhi and the prayer programmes, Mr. Sakwa pioneered a programme that became popular for its unique combination of Church information and actual news reporting. It was called “Makanisa Wiki Hii” (The Church this week). He told me:

“Makanisa Wiki Hii was my baby! I had correspondents outside Nairobi I would tell them to gather any information during Church services I would sit down, write the report, edit, go to the studio and read it.”

He adds: “The programme came in Kiswahili and English and I would read both of them.... I used to be a very frequent Church goer in my early days and I would see things happening, but they were mostly reported on television, so I talked to my boss if he would allow me to present a Church current affairs programme on radio and he agreed³⁵.”

“Even when I was posted to Kisumu, I introduced several religious programmes there. There were ... nearly eight ... eight different languages³⁶.” Obviously, the Government was keen that religion was heard not just on the English and Kiswahili

³⁵Interview with Isaac Anunda Sakwa, (Informant No. LBI007/02/9/2016) conducted at AlfajiriRestaurant off Dennis Pritt Road Nairobi on 2nd September 2016 from 12:15 pm to 2:00pm conducted via Digital Voice Recorder and Windows Phone recorder.

³⁶*op.cit.* 25

services but also the local languages. This may have been an outgrowth of the colonial thinking on the Africanization of broadcast services which saw the fragmentation of such services in 1954 with the establishment of the African Broadcasting services unit of the Kenya Broadcasting Services. This is quite different from several nations of the world such as China and Russia which do not allow the broadcasting of religion or its promotion through radio and television programmes.

The same is the case with countries such as Switzerland and Germany which do not per se license Christian broadcasting stations. Having got used to listening to Christian radio in Kenya, I have found it quite noticeable this kind of media difference. Perhaps this explains why it is not as common to find European-based televangelism. However, because of the promotion of religion in the media without government interference, it makes sense to conclude that such promotion made it easy for the emergence of Kenya's Electronic church in the 1990's in particular.

4.4 The Commercialization of Kenya's airwaves

As will be seen in the next chapter, the Electronic church is a very commercial organ. The move towards commercializing KBC and the entry of commercial stations into Kenya's media space following liberalization implied that if you could pay for a programme, you could go on air. A lot of the previous restrictions to putting programmes on air were either loosened or lifted altogether.

How did this happen? Through an Act of Parliament in 1989, the voice of Kenya, (VOK) was changed to the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation in order to make it more profitable following years of massive losses.

In her thesis titled “Implementation of turnaround Strategies At Kenya Broadcasting Corporation”, Carolyne Mutunga (November 2013) observes that despite the massive infrastructural investment by the government, KBC faced such steep competition from private broadcasters following liberalization that she had to adopt a more commercial approach to her media policies than before. Mutunga observes that, even with two TV channels, three national and 17 vernacular-regional radio services, even with her rich history going back to 1927, extensive infrastructure throughout the country and government connections as a parastatal in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and even with her status as the national broadcaster, KBC came under intense competition in 1989 that she had to turn to paid programming to survive.” (Mutunga 2013, page 2).

Pius Abioje (2011) in “A Critique of commercialization of Religions in Nigeria via the Mass Media” has rightly observed that “every sponsored religious segment in the mass media is susceptible to commercialization.” His reason for this is that such media segments are considered to have “advertorial and projectionary potentiality.” Since mass media is about promoting a commodity or message to reach the largest audience possible, then when religion is put into a mediatized programme, it gains the same potential as any advertised commodity. In fact, most of the time, a mediatized sermon will be aired side by side with other adverts that run on a given channel, be it radio or television. Writing from the Nigerian context, Abioje says that once such religious segments are in the media, it is easy to see through their motive; for instance the name and blood of Jesus are used as agents of power and it is this power that goes on sale. He refers to those who sell religion in the media as “merchants”. Those who “sell” Christianity he refers to as “merchants of Christianity” and those who “sell” Islam as “merchants of Islam.”

As it will be discussed in the next chapter, once religion is mediatized, the boundaries between what is secular and what is sacred are blurred (Passitau 2008) so much so that there is really no clear distinction between the economic, the political or the spiritual because they all appear and compete in the same public sphere. This is brought about by the commercialization process. It may safely be concluded that if something goes to the media, someone has got to pay for it, and if someone has got to pay for it, it is a commercial product. Hence, as soon as religion is put through the media, it is commercialized, thus making it a commodity. For this reason, it could be argued that media commercializes religion. We observe here that, even before liberalization, religion in Kenya's media was paid for. The difference is that it is the government that took care of the airtime and not the preachers themselves.

However, there were also efforts to put programmes on V.O.K. via church sponsorships. Mr. Isaiah Masibo informed me that the Nairobi Pentecostal Church sponsored several programmes in different languages and recorded them at the NPC studios and then sent them to the V.O.K for airing.

When asked if religious programmes were ever paid for by Churches, Mr. Sakwa said, "When I came to KBC, I remember programmes from Kijabewere free. I mean they were free when it was still V.O.K, but when it became KBC, they were told 'now you have to pay.' Because the station had now become more commercial." Mr. Sakwa added that this switch that made KBC more commercial made it difficult for programmes previously received from Kijabe to stay on air and that this is what began to usher in the era of preachers paying for air time³⁷.

³⁷*op.cit.* 27

What Mr. Sakwa may not have seen, however, is that the Kijabe programmes were actually funded by missionaries from America who believed that putting these programmes on air would be a most effective way of sending the Gospel to masses. Hence, one could say that what was not paid for by the government was actually paid for by the Churches or Christian groups that brought the programmes to V.O.K³⁸.

During my interview with Sarah Kihara Mwaka, something else that was important in understanding how KBC religious programmes were funded came up. Sarah decided to use the secular methodology of having a late-night show to reach the audience of KBC with a religious message. She decided to pattern the Friday 10:00 P.M. to 11:00 P.M. after the Kiswahili armed forces greetings and request show, “Salamu Za Majeshi” which ran on the National Service. She wanted this to occupy the “Late Date” slot and, despite resistance from the management, she pushed the request forward³⁹.

“God in His own ways opened the door for Glorious Moments,” said she. “Now instead of ‘Late Date’ on Fridays ... you remember ‘Late Date’ used to be from 10:00 to Midnight? They gave me one hour. ... I kept asking ... like the persistent widow in Luke 18 until they said, ‘acha tumpemoja’ (let’s give her one hour) and that was how Glorious Moments was born.”

When I asked her what the response from Management was after she launched Glorious Moments, she said that the sale of “Salamu cards” went so high that the Management was excited to have the show. She added:

³⁸*op.cit.* 27

³⁹Interview with **Sarah Kihara**, (Informant No. LBI007/01/9/2016), conducted at Kigame Music Academy, on the compound of the central church of Nazarene Ngong Road Nairobi, on 1st September 2016 from 4:15 pm to 5:10pm conducted via Digital Voice Recorder.

“I told them that I was going to read Salaams, and for these Salaams I was going to have cards. I could not manage to finish reading the cards because they were so many. And when I began taking them the cards they could not believe. ... In the beginning they had said nobody would listen and nobody would send Salaams. You know that was revenue for the station; and you know they used to do a survey. The listenership really went high. ... Even politicians were listening to the programme and some people who wanted to commit suicide would write and say I was listening and I became saved⁴⁰.”

It is this commercial element of the “Glorious Moments” programme that speaks to an interesting way of funding Christian broadcasts. As we saw earlier, the Kijabe recordings also utilized this method, only that the Kijabe Card generation did not yield revenue given that the programmes were mostly mission-centered. What is interesting is that Sarah Kihara Mwaka used secular means of revenue generation to support a Church programme, not to mention the usurping of the time allocated for “Late Date.” We will return to this in the next chapter. Suffice it to add here that, most of the new Christian stations that were established before the mobile phone revolution of the last turn of the century, borrowed this method of soliciting station funds. Pastor Eli Rop of Sayare Radio And Television, for instance, established different language blocks on his radio station including Kalenjin, Kikuyu, Luyia, Luo, Hindi, etc, and encouraged each language block to generate community-based revenue to support the broadcast blocks. Most of the language blocks encouraged listeners to establish what he called “Salamu Clubs”, a method that had been established and used by V.O.K. Members of the Salamu Clubs encouraged each other to buy Salamu cards which they would use as a socializing means by writing three or more names that would be read by the continuity persons at the station. These Salamu Cards cost about 50 Kenyan cents in the 1980’s and approximately kshs5 in the 1990’s. By adopting this method

⁴⁰*Ibid.* 37

of revenue collection, Christian media houses had actually secularized their income-generation.

As mentioned above, all this was interrupted with the advent of mobile phone technology and the requests previously made through Salamu cards now shifted to short text messages (SMS). In recent Kenya media history, special codes have been provided for radio and TV stations by phone companies and their subsidiaries with provision for the audience to pay a fee for the text messages sent to the stations. Even Christian media houses such as Hope FM, BHB, Baraka FM, Fish FM and Sayare Radio, among others, employ this form of revenue generation. Another common method is to do open funds drives on Christian stations where programme presenters or recorded financial appeals clearly indicate that listeners can become “friends of the station” and pledge a monthly gift to keep the station on air. Whatever the method of solicitation, it is clear that no programme, Christian or otherwise, can be on air without money. In a sense, the saying is true, “No money, no broadcasts.”

Speaking to Mr. Sakwa on the church funding KBC programmes, he was categorical that preachers were carefully selected and that it did not matter if they had money or not. Even if they had to pay, the Religious Department had nothing to do with it. When I asked whether he recalled any preachers being turned away at KBC on account of programme content even though they were ready to pay for the broadcasts, he said, “I do not recall anyone being turned away. ... All the paid programmes were channeled through the Sales Department, but we were asked to listen to the broadcasts as the Religious Department before they could be aired. “Things are so different today. In our days I do not recall and we would not allow any political content on programmes or someone wooing listeners to pay for certain services. But these days

that is what I see. Nobody bothers, simply because they want money.” Most of the media houses have become so commercialized that they would accept anything because they want money⁴¹.

Having learned from American televangelism and radio outreaches that listeners could be asked to support broadcasts through financial giving, many Kenyan preachers took to this mode of solicitation in order to sustain the broadcasts as well as support other activities of their ministries. Almost all the early broadcasts of “Kuna Nuru Gizani” by Bishop Pius Muiro had telephone numbers that were multi-purpose. Each broadcast ended with the statement, “If you would wish to support us to keep this programme on air ... or if you need spiritual help ...” Before the advent and dominance of mobile money, listeners were expected to call the office and get information on how to give. Occasionally, postal addresses were given for this purpose. All the Biblia Husema broadcasts sent from Kijabe asked listeners to contact the producer for more information using “P.O. Box 75, Kijabe.” Salamu cards were also sent to this number address.

Some of the American programmes that aired on Kenya’s TV stations directly showed Kenyan preachers how to do it. When KTN was launched in early 1990, one of the programmes that showed regularly was the “700 Club” by Pat Robertson. On the programme, Robertson televised testimonies of conversion and social transformation around the world and then made the appeal that people could be part of this agenda by giving to the programme. When family TV was launched about ten years later, not only did the station directly relay the Trinity Broadcasting Network from America,

⁴¹*op.cit.* 26

but local programmes sometimes ended with financial appeals to “keep Jesus on the airwaves.”

Unfortunately, as was the case with the financial scandals of preachers like Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker in the 1980’s in America, the transition from government-controlled media to paid religious broadcasts also ushered in the era of “religious merchants” who stopped at nothing in soliciting money from their audience. It is this kind of electronic Church preachers that this study highlighted at the beginning of chapter 1.

When addressing this commercial element, Mr. Sakwa said:

“There are people who woo people on their programmes because they want money, or because they want people to come to their churches. They say all sorts of things, they even think they are doing miracles. If I was in charge, I wouldn’t accept such programmes to go on air. People play with the word of God and ... I see God punishing people for things like that⁴².”

Mr. Sakwa was very categorical that commercializing religion is all wrong and that the Church in Kenya had missed the mark when preachers began to ask for support on air. He indicated that in his days at the Religious Department desk, the station would not allow this to happen:

“In those days, we had very tough rules. NCKC also decided who would come on air. There was nothing like selling yourself or selling the church. These days that is what happens and it began with this thing of commercializing religious programmes. People are even using miracles, not true miracles, but they use such ... to sell their Church so that when they show them, people can come to their Church. There was nothing like that at KBC when I was there and we were very strict.” I also used to produce Islamic programmes by the way, but I liked the Muslim preachers because they never used to go away from the topics of their faith⁴³.”

⁴² *op.cit.* 27

⁴³ *op.cit.* 27

Mr. Isaiah Masibo added that it was very hard to find long sermons on TV in the 1980's. "The only time you saw preaching on TV was like when President Moi went to Church and then they highlighted the sermon. To quote Mr. Masibo again:

"TV was for the chosen few and it was very, very expensive, and it was only V.O.K. ... and let me say that the financial state of the earlier Churches was not that good; they could not afford to pay like half a million a month because their budget was maybe a hundred thousand shillings or less. ... The only Christian programme I remember that came on TV mostly was the 700 Club and it was foreign, and was fully sponsored⁴⁴."

Mr. Masibo concurred with Mr. Sakwa's observation that the early Christian programmes both on radio and TV were not commercial in nature and emphasized the message and testimony.

"I recall Mr. Harun Opinya, Mr. David Nthiwa and the Kassangas and groups like IFC Jericho Choir, Machakos town Choir, artists like Mary Atieno and Isaiah Symekher who were so good. And you know programmes like 'Sing and Shine' and 'Joy Bringers' appeared only once a week, so you had to wait for them, but they had a message. Not like today⁴⁵."

However, the commercialization of Christianity in Kenya was not entirely viewed as a bad thing. There were radio and TV producers who saw it as legitimate and a source of empowerment. Mr. Joseph Karanja Kimwere whom I interviewed was such a producer. He joined V.O.K. in 1977 as a technical hand and was soon assigned the role of producing a programme called "Nyimbo za Dini" (religious songs). He told me that he went on doing this until the European Christian band called 'Silver wind' visited Kenya around 1982. He went to the 'Silver wind' concert and everything changed for good in his field of production.

"I asked myself," he said, "why can't we find a Kenyan Christian band that does Kenyan music as professionally as silver Wind or solo artistes that we can promote, not like the choirs, but doing serious concert music?" His answer came when he met

⁴⁴Interview with **Isaiah Masibo**, (Informant No. LBI004/02/9/2016), conducted at Java House, Adams Arcade, Nairobi 1st September 2016 from 10am to 11:30 am via Digital Voice Recorder.

⁴⁵*ibid.* 42

Mr. David Nthiwa of Kenya Youth for Christ whom he would involve in a new programme he was thinking about shortly before going for further TV production training in Germany in 1984.

He told me, “After coming from Germany armed with more creativity and more ideas I said, now, we must start a new programme called ‘Sing and Shine’. You sing for Jesus and shine for Him.” He added, “I said, now, we are going to promote these new musicians, as long as you are Kenyan, we will promote you. You will sing and we will give you airtime on TV until ‘watu wakujue’ (people get to know you)”⁴⁶

Mr. Kimwere explained to me the reason why he felt there was nothing wrong with using the media to promote and commercially support Gospel musicians in Kenya’s media:

“I had a boss called Simon Anabwani. ... Of all the bosses in KBC, he understood me,” said Karanja. “Nikamwambia, Bwana Anabwani, (I told him, Mr. Anabwani) you come from the Luhya community. We have got a lot of Luhya singers who are very good. ... We let down Daudi Kabaka by not promoting him properly. He died a poor man. Do you want those boys who were inspired by Daudi Kabaka ... to also die as beggars and paupers? Help me to help them; and he told me ‘Karanja go ahead and do whatever you want to do and so I got a lot of help from Mr. Simon Anabwani.’”

Mr. Karanja Kimwere further explained that he went ahead and procured a lean budget from V.O.K. to pay for sound from Youth for Christ and for the hiring of professional musicians who would then play for the artistes that came to record on the ‘Sing and Shine’ programme. He wanted Kenya’s Gospel musicians to look good, sharp, talented and professional on television so that people could buy their cassettes and appreciate their talents and thus make them big. He also worked with volunteer

⁴⁶Interview with Karanja Kimwere, (Informant EBI009/07/1/2017) conducted at his home in KarabaMbeere South Constituency Embu County, on 7th January 2017 from 10:45 pm to 12:20pm conducted via Digital Voice Recorder

musicians like Norman Njenga, Anne and Japheth Kassanga as well as musicians from the Kenya Youth for Christ fraternity to help chart and make this dream big. It may be helpful to mention here that I was one of the musicians that was inducted into the Sing and Shine pioneering work alongside fellow team members I sang and played with who were students with me at Kenyatta University from 1987 to 1990. Four of us – Philip Nthiwa, Esther Nyaga, Mercy Murigu and I – became regular participants, lifting our profile from mere college students to nationally-recognized gospel musicians. As regular participants, we did not only present our music. We were called upon to quickly rehearse with new artistes and provide vocal or instrumental backup for them. Mr. Kimwere’s vision of growing the scale of Christian music in the media was slowly achieved and many of the artistes became big commercial giants in the music industry in Kenya and beyond⁴⁷.

The same began to slowly catch on in the preaching arena. Preachers began to realize that appearing on television gave them a bigger audience and had the potential to grow the size of their congregations. Towards the end of my interview with Mr. Kimwere, he volunteered some information that helped clarify the beginnings of commercial preaching in Kenya’s media.

“Do you know I made Muiru the Gospel Televangelist?” he began. “I know you may not believe it but I made him. ... Muiru was just another town preacher man who was preaching along the streets of Nairobi at Jeevan Jee Gardens. You know there is a programme we used to do to close down the station called the Epilogue. ... So Muiru came and asked me, ‘Can I do one of your epilogues?’ That time he was with Lucy, the wife. ... So I told him, come. That time I was in charge of Christian programmes on television now. We had created a small department to take care of that⁴⁸.”

I asked him what year this was and he responded:

⁴⁷ *op.cit.* 28

⁴⁸ *op.cit.* 28

“87-88 there. So Muiru came and I remember Muiru asking me what he could do. I gave him to a producer to record him. ... The producer had not produced him when I went to check and when I asked why, he told me, you know this one came just the other day and I don't know if he can make it. ... I said no no; Bwana Karoki, this is a man of God akishindwa tutajua vile tutafanya (if he is defeated, we will know what to do). He did well. He did several 2 minute epilogues for a whole week. When he saw himself on TV he was very happy.”

Mr. Kimwere then explained to me how Pastor Muiru became a TV preacher. This explanation is significant in showing how the commercial element ended up giving birth to Kenya's electronic church.

“So one day he (Pastor Muiru) invited me to go to the Sunset Hotel opposite Central Police. He asked me: I would like to start a preaching programme on TV. Can I start such a programme? What do I need to do? Nikamwambia (I told him) what you need to do is hire equipment, get somebody to shoot you, then go to our marketing department uwaambie unataka kufanya kipindi kamahicho (tell them you wish to do such a programme) and you show them the demo that you would have filmed. He did that, and here we are. He became a preacher. That is how we now have 'Kuna Nuru gizani'. So I made Muiru ... but now he may not remember.”⁴⁹

In the next chapter we will show how this incident transformed Bishop Muiru into one of Kenya's greatest electronic preachers.

Mr. Masibo recalled that, even with liberalization, it took a while before the Church could fully embrace media. “I remember Pastor Harry Das ... at the beginning of the 90's. ...then we had this gentleman from Mombasa ... Bishop Lai. These were able to pay for the broadcasts, but it cost a lot of money to be on air⁵⁰.”

From the above, it is possible to conclude that it is the move to commercialize the media in Kenya that prompted many pastors to start considering paid airtime, leading to the birth of the Electronic Church in the country.

⁴⁹ *op.cit.* 28

⁵⁰ *op.cit.* 42

4.5 Technological advancements in Kenya's Media

One of the greatest incentives to the Church's use of media is the rapid growth of technology that ended the monopoly of one media house, giving access, not only via new entrants in the broadcast sector, but also the opening up of the ICT sector. The rapid changes and legislations in the ICT sector, led by the Communications Commission of Kenya not only led to strides in telecommunication, but also gave rise to the launch of new radio and TV channels in Kenya. The licensing of new broadcasters implied more preachers could begin to use the media for their ministries, because airtime was now cheaper and one could even choose from religious stations that were on air 24 hours.

Broadcast technology has metamorphosed rapidly and progressively all over the world, especially during the last sixty years. Kenya was not left behind. While feedback from listeners and viewers was largely characterized by postal mail right into the 1990's, the growth in the ICT sector also introduced new methods of feedback including call-in sessions towards the end of the 1990's, to the era of text messages sent via mobile phones right to the current use of social media. This diversity in communication technology also meant that preachers had more platforms to experiment with in the dissemination of their messages through media. This possibility was hampered by government monopoly which insisted on using old, analogue technology. Later, when it was time to migrate to the digital platform, there was a big media battle between those who wished to maximize profits and monopoly of the airwaves by staying on the analogue platform, and those who embraced digitization in view of its massive opportunities.

Changes in radio broadcasting largely remain analogue in signal distribution, but TV in Kenya has fully moved to the digital platform. How we got to the point where any preacher could get airtime on radio or TV if he wanted is an interesting journey.

My interview of Rev. Christopher Arap Mutai revealed that a lot of the early technology utilized to prepare radio programmes at Kijabe in the early 1950's was brought into the country by American missionaries. He told me that they recorded on the Ampex cassette recorder and that cassette tapes as well as vinyl records containing Kiswahili and vernacular sermons and music produced at the houses of missionaries were distributed around the country⁵¹.

Pastor Wilson Mamboleo also confirmed that during the late 1950's, as a student at Nyang'ori Bible College, he participated in radio programme productions on cassette tapes and vinyl records and that the studio had been set up and was run by P.A.G. missionaries from America⁵²

This went on right into the 1980's when the shift was made to analogue/digital audio tapes (adat) for multi-track recording and digital audio tapes (DAT) for mastering.

It is helpful to bear witness here on the technology that was used at that time since my early recordings as a musician utilized this early technology. My first music recording in 1987 at the studios of Transworld Radio, Nairobi, was on the two-track tape recorder and then improved on a four-track recording unit to diversify the sound. I later utilized the ADAT and DAT technology, which gave more variety and flexibility with sound production. I recall that this same technology was being used to produce

⁵¹*op.cit.* 19

⁵²*op.cit.* 25

radio broadcasts at the Kenya Baptist Media Studios where I did a number of recordings. Kenya Baptist Media Studios, situated on Thika road, Nairobi, from my recollection, produced radio broadcasts, not only for KBC in the early 1990's but also for the Far East Broadcasting Association (FEBA) and I recall that these recordings were in different languages. In between my music recording sessions, Mr. James Kamanga and Miss Lilian Wafula, the engineers, would call me to voice certain things for the programmes and occasionally to feature as a guest. I recall that it is the ADAT and DAT technology that gave way to computerized recording.

Mr. Isaiah Masibo, the technical engineer in most of the programmes produced for KBC by the Nairobi Pentecostal Church told me that multi-track recording was reserved for music production, but radio continued to utilize two-track reel-to-reel units right into the 1990's, primarily because of their quality and ease of editing.

When I asked Mr. Masibo whether there was any major difference between the earlier forms of recording and broadcast technologies, he chuckled and then introduced a very important point in our discussion of causal factors behind the electronic Church. To Mr. Masibo, the difference between the older technology and the new was “like comparing sugar and sweeteners.” He explained that the newer technology of digitization and computerization was crisp and versatile, but that it did not have the warmth the older technology of spools and tapes had. That listening to FM radio was certainly different from that of Shortwave, A.M. and M.W. but that, while giving media the versatility to experiment with sound dynamics, the new was more artificial and unreal. He said that the digital tends to imitate the original⁵³.

⁵³*op.cit.* 42

The first TV signal in Kenya was black and white. Colour TV programming was introduced gradually from the late 1970's. V.O.K. Television ran for between seven and eight hours, usually from 4:00 P.M. to Midnight; sometimes to just shortly after 11:00 P.M. Radio started broadcasting at 5:00 A.M. and shut down a few minutes after midnight. With liberalization, we began to see 24-hour TV starting with KTN in 1990, although most of the programmes that filled the airtime were foreign. Radio was analogue and mostly transmitted on Medium Wave and Shortwave, which platforms were subject to a lot of signal interference, mostly from weather conditions.

To understand how the technological changes in discussion created an enabling platform for the rise of the Electronic church in Kenya, it is helpful to see the difference between analogue and digital broadcasting. Robi Koki Ochieng (2015) gives us a good summary in her paper on digital migration in Kenya. She writes that “analogue TV broadcasting transmits sound and picture through airwaves. Each TV station then gets a license for a single frequency that can only carry one channel. Analogue TV broadcasting is therefore limited in signal space, spectrum and frequency.” She adds that there is the problem of poor sound and picture especially when there is interference with the frequency or signal quality. Because of this limitation, CCK had been able to license only 17 TV stations and this led to monopoly in the media by only a few powerful players who adopted the commercial model, thus locking out a lot of interested parties (p. 2).

On the other hand, explains Ochieng (2015) digital TV broadcasting transmits sound and picture in two compressed packets. Unlike analogue TV, digital TV is able to carry 8 frequencies in one channel, leading to spectrum efficiency, besides affording

viewers a better signal quality. Digitization gives room to more players and is content-based rather than production-based as the case is on the analogue platform.

For our study, it is important to note that more preachers could put their content on digital TV than on analogue. Technology is really the mother of the electronic church. As it will be seen in the next chapter, growth in information and technology drastically changed how Kenya did church. While long sermons could be mediatized to look like theatrical productions and hence captivate a bigger audience, they could also be edited from the one hour models at a live church to 20 or 30 minutes, punctuated with music, advertisements about coming and past events and offerings could now be taken via the mobile phone through such services as Mpesa, Airtel money or Orange money.

As Marshall McLuhan (1964) stated in "Camera Lucida", "the medium is the message." The combination of media and the Church would produce a "media Church" through convergence. As Jean Baudrillard would put it, at first you have a country, then you have someone make the map of that country. Sooner or later, in order to know anything about the represented country, people would get so used to the map that it would replace the original country. Baudrillard would say in this case that the map of reality has replaced reality itself. This may very well be the case with the Electronic Church or mediatized Christianity, which has ended up replacing the real live church because of the agency of technology.

4.6 The Liberalization of Kenya's Airwaves

Before 1992, Kenya's media was tightly controlled by the government. This was a continuation of the colonial legacy of heavy censorship of what went on air or was printed. White settler communities had strongly resisted the nationalization of broadcasts if they included local interests.

Mbeke and Mshindi (2008) tell us that the colonial government set up the Kenya Broadcasting Service in 1959 following a recommendation by the Pound Commission. They add that, because of the coming independence, the colonial government did not put up a strong broadcast policy, but instead patterned it after the BBC model. Sadly, President Jomo Kenyatta and his nationalist friends who took over power in 1963 did not do any better. They used radio primarily for government propaganda and the consolidation of power. Mbeke and Mshindi (2008) observe that the Kenyatta government preferred a co-opted media that would contribute to nation-building and development. Foreign media was viewed as a threat to the stability of the young government and so was not allowed to operate in Kenya. In order to protect herself, the Kenyatta government nationalized the Kenya Broadcasting Service in 1964 and renamed it the Voice of Kenya (VOK).

My informant, Pastor Wilson Mamboleo told me that the name V.O.K was "coined by the late Achieng Oneko when he was Minister of Information. He added that the government controlled everything that went on air to ensure that there was no criticism of the administration⁵⁴.

⁵⁴*op.cit.* 25

Mbeke and Mshindi further observe that Kenyatta's government enacted the "Official Secrets Act" in 1968 to deal with certain leaks that had begun to make the government quite vulnerable. The fall out between Kenyatta and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga made the government control of the media even tighter.

Mr. Karanja Kimwere informed me that this tight control on the media, i.e. radio, television and print publications continued until 1978 when President Moi took over from Kenyatta and continued in the same style until the attempted coup in 1982 when everything changed and censorship of media was increased. "You could not criticize the government," said he. "It would land you in jail⁵⁵."

To quote Mbeke and Mshindi again, "the eight-hour battle for the control of the microphone at KBC during the 1982 coup attempt hardened President Moi's position towards the mass media. "Journalists were arrested and detained and publications such as *Beyond Magazine*, *Weekly Review* and *Nairobi Law Monthly* among other twenty publications were outlawed towards the end of the 1980's. This led to a lot of agitation by the clergy such as the late Alexander Muge and politicians such as Kenneth Matiba, Charles Rubia and Martin Shikuku.

Adar and Munyae (2001) in their "Human Rights Abuse in Kenya under Daniel Arap Moi 1978-2001" note that the Church and the Law Society of Kenya remained the key critics of President Moi's autocratic regime in the 1980's. The pro-democracy movements and human rights groups used church compounds and cathedral pulpits to plan for and disseminate their change agenda messages. The government, however,

⁵⁵ *op.cit.* 28

continued to arrest critics including those who met at or used Church venues to criticize the government.

Mr. Isaiah Masibo explained that he and other producers of programmes including those at KBC demanded that every pastor who recorded a radio or TV programme had to submit a script or he/she would not be recorded. The programme script, thus, served a professional goal, but, as Mr. Masibo added, “We needed a script so that we could attach to the reel-to-reel tapes; ... remember these were the days of single party. The content had to be cross-checked and then you had to take it three days in advance so that it could be checked for quality and for content⁵⁶.”

The pressure against President Moi’s regime from local dissenting voices as well as the international community which set conditions for aid to include the release of detainees and the granting of democratic space led to the repealing of Section 2A of the Constitution which had made Kenya a *de Jure* (one party) state.

It is important to note here that the room for multi-party politics was a significant move in Kenya in that divergent opinion began to be tolerated. The significance of this to the media sector is that radio, television and newspapers began to enjoy some limited freedom of expression.

These political shifts led to “the registration of new FM radio stations; increased freedom for both the public and other institutions to air their views through the media openly and candidly; increased political content and political battles fought via the

⁵⁶*op.cit.* 42

media; and the growth of public demand for information and news.” (AMDI, BBC, 2006, 6).

Although media space was guaranteed, it was slow to achieve. The government dragged its feet on providing media freedom. Several Bills were passed between 1992 and 1998 and task forces established to oversee the drafting of media and communication changes in the country, but it took the Opposition leaders, the Church and the Kenya Union of Journalists to bring about the changes Kenya now enjoys in a liberalized media landscape. Some of the key developments that radically transformed media practice in Kenya include but are not limited to the 1997 Kenya Government Communications and Postal Sector Policy Guidelines which allowed for the enactment of the Kenya Communications Act of 1998. Shortly after, there was the repealing of the Kenya Posts and Communications Act and the establishment of three organs, i.e. the Communications Commission of Kenya, Telkom Kenya Ltd, and the Postal Corporation of Kenya. The Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK) in particular was to drive all the radical changes in broadcasting and ICT in general in the years that followed. CCK drove all the major amendment discussions leading to the passing of several media bills in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2012 and 2013, among others.

Another important media development in this period was the promulgation of Kenya’s new constitution in August, 2010. In Article 34 of the new constitution, the media was granted a good amount of freedom of expression. It stated in part, “(a)the state shall not exercise control over or interfere with any person engaged in broadcasting, the production or circulation of any publication or the dissemination of information by any medium; (b) or penalize any person for any opinion or view or the content of any broad cast, publication or dissemination”.

This was a radical shift from the censorship and control of the media witnessed in Kenya's media history before. It also marked a clear difference between the mediated and mediatized pulpits. We shall now outline these transitional differences before closing this chapter.

4.7 Transitional differences between the mediated and mediatized pulpits

There is a marked difference between how the Church programmes were before and after liberalization of Kenya's air waves. The pre-liberalization period was largely marked by mediated religion. From the examination of the media texts under study, it is clear that the post-liberalization period was marked by a clear union between the two institutions. The Church took to the media in a big way and, the new media that were looking for programmes to fill the air time, quickly adopted Church content as regular components of their programming, ushering in the era of mediatized religion.

As seen earlier, mediation, simply put, is using the media to relay a direct message from social institutions which use the media as a conduit. This is different from mediatization which sees a merger of media and those social institutions so that you cannot divorce one from the other. In a broad sense, we are arguing here that what took place before liberalization was largely in the realm of the mediated. However, the two are not mutually exclusive and, as some of the scholars read it (Meyer 2002, 2003) there is probably just a theoretical difference in view of the overlaps and application of the two theories. While this study grants that overlap, we insist on a marked difference by virtue of the inseparable convergence (Harvard 2008, 2011) and in view of McLuhan's dictum that "the medium is the message." The historical preference comes naturally in view of our discussion in this Chapter, thus pitting the pre-liberalization period against the post-liberalization period, but this distinction is

not arbitrary. Our discussion will clearly illustrate this. As the media and the Church began to interact during the liberalization period, leading to a symbiotic relationship between them, this resulted to mediatized religion. So, what were the main functional differences between the two?

First, the mediated Church was centered at a sanctuary in the village or town where congregants met at a particular time, usually Sunday or Saturday morning, or perhaps on Wednesday evening, for fellowship. This assembling of believers would then be transmitted live or recorded as it happened and then merely edited minimally for broadcast. On the other hand, the electronic Church has no specific physical location where people gather. It may involve the repackaging of a sermon delivered at a local congregation with additional editing elements that transform it to a mere media production, or it may involve a deliberate move of the Church setting to the market, park, hotel or street. You then receive it at home, at the office or in your car. The only binding locus is the specific radio or TV channel on which a programme is aired. The common, binding tagline is often “Let us meet right here, same time, and same station!”

Secondly, the mediated Church operated its services guided by books and service sheets. This made it a print media church. People sang from hymn books and Sunday bulletins were prepared and distributed to the congregation by ushers. When preachers from this church were invited to radio or TV studios, they were expected to write their sermons on paper as seen in Chapter 4. On the contrary, the Electronic church is a digital church. Everything is on the screen or reachable by turning your radio’s dial. The sermon is illustrated by titling, imagery and other aids and you can receive the announcements via a text that scrolls at the bottom of the screen as you watch and

listen. You can even give your offering digitally by sending your tithes via your telephone or computer.

Thirdly, the mediated Church encouraged decency, order, formal dressing and, wherever the tradition dictated, men and women would sit in different pew sections. The mood was often solemn and the preacher was composed and, in most cases, spoke in monotones without arbitrarily making attempts to excite the congregation. On the other hand, the Electronic Church is very charismatic for the most part. It encourages casual dressing and flamboyance. The more color and diversity, the better for the screen images. It encourages entertainment and less solemnness. A preacher who sweats is good for the screen action; miracle feats are televised mostly uncensored and actions such as people shrieking, rolling on the floor or throwing up and foaming at the mouth in the name of deliverance is considered good for the show because it also enhances the popularity of the preacher and elevates his profile.

Fourthly, singing and overall worship in the mediated Church was participatory with a song-leader and pianist or organist guiding the entire congregation in the expression of worship. Choirs presented special songs before the preacher came to speak. People were asked to stand, kneel or sit by the leader of the service or singing. On the other hand, the mediatised Church is a performatory Church. Several sermons from different times can be pieced together into a single broadcast. Music and worship are viewed from a performatory structure, complete with worship bands and teams that “lead in worship” for a long period of time through special music, complete with the technology of overhead projection, lighting, sound and smoke effects, etc.

Fifthly, the mediated Church took on a more traditional approach to liturgy and preaching techniques. The creeds were recited and you could see the communion

bread and cups been passed around. It was orderly, taking on the mode of the “High Church.” Everything was formal and there were no jokes in the sermon. Response through laughter and cheering from the congregation was greatly discouraged as pointed out by some of our interviewees that we cited in chapter 4. The Pipe Organ or Piano dominated the musical accompaniments. On the contrary, the Electronic church is largely characterized by a new charismatic approach to preaching that resembles the Televangelism of the American stations. The worship culture resembles a secular concert complete with guitars, drums, keyboard synthesizers, saxophones and trumpets, lead vocalists and backup teams. There is shouting, clapping, and screaming, whistling and unrestricted dancing. The more the action, the bigger the viewership. The preacher runs across the stage, yells, jumps up and down or runs downstage to the congregation, sweating profusely. It is full of miracle feats and people are more spontaneous than in the traditional, mediated setting. That was common on KBC.

Sixthly, while the mediated church depended on social responsibility including mutual giving by immediate members of the Church, the mediatized church is kept on air by financial solicitation by the preacher who may keep asking for the audience to give throughout the broadcast. Phone numbers are given and appeals made to send money to such numbers. In other words, they are driven by the support of an acephalous audience.

Seventhly, the mediated Church was largely truth-centered. Expositions sought to find out what God wanted for the people. The electronic church is largely driven by experience and a quest for power encounters and manifestations, making it hard to identify any possible drifts into the occultic.

Last but not least, the dominant themes of the mediated Church included Heaven and Hell, the imminent return of Christ, forgiveness of sins, temptation, growing as a Christian, being a witness for Christ, among others as pointed out by Pastor Wilson Mambo Leo and elucidated by Rev. Christopher Arap Mutai who also run a programme on KBC called “Chochote Chaweza Kutokea” (anything could happen) which focused on the imminence of Christ’s return. The dominant themes of the new expression of Christianity in the mediatized Church include but are not limited to salvation, health, wealth and deliverance. Prosperity is the backbone of everything, whether you are being saved, healed, and delivered or being taught how to live in the world. The messages of the electronic pulpit usually describe how bad the problems in the world are and focus on imminent doom, and that the solution lies in the individual’s change of heart rather than the change of the situation just described.

These two expressions of Church are worlds apart. From the study, it is evident that mediation dominated the pre-liberalization era, largely because there was a desire by the traditional Church to stay authentic. That is why most Churches simply broadcast recordings of sermons which were edited to fit a 20 or 30 minute slot as allocated on the existing broadcasting stations. For example, both Bishop Wilfred Lai and Apostle Harry Das simply had cameras rolling as they preached. The language, gestures, Bible-reading and the entire action of the Church is what you saw on the screen, only that it was condensed, with many aspects left out by the editors e.g. repetition, stammering, long gaps and any redundancies. The main points of the sermon were emphasized in the editing so that what the viewer or listener got was an abridged version of the same sermon.

Things changed drastically, though, when the pastors had to provide regular programmes, in most cases a new broadcast at least once every week. As we saw from Informant Karanja Kimwere, at first this was possible if one was dealing with 3 to 5 minute epilogues, because the studio crew could record all of them on the same day, even if it meant the preacher needed to change his attire to provide freshness for the subsequent days' episodes. As seen in the emergence of the post-Lai era such as Bishop Pius Muiro, the regular demand for weekly broadcasts necessitated a new kind of programme preparation which moved from mediation to mediatization. It was necessary to go into the studio or onto a selected site and shoot the broadcasts. In some cases, different sermons could now be pieced together via meticulous editing to provide more programmes. The result was a gradual, but very clear move from mediated church sermons to the professional production of broadcasts by preachers who now stopped at nothing with regard to technology, stylistics and packaging.

In discussing with Mr. Karanja Kimwere, an important point that explains this radical shift by Kenya's Electronic Church emerged. Mr. Kimwere stated in the interview that Pastor Pius Muiro is the one who visited him at KBC and asked if he could preach on the end-of-transmission epilogue segment which was reserved for Pastors and Imams. Karanja said that Muiro did so well even though he was very green in going on television. This made the Bishop invite him to "Sun City Hotel opposite the Central Police Station" in Nairobi and asked what he could do to get onto television regularly. Mr. Kimwere told him that all he needed to do was find someone to shoot the sermon at the hotel and then proceed to the marketing department to see if it was good enough for a programme. This moved Bishop Muiro onto the screen⁵⁷.

⁵⁷*op.cit.* 28

Right here is a crucial distinction which explains the move from mediated sermons in a Church building to the hotels and streets. The church was no longer symbolized by steeples, bells, pulpits and lecterns. We must observe here that the pastors were no longer the “holy men” adorned in white collars, flowing robes with a Bible that was chained to a pulpit, but actors and entertainers adorned in elegant dresses and jewelry, black suits and ties and who preached freely by quoting from newspapers as well as taking over the role of the choir by being the leaders of music themselves. The broadcast of Bishop Margaret Wanjiru titled “Breaking Marine Spirits” is a good example of this. The altar and pulpit were replaced by dramatic stages, draping and aesthetics of public parks and restaurants.

New modes of packaging Christian programmes in Kenya’s media were introduced by copying from secular productions. While aspects such as humour, music interludes and commercial breaks are totally absent from the early broadcasts of Bishop Wilfred Lai and Apostle Harry Das, these are in plenty in later broadcasts e.g. those of Bishop David Oginde and Pastor Jon Corson aired on Fish FM and Hope FM between 2006 and 2015. On television broadcasts such as those of Pastor Jon Corson on Hope TV and Allan Kiuna on KTN, the telling of jokes to make the audience laugh is common. Perhaps some of the inspiration for the Kenyan preachers to employ these “secular” modes of communication is the watching of comedy such as the KBC “Vitimbi” and “Vioja Mahakamani” local drama shows or the humour of American Christian preachers such as John Haggier, Joel Austin and David Jeremiah. The latter indeed even has broadcasts titled “Medicine for the Soul” in which he tells bible-based jokes.

As better technology became available, Churches which simply televised recordings of sermons that were recorded using a camera or two, now could afford complex

recordings and sophisticated editing and packaging. The early productions of bishop Lai's programme "Family Glory" aired on KBC and KTN were simple and predictable. However, a close look at his later broadcasts shows a multi-media presentation of the services at his Church, JCC Mombasa, whose editing ended up presenting to the audience a sophisticated packaging employing prior preparation of the sanctuary by his media team and the use of multiple cameras to capture the action and other details of the service. While VHS tapes and recorders had limited the quality of the pictures, the shift to digital, high resolution cameras altered everything, making the later images sharper and hence clearer episodes. A selection of broadcasts between 1998 and 2001 proves our point. The specific programmes analyzed include two 1998 programmes titled "Turning Knowledge into Wisdom" and "Taifa Lililo barikiwa", a 1999 broadcast titled "The Faith To Cross The River" and a 2001 programme titled "God Who Makes a Way (Part 2)."

In "The Faith to Cross the River", for instance, there is a lot of titling, background music as the Bishop prays and speaks as well as music interludes by the worship band. After announcing the text, Bishop Lai says:

"We welcome those of you who are watching us through television! ... We believe that this is the day God has made, and if you are sick, I believe that He is going to heal you; if you are bound He is going to deliver you, and if you are not saved, I believe by the end of the service He is going to save you."

Notice the interplay between the mediated service whose entire structure is recorded and then edited to fit about 30 minutes which reaches an estimated membership of about twenty thousand at his Bamburi sanctuary, as well as the secondary audience which he purposefully invites knowing they would be watching. Since the service is recorded live and then edited, it means that the invitation is also recorded, meaning that it is not real time. This is where media becomes a powerful agent in making what

has already taken place seem as if it were happening when the broadcast goes on air. Besides the performatory aspect which reduces the service to an acted scene, we must observe here that the mediatization of religion at this level completely fuses the Church service and media technology to a level where you cannot discuss one without the other. It is the media through the cameras, editing and broadcasting of the service that give the Church a form and appeal. The media package that reaches the audience is actually the message. It is the Church. It is Bishop Lai and his congregation. It is the new Church reality.

In broadcasts such as the two investigative pieces, “Seeds of Sin” and “Prayer Predators”, we are shown preachers going full circle to literally manufacture the sermons by employing multiple production methods including coaching individuals to give testimonies about miracles that never happened. It is clear from the documentation of how the miracles are prepared that preachers such as Victor Kanyari of the Salvation Healing Church desire to keep the audience glued to their sets through these miracles which he ensures are well-rehearsed. At this level of production, there is no difference in techniques between the Electronic Church broadcasts and comedies such as the “Churchill Show.” A show that host various comedians from around the country and brings them together for the live audience in various places the show is hosted in the country. The show however is mainly hosted at carnivore hotel in Nairobi.

Putting a programme on KBC was expensive. A personal inquiry from Miss Sarah Kihara around the year 1991 yielded the response that I needed to raise about sixty

thousand Kenya shillings at that time to put one TV episode on air⁵⁸. Liberalization which allowed many more players in the industry was the answer to the preachers who wanted to go on air but could not afford in that more players meant the broadcast rates had to come down. With the shift from government-sponsored broadcasting which was largely monitored by the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) on KBC to the era of commercial religious broadcasts from the early 1990's, most mainline Churches were overtaken and literally replaced by Pentecostal and charismatic preachers who could afford airtime on the new TV and FM radio stations given their large offerings which occasionally ran into millions of shillings (Parsitau, 2008).

Even after liberalization, the old style of packaging the broadcasts continued as discovery and experimentation with packaging set in. Soon there was a proliferation of charismatic media pastors and teachers who stopped at nothing in packaging their messages for their growing audiences to whom they began to appeal for financial support to keep the broadcasts on air. Postal and physical church addresses for feedback were soon to be overtaken by multiple telephone contacts – now not for the church but for the preacher himself - and prayer for miracles, signs and wonders began to fill Kenya's airwaves.

The style of sermon presentation began to shift from recordings of Church services which were edited to fit the allocated airtime to studio and other location recordings that were custom-fitted for the desired results. The rise in technical details when producing the programme soon necessitated a shift in sermon language as well as the

⁵⁸*op.cit.* 35

communication techniques which, viewed purely as speech acts, became more and more dramatic in order to attract larger audiences.

The progressive changes discussed in this chapter took place over a period of about forty years, but radically altered the media landscape in Kenya. Pastors were given agency that transformed them and their congregations to masters of branded Christianity. As shall be seen in chapter 6, they became skilled performers who utilized the microphone and video camera in a new but powerful way. They were coached by producers and programme directors to present religion in a particular way.

The process of liberalization, in providing more space for media industry players, was a blessing to the Church in that competition in radio and television not only brought airtime costs down, but also ended the monopoly of state-sponsored and NCKK-selected preachers in the media. It also gave a chance to new entrants. Now preachers like Bishop Mark Kariuki, Bishop Lai, Pastor Pius Muiru, Pastor Margaret Wanjiru and Apostle Harry Das, took the airwaves by storm.

The Electronic Church was finally born as more and more preachers realized that all you needed to do to be on air was pay. In order to sustain the broadcasts, media houses no longer required the strictures of written scripts and outlines. Inspired by American televangelism which was at an all-time high in the 1980's and 1990's, Kenya's new preachers in the media realized that they could amass bigger audiences by being more dramatic. Media sermons were improved aesthetically and packaged in styles that began to rival secular programmes in detail.

Mr. Isaiah Masibo, whose work at the studios of NPC Valley road heavily engaged him in programme preparation, told me that now he had to coach pastors on how to present radio programmes. “You know we Pentecostals have a preaching tone and a speaking tone,” he explained. “We had to show them, you know when you are on radio you may be reaching out to somebody in his bedroom, and who gave you permission to shout at him?”

Now preachers had to think about their tone, their style of speaking on the programme and how to sound interesting to the audience. How they did this, i.e. the strategies they used to communicate to their audiences and maintain their loyalty is the interest of mediatization. In the mediatization of religion, there are new ways of experimenting with the communication of messages through the media. Creativity and persuasion, language and technology are used in a new way to attract and preserve such loyalty. The media and religion converge in some interesting ways to produce something new. Baudrillard referred to it as a “simulation” of reality. Philip Auslander has discussed this as “Liveness” and “the mediatized.”

That is our focus in the next chapter that examining what happens, when Church is mediatized and, the results of that mediatization.

CHAPTER FIVE

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND DEDUCTIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

In this chapter we attempt to answer the third question of our study, i.e. how Kenya's Electronic Church used media to persuade and maintain the loyalty of her audience in the post-liberalization period of 1990 to 2015. We set out to examine the rhetoric of the Electronic pulpit in a bid to establish how language and sensorial manipulations have been used to cajole what Augsburger (1990) referred to as a "para-church" entity. To do this, we will closely examine the use of media by the selected preachers.

The justification for restricting our discussion between 1990 and 2015 is that, 1990 saw the start of competition between KBC and the new entrant, KTN. It also immediately preceded the height of the clamour for multi-party politics in Kenya, leading to the repealing of Section 2 (a) of Kenya's Constitution in 1992, which had previously limited multi-party politics and the liberalization of the media. The year 2015, on the other hand, marks Kenya's radical shift from analogue broadcasting to the digital media platform.

We shall discuss the Electronic Church's use of media under two main categories: language and behaviour. Our discussion focuses on emergent themes and characteristics in select media texts, responses to questionnaires submitted to some key users of Christian media as well as comments from key informants who were selected because of their role in analyzing how the Church in Kenya has used electronic media.

Our study randomly sampled two broadcasts from each electronic preacher including Bishop Wilfred Lai, Bishop Pius Muiru, Pastor Allan Kiuna and Bishop Margaret Wanjiru on the use of television and Bishop David Oginde, Rev. Judy Mbugwa, and Bishop Joseph Likavo on their use of radio, between 1990 and 2015. In addition, two investigative journalists productions are examined and corroborated to provide some expert position on the study. The two are NTV's "Seeds of Sin" televised on 3rd November, 2013 and KTN's "The inside Story: Prayer Predators" televised on 2nd November, 2014. In order to probe the basis of these expert comments, some follow-up interviews were made with both journalists, for example Mr. Dennis Okari and Mr. John Allan Namu respectively.

Although our findings focus on the texts that were closely studied, in order to clearly elucidate the findings that emerge from our analysis, a comparison is occasionally made between the selected texts and corresponding preachers of the period and their texts, e.g. Apostle Harry Das, Pastor Michael Njoroge, Pastor Victor Kanyari, and Pastor Thomas Wahome, among others.

5.1 The Language of the Preacher

Let us begin our analysis by highlighting some important observations on how language is used in the electronic pulpit. We must indicate here that by "language" we include all communication aspects, such as symbols, icons, images, analogy, metaphors, word uses and word choices.

The language of Kenya's Electronic Church is quite different from that of recorded sermons before the liberalization of the airwaves around 1990. Before liberalization, the mediated sermons were mostly expository as seen in the short devotions aired by

KBC at the beginning and close of the broadcast hours as well as the sermons by preachers selected by NCKK to fill in the Sunday evening service slots. Whether on radio or television, the pastor simply read from the Bible and then picked key words in the passage and built his expository sermon around it.

The style was predictable. The voice was raised only for emphasis and there was hardly any shouting. The language was tightly formal and followed a written script as discussed in the last chapter. The broadcasts mostly consisted of an Intro, the Pastor's message and an Outro. This was the case with the early productions of Family Glory by Bishop Lai, and there was not much movement, hence the sermon was simply a homily or lecture in structure. Going on television which by nature required visual action, as well as the increasing competition caused by new entrants into Kenya's media, prompted more creativity and so the language began to change gradually to a lot more informal type and pastors began to employ editors and illustrators to make their media presentations catchy and interesting. Mr. Kimwere testified during our interview to the increased usage of "cut-aways" in the 1990's.

A new era of packaging sermons arrived with liberalization in the early 1990's. Pastors became performers and the style took on the element of dramatization. Consequently, language became more informal and preachers now oscillated freely between English and Kiswahili. Occasionally a third language was brought in, most commonly a vernacular tongue. The mixing of languages (code mixing and code switching) was for any purpose from emphasis to flamboyance and pomp and occasionally because the preacher could not get the appropriate expression in English. This trend is seen mostly in the broadcasts of Pastor Victor Kanyari and Bishop Pius Muiru. Bishop Thomas Wahome of Helicopter Church predominantly preaches in

Kiswahili but regularly interjects with Kikuyu, English and what he calls “kusema kwa ndimi” (speaking in tongues), which is a language not readily discernable by non-initiates.

In order to clearly understand the creativity and power of the language of Kenya’s Electronic Church, it is important to understand language as discourse. In any discourse, people use words in a particular way to mean specific things. They choose certain specific words and use them instead of others they could use for the same purpose. They use phrases to evoke specific desired effects in their listeners. Following liberalization, unique words and verbal expressions began to enter Kenya’s broadcast media and have formed part of a unique religious vocabulary that cannot be used in the same way outside the Electronic Church settings.

In my interview with Mr. Dennis Okari, I asked him if there were any specific words that he discovered in his investigative journalism on Kenya’s Electronic Church’s use of language. He singled out words and phrases that had to do with prosperity, e.g. “mbegu” (seed), “Sadaka” (offering) and “miujiza” (miracles). Other phrases included “the power”, “the number on your screen”, “God will richly bless you”, “Give and it shall be given back to you”, “the anointing”, “breakthrough” among others.

Mr. Okari draws this list from his investigative piece, “Seeds of Sin” televised in 2013 by NTV. As seen in Chapter 4, the pre-liberalization period sermons emphasized expository searches for truth surrounding the themes of salvation, holiness and purity, the return of Jesus Christ, as well as virtues such as love, forgiveness, honesty, etc. It could be deduced that this change of language was patterned after secular media whose entertainment-driven culture and language is about money, material things as

pushed by advertising, modeling and good looks, power, ecstatic and dramatic displays as seen in movies and many other audio-visual manifestations. The preachers compete in the same space and their language is shaped by the space. It is obvious that these are not accidental usages. The preachers have perfected this selection, among others, and use them for a specific end⁵⁹.

Examining the language of the Electronic Pulpit requires that we discourse beyond what is said by the preacher. As discourse analysts would put it, we must look for meaning in “language beyond the level of a sentence.” We must ask why a preacher chooses to use a word such as “seed” in the place of “money” and “plant” instead of “give” in his sermon. We must also ask ourselves why a word or phrase is repeated, why a voice is raised, why it is lowered or why there is a switch from one language to another within a sentence or within a particular statement of a point in the sermon.

Norman Fairclough (2003) has correctly observed that language is an irreducible part of social life and that a look at language can help us understand social discourse. This means that when people write or talk, they use language in a specific way, leading to the evocation of meanings and conclusions which play between them and those who read or listen to them. The way one uses language is what we are referring to as ‘discourse’ and so our examination of the language of the preachers and teachers selected for this study may be referred to as religious discourse. Such usage of language is meant to evoke religious meaning and results. Discourse Analysis involves the examination of texts and drawing meaning and conclusions from them.

⁵⁹Interview with **Mr. Dennis Okari**, (Informant EBI002/17/9/2016) conducted through Questionnaire sent via Email on Saturday 17th September 2016 1.09AM and responded to on Monday 19th September 2016 at 4:38pm. With additional responses requested by me through email on Tuesday 20th September 2016 at 12:54Am and responded to by Mr. Okari on Tuesday 20th September 2016 at 1:42pm.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, we have used the term “text” here the same way Fairclough (2003) uses it, in a generic sense to include broad categories such as shopping lists, newspaper articles, transcripts of spoken conversations and interviews, radio and television programmes as well as web pages and sites. It is in this light that we shall render here the TV, radio and online downloads of programmes by examined preachers as texts and therefore view language as the raw material of these texts.

5.2 Repetition and parallelism

First let us look at Repetition and Parallelism as used by the Electronic preachers. Repetition is saying something the same way using the same language more than once. Parallelism, is the use of components in a sentence or passage or even in speech that are grammatically the same or similar in their construction, sound, meaning or meter⁶⁰.

In his radio broadcast titled “In Pursuit of Vision” aired on Fish FM, Eldoret, on Saturday, 27th April, 2013, Bishop Joseph Likavo of the International Vision Centre extensively used repetition and parallelism in a programme that was edited from a sermon he had given at his Church.

From the usage, it is possible to deduce the intent of emphasis and memorability. He wants his audience at the Church not to forget what he is preaching and, by extension, his radio audience. We will cite part of the broadcast here to demonstrate our points.

“We are looking at the ten important things that you need to know as you pursue vision....ten important things that you need to put in your mind, in your spirit as you

⁶⁰<http://www.literarydevices.net/parallelism> Accessed on

pursue vision.” This is Parallelism. “...the first thing you need is to know the outcome. To know the outcome of the vision.” Here “to know the outcome” is repeated for emphasis and memorability.

“Speak your vision. Speak your vision. Or communicate your vision to people.” Here, the first part is repetitious, but that repetition, measured against the latter part of the speech makes this a parallelism. “Hey. We are in trouble here. Come. Come.”

“You need to speak the problem. Let me say that again. You need to speak the problem....you need to propose the solution...you need to propose the solution.....you need to state the reason why something must be done. You need to state the reason why something must be done.”

From this language usage we deduce that bishop Likavo’s sermon expression is heavily loaded with repetition and parallelism for a purpose. Given the frequency of this mode of expression in several of his sermons, repetition must not merely be read as emphasis and presentation style, but something the Bishop uses to ensure his listeners don’t forget what he considers the main points.

In this particular broadcast as well as several others that were not analyzed, the Bishop repeatedly uses the phrase “My dear listener”, thereby designating the programme as radio content. This is not pulpit language. Another phrase he employs is “In our last programme” and “Tune in next week at the same time” which comes at the end of the broadcasts. He cannot use such expression in his regular church service. Both live and recorded Christian broadcasts occasionally employ “secular” media language such as “Don’t touch that dial.” The equivalent of this by TV preachers are phrases such as “For all of you watching us” or “the number on your screen.”

Bishop Lai will say something and then ask the audience to repeat it. In “The Faith to Cross the River” broadcast (1999) he asks the congregation as well as those watching on television to repeat certain lines in the text he is reading. “Say these words after me,” he directs, “We are not of those who turn back to perdition! (The congregation repeats) Say it loudly, ‘we are not of those who draw back to perdition!’ (The congregation repeats); ‘But of those who believe to the saving of the soul’.

(Congregation repeats).

Towards the middle of the broadcast, Bishop Lai uses parallel language for emphasis and clarification. For instance, he says:

“Before the Son of God comes back, the world is going to become more and more evil. What seemed to shake people – in just a mention – will become an ordinary practice, that we will become so much used to sin – and to wrong things – that there will be no more conscience – of good and bad – of evil and good! In the days that we are living – evil and good – is not clear anymore. Because those that are supposed to advocate for good – they call good evil – they want to make everybody believe that – what is not right – what the bible calls sin – is just a weakness! – is just a human nature! – is just something you cannot avoid! – Is part of life – to be evil? The world that we are living in – is trying to convince us – that it is part of life – and we need to learn to bear with evil. ...” (The hyphens have been employed here to indicate the pauses Bishop Lai makes in between his phrases.)

Repetition and parallelism is also evident in the teaching of Bishop Margaret Wanjiru.

In her broadcast titled, “Destroying Marine Spirits” aired in January 2014, this is what we find:

“Experience has taught me through the years, that when you are breaking through to greater investments, when you are breaking through to things that are of value, I am not talking about clothes and shoes and hair,” At this point she is shouting with emphasis. “Experience has taught me ... that the Behemoth and Leviathan will come against your inheritance!” “We must prevail, we must overcome, and we must destroy the marine spirit! We must overcome the Behemoth and Levithine (she

mispronounces the latter but with confidence). The story of Job in chapter 40, 41 and 42 must be rewritten again in January 2014.”

The reference to Behemoth and Leviathan points to the monsters mentioned in the book of Job. Notice the repetition of “Experience has taught me.” Parallelism is evident in the statements, “when you are breaking through to greater investments” and “when you are breaking through to things that are of value.” It is also evident in the phrases, “We must prevail, we must overcome, and we must destroy the marine spirit!”

In his programme titled “2015 Prophetic Declarations”, Bishop Pius Muiro extensively utilizes Repetition both to capture the attention of his audience, but, clearly, also to make everyone tuned in to remember what he says. In one instance, right at the beginning of the broadcast, he also employs Repetition in a hypnotic sense by asking his congregation (and by extension his audience), “wave your hands in the air.” He says this twice in Kiswahili and eight times in English. Several times in their broadcasts, both Bishop Muiro as well as bishop Allan Kiuna ask their audiences to repeat something they have said or simply command, “Tell your neighbor ...”, and the congregation is often seen doing that in total obedience.

In his broadcast titled “Wherever you step is blessed”, Bishop Muiro employs Parallelism a number of times as a means of emphasizing the same thing and creating an impact on his audience.

No doubt, the Bishop is a master of parallelism. For instance, he tells his congregation, “ukichukua viatu vyako Na kuvitoa sakafuni Na kuviweka juu ya meza” (when you take your shoes and pick them from the floor and put them on the table). “Inamaanisha promotion yako inakuja! Kuna ‘elevation’ Ambayo inakuja! Kuna kuinuliwa ambako kunakuja hivi karibuni!” (It means there is your promotion that is coming! It means there is an elevation that is coming! There is a lifting up that is coming soon!)

This kind of usage gives the preacher an identity by distinguishing him from other preachers. Often, the more learned a preacher is the more knowledge of language usage he will apply in the sermon.

5.3 Vocal inflection and intonation

The way one inflects his or her voice and the tone that is used in speech is part of a language form known as Prosody. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, Prosody is the pattern of rhythm and sound in poetry. It is the rhythm and intonation, or the way a speaker's voice rises and falls when speaking. In Rhetoric, it is a phonetic term that uses meter, rhythm, tempo, pitch and loudness in a speech for conveying information about the meanings and structure of an utterance⁶¹.

For a more detailed study of Prosody in poetry, there is a classic book by Robert Beum and Karl Shapiro titled *The Prosody Handbook: A Guide to Poetic Form*.

The root of the term “Prosody” is the Greek word “prosidea” which refers to a song sung to music, tone or accent of a syllable in speech. (Wikipedia, sourced 22nd May, 2017, Prosody(In speech, Prosody is not so much concerned with consonants and

⁶¹<https://literarydevices.net/prosody/>

vowels, but with the wider communication techniques of the speaker as influenced by emotional predisposition. (Hirst & Di Cristo (1998).

Hirst and Di Cristo (1998) give us two main attributes of Prosody as used by a speaker in relation to the audience:

1. auditory measures, referring to the subjective impressions produced in the mind of the listener, and
2. Acoustic measures, referring to the physical properties of the sound wave that may be measured objectively.

They add that, although there is no agreed number of prosodic variables, these include:

1. the pitch of the voice, which varies between low and high;
2. length of sounds, which vary between short and long;
3. loudness or prominence, which varies between soft and loud, and,
4. Timbre, which refers to the quality of sound.

Many more variables in speech have been studied including voice quality and pausing, accenting and stressing of certain syllables, the above variables can be used in combination e.g. the use of low and high pitch to differentiate between regular statements and questions (Crystal & Quirk, 1964).

The dropping of the voice implies a statement has been made or concluded. Raising the voice implies a question is being asked. When it comes to intonation per se, some writers associate it with pitch while others insist that intonation is actually a combination of several prosodic variables.

The form of English intonation is often said to be based on three aspects:

1. The division of speech into units
2. The highlighting of particular words and syllables, and
3. The choice of pitch movement (e.g. the falling or rising of that pitch).

These are usually referred to as Tonality, Tonicity and Tone or the three Ts (Halliday, 1967; Wells, 2007).

Last but not least, stressing something or pausing in a conversation can communicate a lot. Besides, Prosodic expression is most dramatic in the use of different emotions to communicate. If someone is angry or sad, their emotional expression is bound to be different from someone who is happy or excited. Fear, disgust, etc., are bound to yield different expressions in someone's speech⁶².

With this background understanding, let us turn to the electronic pulpit and examine some examples of how vocal inflection and intonation have been employed. Kenya's electronic pulpit has a big variety of vocal stylistics. In general, most of the preachers who come on radio are not just charismatic but, almost as a general rule, they tend towards all being hoarse and loud. They utilize their voices quite dramatically and have mastered techniques that are used to convict and persuade the audience. In a study like this one, it is impossible to capture all the stylistic details or specifically exhaust all the critical discourse that need to be done on the texts. Suffice it, however, to cite a few examples here.

⁶²For a more comprehensive study on the relationship between emotion and prosody, see J. Pittham and K.R. Scherer (1993). "Vocal Expression and Communication of Emotion", *Handbook of Emotions*, New York, New York: Guilford Press, and Pell, M. D. (2005). "Prosody–face Interactions in Emotional Processing as Revealed by the Facial Affect Decision Task". *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*.29 (4): 193–215. Doi: 10.1007/s10919-005-7720-z.)

In a sermon by Bishop Dr. David Oginde, which the study examines again later in this chapter, there is an amazing utility of vocal inflection and intonation. The Bishop is a master of oratory and, although this was a radio and not a TV programme, his vocal inflection, imagery and use of imagination for the audience puts him in a unique class of Electronic preachers who can paint pictures with words. When we return to the bishop's style, the study makes a few observations on imagery, imagination and analogous expressions.

In this particular broadcast, the bishop is vividly describing the death of an Israelite called Uzza on the programme "Fountain of Life" I will make some comments in the text to show his use of voice:

"But then, (he drops his voice with surprise and gives it a breathy intonation) something unexpected happened. (He sounds shocked and terrified) The Bible says (He is emphatic and dramatic as he says these words) in verse number 9, (he is slowly raising his voice) that when they came to the threshing floor of Kidon, (he is raising his voice and crescendos upwards in tone almost with anticipation) Uzza reached out his hand to steady the Ark (he puts a vocal emphasis on the words 'reached' and 'steady') because (he speaks slowly with emphasis now) OXEN HAD STUMBLED! (He puts rhythm to the word 'stumbled' with a lot of emphasis) Now this is not unusual, when you are walking on uneven terrain, (he is half whispering again) you can stumble.... The Ark was going to stumble possibly because the cart was going to overturn. (His voice has gone back to surprise and shock and you can hear a tinge of pity in it) ... Verse 10 tells us the Lord's anger burned against Uzza (he lays emphasis on the word 'burned' and drops it again on the name Uzza, picking on surprise again) He struck him down, (he emphasizes 'struck' and 'down' with the accent stronger on

‘struck’ and with surprise on the latter) because he had put his hand on the Ark. So he died there before the Lord.”

One of the most dramatic expressions in this sermon comes when he begins to apply the story to himself and to the audience” “I want to tell you the first time I read this – as a new believer – many years ago! (His tone is half angry, half shocked and he is quite emotional now), I put down my Bible and said ‘God YOU ARE UNFAIR!’ THIS IS NOT RIGHT! (He is banging the table with his hand).” He then raises his voice in anger, “HERE IS A MAN WHO IS JUST TRYING TO HELP YOU FROM FALLING because the ark of God represented the presence of God! WHEN YOU ARE WALKING WITH SOMEBODY AND YOU SLIP, YOU ARE ABOUT TO FALL, AND SOMEBODY COMES TO HELP YOU SO THAT YOU DO NOT FALL, (he breathes and gets ready to shout real loud in anger) YYOOOU DDOONN’T TURN AROUND AND SLLAP THEM ON THE CHEEK!!! (HIS VOICE CRACKS OUT IN A YODELL ON THE WORD ‘CHEEK’ ...It is unfair!!! And I just put down my Bible and said (he laughs in shock, anger and a sense of resignation) I don’t understand you God!!! (He has a moaning voice on that last phrase.)”

Bishop Oginde is a great story-teller who uses his voice to make bible stories come alive. Before and during the gathering of information from my informants in Nairobi, I happened to attend several of Bishop Oginde’s sermons and noted that he uses his voice as the main centre of communication as well as minimally employing gestures because of the notes and his Bible which he stays on throughout the presentation. He does not move much across the stage as the case is with Televangelists. It is these sermons that are edited and prepared for radio audiences on Fish FM as well as Hope

FM. With the advent of Hope TV, just like Pastor Jon Corson who is equally featured on both stations, Bishop Oginde now comes on TV and the style is not much different.

One of the most dramatic manifestations of vocal inflections is on the Intro to the “Pursuit of Vision” broadcast by Bishop Likavo aired on Fish FM the morning of 9th October, 2010, titled “Vision, Mission and Purpose.” The male voice that introduces it is husky and dramatic. It is full of anticipation and intrigue, resembling a movie scene that has a character whispering something special or precious to someone else:

“Hallo everyone!” He raises his voice on “hallo” and drops it on “everyone!” When he goes on to say, “Welcome to the programme, ‘Pursuit of Vision’ with Bishop Joseph Likavo of IVC Church!” he increases the breathy intonation on the title of the programme. When he states the purpose of the programme, his voice is full of anticipation and you can hear a smile behind the breathy voice, almost as if suggesting that the purpose of the broadcast is a good and beneficial one. He employs emphasis on words at the end: “In pursuit of vision is designed to positively contribute towards the efforts you are making in your life to make sure that you accomplish the thing you believe you were designed to do.” He concludes with a friendly, less breathy tone: “And now, Bishop Joseph Likavo with ‘In Pursuit of Vision.’”

Turning our attention to someone else, in her programme titled “Coming out of Debts”, Bishop Margaret Wanjiru is very dramatic with the use of her voice. As she begins her message her voice is calm and relaxed but less than one minute later she begins to raise it. Towards the end of the sermon, she is shouting at the top of her

voice and it cracks on the emphatic words. Her consonants such as “p” and “t” push against the microphone levels and distort. The “p’s” literally burst through the shield and pop. “Do you realize that the shylocks’ money, TO PAY IT BACK ... YOU BORROW AND EVEN THE LITTLE YOU BORROW DISAPPEARS!?! ...BOTTOM LINE WE ARE GETTING OUT OF DEBT!”

Bishop Wanjiru can oscillate between seriousness and light-heartedness, whispering and shouting with ease. As a predominantly Soprano voice, she can go real low to the Tenor range as well as scream really high.

In her broadcast titled, “Destroying Marine Spirits” cited earlier, after the Intro there is an automatic move into a song medley whose entire recording is distorted, adding to the crackling voice of the Bishop who is singing and adlibbing at the top of her voice. When she gets to the medley section of “No Other Name but the Name of Jesus”, she is almost losing her voice as evident in the strain to her voice, leading her to lose some notes altogether. She takes on an extreme vibrato which rings above the background vocals and band. On the portion of “Cha Kutumaini Sina” (My hope is built on nothing less ...) she sounds tired, like she will faint. When she starts to speak, she begins softly by telling a story about a pastor friend praying for the Twin Glory Towers (her Church facility) and when she gets to the climax and people begin to clap, she says, “If you are going to clap, then clap like you’ve got some life in you!” At this point she sounds harsh and disappointed. She then moves into a shouting tone, “That is how we got our building!”

There is something quite special we can learn on intonation and vocal inflection from how the audio in the Intro to all her programmes is packaged. We note that the Intro

has a male voice that describes what the programme is about in typical advertising tone. The voice starts out in a calm, warm and hissy voice resembling that of a movie character that is about to break out with some new information, “Experience REAL WORD.” He says “experience” in a slightly deeper tone than “real word”, thus clearly distinguishing between the expected experience and what is to be experienced. He pauses for about three seconds between the phrases and then moves to the next phrase, “REAL PRAISE” by lifting his voice dramatically on the first word and then gliding onwards with a bit of accentuation and excitement. When he moves to the third phrase, “real miracles” he returns to his first tone with a touch of excitement and wonder before settling on the fourth phrase, “real love” on which he completely drops the voice in tone and slows down. He has a lot of passion in this phrase. He then raises his voice as he crescendos into excitement, “THE GLORY IS HERE WITH HONORABLE DOCTOR BISHOP MARGARET WANJIRU!”

Bishop Pius Muiro is the most dramatic of all the preachers analyzed with regard to vocal inflection and intonation. He possesses a vocal identity characterized by hoarseness, emphasis on just about every word and a very potent regular up and down movement of tone on every phrase. If you turned on the radio or closed your eyes as you scroll between channels you will still identify this great Electronic pulpit voice which ranges between tenor and baritone. Of crucial significance is the fact that he sounds the same in all his programmes and there is no soft or loud. He is always loud and strong. We also observed that there is no change in his vocal inflection whether he is doing the exposition of a Bible verse or announcing upcoming meetings and events of the Maximum Miracle Centre.

In his episode titled “Wherever You Step Is Blessed”, he makes the service notices right on the Intro packet: “Kilasiku ya Juma Pili! TukoNa ibada Embassy Cinema! (Every Sunday we have a service at Embassy Cinema!) Ibada ya kwanza ina anza saambili! Inamalizika saa tano! (The first service starts at 8:00 A.M.! It ends at 11:00 A.M.)” Kiswahili being a language that is built on strong consonants that must all be pronounced, followed by equally strong vowel sounds which, combined with the consonants make any extra vocal inflection quite dramatic.

When he says “Kilasiku ya Jumapili” he puts an accent on the word “siku” and suspends the word “Jumapili” in a tone that is half exclamation and half question.

The next announcement is bi-lingual, employing both Kiswahili and English. “Kilasiku ya Jumapili tuna ibada Ruaraka very powerful.” He mixes his strong intonation of Kiswahili with the putting an accent on the words “very powerful!” Sandwiched between musical interludes with throbbing beats, Bishop Muiro’s announcements are no different from those of commercial products and services on radio and television. Quite likely, his producers wish to produce this effect in order to capture the attention of the audience the same way the advertisement of Coca Cola or toothpaste would.

Bishop Muiro has something else in his style of preaching that mixes interestingly with his inflection. In between his phrases, he makes a growly, glottal sound behind a loud breathing through the nose and mouth. The effect is that of a seamless connection, making it hard for the listener/viewer to pick out punctuations. In “Wherever You Step Is Blessed” he directs his audience to pick a favourite pair of shoes and prepare for its anointing which in turn would imply that if the

listener/viewer wears these shoes, wherever he or she goes in they would be blessed. Every phrase in this description of the process of being blessed is punctuated by this sound. It is a mysterious sound whose import is only a matter of conjecture. Perhaps it helps him to formulate the next phrase, hence serving as a brain stimulus to take in more air and process his thinking process to maintain the seamlessness. Perhaps it is a conscious effort to glue the audience to the message without giving any interlude, hence serving as a catalyst to attention. Perhaps it is really a stamina-generator that gives him the dynamism he needs for every new phrase. More study on the phenomenon itself could yield some interesting results.

Right here, though, we must call on Baudrillard's hyper-reality in our interest to understand who the real Muiru is. Is it the Muiru of the broadcast, all sweaty, loud and emphatic in his speech, or is it the Muiru who sits at a dining table at home and asks for salt and pepper for his beef stew? We can raise the question for Bishop Oginge, Bishop Allan Kiuna, Rev. Judy Mbugwa or anybody else who participates in multiple speech acts. We can ask it of lawyers wanting to know who the real attorney is, of news anchors, of farmers and Matatu drivers. How do we communicate at home, and how is that different from our vocations? Certainly, and there is no better conclusion than that any role we play demands that we become actors who must do certain things or inflect our voices to meet the performatory requirements of these roles. We can conclude here that Bishop Muiru is doing in these broadcasts what we all do every day. A mother inflects her voice and puts on a childish tone when communicating with her infant baby. A father will equally shock peers by making funny sounds to catch the attention of his toddler son. It all changes when the same mother gets to the office as a company secretary or the father gets to Church and starts to preach. Shakespeare is vindicated again and again: We are all players on a stage!

Most significant, though, is the fact that media gives the pastors the space, technology and convenience to do through radio and television what they cannot do at home or at their physical places of worship. The pastors use media to paint a new identity. This is the identity the audience relates with and responds to. Media gives them a new tonality. It presents them as authoritative masters of communication and the audacity to play the role of information masters so that the audience looks to them. Together with the regular usage of tone and gestures, they buttress their communication with visual aids that emphasize the points of their sermons.

This leads us to our next important point, i.e. how the electronic pulpit employs imagery, imagination and analogy.

5.4 Imagery, analogy, symbols and icons

Imagery is the “process by which mental sensory information is processed and represented in working memory. ... A form of cognitive processing that does not utilize verbal or semantic means (Alesandrini, 1982). From the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, we learn that while both imagery and imagination are important in daily communication, they are best understood if broken into three analytical components:

1. The representational nature of mental images (popularly known as the imagery debate);
2. The link between images and imagination (heavily challenged in the 20th century by Behaviourism), and
3. The importance of imagination as a great epistemological guide to possibility.

Our study is not interested in the second component or its theoretical clashes with Behaviourism. We are interested in how the Electronic church utilizes imagery to cajole the audience that consumes its programmes. We are interested in the first and third components above. The first component helps us to see the relationship between what preachers create in their minds, which is transported into words which, in turn are heard by the audience. The audience, in turn, responds to these formulations by creating their own images of the original images from the preachers. The same can be said of mental pictures created by the preachers through words, sounds or symbols and which are transferred in the same way as words to the audience, who in turn form their own pictures. The result is an endless debate as to the meaning and application of these images. The media, once again, give preachers the agency to exercise the application of these images in interesting ways, mostly patterned after their application in secular media.

Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) give a good example of how discourse about a phenomenon such as a flood disaster can end up with interpretations and discussion from diverse contexts. With a base in Structuralist and Post-Structuralist linguistic philosophy, they point out that our access to reality is always through language.

To quote them:

With language, we create representations of reality that are never mere reflections of a pre-existing reality but contribute to constructing reality. That does not mean that reality itself does not exist. Meanings and representations are real. Physical objects also exist, but they only gain meaning through discourse. (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002:8).

A flood phenomenon as an image, for example, is understood differently by people, depending on what social reality they live under. When a preacher such as Prophet Dr. David Owuor goes on public radio and television as he did several times between 2005 and 2007 to warn about impending flood catastrophes if people did not repent

enough to avert God's wrath, his imagery of the flood was consumed and interpreted differently by different people. His followers indeed saw an impending Armageddon just about to be visited on people. Kenya's Meteorological department read his message on purely scientific terms. All they cared for was, if real, would it be a Tsunami, Elnino or Lanina situation? They read and approach the phenomenon from an information perspective. Politicians and city planners would focus on the disaster purely on humanitarian grounds with aspects such as evacuation as more important than, say, Armageddon.

Imagery and imagination come to us packaged in many different ways, but two are important:

1. Pictorial representation, and
2. Descriptive representation.

In pictorial representation, a picture such as that of Mount Kenya can be shown to the audience on the screen. In Descriptive Representation, a description is given to the audience in words such as, "On the Eastern side of Nairobi, about one hundred miles away, there is a tall thing called Mount Kenya. This thing stands at a huge elevation of seventeen thousand feet and is surrounded by a dense amount of green vegetation which is home to many animal and bird species."

In the same way, a TV preacher can use pictures of cities, villages or even abstractly-constructed realities and use them as illustrations that persuade the audience in a particular way. The editors of Bishop Muiro's programmes, for instance, are very meticulous in following every statement he makes with a visual representation that helps to drive the message home. For example, when he talks about death, the picture of a grave is put on the screen by the editors. When he talks about shoes, the picture

of shoes is shown. In the same way, radio preachers could paint pictures with words of their own or images taken from the bible.

Let us cite, in part, a sermon by Bishop Dr. David Oginde titled “When the Ox Stumbles,” which aired on Fish FM on Monday, 6th August, 2007, from 7:30 to 8:00 P.M. Oginde centres his sermon on King David leading Israel in the bringing of the Ark of the Covenant back to Israel from Philistia. The Ark is carried on a brand-new cart, driven by oxen. The oxen stumble and the Ark nearly falls. A man called Uzza reaches out to hold the ark to prevent it from falling and is struck dead by God as a warning that only the priests were allowed to handle the Ark. Part of Oginde’s broadcast is full of imagery, imaginative language and analogy. We quote him here verbatim:

“David, the bible tells us, bought a brand-new cart. In our day we could say a 4-wheel, double-cabin Pickup! To carry the Ark of God. Because I am sure in his mind he did not want to carry the Ark of God on a used cart, just in case that cart might have carried something that would defile the ark of God. And so he got a brand-new cart in which he was going to carry the Ark of God. AND NOW TO GO AND GET THE ARK OF GOD (he is shouting with excitement) there was a worship team! ... The Bible says (he is whispering at this point with excitement) he put together a worship team! A celebrating team! Those of you who have gone to pick brides, if you thought you knew how to sing, this was something! They had tambourines, they had cymbals, they had trumpets, they had everything; they were going to worship God as they brought the Ark of God into Jerusalem. This was going to be a great celebration!” Bringing a bride is nothing to compare with bringing God home!!! (He is half shouting, half smiling!) ... Verse eight tells us that David and his people were

celebrating before God with all their might. With songs, with harps, with lyres and with tambourines, with cymbals and with trumpets; you only need to use your imagination to see what a great day that was!”

Notice that Bishop Oginde actually directly asks his listeners to use their imagination and get the picture of how great this day of celebration was. He uses imagery and imagination concurrently throughout the cited section of the sermon and paints pictures with his words. When describing the cart that carried the Ark, he uses phrases such as “brand-new” and “used” to contrast the cart David used with the kind he did not use. He regularly employs pauses, accents and stresses to get his message across. Notably, he tends to use pauses where he is about to mention something he considers important and, in many cases, he will accent his words after the pause and raise his volume.

The Bishop also uses analogy to communicate his message when he says, “He put together a worship team! A celebrating team! Those of you who have gone to pick brides, if you thought you knew how to sing, this was something! They had tambourines, they had cymbals, they had trumpets, they had everything; they were going to worship God as they brought the Ark of God into Jerusalem.” Notice that he compares Israel’s worship and celebration with the jubilation that takes place when African weddings occur and especially the singing, dancing, ululation, and other forms of cheering.

We need to observe here that, although this same style of imagery and imagination is employed at regular sanctuaries, the fact that they are employed in radio broadcasts is unique. The listener is not at the meeting. He is not able to see the preacher to enjoy

the benefit of gestures and facial expressions. He depends entirely on that imagery. The better a preacher is at using these modes, the more attention he will get from the audience. In fact, this is one reason why Bishop Oginde's programmes are very popular.

It may be fitting to observe here that, one reason why Jesus is considered an exceptional teacher, even by his critics, is that he used a lot of parables and imagery to communicate his message, making his sermons and statements quite memorable. Rev. Judy Mbugua of Homecare Fellowship uses an interesting analogy to communicate the message that certain small things can negatively affect the lives of Christians and that they have got to deal with them. In a radio broadcast titled "Families under God" aired on Fish FM on Sunday morning, 12th July, 2015 from 6:30 to 7:00 A.M., (which also airs on Hope FM and Family TV), Rev. Mbugua spoke on the topic of "Little Foxes." She lifts this analogy from Song of Songs 2:15 which says, "Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom."

It is easy to see why this Scriptural analogy is attractive to Rev. Mbugua. The biblical passage itself is loaded with compound analogy. The Song of Songs as a book is a celebration of love between a man and his woman. This romantic relationship is in itself considered a celebration of the relationship between God and the nation of Israel. The church carries this analogy beyond this interpretation and applies it to the relationship between Jesus who is viewed in the New Testament as the Groom and His Church as Bride. Both John Wesley's and Matthew Henry's Commentaries on this Scripture promote this understanding and, therefore, see the "little foxes" as those things that spoil relationships between man and man as well as man and God. The

foxes are described as “little” or “small”, giving away the focus as being on tiny rather than large concerns. The other part of the compound analogy is the image of the vineyard which comes to us in plural in this passage implying that the application is universal. Related to this is the descriptive phrase “in bloom” which locks the application to “ripeness”, “readiness”, or “mature” among other applications. There is extended meaning in the injunction which seems to be directed at other people, helpers or agents of support”, as well as the term “ruin” or “spoil” which gives away the reason for the injunction.

That Rev. Mbugua is using this application is seen by what she says at the beginning of the broadcast: “...in homes and in families it is not the major things that disrupt families. It is the small things, and so as you think about it and as I invite you and update you on what we are doing in Homecare, I know that God is going to bless you even as you think about the small things in your life that may be causing a major, major problem. ... So let us look at the little fox that I would like us to share about today, and that is the little fox called misunderstanding. Someone has said that to be great is to be misunderstood. To be misunderstood means to fail to understand correctly. ... Usually caused by miscommunication. ...”

The symbol of the fox, a cunning animal, is transported into behaviour to mean misunderstanding in a family setting. This is skillful and is intended to help the listener remember and effectively apply what is taught.

In a different broadcast aired on the morning of 2nd August, 2015 on Fish FM, but several weeks back on Hope FM, in a programme titled, “Keep Your Fire Burning”, Rev. Mbugua employed another powerful analogy. In the programme she broke down

the analogy using a positive symbol and a negative one. Positively, she advised that couples must never let their fire of love to go out and must do everything to remove the pains that could make that fire go out. Negatively, she conjures the image of ashes, which must be removed from a marriage to keep the relational fire burning. She observed:

“Some of us have been married for a long time. ... Someone said ‘when it is old, get a new thing; but not with marriage.’ ... There is a famous advert, ‘if pain persists, see a doctor.’ You really need to look at your marriage and in the areas where pain may still be persisting, see a doctor ... in this case a heavenly doctor who, in the first place, gave you that woman or that man.” And I want to say that the fire of love, no matter how long you have been married, should be kept burning.”

Notice how she employs compound images in the analogy. She refers to pain, medicine and doctors to symbolize the terrible things that may occur in the family, heavenly counsel and God who heals marriages. In the family, Rev. Mbugua takes this analogy out of Leviticus chapter 6, illustrating how the priests in the book of Leviticus needed to remove the ashes from the altar every morning and argues that, in the same way, couples must remove ashes from their relationships. She says that with time, ashes could build up until there is no room for any more firewood.

“So, you need to keep removing the ashes, otherwise the fire will go out. In the same way, if we do not remove the ashes – those seemingly small things – with time they become big things; things like anger in the family. ... No wonder in the newspapers we see people; couples which were in love killing each other.”

Coming through radio, these are powerful forms of communication in themselves. What happens on television is that these analogies are then shown on screen through representative images which form more concrete pictures in the mind of the viewer, leading to an even more effective way of keeping the message in the minds of the audience. The electronic church understands the power of screen images and so they

push their usages to the limits to get across to the audience. Some preachers are better than others at this, depending on the technology available to them.

Bishop Lai's 1999 broadcast referred to earlier was titled "The faith to cross the river." Although he reads from Revelation 22 which talks about the river of "pure water, clear as crystal", Hebrews 10 and a sequel application in Ezekiel 47, he applies this picture of the river to the life of the Christian and what is happening in the world today. He lays emphasis on the tree of life that is growing by the river and makes some interesting application regarding these leaves.

He asks his congregation (and by extension the watching audience) to underline in their Bibles, "and the leaves of the tree of life were for the healing of the nations." And "the time is at hand" in verse 10.

In Bishop Allan Kiuna's broadcast titled "Pathway To Greatness" televised on 3rd February, 2013 on KTN,⁶³ not only are we shown the symbol of a path at the beginning of the programme, but, towards the end of the programme he uses an interesting analogy to tell his congregation that nobody can derail them from their destiny and purpose. He says, "your height is right for your purpose... there's no contraception that would have kept you away because you had a purpose"

Contraception refers to gynecological services and agents such as birth control pills, condoms, intra-uterine devices, injections etc... which prevent conception from taking place. This word is employed to accentuate the impact of his point to the effect that nobody is without purpose.

⁶³ uploaded on YouTube 5th Feb., 2013

Let us argue here that we can do very little about changing how different people discourse about images that come to them on radio or television, but that, through language, a person can paint pictures that cajole an audience to do something a particular way. They might even suggest a line of action in view of the image they have made, but it is up to the individual person in the audience to determine the extent of that response.

Language, then, is not merely a channel through which information about underlying mental states and behaviour or facts about the world are communicated. On the contrary, language is a 'machine' that generates, and as a result constitutes, the social world. This also extends to the constitution of social identities and social relations. It means that *changes* in discourse are a means to changing how people perceive social reality.

One of the greatest users of imagery was William Shakespeare. In his *First Folio*, he compares man's life in the world to a stage where different people act out the scenes of life. He says,

“All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts.”

Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet* regularly uses the images of the stars and planets to evoke the aspect of the supernatural powers that watch over all the scenes of the actors. Many African writers heavily employ imagery and analogy to communicate. The titles of their books tell it all: *The River Between* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o,

Blossoms of Savanna by Henry Ole Kulet, Meja Mwangi's *Going Down River Road*, *In the Fog of the Season's End* by Alex Laguma, *The Flood* by John Ruganda, Ng'ang'a Mbugua's *Different Colours*, among others.

Kenya's political scene is equally awash with imagery that uses words in uncommon ways. Corruption seems to have the most words that describe malpractice, ranging from "Kupewa Ugali" (to be given Ugali, Kenya's staple food) to "kunywa chai" (to drink tea) to such terminology as the "Chicken Gate Scandal" which refers to the stealing of billions of shillings intended for the procurement of voter equipment in 2013.

Kenya's Electronic church regularly uses the language of imagery and analogy to clarify assertions or illustrate the points of their sermons. As seen earlier, one of Allan Kiuna's broadcasts is titled "Pathway to Greatness." The word "pathway" is a strong image that gives the audience the idea of walking to their destiny of greatness.

5.5 Extensive use of symbolism and iconography

The word *symbol* comes from the Greek word *symbolon*, which means 'contract', 'token' or 'insignia'. It is a means of rendering big or complex ideas by use of representation. For instance, the Cross symbolizes the suffering and death of Jesus Christ and the dove as well as oil represent the Holy Spirit.⁶⁴

The following Table depicts the commonest symbols of the Christian Church:

⁶⁴ Encyclopedia Britannica Online Edition, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/religious+symbolism>

SYMBOL	MEANING
THE ANCHOR	HOPE
THE APPLE	SIN
CEDARS	CHRIST
THE CHALICE	COMMUNION
CIRCLE	ETERNITY
CROWN	AUTHORITY OF CHRIST
DAISY	HUMANITY OF CHRIST
DOLPHIN	RESURRECTION
DOVE	HOLY SPIRIT/PEACE
EAGLE	RESURRECTION/ASCENSION OF CHRIST
EASTER EGGS	FERTILITY/NEW BEGINNING
ALL-SEEING EYE	OMNISCIENCE/OMNIPRESENCE.
FISH	CHRISTIAN FAITH
LILY	LOYALTY/TRINITY
PELICAN	CRUCIFIXION
THE PHOENIX	RESURRECTION
PLUMB LINE	JUDGEMENT
POMEGRANATE	UNIVERSAL CHURCH
POPPY	SLEEP OF DEATH
ROOSTER	INFIDELITY/VIGILANCE
SCALES	FINAL JUDGEMENT
SHAMROCK	TRINITY
SHELL	BAPTISM WATER/PILGRIMAGE
SHIP	CHURCH
SKULL	DEATH
STAG	PURITY/DEVOTION/SAFETY OF GOD

TRIANGLE	TRINITY
PEACOCK	IMMORTALITY.
PALM BRANCHES	VICTORY
OX	STRENGTH/SERVICE
OAK	STEADFASTNESS
OIL	CONSECRATION
LAMB	CHRIST
HALO	HOLINESS/TRINITY
SCROLL	OLD TESTAMENT
CROSS	PASSION OF CHRIST

Encyclopedia Britannica defines Christian iconography as “a representation of sacred personages or events in mural painting, mosaic, or wood.” Following the “iconoclastic controversy” of the 8th and 9th centuries which sought to settle the question as to whether God could be represented in symbols and icons in view of the First, Second and Third commandments, the Eastern Orthodox Church ruled that it was not sacrilegious to use symbols and icons in worship and instruction because God had chosen to represent Himself physically in Christ through the incarnation. This explains why the bulk of the Church’s symbols are found in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1913, Volume 7) defines Christian Iconography as “the science of the description, history, and interpretation of the traditional representations of God, the saints, and other sacred subjects in art.” The Encyclopedia further states that during the early centuries, the walls of the catacombs were decorated with paintings and mosaics. In later times, churches put on their walls, ceilings, windows, altars, furniture, books and liturgical vessels, scenes from the Old and the New

Testaments and from the lives, legends and mythologies of the saints. These have largely been employed for instruction, worship and edification.

According to *Encyclopedia Britannica* cited earlier, in the classical Byzantine and Orthodox tradition, iconography is not a realistic but a symbolical art, its function being to express in “line and colour” the theological teaching of the church. Hence, according to this view, icons have a special liturgical function and are used for instruction and veneration as well as serving as a medium of instruction for the uneducated faithful’s.

However, the use of icons to instruct the uneducated can be challenged by their popularity and unreserved usage even by congregations that are dominated by highly educated faithful’s, past and present. This implies that symbols and icons are not just a complete language of communication, but serve a purpose that mere oration cannot satisfy. Besides, discourse on individual words as used in language will show how language itself evokes a great amount of symbolism.

Ferdinand De Saussure (1960) illustrated this by showing us how words come to us as “signs”, possessing “form” and “content” and that the meaning of a sign gains value by being different from other signs. This point is important because symbols, icons and words have been used throughout Church history dictated by convention. Water, for instance, has always been used by the Church in baptism to symbolize the cleansing of sin and resurrection from the dead. The Electronic Church, however, as used by the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God led by Bishop Marcelo and the Salvation Healing Church of Pastor Victor Kanyari, water is used as a symbol of blessing as well as deliverance from oppression into a life of prosperity.

Because of the commercialization of broadcasting in Kenya around 1990, not only did preachers begin to utilize secular packaging methods for their sermons, but symbolic language took centre stage. Words such as “planting seed” moved from the agricultural realm to the financial realm and then to the spiritual realm, courtesy of the Electronic church which used the words repeatedly in their radio and television programmes.

Kenya’s Electronic church has used symbols and icons in diverse ways to communicate her message. In most cases, symbols and icons are used to supplement intended meanings in a sermon. For instance, Bishop Allan Kiuna in his broadcast titled “Pathway to Greatness” superimposes the picture of a road on the Intro section to emphasize direction to greatness. This appears immediately the Bishop begins to speak. Notably, the sermon itself is a recording at the Church, but the superimposition of the symbol of the road is done at the editing stage at the studio. In two other broadcasts, “Operating the Promises of God” and “Breaking Generational Cycles”, he includes the symbol of a potter modeling clay, perhaps to give us the idea of formation through teaching.

Bishop Pius Muiro is one of the preachers that has employed symbolism and iconography extensively in his broadcasts. From the first broadcasts of the early 1990’s to the present, each episode is introduced by flashing rays and the symbol of the sun bursting through a window. His broadcast is titled “Kuna Nuru Gizani” (there is light in the darkness), making this symbolism extremely relevant to the programme title as well as the intended theme of shining God’s light into a dark world that needs His intervention. .

A closer look at his 31st December 2014 broadcast on KBC titled “2015 Prophetic Declarations” will further demonstrate how extensively Kenya’s Electronic preachers have used symbols and icons in general. Let us cite below what happens in this particular episode, taken from my summary of the programme:

“As the sound goes, the name Maximum Miracle Centre appears with some ray graphics in different light colours, peach, sky blue. ‘MMC presents Light in Darkness.’ Different clips of Bishop Muiru preaching on different occasions also appear. There’s one that shows him in three different sermons with a US flag joining them in graphic form. As the first sound fades away welcoming the second youthful beats, there’s a gift box, with a ribbon displayed with stars all over to signify the festive season. There are words ‘Bishop Pius and Rev Lucy Muiru and the entire Maximum Miracle Center wishes you a Happy New Year And A Prosperous 2015.’”

The sound at the beginning of the broadcast is significant. It is the recording of bursts of thunder, sourced from an audio recording of a song by Douglas Jiveti in 1990 titled “Yesu Aliyesulubiwa” (the Crucified Jesus) whose audio effects perfectly fit Bishop Muiru’s packaging. The sound of thunder at the beginning of this song in itself symbolizes destruction and gloom. Given that Bishop Muiru uses the same audio Intro for his radio broadcasts, it is clear that the Bishop is meticulous in his selection of audio-visual symbols and desires the same effect for his radio and television audiences. The flashing rays and graphics against that audio background are extremely potent in getting his message to the audience.⁶⁵

His usage of the U.S. flag is a powerful symbol that catapults him to a world stage. It is clear Bishop Muiru wants the audience to know that his ministry reach goes beyond Kenya and that he has the mandate to burst those rays of light into a darkness that covers the entire world.

⁶⁵ I was the producer of Douglas Jiveti’s song back in 1990 at the studios of Kenya Baptist Media, Thika Road, Nairobi. I sourced these thunder sounds from vinyl records containing sound effects compiled and released by BBC.

His use of the gift box with ribbon and stars is important in that it contextualizes the period of his sermon, cutting between Christmas and Boxing Day which are still in the minds of the audience and a focus on the coming New Year which, in itself, is often viewed by the Church as a gift. Let us look at the account again:

As the Bishop starts speaking, the writings fade away and we see people on stage behind the Bishop waving as he orders them to. The rest of the church is also waving. As he repeats, so does the waving intensify, 'Ushering Year 2015 At MMC Embassy Cinema' are also seen at the bottom of the screen amidst the waving. After that, the church is now calm and Bishop Muiro is at the altar. As he starts counting the remaining seconds to the New Year, the church jumps at the mention of each second. When he announces the last second, they all jump in jubilation, hands waving while others are clapping. A number of people are seen running up and down on the pulpit jumping happily. Others are hugging each other and holding hands. There's also a white smoke on the pulpit. After the joyous movement, a lady musician appears on the pulpit singing and dancing happily accompanied by some young boys and girls probably teenagers as dancers. The lady sings passionately using hand gestures and dances vigorously.

Right here the broadcast introduces us to the symbol of smoke. In the Bible, Smoke, and its relative, fire, often symbolizes the presence of God. Isaiah chapter 6 utilizes these symbols when God appears to the prophet in the temple.

In the next section of the broadcast, we have multiple symbols and icons used to emphasize several points. It is obvious that these are added by the editors of Melmax Studios in order to accentuate the message.

My Assistant records later in the transcript:

When the Bishop starts preaching, it seems like a different day because it's on yet a different stage with a different suit. Words 'Bishop Muiro, Maximum Miracle Centre' appear as he preaches. He squints at times and opens eyes wide as he talks (facial expression). He also points at the camera. As he mentions Mark 8:22-24 the words appear on the screen in whole. Words like righteousness, tithe and offering, appear as he mentions them. When he mentions prayer, two palms are seen together as a sign of prayer. As he continues preaching, the words of Mark 8: 23-25 continue appearing on the screen.

When he mentions *kubarikiwa*, the word blessed appears on the screen as well as a picture of a vehicle after it's been mentioned. Another vehicle, a range

rover also appears after the first smaller car. Words like, healed, courtship, anoint, preach, business appear. A picture of a couple on the wedding day also comes after the word courtship.

‘Healing, anointing, and when he mentions the word *kujenga* a photo of a storeyed building under construction appears.

When he says my brother, my sister, he maintains eye contact with the camera.

Some tall buildings and infrastructure appears when he mentions *mjini* while grass thatched houses are shown when he says *mashambani*. A graveyard is seen with white crosses, but still the sign X in red appears on it when he talks about no more deaths in 2015, money, shows notes in bunches, *dhambi*, the word sin appears.

Restored, attention, focus year 2015, recovery, healing, appears too. Two beautiful Caucasian little girls are seen on the screen when he says *watoto wako*.

1 John 4: comes to the screen when he says greater is he...

Words like relationship, healing, ministry, witchcraft, blood pressure, fasting offering, cleanse, praise, worship, job spouse, favor, enemies, rent, sanctify, blessings, miracles, promises, preacher, doctor, tutor, lecturer, lawyer, politician appear as he mentions them. As he ushers in the prayer session, he is sweating profusely as it’s evident from the shining face.

All this time he’s preaching, his name and church name appear and reappear at the bottom of the screen; ‘Bishop Pius Muiro, Maximum Miracle Centre’.

The visual effect of palms held together, cars and houses are used regularly in his other broadcasts. It is obvious that his Church, Maximum Miracle Centre, puts a high premium on prosperity and hence the symbol of cars and houses. The icon of a grave in prosperity preaching symbolizes death and loss. The superimposition of the letter “X” on the grave symbol is used by his editors creatively to relay secondary meaning, i.e. the symbolized death is cancelled. Notice that he contextualizes the grave in the village surrounded by mud huts, a sign of poverty and loss. This contrasts with the cars and huge buildings of the city. He uses this to distinguish such loss from the success spoken about in his sermon. Bundles of money are a potent symbol of the desired affluence and prosperity and the wedding couple communicates strongly the idea of relationships. Bishop Muiro’s editors are extremely talented in compiling the

broadcasts by matching what the bishop says with the desired visual effects. Right here, it is clear that the mediatization of a sermon is more effective in cajoling the attention and response of the audience than mediated sermons. .

5.6 The identity and behaviour of Kenya's electronic church preachers

Besides our examination of the Electronic pulpit from the aspect of language, as seen earlier, there is the element of behaviour, which informs the manifestation of mediatized Christianity as well as the thinking of the preacher, which in turn informs the epistemological foundations of his sermon, his perceptions and acquaintance with the socio-political environment in which he operates. All these reveal the real identity of Kenya's electronic preacher. This discussion helps to bring out the person the audience relates to, beyond his words.

The aspect of behavior

We observe that although our survey of the thematic elements of the selected preachers is bound to conjure some pertinent concerns that tend towards the ethical, our analysis of the texts will focus on the descriptive rather than the prescriptive aspects of the preachers' conduct. Our interest remains how the electronic Church uses the media and not whether it should or should not use them in a particular way. We are equally interested in how media give the preachers the agency to manifest their religion on radio and television, but in this study we are not interested in the rightness or wrongness of that usage. Although such ethical concerns are present everywhere in our study and may be highlighted every so often, our spotlight remains focused on media usage.

In his investigative piece titled “Seeds of Sin” which was aired on NTV on 3rd November, 2013, Mr. Dennis Okari depicts the bulk of Kenya’s electronic church as being bent towards prosperity preaching, dwelling on the themes of good health, money and material success. Mr. Okari gives us his conclusion regarding the ethical standing of the electronic pulpit right at the opening of his investigative programme, but proceeds to show us some classic clips displaying exactly how real mediatization works⁶⁶:

“You are about to visit a world where, in the name of God the Almighty, greed and deception has ruined the lives of many,” he begins. This is the wickedness perpetuated by men and women plying their trade using otherwise good titles like ‘Bishop’ and ‘Apostle’ who prey on the earth’s most vulnerable.

Mr. Okari then proceeds to unveil some interesting things regarding the behaviour of preachers from Kenya’s electronic pulpit. We will outline the different aspects of this behaviour using his broadcast of 3rd November, 2013 on NTV as well as the investigative broadcast, “The Inside Story: Prayer Predators” by John Allan Namu and Mohamed Ali⁶⁷.

5.6.1 Obsession with power and miracle displays

These are achieved mainly through exorcism and other deliverance feats. As it have been indicated, Kenya’s electronic pulpit has actors who will do anything to show that

⁶⁶Seeds of Sin by Dennis Okari NTV Investigates <http://www.nation.co.ke/video/1951480-2508806-kjvs83z/index.html> Video downloaded on

⁶⁷Namu, J.A. and Ali, M.: (Nov. 2, 2014) *The Inside Story: Prayer Predators*, Nairobi, KTN. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8vhmb_bX1E

they have power, influence, anointing and popularity. These are usually a ticket to financial solicitation from unsuspecting victims.

Kenya's electronic pulpit is awash with numerous miraculous displays of how people can be freed from evil spirits, the power of witchcraft and spells, curses, stubborn habits, diseases and other bondages. Testimonies abound on several broadcasts recounting how the pastor, apostle or bishop prayed for people or performed a particular ritual that released these people from such bondage. At the beginning of Mr. Okari's expose there is a clip of a pastor shouting with a hoarse voice in an ecstatic ritual of exorcising witchcraft from a woman who is held on the floor by some men. My research Assistant, Alvin Jiveti describes:

A woman is being restrained by at least four men as she shakes uncontrollably. Her hands and legs have been secured by a total of three people; two men hold each of her legs as one holds her hands. Her head remains moving from side to side. A pastor's voice is heard commanding for removal of witchcraft as the woman, who appears not to be in control of herself, continues to struggle to free herself. The pastor shouts, "Toa uchawi! Toa! Iko wapi? Toa uchawi!" (Remove the witchcraft! Remove it! Where is it? Remove the witchcraft!).

In a different clip about seven minutes into the Expose, Pastor Kanyari's behaviour at the Electronic pulpit is shown. He is seen conducting what has been described by the Pentecostal Churches as "deliverance." My assistant describes the visual details again:

At a pulpit in church, around ten, more or less, men and women lie on the floor wriggling and crawling about, screaming and screeching. A group of other men and women walk among the lying people, attending to them. One of the men, that is the pastor, who is wearing a lime colored trouser and white shirt, walks with a bottle of water as he pours it randomly on the people on the floor commanding them to walk like snakes. The woman from the first scene is still in hysterics and even happens to be hoisted upwards in the air still in efforts to free herself. The other women are then seen seated on the floor against the wall looking confused as though they are waiting to be serviced in one way or another. The first woman now seated on the floor is loose from her restrainers as the same pastor standing at her backside has his hands around

her cheeks. She waves her hands about and frees herself from the pastor's grip and she is restrained again as it was earlier.

The theatrical displays in the above clips not only depict well-rehearsed performances, but also the intention to mesmerize the audience with these feats of power manifestations. The lead character in the entire performance is the Pastor who issues commands and directives and literally knows in his mind how the script will go. The more the drama, it is believed, the more the power and, as seen earlier, the more the authentication of the Pastor. The Pastor is the "replica of the divine" and his use of radio or television to show the power of God brings God closer to the people. The Pastor has something the people in his congregation and the audience do not have, i.e. 'a word or power from God', and, it would seem inevitable to conclude that media technology avails this power to them. The mediatized pulpit is, therefore, the meeting point of Church and technology, but also the bringing together of God, the preacher and the audience.

Right here, Marshall McLuhan (1964) is vindicated one more time. The medium is the message. The technologies and form of the media embed themselves in the message so much so that these technologies influence the way the sermons and miracles are perceived. When exorcism and deliverance take place on the screen, therefore, the audience watching cannot separate them from the radio or TV that provide the agency of their being seen as miracles. Here, McLuhan is justified again in describing media as "the extensions of man." In this Expose, we see the media as bringing Kanyari's exorcism and deliverance to the audience. The way he does it all is different from Bishop Allan Kiuna and Bishop Pius Muiro, even though they all use the same technology. While Muiro employs a lot of imagery, symbolism and titling,

Kanyari literally role-plays his communication of power. His character comes out as being distinct from the other preachers.

Returning to our clips, not all the intended import of the miracles of exorcism and deliverance get across successfully. In the effort to communicate power manifestation via media, it is hard to separate the intended from the unintended. For instance, there is uncertainty and ambivalence of the Pastor's command to those lying on the floor to "walk like snakes." If the intent is to be free from the grips of the devil who, is pictured as a snake, then, as an electronic preacher, he gets away with a contradiction to his own intention, not to mention the indecency of the entire scene. Another difficult image to interpret is the Pastor's hands on the cheeks of the woman in the clip. If this is exorcism or deliverance, once again the imagery is confusing.

The drama and implication of this exorcism and deliverance ministry is intense. While this could never have been broadcast on national television before 1990 given the restrictions of the Films and Stage Plays Act (1967), the democratic space accorded by liberalization has seen this easily pass for broadcast along with many other scenes that would be proscribed under the decency clauses. The Film and Stage Plays Act of 1967 had required that the film texts be written out and examined by the licensing board. If any part was in a language other than English, an accurate translation had to be given. Let us cite the Subsidiary Legislation of the Act in part:

3. (1) Every application for a filming license shall be made to the licensing officer in Writing and shall be accompanied by a full description of the scenes in and a full text of the spoken parts (if any) of, the entire film which is to be made together with a written Statement by the applicant as to the duration of the film to be made, and the part or parts thereof which are to be made in Kenya or which have been made outside Kenya.

(2) Where the spoken parts in a film to be made are in a language other than English, an accurate translation in English of the full text of the spoken parts of the entire film certified to the satisfaction of the licensing officer shall accompany any application for a filming license.”

One of the most bizarre revelations by Namu and Mohamed in “The inside Story ...” is the blatant manipulation of innocent congregants by Pastor Victor Kanyari. He does this with the assistance of a few faithful’s. One of his assistants, James Wachira, later abandoned the Church and became a key respondent in the unfolding of Kanyari’s fake miracles. Because of its significance, the study will cite Wachira’s revelation to Namu verbatim below:

“And we used to have – We used to use Potassium Permanganate – which is a chemical – which is a lab chemical – and once it is applied on you it reacts with water and oxygen. It becomes red and so people would think that was blood. So, in Church we used to wash people’s feet – and – during the washing of people’s feet we would apply it and people would believe that that was blood oozing out of their feet. In outdoor meetings I used to personally take it. – Buy a handkerchief or face towel – and I would put it there – and take it to him at the pulpit. So he would just touch it, greet you and tell you to wash your hands. ... If it begins to rain you would just see blood oozing from your hands.”

We will return to this when making our concluding remarks in the next chapter. However, suffice it to observe here that, anyone who would be healed in this manner would be ready to give anything for the miracle. The theatrical elements are hard to believe, but all the drama only serves to attract more and more members to the church.

There are questions of fraud and manipulation, but there are also important media discussions behind these manifestations. Notably, media technology gives the watching audience the impression that a real miracle is taking place. A question may be raised as to whether such technology makes it easier to manipulate the audience.

In their exorcism and miracle feats, many of Kenya's television preachers tell their direct audience as well as viewers that they can free them from possession by powers of demons, witchcraft and sorcery. Read against the laws of the land, there are some important insinuations that could land these preachers into problems. Some critical concerns could equally be raised regarding the appropriateness of displaying magic and/or witchcraft on public television. Not only do we have legal concern as to the possibility of defaming someone by claiming that they possess witchcraft when they do not, but also a possible contravention of the Witchcraft Act of 1925 which is revised later. There is also the question that is begged as to how the audience can prove that those from whom the Pastor is exorcising witchcraft indeed do have it. The only proof is pictures from television, but nobody can really prove much from a compiled and technically edited film that is aired on television. It may, therefore, be argued that the pastor and the media manufacture both the witchcraft and the exorcism, given that the efficacy of the miracles is the broadcast of them.

Before leaving this matter altogether, there are some critical questions that mediatized pulpits cannot fully account for. For instance, how does one differentiate between a real miracle and a simulated one? In essence, the question is begged as to the reality of screen miracles. As Baudrillard would help us suggest, are not all screen miracles simulations of the real ones? This, however, is only a discourse at the metaphysical level, because, in the first instance, there was no miracle really, but the mimicry of it. Perhaps, mediating the miracle by televising a real occurrence would fit Baudrillard's concept of hyper-reality where the map represents a real country; but in this case, mimicry departs from the analogy, or simply extends it.

Yet, we can raise a further question with Birgit Meyer (2003): Can the divine really be captured on film? For our purpose, what gives the mediatized miracles agency? Is it the pastor who performs them or the media technology that shows them to the audience? When the audience responds by putting their faith in the transmission of such miracles, how do we account for truth and efficacy?

Another curious question is, if the fakeness of a miracle is hidden from the audience so that its simulation is all such an audience relates to, how would one account for the difference between real religion and the fake one that is enacted by role-playing, camera tricks or outright deception such as Pastor Kanyari faking blood by employing chemical mixtures?

5.6.2 Financial Solicitation

The Electronic Church is established by money and operates on financial solicitation. Without money the programme will go off air (Schulz, 1987). This money talk oscillates between the philosophy of sowing and reaping and pleas for support to keep the programme or station on air.

Interestingly, one of the texts under our study makes a comment on this phenomenon. Bishop Dr. David Oginde observes in his sermon titled “The winds of Doctrine”:
 “The other area of manipulation is free gifts on sale. Prosperity preachers sell a lot of merchandise especially on TV in the name of free gifts. You will hear appeals like this: God has impressed on me to send a gift to anyone who makes a seed commitment of at least 200 dollars or more. I will send you a free gift, not for sale if you can send your generous gift of at least 200 dollars! A free gift of at least 200

dollars! Is it free? Why are we being conned?" He asks the congregation/audience why they cannot use the 200 dollars to go and buy the gift.⁶⁸

As John Allan Namu observed at the beginning of "The Inside Story" ... "the philosophy of giving goes, "Sow sparingly and you shall reap sparingly. Sow in plenty and you shall reap in plenty. Give and you shall receive." Namu adds that there are, those in Kenya's Church today who would twist such biblical phrases to their own selfish ends, "preying on those who are desperate for inspiration from the bible."

Namu and Mohamed show clips indicating the importance of one of Kanyari's services beginning by his issuing directives that it should commence with an offering of kshs310 (three hundred and ten Kenya shillings), something he later explains as a direct command from God to associate giving in his ministry with the verse in Malachi 3:10.

In order to see where Kanyari is coming from and how he and other prosperity preachers use this portion of Scripture, let us cite it in context, from verse 10 to verse 12:

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. (11) I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty. (12) "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the LORD Almighty."

That Kenya's Electronic preachers are creative and smart is not debatable. Kanyari attaches a mystical link to a Bible passage to justify the amount congregants and the

⁶⁸ I note here that I was sacked as radio presenter at Family Radio, now Radio 316, back in 2002 for raising concern as to why this deception was being aired on Family TV, our TV wing.

watching TV audience are to send to him. “310 shillings” mystically connected to Malachi chapter 3 and verse 10! Incidentally, the verse is actually on giving, but it is the mystique of its connection to a particular amount of money that carries the day both in pathos and craft.

Kanyari does not hide the fact that he is not ashamed to get the money from congregants at any cost. On one of his programmes, captured by Namu and Mohamed, he admits that he is ready to steal from the audience, if need be: “So siwezi kusema sana kwamba I am using Scripture to lie to you! (He adds in low tones) I don’t do that! Watu wanasemanga ya kwamba ma-pastor ni wezi, (people usually say that pastors are thieves) Basi wachanikuibie mara moja, (therefore, allow me to steal from you just once) kama ni kuiba siwacha nikuibie mara moja leo, (if it is stealing, then let me steal from you this once today) Utumetu hiyo 310 halafu niombe na wewe! (Just send me that 310 and then I will pray with you) Na Mungu akubariki katika jina la Yesu, (and May god bless you in Jesus’ name!) amen! Muwe Na wakati mwema, bye-bye!” (Amen! May you have a great time! Bye-bye!)

In a different investigative piece by Dennis Okari, Kanyari and several other ministers of the Electronic church are depicted as fleecing the flock via this same clever trickery and smooth talk. My research assistant, Samuel Kariuki, explains the broadcast by Mr. Okari:

“Kanyari looks at the camera and gives directions with his hands as he speaks. As he speaks about “mbegu” (seed) another text appears on the screen. The text inscription is “SOW a SEED OF 310 ONLY”

CLIP 8

Clip shows congregants placing cash at a red carpet presumably an altar. As the camera is zoomed out it's clear it's an altar and one Prophetess Nduta is standing at the pulpit. Congregants are in a line, and they all drop cash at the pulpit one at a time.

Kanyari and several other electronic preachers are able to pay for the broadcasts and so the stations on which their programmes are aired are bound by contract to air the information. In some cases, disclaimers will be put up in title form indicating that the views shared on the programme are not necessarily those of the station or its partners. Unfortunately, right here the role of the media in disseminating information is brought to question. There is contradiction in action and intention. On the one hand, it is a big logical contradiction for the media to state that the preacher's views are not the media's views, because the only way we get the preacher's views is via that specific medium. To divorce media from media is absurd. On the other hand, to use the term "necessarily" leaves the disclaimer at a position of ambivalence. It means the media may or may not agree. The question is begged, as to who or what, is the media and what is agreement in this context? As agents that provide preachers with the space to propagate their sermons, media owners in issuing disclaimers end up being dishonest capitalists who are prepared to fatten as well as poison the audience, provided they are paid for it. In this sense, the media manipulates for gain the same way some of these preachers do.

5.6.3 Flamboyance and display of classy living

Extravagant living and the display of class is synonymous with most charismatic prosperity preachers. On the broadcast titled "Operating the Promises of God" Bishop Allan Kiuna is dressed in a classy, black suit, a black collared shirt with tiny strips of

white at the collar edges, black dress shoes, and a red tie lined with diagonal strips of white. His wife, on this occasion, is wearing a black, short-sleeved dress with flowered edges, as if to match him. In “Breaking Generational Cycles”, he is wearing a pink shirt he is dressed in black trousers, elegant, pink shirt and a pink tie. His wife is in a shiny, silver dress with similar coat to match.

The message being sent out is “we are prosperous ... be prosperous because we are! We are people of class ... follow our example!”

Bishop Muiru’s programmes depict him in many different elegant attires, ranging from suits to African shirts. He is seen in different clothes in the same programme, partly because of showcasing different meetings for publicity, but partly because, some of the sermons are compiled by pulling together different meetings.

Bishop Margaret Wanjiru dresses elegantly and severally boasts to her congregation and audience as to how many pairs of shoes she has, how her wardrobe is full or how she has several refrigerators in her house. Her love for flamboyant living and boasting over what she has comes out clearly in one of her sermons titled “Anointed to prosper.”

Bishop Muiru hardly teaches on anything apart from prosperity, and it is about cars, houses, a lot of money, success, etc. Pastor Kiuna’s sermons are mostly on success and breakthroughs in life.

5.6.4 The use of contact objects and sensorial manipulation

In his sermon, “Wherever You Step Is Blessed”, Bishop Muiro uses shoes as a contact object to trigger predicted blessings. He also uses the symbol of oil to connect his congregation to what he calls “anointing” of those shoes. To quote him verbatim:

“Siku Ya Leo Ni Kipindi Prophetic. (Today We Have A Prophetic Programme) Nani Kuhusiana Na Mambo Ya Viatu! (And It Is About The Matters Of Shoes) Yaani Viatu! (That Is, Shoes) Ya Kwamba, Baada Ya Mahubiri haya, (That, After This Preaching) Utachukuwa Vile Viatu Unavipenda sana, (You Will Take Those Shoes You Like Very Much) Viatu ambavyo unavitumia mara kwa mara, (The Shoes You Use From Time To Time) Unaweza ukavimwagili ama futa kidogo, (You Can Pour A Little Oil On Them) Na unaweza ukafanya maombi kama Vile Nita kavyo kuelekeza.” (And You Can Make A Prayer As I Will Direct You.)

Bishop Muiro then directs the audience to Luke 10:19, which says, “I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.” He then proceeds:

“Nimeongea mambo ya viatu na nikasema kwamba tafuta viatu unavyo vipenda, (I have talked about shoes and indicated that you should look for your favourite shoes) viatu ambavyo mara kwa mara unavitumia, (shoes that you use from time to time) unaenda kuvitumia kama prophetic tool kwa mahubiri ya leo (you will utilize them as a prophetic tool for today’s preaching) na ninaamini ya kwamba utakombolewa. (And I believe that you will be delivered.) Ukiangalia maisha yako, (when you look at your life) viatu vinatumika sana kwa maana ndivyo unavyo vitembelea. (Shoes are regularly used because they are the ones you walk in) Wakati ambapo unaenda kutafuta kazi unavaa viatu unaendanavyo. (When you go to look for work you put on shoes and go in them) Wakati ambapo unaenda mahakamani unavaa viatu unaendanavyo. (When you go into a courtroom, you put on shoes and you go in them) Wakati ambapo unaenda interview unavaa viatu unaendanavyo.(when you go for an interview, you put on shoes and walk in them) ... Wakati ambapo unaingia kwa trouble, ni viatu ambavyo unaingia navyo.(when you land yourself into trouble, it is shoes you will be wearing as you get there) Maandiko ya Luke chapter number 10 na verse number 19 ya Biblia inasema nimewapatia mamlaka juu ya nguvu zote zamaadui.(The Scriptures in Luke chapter number 10 and verse number 19 says I will give you power over your enemies.) Mtakanyaga nyoka mpaka mtakanyaga scorpions. Na hawatawa dhurukamwe. (You will step on snakes and scorpions but they will not harm you). Mtawakanyaga namnagani? (How will you step on them? Mtawakanyaga mkiwana viatu kwa miguu yenu. ...” (You will step on them with the shoes that you will have on your feet.)

He goes on to narrate how witches can collect soil from where you step and how spells can be cast where you pass. He explains that they curse you and scatter your destiny. He asks the audience to take their favourite shoes and put them on top of a table, bed or stool in the house. He says that in merely moving the shoes from the floor and putting them on an elevated place is a prophetic connection with elevation.

He then directs:

“Baada ya mahubiri ya leo, chukuwa mafuta ... (after today’s preaching, take some oil unaweza kumwagilia matonematone, (you can pour little drops) yaanindani ya viatu, (that is, inside the shoes) na kutangaza yale muhubiriamesema leo. (and announce what the preacher has said today.”)

He says all the diseases associated with feet and the poverty that comes with joblessness when you go out to look for a job will be over.

My research assistant, Anne, gave me the visual description again:

“He faces the camera and starts preaching about shoes as the word “viatu” is mentioned, pairs of brown shoes, sapphire high heeled ladies shoes and men black shoes appear on the screen. When he mentions oil, a hand appears with a bottle of oil pouring. The Bible verse, Luke 10; 19 appears with the wordings on the screen when Bishop Muiru mentions the book. As he starts talking about shoes, pictures of different types of shoes interchangeably appear on the screen. The word ‘job’ appears over a background that has a pair of brown shoes when he mentions “kutafutakazi”. When he says “mahakamani”, a court portrait comes on the screen. The word ‘interview’ appears too on the screen with a pair of brown shoes as background.

The interesting thing about Bishop Muiru’s invocation of change through contact objects is no different from witches and magicians who use elements such as water, wind, soil, oils, food, blood, herbs, and even words to heal or bring harm. Notice that he tells his audience to pour drops of oil inside shoes, move them to heights, speak certain words, etc. There is need for more study of this connection between religion and magic, the benevolent and malevolent use of incantations and invocations, and their association with artifacts, symbols, icons, etc.

In earlier days, Muiro, like several other preachers of the 1990's and the first decade of this millennium, were known to tell their audience to connect their faith with theirs by touching the radio or TV set. Bishop Marcelo of the Universal Kingdom of God who broadcasts on Radio Jambo every morning between 5:30 and 6:00 A.M. repeatedly tells his audience to put water in a glass and so unite as believers in a common faith. Bishop Musili has been known to sell anointing oil in different bottled sizes. Pastor Wahome of Helicopter Church as well as Bishop Musili will blow into the microphone in order to symbolize the move of the Holy Spirit, thus hypnotizing their radio and TV audiences. As seen earlier, Pastor Kanyari employs water as an agent of healing. He asks his congregants to put water in a glass and drink it whenever he commands them, but, with the help of his assistants, he symbolically "washes away" the diseases of those who come to him for healing after asking them to put their feet in basins filled with water.

While one may rush to condemn preachers of Kenya's electronic church for what seems to border magic and witchcraft, it is important to realize that their actions could easily be justified by appealing to incidents such as those in the bible where handkerchiefs and shadows were used to heal. They draw from accounts such as the woman with the issue of blood touching the garment of Jesus and getting well, to the healing of invalids at the Bethesda well. They point to Jesus spitting on the ground and mixing his saliva with mud and rubbing it on the eyes of the man born blind who gets well, or His asking him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam.

Nevertheless, we must bear in mind that it is the media that makes this sensorial manipulation efficacious in the modern church.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Having traced the historical background and development of Kenya's electronic church as well as the results of commercializing and liberalizing Kenya's media in chapter 4, To answer our first two questions, in answer to our third question we saw how some of its popular voices utilized the electronic pulpit in the last chapter. In this chapter we will answer our last two questions in the study, i.e. How has the use of radio and television transform the identity, behavior and thinking of Kenya's preachers and what agency has the media in Kenya given preachers and teachers to experiment with formats and technology previously not utilized by the Church? We will conclude our discussion by making some comments on the results of this agency.

6.1 The thinking of The Electronic Preacher

Before completing our analysis of the Electronic pulpit, we must mention our observations regarding how the Electronic church preacher thinks. Here we look at the epistemology that drives radio and TV sermons, the socio-political implications of mediatizing the church and the mysticism of the media-Church relationship.

How a preacher thinks shapes his attitude and perception of society, his language, his content, his style of presentation, his dress, his conduct, his relationship with the audience and his theology. The school one goes to, the books he reads, the music he listens to, the family he comes from, the place he lives in, the friends he keeps, the role models in his life and the places he goes to, all add up cumulatively to shaping the person who comes to us on radio or television.

For example, when I asked Bishop Allan Kiuna who his role models in the ministry were, he responded: “We look up to several entities and personalities when it comes to our media ministry. Daystar Television Network and Bishop TD Jakes of Dallas top this list.”

A future study could probe the similarity or difference between preachers and their role models. What is clear, though, is that these role models shape the language, behaviour, dress, thinking and overall lifestyle of those who look up to them. Many factors are responsible for this identity.

We will now make brief comments on these factors in so far as they have contributed to the definition of Kenya’s Electronic Church and specifically its manifestation in the post-liberalization era.

6.1.1 Epistemological foundations for the thinking of Kenya’s Electronic Preacher

Epistemology is the study of the foundations of knowledge. It investigates what we know and how we know it.

The *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* tells us that Epistemology deals with two main tasks, i.e. the nature of knowledge (where we ask, what does it mean to say that someone knows or does not know something), and the extent of human knowledge (how much do we know or can we know) and how might we use our reason, senses or resources to know?

Epistemology is critical in our discussion of the Electronic Church, because preachers claim to have not just observable knowledge from the Scriptures, which can be taught and interpreted, but also special revealed knowledge which is not accessible to

anybody else. They will issue prophetic descriptions and predictions concerning the lives of individuals in the congregation or audience. They claim to know who is sick and, occasionally even the gravity of the problem and when it will be healed. They have knowledge of the will of God and tell members how to tap into that will.

However, it is the exercise of this second type of knowledge – mystical knowledge – that continues to raise debate. How does someone who never went to school possess so much knowledge as to lead a flock comprising people who sometimes, are more educated than him? What if the preacher is wrong in his claims or beliefs? What proof is there for metaphysical claims?

The Electronic pulpit is awash with a wide variety of preachers, ranging from the sensational and mediocre to the very intelligent including those, like Bishop Dr. Oginde, who hold PhDs. Interestingly; there is also a category of Electronic Church preachers who have honorary doctorates, but parade them for pomp and authority. Much worse is the fact that they use them the same way academic holders of doctorates use them.

We conclude here that the level of education a preacher has will be correspondent to his/her ability to apply concepts or explain sermon content. In certain instances, the specific field of training prior to preaching may influence the sermon content. For instance, Bishop Dr. Oginde's first degree was in the field of Architecture. He has also studied Theology and Leadership, with his doctorate being in leadership. Quite a number of his sermons employ language from the field of engineering and construction and so he would have an upper hand in explaining concepts such as Jesus Christ being the cornerstone, the construction of Noah's Ark or the building of the

tabernacle in the wilderness or the temple in Jerusalem. At a service I attended recently, Bishop Oginde was preaching on the Tower of Babel and, no doubt, acquaintance with architectural language gave him a rare advantage to articulate the difference between methodologies used by the ancient people of the Chaldees and contrast them with contemporary principles and practices of construction.

Bishop Lai is a serious reader of books. He indicates that he prepares for his sermons by studying the Scripture and seeks to expand his understanding of bible passages by reading commentaries on the said passages of Scripture before preaching. He says, “Some versions of the Bible say ...” He says again, “It is not easy to be a civil servant today ... they want you to do what is wrong and you know it is wrong! They want you to do what is wrong and they give you something bigger than your salary ...” He talks about “business” and “tenders”, and “inflation”, etc. He says, “We need faith as we finish this millennium and get into the next one.” It is obvious that Bishop Lai is well-read and takes the preparation of his sermons seriously.

Rev. Judy Mbugua, in her sermon titled “Fight for Your Family,” says, “Many people today say that the family is an endangered species.” The concept of “endangered species” is a scientific one. We do not ordinarily expect preachers to be using scientific language in the pulpit. Later in the same broadcast when giving reasons why we need the family, she says in her third reason, “Thirdly, the marriage and family have been described as society’s ‘emotional thermometer.’” Once again, preachers do not ordinarily talk about thermometers in the pulpit. Here is another case that shows how the learning of the preacher can influence his pulpit language and shape his epistemology.

That Rev. Judy Mbugua is well-read and does some preparation before recording a programme is not a secret. She cites authors who have written on the subjects she preaches on. For example, in the sermon discussed above, she cites Jill Briscoe who has written a book which carries the title of her sermon⁶⁹. I checked the internet to verify her citation and actually found Jill Briscoe's book on Amazon.

Bishop Dr. Oginde in his sermon titled "The Wind of Doctrine", in explaining how prosperity preachers con, cites a passage from E.W. Kenyon. On the flip side are a big number of Electronic church preachers whose epistemological foundation is what they term "revelation from the Holy Ghost." They look down on educational qualifications and theological approaches to the truth and knowledge of God, preferring abductions or mystical experiences. They issue predictive words to congregants, which they call prophecy.

In the "Inside Story ..." broadcast, Namu and Mohamed depict a scene where Pastor Victor Kanyari Mwangi (known to his followers as Prophet Dr. Kanyari) issues such predictions at the end of the service: "Jumapili hii itakuwa Jumapili ya miujiza!" (This Sunday is going to be a Sunday of miracles!), captures a clip right at the beginning of the Expose, "Ambayo ni ibada ya 'takeover'." (Which is going to be a take-over service.)

This is a risky prediction because it is open-ended and then it cannot be verified. It is hard one week later for a quantification to be done as to how many congregants or members of the audience actually get blessed, let alone determining in what way.

⁶⁹ I checked the internet to verify her citation and actually found Jill Briscoe's book on Amazon. Fight for the family: Jill Briscoe: 9780310218418: Amazon.com: Books <https://www.amazon.com/Fight-family-Jill-Briscoe/dp/0310218411>

He excites his congregation, not with content but with heights of emotional feats. For instance Namu and Ali show a clip of Pastor Kanyari asking his congregation to keep repeating the word “fire”: “Semeni fire, fire, fire, fire, fire ...” This excites his congregants and sends them into a frenzy of expectation. . He is also shown leading a song about how the enemies of his congregants will be so shocked at what God was going to do for them. This mixture of music and feats, predictive declarations and what may be defined as divination, mesmerizes the audience and leaves them in awe of the leader. Unlike Bishop Lai who employs a lot of Scriptural passages, comparisons and applications, there is hardly any Scriptural focus in this crop of preachers and when the Bible is cited, it is for a very specific end such as giving or victory. Kanyari, just like Bishop Muiru may read one verse and then pick out a word or a phrase and exegete from it.

To cite “The inside Story ...” again, Pastor Kanyari predicts something for his congregants in a benediction at the end of the service: “Wiki hii, iwe wiki ya Baraka kwako! ... Bwana afungue milango yako!” (Let this week be a blessed week to you! May the Lord open your doors!) The congregation responds with a loud affirmation. It would seem as if, the more emotion Kanyari can excite, the better.

Away from the strict Bible exegesis of Bishop Oginde and Bishop Lai, there is an audacity associated with Pastor Kanyari and Bishop Muiru which tends towards the casual and, in Kanyari’s case, even near blasphemous. Consider the following remarks which are drawn from his own imagination:

“Zamani Mungu alikuwa na huruma! Lakini siku hii Mungu hana huruma!” (In the past, god was merciful, but nowadays God is not merciful!” “Hauwezi kuniambia Mungu ako na huruma ikiwa wewe umekaahapo!” (As you sit there, you cannot tell me that God is merciful.)

We may conclude here that it helps for a pastor to go to school. It might even be necessary to consider the recent suggestion by Kenya’s Attorney General that pastors in Kenya be registered only if they can show at least some minimum theological education and belong to an association of pastors for self-regulation.

Our point here is that, what a preacher knows, reads, spends time on, etc., shapes the epistemology of his thinking and his overall conduct in the electronic pulpit. It, in turn, shapes what his audience knows or does.

6.1.2 Socio-Political foundations for the sermons of Kenya’s Electronic Preachers

It may be argued that, the more a preacher knows about the society he is reaching with the Gospel, the more effective he will be in influencing it and the greater the relevance of his sermons. The preacher must be acquainted with the political, social and economic conditions of the people he speaks to and must relate to them at their level. One can only be effective in reaching affluent people if he himself is affluent and can communicate using the rhetoric of affluence. Bishop Wanjiru, for instance, can make sense when she says “my fridge never goes empty” only to a people who have seen or possess a fridge.

Let us suggest here that the lower the social class being reached, the simpler the message and the lesser the content. With messages of prosperity dominating the airwaves, it is obvious that it is mostly the poor and needy in society that are targeted.

The higher the social class, the more thorough the message content and the more intellectual it will tend to be. For instance, Bishop Wilfred Lai is extremely conversant with current affairs and diverse facets of social, economic and political on-goings in the world. Around the turn of the millennium, he displayed total conversance with aspects such as the “millennium bug” and talks freely and eloquently about the computer world. To quote him in his sermon titled “The Faith to Cross the River”:

“We are living at that time – The nations are sick! – You will know they are sick by the kind of laws that they are passing! – In many parts of the world today – let me help you understand where we are! – Abortion – is legal! – By a vote of legislators. – In many parts of the world – that is the license to kill an innocent child. – They don’t call it a child, they call it a fetus! Let me tell you it is a child, it is a baby! - ... Our leaders in the governments of the world ... sit down and say ‘yes’, they can remove the thing! ... I praise God that I live in the third world ... I praise God that I live in Africa, It is normal in any part of the so-called first world, for a man to marry another man. It’s normal. They say ‘it’s my right!’ and a woman can marry another woman! - ... If that’s what development is all about, I DON’T WANT IT! If that’s what civilization is, we are behaving worse than dogs! Even animals, they have got their mates! You will never find a male dog trying to have a relationship with another male dog! ... The dogs have got more sense than men!

This is serious social discourse that engages the culture he is speaking to. The people who want nothing but prosperity have no time for such sermons. They don’t understand and are not bothered by things such as the ‘millennium bug’ or decisions being taken at the United Nations.

Rev. Judy Mbugua in her radio programme titled “Fight for Your family” displays a lot of knowledge about international relations and events. She says,

“I want to bring out a few things to show you how important the family is. The family, number 1, is the basic unit of any given society. It is the pillar that, in a sense, supports mankind. So, when we talk about family, we are talking about the foundation of mankind. We are talking about an important organ of society. It is an important institution because philosophers, scientists, astrologers, heroes and great charismatic leaders that this world has ever produced, all emerged from families. It is important because it is the beginning of life and the destiny of man. Even the United Nations, in recognition of the importance of the family, designated a whole year to the family. .”

Once again, such social rhetoric is given to people who already have food, clothes, cars and houses. They are not trusting God for a job or promotion. They just need to hear truth regarding how to engage at the office, in transactions, in moral choices and in times of temptation. Such preachers act as moral conscience of the society and the media gives them agency for transformation rather than inspiration. They preach at the level of ideas and prevailing social moods and use language that would make the opinion makers think about policies and their implementation. Such preachers are prescriptive and are viewed as givers of a society's direction. They fall in the class of Martin Luther King, Jr., who would even address protest rallies and his 16th century German namesake, Martin Luther, who pinned 95 theological protest statements on the door of the Wittenberg Cathedral. This is the kind of rhetoric we find in Rev. Judy Mbugua's clarion call in the sermon "Fight for the Family" when she says: "Marriage and the family serve as the social prototype and model of all other relationships. As marriages go, so goes the family. As the family goes, so goes the community. As the community goes, so does the nation."

This sociological pyramid unveils Rev. Mbugua's connection with social concerns and work. As a prominent leader of the Pan-African Christian Women Association (PACWA) and founder of her ministry called Homecare Fellowship, it is easy to read her philosophy of ministry and society in her sermons.

All the Introductions to her broadcasts open with a segment of a song by Bill and Gloria Gaither from the United States of America. The words of the song go: "I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God ..." and the producer's words which carry the reminder that Homecare Fellowship "is an interdenominational ministry with a vision

to pray for the family, the government and evangelism.” After this Intro, in almost all the programmes, Rev. Mbugua then introduces every message by saying, “Good morning and welcome to this programme, Families under God, brought to you by Homecare Fellowship.” She then repeats the goals of the broadcasts stated earlier. This is significant because it brings out the fact that Rev. Mbugua is heavily engaged in transformational work in the society.

The preachers of the Electronic Church are social activists and transformers. Liberalizing Kenya’s airwaves just gave them the agency they lacked before to come out as social activists and champions of transformation.

6.1.3 The Controversy of the Church-Mediarelationship

From a researcher’s point of view, it is extremely interesting to see the Church embrace a tool it has criticized now and then as being worldly and anti-God. Traditionally, pastors have regularly issued caution to congregants to be careful with the media because it would derail their faith. To see many pastors begin to embrace media and appear on the same stations that broadcast what they deem “secular content” is a big revolution.

Hjarvard (2008), has addressed this tension by attributing it to mediatization which he sees as a theory that accounts for media as agents of religious change. Harvard argues that through mediatization, religious institutions are subsumed under the logic of the media. The media become conduits of religious expression as it shapes religious imagination using the language and idioms of popular culture. The question is, can the Church fight this anymore? No. The Church needs the media. Can the media ignore the Church? No. The Church is part of culture and the media needs culture for its

content. When interviewing Mr. John Allan Namu, I put this question to him in view of the tension between the two institutions:

RK: Are these enemies or are they friends?

NAMU: Well, it really depends on the context. I'd say as a journalist, it should be neither. It should be something that journalists, to a large extent, try in their reporting to be dispassionate about in order to have an objective view of whether religion is right or wrong for us. Once again I have to stress that religion is a vehicle through which spirituality is expressed.

RK: Now, if we were to leave out how religion has been used for better or worse and just wanted to, maybe, understand whether the media needs religion, whether in terms of content or expression – Do you think media needs religion and do you think religion needs media?

NAMU: Well, certainly there has to be a relationship between the two, I would say generally media needs religion and religion needs media. Religion forms a big foundation, a big part of an individual's and a group's and a country's culture. And so many times as a media you are many times a reflection if not a child of that culture. And so it is impossible to completely ignore or disavow religion's role in media. Therefore, there is to that extent a very strong relationship that would imply that the media needs religion. – Does religion need the media? Oh yes. A lot of religions base their growth on communication. The broadcasts of various tenets and messages that they espouse, in this day and age we don't have town criers anymore; ... When you go onto Twitter, you go onto Facebook, you go onto TV or to radio and you broadcast

your message to those who believe or will potentially believe, in that way there is a symbiotic relationship that cannot be disavowed. They need each other⁷⁰.

Let us observe here that the Church-media tension is not just at the spiritual and moral levels. There are real metaphysical tensions. For instance, before liberalization and when there was only one broadcaster in Kenya, the secular versus sacred distinction was quite loud. As a music composer, producer, performer and arranger, I was repeatedly warned against introducing “secular styles” in the Church. I was castigated when I recorded my first “Christian Reggae” song in 1987 on my first album. We were warned not to watch entertainment shows or that we should not spend too much time watching news on television. With liberalization of the airwaves, not only did the pastors who turned to using radio and television perfect theatrical modes of presenting their messages, but began to invite bands such as Revival Flames from the Deliverance Church, Umoja, onto their programmes. These bands sounded very much like their secular counterparts. Hence, before the Church had been grappling with the need to “desecularize”, but now they began to “sacralize” what was previously viewed as secular.

It is no secret that the convergence of the Church and the media gave rise to an interesting agency where the media ceased to be a mere conduit of information and also becomes the language and environment of the message. (Meyrowitz, 1997).

⁷⁰Interview with **John Allan Namu**, (Informant EBI001/05/7/2016) conducted at his office situated at Franklin Management 1st Floor Viking House Westlands Nairobi Kenya on 5th July 2016 from 12pm to 1pm conducted via Digital Voice Recorder

This is unavoidable and, it could be argued that, once the preacher has gone on radio or television, he acquires a new identity and his profile goes up. This realization makes the preacher develop the tradition of thinking through the media. He cannot conduct his services without public address systems. He cannot preach without a microphone and PowerPoint or slide projector. The worship is incomplete without keyboard synthesizers, drums and guitars. Church is no longer divorced from media technology and, at the level of consumption, the media cannot do without the Church which commands a huge audience.

This mystical symbiosis not only changes the identity of the preacher, turning him into a performer, but also his thinking, his conduct and his language. An exploration of this phenomenon of the relationship between media agency and the preacher's identity is necessary. It could be assessed by highlighting how media gives the electronic pulpit agency to create virtual identity. Radio and television, which are largely viewed in Kenya as authoritative sources of information, knowledge and entertainment, cannot be easily ignored with regard to the influence they wield on audiences that consume them. With regard to religion, if a preacher is on radio or television, the information he gives is considered final and binding. It is considered the whole truth.

As already observed, the commercialization and liberalization of Kenya's electronic media, doubtlessly, gave several preachers the ability to experiment with new ways of packaging and communicating their messages in a manner not seen before. As Damaris Parsitau (2008), citing S. Hoover (2006) has pointed out, the public articulation of religion in Kenya was greatly enhanced by the accessibility of new

mass media offered by new global infrastructures, new media technologies as well as state policies regarding liberalization and commercialization.

While media access had been limited to a few preachers, the commercialization of KBC and the launch of new stations made media so accessible that many could now utilize it. While this dominance of media affected every social institution in Kenya, the Church jumped at it with unusual interest. Stig Harvard (2008) would see this dominance as inevitable and argue that once the society is dominated by media use, all the institutions will be affected by it and it would be impossible to separate them from mass media. The Church as a social institution has been so transformed by mass media that, it could be argued, Church ministers need to pay attention to the fundamentals of their faith or the media will blur them through excessive articulation, experimentation and technological possibilities. Media has given the Church such latitude that, if not checked, such agency could hide the content of the Church or transform it into mere technological and commercial displays.

We will now examine this agency that transformed the everyday preachers Kenyans knew into media masters without limits of imagination, creativity, technology or geography.

6.2 Media as agents of religious change

As conduits of communication, media have become primary sources of religious ideas. (Harvard 2008). What was initially regarded by the Church as a powerful and helpful tool to reach masses with the Gospel has ended up exposing the very institution that invited it in, primarily by opening its doors to experimentation, new imaginations and a platform to conceal the behind-the-scene motives of preachers.

The media have stretched the confines of religious language, moving the language of the pulpit from formal theological discourse to a more theatrical expression. Radio and television have moved worship from a private, individualized, covert expression to entertainment in lines with the definitions of popular culture. Indeed, Church is no longer a place of reverent kneeling and closing of eyes, but a place of wild dancing and full of visual attraction. If you close your eyes, you will miss something.

Interestingly, too, the media has taken over the moral and spiritual guidance of the society as well as providing a sense of community, functions that were reserved for religious institutions. (Harvard 2008, 2011) In times of tragedy, e.g. in the case of 9-11, the media takes over the role of commenting on such tragedies and rallying people together to reflect as one community (Hoover, 2006), something that was reserved for churches. TV anchors and radio show hosts, at such times, give messages of hope and may even call in pastors to pray for the affected nation.

In order to see how this works, let us outline five major ways in which media become agents of changing the definition and operation of the church:

- i) *Media provide the technology and environment to experiment with new expressions.*

Without radio studios, transmitters, video cameras, graphic design, lighting, sound effects and other technologies, Church fellowships are simple communities that are small in size where everybody knows everybody, there is no role-playing and there is a very high sense of transparency and accountability.

When pastors such as Thomas Wahome, Michael Njoroge, Lucy Nduta or her son, Victor Kanyari, enact miracles, one of the intentions is that many people will see

these signs and wonders and, therefore, come to their Church, give money or simply elevate them as great men of God. Media become the preferred channels for raising this kind of profile. Such pastors will invest in high definition cameras to capture the miracle feats for broadcasting.

In “The inside Story”, journalists Allan Namu and Mohammed Ali capture an incident where Pastor Kanyari announces repeatedly to everyone present, “Wachaniwa onyeshe ukimwi ukitoka na macho yenu ...” (let me show you how AIDS leaves people right before your eyes). At this point in the service he has lined up several women ready to perform his “permanganate miracle.” After he has finished, he lifts the basin with red drops of the chemical mixture on the sides and says, “wachaionekane kwa camera mtaona kwa television zenu!” (Let it be seen on the cameras so that you can see it on your television sets!) In other words, he has actually manufactured this scene so that it can be filmed and televised.

Kanyari knows that the media profiling of the so-called miracles will draw people to him. When they are drawn to him, he can manipulate them to fund him. It is clear here that media technology gives him the ability to replicate his trickery with viewers being so removed from the enacting of the miracle, hence limiting questioning. But where did it all begin?

Certainly, when stations such as KBC gave pastors like Pius Muiro a chance to record many devotions on the same day but which would run for a whole week, the media had already changed the game for how church was done. People were deceived that Muiro was in the studio at 5:00 A.M. or 12:00 Midnight when he was not. It was just a recording. Once the church accepted that way of doing Christianity, media had

taken over and had promised convenience and the numbers, but it had also inculcated lying. Scripts were edited to sound perfect and preachers dressed for the screen. Later, it would be hard to reverse this or determine just how far preachers could go with lying through technology. The radio transistor and TV set carried a level of authority that was hard to question. After all, masses had relied on radio and television for news, death announcements and feature programmes that educated. They would not isolate this level of authority when it came to religious programming. As long as it was on air, it was considered true and authoritative. We will return to this later in this chapter when discussing performance.

ii) Media provides a ready audience, exempting the preachers from the task of seeking alms.

Mass media is about numbers and, the bigger the audience, the more the advertising revenue. While the rating of a media house is driven by how many people listen or watch, putting a Church programme on a station with such a large number of listeners or viewers saves the preacher from the hustle of looking for an audience for his message and other related purposes. In order to keep that audience glued to his message, though, no preacher will speak in monotones or simply stand at a pulpit with a Bible. Nobody would be as interested. He would have to design a way of holding the attention of the audience. To do that, creativity would have to come in. Since the Church is not an institution that is interested primarily in aesthetics, pastors were forced to ask the question, “How is it done in other programmes?”

Once that question was asked, there was a shift in traditional Church presentation. This is because, to ask how and what the media does to keep an audience interested in a broadcast is the transforming agent that alters a sacred building to a theatre and a

pastor to an entertainer. For radio, music interludes and dramatization through short skits were introduced as monotony breakers. For TV, graphics, symbols, images, icons and cut-aways in general, were introduced.

As discussed in Chapter 4, one of my informants, Sarah Kihara, became very successful in presenting her new religious programme called “Glorious Moments” by making this late-night programme sound like “Salamu Za Majeshi” (Armed Forces Request show) which used to run on KBC’s Kiswahili service. Occasionally she made it sound like “Late Date” by playing music that was reflective, only it was religious and not secular as the case was with Late Date. She read “Salaam Cards”, something that was reserved for entertainment in secular broadcasting.

As soon as entertainment aspects of the secular broadcasts were replicated in Christian programmes, the media had completely brought the Church under its wings and forced it to operate under its logic. As soon as producers like Karanja Kimwere chose to produce programmes such as “Joy Bringers” and “Sing and Shine” showcasing the talents of individual Christian music groups, the stage had been set for the removal of boundaries between the Church and the media except for content. However, as we bring this study to a close, there is ongoing debate in Kenya’s Gospel music industry as to what really constitutes the Gospel in the music they make. For instance, recent radio, TV and Facebook discussions have surrounded the definition of Willy Paul’s and Bahati’s songs which out rightly talk about social issues and whether they qualify to be Christian. Case in point is Bahati's song that extols the virtues of a mother and Willy Paul’s lyrics which carry social themes such as heartbreaks and derailment by women. Again, with so many music DJ’s two or three hour music programmes in the media and the establishment of stations that play nothing but

Christian music, the question is raised as to the priority of the Church when it gets to choosing between the speaking of the Word and music, i.e. preaching and entertainment.

In utilizing media to reach these huge audiences, pastors no longer need to plant new Churches. All they need is the ability to pay for airtime and they have a ready audience. It could be said that the media actually plants the Church for them. They don't need many assistant pastors. It is a one-man show. They do not need ushers. The mobile phone collects the offering for them and the screen gives the announcements and relieves the audience from taking notes during a sermon. The screen replaces the Church sanctuary.

iii) Radio and Television have gained Prominence over live Church

The mediatization of the Church pulpit has removed Church from a building and taken it at home. Some even drive as they listen to Church services. At first, the airing of services on radio and TV was largely intended to reach the sick at home and in hospitals. Not so anymore. Bringing church to the living room has become a case of convenience and attracts a big and diverse audience. As a matter of fact, it could be said that Kenya's Electronic Church has taken advantage of the agency of the media by diminishing the sense of community accorded by Church services as well as limit the authority of the pastor of the traditional Church by providing an option for going to Church on Sunday. Almost every station in the country has Christian programming on Sundays as shown in the following table:

SUNDAY TV PROGRAMME SUMMARY 2017

STATION	TIME	PROGRAMME
Citizen	4:00am-6:00am	Pambazuka
	6:00am- 9:00am	Rauka
	9:00-11:00am	Live Church service
	11:00-1:00pm	Kubamba
KTN	5; 00 am – 1:00 pm	Command-Your-Morning, New-Creation-Church-TV, Joel-Osteen-Ministries, Tukuza-Live-Gospel-Show
K24	7:30 am – 9:00am	Christian show (FEM) Christian show (universal) Christian show (in his presence)
	9:00am—11:00am	Christian show
	11:00am-1:00pm	Switch live (gospel music show)
	NTV	8:00 am

iv) *Media Transforms Church Worship Into Entertainment*

If you turned on your radio in Kenya and heard music playing, it would be difficult in the 21st century to tell whether the music was secular or sacred. Similarly, if you put off the television audio and simply watched certain Church groups dancing, it would be almost impossible to tell if it was a Church broadcast or secular entertainment. Church music, announcement of events and even some of the preaching utilizes the same technological and packaging features as any other programme. Indeed media has had a profound impact on Church worship.

There are three main areas that show the impact of media on religion in Kenya. First, media has transformed worship into performance. Secondly, Kenya's media have transformed and popularized Church doctrine and discourse into cinema. Thirdly, media have blurred the distinction between worship and commerce as well as worship and entertainment.

Let us look at these three aspects closely. First, the traditional Church worship is mainly congregational and participatory. Even with specialized and trained choir directors and conductors, the focus is never on the individual. Once such a Church worship is mediatized, the focus slowly shifts from the group to individual acts and visual details. Just like in cinema the plot tends to highlight the main characters, radio and television will ensure that focus is limited to those who play key roles. In mediatized Church, the cameras will ordinarily single out choir movements, the conducting of the music, virtuoso sections for instrumentalists, and the expressive or humorous sections of a pastor's sermon.

My discussion with Mr. Karanja Kimwere yielded an important explanation as to how Kenya's musicians were transformed from the era of corporate worship to that of shining like other secular artistes. Fascinated by the performance culture of European groups such as Silver Wind which was very popular in the 1980's, as a young television producer, Karanja simply reasoned that if European groups can do so well and put up such stunning performances, there was no reason why he could not replicate similar productions on Kenya's television.

“In the course of doing ‘Nyimbo Za Dini’, I met several big ministers,” he told me, “...I met *akina* David Nthiwa now, and I started thinking hard. There was a group which came from Europe, Belgium or some place, called Silver Wind. Silver Wind came and I went to see them; and I asked myself, you mean in Kenya we don't have a group or groups of people who can sing like those? Must we always have choirs? ... I kept wondering, why can't we have our own people here ... Then there was another kids' programme called Joy Bringers for small kids and I was also given that one. ... I told my boss if it is me who is going to do this programme, then not for kids! FAMILY. We are going to be a Joy Bringers Family programme. So I said I have to own this programme the way you people in music own your song. I began to think how I can get small groups like Silver Wind to come. That is how I looked for David Nthiwa because they had Youth for Christ.”

It is important to note here that the individual thinking, influence and experiences of a television producer can single-handedly change the church's expression in the media. Karanja judged that it was boring to simply televise choirs. Perhaps more elaborate performances patterned after Western concerts would be more interesting. This thinking in the early 1980's was to drastically change the music scene and worship spectrum of Kenya via the agency of the media. Karanja goes on:

“Then I said, wait a minute! We have very many international Gospel singers! Solo artistes! Why don't we have a single one except one guy called Kenneth Owuor, singing ‘Number 9’? So I asked, why don't we start a programme like that? ... so we went on with Youth For Christ singing Joy Bringers, ... now that it is 1984, I went to Germany, after I came from Germany armed with more creativity and more ideas I said, now we start a new programme called Sing And Shine. You sing for Jesus and you shine for Him!”

Karanja encouraged and went out to look for small, more contemporary groups such as Youth for Christ and I.F.C. Jericho choir led by the late Isaiah Symekher, and gave them airtime, leading to a gradual phasing out of the large choirs from the screen. It is no wonder that this culture of music performance rapidly gave rise to solo artistes such as Kenneth Owuor, Faustine Munishi, Ezekiel Omwanza, Norman Njenga, Anne and Japhet Kassanga and John Deus among others who became household names in the late 1980's and 1990's. These sold cassette tapes and appeared regularly on television and radio. They, indeed, became more popular than their pastors as well as their individual Churches and also became materially successful because of the sale of their music.

A close look at Kenya's media scene will show that this departure from participatory, congregational worship to the era of solo artistes was irreversible. These individuals, rather than groups, came to be known as Gospel Artistes, a status which quickly gave rise to media celebrity. A random survey of Citizen TV, KTN, NTV, K24 and KBC Channel 1 shows us that the commonest of these Gospel music artistes during the last decade includes but is not limited to Ruffton, Mercy Masika, Henrie Mutuku, Daddy Owen, Jemima Thiong'o, Eunice Njeri, Juliani, Ben Githae, Jimmy Gate, Porcupine, Guardian Angel, Bahati, Willy Paul and Gloria Muliro, among others. Kenya's media scene was soon to attract solo artistes from neighboring nations, beginning with the televising of Mike Okeke from Nigeria, Steve Kekana and Itani Madima from South Africa and Lutaya from Uganda, to more recent Tanzanian artistes such as Rose Muhando and Christina Shusho.

Karanja explained that he would get an artiste to come into the studio for the shooting of the programme and it did not matter if he/she had a band or singing group. He talked to Youth for Christ and a number of musicians (including this researcher) to serve as backups for the different singers. My personal recollection of the preparation is such that we would report at the KBC studios as early as 8:00 A.M. on Mondays when Karanja mostly did the recordings and we would wait in the garden or restaurant for the guest artistes on Sing and Shine or Joy Bringers Family programmes. We would then listen to their songs, pick out the chorus or other refrain sections and then develop three-part harmonies for them. The band would then rehearse with all of us in the recording studio before the actual recording began at about 11:00 A.M. usually a minimum of two episodes would be shot per day; sometimes as many as four or six. These would run for several weeks since only one episode ran per week.

The scene had completely changed and KBC became the new Church pulpit. Pastors, groups and individual artistes came to KBC instead of KBC taking the O.B. vans on site to record. Church had been reduced to performance, whether you were preaching or singing. This leads us to the second major aspect of this transformation, i.e. the transformation of church doctrine and discourse into cinema.

While the Africa Inland Church was doing their best to transform their “Cho Chote Chaweza Kutokea” radio broadcast on Saturday late morning into a more attractive programme through skits about Church life and doctrines such as the expected return of Jesus, the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation began to encourage Christmas and Easter plays. With the commercialization and liberalization of the airwaves in the 1990’s, Nigerian movies began to make their way into Kenya, leading to the screening by KTN of movies such as “The Price” whose synopsis is patterned after

the biblical story of Job, and “War Room” which depicts the theme of prayer. Between 2000 and 2006 it was common to tune into KTN or NTV and find Christian films such as Tim Lahaye’s “Left behind” series.

It is important to note that the introduction and popularization of Christian films was a major paradigm shift in legitimizing media’s role in blurring the distinction between faith, performance and business. While the Church had previously frowned at practices such as going to the cinema, now, not only was television airing films with Christian themes, but these films were no longer at film theatres but in the homes of both Christian and non-Christian viewers. The faith had finally been mediatized and there was no more isolating between the sacred and the secular with regard to the Electronic Church.

A few comments can be made on the result of the third concern, i.e. removing the distinction between Church and media. Not only did it blur the distinctions between worship, commerce and entertainment, but it gave Church members – clergy and laity – the agency to play around with various ways of presenting religion to the public through media.

Gospel music awards such as the Malaika and Groove Awards were introduced to recognize and reward music talents. Buying and selling had previously been viewed as a secular affair and sermons were frequently preached about Jesus expelling money-changers from the temple. Now preachers sold their books, anointing oil, music CDs and DVDs as well as miracles. Mimicry had previously been associated with deceit. Jesus had warned about “wolves in sheep skins” and the “leaven of the Pharisees”. Both cinema and secular-sounding music were rejected by the Church.

Media made them accepted by the church again. With the rise of televangelism and other usages of the media, the dichotomy was removed, leading to a never-ending debate in the Church as to whether media was a blessing or a curse.

iv) The redefinition of Kenya's public space

As Damaris Parsitau has correctly observed, Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity has not only become a dominant feature of Kenya's religious and political landscape, but, quite significantly, prominent in Kenya's mass media scene because Pentecostals and Charismatics are the biggest buyers and users of air time. Parsitau argues that liberalization and commercialization quickly catapulted Pentecostals and charismatics into the public sphere, thus redefining the religious landscape of the country. With commercialization, there was no longer any serious restriction as to who could go on air. If you could pay for a programme, it did not matter what you were airing. This means that Kenyans now consumed more religious content than before.

Parsitau (2008) observes that "During weekends a series of church services, sermons and gospel music fills more than seven to eight hours of television time on only four channels alone that are: Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), Kenya Television Network (KTN), Nation Television (NTV) and Citizen TV."

When one considers that there are many Christian stations in the country which run 24-hour broadcasts both on radio and TV, it is obvious that mediatization has transformed Kenya's public sphere and made the country a largely Church-dominated society.

6.3 The results of mediatizing Kenya's church

The results of the mediatization of Kenya's Church are not difficult to see. We will outline several of them below:

Media have turned preachers into performers.

It can be argued that technology is all it takes to transform the everyday preacher into a performer. The studio world is one of the fundamental agents that transforms any communicator from the environment of reality to that of role-playing. The studio is naturally created for performance and so, whether one is looking at a musician, a teacher, an orator, a poet or preacher, as long as he enters the doors of a studio, he is immediately transformed into an actor. He acts knowingly or unknowingly, but the functional definition of a studio carries with it the element that the person who enters it is going to do something in a defined manner and for a defined cause. Whether one is dealing with someone who dresses in a particular way in order to take a professional photograph or has powder applied on the face in order to prevent over-reflection from the bright lights at a television studio, one is reduced to an actor. Radio transmission booths are acoustically treated and state-of-the-art microphones set to give unique sound quality for the audience. In essence, the voice of your closest friend on radio compared with what you hear face-to-face is different. It is all nothing but pre-orchestrated performance.

Given this fact, all preachers who use radio and television are actors. They play performatory roles. Radio preachers are trained on how to engage the audience and, during formal broadcasts, they are reminded that they are no longer addressing peers at a dinner table or spouse in the bedroom. In less formal settings such as breakfast or drive time shows on FM stations, they are told they should maintain a light heart,

humour and an informal tone in communication in order to bring cheer to a stressed audience. When speaking to children, the preachers are reminded to use simple language, tell interesting stories and keep their message brief in view of the children's short concentration span. Radio presenters and announcers are taught to speak to the individual rather than a crowd and are encouraged to keep the audience glued through suspense, questions and teasing. It is a theatre world.

When it comes to television, not only is make-up before programmes important, but television studios are fitted with changing rooms, lighting and sound effects, stages, lecterns and pulpits, chairs and tables, carpets, benches, different screens, etc. It is a performance world.

With the advent of the Electronic Church, especially from the 1950's, the expectation of performance was certainly envisaged by some pastors who began to lay out their Church auditoria for this performance, interestingly, both live and recorded. Richard Kyle(2010) has observed that Televangelist Rex Humbard had his sanctuary constructed for high-definition TV. Kyle adds that while Humbard televised traditional services, he also televised imitations of music and variety shows that were popular in secular television.

My attendance of services and Christian events during the last five years or so has led me to conclude that several pastors who have programmes on TV are fully aware that they are performers. They will prepare the audience for good video shots and, when they think the shots are not good enough, they order a repeat of certain scenes. A few examples will suffice.

A preacher at the Deliverance Church, Eldoret, on the first Sunday of May, 2012, prepared his camera men for the live shot of his programme on SAYARE TV. It was

obvious that he wanted a particular, desired effect for the programme and even ordered a repeat of a scene. He said to the congregation:

“At the count of three, make a joyful noise to the Lord and give a loud shout to Him.”

He asked people to remove handkerchiefs and wave them as they give a real big shout.

He then counted, “1, 2, 3!” and many people responded. It is what followed that made me draw this conclusion: “Cut!” he shouted to the camera men. “That’s not good enough for television! That’s not good enough for TV. We are going to do another one. This time let’s do it right.”

The congregation obliged. This was calculated.

On the 14th of December, 2014, I was invited together with my team, Sifa Voices, to curtain raise at a worship concert by the South African group, Joyous Celebration Choir, at CITAM Karen church. Halfway into the performance, the leader of the service interrupted: “Get ready! We are now going live onto KTN!” This had been the same at a different event, a thanksgiving service for five years of Mediamax, on 24th April, 2013, wherein I had been invited to make a special song presentation. We were prepared for the real action and we went live onto K24 just minutes before Kenya’s Deputy President, William Ruto, walked into the sanctuary.

(i) media gives the agency for easy manipulation

From our analysis of the texts in this study, as well as the interviews carried out, it is fitting to opine that it is easier to deceive media audiences than live audiences. This is because there is not much time or attention to notice the details behind the quick succession of video clips that last only a few seconds each. Besides, everything is

edited and compacted into a very short time. For this reason, some preachers in the electronic church have perfected the art of creating visual images to solicit certain desired effects away from the content of the sermons. For instance, in order to glue people to the screen, some preachers craft miracle feats.

The height of realization by preachers that TV is about performance is seen in the Expose by Namu and Ali discussed in the last chapter. According to the broadcast, Pastor Victor Kanyari had developed the art of faking miracles with the help of his Assistant Pastor, James Wachira, who abandoned the Church and revealed what they had been doing. “We would train on how to give false testimonies. We would be trained on – communication, in a way that when I look at you, you as my fellow worker I would know what you want and what step to take next.”

Kanyari would enlist the help of Wachira and other Church ushers to wash the feet of congregants. Namu says that Wachira was skilled in a scum that was crafted to deceive worshippers. Because of its significance as an illustration of how media gives the agency for conmanship, we will cite a segment of this interview verbatim:

“And we used to have – We used to use Potassium Permanganate – which is a chemical – which is a lab chemical – and once it is applied on you it reacts with water and oxygen. It becomes red and so people would think that was blood. So, in Church we used to wash people’s feet – and – during the washing of people’s feet we would apply it and people would believe that that was blood oozing out of their feet. In outdoor meetings I used to personally take it. – Buy a handkerchief or face towel – and I would put it there – and take it to him at the pulpit. So he would just touch it, greet you and tell you to wash your hands. ... If it begins to rain you would just see blood oozing from your hands. This gel is used to stick the needles between the fingers so that, once you cross your fingers like this, no one can suspect that you have needles. You raise your hands, take this and apply in between the fingers like this ... while they are praying and they have closed their eyes, - sorry, need to close the fingers - by that time you have identified two or three people who will be prophesied – that they have needles in their bodies, and that someone went to a witch doctor, and – spells were cast on them – that they will never make it in life - so, as an indication that there is deliverance, then blood is supposed to ooze from their legs. You can close this finger like this – for a long time, close to fifteen minutes before the gel begins to melt. So at this

point in time, people are praying, others have been prophesied to, and they have been selected and they have been put on a special seat in front of the Church. On this other hand I already have this chemical – (Namu asks: is that Potassium Permanganate?) – This is Potassium Permanganate, I can show you. It is highly reactive to water and oxygen, so it will just turn red. After a few people have been selected, and they have been prophesied, they have needles in their bodies – and that blood is going to come from their legs – is now when he commands that we go and pray for them. And we begin to pray – holding your leg like this (he demonstrates) Pray (Namu: and at that time you are rubbing the compound on the) you are rubbing on the leg like this, like this, and that time you are praying. After I have finished praying I will just advise you to put your leg in the water – I wash your legs (he is panting) Then when it is, when it begins to react, I will be closing my eyes, when I open my eyes (Namu interjects ‘it’s immediate’) ... then I am supposed to shout, ‘man of God, man of God, there is blood oozing from his leg! (Panting again) Man of God!! There is blood oozing from his legs! And then, still I would be dropping needles in water, Then the man of God would begin praying would begin praying, then after I have dropped the needles I’ll continue praying, I’ll continue praying, and then I would ask you to remove your leg – remove your leg – Then I would just take the water, of course this is contaminated water, it has a lot of witchcraft, ... then I would tell the man of God, ‘there are needles inside’, So I’m supposed to shout, ‘man of God, man of God, there’re needles inside; there’re needles coming out of his leg! ... And so I am supposed to take them, and show him, and tell him, ‘man of God, there were four needles in his leg and they have come out.’ And so we would tell the person maybe who has problems in his life that the witchcraft has come out – this was put by a witch doctor – aaaahmmm! And now he is free! He will make it, or if he is sick, that now he’s healed.

This spectacular magic tricks termed miracles surprise people and make them pay for their healing. Such screen miracles would add to his profile. Conmanship through the media is one of the reasons why the government of Kenya through the office of the Attorney General has tightened the registration process for new Churches.

(ii) the commodification of religion

As discussed in chapter 4, before liberalization, the Church groups and pastors that were invited to minister on KBC radio or television did not pay for such appearance. Again, religious broadcasts were not a one-man show. NCKK and the religious department at KBC vetted and gave preaching opportunities randomly. This discouraged the creation of religious empires. As Informant Isaiah Masibo stated,

radio and television was not for everybody. As Pastor Wilson Mamboleo added, a lot was edited out and not everything you said went on air.

As soon as KBC was commercialized in 1989, the whole stage changed. Now only those who could pay for air time were allowed to go on air, hence the beginning of individual church slots or personalities.

This study concludes that it is this commercialization that commoditized religion because the highest bidder got the air time and, therefore, had his/her message heard by the audience. The more money you could afford the more the air time. The radio and TV slots were broken into fifteen minute, thirty minute and one hour slots. The longer the time, the more you paid. Then there was the time band issue. Putting a programme on air at prime time cost the preachers more money than during off-peak times.

This phenomenon is the reason behind why big churches such as Christ Is the Answer Ministries (CITAM) and the Africa Inland Church (A.I.C.) have been able to raise enough money to put up their own media houses. CITAM runs Hope Media which comprises both Hope FM and Hope TV, and the A.I.C. runs Biblia Husema Broadcasting and Truth FM radio stations and Biblia Husema Television.

(iii) the promotion of experience as an expression of faith

In the broadcasts by Bishop Wilfred Lai discussed earlier, the Bishop constantly repeats the phrase, “for those of you that are watching us live ...”, thereby indicating that he wanted the audience to participate in the broadcasts and feel a part of the proceedings. Bishop Pius Muiru in his broadcast “Wherever you step is blessed” discussed in the last chapter gives direct instructions for his audience to take favourite pairs of shoes, put them on an elevated place and then sprinkle drops of oil on the

shoes, uttering certain prayers. This participatory experience makes the audience feel as if they are part of the action. Occasionally, Muiru would tell the audience to put their hands on the radio just as he puts his and that this experience would unite them together in the prayers he would utter for them, making them more efficacious.

Such experiences and the washing of feet or being asked to drink a glass of water as the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God broadcasts on Radio Jambo every morning at 5:30 A.M. keeps asking the audience to do, promotes sensory experiences that persuade faith on the basis of participation.

We argue in this study that the line between reality and hyper-reality becomes quite narrow when religion is mediatized. The validation of hyper-reality engraves experience in the audience as the new reality, making the map take over from the territory as argued by Jean Baudrillard (1994).

(iv) media encourages unhealthy competition among preachers

In several broadcasts, Bishop Margaret Wanjiru refers to how well-dressed she is and what she is worth. In an episode of “The Glory Is Here” at the beginning of the year 2000 this researcher tuned in to a broadcast on KBC where she boasted of the many pairs of shoes and dresses she had. To quote her, “My fridge never goes empty...when I go to a petrol station, I don’t tell them “Weka miambili”(Put in Kshs.200 worth of fuel) but I tell them :“Jazatangi”(Fill the tank)...”

The competition is also seen in how churches are named e.g. Maximum miracle Centre, Helicopter church, Solution Centre, among others.

6.4 Conclusion and suggestions for further research

Before bringing our study to a close, let us observe that the foregoing discussion on the mediatization of the Church pulpit in Kenya is not complete. Our focus deliberately left out the impact of social media on the church. With the mobile phone having taken over from radio as the most accessible means of communication including Kenya's rural areas, there are some interesting aspects this discussion could engage. Notably, Kenya's rural population even has access to radio and television on the mobile phone. Breaking news as well as religious messages are relayed via this platform, making it necessary to evaluate how religion is made mobile and accessible to even greater numbers. More important, however, would be the need to probe how the mobile phone transforms both access to and practice of Church in Kenya.

Facebook and Twitter are other important aspects of social media to research in so far as they promote and transform the mediatization of faith. For instance, I run a Monday post on my Facebook pages where I reach nearly ten thousand readers with what I have titled "Monday Reflections" in which I pick a topic and discourse on it from a biblical perspective. It is the volume of responses that baffles me and makes me suggest that this massive interest in religious discussions on social media needs to be studied.

Secondly, it is my observation that mainstream print and electronic media have neglected the history of Kenya's religious media. I did not find a single volume that discusses this via interviews with the key players in the industry. I met open hostility to KBC and VOK wherever I turned and yet it is KBC and its predecessor, VOK that pioneered broadcasting as we know it in Kenya today. Even outside religious broadcast interests, then on-religious history of broadcasting in the country has no key

informant interviews. Most of the studies available on KBC or VOK are quantitative in nature and major on trends rather than history and elucidation. Early broadcasters such as Leonard Mambo Mbotela, Amina Fakhii, Job Isaac Mwamto, Stephen Kikumu, Ali Salim Manga, Gladys Erude, Khadija Ali, Billy Omala, among others, remain unknown to the modern generation of communicators and media consumers alike in Kenya. Communication students as well as media experts need to quickly engage in profiling these icons before we lose them together with their work that shaped media as we know it today.

From a religious media perspective, there should be a quick undertaking to profile Rev. Samuel Waitinde, Gladys Erude, Wambui Mburu, Pastor Wilson Mamboleo, Bishop Wilfred Lai, among others together with their knowledge of the development of religious broadcasting in Kenya.

Thirdly, the intersection of media and religion needs to be introduced in communication and media studies departments as an important area of study. With this intersection being witnessed on a global scale, time has come for whole units to be set aside to probe this phenomenon. Besides, perhaps inter-disciplinary dialogues should be held between departments of religion and those of communication and media studies in order to glean from the wealth of knowledge that sits unexamined and undiscussed by virtue of narrowing interests in these departments to solitary departmental concentrations.

Lastly, in the area of mediatized religion per se, there is need to probe what Hoover (2006) has called “civic religion.” This is where media take over the responsibility of the Church altogether by becoming the place to discuss religion, especially where national concerns such as elections or disasters are concerned. For instance, when the

first president of the republic of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, died in 1978, Kenya's media took over the duty of solemnly mobilizing the country in prayer and reflection, worship and comforting the affected. Religious music was played and poetic lamentations filled the airwaves. In the same way, when the country was coming to terms with the West Gate terror siege, media commentators would mobilize the audience without the agency of religious institutions to pray for, encourage and give hope to the audience. News anchors and radio presenters became the "pastors" of the moment. They asked Kenyans to volunteer to give blood for the wounded and to care for the affected, something religious institutions would normally do. This whole area, including how Sundays have become religious media days, needs to be studied and articulated.

It is my hope that my study has added something to the intersection of religion and media and opened up interest for further research in related areas.

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APPENDIX I: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

NAME	PROFESSION	INTERVIEW NUMBER	INTERVIEW METHOD	DATE OF THE INTERVIEW
Mr. John Allan Namu	Investigative journalist	LBI001/05/7/2016	Digital Recorder	5/7/2016
Pastor. Wilson Mamboleo	Pastor	EBI005/01/9/2016	Digital Voice Recorder	01/9/2016
Mr. Isaiah Masibo	Studio engineer	LBI004/02/9/2016	Digital Voice Recorder	02/9/2016
Mrs. Sarah Kihara Mwaka	Radio presenter/ Broadcast Studio Engineer/Producer	LBI006/0/9/2016	Digital Voice Recorder	02/9/2016
Mr. Isaac Anunda Sakwa	Radio Programme producer/ Anchor	LBI007/02/9/2016	Digital Voice Recorder	02/9/2016
Mr. Dennis Okari	Investigative journalist	LBI002/17/9/2016	Email	17/9/2016
Bishop Allan Kiuna	Pastor	PBI003/17/10/2016	Email Questionnaire	17/09/2016
Mrs. Pamela Omwodo	Radio Programme Manager	EBI003/17/10/2016	Email	17/10/2016
Rev. Christopher Arap Mutai	Founder BHG/Pastor	EBI008/06/1/2017	Digital Voice Recorder	06/1/2017
Mr. Karanja Kimwere	TV producer	LBI009/07/1/2017	Digital Voice Recorder	07/1/2017
Prof. Emily Choge	Lecturer	LBI003/30/8/2016	Digital Voice Recorder	30/8/2016

APPENDIX II: SCALING RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMING ON KENYA'S TV

SATURDAY SCHEDULE

STATION	RELIGIOUS PROGRAMME	TIME AIRED	TOTAL NUMBER OF PROGRAMMES	TOTAL NUMBER OF RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMES
KTN	CHRIST EMBASSY	6.00AM		
	JOYCE MEYER MINISTRIES	6.30AM		
	TENDEREZA LIVE	4.10PM	50	3
KISS TV	-	-	12	0
HOPE TV	ALL RELIGIOUS	ALL DAY	33	33
KBC TV	WORSHIP EXPERIENCE	6.00AM		
	TURNING POINT	7.00AM		
	A MIRACLE IN THE VILLAGE	7.30AM		
	NENO LITAKUWEKA HURU	8.00AM		
	VOICE ON FIRE	8.30AM		
	JESUS WINNER MINISTRY	9.00AM		
	PRAISE ON	4.50PM	23	7

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

STATION	RELIGIOUS PROGRAMME	TIME AIRED	TOTAL NUMBER OF PROGRAMMES	TOTAL NUMBER OF RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMES
KTN	CHRIST EMBASSY	6.00AM		
	TUKUZA LIVE GOSPEL SHOW	65.30AM		
	VOICE OF JUBILEE	9.00AM		
	TUKUZA LIVE GOSPEL SHOW	11.00AM	21	4
	KAKANDE MINISTRIES	8.30AM		
	GOSPEL EXPLOSION	9.00AM		
	CHRIST EMBASSY	1.30PM	19	4
KISS TV	-	-	16	0
HOPE TV	ALL RELIGIOUS	ALL DAY	36	36
KBC TV	IN TOUCH MINISTRIES	6.00AM		
	WORSHIP EXPERIENCE	7.00AM		
	KUNA NURU GIZANI	7.30AM		
	TURNING POINT	8.30AM		
	CELEBRATION TIME	9.00AM		
	JJENGE IMANI YAKO	9.30AM		
	WORSHIP EXPERIENCE	10.00AM		
	TURNING POINT	10.00PM		
	WORSHIP EXPERIENCE	10.30PM	25	9

**APPENDIX III: SCALING RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMING ON KENYAS
RADIO**

SATURDAY SCHEDULE

STATION	RELIGIOUS PROGRAMME	TIME AIRE D	TOTAL NUMBER OF PROGRAMMES	TOTAL NUMBER OF RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMES
BIBILIA HUSEMA BROADCASTING	ALL RELIGIOUS	ALL DAY	35	35
RADIO JAMBO	-	-	14	0
HOPE FM	ALL RELIGIOUS	ALL DAY	9	9

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

STATION	RELIGIOUS PROGRAMME	TIME AIRE D	TOTAL NUMBER OF PROGRAMMES	TOTAL NUMBER OF RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMES
BIBILIA HUSEMA BROADCASTING	ALL RELIGIOUS	ALL DAY	35	35
RADIO JAMBO			14	1
HOPE FM	ALL RELIGIOUS	ALL DAY	12	12

**APPENDIX IV: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ELECTRONIC CHURCH
MINISTERS IN KENYA**

ETHICAL STATEMENT:

The purpose of this research Questionnaire is strictly academic and intended solely as a source document for information to help understand the relationship between media and religion in Kenya. It is not in any way interested in or to be used for personal vilification, promotion or undermining of anyone interviewed. The answers solicited by it shall be treated with the confidentiality that shall be assigned to the project environment alone and shall not be used maliciously against any respondent. All respondents shall be treated with maximum respect and dignity in relation to the information provided during and after the interview.

1. When did you start using the media to share your message and why?
2. How many programmes do you run weekly and when exactly do they run?
3. Are there any advantages of using radio or TV to relay your messages compared to preaching directly to your congregation?
4. How many people do you estimate you are able to reach via media compared to how many come to the Church every Sunday.
5. Most Christian broadcasts are on Sunday morning or in the evenings. Is there a reason for that?
6. Who does the packaging of your messages for radio or television and how do you ensure they pass to the audience what you intend for them?
7. Do you relay any of your services live, or are they prerecorded?
8. The Church has largely embraced technology to reach out. How do you ensure
9. And manage feedback from a media audience you cannot see in front of you, and which technology do you employ to get such feedback?
10. Have you ever used radio to send your programmes out to masses, and if so, how different is it from TV?

11. What do you do when preparing your broadcasts to make them interesting and catchy to your audience?
12. Has Kenya's migration from analogue to digital broadcasting made it easier or harder for you and your ministry to use the media?
13. If you were to advise pastors who don't use the media to reach out, what would you tell them?
14. Who is/are your role model/models in the use of the media to share the Church's message through radio and television?
15. Is there anything else you would like to tell me as a researcher ON the relationship between media and religion?

**APPENDIX V: EMAIL DISCUSSION BETWEEN MR, RUEBEN KIGAME
AND BISHOP ALLAN KIUNA**

1. When did you start using the media to share your message and why?

Our media department has been in operation for the past ten years but different segments of it have come into action much later. The Voice of Jubilee TV broadcast, Woman Without Limits Talk Show and the JCC Church Live. We have recently launched our social media segment that is now a strong arm of our media. The whole reason for using media outreach is to reach people the walls of JCC because ours is a message of the kingdom and not just one church.

2. How many programs do you run weekly and when exactly do they run?

Currently we are running the Woman Without Limits Show every Sunday from 4:30pm on NTV. The social media reach is on during both services on Sunday – 8:30am and 11:30am

3. Are there any advantages of using radio or TV to relay your messages compared to preaching directly to your congregation?

Yes. We are able to reach beyond the walls of JCC. We are able to minister to our members through media when they are not able to attend church services.

4. How many people do you estimate you are able to reach via media compared to how many come to the Church every Sunday?

A live church service reaches upto 12 million people. WWL Show has near similar viewership. Social media reaches between 20 – 30 million people on a Sunday morning according to our statistics

5. Most Christian broadcasts are on Sunday morning or in the evenings. Is there a reason for that?

Sunday morning and evenings are already family designated times in many homes. That is the best time to reach families as they sit together at home.

6. Who does the packaging of your messages for radio or television and how do you ensure they pass to the audience what you intend for them?

We have in in-house media team that does the production for all our programs. We have feedback monitoring systems including TV Station viewership statistic reports.

7. Do you relay any of your services live, or are they prerecorded?

We partner with media stations to air our services LIVE during certain agreed seasons. All our services however, are available on LIVETSREAM every Sunday.

8. The Church has largely embraced technology to reach out. How do you ensure and manage feedback from a media audience you cannot see in front of you, and which technology do you employ to get such feedback?

We use social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Livestream – and these systems all have feedback mechanisms from viewers to help us gather feedback even in real time.

9. Have you ever used radio to send your programs out to masses, and if so, how different is it from TV?

We have used Live radio. The advantage of radio of radio over TV is that listeners can listen-on-the-go. TV programs can only be scheduled in line with general family schedules to capitalize on family times like evenings or weekends.

10. What do you do when preparing your broadcasts to make them interesting and catchy to your audience?

We incorporate our dynamic praise and worship sessions, behind the scenes segments and links to facilitate the flow of the messages to the viewer/listener.

11. Has Kenya's migration from analogue to digital broadcasting made it easier or harder for you and your ministry to use the media?

It has made it easier. We are in the process of setting up our own TV Station because of that.

12. If you were to advise pastors who don't use the media to reach out, what would you tell them?

When your ministry reaches the place it can shoulder the expenditure of media ministry, it would be a very prudent step to take so as to reach the body of Christ with the particular message that God has given you.

13. Who is/are your role model/models in the use of the media to share the Church's message through radio and television?

We look upto several entities and personalities when it comes to our media ministry. Daystar Television Network and Bishop TD Jakes of Dallas top this list.

14. Is there anything else you would like to tell me as a researcher in the relationship between media and religion?

We are persuaded that if Jesus was living in our day, He would be using media to reach the masses. Using media is proof that you are convinced that your message is needed by more people than those with direct access to you

**APPENDIX VI: EMAIL DISCUSSION BETWEEN MR. RUEBEN KIGAME
AND MR. DENNIS OKARI**

1. How long have you been involved with the media in general and how long with investigative journalism?

I've been a journalist for 13 years. I have done investigative journalism since 2010 to date.

2. What prompted your interest in investigating religion in particular and what are some of the cases you have investigated?

I was interested in investigating religion because of several reasons. Namely;

- *Firstly, I felt It was my Christian calling for me to stand and tell the story (the truth)*
- *Secondly, I felt I was blessed with a platform to air what I saw and heard to reach the masses.*
- *Thirdly, I have gone through some of those rogue churches and didn't like the experience.*
- *Fourthly, I received many complaints about some rogue churches and had no avenue to air out what they experienced so the last stop was the media to expose them.*

3. According to you, what is religion?

Religion to me is dead traditions and ordinances trying to take a dead man to please a God who is spirit and is alive and who operates in Grace and not the law.

In your view, does media need religion, and does religion need the media? Are the two institutions friend or foe?

In my view, the two institutions are commensal.

The media is there for profit. Religion neither benefits nor causes any harm in terms of commercialization.

They are different in structure and ideology and that's why they are neither friend nor foe. It's a complicated relationship.

Whereas the media benefits financially when religion puts out content through its channels, religion benefits from gaining the attention of an audience. At that point the two are friends. But that's programming. When it comes to news, religion has no place. It's what makes headlines. A man bites dog is the news here not the other way round. So religion and the media at this point are foe.

4. A lot of Church pastors and teachers are increasingly using media as an extension of the Church and ministries. As a journalist, what do you think is the reason/(s) for this?

There are several reasons they are doing that depending on who is doing it but Jesus said go ye into the world and preach the gospel. To me it simply means use any platform or sphere of contact to do so. The media is the most influential platform because some use it to gain more followers and buy into their doctrine. Others use it to manipulate and lie to audiences to make money.

So there are those who use the media to extend their churches and ministries for the right reasons and others don't.

5. In your view, how different is mediatized religion (religion that is packaged and transmitted through the media) from unmediatized religion?

The point of difference is that the one who uses the media will gain more in terms of reach to the masses therefore acquiring more followers and they become popular so fast. The other one will be limited to the people they reach at a time, therefore growth levels are much lower.

6. To your knowledge, when and for how long has the Church in Kenya been using the media?

I think the church has used the media since I was born that is 1982. I remember watching Christian programming on KBC and also listening to radio and there were many Christian programs. My parents also grew up listening to Christian programs on the few media platforms that existed then. So the church has used the media since its inception into the country.

7. To what extent did the liberalization of the airwaves and the recent migration to digital broadcasting affect Kenya's definition and understanding of the Church?

I can't quantify this because I don't have any facts with me. I haven't seen any research done on this and from where I sit it is difficult to tell how Kenyans have been affected by the digital broadcasting.

But what I've observed is that many churches and ministries that didn't have the kind of cash flow that would put their programs on the big stations, now have many alternatives to air their content even in the vernacular.

8. Why do you think most Church programs on radio and television are in the mornings and evenings?

Because its prime time when the biggest audience is either watching or listening and it's based on market research.

9. Most Electronic Church preachers are very versatile in their usage of the media. In your view, what is the place of images, symbols and artifacts in Electronic Church communication and how are they used to cajole followers?

I think there is a place for symbols and elements that have reference to the Christian faith on electronic media, however I don't think visually, they can persuade loyalty more than the content.

People go for what is being said. Dressing in a white suit with white shoes doesn't drive ratings or audiences to develop interest because so many preachers are doing that anyway. Elements that put people off are for example having a graphic image of an anointing bottle on the screen. It's been overdone and mostly it is being sold to people anyway so the less the artifacts and the more the message that will draw interest. A seed is always connected to some negative nuances because of how many people have taken advantage of audiences to drive the message of giving.

10. In your view, what agency/possibilities does the Electronic media give to the Church to experiment with technology and formats ordinarily reserved for what is normally viewed as secular?

I don't think it's supposed to be given to church but rather the church should take it. There is no disclaimer to the use of any technology to spread the gospel.

11. What means and strategies has Kenya's Electronic church used to persuade and maintain the loyalty of her audience?

Consistency is key. Those that have managed to maintain a certain standard over a period of time get loyal followers. It's the same way secular programs work. The concept is the same. Consistency is key.

There are some churches that use the electronic media for a week and then disappear for a year and come back for a month then disappear completely. It's hard to get loyal fans because relationships and bonds between the audience and the program take time.

12. From your investigation, how different is media language by the Electronic Church different from live Church services? ... what common phrases have you picked up in that usage?

The media has a jargon book and so does the Church which is the Bible so the language definitely is different. However style of opening and closing programs is almost similar in greeting the audience and saying goodbye to the same audience and thanking them for watching while teasing an upcoming event. I noticed it's a mixture of English and Swahili words like:

- Seed
- Mbegu
- Sadaka
- It doesn't matter
- The power
- Pepo
- The number on your screen
- God will richly bless you
- Give and it shall be given back unto you
- The anointing
- Can I prophesy
- Breakthrough
- Miracle
- Deliverance
- Your life will be the same
- Maandiko yanasema
- Bwana asifiwe
- Shetani huna mamlaka tena

13. Money appears to be a key element of the Electronic church. How is it solicited and how different is the solicitation from live Church?

Through the electronic media the use of Mobile money transfer is obviously there, and bank accounts as well. Live services there is a big emphasis on the basket.

14. Religion ordinarily pursues truth, honesty and righteous conduct. In your investigations you seem to have unearthed something contrary when it came to religion in the media. What did you find out?

I found out that there are those who started well but along their path money became the point of focus and therefore any means to get it was acceptable. Then there are those who came into religion for monetary gains treating church like another business but the commodity being sold is God.

I also discovered the language used was cleverly crafted to target gullible Kenyans who wouldn't question some things in the name of questioning God because scriptures were being twisted around.

15. Why do you think “miracles” and “financial giving” seem to dominate the Electronic church?

Everybody wants a miracle because we live in a world with so many challenges so it's easy to sell what is on high demand, 'miracle'.

Everybody wants money, so again it's easy to sell that line of doctrine to the masses because everyone wants to aspire.

**APPENDIX VII: EMAIL RESPONSE TO QUESTIONNAIRE FOR
TRANSWORLD RADIO PROGRAMMES DIRECTOR (MRS. PAMELA
OMWODO)**

ETHICAL STATEMENT:

The purpose of this research Questionnaire is strictly academic and intended solely as a source document for information to help understand the relationship between media and religion in Kenya. It is not in any way interested in or to be used for personal vilification, promotion or undermining of anyone interviewed. The answers solicited by it shall be treated with the confidentiality that shall be assigned to the project environment alone and shall not be used maliciously against any respondent. All respondents shall be treated with maximum respect and dignity in relation to the information provided during and after the interview.

16. When did you start using the media to share your message and why?

I started using media to share Neno, a Bible teaching radio programme in 1992. At that time there was a vacuum for a systematic sound Bible teaching radio programme in Kenya. So with the help of teachings from re known Bible Teacher known as Mcgee,we started production of what became one of the most popular radio Bible programmes in the whole of East and Central Africa.

17. How many programmes do you run weekly and when exactly do they run?

After running the Neno programmes for more than seventeen years on the national radio Station (KBC) we started airing them on our own five FM stations located in Lamu, Lodwar, Garissa, Voi and Marsabit. We also have air the same programmes on three other local stations in Kenya. All the stations run the Neno programmes daily Monday through Friday. It takes five years to go through the whole Bible. We went through the Bible thrice on KBC and are now running it for the second time in all our five FM stations.

18. Are there any advantages of using radio or TV to relay your messages compared to preaching directly to your congregation?

The advantages of using radio media over direct congregation are numerous.
- *We are able to reach more people than the largest Church in the world. E.g. on KBC we were able to reach 6 million listeners through one single broadcast. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is urgent and so the need to use the quickest means to reach as many as possible. The largest Church in Kenya has a sitting capacity of about 15,000 people.*

- *We are able to reach places where an ordinary pastor cannot reach because radio knows no boundary.*
- *The above among other many advantages of using radio media.*

19. How many people do you estimate you are able to reach via media compared to how many come to the Church every Sunday?

As indicated in answer in question 3.

20. Most Christian broadcasts are on Sunday morning or in the evenings. Is there a reason for that?

It is believed that for most Kenyans Sunday morning is a peak time for both born again and nominal Christian for one reason, majority of Kenyans have religious tendencies and tune to listen to gospel on radio stations more on Sundays either to be blessed and if not so just to feel holy because Sunday is regarded as the day of the Lord.

Even secular stations are well aware of the above fact and try to cooperate with Christians on Sunday mornings by hosting live services and playing a lot of Gospel music. As much as we appreciate this effort made by secular radio stations, Christian radios stations should do a better job on Sundays. The fact that Gospel is the reason for their existence should make Sunday the best day for all the listeners hence do a better job than what we find on secular stations.

21. Who does the packaging of your messages for radio or television and how do you ensure they pass to the audience what you intend for them?

The Neno programme is presented by a radio teacher and a continuity presenter who use a given guideline that strictly follows the a given policy. The ready programme is handed over to a dispatch officer who ensures the programmes are dispatched to all the various radio stations for airing three months in advance.

22. Do you relay any of your services live, or are they prerecorded?

All Neno programmes are pre-recorded three months in advance of broadcast.

23. The Church has largely embraced technology to reach out. How do you ensure and manage feedback from a media audience you cannot see in front of you, and which technology do you employ to get such feedback?

Each Neno programme broadcast gives both electronic and postal contacts for questions, testimonies or recommendations that our listeners may have. We have an established audience department that responds to each our audience

using the means that they have used to get in touch with us. This is done with the help of the Neno Bible teacher who gives an input where it is required.

24. Have you ever used radio to send your programmes out to masses, and if so, how different is it from TV?

We have always used radio to broadcast to our audience though we are currently working on a TV version for the Neno programme.

25. What do you do when preparing your broadcasts to make them interesting and catchy to your audience?

We use relevant illustrations that touch on the day to day lives of our audience. We also use music that is relevant to the message of the day.

26. Has Kenya's migration from analogue to digital broadcasting made it easier or harder for you and your ministry to use the media?

The digital migration has not affected us in any way as the radio version has not been implemented...but our listeners have been demanding that we give them a TV version of the Neno programme, something we have taken seriously and are working on not only a Swahili version but also a Gikuyu and dholuo version of the same.

27. If you were to advise pastors who don't use the media to reach out, what would you tell them?

I would tell them that they are missing in action. They all have to realize that technology belongs to the Lord and it is he who has given human beings the brains and idea all so that they can use it to preach the whole Word to the whole world. The devil is aware of this fact and is trying to do his parallel work using the media.

Pastors should take advantage and go where the masses are going and influence them for Christ.

It's a fact that with many media outlets and many forms and formats of receivers, more and more people are now able to get informed more than ever before.

28. Who is/are your role model/models in the use of the media to share the Church's message through radio and television?

I think we are the role model for many preachers because in the history of Kenya we have never had a radio programme that runs from verse to verse,

chapter to chapter, book to book daily and continuously for years and years. Our slogan says it all, "Na Nenolitaendelea..."

29. Is there anything else you would like to tell me as a researcher in the relationship between media and religion?

Religion must marry the media and move hand in hand, otherwise we shall become irrelevant!